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AN EXPLORATION OF SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN THE UNPROMISING CONTEXT OF TWO SCHOOLS IN KLIPSPRUIT IN SOWETO



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0205719M

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of the principal in managing teaching and learning in two primary schools in Soweto. The study was based on the assumption that leadership in the case study schools focused primarily on managing teaching and learning. Further to this, the study assumed that the principal was not the sole instructional leader, but that leadership was a shared entity.

The study was a qualitative case study and the data collecting methods included in-depth interviews, document analysis and observations. These data collection methods allowed for triangulation, whereby information of the participants or respondents was able to be validated. Participants included the principals, deputy principals, head of departments (HOD's) and parents.

The research findings revealed that the principals of the schools together with the deputies and HOD's, played a central role in managing teaching and learning. Furthermore, in the case of study schools, findings revealed that the success of the schools was due to extending partnerships beyond the boundaries of the school. These schools succeeded by building and managing relationships both, inside and outside the schools under study.

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I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Zakhele Mbokazi for being an amazing supervisor. Your guidance and academic input has been invaluable.

To my husband, Dhevan Marimandi, without you, this dream would never have become a reality, thank you for your intellectual input, love and support throughout the duration of my studies.

To my daughter Alisha, thank you for your understanding when I had to spend hours compiling this research.

To Yvette, Misha and Jeanette, thank you for all those hours and many days you spent listening to my despair and excitement as I completed this journey.

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to

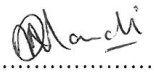
my husband, Dhevan Marimandi

and

our daughter, Alisha Marimandi

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own work completed under the supervision and guidance of my supervisor, Dr Zakhele Mbokazi. It is being admitted for the degree of Master of Education, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.



.....

Nitasha Marimandi

16 .....day of March 2015

6

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Advance Certificate in Educational with Specialisation in Educational Leadership
ANA	Annual National Assessments
DoE	Department of Education
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
NSSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding

USE OF TERMS

Successful schools – the use of the word successful schools in this context is relative to schools that are performing well with regards to learner achievement.

Disadvantaged areas – are areas with a low socioeconomic status, commonly found in previously black townships of South Africa (example Soweto and Alexandra).

Unpromising contexts – are schools that are located in disadvantaged areas in a South African context.

Leadership – leadership is the ability to influence the thinking, values and emotions of followers from an educational perspective.

Management is an organisational concept relating to the structures and processes of an organisation.

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Chapter One

Background and Orientation

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the relevance and importance of the study. Effective leadership and management are vital to promoting teaching and learning within a school environment. The national context of South African schools introduces important factors relevant to the research setting and will therefore receive discussion. Furthermore, this chapter will reveal the problem statement, the aims of the study as well as the research questions and rationale. The limitations of the study are discussed, and an outline of the succeeding chapters will be provided.

1.2 Background

There is increasing recognition that effective leadership and management are vital if schools are to be successful in promoting good learning opportunities for learners (Hallinger, 2003). In addition, evidence points to good leadership contributing to school improvement and learning outcomes (Bush et al., 2011: 31). However, there are many complexities associated with leadership in a South African context, due to the fact that schooling variously provides vastly different experiences for different students, where the gap between the rich and the poor is wide in South Africa. Christie (2008) notes that South Africa is still one of the most unequal countries in the world, and where, as relevant to this study, technological tools in the form of mobile phones and the internet are not yet readily available for the vast majority of South Africans.

During the last two decades of apartheid, research as noted by Christie and Lingard (2001) has revealed that large numbers of black schools ceased to function in South Africa, particularly secondary schools in urban townships. The tradition of protest against inferior education, combined with poverty, material deprivation and disruption of township communities, left a legacy of school breakdown that the post-apartheid government has struggled to reverse. These schools are characterised by poor attendance of the learners and teachers. There are conflicting relationships within schools, between the principal and the staff, and a culture of discontinuous learning has been adopted, resulting in poor results.

Violence, crime and substance abuse is rampant in and around the schools (Christie and Lingard, 2001: 8).

Therefore, principals who find themselves in unfavourable school contexts find themselves obliged to adjust their leadership and management styles to benefit the context in which they are placed. The landscape of educational policies has undergone huge changes in the post-apartheid period. The system, which was once structured along racially unequal lines, has undergone change. The *National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NSSF)* were meant to determine formulae for school funding. The Curriculum 2005 and an introduction of outcomes-based education into schools (Department of Education, 1998) were established with the intention to bring an end to apartheid and to establish a new and ideal form of education.

The amount of power given to principals placed them under considerable pressure as they often worked in poorly equipped schools with inadequately trained staff (Bush & Oduro, 2006). Given the vast inequalities in the South African schooling system in terms of both human and financial resource constraints, implementing the new policies has not been easy for all. One of the unintended effects of the new governance system was the perpetuation of historical inequalities within the system. A typical example is the School Governing Bodies that have been introduced. The parent bodies of the best functioning schools in the system were able to use their resources and social capital to the advantage of their schools (Christie and Lingard, 2001: 8). They used their management powers to raise substantial fees, to employ teachers with specialist support and to offer a broad curriculum. This, however, was not the case with the majority of schools in the system namely the quintile three schools which are located in communities too poor to pay fees, often with demotivated teachers working under difficult conditions, with no libraries and computer networks to support students in the new curriculum (Heystek, 2006).

A number of new principals were placed into positions, without the necessary induction process or qualifications and, as a result, they lacked both management and leadership capabilities (Bush et al., 2011: 31-32). This brings us back to the widespread belief that the

quality of leadership makes a significant difference to both school and student outcomes. In many parts of the world, including South Africa, it has been recognised that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners. Educational leadership and management ought to be centrally concerned with the purpose or aims of education.

According to Bush (2007), most leadership practices are based on those used in western countries. His research advocates a distinctly African model of "*ubuntu*" based leadership, style which embraces the fundamental values of the South African constitution and is rooted in African traditional sensibilities and interconnectedness among people (Bush, 2007: 402). Msila (as yet unpublished) links *ubuntu* to democracy, claiming that it is the "ideal democratic tenet" and contributes to "a world of moral stability".

Leadership can be understood as a process of influence based on clear values and beliefs and leading to a vision for the school. The vision is articulated by leaders who seek to gain the commitment of staff and stakeholders to the ideal of a better future for the school and its learners. Both western and African models collectively suggest that concepts of school leadership are complex and diverse. They provide clear, normative frameworks, by means of which leadership can be understood; however, there is still relatively weak empirical support for these constructs (Bush, 2007: 403). Given the dispensations the of the past and current crises in South Africa, poor learner performances as a means of improving learner outcomes requires an approach to leadership that would focus on 'instruction'. This means attempting to change the mind-set of leaders to regard the process of teaching and learning as central to their role rather than simply leaving such matters to educators. It is important to remember that South Africa still bears the marks of apartheid inequality (Christie, 2008), and that globalisation interacts with this legacy in complex ways. This produces particular conditions that are both similar to other places around the world, and also quite unique.

This study therefore focuses on principals that are able to maintain favourable learner achievement regardless of its unpromising context, characterised by the socioeconomic challenges of the poor and working class. In-depth studies have been conducted in secondary

schools (Christie, 2008) but not many studies have been undertaken in primary schools. If primary schooling forms the foundation for successful secondary schooling to proceed, is it not vital that we ascertain what these principals are doing right? This in an effort to empower other primary school principals in similar contexts.

1.2 National context of the study

Christie underscores the point that as institutions, schools may be understood minimally in terms of regularised and sanctioned social practices which persist and change through human activity (Christie, 1998: 286). We need to acknowledge that it would be difficult to ignore that schools differ from one another. In South Africa, these differences are particularly evident for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the discriminatory funding policies of the previous governments, and the continued socioeconomic gap between racial groups that persists to this day (Taylor, 2006: 73). The diversity of schools in South Africa is enormous. There are some that boast magnificent buildings and educational programmes that would rank amongst the best anywhere in the world. In contrast, there are those that occupy broken down buildings, lacking doors and windows, electricity and sanitation, and with few books, and no other resources (ibid.). Attempts to categorise institutions as complex and diverse as schools are fraught with difficulty, where any categorisation scheme will, at best, be a crude and broad generalisation representing a pale imitation of reality. Nevertheless Taylor (2006) has argued in favour of the value that labelling schools has, especially for policy-makers and researchers as this would enable them to better understand and serve the needs of schools in particular. In South Africa in general, there appears to be a tendency to ignore existing diversity and to mandate complex and comprehensive changes in systems that may or may not be ready to cope with them (Christie, 1998: 286-287).

1.3 Local context of the study

The high-performing schools chosen for this study are in close proximity to one another. Geographically, they are located in Klipspruit, Soweto. Historically, Klipspruit was established in the early 1900s as a native location. The housing was made of V shaped shacks without foundations. With the influx of both locals and immigrants into this township the housing crisis has since escalated.

The schools were both co-educational, public school organisations. The schools were established during the late 1960's as Xhosa-dominated. They service communities who are mostly disadvantaged and unemployed, where a large number of the children attending these schools come from informal settlements like Motsoaledi, Kliptown, Freedom Park, Nomzamo Park, Holomisa Camp and other townships like Orlando, Diepkloof, Pimville and Klipspruit. Some even come from as far as the inner city of Johannesburg.

