

RESEARCH REPORT

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Education Degree AT THE
University of the Witwatersrand

TOPIC

An exploration of successful leadership in challenging circumstances – Case Studies of two
Kathorus Secondary Schools

STUDENT NAME

KWENA GEDION POOPEDI

STUDENT NUMBER

415679

SUPERVISOR

ZAKHELE MBOKAZI

February 2011

Abstract

This study explored successful leadership practices in challenging circumstances within the context of two case study schools. It was a qualitative case study of two secondary schools that have consistently performed above national average over a period of five years for matric pass rate. These township schools are headed by a female and a male principal.

The study provides greater insights into leadership practices in the schools. The study showed that shared leadership was not practiced in the case schools. Shared (distributive) leadership implied that principals in the case schools would be practicing collective forms of leadership. However, delegation, which was about authority and accountability residing with the principal, seemed more prevalent. The findings revealed that both principals saw themselves as delegating most of the tasks to their subordinates, even though these tasks belonged to the subordinates by virtue of their formal appointments. The case schools have two deputies who share administrative and curriculum responsibilities. The deputy principals are there to deputise and assist the principal - duties that are lawfully theirs. The same applies to the HoDs whose duties are to oversee curriculum delivery in the classroom. These are not a delegated function but an execution of their responsibilities.

In both case schools, evidence shows that the schools are successful because of the initiative of individual teachers who exert themselves in the classroom.

Keywords

Successful school leadership

Instructional leadership

Transformational leadership

Distributed leadership

Declaration

I, Kwena Gideon Poopedi (Student number: 415679) Master of Education student at the University of Witwatersrand hereby declare that the following project is my own unaided work. It is partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Education degree. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination of any other University.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Kwena Gedion Poopedi

February 2011

Dedication

This research report is dedicated to my parents. They have been a source of inspiration throughout my entire life.

Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the support and contribution of the following people:

- My supervisor and mentor, Mr Zakhele Mbokazi, for the invaluable role he played throughout the process of planning and executing this research report. He has given generously for his time and expertise. I am deeply grateful to his constructive criticism, attention to details and his expectation of work of a high standard.
- The principals, HoDs and teachers of the two schools in which the research was conducted. Their co-operation and willingness to participate in this research cannot go unnoticed. My sincere gratitude is extended to them as well.
- My wife, Matome Daphney Poopedi and our children for their belief in me. The love and support my wife provided throughout my study was a true inspiration.
- My parents, Abrina and Petrus Poopedi for relentlessly encouraging me not to give up my studies. I will be forever indebted to you.
- My siblings, Ezekiel, Salome, Ananias, Petunia and Selina for believing in me.
- Friends and colleagues for their support, encouragement and constructive criticism throughout the research.
- A special thanks to my dear friend Thabo Kgwete, to whom I owe my life and more. He has made an important contribution to this research report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 CHAPTER 1

1.1 Background	13
1.2 Aim of the study	15
1.3 Objectives of the study	16
1.4 Problem statement	16
1.5 Research questions	17
1.6 Rationale	17
1.7 Theoretical framework	20

2 CHAPTER 2 Review of literature

2.1 Introduction	23
2.2 Leading in the poor communities	26
2.3 Concepts of leadership	30
2.3.1 Instructional leadership	30
2.3.2 Distributed leadership	33
2.3.3 Transformational leadership	38
2.4 Setting the direction for the school	40
2.5 Developing others	42
2.6 Redesigning the organisation	44
2.7 Principal who lead cultural change	47
2.8 Conclusion	49

3 CHAPTER 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction	51
3.2 Research approaches	51
3.3 Sampling	53
3.4 Research methods	54
3.5 Instrument design	56
3.5.1 Interview Schedule	56
3.5.2 Observation Schedule	56
3.6 Data Presentation Analysis	57
3.7 Validity and reliability	57
3.8 Ethical considerations	58
3.9 Limitations of the study	58

4 CHAPTER Four Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

4.1 Introduction	60
4.2 Profile of School A	60
4.3 Profile of School B	61
4.4 Presentation of data	61
4.5 Profile of participants	63

4.6 Presentation and analysis of data of School A	65
4.6.1 The role of principal giving the school direction	65
4.6.2 The school culture	68
4.6.3 Teaching and learning	70
4.6.4 Leadership	73
4.7 Presentation and analysis data of School B	77
4.7.1 The role of principal in giving the school direction	78
4.7.2 The school culture	79
4.7.3 Teaching and learning	82
4.7.4 Leadership	84
 5 CHAPTER 5 Summary, Conclusions and recommendations	
5.1 Introduction	88
5.2 Summary	88
5.3 Conclusions	91
5.4 Recommendations	92
 Reference	 94

Appendices

Appendix 1	99
Appendix 2	103
Appendix 3	106
Appendix 4	108
Appendix 5	111
Appendix 3	113

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AESOP – An Exceptional Schooling Outcome Project

HoD – Head of Department

ISSPP – International Successful School Principalship Project

MTL – Managing Teaching and Learning

SGB – School Governing Body

SMT – School Management Team

List of Tables

Table A: *details pertaining to the background of the interviewees at school A* 63

Table B *details pertaining to the background of the interviewees at school B* 64

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to set the scene for the study of successful leadership in schools that produce quality education reflected in good results in the Senior Certificate Examination. . These schools are situated in low socio-economic settings.

1.1 Background

According to Harris (2009), many schools in contexts of acute levels of socio-economic deprivation also face external factors that adversely affect their ability to perform. Incidences of crime, drug abuse and violence tend to be significantly higher within areas of urban deprivation and social disadvantage. Harris (2009) further argues that the socio-economic challenges facing schools in the poorest communities are acute and the task of school improvement is a particular difficult one for those principals and teachers committed to working within these contexts. Within the South African context, a study conducted by Christie et al. (2007) observed that Senior Certificate results continue to reflect past distortions in the education system in terms of access and success. They contend that whereas the majority of white children have been able to stay at school until the age of 16, and their Senior Certificate pass rates have been over 90%, the same is not true for black children. Thrupp (1999) argues that schools that are often located in areas with high level of unemployment and crime, as well as poor housing and health conditions, are required to take on a huge caring role in addition to their academic one in order to achieve academically.

Bipath (2008) further maintains that many of the schools in high-poverty contexts are under-funded and inadequately staffed compared to schools in wealthier areas. However, the transformation agenda, pursued by the South African government since it came to power in 1994, has altered the funding model. Despite efforts to direct a substantially larger share of education funding to historically disadvantaged schools, historically advantaged schools continue to outperform these schools. These reforms were brought about through progressive legislation intended to redress the imbalances of the past. This legislation is largely encapsulated by the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, which set out the framework for Norms and Standards for the governance of schools; and the 1998 National Norms and Standards for Schools Funding (amended in 2005) which set out the framework for funding provinces and schools.

The focus of this study is on two secondary schools that have consistently performed above national average over a period of five years in terms of the matric pass rate. These are township schools, one headed by a female and another by a male principal. The schools are situated in Vosloorus Township in the Ekurhuleni metropolitan area. There has been extensive research in the area of school effectiveness. Cele (2005) contends that research that focus on understanding the concept of 'effective schools' in South Africa has attempted to assist the state to reward and punish schools based on their performance, but this has been contentious and subject to debate, placing pressure is on secondary schools and placing the emphasis exclusively on matriculation results. For instance, in 2010 the Gauteng Department of Education has budgeted millions of Rands for improvement of Grade 12 results. The aim is to get rid of the so-called dysfunctional schools. These are schools which obtain below 50 percent pass rate at matric.

Successful and resilient schools in the townships and rural areas should be understood within the context of their historical background of decades of apartheid. Many years of racial segregation and discrimination, and the subsequent resistance led in large part by school children (and therefore making schools sites of struggle and inoperable) resulted in collapse of schools; these were mainly secondary schools in the townships. The increasing effectiveness of schools serving young black learners who reside in working-class suburbs, informal settlements and marginal rural areas must be understood as the outcome of the revolutionary changes in South African society (Fleisch and Christie, 2004, p. 96).

The feeders of these secondary schools are the primary schools around the township. Many learners come from primary schools unprepared for secondary school and have very poor literacy and numeracy skills as is evident in the results of the PIRLS (Progress in Reading Literacy) study which placed South African learners at the bottom of 45 schools in literacy and numeracy tests done on grades 5 and 6 (Howie, et al, 2008). The teachers in these primary schools are Africans, the majority of whom were trained under the apartheid system of education. And yet there are secondary schools that manage to achieve above the norm with these considerable odds against them.

1.2 Aims of the study

The purpose of the study is to explore successful leadership practices in challenging circumstances within the context of two case study schools.

1.2.1 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study, therefore, are to:

- Study the impact leadership has on successful schools and also to look into the factors that make these schools stand above the rest in the township;
- Explore school culture and organisational structure; and
- Explore leadership models applicable to schools in challenging circumstances.

1.3. Problem Statement

The study focuses on school principals in previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa. The study looks at secondary schools in the low socio-economic geographic area of Kathorus, and detailed descriptions of South African township communities and schools are provided. Straker (1992, 1996) and Wilson (1963), Straker (1996) paints a gloomy account of township life, “characterised by overcrowding, drenched in a culture of violence and crime; ... the communities and their schools suffer economic deprivation, general poverty and poor health” (p3). Characteristic features of these township schools include irregular attendance by both staff and students; conflictual relationships within schools between principals, teachers and students; discontinuous learning and poor results. Violence, criminality, rape and substance abuse abound within and around schools. Yet, in the same difficult circumstances, a number of schools manage to survive, albeit precariously in some cases (Christie and Lingard, 2001). As observed by Taylor (2006), “a tiny band of schools situated in the poorest communities provide some of the highest quality education; ...they are performing heroic deeds under difficult conditions, and serve as role models for the rest of

the system” (p.73). Two of these ‘tiny bands of schools’ are the focus for this study. These are high performing secondary schools situated in the township of Kathorus.

1.4. Research questions

The study explores the following key questions:

1. What are the practices of a successful leader?
2. How does successful school leadership impact on pupil outcomes?
3. What is the role of the principal in developing/nurturing a successful school culture?

1.5. Rationale

The rationale for the study is informed by the researcher’s interest in how people overcome challenges. Therefore, the focus of the study is on successful schools that have consistently performed above the national average over the past five years. These schools are not chosen to represent the best or excellent in the system. They are schools that perform well under conditions that are typical of the mainstream of the South African education system.

The successful schools, discussed in this study, have everything in common with any other township school that is affected by social challenges. Some of the children come from dysfunctional or child-headed households. Some come from neighbouring informal settlements using government subsidised scholar transport. Schools are seen as one way to ameliorate poverty and evidence of high-performance schools in high-poverty communities provide some measure of optimism (Mulford et al, (2007, p. 461). Schools carry the hopes of the down-trodden because through successful completion of schooling, there is a chance that the vicious cycle of poverty can be broken. Mulford et al (2007) argue that the most distinguishing feature of successful school is leadership.

In this regard the researcher looked into the role of school leadership on pupil outcomes. Day et al (2008, p. 9) contend that school leaders are able to retain a rigorous focus on raising pupil attainment whilst at the same time providing children with safe, healthy, and happy environments for a large part of their day. Enhancing learning and teaching is a key priority for school leadership. The study also examines school culture. A case study conducted by Gurr et al (2006, p. 376) showed evidence indicating that successful school leaders promote a culture of collegiality, collaboration, support and trust; and this culture was firmly rooted in their democratic and social justice values and beliefs.

Leaders do not act alone to attain the goals of the organisation. Gurr et al (2006, p. 376) found that successful leaders focus on distributed leadership, which was facilitated by providing support for distributed leadership processes and practices; promoting a culture of trust. This, in turn, encourages enthusiasm and a sense of agency amongst staff, students and parents.

Principals play a major role in schools. Halawah (2006) argued that “school principals play important role in establishing school discipline, both by effective administration and by personal example” (p. 334). This study will explore the following: the role of principals as part of the School Management Team (SMT) ; Heads of Departments (HoDs) as managers whose task is to oversee curriculum delivery on daily basis; the monitoring of teachers; and whether the analysis of the learner results takes place and has an effect on school performance – both by learners and teachers.

In addressing the research topic, the researcher consulted literature on school effectiveness.

Edmund's (1979) lists five factors attributable to effective schools:

- (1) Strong administrative leadership;
- (2) School climate conducive to learning;
- (3) High expectations for children's achievement;
- (4) Clear instructional objectives for student performance; and
- (5) Emphasis on basic skills instructions.

The proponents of the school effectiveness do not all agree on common characteristics of effective schools.

School improvement literature was also consulted owing to the daunting challenges and lack of improvement confronting many of our schools. Studies have shown that secondary schools can take a minimum five years to improve but many schools are unable to improve at all. Their performance remains the same in spite of resourceful and well-intentioned interventions from the department of education. Hopkins et al. (1994) have defined school improvement as an approach to educational change that has the twin purpose of enhancing student achievement and strengthening the school's capacity for managing change.

The study will further explore leadership theories, styles, models and practices. The focus will be on shared leadership or distributed leadership, instructional leadership, transformational leadership and change leadership.

1.5. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study draws upon the model by Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) on 'an organising framework for understanding and developing schools'. They argue that a school is an organisation, made of aspects or elements, each of which needs to be functioning healthily for the whole to be healthy. Any unhealthy or malfunctioning element will have a negative ripple effect throughout the system.

In this framework, the culture of the school is placed at the centre as it determines and reflects how the elements of the organisation develop. School culture is determined by many external as well as internal forces (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997). They further argued that school cultures reflect the norms and values of any particular society.

Elements identified in the framework are as follows:

Identity: The identity of an organisation is determined by its unique culture. Strong successful leadership provide the school with a unique identity. This important aspect relates to the broad purpose of the school, reflected in its vision, particular mission, and broad aims and tasks (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997). The National Standards for headteachers (DfES, 2004) identified core professional leadership and management practices in six key areas These include shaping the future, i.e. creating a shared vision and strategic plan for the school (in collaboration with governing body) that motivates staff and others in the community. Of critical importance to the study is the school vision that enables everyone to rally behind leadership in ensuring that the performance of the school is maintained over time.

Strategy: Within an organisation, strategic planning – of setting goals, planning action steps to achieve the goals and ensuring that the process is evaluated in an ongoing way – takes place within a framework of organisational culture (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997).. This is an important area of leadership where decision-making takes place. This study explores decision-making processes whereby role-players such as teachers, SMT, principal and the SGB interact in setting the goals to be achieved in subsequent year(s).

Structure and procedures: Structural and procedural activities i.e. the rules, regulations and methods whereby these structures relate to one another (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997), reflect the culture of an organisation. Execution of duties and leadership roles depend, to a large extent, on structures and procedures. Structures consist of lines of responsibility and authority of units and departments, how they relate to one another and how individual and team contributions are combined (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997). They also consist of lines of communication and accountability.

Technical support: This involves administration, financial and resource allocations and controls.

Human resources: The human resource management in large part, creates organisational culture in that issues concerning the recruitment, retention and satisfaction of members of the staff (teachers, non-teaching staff and principal), as well as other role-players in the school are the focus

The context: this includes consideration of the dynamics linked to the various aspects milieu: social, political, economic, technological, legislative, physical, cultural and institutional (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997).

This chapter looked at the elements identified in the framework culture of the school. These elements are important because they are all interrelated and interdependent for the smooth operation of the organisation. These elements are explored further in the literature review and analysis of the data.

The next chapter reviews literature on successful leadership practices within the local, national and international context.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN CHALLENGING

CONTEXTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews literature on successful school leadership practices. The chapter begins by exploring the contexts within which successful school leadership takes place. The International Successful School Principal Project (ISSPP) investigated school leadership extensively in eight countries: the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, China, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The ISSPP aimed to identify successful leadership practices in schools of varying sizes, in different geographic locations and having pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds. "ISSPP began with the notion that the quality of principal leadership makes a difference in student learning and school improvement; and the characteristics, processes and effects of successful school leadership can be identified and compared across national contexts" (Johnson et al. 2008, p. 407). The experiences of leadership in ISSPP are not necessarily replicable in the South African context owing to varied dynamics and material conditions.

The criteria for judging successful school leadership is not similar all over the world. Moos et al. (2008) stated that "in all countries in the ISSPP project – except in China – nation or state authorities have devolved authority to the local and school level. In most of schools in the case studies the distribution of leadership is discussed, but there seemed to be differences in how it is carried out in practice" (p. 342). With the introduction of the South African

Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, schools were given powers to administer property, and make recommendation to provinces on employment of teachers. Some schools applied for section 21 of SASA of 1996 to be given powers to manage their own budgets. Such management is supposed to be overseen by the School Governing Bodies (SGB), whereby the principal acts as the administrator. This paradigm shift requires a leadership model similar to school leadership in first world countries where devolution of powers to schools has long been in practice. However, contextual factors need to be taken into consideration in South Africa due to the apartheid-induced inequalities. SGBs in historically disadvantaged communities face a mammoth task dealing with governance issues like budgeting, fundraising, policy formulation, staffing and other related matters because of inexperience and a lack of skills. As Hoadley et al (2009, p.374) aptly observed: “these policies set out an ideal-type vision for a new system of equal quality for all, but did not speak to the conditions of the majority of schools, or adequately address the deep historical inequalities and uneven quality that existed within and across the country’s schools. The best functioning schools in the system were able to use the new management dispensation to raise fees, employ ‘governing body’ teachers, provide salary supplements, and offer a broad curriculum with specialists support. Not so the majority of schools in the system, often in communities too poor to pay fees, without capable governing bodies, without libraries, laboratories and computer networks to support the new curriculum and often with demotivated teachers”.

Moos et al. (2008, p. 342) found that in most schools in the ISSPP, the principal set the direction of the school. They further argued that approaches seem to be similar, but in some schools the direction is formulated by the principal while in other schools the direction is a

product of dialogue and shared-sense making and knowledge-production. This vision should mirror the values and the beliefs espoused by the principal.

Mulford et al. (2007, p. 229) argued about what should decide successful school leadership and who should provide the evidence. The questions they attempted to answer were: is there a school vision, and what is the quality of the vision? Is there a strategic plan to achieve the vision, a way of evaluating progress toward the vision? Mulford et al. (2007, p. 243) stated that “our finding supports the position from previous research that the principal’s influence on student learning is indirect, that is through school capacities such as trust and respect, empowerment (of student and teachers), a shared and monitored vision, and supported experimentation”.

In a review provided by Leithwood et al. (2008, p. 27) concerning successful school leadership, they refer to ‘strong claims’ about school leadership. These claims are:

1. School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning.
2. Almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices.
3. The way in which leaders apply these basic leadership practices – not the practices themselves – demonstrate responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the contexts in which they work.
4. School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions.
5. School leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed.

6. Some patterns of distribution are more effective than others.
7. A small handful of personal traits explain a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness.

Amongst the seven claims about successful school leadership, Leithwood et al. (2008) suggested that the “first two have attracted largest amount of evidence” (p.27). These two claims pertain to school leadership and its influence on pupil learning and basic leadership practices. A study conducted by Day (2005, p. 576) showed that successful principals in challenging context “accepted their responsibilities to do the best they could for every pupil in reaching their full potential in terms of the government testing and attainment agendas – flawed though they found these to be – whilst simultaneously being highly critical”. These principals had moral and ethical commitment to ensure that pupils are holistically developed.

2.2 Leading in the poor communities

The importance of leadership as a lever to secure improvement in difficult contexts should not be surprising (Harris, 2009). Leadership plays a critical role in securing successful school effectiveness and improvement. Harris (2009) further argued that it was well known that school leadership plays an unprecedented role in determining a school’s success and there is very strong belief in the ability of leaders to promote and generate school improvement. Hallinger and Heck (1998) contended that successful school leaders exercise an indirect but powerful influence on the effectiveness of the school and on the achievement of students attributing up to a quarter of the school level variance in pupil achievement as a result of such influence. The role of school leadership cannot be over restimated.

Harris, (2009) showed that of central importance to the leaders of schools in poor communities was the co-operation and alignment of others to their set of values and vision. She contended that principals communicated their personal vision and belief systems by direction, words and deeds. She further argued that the vision and practices of the principals in schools in poor communities were organised around a number of core personal values concerning the modelling and promotion of respect (for individuals), fairness and equality, caring for the well being and whole development of student and staff, integrity and honesty. In other words, principals in poor communities have to be pragmatic and lead by example. His/her personal vision and belief will determine the direction of the school but will depend on how he/she communicates with his/her subordinates and broader school community.

To lead a school in a poor community someone who is familiar with the environment and local politics is needed. A study carried out by Dinham (2005 p. 343) showed that “principals of schools where outstanding sites were identified exhibited a keen awareness and understanding of the wider environment and positive attitude towards engaging with it”, stating further that “even with mandated change, principals look for how they can adapt what they are already doing to meet new requirements. They consider ways in which their school might benefit from change”(343). The more familiar the principal is with the environment, the easier the principal will effect change and improvement in the school without first trying to acclimatise to a situation.

Leithwood and Steinbach (2002) in Mulford et al. (2008 p. 462) argued that “schools serving low socio-economic status (SES) families can find themselves in an ‘iron circle’ that begins with the family’s impoverished economic conditions that may involve unemployment,

cultural, racial and/or linguistic factors, immigration, high mobility, family break-ups, malnutrition and other health problems, substance abuse, low expectations including performance at school". This study is about the Australian state of Tasmania, but the predominant conditions in South African townships are conditions such as unemployment, health problem such as HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, low expectations including performance in schools.

Christie (1998 p. 283) refers to the 'breakdown of culture of learning and teaching' in South African schools. She stated that "these schools, generally secondary schools located in the poor and disrupted communities spawned by apartheid, share a number of common features. These includes: disputed and disrupted authority relations between principals, teachers and students; sporadic and broken attendance by students and often teachers; general demotivation and low morale of students and teachers; poor school results; conflict and often violence in and around schools; vandalism, criminality, gangsterism, rape, and substance abuse; school facilities in a generally poor state of repair" (Christie, 1998, p.283).

"As schools face increased public and political demands for improved performance, meeting these demands becomes particularly problematic for school in high-poverty communities" (Mulford et al. 2008, p. 463). Dedicated and hardworking teachers and principals are required to overcome these obstacles. The importance of school culture, such as clear expectations; supportive structures and services; and positive leadership cannot be overemphasised. Carter (2000) in Mulford et al. (2008) "found five features to be common to 21 such schools: principals who were free to act, who used measurable goals and elicited parental support; master teachers who set the tone for improved teacher quality; rigorous and regular testing that enforced schools goals; achievement that acted as the framework

for self-control, self-reliance and self-esteem; and, time on task that resulted in students' demonstration of mastery" (p. 463).

If the 'purposes and goals' of the school are not clear to all the stakeholders it will be difficult for the school to find direction for sustainable success. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000, p. 113) conducted a series of empirical studies that found that the influence of leadership on student engagement with school was "mediated by both school and classroom level conditions". 'Purposes and goals' was one of the school conditions included in their framework, and this included what members of the school understood to be both the explicit and implicit purposes and directions for the school. They asserted that it also encompassed the extent to which such purposes and directions were believed to be a compelling and challenging target for personal practices as well as the collective school improvement effort. "Evidence from our reviews suggested that such purposes contribute to school effectiveness, to the extent that members are aware of them; and to the extent they are perceived to be clear, meaningful, useful, current, congruent with district directions; and to reflect important educational values" (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2008, p. 115).

It can be argued that successful school leadership practices take place within a particular context. "Successful leaders are sensitive to context, but this does not mean they use qualitatively different practices in every context. It means, rather that, they apply contextually sensitive combination of the basic leadership practices" (Leithwood et al. 2008 p. 31). Davidoff and Lazarus (1997 p. 34) emphasised that broader contextual element which includes consideration of the dynamics linked to the various aspects of the milieu,

including social, political, economic, technological, legislative, ecological, physical, cultural and institutional dynamics should not be ignored.

The next section deals with instructional, distributed and transformational leadership.

2.3 Concepts of leadership

2.3.1. Instructional leadership

The core purpose of principalship is to provide leadership and management in the school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning takes place and which promote the highest possible of learner achievement in any context (The South African Standard for Principalship, 2005). This discussion document further states that the principal has a responsibility to create a safe, nurturing and supportive learning environment which enables effective teaching and learning to take place.

Bush and Glover (2006, p. 27) states that “Instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning and on the behaviour of teachers in working with students. Leaders’ influence is targeted at student learning via teachers. The emphasis is on the direction and impact of influence rather than the influence process itself”

Bush and Glover (2009, p. 5) contended that “the responsibility for managing teaching and learning is shared amongst principals, SMTs, middle managers and classroom educators. Educators manage curriculum implementation in their classrooms, HoDs have responsibility to ensure effective teaching and learning across their learning areas or phases, while principals and SMTs have a whole-school role”.

McEwan (2000) listed seven steps to effective instructional leadership. She describes the third step thus: 'to create a school culture and climate conducive to learning' and by this she means 'establishing high expectations for student achievement that are directly communicated to students, teachers, and parents; establishing clear rules and expectations for the use of time allocated to instruction; and, establishing implementing, and evaluating with teachers and students (as appropriate) procedures and codes for handling and correcting discipline problems'.

Successful principals are expected to take instructional leadership practices into consideration. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) defined instructional services as "interventions by teachers with students aimed at stimulating their educational growth. They cite as examples of such practices "instructional planning, the consideration for learning principles, clarification of appropriate instructional goals, decisions about curricular content, selection of instructional strategies, and the uses of instructional time"(p116) . An instructional leader should be aware of these practices and constructively manage to and engage with them.

Huber (2004, p. 673) stated that "instructional leadership focuses mostly on those aspects of school leadership action that concern the learning progress of the pupils. This includes management-oriented as well as leadership-oriented activities like a suitable application of resources for teaching, agreeing upon goals, promoting cooperative relationship between staff, but, especially, the evaluation and counselling of teachers during lessons through classroom observation, structured feedback, and coaching". Successful school leaders play pivotal role in supporting and mentoring their teachers to reach their pedagogical goals.

The National Standards for Headteachers (DfES, 2004) in England identify core professional leadership and management practices in six key areas: (1) shaping the future; (2) leading

learning and teaching; (3) developing self and working with others; (4) managing the organisation; (5) securing accountability; and (6) strengthening the community. These core professional leadership and management practices are assumed to be applicable to all contexts.

‘Leading learning and teaching’ (key area 2) is explained as raising the quality of teaching and learning, and pupils’ achievement. “This implies setting high expectations, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of learning outcomes. A successful learning culture will enable pupils to become effective, enthusiastic, independent and committed to lifelong learning”(Day et al. 2008, p. 7). Principals play a major role in ensuring that culture of teaching and learning is inculcated in the teachers and pupils.

Principals should carry a significant load with regard to teaching, if he/she aims to make an impact on student outcomes. In this regard principal’s pedagogic expertise is of utmost importance. A study by Roberts and Roach (2006) in Hoadley (2009) on five effective schools found that principals in these schools maintained what they termed a ‘connection to the classroom’. In these schools all principals carried a significant load with regard to teaching. These principals lead by example.