These schools are no-fee schools, under Quintile 3, and fundraising initiatives for the purpose of augmenting the grant received annually from the government is an uphill battle. Regardless of the changes in population dynamics and poor socioeconomic conditions surrounding these schools, they are able to maintain good standards of learner achievement reflective in the Annual National Assessments of 2012. These schools have had a good academic track record over the years, and attention in this study is therefore paid to the functionality of the schools with regards to learner performance. Jansen (1995) notes that strong administrative leadership and a school climate conducive for learning are attributes encouraging of high expectations for student achievement (Jansen, 1995: 185). Usually, no-fee schools do not have enough funds to meet their basic needs of paying for electricity, and much less, providing learners with textbooks to engage in productive teaching and learning. Thus, many mission and vision statements of the schools - of affording all learners equal opportunities - unfortunately becomes a mere distant reality.

1.4 Problem Statement

Schools in unpromising contexts have been the focus of research, both internationally and nationally. These are schools located in socio-economically disadvantaged areas. Research undertaken by Harris and Chapman (2004) within the UK resonates with Christies' (2008) local research of South African schools in unpromising contexts. The authors are in agreement that these schools face complex dilemmas in striving to achieve well, as they do not benefit from the advantages of positive socioeconomic contexts, and school infrastructures are often not conducive for teaching and learning. An enduring legacy of apartheid in South Africa has been the dysfunction of many historically African schools (Christie, 2001). Schools are faced with the ever-increasing demands of society where schooling provides vastly different experiences for different students (ibid.). The inequalities

of apartheid are still prevalent even today, as revealed by Christie (2008), who has noted that South Africa is one of the most unequal countries of the world when it comes to education. However, there are still schools that continue to produce good academic performances, regardless of their unpromising contexts. The purpose of this study is to explore the leadership role of the principal, as well as the school management team (SMT) contributions, and to see how this promotes learner achievement in primary schools faced with unpromising contexts.

1.5 Aims

One of the aims of this study is to develop an understanding of schools operating in unfavourable socioeconomic conditions within the South African context, with particular emphasis on leadership strategies, SMT competencies and the ability to negotiate unpromising contexts to support learner achievement.

1.6 Assumption of the study

The Ministerial Report (2007), entitled 'Schools that Work' points towards leadership as a shared process of involvement, and that schools in socioeconomic deprivation exhibit inner capacities in terms of teaching and learning which are supported by quality leadership and management, as well as the commitment and collaboration of staff. The Ministerial Report (ibid.) reported on high schools. Harris and Thomson (2006) highlights that not all schools in challenging contexts have the internal capacity to support leadership in this form. In this regard, the case study schools were two primary schools in Soweto.

1.7 Research questions

- What is the role of the principal towards the success of a school facing difficult circumstances?
- To what extent do principals share leadership with the SMT?
- How do successful schools in unpromising contexts negotiate socio-economic conditions of their learners?

1.8 Rationale

The struggle of high-poverty schools for survival is well documented (Kamper, 2008). Some have overcome poverty-related odds and performed exceptionally well, the reasons for which prompted this study. Given the spread of performance within the system, these schools are not chosen to represent 'the best' in the system, and they are not necessarily - 'excellent' - schools. These schools just perform well under conditions that are typical of schools in South Africa that have all the resources and infrastructure that promotes a favourable context for educational instruction. The question remains as to whether the leadership and SMT competencies within these schools are able to be directly related to the success of these schools.

1.9 Limitations of the study

This case study was conducted in two schools in Klipspuit, Soweto and the findings may not necessarily represent the rest of the primary schools in unpromising contexts in the country. The availability of South African literature on successful school leadership was found to be scarce, where meanwhile; the same manner of literature was over-represented in western countries. The dearth of research in this area of study in this country, especially in township schools, forms part of the motivation for the current research.

Gaining access to township schools poses a problem, as principals as well as teachers are reluctant to be interviewed for the purpose of the research. This was only made possible because both principals had a unique understanding of research, and allowed me access to their schools.

Time constrains also played a factor in limiting the research, where, while not wanting to infringe on teachers' – learner-contact time, negotiating interview sessions became an issue, as participants were reluctant to sacrifice personal time outside of the class.

1.10 Outline of Chapters

Chapter One: *The introduction and Orientation*: the current chapter maps out the general orientation of the study, the structure, as well as the organisation. The aim of this chapter is to provide the background of the scope of the research, and to outline; the research questions as well as the rational of the study. The significance of the study is discussed in this chapter in the form of a rationale. This chapter also outlines the central argument, the upcoming chapters, conclusions, and indicates limitations of the study.

Chapter Two: *Review of Literature and theoretical framework*: the main aim of this chapter is to review the relevant literature informing the study. It concentrates on setting the scene and is dominated by literature on leadership styles and strategies that promote successful schools, particularly those located in unpromising contexts. The analysis of current trends and debates in good leadership practices has been discussed. The main issue discussed in this chapter is the role of the principal, together with the SMT, in promoting good practices. The theoretical framework for this study draws on work by Leithwood et al. (2006), especially these authors' formulation of four core categories of practice that are common to successful leadership. These categories were further redefined into a small number of more specific leadership behaviours.

Chapter Three: *Research Design and Methodology:* the aim of this chapter is to identify and map the process involved in this investigation. This chapter provides a description of the research process, the research design, research methods as well as the criteria and justification for the selection and description of the instrument. In this research I seek to understand the way in which principals in unpromising contexts are able to maintain productive school environments. The qualitative approach enabled me to find and explore information using a variety of methods allowing a deeper search for meaning. The sampling strategies used included individual interviews, observations and documents. The chapter contains issues of reliability and validity, ethical considerations and a conclusion.

Chapter Four: *Presentation of findings:* This chapter presents the findings of this study. The research was informed by the assumption that the principals of the two case study schools were focused on the management of teaching and learning. This chapter analysis the results of the study and provides the research findings.

Chapter Five: *Analysis and Discussion*: This chapter presents a cross-case analysis of the findings presented in the previous chapter and identifies patterns and trends in the findings. The chapter also interprets the findings of the study in terms of the research questions, the theoretical framework and the literature reviewed. The data was triangulated to cross-check and compare the two schools.

Chapter Six: *Summaries, conclusions and recommendations*: This chapter presents the summary, conclusion, recommendations of this study, including areas that may require further exploration. As mentioned earlier the main focus of this research is to examine the instructional role of the principal together with the SMT, and their ability to produce good results in an unpromising context.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review together with the theoretical framework, which will each be discussed separately. The literature review starts by presenting the meaning of unpromising context within a conceptual framework on leadership that has been successful in unpromising contexts both internationally and locally. The discussion further presents the role of the principal, principals rising above the odds, and understanding the role of the School Management Team (SMT). The selection of the literature was informed by a systemic review, linked to the three central themes of the research questions: the role of the principal and best practice, in particular, the way in which principals cope in unpromising contextual situations, the school management team and their responsibility for the professional and operational management of the school, as well as the challenges they experience. Even though schools in South Africa are different, the phenomenon of high-performing schools in challenging circumstances is not unheard of.

An understanding of the terms literature review and theoretical framework are essential, where a literature review in qualitative studies is defined as the foreshadowing or central questions that guides an investigation (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 73). This is supported by previous research studies that are able to justify the purpose of the study pertaining to a selected field of research. It also establishes the grounds for the development of the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework consists of accounts of research conducted by accredited scholars within the field. This is important, as qualitative studies rely extensively on existing theories for their arguments (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 74).

2.2 Schools in an unpromising context

Research undertaken by the Ministerial Committee (2007) draws attention to the various interpretations of schools successful in unpromising contexts. Christie et al (2007) has noted

that producing reasonable results in Senior Certificate for matric exams may be a good indicator. The question to consider would be: are these successes a result of rote learning and "drilling" of a relatively narrow set of work, or is it possible that these schools provide learning experiences of a different quality to their learners. My study is focused on primary schools and how they are able to remain successful schools in unpromising socio-economic contexts. The reason for this is that numerous studies have already been conducted in secondary schools based on matric results.

2.3 The Role of the principal

Research shows that the role of the principal in the traditional model dominant in South Africa prior to 1994 was that of a manager or administrator (Steyn, 2003: 3). School principals had more managerial and administrative tasks, and fewer teaching duties. These schools were characterised by authoritarian, hierarchical, top-down management styles (Steyn, 2003: 3). Principals were therefore those who implemented official decisions, rather than managers with the freedom to manage as they saw fit. After 1994, principals have been faced with a wide range of demands and challenges, particularly in establishing a culture of teaching and learning in their schools, improving and maintaining high standards of education, working more closely with parents, coping with multicultural school populations, managing change and conflict, coping with limited resources and ensuring more accountability to the community they serve (Mestry & Grobler, 2004: 3).

The role of the principal is to provide leadership, direction and co-ordination within the school. The principal's main focus ought to be to develop and maintain effective educational programmes within his/her school and to promote the improvement of teaching and learning within the school (Mestry & Grobler, 2004: 3). The principal should also strive to create a school which fosters both student and teacher growth. The duties of the school principal are all encompassing, due to the facts that all aspects of the schools operations are either directly or indirectly under his/her jurisdiction (ibid.).

Studies in principal practices from a local context have highlighted that those who undertake educational leadership roles in the twenty-first century will need a complex mix of skills

relating to the leadership of people, enabling colleagues to perform effective educational leadership and management tasks (Christie and Lingard, 2001: 8). The key to unlocking and building a culture of life-long learning and teaching in a South African context is therefore both difficult and complex.

Research further opens up our understanding of some of the challenges facing principals in developing countries in Africa, which includes students who cannot pay school fees and buy books. There is a critical shortage of school equipment, facilities, staff, lack of playgrounds; students travel long distances, and are limited by the use of English as a medium of instruction (Bush and Oduro, 2006). South Africa is not excluded from this, as Van der Berg's (2005) study shows that schools in South Africa are 'bimodal', viz. it is accounted for by affluent schools on the one hand, and poorly resourced schools on the other. Even though South Africa is one of the most advanced countries of the continent, it nonetheless habours *thousands* of schools without power, water, sanitation or telecommunications (Christie and Lingard, 2001: 8). If these are the experiences, of principals in unpromising contexts, the question to consider would be: what are the principals doing in their leadership capacity to not only cope with their under resourced schools, but to also overcome their contextual situations? Inevitably, the task of the principal in such circumstances is very difficult. Violence, crime and substance abuse can be found both in and around the schools (ibid.). Therefore principals who find themselves in unfavourable school contexts ought to adjust their leadership and management styles to benefit the context in which they are placed.

It is evident that the job of the principal is within the frame-work of his or her particular context. Regardless of the similarities in the daily functioning of a school, it must be remembered that the pressures facing leaders in developing countries are particularly acute. Inevitably, this leads to increased pressures of accountability on site-based leaders, who are obliged to deal with increasing complexity and unremitting change (Bush, 2009: 377). These contextual problems exert enormous pressure on school principals, who are often overwhelmed by the duties expected of them (ibid.).

It is increasingly evident that effective leadership and management are vital if schools are to become successful in providing good learning opportunities to students. There is also emerging evidence that high quality leadership makes a significant difference to school improvement and learning outcomes (Bush et al., 2011).

2.4 Principals rising above the odds

The true impact of poverty on the provision of education is evident, and the role of the principal is becoming increasingly important, as it is of paramount importance to considering the way in which schools in poor communities have found ways to effectively overcome severe poverty-related odds, such as hunger, homelessness, illiteracy, unemployment, gangsterism, drug abuse, as well as the negative, fatalistic mind-set that all these factors may induce (Day, 2005; Harris, 2002; Taylor, 2006). Answers to these questions are important, not only from an educational perspective and as the quality of educational leadership may be concerned, but also for the social and ethical purpose of empowerment of the school, which in high-poverty settings acts as a catalyst for community development (ibid.).

Contemporary studies like Harris and Chapman (2002) and Harris et al. (2006) have identified certain common features or characteristics of effective leadership in schools in challenging circumstances. While it is important to have insight into successful leadership practices in schools, it is also important to understand that, schooling ought to help people to understand the cultural and natural worlds in which they live, to communicate with others and to act in the world in ethical ways, as evidence in a principal's ability to successfully engage all stakeholders in good leadership practices, by sharing responsibilities successfully with other members of staff. Are such principals distributing leadership in an effort to maintain high standards within their schools, or are they solely responsible for the success of their schools?

2.5 Understanding the role of School Management Teams

The SMT has the day-to-day responsibility for the professional and operational management of the school, under the leadership of the principal (DoE, 2002) this is applicable to the South African context.

Recognising variation in local priorities and the need to support the view that leadership becomes relative to context, i.e. "there is no one package for school leadership: no one model to be learned and applied, regardless of culture and context" (Ngcobo and Tikly, 2010: 204). Research in the field has been able to provide theoretical evidence in contextualising an understanding of leadership with regards to SMTs in contrasting locations in South Africa.

It is, therefore, important to establish the exact duties of the SMT. An SMT functions effectively if the senior managers (principals and deputy principals) and the middle managers (heads of department and the senior teachers) work together (Van der Merwe, 2002: 35). Apart from possessing detailed knowledge of the realities of teaching and learning the senior managers ought to offer clarity of purpose and vision in order to help the school management team to act with authority (Van der Merwe, 2002: 36). The key role of an SMT is to encourage members of staff to reflect upon, to debate, and to agree on collective interpretations of how the curriculum should be taught and the range of experiences learners should be offered. This has been argued against, citing the fact that there are indicators that point to a lack of time and resources as constraints that hamper school management teams to take on more than routine administrative tasks (DoE, 2002: 24).

The school as an organisation has different levels of accountability at school management and classroom management level. This accountability relates to ensuring that quality teaching and learning happens within the school (DoE, 1997). It is the responsibility of school management teams to ensure that their schools deliver their brief against the mission, vision, curriculum goals and action plans for their schools. There are a number of indicators that can be put in place to measure this success. An understanding of these indicators highlights the level of leadership practices put in place by the principals to maintain proficiency. The main indicator relates to increased learner performance and attainment. A second important indicator relates to defining ways of motivating teachers and learners to accept challenges presented to them (DoE, 2000), to which the identification and development of support strategies and mechanisms and the defining of teaching and learning expectations is related (ibid.).

With the introduction of SMTs the principal is no longer the single authority figure, but is ushered into a partnership with other stakeholders as noted by Bush et al. (2010). The challenge that a principal faces is to understand this situation of changes and improve his or her interpersonal and communication skills to meet the changing environment. The principal would not be in a position to issue instructions and expect the staff and students to obey these instructions. In contrast, the altered role of the principal requires him or her to articulate views for a shared vision (ibid.).

2.7. The theoretical framework

2.7.1 Introduction

The discussion in the theoretical framework will centre on Leithwood et al. (2006), concepts of leadership and management, forms of leadership, and a successful model of leadership. The theoretical framework for this study draws on the work by Leithwood et al. (2006); which has suggested four core practices that are common to successful leadership. This approach clearly explains the way in which principals are able to use their leadership influence to produce good learner outcomes, regardless of poor socioeconomic contextual factors. The model covers the four broad categories (Leithwood et al., 2006), namely:

- setting directions;
- developing people;
- redesigning the organisation; and
- managing the instructional programme of teaching and learning.

The text entitled "*Seven strong claims about successful leadership*" by Leithwood et al. (2006) was followed by their study entitled "*Ten strong claims about successful school leadership*", which was commissioned by DCSF in 2009, and which comprised empirical data undertaken in 20 case studies over two years in Nottingham. It was based on the premise of inspiring leaders to improve children's lives. The success of the research proved that leaders were required to be actively involved in their leadership roles, and that leadership strategies were often situational or instructional (DCFS, 2009). In light of this observation, it is important to draw relevance to the various conceptual understandings of leadership and management.

2.7.2 Concepts of leadership and management

Leadership and management is a popular idea, however, because it is so wide spread, it could mean anything. Alvesson and Spicer (2012) describe leadership as influencing the thinking, values and emotions of followers and management works directly with instructions. Leadership and management are not necessarily the same, but they are not mutually exclusive (ibid.).

The field of leadership and management in education is a complex field to critique. While researchers from different theoretical perspectives agree on the importance of leadership in functioning of schools (Bush and Glover, 2003; Leithwood, 2004; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012), 'leadership' as a concept, is itself variously interpreted, and its direct effects are hard to specify. Christie (2010) clarifies this variability, explaining that while leadership on the one hand may be understood as a relationship of influence directed towards goals and outcomes, on the other hand, it is an organisational concept, which relates to structures and processes of an organisation (Christie, 2010: 696).

2.8 Forms of leadership

In order to understand leadership it is important that we recognise its different forms. Leadership is mainly described in the literature by using adjectives, such as 'instructional', 'distributive', 'participative', 'managerial', 'transformational', 'moral', 'strategic' and so on. The use of the terminology can be found in studies conducted by various researchers (Christie and Lingard, 2001; Hallinger, 2003; Sergiovanni, 2003; Christie, 2008 and Bush and Glover, 2009). The words used focus on the different stylistic or methodological approaches and although they are relevant. Leithwood et al. (2004: 6) cautions that often these adjectives mask the important underlying objectives of what principals are trying to accomplish, namely helping the organisation set a reasonable direction, and influencing members to move in that direction. For the purpose of this study, I will focus predominantly on instructional leadership, transformational leadership and distributed leadership. These leadership styles were chosen particularly because together they create a shared sense of purpose, a climate of high expectations, and culture of improvement within a school. Below, I present a summary of each of these leadership styles.

2.8.1 Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership focuses on those actions directly related to teaching and learning with an emphasis on classroom supervision. It has been noted that instructional leadership prominent during the effective schools movement of the 1980s is gradually showing signs of waning (Bush and Glover, 2009: 12), however, it is a pivotal dimension of leadership, because it targets the schools' core activities of teaching and learning.

Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2003) define instructional leadership as an influential relationship that motivates, enables and supports educators' efforts to learn about and change their instructional practices. Likewise, McEwan (2003) asserts that instructional leadership is a form of leadership practice that is directly related to the process of instruction, where there is interaction amongst educators, learners and curriculum. This view is supported by Hallinger (2003: 338), who points out that "the broad brushes of instructional leadership in effective schools produce an image of the principal as directing or orchestrating improvements in the school." Instructional leadership is not a narrow concept; and researchers such as McEwan (2000) and Sergiovanni (2003) have conceived different models of instructional leadership. These models have come to be used as guidelines for instructional leaders. Although the two models do not have exactly the same elements concerning the management of teaching and learning they do however maintain as their main theme delivery of the curriculum, and teacher development.