What is disconcerting about the findings of the study carried out by Hoadley (2009, p. 381) in South Africa was that “principals reported spending most of their time on administrative functions and disciplining learners. ‘Instructional leadership’ as read through ‘overseeing teaching and learning’ and ‘supervising teachers’, was not a function that took up the majority of many principals’ time. It was explicitly found that only 17% of principals identified overseeing curriculum and instruction as their main task”.

2.3.2. Distributed leadership

Spillane (2005, p. 144) posited that distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership practice rather than leaders or their roles, functions, routines and structures. He further stated that a distributed perspective frames leadership practice in a particular way; leadership practice is viewed as a product of the interaction of school leaders, followers and their situation. He argues that these interactions, rather than any particular action, are critical in understanding leadership practice.

Spillane (2005, p. 145) further argues that “equating leadership with the action of those in leadership position is inadequate for three reasons. Firstly, leadership practice typically involves multiple leaders, some without formal leadership positions. It is essential, therefore, to move beyond viewing leadership in terms of superhuman and/or individual actions. Secondly, leadership practice is not something done to followers. From a distributed perspective, followers are one of the three constituting elements of leadership practice. Thirdly, it is not the actions of individuals, but rather the interactions among them, that are critical in leadership practice”. Therefore, class teachers, by virtue of being positioned in the classrooms, teaching particular learning areas are leaders in their own right. Teachers’ interactions with their fellow colleagues and those in managerial positions attest to the fact that teachers are not merely followers. Successful leaders’ duties will include how to harness the actions of their teachers in trying to achieve the organisational goals.

“Leaders act in situations that are defined by others’ actions” (Spillane, 2005, p. 145). He argues that from the perspective of distributed leadership, it is in these interactions that

leadership practice is constructed. In this case everyone's role is appreciated and supported. Inasmuch as followers need their leaders, leaders need their followers.

Harris (2008, p. 173) cautions against the misinterpretation of distributed leadership by arguing that "while it is certainly the case that all leadership is to some extent distributed, as leadership is essentially organisational influence and direction, it does not mean that everyone in the organisation simultaneously leads. Distributed leadership theory would recognise that many people will have the potential to exercise leadership in any organisation but the key to success will be the way that leadership is facilitated, orchestrated and supported". She contends that it is a form of lateral leadership where the practice of leadership is shared amongst organisational members. Successful leader will play a facilitative role in ensuring that all the members contribute to the wellbeing of the organisation.

Leadership does not particularly reside in any one position within an organisation. Harris (2008, p. 174) conceded that "distributed leadership does not imply that the formal leadership structures within organisations are removed or redundant. Instead, it is assumed that there is a powerful relationship between vertical and lateral leadership processes. It also means that those in formal leadership roles are the gatekeepers to distributed leadership practice in their schools".

"Distributed cognition implies that learning takes place through interactions within and across various teams. Distributed leadership similarly implies that the practice of leadership is one that is shared and realised within extended groupings and networks, some of these groupings will be formal while others will be informal and in some cases, randomly formed. Within school this could manifest itself in the work of subject departments, cross-curricular

groupings, action learning sets and school improvement groups. In short, where teachers are working together to solve particular sets of pedagogical problems, they will occupy leadership 'space' within the school and will be engaging in leadership practice. The point is that distributed leadership is not restricted to any particular pattern and cannot be prescribed in advance but emerges within the organisation in order to solve problems or to take action" (Harris, 2008, p.175).

In case studies of ISSPP conducted in Australia, Moos et al. (2008) pointed out that "in general the principal's distribution of leadership tasks seemed primarily aimed at 'staff commitment by supporting staff initiatives and a climate where it is alright to take risks" (p. 344). This, they argue, can be achieved only if the school has a vision that is agreed by all. Distributed leadership recognises the potential of every staff member to exercise leadership beyond their formal positions and assigned duties.

Wong (2005, p. 560) discusses how "in the Chinese school system a hierarchy of superintendents determines the direction of development, and the case schools were strong top-down communities. The principal's tasks were handling the bureaucracy, carrying out decisions made by the federal senior management". This is similar in many instances to the situation in the South African schooling system where policy decisions are top-down and it is the task of managers at lower levels to implement them. However, this does not preclude principals of schools to distribute leadership amongst the staff.

In ISSPP project in Norway, Moos et al. (2008, p. 347) found that "within schools it seemed that to a certain extent leadership was distributed to leadership teams and to teacher teams. The distribution of leadership tasks had been in such a way that the principal, it seemed, still retained the final powers of decision-making, but at a general level teachers

were involved in school development issues and they were expected to take significant responsibility and decisions in their everyday work". In distribution of leadership, principal will always be a central figure.

In the case study conducted by Presthus (2006, p. 94), the findings were that, "the principal has together with the rest of the school created several arenas where the researcher has traced 'conservative action' in different forms and distributed leadership in different contexts. From the case study it seems that the principal is successful among others as a result of a combination of strategies related to 'distributed leadership' in the school".

In the study conducted by Harris and Chapman (2002, p. 11), it was established that "the heads used a number of strategies for bringing out the best in staff. In addition to formal development opportunities, these strategies included: the power of involving others in decision-making; giving professional autonomy; leading by standing behind, alongside and in front".

In many organisations, there are leadership teams that share responsibility as a collective group and increasingly, in response to the sophistication of knowledge intensive work organisation, leadership is further distributed in teams (Barry, 1991 in Ross et al. 2005).

Distributed leadership practices are like networks. Hargreaves and Fink (2008, p. 233) argued that networks increase professional interaction and learning across schools, and for those who participate in them, they generate excitement about teaching and learning.

"At their best, professional networks enable and encourage schools to share and transfer existing knowledge that can help children learn better; they stimulate the professional fulfilment and motivation that comes from learning and interacting with colleagues; they

capitalise on positive diversity across teachers and schools who serve different kinds of students, or who vary in how they respond to them; and they provide teachers and others with opportunities for lateral leadership of people, programs and problem-solving beyond the immediate school setting” (Jackson, 2004 in Hargreaves and Fink, 2008, p. 233). Schools cannot operate like islands; their personnel need to share their experiences and expertise.

Amongst the seven core key areas already mention by Leithwood et al. (2008, p. 27), they suggest that ‘some patterns of distribution are more effective than others’. Leithwood et al. (2008, p. 35) found that the research on a sample of 110 schools demonstrated that there are relationships between the use of different patterns of leadership distribution and level of value-added student achievement:

- Schools with the highest levels of student achievement attributed this to relatively high levels of influence from all sources of leadership.
- Schools with the lowest levels of student achievement attributed this to low levels of influence from all source of leadership.
- Schools with the highest levels, as compared with those in the lowest levels, of student achievement differed most in their ratings of the influence of school teams, parents and students.
- Headteachers were rated as having the greatest (positive and negative) influence in all schools.

Leithwood et al (2008, p.35) concede that while the evidence strengthens the case that some leadership distribution patterns are more helpful than others, it sheds little light on the range of patterns that actually exists in schools and, most importantly, the relative effects of these patterns on the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement.

2.3.3 Transformational leadership

Leithwood and Jantzi (2000, p. 113) describe transformational as an approach to leadership that aims to foster capacity development and higher levels of personal commitment to organisational goals on the part of staff. Although, according to them, authority and influence associated with this form of leadership are not necessarily allocated to those occupying formal administrative positions, much of the literature focuses on the perspectives of structural transformation through systems and administration. They dispel this notion by stating: “Rather, power is attributed by organisational members to whoever is able to inspire their commitments to collective aspirations and the desire for personal and collective mastery over the capacities needed to accomplish such aspirations” (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000, p. 113).

“Transformational leadership practices positively affect teachers’ commitment to the school’s goals and their participation in professional learning activities” (Kruger, 2009, p.115). Kruger (2009) goes further to state that to be effective, school leaders need to use a combination of transformational leadership behaviours, although the leader’s vision comes to the fore as the most important transformational leadership dimension in explaining teacher learning and school improvement. Kruger (2009) maintains that the effort is the creation of a professional learning community by the transformation from teachers to learners. The main focus of a transformational leader is to inspire teachers as professionals involved in learning, to become visionary lifelong learners.

“Transformational leaders do not simply administer structures and tasks, but concentrate on the persons carrying these out; that is on their relationship and on making deliberate efforts to win their cooperation and commitment (Huber, 2004, p. 672). Huber (ibid) asserts that transformational leaders try to actively influence the culture of the school so that it allows and stimulates more cooperation, coherence and more independent learning and working. Here “leadership” is emphasised over “management”. Huber (2004, p. 672) uses the term transactional leadership to explain the functions of a manager, stating that in this instance the school leader is the manager of the transactions, which are fundamental for an effective and also efficient work flow within the organisation. Huber (2004) indicates that the daily organisational proceedings and the administration of buildings, financial and personal resources, the time resources of staff, as well as communication processes within and outside school are all included in this definition of “transactions” or “interactions”. The two concepts, “transformational” and “transactional” should not be viewed as the opposite of the continuum, but rather as complimentary.

“Transformational leadership is referred to as the multi-dimensional conception of leadership” (Höög et al., 2005, p. 597). They contend: “this approach to leadership is defined as a method of managing activities based on the leader’s ability to change and internalise organisational direction and work methods. Transformational leaders do this by engendering confidence in co-workers and changing the culture of the organisation – its values, norms and behaviour” (Höög et al., 2005, p. 597).

There is a need for leadership to be demonstrated at all levels in an organization and not just at the top. Early and Weindling (2004, p. 15) state that leadership is dispersed throughout the whole organization and it is not the leader but leadership that is the key factor. They went on to say that today's leadership needs to be decentralized and distributed in every part of the organization so that those on the periphery who are first to sport challenges can act instantly on them.

2.4 Setting the direction for the school

Successful school leaders are visionaries who are able to set directions for their schools. Harris (2009), and Harris and Chapman (2002) emphasise that of central importance to leaders in all schools, but particularly in schools in poor communities, is the co-operation and alignment of others to a shared set of values and vision. Harris and Chapman (2002) argue that establishing a clear vision and communicating a sense of direction for the school is a critical task for leaders in schools under difficult circumstances. Harris (2009) goes further to argue that a lack of direction or common purpose can be a contributory factor to a downward spiral of performance amongst staff in schools in high poverty context. Kruger (2009, p. 113) also notes that the school leader is able to formulate, communicate and disseminate a vision in order to realise the desired learning outcomes at student level. Therefore, failure to provide direction by establishing clear vision will result in the stagnation of schools that are beset by high poverty levels, as well as in the continuation of poor performance.

According to findings from ISSPP provided by Gurr et al. (2006, p. 377) on Tasmania (Australia), school success derives from the development of a shared or collective vision for the school. They found that in most schools the vision comprised four aspects: focus

(individual focus on each child); environment (safe, caring, positive relationships); expectations (school values regarding actions/behaviours of students, staff and parents); scope (lifelong learning and community social capital). These four aspects of school directions are interconnected. One aspect cannot be achieved at the expense of others; a holistic approach is required.

Harris (2009) states that the emphasis on core values such as respect, fairness, equality, integrity and honesty is a way of defining the moral code of the school and setting in place minimum standards of conduct. She further emphasises that with a well defined vision and established values in place, the possibility of raising staff and pupils' expectations of performance is enhanced in all schools; particularly those in a high poverty context.

AESOP (An Exceptional Schooling Outcomes Project), an Australian study investigating processes of outstanding educational outcomes in Years 7-10 in New South Wales government schools involving the University of New England, the University of Western Sydney and the New South Wales Department of Education and training (NSW DET) (Dinham, 2005) found that "successful principals do not attempt to 'build Rome in a day'. These leaders possess a long-term agenda and vision and are prepared to work towards this. They set meaningful, achievable goals rather than short-term targets" (p. 338). These leaders are aware of the pitfalls of having short-term goals but losing sight of the longer-term vision that inform those goals.

Successful principals should take into account the environment and the contextual factors of the school as well as the professional wellbeing of the teachers. Dinham (2005, p. 349) further notes that such leaders are aware of the importance and value of providing professional, pleasant facilities and of treating staff professionally; in doing this, they are

warranted in expecting a high standard of professionalism in return. He asserts that principals place a high priority on school cleanliness and a pleasant environment.

Amongst the six key areas identified in the National Standards for Headteachers (DfES, 2004), 'shaping the future' is explained as creating a shared vision and strategic plan for the school (in collaboration with governing body) that motivates staff and others in the community.

2.5 Developing others

Principals operate in an atmosphere that requires them to constantly develop their fellow teachers and students in order to successfully attain the organisational goals. Jacobson et al. (2005, p. 613) refer to 'the caring principle' on the part of the principal as the ability to develop and influence people. In their study, the selected successful principals were able to maintained the "long view" when it came to creating positive school cultures and supporting teachers' professional and personal development by actively responding to the needs of staff members on a daily basis.

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) assert that human resource development includes the area of staff development which, in a school context, usually refers to teacher or professional development. "This incorporates education and training opportunities through various forms of in-service programmes. Without ongoing programmes and processes to encourage and support staff development, schools become out of touch with educational trends and teachers lose the sense of renewal and inspiration which is such an essential part of a meaningful education" (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997, p. 30). For sustainable success and

improvement, school leadership needs take into account the developmental needs of all role-players.

The study carried out by Day (2005, p. 577) in UK on successful principals in challenging contexts revealed that “these heads focussed upon setting and sustaining directions, developing people through informal and formal support and modelling; and where appropriate, redesigning the organisational structures and nurturing culture so that staff could participate. Collaboration and a sense of individual and collective belonging to and ownership of the organisational vision and strategies were fostered”. Day (2005, p. 578) found that all those in the study focused on teamwork as a means of drawing upon and building a fund of social capital, in order to create a store of shared experiences and foster individual and collective capacity to respond to change and emphasise mutual responsibility.

“School leaders with a moral purpose are concerned about closing the gap between high-performing and lower-performing students and raising the achievement of – and closing the gap between – high-performing and lower-performing students” (Brown, 2007 in Kruger, 2009, p. 116). And there will always be varying degree of performances on the part of teachers. School leaders with a moral purpose will have to assist poor performing teachers to meet the required standard for the school to be successful. This can be through modelling, coaching, in-service training and other educational innovations that will enhance performance of struggling teachers.

Case study evidence cited by Gurr et al. (2006, p. 375) indicate that “individual capacity building is a three stage process, through which leaders support/encourage others to undertake leadership roles, encourage staff to accept responsibility for their own professional learning and foster and support professional learning for groups”. They assert

that these actions result in staff feeling valued and cared for. They further emphasise that the context in which support and capacity building occurs is important, in that successful leaders match the level and type of support to staff needs and staffing profile.

A main concern for the principal in challenging school contexts is often one of maintaining staff morale and motivation (Harris, 2009). She found that in the number of schools she studied staff morale had been low and individual self-esteem had been eroded by on-going criticism of the school. She observed how certain principals consistently and vigorously promoted staff development whether through in-service training, visits to other schools, and peer support scheme to counteract feelings of inferiority and helplessness.

2.6 Redesigning the organisation

Höög et al. (2005, p. 596) undertook a study that focused on the relationship between structure, culture, leadership and authentic learning for adults and children in three successful schools in Sweden. Success in Sweden is defined by the school's output. They further stated that in Sweden such output includes not only students' academic learning but also social goals associated with the civic mission of the school.

Höög et al. (2005, p. 598) argue that "a leader's disposition to focus on cultural change, signifying a preoccupation with the personnel's needs, values and views, may be combined with a leader's disposition to focus on structural change, which signifies a preoccupation with goals, routines, finance and evaluations in his/her attempt to enhance authentic student learning".

Höög et al. (2005, p. 598) write about the importance of associating efforts to change the culture with the introduction of a new structure. "In the Swedish context there is an ongoing

discussion about the conflicts between a prescribed structure by the governing bodies and the value-based opinion about schooling among teachers and others” (Höög, 2005, p. 599). They further argue that based on contemporary research in this area, they can establish that in today’s scenario schools need leadership with a balanced focus on both the structure of a school and its culture.

Fidler (1997, p. 54) argues that to be effective, organization should be doing the right things or achieving outcomes which are consistent with its expectations. These ‘right things’ should be periodically reviewed and accountability should be allocated to ensure that decisions are carried out and that the quality of outcomes matches expectations.

Fidler (1997) further states that there is no single organizational structure that is most effective for any given situation and that the two main competing requirements are coordination and control.

It stands to reason that there should be a periodic review of organisational structure and its activities and that a bias towards either of the competing requirements, coordination and control, would diminish the other.

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997, p. 25) states that “structures consist of lines of responsibility and authority, of units and departments and how they relate to one another, and how individual and team contributions are combined. They also consist of lines of communication and accountability. Procedures refer to the rules, regulations and methods whereby these structures relate to one another”. This brings me to the important aspect of structure and procedure which is decision making. Decision-making in all structures needs to be understood and developed. Stakeholders such as learners, teachers, parents, and

principal should be well represented in meetings where crucial decisions are made in order to give stakeholders some sense of ownership.

Another important aspect of structure and procedure which needs to be understood and developed is accountability. “This refers fundamentally to responsibility and reporting systems” (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997, p. 25). Accountability is the key element in any organization. A common factor in dysfunctional schools is that no one is held accountable for the ineffectiveness and inefficiency. Non-performance of school leadership stems from the fact that no one is held accountable for their actions or inactions, whereas, however debatable in terms of accurate measurability, in many western countries, school results are published through league tables and often determine the choices parents make for their children.

Building a collaborative school culture cannot be overemphasised because it involves all the role players. Leithwood and Reihl (2005) included the category of successful practices, the building of a collaborative school culture, creating structures to encourage participation in decision-making, and the building of productive relationships with parents and the wider community.

2.7 Principals who lead cultural change

Successful leadership cannot be measured by student outcomes alone. “Leaders have a deeper and more lasting influence on organisations and provide more comprehensive leadership if their focus extends beyond maintaining high standards” (Fullan, 2002, p. 17). He identifies five essential components that characterise leaders in the knowledge society:

moral purpose, an understanding of the change process, the ability to improve relationships, knowledge creation and sharing, and creating coherence.

Fullan (2002, p. 17) defines moral purpose as social responsibility to others and the environment. He asserts that a school leader with moral purpose seeks to make a difference in the lives of students. He goes further to argue that leaders are concerned about closing the gap between high-performing and lower-performing students. Leaders who lack moral purpose will find it difficult to operate in low socio-economic conditions. Students under these conditions come from challenging circumstance such as child-headed families, dysfunctional families, unemployed parents, etc. A successful leader is expected to take these conditions into consideration.

In his study of transitional leadership, Jansen (2007, p. 96) makes use of the accounts of two leaders leading against the grain that are brought into conversation to reflect on race, leadership, and social justice in the context of South Africa's transition from apartheid to a democratic state. He points out that these leaders hold a strong sense of social justice, and discusses the imperative to open up opportunity in the well-resourced, previously white institutions to all South Africans. He goes on to argue that, "they do what they do not on the basis of some superficial attempt to boost student enrolments, therefore retain government subsidies; or to elevate black staff numbers and therefore meet legal requirements for 'employment equity'. On the part of these leaders there are deep commitments to change, to correction and to community" (Jansen, 2007, p. 96). The moral purpose of these leaders is embedded in not only educational, but also social change.

Jansen (2007, p. 96) further contends that, "both leaders, despite the complexity and challenges of the task of building social justice and inclusiveness, remained strong in their

commitment to institutional change and transformation. Despite recording feelings of marginalisation and exclusion, they also tell of experiences of inclusion and acceptance. Their networks broadened their circles of colleagues and friends enriched, and their resolve to continue leading remained firm". Both these leaders are visionaries who could see the bigger picture. Their actions are well calculated and the consequences of their actions are anticipated.

Handy (1984, p. 2) described four cultures, which are: the club culture, the role culture, the task culture and the person culture. It is the duty of the headteacher/principal to help identify the culture of the school he/she feels comfortable with to take the school forward. Hargreaves (2002, p. 57) stated that "school leaders tend, for understandable reasons, to want a culture that is clear, consistent and consensual. All the staff members are pulling in the same shared direction so that organizational goals are likely going to be achieved. Changing culture needs a great deal of effort. And engaging in such an exercise needs meticulous understanding and should guard against being too ambitious". The leader has to decide which element of the culture most needs attention.

Culture of the institution plays a major role in effecting desired changes for school improvement. Southworth (2004, p. 85) in Bush and Glover (2009) stressed that 'the kind of culture we need in schools today' is characterised by collaboration and shared leadership as well as a strong focus on learning for adults as well as students. They emphasised that a successful learning culture features professional dialogue, with teachers and school leaders sharing their experiences, within and beyond their classrooms.

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) sum up the issue of the transformation of school culture by saying "the culture of the school comprises the values, the underlying norms which are

given expression in daily practice, and the overall climate of the school. A way of describing the culture of a school is by looking at ‘the way we do things around here’” (p. 20). The culture of every school is determined to a large extent by the interactions and inter-relationships among its role-players.

2.9. Conclusion

This chapter explored the literature review of successful school leadership. The following aspect of school leadership was explored: the context within which leadership takes place; the concepts of leadership; setting the direction for the school through vision; developing others; redesigning the organisational structures; and principals who lead change.

The literature review covered issues relating to successful school practices of the principal in challenging contexts by looking at the studies that were carried out through ISSPP which investigated the characteristics, processes and effects of successful school leadership across eight developed countries (with the possible exception of China). In a South African context the studies on successful school leadership is a relatively new phenomenon, but valuable experience can be learnt from other countries.

Leadership concepts such as instructional, distributed and transformational leadership were explored in relation to successful school leadership. The review highlighted the positive effects of these various styles of leadership. The literature review also showed that a successful leader should be a visionary who will be able to set the direction of the school, develop staff, and have a strong sense of moral responsibility. Redesigning of the organisational structure should be such that there is participation of stakeholders in decision-making.

The next chapter will be looking at research methodology. The following will be explored: sampling, research methods, validity and reliability, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research approach that was employed to gain greater insight into successful leadership practices. The research used a case study to observe the leadership practices of two principals. The study also used semi-structured interviews as a research method.

3.2 Research Approaches

This research used a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is often used to understand social phenomena. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) contend that qualitative research is based more on constructivism, which assumes that multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective perceptions or views of the same situation. Cohen et al. (2000) contend that the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. This research is a case study of two successful township schools. The focus of the study is on leadership impact in successful schools affected by challenging circumstances. In the study, leadership practices as well as the culture of the school are explored

Nieuwenhuis (2010) explains that case studies offer a multi-perspective analysis in which the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of one or two participants in a situation, but also the views of other relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them. Nieuwenhuis (2010) contends that “the case study opens the possibility of giving a voice to the powerless and voiceless, like children or marginalised groups. Thus it is essential

for the researcher to come to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the situation, and this aspect is a salient feature of many case studies” (p. 75). The participants in this study are the principal, the HoD and two teachers from each school; all of them are given an opportunity to articulate their perspective on school leadership. This case study enabled the researcher to interact with the participants and to gain deeper understanding of their daily engagement with leadership practices.

According to Merriam (2001), the decision to do on qualitative research case studies is because researchers are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing. This study aims to provide insight into leadership phenomena rather than to test any specific hypothesis.

The investigation in this case study was carried out at two selected schools during school day where multiple sources of evidence are easily accessed. Yin (1981) in Anderson (1990) provide a technical definition of case study research, namely that “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p.221). McBurney (2001) points out that the principal characteristic of case studies is that they examine individual instances, or cases, of some phenomenon.

The case study method like any other research method has strengths and weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages. Nisbet and Watt (1984) in Qi (2009) outline several strengths of the case study method. Amongst others, the results are more easily understood by a wide audience as they are frequently written in everyday, non-professional language. Also, results are immediately intelligible; they speak for themselves. Further, case studies

capture unique features that may otherwise be lost in large scale data; these unique features might hold the key to understanding the situation.

Nisbet and Watt (1984) went on to outline the weaknesses of the case study as follows:

- The result may not be generalisable except where other readers/researchers see their application.
- They are not easily open to cross-checking; hence they may be selective, biased personal and subjective.
- They are prone to problems of observer bias, despite attempts made to address reflexivity.

Qi (2009) contends that many researchers also cast doubts on the validity and reliability of case study. Merriam (1998, p. 205) concurs that “reliability is problematic in the social sciences because human behaviour is never static”. Another researcher may reach a different conclusion. The same applies to this study. The researcher cannot claim to have adequately addressed reliability and validity by employing triangulation through the interviews of the principals, HoDs and teachers.

3.3 Sampling

Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for study. Sampling decisions are therefore made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer the research questions (Nieuwenhuis, 2010).

Two township secondary schools were selected for the study. The schools were chosen on basis of having continually obtained above average matric pass rates. This was therefore, a purposive sample. In purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality (Cohen et al, 2000). Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 2001). In the case of the two township secondary schools, the principals have shown resilience against considerable odds. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) states that: "In purposeful sampling (sometime called purposive sampling), the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest. On the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population, a judgement is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the study" (p. 138). This suggests that researcher's knowledge of the population is important in selecting the sample for a particular purpose of the study.

3.4 Research methods

The research methods that were used in the study were observation and in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

3.4.1 The semi-structured interview and schedule

Whereas an interview is defined as a specialised form of communication between people for a specific purpose associated with some agreed subject matter (Anderson, 1990). He went on to argue that "the interview is a highly purposeful task which goes beyond mere conversation. There are many advantages to the interview as a method of data collection.

People are more easily engaged in an interview than in completing a questionnaire. Secondly, the interviewer can clarify questions and probe the answers of the respondent, providing more complete information than would be available in written form. Thirdly, interviewing enables the interviewer to pick up on non-verbal cues, including facial expressions, tones of voices and, in the case of interviews conducted on the respondent's turf, cues from the surroundings and context" (Anderson, 1990, p. 222).

Semi-structured interviews allowed the interviewer to be flexible during the interviews. The focus for the interview was on school leadership in general. In this instance, the principal and one member of the School Management Team (SMT) member was interviewed as well as a two teachers, one teacher was teaching in Grade 12. The SMT member was expected to give his/her perspective in terms of their style of leadership and management whereas two teachers were expected to give their views about their experiences concerning student outcomes and classroom teaching as well as the leadership practices of their principal. Appointments were made to ensure little disturbance. Aspects that were covered in the interview were as follows:

- School culture.
- School outcomes: teaching and learning outcome, student outcome and community social capital outcome.
- Leadership styles.
- Personal characteristics and qualities.
- Values and beliefs.

These aspects are also in line with the research questions and the objectives of the study.

The interview was expected to be followed by the observation to verify the findings. The interviews lasted for approximately 25 minutes; participants were free to use the language they were most comfortable with. All of them chose English as preferred medium during the interview. Permission to record the interview was granted by each participant.

3.5 Instrument design

Two instruments that were prepared for the study were the interview schedule and the observation schedule. An interview schedule was constructed to give guidance during the interviews.