The notion of a teacher being developed by an instructional leader is supported by Blase' and Blase' (1999). This arises from their conception of the theme of "promoting professional growth". The study was based on their perspective of the teacher in principals' instructional leadership. They observed that promoting teachers to motivate and empower, enhances the value of staff development, where the teachers become learners themselves, and participate with other teachers (Blase' & Blase', 1999). The core purpose of the principals' leadership is to provide leadership and management in all areas of the school, so as to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning can take place and which would promote learner achievement (Bush et al., 2010).

Taking a broader view instructional leadership incorporates all leadership activities that affect student learning (Bush and Glover, 2009: 11). With this leadership style, the assumption is that instructional leaders have both the expert knowledge and the formal authority to exert influence on teachers by coordinating the role of the principal in controlling, supervising and developing the curriculum and instruction (Leithwood et al., 1999: 8).

2.8.2 Transformational leadership

The transformational model of leadership became popular during the restructuring reforms of the 1990s (Leithwood, 1994). Leithwood has further deepened our understanding of transformational leadership from an educational perspective in his description of a conceptual model where he describes seven components of transformational leadership to include: building a school vision; establishing school goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualised support; modelling best practices and important organisational values; demonstrating high performance expectations; creating a productive school culture; and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions.

Transformational leadership does not focus much on the principal as an instructional leader, but on bottom-up participation and development of collaborative decision-making processes (Leithwood, 1994). The main similarity between instructional leadership and transformational leadership is that they both focus on creating a shared sense of purpose, a climate of high expectations, and a culture of improvement; implementing a reward structure to reflect the goals of staff and students, encouraging staff professional development, and visibly living the values fostered by the school (Hallinger, 2003: 343). These concepts, however, differ in their target of change, namely instruction, versus developing the capacity of others. Transformational leadership deals with changing teachers' mind-sets, so that they can deliver what is required of them in terms of the curriculum (ibid.). One of the earliest researchers, Bass (1985), defines transformational leadership as a model that motivates followers to do more than they originally expected to do, by raising their levels of awareness, getting them to transcend their own self-interest by altering their need levels. Leithwood (1994) defines this type of leadership as the collective action that transforms, generates and

empowers those who participate in the process. Leithwood (ibid.) states that transformational leadership facilitates the redefinition of peoples' mission and vision; it renews their commitment by restructuring their systems for goal accomplishment.

Transformational leadership is ideal, but certainly not realistic in South Africa (Christie and Lingard, 2001). The education system has historically vast inequalities embedded within it by the apartheid regime (ibid.). Although there may have been progress in certain areas, very little has been accomplished in the post-apartheid government relating to the inferior education it wilfully structured for the majority of the population, and the poor socioeconomic conditions of the schools that operated under this category (Christie, 2008). Christie (2010) further confirms that the South African landscape of policy change stretches beyond the evident beacons of new policy, such as the National Education Policy Act, the South African Schools Act, and Curriculum 2005, to name a few. In addition, there is a complex network of regulations and requirements, which have been put in place in schools that operate in very different conditions and with different capacities to implement them (ibid.). Instructional leadership is therefore favoured, because it encompasses a top-down leadership style, which involves strong, directive leadership that is focused on the curriculum and instruction from the principal (Hallinger, 2003).

2.8.3 Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership has become the object of recent research (Leithwood et al., 2004: 28) and overlaps with shared, collaborative and participative concepts. This leadership assumes a set of practices that are "enacted by people at all levels rather than a set of personal characteristics and attributes located in people at the top" (ibid.). Successful leaders depend on the contributions from all stakeholders of their organisation. However, the practical application of leadership distribution may easily be mistaken with the mere distribution of management responsibilities (Spillane et al., 2004: 543).

MacNeil and McClanahan (2005) have define distributed leadership as the shared leadership of two or more people. This involves the sharing of power and joining forces to move towards the accomplishment of a shared goal. Timperley (2005), however, broadens the

definition of distributive leadership from merely the sharing of work in an organisation, to the dynamic interactions that are able to exist between multiple leaders and followers (Timperley, 2005: 396). These roles are not top to bottom, but are assigned to a dynamic person who is able to carry out the role.

Distributive leadership is an ideal leadership style but its practicality is questionable, as posited by researchers such as Timperley (2005) and MacBeath (2005), who note that there is limited empirical evidence in the literature of how this leadership style works in practice.

2.9 A model of successful school leadership

Developing one successful model of leadership is becoming increasingly more difficult (Bush and Glover: 2003). Leithwood et al (2004) argues that developing leaders should have a repertoire of practices and the capacity to choose the appropriate one when the need arises. It is also apparent that research on forms and effects of leadership is relative to the contexts principals find themselves in (Bush and Glover, 2009: 32), where the way in which they respond to and adapt to their contexts determines their success. Consequently, an integrated model of leadership is recommended by Bush and Glover (2009).

2.10 Chapter overview

This chapter presented a review of literature that looks at the role of the principal providing leadership, direction and co-ordination within a school. The principal's main focus should be to develop and maintain effective educational programmes within his/her school and to promote the improvement of teaching and learning within the school. In addition there are a number of leadership models in which principals need to adopt situational leadership strategies in order to be successful. Good leadership practices promote learner achievement even in unpromising contexts. The theoretical framework adopted in this study is based on the work of Leithwood et al. (2006), especially their four core categories of practices that are common to successful leadership. These categories were further redefined into a small number of more specific leadership behaviours. The next chapter discusses the methodology used in the study.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the rationale for a qualitative approach to this study. Qualitative research is an accepted methodology for many important questions, with significant contributions to both theory and practice. Unlike quantitative research designs, which are fairly uniform in structure, qualitative designs can vary significantly, depending on the theoretical framework, philosophy, and assumptions about the nature of knowledge and field of study (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 320). The distinguishing characteristic of qualitative research is that behaviour is studied as it occurs naturally. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), however, there is no manipulation or control of behaviour or settings, nor are there any externally imposed constrains. Rather, the setting is an actual classroom, school, clinic or neighbourhood. This is why qualitative research is often described as field research; it takes place out in the field or contextual setting (ibid.).

This research pursues insight into the way in which principals in unpromising contexts are able to maintain productive school environments and to contribute positively to learner achievement. The qualitative research approach is used in this study as it is best suited to the nature of the study. After explaining the choice of research approach, I discuss the population, sample, and data collection and analysis procedures that were used in this research.

A qualitative case study methodology was used to explore the real-life context of the phenomenon of successful schools in unpromising contexts in Klipspruit, Soweto. The two Quintile 3 (no fee) schools were purposely identified for this study, as both of them operate in high poverty socioeconomic circumstances, and are considered as successful schools by their respective communities. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with both principals and their SMT members. This was aided by open-ended questions, related to the research questions and that were tape-recorded. A degree of trustworthiness was established

before interviews took place to facilitate more meaningful interaction with interviewees. Interview summaries were then compiled. Observations of the facilities with photographic recordings and field notes were used to provide further context of the case studies.

3.2 Research paradigm

The positivism and the interpretative approach are important to research as scientific, evidence-based inquiry (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 5-6). These two major paradigms, positivism and interpretive, provide the foundation for different types of educational research namely, quantitative and qualitative research. Defining the two approaches allow for a sound understanding of the approaches. Firstly, the positivist approach allows for limitations, contextual factors and use of multiple theories within which research findings are interpreted (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 5-6). Then we have the interpretive approach, which is a paradigm for generating knowledge, and includes systemic procedures, but is able to maintain that there are multiple constructed realities (ibid.). This is unlike the positivist approach, which postulates a single reality.

The research for this study employed an intensive qualitative interpretative methodology, which included a constructivist perspective (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 321-330). This method allowed for great insight into the work of the principal with relevance to best practices. A qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth look at the case studies and enabled the researcher to gain an understanding of the principals' relation to his/her context with the aim of understanding how successful principals promote learner achievement in their schools.

A qualitative study approach was conceded for the collection and analysis of data, so as to provide meaningful insight into leadership practices of the principal in order to promote teaching and learning. This is because, according to Mouton and Marais (2010: 153), qualitative research is regarded as scientific because it is "characterised by the suspension of belief". McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 322) further note that the researcher "becomes immersed in the situation and the phenomenon studied" and the researcher therefore assumed an interactive social role in which to record observations and interactions with participants. A qualitative research allowed the researcher the opportunity to utilize the respondents' own

words and actions to describe a view of the world they inhabit (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 321-330). This was important to this investigation as it seeks to explore, and to capture the feelings and experiences of the two primary school principals and their management teams, from their own point of view.

3.3 Research approach

Many case studies and empirical investigations have been conducted over a number of years on school effectiveness (Christie, 2007). This is in line with the objectives of this study, as it seeks to investigate the underlying processes of leadership and how this is practised in different contexts.

The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to explore and find information using a variety of methods allowing a deeper search for meaning. As analysis, two case studies allows for collection of data through interviews, observations and the review of documents at the school site. By using case study research, the researcher is able to establish 'how or why something occurs' (Yin, 2003: 10).

As suggested by Yin (2003) a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, "especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". A virtue of a case study approach from the point of view of the study is that it allows for multi-perspective analyses. "This means that the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of the participants, but also of the relevant groups of participants and the interaction between them" (Yin, 2003: 11).

A qualitative approach was chosen deliberately, as the nature of the study does not warrant the researcher to make predictions; as opposed to a quantitative approach. Instead, this approach is guided by interests in whether the findings of this study supports or modify existing ideas (Creswell, 2008).

3.4 Population

The term population in research refers to a group of elements or cases, and this could be individuals, objects, or events, all of which conform to specific criteria, and which allows for one to generalise the results of the research (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 129). This sample was selected from a circuit of approximately 33 schools in Klipspruit. Each circuit is subdivided into clusters of 10 to 15 schools. There are three clusters in total in this particular circuit, with three cluster leaders and one circuit manager. Out of the 33 schools, less than a third of the schools are functioning as 'normal' schools. The others are predominantly underperforming schools (DoE, 2013).

3.5 Sample

It is evident that the power and logic of qualitative sampling is that a few cases studied in depth yield many insights about the topic, whereas the logic of probability sampling depends on selecting a random or statistically representative sample for generalisation to a larger population (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 326). Furthermore, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that although there are statistical rules for probability sample size, there are only guidelines for qualitative sample size. As a result, a qualitative sample can range from 1 to 40 or more (ibid.), therefore, a qualitative sample seems small compared with the sample needed to generalise to a larger population group.

A purposive sample was used in this study. The purpose of sampling in qualitative research is to increase the utility of the information obtained from small samples (Patton, 2001: 242). In addition, the purpose of sampling is to "select information-rich cases for in-depth study" (ibid.), when one wants to gain clear insight and understanding without generalising.

The sampling strategies used in a qualitative study include individuals, groups, documents, reports and sites. For the purposes of this study, individuals, reports and sites were used. Regardless of the form of the data, purposeful sampling is used.

In order to obtain information about the phenomena under study, the following criteria were considered most appropriate for the purposes of this study:

- Both schools are located in the same area geographical area (Klipspruit);
- they are both successful schools in unpromising contexts; and
- these schools have performed well in the ANA exams in the past three years.

After prior assurance of confidentiality and ethical accountability, an in-depth interview was conducted with each principal and selected member of the SMT, as well as two parents in each of the two schools. The principals and deputy principals in the sample schools were individually interviewed along with the heads of departments (HOD's) in each school.

The limitation of purposive sampling is that the findings derived cannot be generalised to the larger population of primary schools in Gauteng. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), purposive sampling is often a feature of qualitative research, where the researcher handpicks the cases to include in the sample, based on what the study is about and what the researcher is seeking. In this regard, two Klipspruit township primary schools were chosen as sites in order to try and understand the role of the principal and SMT in managing teaching and learning. However, this can contribute to successful practices used by these principals to promote good leadership practices of schools in similar contexts.

3.6 Data collecting methods

Data collecting methods in the study were interviews, observations and documents. These methods were:

- individual semi-structured interviews with the two principals and members of the SMTs;
- observation of the work of the school principals; and
- collection and scrutiny of documents that relate to good leadership practices and learner performance.

The interviews consisted of open-ended questions. This took a greater degree of input from the participants. The interviews were aimed at providing answers to the research questions. The interview schedule provided for questions on the school's key values and principles; the

most serious poverty-related problems the school has to cope with, and how these are overcome; and the specific leadership qualities needed to continuously improve teaching and learning in high-poverty schools.

The interviews of all participants were tape-recorded. Interview summaries were compiled on the basis of the recordings and the researcher's field notes. For the sake of trustworthiness, the summaries will be sent to each principal for verification of correctness and comprehensiveness, where applicable. In addition to the interviews, observations of the school facilities, premises and surroundings were undertaken. Observation data was captured by the researcher through the use of field notes.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

Interviews were tape-recorded and this was followed by verbatim transcriptions. Qualitative data analysis was used because the researcher aimed to gain a clear understanding of the situations and processes of the schools (Creswell, 2008: 153). Once collected, the data for the study was analysed using appropriate qualitative research techniques in order to identify patterns of behaviour. The data was then categorised into themes that emerged from the findings, which were shaped by the questions and answers of the participants in the research. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 467-470), data analysis is largely about organising data into categories and identifying patterns.

Coding schemes were designed for each category and patterns using Creswell's (2008) model of interpretational analysis. The grounded theory analysis was used to inductively analyse the participants' interview responses. These were compared to the conceptual frame of good practices by Leithwood et al. (2006). It is also possible to use the same codes across different probes, and where the coding of responses was found to be identical, they were compared for consistency and similarity.

3.8 Ethical considerations

The settings and participants were not directly identifiable in the research and the location and features of the settings were disguised to appear similar to several possible places. Code names for the schools and participants were used (School A and School B, principal from School A and B, SMT from School A and B). Although physical harm to informants seldom occurs in qualitative research, it is possible that participants may experience humiliation, and/or loss of trust. The researcher ensured that a sense of caring and fairness remained part of the researchers thinking, actions and approach.

The four pillars of ethics were strictly adhered to by the researcher, which include: confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent and the right to withdraw. These terms were discussed in detail according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 339). Firstly, confidentiality requires that the settings of the participants should not be identifiable and needs to be disguised by the researcher. Researchers have a dual responsibility to protect the participants' confidentiality from individuals as well as the informants from the general public. Secondly, anonymity is important, as it allows the participant to feel safe when expressing feelings and beliefs, as pseudonyms were used to ensure that the identities of participants are not disclosed. Thirdly, informed consent deals with the researcher gaining permission to interview participants on the terms of the participants, with regards to time and place; and fourthly, the participants had the right to withdraw from the research at any given time. Consent forms were signed by all participants (Appendices, A-H). Therefore, the researcher ensured that all participants held a clear understanding of the process that would follow concerning the study, and at no point did the researcher mislead the participants.

3.9 Validity, reliability and triangulation

This qualitative study depended greatly on the extent to which the researcher was able to build trust and maintain good relations with participants, without becoming non-judgemental and respecting the norms of the situation. As McMillan and Schumacher (2010) have explained researchers use all their personal experiences and abilities of engagement, balancing the analytical and creative through empathetic understanding and profound respect for participants' perspectives. Qualitative researchers are able to provide logical extension

findings, which enables others to understand similar situations and apply the findings in research or practical situations (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 335). Authenticity is the faithful reconstruction of participants' perceptions. Where the reader is able to relate or connect with informants and situations (ibid.).

Reliability is "the extent to which a measure yields the same answers, however and whenever it is carried out, whereas validity is the extent to which it gives the correct answers" (Kirk & Miller, 1986: 19). According to Merriam (2008, 209) all research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. Being able to trust research results is especially important to professionals in applied fields, because practitioners intervene in people's lives (ibid.).

Merriam (2008: 209-210) agrees that reliability is problematic in social sciences, because human behaviour is never static. Qualitative research mainly uses trustworthiness of data and triangulation. In this case, it was the SMT and parents from schools with similar contexts as well as similar academic results in the ANA examinations. Regardless of the type of research, validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualisation, as well as the way in which the data is collected, analysed and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented (ibid.). This study has identified interviews, observations and document analysis as methods for gathering data. The three methods ensure the credibility and validity of the results, and thereby triangulate. In addressing consistency and accuracy of findings, I cross-checked evidence with the literature in the field as well as theoretical framework and this was used to verify the authenticity of the results. The following chapter presents the data that was collected for investigation.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Presentation

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the findings of the study. A detailed description and analysis of the two case study schools is presented individually, as School A and School B. The chapter starts with a general outline of how many participants were chosen in each school, and why these schools were chosen for this study. This is followed by findings presented per individual school with regards to the background and context of the schools, site observations, and documentary analysis of the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results and the presentation of the interviews of each participant.

The selection of participants in School A consisted of five participants. These participants were: the principal, there was no deputy principal, two HOD's and two parents. School B consisted of six participants namely; the principal, the deputy principal, two HOD's and two parents. Each participant was interviewed individually. The main purpose of including parents in the research study was to obtain an outside perspective of the role of the principal and SMT in managing teaching and learning at the school.

This research is informed by the assumption that the principals of School A and School B are focused on managing teaching and learning. Looking at both schools' past ANA results, these schools have been successful in unpromising contexts. These schools are located in disadvantaged areas and are often the recipients of higher than average numbers of students with diverse ethnic backgrounds, and low literacy levels. The net result of the powerful amalgam of social and economic problems means that it is more difficult to improve schools in challenging contexts because of the multiple problems faced by both teachers and learners at these schools (Harris and Chapman, 2004). Many successful schools in unpromising contexts face complex dilemmas in striving to achieve well in a competitive context where they do not have the advantages of successful mainstream schools. An enduring legacy of apartheid in South Africa has been the dysfunctionality of many historically disadvantaged

African schools (Christie, 2001). Schools are faced with the ever increasing demands of society where schooling provides vastly different experiences for different students. Poverty is a painful reality for many, though some people experience a great deal of wealth. The inequalities of apartheid are still prevalent even today. Christie (2008), for example, notes that South Africa is one of the most unequal countries of the world with regards to education, yet admits there are schools which continue to produce good academic performances.

This study is an exploration of two schools set in similar contexts, and the role of the principal, as well as the SMT's contributions to learner achievement in primary schools found in unpromising contexts. The principal together with the SMT occupy the pivotal position in the school, and must therefore be the educational leaders whose main focus is the provision of a quality educational experience for students.