The Observation Schedule

An observation schedule focusing on daily running of the school was developed. I needed two days to observe the running of the school during school hours. My observation was carried out in such a way that it does not hinder the smooth operation of the school.

Aspects covered in the observation schedule were:

- How the day begins
- Principal's time-table
- How meetings are being conducted: staff meetings, SMT meetings, other sub-committee meetings
- Communication amongst staff members.

Unfortunately, the observation did not take place as planned because it was during examination time. Everyone was busy. Principals kept on postponing our meetings. On the day of the interviews both principals were in a hurry to submit examination scripts to the district office and to attend other meetings.

3.5 Data Presentation Analysis

Qualitative analysis is a relatively systematic process of coding, categorising, and interpreting data to provide explanation of a single phenomenon of interest (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Niewenhuis (2010) concurs that qualitative data analysis tends to be an ongoing and iterative (non-linear) process, implying that data collection, processing, analysis and reporting are intertwined, and not merely a number of successive steps. Categorising the data in themes is one way of organising it. For this research, themes which were directly linked to the research questions.

Research analysis requires the researcher to make sense of the research findings and draw conclusion and make recommendations based on evidence from the research findings

3.6 Validity and reliability

Validity implies that the researcher's conclusion is true or correct – that it corresponds to the actual state of the world (McBurney, 2001). And reliability is essentially a synonym for consistency and replicability over groups of respondents (Cohen et al., 2003). The use of interviews and observation as research tool help to enhance the reliability and validity of the research by way of triangulation because it is believed that one single use of data collection method is not enough by itself. Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour (Cohen et

al., 2003). In this instance triangulation was not done convincingly because only interviews were carried out and interviews lasted for 25 to 30 minutes. As a result, the validity of the research findings was adversely affected.

3.7 Ethical considerations

The research proposal went through the Ethics Committee of the university, which after scrutiny together with the proposed questions was declared to have taken into account possible ethical consideration before permission could be sought from Gauteng Department of Education. Then meetings with the earmarked schools were arranged. Participants were informed of the nature of the project. Participation was voluntary and could be terminated at any point and anonymity was guaranteed. All participants were reassured that data collected was for purposes of the partial fulfilment of the Master of Education Degree. Participants' names, data collected and the schools' names will be kept anonymous and confidential. The time required from each participant to partake in the research was also indicated and all participants were assured that the questions asked were not meant to be any way judgemental and there were no wrong or right responses; they were only expected to give their honest opinions to the questions.

3.8 Limitations of the study

Case studies by their very nature have limitations because their outcomes cannot be generalised. Merriam (2001) contend that the limitations of the case studies involve the issues of reliability, validity, and generalisability.

The scope of this study is limited mainly by time and accessibility. Schools were disrupted due to protracted strike action waged by the public servants during the third term. I had

proposed to conduct this study during the third term. This study was carried out in the fourth semester when schools were focused on the final exams; as a result co-operation from the principal and the staff was affected. The study was to cause minimal disturbance to the participants, and these participants are school managers and teachers. As expected it was difficult to have access to all of them due to their commitment to teaching and learning during that crucial time of the year. They all complained about the timing but they showed some willingness to co-operate.

This chapter examined research methodology; how sampling was done, of which it was purposive sampling; research methods that were employed were interviewing and observation to triangulate the findings; data presentation analysis; ethical considerations and limitations of the study were outlined.

In the next chapter, data will be presented, interpreted and analysed.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

The research was conducted in two high schools; school A and school B in the Kathorus area. Kathorus is part of the Ekurhuleni metropolitan of Gauteng. Both these schools are situated in a relatively new area of the township, hence their status is that of quintile 5. Quintile 5 schools are categorised as schools that have fewer needs. The issue of the quintile rating of these schools is a bone of contention even at district level, because learners in these schools come from primary schools that are in quintiles 1, 2, or 3, and these are no-fee schools, but when they go to secondary schools they are expected to pay school fees because of where the school is situated. Nevertheless, these schools cater for learners who come from diverse backgrounds in the township. Some of the learners come from the informal settlement and are on scholar transport. The schools are situated among houses where home owners have bonds and paying for relatively upmarket homes, but on the outskirts of the School A are huge RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) housing settlements, where government subsidies provide inhabitants with free housing; learners from both these areas attend these schools. The feeders of these schools are township primary schools.

4.2 Profile of school A

School A is headed by a female principal. She has been the principal of the school for the past eleven years. The school has a total enrolment of 1969 learners with 60 educators and 24 support staff. The principal is assisted by two deputy principals due to the size of the

school. One deputy principal is responsible for curriculum matters and the other for administration. The school was established in 1986.

4.3 Profile of school B

School B is headed by a male principal who has acted in the principalship post for the past three years since the previous principal took ill. The school has a total enrolment of 1589 learners with 60 educators and 24 support staff. The school also has two deputy principals. One is responsible for curriculum matters and the other for administration. The school was established in 1990.

Due to time constraints, the data in School A was collected within a day. The collection of research data was intended to last for at least two days. The first day was going to be for the interviews and second day for observation. Data collection took place during examination period where there was no formal teaching. Four participants were interviewed even if one was reluctant to participate. These interviews took place after they were postponed several times due to examinations.

4.4 Presentation of the data

Observation was not done as planned. The researcher had planned to observe the principal's day schedule as well as how the school starts in the morning and ends in the afternoon and also how communication took place, e.g. how the principal issues instructions to the staff and how the meetings are conducted. The principal in School A indicated to the researcher that around that time of the year she was constantly busy with the examinations and meetings at the district.

In School B, the principal also kept postponing the interviews. He complained about the timing of the study. The data was collected over a period of two days. On the first day the researcher interviewed the principal for 30 minutes around midday. After the interview he came back to say teachers had already gone and the time was around one o'clock in the afternoon. The researcher was advised to come the following day.

The following day the researcher managed to interview a HoD and two educators. The interviews lasted for about 25 minutes each. It was not an easy task to get hold of the interviewees/respondents because they also complained about timing. They were busy with marking.

As for observation, it was almost impossible to observe and to arrive at a conclusion. When the researcher arrived at the site, the principal had already gone to submit papers at the district. Apparently, on that day only the morning papers were written. After writing teachers would retreat into their classrooms and staffroom to mark while some of the learners were loitering.

4.5 Profile of participants.

Table A: details pertaining to the background of the interviewees

SCHOOL A						
Participant	Age	Gender	Qualifications	Teaching subjects	Teaching Experience	Current School Experience
Respondent A1	34	Female	Secondary Teachers Diploma	Accounting /economics	11 – 15 years	12 years
Respondent A2	37	Male	HED & Master of Public Admin	Geography & English	11 – 15 years	2 years
HoD-A	38	Male	B. A. Ed	Maths & Geography	11 – 15 years	13 years
Principal-A	46	Female	BEd Honours (Applied linguistics)	Sesotho & History	More than 15 years	11 years

Table B: details pertaining to the background of the interviewees

SCHOOL B						
Participant	Age	Gender	Qualifications	Teaching subjects	Teaching Experience	Current School Experience
Respondent B1	35	Male	BEd	Life Sciences	11 – 15 years	13 years
Respondent B2	38	Male	B. A. HED	English & S. Sciences	5 – 10 years	8 years
HoD-B	44	Female	Further Diploma in Education	Life Orientation	15 – 20 years	18 years
Principal-B	48	Male	BEd Honours		More than 15 years	13 years

4.6 Presentation and analysis of data of School A

Table A illustrates the biographical information of teachers, teachers' qualifications and their subject areas as well as teachers' length of experience in the teaching profession and in the school in which they are currently teaching (School A). All the respondents are qualified professional teachers, with principal having honours (Applied linguistics) and one teacher with Master of Public Administration as their highest qualifications. The teacher with Master of Public Administration said his research topic had to do with managing resources in the school.

All respondents have more than ten years of teaching experience with the principal having the longest teaching experience at 24 years, 11 years of which was in the current principalship post at the school. Respondent A2 had a break after 10 years, having been a HoD for seven years in another school. He started at this school in 2008. He is now a Post Level One (PL1) teacher. He did not divulge the reasons for breaking the service.

4.6.1 Role Of principal in setting the direction of the school

When the principal was asked about the vision and the mission of the school she appeared to have been caught off-guard. She had to literally refer to the vision and mission framed on the wall. However, the vision and mission of the school is hanging in all the offices as well as in the staffroom.

The principal acknowledges that all the stakeholders were involved in developing vision and mission of the school. When the principal was asked about how the vision and mission was developed, she said:

In fact all the stakeholders were involved. We asked ideas from everyone and at the end the School Governing Body consolidated their input and came with one idea.

When the principal was asked about her role in the development of vision and mission of the school, she responded:

I actually had to be there as a resource person not necessarily putting words into people's mouth. I was just there to help.

However, the HoD-A and two teachers who were interviewed did not know the vision and mission of the school. All of them said the vision and mission of the school was developed long before they were appointed in the school. The HoD arrived at the school in 1997, but also expressed the same view.

When one teacher (A1) was asked about the vision and mission of the school, he was dismissive:

I don't want to lie. I haven't internalised that, not necessarily for me as an individual but the entire staff. It is written there but not given that prominence.

Aside from the respondents not knowing the vision and mission of the school, they expressed the belief that the principal was giving the school direction by showing compassion and love of the learners and staff. They know what the principal expected of them. One teacher (A2) asserted:

Although our principal is too strict, she has a human side. Her love for children is unquestionable and whenever a member of the staff is aggrieved, she is always there for everybody.

The HoD-A agreed:

Our principal plays a very important role giving the school direction. She is always there for everybody. Even the children know that the principal has a special place in their heart.

The study conducted by Day (2005) in the US concluded that, “whilst socio, political, economic and professional contexts were important influences, successful heads were driven primarily by individual value systems. It seems that moral purposes, emotional and intellectual commitment, and ethical and social bonds are far more powerful levers of leadership than extrinsic agendas” (p. 575). The principal in this study did not suggest that the departmental policies or the District Office was putting pressure on the school to attain success. Other respondents seemed to hold their principal in high esteem by virtue of her manifest beliefs and the values she upholds.

Day (2005) went further to assert that the work of successful heads, especially in challenging school and community contexts, involves acting with passion. It requires commitment, courage and determination and high levels of emotional energy. Ill-discipline is not tolerated in the school. Deputy Principals are tasked with the overall maintenance of order.

When the principal was asked about role of the district in relation to the achievement of the school, she commented:

The district does play a role by giving us the recognition we deserve, like we received the achievement award in 2006; depending on who is at helm at the district office, we normally feel that our efforts are appreciated.

According to Harris (2009) the principals should at all times communicate their personal vision and belief system by direction, words and deeds. He also states that it is clear that their vision and values emanate from a core belief in the ability of all children to learn and in the school's potential to offset the effect of disadvantage on student performance. In this instance, the principal can be said to be fully aware of the plight of the learners under her care. She had adopted a strict approach to ill-discipline from the side of learners, as well as educators.

4.6.2 The culture of the school

The culture of the school could not be explored adequately because no observation of normal school-day routines was possible. Minutes showed that meetings were being held regularly and were being chaired by principal or one of her deputies. I did not have the opportunity to attend one of the meetings. There are also departmental meetings.

When the principal was asked to describe the culture of the school, her response was that they believed in excellence; and that working towards achievement of the vision was the reason for their existence.

One teacher remarked:

In terms of human relations it is fine. People relate well with each other. When one member of the staff has bereavement, people will be there to give moral support. In terms of actual job, staff members attend to their duties even if at times they need persuasion from the principal, HoD or the deputy principal. One other thing is that the school is using the culture of physical punishment or the use of stick. I am from an

environment where corporal punishment is totally not allowed. But here it is used as a form of instilling discipline. However, learners do regularly come to school. (A2)

Another teacher (A1) concurred:

Ever since I have been here, there has always been unity and cooperation amongst the staff. We do give one another the support that is needed.

A HoD-A responded:

Generally we get along very well even though some incidents will always be there that will be cause for a concern of which I will say those are isolated cases.

When quizzed to be specific about those isolated cases he declined to elaborate. He however, highlighted that there is unity amongst the staff.

When the principal was asked about her contribution towards the wellbeing of the school over the past three to five years, she was enthusiastic:

I believe in the development of people. I support all the departmental initiatives that help in the development of the staff as well as initiatives from non-governmental organisations.

The principal described teachers' co-operation as excellent. But with regard to the parents, she lamented that they are not supportive enough, ascribing this to the level of illiteracy of parents. The two teachers agreed with the principal's view that parents were not co-operative enough. This is some cause for concern. "In every organisation there are particular aspects or elements which make up that organisation, and each of these needs to be

functioning healthily for the whole to be healthy. Any unhealthy or malfunctioning element will have a negative ripple effect throughout the system” (Davidoff and Lazarus, p.17).

4.6.3 Teaching and learning

The role of leadership in contributing to teaching and learning

According to Bush et al (in press: p 7) “principals’ responsibilities should include setting the framework for effective teaching and learning, developing policies to address this issue, and ensuring that curriculum delivery is being implemented successfully. Their role is to take a school-wide view. Principals have a direct responsibility for the quality of learning and teaching and for pupils’ achievement”. This implies setting high expectations and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of learning outcomes.

Insofar as the role of leadership in contributing to student learning, the Principal-A said:

We came with programmes that enhance learning. We introduced compulsory study for Grade 10 to Grade 12 that takes place in the morning and in the afternoon as extra-lessons.

The HoD-A responded:

I make sure that learners’ curricular needs are attended to by ensuring that teachers attend to their classes regularly.

Respondents A1 and A2 agreed that curricular needs of learners are catered for. They hinted that there is no shortage of learning support materials and the environment is conducive to learning and teaching.

Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning

When the principal was asked about monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching, she outlined the processes of carrying out monitoring and evaluation:

A teacher would be given powers to act as floor manager to restore order in a particular floor and have powers to ensure that classes are attended to. HoDs monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. Monthly reports are compiled and submitted to the principal by the HoDs. These reports entail what transpired in the classroom during the course of the month. The reports will also elaborate the good practices noted by the HoD.

The two teachers concurred that learning and teaching is monitored by the HoDs. They did not mention the principal in relation to monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The two teachers seemed oblivious to the monthly report being submitted to the principal by the HoD.

The HoD-A highlighted part of his responsibility:

We have Grade co-ordinators helping the HoDs with their duties. We also monitor classwork and homework on a monthly basis and send the report to the deputy principal.

According to Marks and Printy (2009:371) “shared leadership instructional leadership involves the active collaboration of principal and teachers on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Within this model, the principal seeks out the ideas, insights, and expertise of teachers in these areas and works with teachers for school improvement. The principal and teachers share responsibility for staff development, curriculum development, and

supervision of instructional tasks”. The principal is not teaching in any learning area but she ensures that the environment is conducive for learning and that teaching takes place. When the principal was asked about which learning area(s) seemed to obtain the best pass rates on a yearly basis, she outlined:

Commerce, Social Sciences, Mathematics and Physical Sciences are the subjects that score higher on a yearly basis. We normally encourage teachers to attend cluster meetings and each department should also holds meeting to share good practices. We bought laptops with internet for each department to access information.

This indicates that the principal is instrumental in ensuring that shared instructional practices do take place in that teachers share valuable information to enrich their teaching. And the use of grade co-ordinators who help the HoDs attest to the practices espoused in the distributed leadership perspective.

Performance of teachers should be monitored and evaluated as per agreed standards. The principal noted that the only tool to evaluate teacher performance is the departmental policy called Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS). But as for teachers, whose performance is satisfactory, she stated:

The HoDs are the ones working closely with teachers and they are expected to identify teachers in need of development. We normally consult facilitators from the district to come and offer assistance in terms of teacher development.

The HoD concurred with the principal that workshops organised by district were helping the development of teachers because they addressed their curricular needs and are conducted by people with requisite expertise.

Respondent A1 differed with his seniors:

Some of the workshops organised by the District office are helpful and some are not so helpful. Some of the subject facilitators are not well versed with what is going on in the classrooms. We need subject facilitators who are well-informed about the challenges we face on daily basis in our classrooms. We are still required to do a lot of paper work and at the same time we are required to cover the syllabus in time for revision to take place, which is highly impossible.

Respondent A2 was uncritical of the workshops:

Workshops help to clarify some of the concepts we struggle with in the classrooms. We interact with teachers from other schools and exchange ideas during the workshops. I think they should organise more workshops.

4.6.4 Leadership

The influence of leadership.

Cuban (1988) cited in Bush (2008) provided the following definition, “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” (p. 273).

When the principal was asked about her influence on her colleagues and how she was influenced by them she stated:

We do have an open-door policy. We welcome different ideas from the staff and evaluate them and come up with the most suitable idea. We use a consultative

method. We ensure that the values and ethos of the school are adhered to. Although I may have the authoritative voice I still listen to colleagues. Everybody's input counts.

This assertion does not make clear what the initiatives are that are undertaken by the principal except for having an open door-policy. However, the influence of the principal is palpable, in the sense that everyone acknowledges the principal as the central figure in the school.

Delegation of task/duties to other staff members

According to Hargreaves and Fink (2008) communities of practice do not require heroic or hierarchical leaders, but leaders who can help design a culture in which leadership is distributed in an emergent and benevolent way – so the community engages in robust dialogue, in an evidence-informed and experience-grounded manner, about the best means to promote the goals of deep and broad student learning for all. The principal in the study indicated that duties/tasks were delegated all the time. In her own words:

I delegate duties all the time in a way of empowering the staff. I know that one day I am not going to be there. When that happens everyone will know what is expected of them. I have two deputies; one is responsible for curriculum and the other for administration and policy. I normally act as the overseer.

The HoD agreed with the statement above that most of the managerial duties are shared amongst the SMT members and the two deputy principal share their duties efficiently.

The style of leadership of the principal

According to Angus (1987), leadership is interactive in multiple directions such that in schools, for instance, the principal is largely shaped by the teachers, the reputation and the history of the school and the expectations that have become institutionalised over time within the school and its community. The two teachers shared the same views that the principal is a bit autocratic and at times not flexible. One teacher stated:

She is bit autocratic and not so flexible but has human side.

The HoD differed with them, saying that she is democratic:

The principal is quite aware of her responsibilities to school community and she cannot afford to let the school down by trying to appease everyone. She is strict and democratic.

However, the two teachers expressed what the principal value most, which is the love for learners. They say the principal has adopted no-nonsense attitude towards teachers who portray some irresponsible behaviour.

Decision-making

Case study evidence of the work carried out by Gurr et al. (2005) indicated that successful school leaders promoted a culture of collegiality, collaboration, support and trust, and that this culture was firmly rooted in their democratic and social justice values and beliefs. The two teachers in this study lamented that when it came to decision-making, ordinary teachers played a minimum role. Most of the decisions seemed to be taken by the SMT and then cascaded down to the teachers. One teacher (A2) put it thus:

The decisions are taken by the SMT headed by the three senior managers (principal and two deputy principals). There is no consultation with the entire staff, we are just being told to implement their decisions.

This evidence shows lack of collegiality and trust on the part of management of the school. Teachers are not integral when it comes to decision making but are mere implementers of decisions. The two teachers lamented that they are not part of decision-making. They feel that decisions are taken on a top-down basis and they are not afforded the opportunity to make input. The HoD differed with the two teachers, insisting that decisions are reached through consensus.

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) states that decision-making structures and procedures refer to specific structures, rules and methods developed in the school that provide the framework for making decisions around the various tasks of the school. In school A, the framework for decision-making is not clarified to teachers and the process is restricted to SMT members.

Defining the personal characteristics/qualities of the principal

In the study carried out by Jacobson et al. (2005) an example of how the caring principle enabled a principal was demonstrated by a principal who consciously modelled behaviours that teachers could emulate, specifically asking them to view students through the eyes of parents who wanted nothing more than for their children than to attend a safe, productive school where they would have a chance at a real education. These qualities were also evident with the principal in this study, one teacher (A2) stressed:

Our principal is a God-fearing person who is very strict with curriculum. She will always remind us that these children have parents too whose hopes are placed very

high on their scholarly achievement. She does not compromise when it comes to contact-time.

The other teacher (A1) concurred:

She is simply open with the truth. She cannot hide her feelings insofar as school work is concerned.

Two teachers differed once again with the HoD. The HoD described the principal as a very understanding person who only looks at the positive sides. Two teachers agreed that the principal is not always flexible especially during meetings.

One teacher (B) attributed the strength of the principal to her vast experience as a principal. The principal has been heading the school for the past eleven years. The other teacher (A) attributed the strength of the principal to the good relationship she had with the School Governing Body.

4.7 Presentation and analysis of data of School B

Table B illustrates the biographical information of teachers, shows teachers' qualifications and their learning areas as well as teachers' length of experience in the teaching profession and in the school in which they are currently working (School B). There are a total number of 4 participants; two teachers, one HoD and a principal. All participants have teaching qualifications, with the principal having a National Diploma in Electrical and National Diploma in Mechanical engineering and having taught at a Technical College (now referred to as Further Education and Training Colleges) for nine years before being appointed deputy principal in the late 1996 at the school. Amongst the participants, the principal is the one with the longest teaching experience, having taught for 23 years and all the other

participants having worked in the school for at least five years. The principal has been in the position for the past three years.

4.7.1 The role of principal in setting the direction of the school

According to Jacobson et al. (2005) a leader must be able to articulate a common vision, to set a clear direction, create high performance expectations and then communicate the vision and expectations effectively. The principal role is to embody the vision of the school. In this instance neither the vision of the leader nor the school's vision are clear to the participants. No one was able to articulate the vision of the school/principal. However, they concede that the expectation of the principal is that everyone should do his/her work for the school to succeed.

The principal in School B articulated a vision and mission of the school which was not exactly what was stipulated on the office wall and other documents of the school. He claimed that all stakeholders were involved in drafting the vision and mission of the school.

Respondents B1, B2, and the HoD-B speculated that the vision and mission of the school was developed by the SGB. They were not part of the people who developed and revised the vision and mission. The HoD as member of the School Management Team stated categorically that, "I was not consulted" meaning there is no buy-in of the vision and mission from the entire staff. The HoD further stated in her own words:

We do have the vision and mission in our school but it is only on paper. I think it needs to be reviewed because it has been there for a very long time. We are instructed by the principal as to what we should do. Our principal is authoritarian.

One teacher (B) added:

I don't want to lie. I don't think even the principal knows the vision and mission of the school. No one has ever made reference to the vision and mission of the school.

These assertions mean that the school operates without clear vision except to say that the principal makes a point that everyone is to do his/her work. Leadership is an act of influence but here the principal is using coercion to achieve the educational goals. Teachers are not motivated to perform on their own.

Given the fact that the principal is acting in the post; he (principal) might have adopted this strict attitude, because he feels that he is not accorded the respect he expects from his subordinates.

4.7.2 The culture of the school.

Handy (1984) states that each school is different from every other school- and schools, as a group, are different from other kinds of organisations. There is something natural and right about that, for organisations are living things, each with its own history and traditions and environment and its own ability to shape its destiny (Handy, 1984:1). School B also has its own history and traditions that makes it unique. The principal described the culture of the school as trying to develop disciplined learners. He also emphasised the importance of having disciplined staff as a major factor for the success of the school. The other participants concurred with the principal that teachers were well behaved and disciplined; they knew what was expected of them.

All the participants agreed that learner and teacher absenteeism was not a problem.

Respondent B2 pointed out:

The culture of the school is hugely the legacy of the former principal. I would honestly attribute the success of the school to him. He laid the foundation for this school to operate smoothly. Everyone in the school admired him for his courage in dealing with issues pertaining to the running of the school.

This was supported by the HoD-B several times during the interview. The HoD-B complained that since the departure of the former principal things were slowly falling apart. The HoD-B attributed the success of the school to all the stakeholders:

All stakeholders do positively contribute to the success of the school. Teachers voluntarily go to the classes. Everybody is playing his/her part.

The principal agreed:

I attribute the success of the school to everybody i.e. the learner, educators, SGB, SMT and parents at large.

The culture of the school as stated by the HoD-B was that teachers were less motivated than before, they just came to school to teach and go back home. That passion for excellent teaching had faded since the appointment of the new principal, she lamented:

Here we have an abnormal culture, there is no order but we do have some staff meetings. People don't even know the organogram of the school, there is confusion about protocol. However, we don't have problem with learner absenteeism and teachers attend to their class regularly.

In terms of school culture, Hargreaves (1997) made a distinction between instrument-social control of the school domain and the expressive-social cohesion domain of school life. Instrument-social control is explained as being directed towards students' cognitive achievement; such tasks require social control over teachers and students so that they work together in orderly ways, concentrate on teaching and learning and avoid the ubiquitous possibilities of distraction and delay. And according to expressive-social cohesion domain of school life, schools have an expressive task of maintaining social relationships so that they are satisfying, supportive and sociable.

School B in this study can be regarded as having instrumental domain. In the first typology of school culture, Hargreaves (1997) depicted a school which is high in the instrumental domain, with pressure on students to achieve learning goals, but with weak social cohesion. School life is orderly, scheduled, disciplined – i.e. a formal school culture. Under the current leadership, there seems to be weak social cohesion but the researcher is cautious not to draw such a conclusion because observation as it was planned could not be carried out. The culture of School B cannot be described as formal school culture because the HoD-B and other respondents (B1, B2) agreed that there is no order at the school and things are done haphazardly. All the principal is looking for is that teaching and learning should take place. The principal is desperate to express his authority. They hinted that there is no clear schedule for holding meetings, i.e. both SMT and staff meetings.

4.7.3. Teaching and learning

The role of leadership in contributing to teaching and learning.

McEwan (2000) pointed out one important indicator as establishing high expectations for student achievement that are directly communicated to students, teachers, and parents. These are the stakeholders that need to be consulted when crucial decisions are made. The idea of setting high expectations for student achievement should not be an end in itself but should be accompanied by an action plan involving all stakeholders. Actions should be monitored as to whether the objectives and goals of the school are met. The principal in School B mentioned the importance of curriculum delivery and following departmental pacesetters/benchmarks. This principal indicated that he was not teaching any learning area because of administrative work. All he said was:

I made sure that curricular needs of the learners are taken into considerations by teachers. This is done by ensuring that teachers are in the classroom on time.

Instructional leadership should also help to set high expectations for the staff. McEwan (2000) indicated that instructional leaders should assist teachers in setting and reaching personal and professional goals related to the improvement of school, instruction and monitors the successful completion of these goals. This is an important aspect of staff development and the focus should be on improvement of classroom performance. The principal in School B managed to get sponsorship for teachers to further their studies in gateway subjects like Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Economic and Management Sciences.

As middle managers, the Heads of Department (HoDs) have an important part to play in managing teaching and learning. Their role is focused on sub-units, based on learning areas or phases. Busher and Harris (1999) contend that in hierarchical terms, the head of department is a middle manager. He or she is not part of the senior management team, but responsible for the operational work of others, namely classroom teachers. Furthermore, Bush et al (in press) argues that HoDs should spend more time analysing learners' results; jointly develop departmental improvement plans with their educators; monitor educator classroom records on a regular basis; establish direct observation of educator teaching; and set improvement targets with educators. The HoD-B in the study stated:

The main focus of the SMT is to motivate learners. My role as departmental head is to engage my subordinates in our meetings about meeting our set objectives and to monitor their performances on a daily basis. I make sure that IQMS is conducted and work schedules are covered. Quarterly schedules are analysed in our departmental meetings.

Respondents B1 and B2 agreed with the HoD that regular departmental meetings are held to engage with issues pertaining to the curriculum. However, classroom observation is done once per year in accordance with the IQMS. All respondents expressed their dissatisfaction about the efficacy of IQMS.

Monitoring learning and teaching

Bush and Glover (2009) emphasise that the responsibility for managing teaching and learning (MTL) should be shared amongst principals, SMTs, middle managers and classroom teachers. They agree that the responsibilities of principals should include setting the

framework for effective teaching and learning, developing policies, and ensuring that curriculum delivery is being implemented successfully. SMTs should share the overall responsibility for MTL with the principals. They cite Rhodes and Brundrett (in press) stressing that middle leaders are important in any strategy to develop learning-centred leadership in schools.

The HoD-B in School B pointed out that she monitors lesson plans; checks files, work schedules and does moderation of exams. She makes sure that teaching and learning takes place in her department. The principal relies on the monthly reports submitted by the HoDs. However, the principal is not teaching any learning area. It is evident that in this instance, there is shared responsibility for MTL with the principal.

Learning areas that were scoring high marks in Grade 12 on a yearly basis are said to be Languages, Business Economics, Economics, and Life Orientation. Whereas, Mathematics, Physics and Accounting were scoring low marks. The reason for poor result in those learning area as advanced by the HoD was:

It is due to lack of proper human resources. We lost many teachers due to promotions and some just left teaching for greener pastures. Those that we have cannot deliver in those important subjects.

4.7.4 Leadership

The influence of leadership

Foster (1986) in Presthus (2006) posits that leadership should be understood as an actions bound by space and time, and these actions are intended to enable others and allows them, in turn, to become enablers. She argues that leadership is seen as a relational concept. She

further argues that in order to understand the leadership enacted by a school principal it is then needed to explore how he or she relates to other people within and outside the organisation, enables others, and is influenced by others. The principal in School B expressed satisfaction that his staff members were co-operative and happy with his leadership, and that he listened to their concerns and advice all the time.

However, the HoD-B differed with the principal and claimed that under his leadership there were divisions in the SMT. The two teachers also were not happy about the influence of the principal because they felt their efforts were not being recognised. Teachers felt that they were not treated as professionals but as mere workers who were there to carry out their duties without questions. Therefore, there is some despondency on the part of the staff.

Leadership style of the principal

The HoD described the principal as a dictator who does not consult. HoDs are part of SMT and therefore should be part of decision-making. The HoD-B in this school complained that “sometimes we are just being told”. That is indicative of autocratic behaviour.

One teacher (B1) remarked:

He (principal) likes to bulldoze things. He can hardly sit down with the teachers and found out about their expectation. As such he does not even know the needs of the teachers. He does not want to open-up to his subordinates.

Respondent B2 agreed:

We just do what we are being told to do. I think, maybe every principal has a unique way of running his/her school.

Decision making

The HoD-B expressed frustration that decision-making is the sole preserve of School Governing Body (SGB) and senior managers (principal and two deputies). She complained that minor issues are discussed by the entire SMT but when it comes to important issues pertaining to improvement of school and implementation of other important policies they are just implementers.

One of the teachers lamented:

Of late, the principal is the one taking decisions. During meetings other SMT members seem not to be happy with current developments. It seems as if there are squabbles. As post level one teachers, we expect direction from SMT members but instead we are just given instructions by the principal. We are not given that platform to express our views (B2).

The personal characteristics/qualities of the principal

Transforming culture- changing what people in the organisation value and how they work together to accomplish it – is to create deep, lasting change. This is not an easy task; it requires a leader who will diagnose factors that impede cultural change and will be decisive in dealing with the impediments. Transforming school culture needs visionary leaders who have emotional intelligence. Fullan (2002) stated that emotionally intelligent leaders are able to build relationships because they are aware of their own emotional makeup and are sensitive and inspirational to others. He argued that for cultural change to take place, a principal's role is to motivate and energise disaffected teachers and forge relationships

among otherwise disconnected teachers. This can have a profound effect on the overall climate of the organisation. The HoD-B in School B explained:

Our principal applies policy as it is. He is the kind of person who does not easily change his decision. Once he makes a decision, he can't change. Even apologising is difficult for him to do. Those who happen to know him now can't even approach him. They are literally afraid of him.

This assertion implies that the principal has failed to build good relationships between him and other managers in the school. In this way the principal is not aware of his emotional makeup and is not sensitive to other members of his staff. The members of the staff are not inspired to perform optimally because of the overall climate of the organisation.

One of the teachers corroborated what was alluded to by the HoD:

Our principal likes to dictate. He likes to say he is the accounting officer. Everything goes through him and this is a big institution, some of the things must be delegated. He does not trust his staff (B1).

This lack of trust shows that the teachers will not be fully developed to take responsibility of their action without being closely monitored by the principal.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide conclusions and recommendations on the research. These conclusions and the recommendation will contribute to future studies in the field of successful school leadership in contexts of poverty. The shortcomings of the research are highlighted in the recommendations.

5.2 SUMMARY

The exploration of successful school leadership in challenging circumstances suggests that the findings from ISSPP cannot be translated to all contexts. Yet, according to Johnson et al. (2008) the ISSPP began with the notion that the quality of principal leadership makes a difference in student learning and school improvement and that the characteristics, processes and effects of successful school leadership can be identified and compared across national contexts.

The exploration of successful school leadership in this study showed that the vision of the principal plays a crucial role in giving the school direction. In School A, the teachers know what the principal is expecting from them. The principal is acting as a towering figure and has earned respect from her colleagues over the eleven years as principal of the school. This is contrasted to the situation in School B where the success of the school is attributed to the legacy of the former principal. The principal in School B simply ensures that teaching takes place. Leadership is about influence, like in the case of the former principal of School B. His leadership is still being experienced even whilst he is gone. Both schools have vision and

mission statements which were not internalised by the staff members. School Governing Bodies are required to adopt vision and mission statements for their schools. In the schools in this study this was done to fulfil a departmental requirement. All the respondents in both schools were not part of the development of vision and mission of their schools. Therefore, there was never a buy-in of vision and mission from these important stakeholders.

In both schools principals were not teaching any learning area, therefore they were not leading by example. In the study conducted by Harris and Chapman (2002), it was found that principals set high expectations for students, emphasised consistency in teaching practices, provided clear rules about behaviour and stressed discipline. Principals in the study are not aware of any practices taking place in their schools' classrooms. That function is delegated to the HoDs. Principal in School B has a National Diploma in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering. He could play a major role in assisting teaching Mathematics and Physical Sciences. These are the subjects that pose a challenge nationally. There is an acute shortage of Mathematics and Physical Sciences teachers; the government of South Africa has even resorted to the help of the foreigners from neighbouring countries like Zimbabwe. In both schools, instructional leadership on part of the principal is not evident.

This study has generated greater insight into shared or distributed leadership. Both principals claim to have delegated most of the task to their subordinates, but upon enquiry those tasks are rightly supposed to be done by their subordinates. They have two deputies sharing tasks like administration and curriculum matters. The deputy principals are there to assist the principal; those are duties that are rightfully theirs. The same applies to the HoDs whose duties are to oversee curriculum delivery in the classroom. This is not a delegated function but they are doing what they are hired to do. One respondent in School B

complained that the principal has things that he supposed to delegate to one of his deputies like checking cleanliness of classrooms. The principal in this case checks the cleanliness of classrooms himself. In the study conducted by Gurr et al. (2006), it was found that principals' focus was on distributed leadership, which was facilitated by providing support for distributed leadership processes and practices, promoting a culture of trust which encouraged enthusiasm and a sense of agency amongst staff, students and parents and by careful planning to ensure distributed leadership practices were integral to teaching and learning and other key areas of school operation. The feeling from the respondents in School B is the principal does not engender the culture of trust in the school because he does things that he could delegate.

In terms of transformation of the school culture, neither principals were innovative. They were dependent on the support and direction offered by the Department of Education. This is nothing surprising. The only practice, and this is common to most schools, is that both school offer extra lessons in the afternoons to cover the syllabi and do revision. Parents, as important stakeholders do not feature as significant components of the school.

In both instances, teachers are frustrated about not being consulted in decision-making. Decisions are made by the senior managers. HoD in School B pointed out that not everybody in the SMT is involved in decision-making; only the principal and two deputies take decisions.

The culture that has been inculcated in both the schools is to produce good matric results as the primary goal. Learner and teacher absenteeism is not experienced in both schools. The class registers and attendance register show regular attendance of both learners and teachers respectively. Both HoDs expressed satisfaction about their teachers in their

respective departments and claimed that they attended to their classes in accordance with the time-table. HoDs were satisfied with their learners' and teachers' co-operation. It is only in the case of parents that concern was expressed because only a few ever attended parents meetings.

These schools have tasted success. The teachers are to a large extent motivated by their good results. Over a period of five years these schools have performed above the national average in senior certificate exams. It is a case of 'success breeds success'.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The study showed that a key characteristic among the heads was that all revealed a passion for education, for pupils and for the communities in which they worked and that this was recognised and appreciated, because they had translated their passion into practice. It was evident in that pupil's achievement had increased over a sustained period of time.

From the study, the researcher can draw the conclusion that distributed leadership is not clearly evident, especially in School B where the participants felt that the principal was doing everything on his own without assigning some of the duties to his subordinates. Even in School A where the principal claims to delegate duties all the time, there was evidence that her subordinates were doing exactly what is required of them in terms of their respective posts.

Principals in both schools were not teaching any learning area and they saw nothing wrong with that. They both decried the fact that administrative duties were overwhelming. They are required to hold meetings with other stakeholders such as parents who visit the schools to inquire about their children and to regularly liaise with the district office. The district

office is aware of the problem of excessive administration but is not doing anything to put measures in place to address this situation. Principals should understand that teaching and learning is the core business of the school, and they have to play leading role in managing teaching and learning in their schools.

5.4 Recommendations

The research exposed the need for further research on successful school leadership in challenging circumstance. There is therefore a need for research in similar contexts in rural areas and other informal settlement that will further corroborate or challenge these findings. This study was small and because of its sample size generalisations on the finding could not be made. However, the aim of the study was not make generalisations but gain greater insight and understanding into the phenomenon of successful school leadership.

The most determining factor of successful schools in South Africa is the Grade 12 results. Therefore, this study looked only at secondary schools, but successful school leadership applies across all levels of schooling. Other factors that need to be taken into considerations are school structure, building school capacity, providing individual support and building individual capacity, and focus on teaching and learning outcomes.

This study sought participation of the principals, HoDs and teachers. Studies like this could involve other important stakeholders such as learners, and parents. Members of the SGB, deputy principals and district officials might provide a clearer picture of successful school leadership if interviewed in focus groups. The input from these important stakeholders might be useful in future research.

Further studies in successful school leadership would contribute immensely to the South African education system and policy making. South Africa, as an unequal society needs to be studied to find an understanding of all aspects of schooling, but particularly of leadership, because most historically disadvantaged schools still experience difficulty in management and leadership. The government of the day has provided considerable resources to realise successful schooling but a great deal still needs to be done.

REFERENCES

- Bush, T. (2008). From management to leadership: Semantic or meaningful change? *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 36(2), 271-288.
- Bush, T., Joubert, R., Kiggundu, E. and Van Rooyen, J. (in press). Managing teaching and learning in South African schools. *International Journal of Educational Development*
- Christie, P. (1998). Schools as (dis)organisations: the 'breakdown of the culture of learning and teaching' in South African schools. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 28(3), 283-300.
- Christie, P. & Lingard, B. (2001). *Capturing Complexity in Educational Leadership*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American educational Research Association. Seattle, WA, April 10-14.
- Christie, P., Butler, D. and Potterton, M. (2007). REPORT TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION. MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE: Schools that work.
- Cele, N. (2005). Effective schools operating with amazing (dis)grace of human resource strategy, policy and practice: A South African case. *International Journal of Leadership in education*, 8(3), 223-236.
- Davidoff, S., & Lazarus, S. (1997). The Learning School: An organisational developmental approach.
- Day, C. (2005). Sustaining success in challenging contexts: leadership English schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(6), 573-583.
- Day, C., Sammons, P., Hopkins, D., Leithwood, K. & Kington, A. (2008). Research into the impact of school leadership on pupil outcomes: policy and research contexts. *School Leadership and Management*, 28(1), 5 – 25.
- Dinham, S. (2005). Principal leadership for outstanding educational outcomes. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(4).

- Edmunds, R. (1979). Effective schools for the urban poor. *Educational journal*, 37, 15-25.
- Fleisch, B. & Christie, P. (2004). Structural Change, Leadership and School effectiveness/Improvement: Perspectives from South Africa. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education*, 25(1)
- Gurr, D., Drysdale, L. and Mulford, B. (2006). Models of Successful principal leadership. *School Leadership and Management*, 26(4), 371 – 395.
- Handy, C. (1984). 'Taken for granted? Understanding schools as organisation' in Purpose and Planning in schools, Longman.
- Hargreaves, D. H. (1997) 'School culture, school effectiveness and school improvement' in Organisational effectiveness and improvement in education (Harris et al). Buckingham, the Open University Press.
- Hargreaves, A. and Fink, D. (2008). Distributed leadership: democracy or delivery? *Journal of Educational Administration*, 46(2), 229-240.
- Harris, A. (2008). Distributed leadership: according to the evidence. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 46(2), 172-188.
- Harris, A. (2009). Successful leadership in high poverty schools. *Quest journal*.
- Hoadley, U., Christie P. & Ward, C. L. (2009). Management to learn: instructional leadership in South African secondary schools. *School Leadership and Management*, 29(4), 373-389.
- Höög, J., Johansson, O. & Olofsson, A. (2005). Successful principalship: the Swedish case *.Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(6), 595-606.
- Howie, S., Venter, E., Van Staden, S., Zimmerman, L., Long, C., Du Toit, C., Scherman, V., & Archer, E., (2008). *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006 Summary Report South African Children's Reading Achievement*. Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, University of Pretoria.