The struggle for survival of high-poverty schools is well documented (Kamper, 2008). Some have overcome poverty-related odds and performed exceptionally well, prompting interest in schools that have achieved better than the norm framed by this study. Christie (2008) notes, that there are various levels of performances of schools within the South African education system. The schools chosen are not representative of 'the best' in the system, nor are they 'excellent' schools. They are schools that perform well under conditions that are typical of previously advantaged schools of the inherited South African education system (ibid.). I would argue that understanding how these schools manage to send happy, motivated learners out into the world inevitably arises the question as to whether the leadership and SMT competencies within these schools are directly related to their success.

4.2 Findings of School A

4.2.1 Background and context of School A

The high performing school A is located in Klipspruit, Soweto. The school is a co-ed, public school organisation. It services communities who are mostly disadvantaged and unemployed. A large number of the children attending these schools come from informal settlements like Motsoaledi, Kliptown, Freedom Park, Nomzamo Park, Holomisa Camp and other townships like Orlando, Diepkloof, Pimville and Klipspruit. Some even come from as far as the inner

city of Johannesburg. These schools are characterised by high levels of multiculturalism and multilingualism (Christie, 2008). The school has a male principal, between the ages of 40-60 years old, together with a small staff compliment. This school starts from Grade 5-7, with a staff allocation of about 15 members.

4.2.2 Site observation

School A is situated in Klipspruit Soweto. It is a Quintile 3 school and is a no fees school. On arrival at School A, I was most impressed by the reception I received at the entrance of the school. A security guard took my details down and informed me how I should proceed to the principal's office, which gave the sense of safety learners necessarily required. I proceeded to the school grounds after the bell had just rung as it was the end of the school's break, and was pleasantly surprised by the quiet manner in which learners were returning to their classrooms. Within a few minutes, all the learners were settled in class and the teachers were involved in teaching. The gardens of the school were well maintained, and the surroundings were humble, but clean, and everyone had a friendly disposition. I was met by the principal, who took me for a tour around the school, highlighting interesting projects that the school was embarking on, such as an economical vegetable garden, and parents were pointed out, assisting in the maintenance and upgrades at the school. I was then shown to the principals' office, which although it was small, was functional, and served many purposes. The principal allowed me to use this venue for all the interviews.

4.2.3 Document analysis of School A

The principal allowed me access to various documents regarding policies and departmental regulations. These were also displayed on the walls of the office. Timetables for both the learners and teachers were displayed on a notice board, such that the principal was able to locate classes as well as teachers at any given time. There was a book in which minutes of various meeting were kept, and also typed minutes that were submitted to the department of education on request. Having read through the various documents the recordings below was of interest to this study, for the way in which it described the variety of activities in which the school took part:

The school was fortunate to be adopted by Investec employees and management, who constantly provide our learners with food parcels, blankets, clothing including takkies and many other things, year in, year out since 2009. (documented: 31 July 2009)

Learners have access to computers in the computer room and tablets in the classrooms. Learners and Teachers share these tablets for the purpose of teaching and learning… (documented: 31 January 2014)

… Our school HOD together with learners after our learners received a trophy for neatness, and they also received eye lenses (spectacles) *to boost their visual impacts that are affecting them…* (documented: 30 April 2014)

The paper-work of the school that enables daily functioning was in place, and this was a positive reflection on the school. Scott and Morrison (2007) mention that documents are important for a researcher to have, because they add value and also contribute to the development of key concepts and the construction of research instruments. This is supported by McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 361) who maintain that documents describe the functions and values of an organisation, as well as how people would come to perceive it (ibid.).

4.2.4 School Performance of School A

The table below is an indicator of School A's performances in the Annual National Assessments (ANA's) over a period of three years.

Table 4.1 School Performance according to the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results 2011-2013

	2011	2011	2012	2012	2013	2013
Grade	English	Maths	English	Maths	English	Maths
5	17%	28%	43%	32%	60%	34%
6	24%	32%	43%	29%	57%	37%

The table 4.1 reflects School A's ANA results over a period of three years. The English results indicate an increase each year. The Maths results, although still low, show an increase each year as well.

4.2.5 Interviews

Interviews are one of the methods used to collect data from participants in this study. The interviews consist of open-ended questions, where each interview was provided a time allocation of 45 minutes per participant. This would take a greater degree of input from the participants. The interviews were aimed at providing answers to the research questions. The interview schedule provided for questions on the school's key values and principles; including the most serious poverty-related problems the school has to cope with, and how these are overcome; the specific leadership qualities needed to continuously improve teaching and learning in high-poverty schools.

4.2.6 Interview with the principal of School A

The principal of School A is a male between the ages of 40-60 years old. He has his HDE, ACE and, BED Honours and is currently completing his Masters in Educational Management at Wits University. He has been in the position of principalship for more than five years. After explaining to the principal the procedure for the interviews and the subject matter concerning my research we settled on a date and time to meet. The interview took place in the principal's office. My first approach was to gain an understanding of the participant's interpretation and implementation of leadership within the school.

Response to questions relating to leadership roles in School A

The principal of School A's response to his style of leadership was very insightful. It was clear that this principal was knowledgeable with regards to the various forms of leadership styles and was fully aware that one leadership style cannot be adopted to resolve all issues (Bush) encountered by in the daily running of a school, as cited below:

Firstly my understanding of leadership is that we have democratic and autocratic styles. Both are very different. If we look at pre 1994 leadership, in schools where in the line [sic] *with the apartheid, hence autocratic styles were implemented. This system was a respected system. But post 1994* [sic] *changed this view. Policy also had to be changed. Based on all discussions and all involvement of staff, it is not always possible. I think I represent democracy but sometimes, people are mandated. There are some decisions that need to be taken as a leader. These are non- negotiable, for example, if teachers are absent or if teachers don't follow protocol, by compromising the standards of education. As a manager, I need a team, committees to assist in different areas. I consult with the various committees. I am a democratic leader but policy is non- negotiable.*

This response highlighted that leadership is contextual. The HOD 1 of School A supported the principals' responses by proposing the fact that the responsibility of leading the school was a shared effort. HOD 1 and 2 both commented on the various meetings that were held on a weekly basis by the principal. Here, important management decisions were discussed and where possible consensus was reached. However, the principal emphasised that it was not always possible to reach a consensus; nor is it always possible to negotiate protocols made by the Department of Education, as being a public school would mean that there are times when policy ought to be adhered to. It was clear that consultation took place where it was deemed necessary, but decisions that affected the effectiveness of the school took preference.

When interviewed on the way in which the principal understands and maintains his role, his response was as follows:

The role of the principal is to ensure that teaching and learning takes place and that the schools own vision is realised. We need to work as a collective. It is important to lead from behind. I'm a good listener, I take advice that is given. I see the school as a learning community, with a shared vision. My influence on decision making and curriculum is important. I feel that at the work place, we spend a lot of our time it's therefore important that we enjoy our work place. I'm open up to working with others and to maintaining a high standard of work. Good relations are important. There will be situations or times of conflict but as a principal. I need to ensure that harmony prevails, the smooth running of the school is important. I have to manage the conflict.

I also have to be un-biased and treat everyone equally. Sometimes we have to change the office to be [sic] *a court.*

The extract above shows according to the principal that the school maintains good relations and high levels of professionalism. As the head of the organisation, the principal should not take sides when conflict arises, but ought to establish a common ground so that all members of staff feel that they are treated fairly. This is important in a school community, as it builds good working relations. If a school is to be a community, then there has to be harmony amongst all involved. The principal should be the driving force for his staff.

When asked about his important attributes and his staff's perception of him the principal responded as follows:

Well, people will judge you as to how you conduct yourself. I do have an open door policy. It's difficult to say. I'm approachable but also stand my ground there have been instances when I had to make tough decisions with close friends, but I have to realise my position and make the right choices. Even if the individuals are close to me.

According to this principal, he was able to maintain his professional role. Irrespective of the consequences, he remains focused, even though some choices are not favourable to him within his social circle. This degree of professionalism is admirable, and supports that his attributes are based on high moral and ethical values. Being a religious individual he is both compassionate and caring but maintains order, which he considers to be achallenge.

Responses to questions on the role of the principal in monitoring teaching and learning specific to the curriculum

In response to the question regarding the role of the school principal in monitoring teaching and learning, one principal said:

… my involvement in the curriculum is to guide and support educators. I don't mix managerial position with politics. I try to create a balance. I believe in: 'less time talking, more time working'.

The importance of overseeing curriculum issues is evident. The principal acknowledges that the most important work of a school leader is to oversee the running of the school and monitor the process of teaching and learning in the school. This is in agreement with the South African Standards for school leadership Draft Policy (2005), where the core purpose of principalship is to provide leadership and management in all areas of the school, with the aim of enabling the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning takes place, and in doing so, promoting a high standard of learner achievement.