- Huber, S. G., (2004). School leadership and leadership development. Adjusting leadership theories and development programs to values and the core purpose of school. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 42(6), 669-684.
- Jackobson, S. L., Johnson, L., Ylimaki, R. & Giles, C. (2005). Successful leadership in challenging US schools: enabling principles, enabling schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(6), 607-618.
- Johnson, L., Møller, J., Jacobson, S. L. & Wong, K. C. (2008). Cross-national comparisons in the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP): the USA, Norway and China. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 52(4), 407-422.
- Krüger, M. (2009). The big five of school leadership competences in the Netherlands. *School Leadership and Management*, 29(2), 109-127.
- Krüger, M. L., Witziers, B. & Slegers, P. (2007). The Impact of School Leadership on School Level Factors: Validation of a causal model. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 18(1), 1-20.
- Leithwood, K. (2005). Understanding successful principal leadership: progress on a broken front. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(6), 619-629.
- Leithwood, K. & Jantzi, D. (1999). The effects of transformational leadership on organisational conditions and student engagement with school. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(2), 112-129.
- Leithwood, K., Harris, A. & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership and Management*, 28(1), 27-42.
- Leithwood, K. and Riehl, C. (2005). What we know about successful school leadership. In *A New Agenda: Directions for Research on Educational Leadership*, eds W. Firestone, and C. Riehl. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Marks H. M. & Printy S. M. (2009). Principal leadership and school performance: an integration of transformational and instructional leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(3), 370-397.

- McMillan, J. H. & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education – Evidence-based inquiry*. Seventh edition.
- Merriam, S. B. (2001). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 26-66.
- Moos, L., Krejsler, J., Kofod, K. K. & Jensen, B. B. (2005). Successful school principalship in Danish schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(6), 563-572.
- Mulford, B., Kendall, D., Edmunds, B., Kendall, L., Ewington, J. & Silins, H. (2007). Successful school leadership: what is it and who decides? *Australian Journal of Education*, 51(3), 228-246.
- Mulford, B., Kendall, D., Ewington, J., Edmunds, B. Kendall and Silins, H. (2007). Successful principalship of high-performance schools in high-poverty communities. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 46(4)
- Murphy, J., Smylie, M., Mayrowetz, D. and Louis, K. S (2009). The role of the principal in fostering the development of distributed leadership. *School Leadership and Management*, 29(2), 181-214.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2010). Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques. In J. W. Creswell et al (Ed), *First steps in research* (4th impression, pp. 69-97). Van Schaik publishers.
- Nisbet, J. and Watt, J. (1984). Case study: In J. Bell, T. Bush, A. Fox, J. Goodey and S. Goulding (eds) *Conducting Small-Scale investigation in Educational Management*. London: Harper & Row, 79-92.
- Persson, A., Andersson, G. & Lindstrom, M. N. (2004). Successful Swedish headmasters' intension fields and alliances. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 8(1), 53-72.
- Presthus, A. M. (2006). A successful school and its principal – enabling leadership within the organisation. *Staff Issues and Professional Development*. ISEA, 34(2).

- Sağnak, M. (2010). The Relationship between Transformational School Leadership and Ethical Climate. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 10(2), 1135-1152.
- Shields, C. M. (2009). Transformative leadership: a call for difficult dialogue and courageous action in racialised contexts. *ISEA*, 37(3).
- Spillane, J. P. (2005). Distributed leadership. *The Educational forum*, 69, 143 – 150.
- Thrupp, M. (1999). *Schools making a Difference Let's be realistic* (Buckingham: Open University Press).
- Robinson, V. M. J. (2008). Forging the links between distributed leadership and educational outcomes. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 46(2), 241-256.
- Taylor, N. (2006). School reform and skills development. In S Brown (ed.) *Money and morality: 2006 transformation audit*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.
- Qi, S. (2009). Case Study in Contemporary Educational Research: Conceptualisation and Critique. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 5(4), 21-31.
- Wong, K. C. (2005). Conditions and practices of successful principalship in Shanghai. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(6), 552-562.

APPENDIX 1

DRAFT OF THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I will explain the purpose of the interview to get the participants' consent and understanding. The purpose is not to test their knowledge but an exploration of successful leadership in their school. Participants will be asked to have their interview tape-recorded. This interview schedule will be used to interview all the participants, except that there will be specific questions for other participants.

1. SCHOOL CULTURE

1.1 What is the vision and mission of your school?

1.2 How was the vision and mission developed?

1.3 What was your role in the development of vision and mission of your school?

1.4 How would you describe the attitude of the entire staff towards the vision and mission of the school?

1.5 How would you describe the culture of your school?

1.6 Who do you attribute the success of your school to?

1.7 As an individual what was your contribution towards the wellbeing of the school over the passed three to five years

APPENDIX 1 (CONTINUED)

2. SCHOOL OUTCOMES

2.1 How much time is spent on learning and teaching- contact time (percentage)?

2.2 Do you offer any extra classes?

2.3 What is the role of leadership in contributing to the improvement of student learning?

2.4 How would you describe learner attendance at your school

2.5 How do you deal with learner absenteeism?

2.6 Do you experience late coming from your teachers? (directed to the principal)

IF YES

- What are the common reasons for late coming?
- How do you deal with late-coming?

IF NO

- What mechanism have you put in place to curb late coming?

2.7 Which learning area(s) seems to be getting high pass rate on yearly basis and what do you think is the reason?

APPENDIX 1 (CONTINUED)

2.8 Which learning area(s) are getting low pass rate and what do you think is the reason?

2.9 How do you monitor learning and teaching in the classroom?

2.10 How do you evaluate performance of your staff?

2.11 For those teachers whose performance is not satisfactory, how do you develop them?

2.12 How would you describe your learners' co-operation?

2.13 How would you describe teachers' co-operation?

2.14 How would you describe parents' co-operation?

3. LEADERSHIP

3.1 How do you influence or be influence by your colleagues?

3.2 What is the role of the principal in giving the school direction? (directed to the Grade 12 teacher and an HoD)

3.3 How would you describe the style of leadership of your principal?
(directed to the Grade 12 teacher and an HoD)

APPENDIX 1 (CONTINUED)

3.4 Who are involved in decision-making and what are their roles? (directed to Grade 12 teacher and an HoD)

3.5 Explain the personal characteristics/qualities of your principal? (directed to the Grade 12 teacher and HoD)

3.6 What are the weaknesses and strengths of your principal? (directed to the Grade 12 teacher and HoD)

3.7 What has been the role of your principal in developing the staff? (directed to the Grade 12 teacher and HoD)

3.8 How do you recruit new teachers to your school?

3.9 How do you manage learner admission per grade?

APPENDIX 2

DRAFT OF THE OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

1. How the school begins the day?

1	2	3	4
No order, first period wasted by learner trying to settle in their classes.	Minimal amount of time is wasted.	School starts promptly without disturbance.	Other

Comment (especially when religious observance is done before teaching and learning starts)

.....

.....

.....

2. How the school ends the day?

1	2	3	4
Learner/teachers leave before school out.	Anyone leaves during the last period.	Learners leave at the end of the last period.	Teachers remain after school conducting extra lessons.

(Observation schedule continued)

Comment:

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Principal's/HoD's/teacher's time-table

1	2	3	4
Time-table not followed.	Other periods are missed.	Time-table is strictly being followed.	

Comment (on what takes place during exchanging of period and principal daily activities)

.....

.....

.....

4. Decision-making

1	2	3	4
Decision-making done by the principal alone.	Principal consult only the SMT.	Principal consults the entire staff.	Principal consults all the stakeholders.

Comment (on crucial decisions taken during my observation):

.....

.....

.....

5. Communication

1	2	3	4
Initiator is always the principal.	Everyone is allowed to initiate discussion.	There is a particular way of communicating with other members of the staff.	Stakeholders are always considered.

Comment line of communication:

.....

.....

.....

(Observation schedule continued)

6. Learner enrolment

1	2	3	4
The school is experiencing overcrowding in the classrooms.	Overcrowding is experience in the lower grades only.	The school has admitted learners according to its capacity	Teacher learner ratio is in accordance with departmental policies.

Appendix 3: Invitation of Schools to participate

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Kwena Gedion Poopedi, a second year student at the University of Witwatersrand studying towards Master of Education Degree. I am humbly requesting permission to conduct research in your school.

My research topic: An exploration of successful leadership in challenging circumstances- Case studies of two Kathorus Secondary Schools.

Your school has been selected on the basis that it has consistently performed above the average matric pass rate over the passed five years. The research is going to be conducted during the third quarter of 2010.

Should your school participate, the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interview with you as the head of the school, each interview lasting for at least an hour. As the head of the school, I will also request that you grant access to one Head of Department (HoD) and one Grade 12 teacher in order to conduct one-on-one interview with them. These interviews will focus on the leadership the HoD and the teacher experience.

The study requires that I spend two days involved in interviews and observations at the school. I will be visiting your school to describe the study in detail and answer any questions that you or your staff may have.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by filling in the slip below.

Kind regards

K. G. Poopedi

School Consent Slip

I,-----, as (position)-----on behalf of--
-----School, understand the nature, requirements and benefits
of participating in the study, consent to participate in the study.

Signature -----

Date -----

Appendix 4: Invitation of the Head of Department to participate

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Kwena Gedion Poopedi, a second year student at the University of Witwatersrand studying towards Master of Education Degree. I am humbly requesting permission to conduct research in your school.

My research topic: An exploration of successful leadership in challenging circumstances- Case studies of two Kathorus Secondary Schools.

Your school has been selected on the basis that it has consistently performed above the average matric pass rate over the passed five years. The research is going to be conducted during the third quarter of 2010.

Should your school participate, the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interview with you as the Head of Department in the school, each interview lasting for at least an hour. These interviews will focus on the leadership you have experience in the school as the Head of Department.

The study requires that I spend two days involved in interviews and observations at the school.

I will be visiting your school to describe the study in detail and answer any questions that you or your staff may have.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by filling in the slip below.

Kind regards

K. G. Poopedi

School Consent Slip

I,-----, as (position)-----on behalf of--
-----School, understand the nature, requirements and benefits
of participating in the study, consent to participate in the study.

Signature -----

Date -----

Appendix 5: Invitation of Grade 12 teacher to participate

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Kwena Gedion Poopedi, a second year student at the University of Witwatersrand studying towards Master of Education Degree. I am humbly requesting permission to conduct research in your school.

My research topic: An exploration of successful leadership in challenging circumstances- Case studies of two Kathorus Secondary Schools.

Your school has been selected on the basis that it has consistently performed above the average matric pass rate over the passed five years. The research is going to be conducted during the third quarter of 2010.

Should your school participate, the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interview with you as Grade 12 teacher in the school, each interview lasting for at least an hour.

These interviews will focus on the leadership you have experience in the school as grade 12 teacher.

The study requires that I spend two days involved in interviews and observations at the school.

I will be visiting your school to describe the study in detail and answer any questions that you or your staff may have.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by filling in the slip below.

Kind regards

K. G. Poopedi

School Consent Slip

I,-----, as (position)-----on behalf of--
-----School, understand the nature, requirements and benefits
of participating in the study, consent to participate in the study.

Signature -----

Date -----

APPENDIX 6: SUBJECT INFORMATION SHEET

Exploring successful leadership in schools

I am involved in the study that explores school leadership development and the role that principals play in the success of their schools. Much has been written about successful principalship internationally. However, the school leadership within the South African context is significant in that principals in previously disadvantaged township secondary schools have rarely been studied. Little is known about existing patterns of school leadership practices in South African schools operating in disadvantaged communities.

The aim of the study is to explore practices and behaviours of successful school leadership. School principals face complex demands from their communities and the Education Department whereby principal are regarded as agents of transformation – transforming the roles, operations and achievements of their schools, transforming local communities and transforming the nation. These demands have particular dimensions in South African schools, arising in part from the different social, economic and political characters of schools, and in part from the history of Apartheid. A shift in thinking is needed in understanding school leadership practices in South Africa, as a logical and essential part of transformation envisioned in new educational policies. Two Kathorus township secondary schools have been selected as case study school for the research. The schools were chosen on the basis of performing well in their Senior Certificate pass rates over the pass five years. Principals, Heads of department and Grade 12 teachers of the case study schools will be selected as participants. They will be informed that participation in the study will be under

conditions of anonymity and that the names of the schools will not be divulged to any other parties, and they are free to withdraw at any time.

One-on-one interviews will be conducted with the participants of the selected schools, each lasting for at least an hour. These interviews will focus on the leadership the Head of Department and Grade 12 teacher have experienced in their schools. Principals as participants will be chosen on the following basis:

1. School principals from 'successful' Kathorus secondary schools.
2. The selected school principals should have spent different amounts of time in their positions (ranging from relatively new to well-established principals with many years of experience).

The result of the study will be presented to the University of the Witwatersrand for examination, together with the report, and it will also be made available to the Gauteng Department of Education.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact:

Mr Kwena G. Poopedi

Cell: 0722325381

gideonpoo@webmail.co.za