When asked how the principal was able to achieve improved learner performances, his response was a follows:

I am mostly goal driven. I have done this by bringing in counsellors and advisers from different organisations to serve as motivational speakers. It's important to motivate on the different curriculum programmes. I try to support them socially, we find ourselves in [the midst of] *crime and poverty* [in this area]. *I am not afraid to do referrals of learners for various needs, I they are important. I work closely with social workers. The feeding scheme is important and a great help. I managed to get sponsors to assist our girl learners with toiletries. Our school appeared on TV for the positive things that we are doing. Through the project, we were able to obtain 12 pairs of spectacles for some of our learners; in doing so we have also dealt with learning barriers. My staff's very motivated they have intrinsic motivation and this has influenced marks positively as well.*

Therefore, the SMT, together with the principal, have an influence on learner performance. The principal supports and capacitates his teachers to share their expertise and work as a team. He believes that teachers should be honest about their capabilities, but ought to take the

initiative to empower themselves as well. Outside help has had a positive influence on the school community. When the school was given (40 tablets as part of the trial by *Gauteng On-line*) an initiative by the Department of Education, the principal took it upon himself to learn how to use the tablets and was so persistent about learning this new technology that he successfully obtained the assistance of an independent NGO for training, where the school now has a professional IT specialists assisting both the teachers and students with the implementation and networking of the tablets.

Responses to questions on the functionality of the school by the principal

In response to the questions regarding the principal's understanding of the core practices of a school, he said:

> *My understanding of the core practice of a school is that you need a manager, and governance. The position of management is assigned to the principal and the position of governance is assigned to the SGB. The school needs both these things to function and run well.*

The principal envisions his main duty as a manager to be that of someone who ensures that the school functions at an optimal level. The purpose statement and the vision statement of the school is to ensure that all learners are treated in a way that would promote teaching and learning and good performances regardless of their socioeconomic status.

It was clear that this principal was interested in a safe and positive learning environment for all stakeholders of the school. His passion for good school practices was evident, this, once again, explains why this school was performing well despite it being a Quintile 3 school in an unpromising context.

4.2.7 Interview with HOD 1 of School A

HOD 1 is a male between the ages of 30-40 years old and has been in the teaching profession for over fifteen years. He has also been a member of the SMT for more than five years. He is an HOD of the phase that entails extensive leadership accountability, particularly when it comes to curriculum issues. He holds an HDE and BEd Honours from the University of Transkei.

Responses to the questions involving the participant's leadership role in the school as an HOD

When ask about the impact of the role of HOD 1 on the functionality of the school, he said that as an HOD and a member of the SMT, he was required to 'set the example' and to be prepared for the implementation of the curriculum, as this was a public school, following CAPS, where the demands were very high with the implementation of a fairly new curriculum.

> *As the HOD I need to ensure and prepare in time. (aahm) I need to make sure that teachers are following the pace* […] *set by the department. I do moderation for learner's books, and I check term exams. I am the link between the principal and the educators. In as far as school work is concerned. I need to take the summaries to the principal, so* [that] *he can compare and give it to the IDSO.*

Being a public school means that the school head needs to keep abreast with various administrative issues. It is clear that HOD 1 plays a pivotal role in this regard. He is responsible for ensuring that tasks set by the teachers are moderated, and are of the required standards (according to CAPS). He also needs to provide the necessary termly statistics to the principal. The principal submits the results to the IDSO for scrutiny. He considers himself the link between the principal and the teachers of the school. This suggests that his leadership role has an impact on the functioning of the school.

His response to involvement in curriculum development was that he needed to ensure that the teachers in the school were working. The moderation of lesson plans and work schedules had to be analysed by him to ensure that teachers were adequately prepared for the implementation of each of their subjects. The moderation process was a time consuming activity but essential to the instructional curriculum.

> *As the phase HOD I need to make sure that teachers are working. I need to ensure that lessons are well prepared. I moderate schedules for files, I make sure that educators are not slow as we need to keep up with CAPS, and remedial work is done for the weaker learners. I look at learner sample books and tell teachers how to give support after I have moderated the work. In subject meetings I encourage educators professionally. I share knowledge and also encourage them to attend workshops.*

In an effort to support learners who have not fully understood the content of subjects taught, HOD 1 advises the teachers on methods and strategies that might be implemented. He uses his knowledge to empower educators by demonstrating ways of dealing with various issues during professional development workshops. In addition, he encourages them to improve their abilities on a professional level. He has been supported with his implementation strategies by the principal and this makes him feel that he is contributing to the leadership of the school in a positive way. The staff development workshops have been successful and have resulted in improved results over the years. Although HOD 1 instructs teachers to meet specific requirements, his leadership style is democratic as he values opinions of others.

Responses to participants' view on the principal's contributions to leadership

In response to the questions about the principals' leadership style and its contributions to the running of the school, HOD 1 indicated that the principal has given him guidance on matters relating to policy implementation and curriculum development, as follows:

> *The principal does give me guidance. We often get polices to explain to the teachers. When new policies, come out he gives the policies to me and explains the policies to me first. He also* [from] *time to time has meetings with us. He guides us. Most of the time, our meetings are on a Thursday.*

He acknowledges that the principal is not a leader without expectations, but one who implements mandates and ensure that they are fulfilled. HOD 1 has agreed that jobs are delegated, as it is impossible for a single individual to ensure that everything is functioning well in an organisation as big as a school. This raises the question of team work and collegiality. HOD 1 enjoys the authority given to him. Good leadership practices are definitely being promoted at the school as there are a number of events that are taking place there. HOD 1 feels that he has learnt a lot from the way the school is led by the principal. He looks up to the principal as a role model, and sees the principal as someone who makes the daily duties of teachers easier.

The responses to the questions about the positive impact of leadership on the school

When HOD 1 was asked about the positive impact of leadership on the school his response was that he received guidance from the principal. The principal guided HOD 1 in matters relating to policy and curriculum development.

> *The main function of the leader is to lead teachers and give them guidance. And also manage them accordingly. It's important not to go against policies we should follow policies set by government. We mustn't go against policies because policies are important. It's there to guide us. Give us direction. Like the finance police* [sic]*, it's there because it's like running a business you won't have direction without it. Policies give good guidance.*

The principal follows policies set by the Department of Education and well as the policies that schools are to develop on contextual basis. The staff of School A has seen this as being

professional. They feel a sense of safety and understand that they have collectively agreed on implementation issues regarding curriculum, school welfare and the financial status of the school. The principal is held in high regard for adhering to policies. His staff feels that he is an accountable leader. The position of the principal requires skills that foster professional growth as well as organisational improvement.

4.2.8 Interview with HOD 2 of School A

HOD 2 has been at the school for more than 5 years but in the position of HOD for only a year. HOD 2 is a male and aged between 30-40 years old. He is the intersen HOD for the school and is responsible for curriculum issues, particularly with regards to Mathematics. He currently has a teaching degree, but would like to further his studies in the future.

Responses to the questions pertaining to the participant's leadership role in the school as an HOD

HOD 2 is actively involved in the running of the school. He is responsible for solving curriculum-based issues. Although he has not been in the position for long like other SMT members, he is fully aware of the responsibilities of an HOD. He ensures that staff is kept up to date, by having meetings on a regular basis. In doing so, issues are dealt with as they occur.

> *As a leader I call meetings to support educators. In the meetings I encourage them to work as a team. I also develop the educators when they lack information. For example, when they need help with maths fractions, I will show them how to teach the lesson, so that if they understand, then the learners will also understand.*

The above interviews extracts underscore the importance of leading by example. It is clear that HOD 2 sees the need to practice subject matter with teachers in an effort to empower them in the class room, and as a result, supports good classroom practices. This is essential to maintaining good ANA results as well as contributing to curriculum development. By working closely with teachers HOD 2 adopts a leadership style that promotes participation

and an atmosphere of collegiality. He feels that his input is valued and implemented within the school's leadership programme.

Responses to participants view of the principals contributions to leadership

The principal is seen as a role model by his staff. He is admired for his punctuality and the professional manner in which he conducts himself at school functions, such as at assemblies and awards evenings. He implements good practices that are visible to others by arriving first at school, and often being the last to leave. The principal is seen as someone who is very knowledgeable with regard to policy and curriculum instruction.

> *Yes, I really feel that I'm given guidance by my principal. Yes, you see, if I ask questions, he sits down and explain deeply. Sometimes he gives me far more information then I was asking for. He knows a lot about teaching and he guides me and explains policies to me. We feel free to come to him because we know he will help us. We are willing to come to him. He is one who goes the extra mile. He will assist in every way without becoming impatient.*

It is evident that the principal of this school is involved in both direct and indirect supervision of teaching and learning. Even though principals are generally caught up with administrative duties, this principal plays a leading role in monitoring the process of teaching and learning in the school. This is in agreement with the South African Standard for Leadership Draft Policy (2005), which states that the core purpose of principalship is to provide leadership and management in all areas of the school, so as to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning take place, and to promote the highest possible standards of learner achievement.

The responses to the questions about the positive impact of leadership on the school

In response to the question regarding the positive impact of leadership on the school, HOD 2 indicated that he is happy with the daily running of the school. What was highlighted was the

ability of the principal to adjust his leadership strategies to accommodate issues that teachers would have was done on a daily basis over lunch, and this was the time when they were guided by the principal in an informal way, so as to arrive at solutions to issues they may have.

> *The main function I see is teamwork. We are taking that thing together. You see together 'we can move mountains'. When this happens often at school* [...] *we are together, we work together. Here there are no camps. We are a family. We have a cooked lunch together. During lunch we discuss the challenges that we experience in class. So that we can come up with ideas; this helps teachers to overcome the problem.*

The extract above shows that, as far as HOD 2 is concerned, the principal expected to support his staff. He is also expected to be sensitive to their problems, and to provide support where need arises. Teachers do not feel as if they are neglected, but rather, the importance of teamwork is emphasised. The principal is supportive towards the development of teachers at his school by empowering them to attend training in areas of concern. By using consensus to reach solutions, according to HOD 2, the principal is sharing the duties of leadership with his staff.

4.2.9 Interview with parent 1 of School A

Parent 1 has been involved with the school for the past two years. As a member of the SGB he is directly involved in school governance. He holds a matric certificate and a further Education Programme Certificate in Arts and Culture from Wits University. After formal introductions had taken place, I proceeded to establish with him why school A was the parents' first choice.

Response to the parents' choice of school

Parent 1 responded that the school in question had a good reputation. He further explained that it was a no-fees school, but offered all that fee-paying schools could. This school was, furthermore, close to his home and a safe environment for learners. The school had a good reputation in the community and was a favourite amongst many parents in the surrounding areas.

> *Yes, my child loves this school. She won't miss out from school, not even for a day. She will make sure that she's at school. My child is happy to come to this school.*

It is important that learners feel comfortable in their learning space. The above extract clearly points to the school being a safe and positive environment, and therefore that productive teaching and learning is able to take place. Here, learners are highly motived to learn, which results in a minimal absenteeism. If, however, a learner does stay absent consistently, the matter is brought to the attention of the principal by the teachers, and it is addressed with immediate effect. It goes without saying that a school is only able to function effectively if it has learners to teach. School A makes it a priority to ensure that leaners are attending school such that teaching and learning can take place.

Responses to parents' observations with regard to the management of teaching and learning at School A

Teaching and learning plays a pivotal role in School A. The school is actively involved in educational programmes in which all learners are encouraged to participate. An event like a 'Story Skirmish' is an initiative that challenges learners to read on a competitive level, and takes place annually. School A has introduced this event to promote reading in the school, with the aim to foster lifelong learning.

I think it does there is good teaching taking place here. The programmes at the school are very involved. As parents we can see things like 'Story Skirmish' happening and the computer centre is working. These are things […] *it encourages us as parents you see. We see books of our children because they come home regularly. There* [are] *good text books being used. This is far better than compared with what we had at school in my time.*

Learner's books are monitored and parents have access to them. Parents are encouraged to assist their children with homework tasks and are also informed in advance about projects that would require them to purchase or provide additional materials. The staff of the school is seen as accommodating as they are empathetic towards parents who do not have a good understanding of the curriculum, and assistance is available to such parents. If a matter of concern arises (abuse or neglect) the staff will notify the necessary authorities (social welfare or police). The learner's social welfare is important to the staff, and they aim to protect the learners in an effort to make school a happy and safe environment. The LTSM that is used at the school is in accordance to CAPS, and each learner at the school has access to the necessary LTSM. The school has a fully functional computer centre and a total of 40 portable tablets in operation.

Responses to parents' contributions to the school

In response to the issue of the school valuing parents input, Parent 1 reported that the school has implemented suggestions made by parents, and noted further that the school has regular parent meetings, where various issues pertaining to their children's development are discussed. Parents are kept updated on developments and events at school, using newsletters. It was reported that the school does follow GDE requirements by asking parents to sign indemnity forms for school trips, and also making the whole school assessment plan available for public viewing.

Yes, the school values our input. They do, we have had instances where parents have made suggestions, and the staff has welcomed it. Yes, we get letters of notifications. If

there's meetings or school trips and activities being undertaken they will let us know. We have [to] *sign consent forms. This is also department policy, and the school is following it well. The principal is willing, and I would say he is easy* [sic]. *I would rather say… he is a professional. This works best because there's interaction between the parents, teachers and pupils. This makes us as parents confident in him.*

The above extract underscores the fact that curriculum is the central focus of the school and are responsible for the implementation of this curriculum. Bryk and Schneider (2002) are of the opinion that school principals are crucial for shaping trust in schools, which has an influence on the effectiveness of the school. In order to achieve a successful school, the principal must lead in developing and sustaining relational trust, which creates a climate for success.

4.2.10 Interview with parent 2 of School A

Parent 2 is a female, who holds a matric certificate, and who is currently unemployed. She is the deputy chair of the SGB. She has a daughter in Grade 6 at the school, and has been affiliated with this school for over five years.

Response to the parents' choice of school

Parent 2 indicated that her choice of school was based on practical considerations, especially the fact that she lives close to the school, and the fact that the school is a no-fee paying school, making it financially more attractive to parents. The school has a good reputation in the community as well.

I'm a parent. I'm not working and this is a no fees school. So, that's why I've chosen this school. Also, this school is close to home for my child. I don't have the money, but I still want a good education for my child. My children like school. Even if my child is sick, they are [sic] *coming to school.*

The above extract reinforces the fact that this school is a safe environment for children to the extent that they would attend school even when they are ill.

Responses on parents' observations with regard to the management of teaching and learning at School A

The responses by Parent 2 with regard the management of teaching and learning at the school was in agreement with Parent 1's sentiments, but with the reservation that the content was not abundantly clear to learners especially in Mathematics. Parents could, however, consult with teachers, and gain assistance pertaining to issues that might emerge.

> *I must make sure my child is doing the work I have to sign, to say the work was done. I must also see that my child understands the work for tests and exams. They explain to us as parents, they also listen if we are having a problem. These teachers understand the pupils and the parents so they always trying to help us.*

The above extract indicates that parents are encouraged by the school to take a leading role in their children's education. Assistance is given to parents to reach this goal, where a triangulation of teacher, parent and learner effort is able to be observed. This is important, as this is the means by which the seriousness of teaching and learning is amplified. In addition, a community support structure is evident.

Responses to parent's contributions to the school

In response to questions about parent's contributions, Parent 2 agreed that the school has taken their contributions seriously. Parents are updated via newsletters and learners diaries on school events. He further indicated that the principal was available if parents needed to talk to him.

The school values our input, yes they do. If I have a problem, I call the principal. I can even talk to the SGB or call them. Yes, they do tell us when things are going to happen at the school. They write letters to us and also they use the diary. Yes "my principal he is [sic]*". I don't have fear for him. When I have a problem I can come and talk to him. He listens to us and I know my talk is confidential.*

Whilst the principals' main function is to deal with the teaching and learning of a school, in this instance, the principal makes an added effort to support parents as well. He seems to have an open door policy, but remains professional in the way in which he conducts matters. The above extract suggests that the stakeholders of the school are able to maintain a high degree of trust and respect for the leader.

4.2.11 Overview of School A

This overview constituted a presentation of the findings of School A. The data collection methods included interviews, observations and document analysis. As far as the interviews were concerned, School A's principal granted me access to the school and was interested in the topic of my study. All the participants were willing to participate and answered questions with ease. From my observations of the site visits, I could conclude that the school was functioning effectively and that the principal was involved in the daily running of the school. With regards to the document analysis, all the relevant documents were either displayed on the walls of the principal's office, or filed in labelled files according to GDE regulations. All documentation was made available for me for research purposes.

4.3 Findings of School B

4.3.1 Background and context of School B

The high performing School B is located in Klipspruit, Soweto. The school is a co-ed, public school organisation from Grade R to Grade Seven. It services communities that are mostly disadvantaged and unemployed. A large number of the children attending these schools come from informal settlements like Motsoaledi, Kliptown, Freedom Park, Nomzamo Park, Holomisa Camp and other townships like Orlando, Diepkloof, Pimville and Klipspruit. Some come from as far as the inner city of Johannesburg. This school is multilingual and

multicultural. The school has a female principal between the ages of 40-60 years old, and a staff compliment of about 20 members.

4.3.2 Site observation

Prior to my arrival at School B, I had been in contact with the principal telephonically. I scheduled an appointment with the principal. My details were taken down by the security guard at the front gate. The school was a big, structured building and there was a palisade fence around the perimeter of the premises. There were a number of cars parked in the teachers parking area. At the reception area, I informed the receptionist that the principal was unable to see me due to an urgent appointment, but extended her sincere apologies. I then scheduled another appointment with the deputy principal, who was very helpful. On my second arrival at the school, I was once again met at the front gate by the security and after having filled in the necessary information, I was shown to the front reception of the school. Once again, I was met by the deputy principal and she had alerted me to the fact that the school had been broken into, and that the security had to be restored and improved, so there was expected to be noise disturbance related to the repairs. I was ushered into the staff room as this was where I was to conduct the interviews. The principal was at a function where she was the recipient of a social prize for community work in the area, but the deputy had assured me that everything else could go ahead as planned. I would meet with the principal later that day. At the time of my arrival the learners were on break and I observed the children playing and laughing. It was comforting to see how happy and safe they felt at school.

4.3.3 Document analysis of School B

The contextual factors of School B on the day were unfavourable, as the school had just been burgled, so the computers had all been stolen. However, the school's SIP, timetables, minutes of meetings and various other regulation documents were available for observation. School B had a book in which they recorded various events. The principal allowed me to read through the book and these were the recordings of interest that were found:

> *The Minister of Education visited us. We are so proud to be a school that is improving and we will continue to strive to improve…* (documented: 31 January 2012)

Our school had two recipients for the National teachers' awards this year a proud moment for us. Well done to the principal and HOD… (documented: 30 September 2013)

…the community church invited the principal to attend an awards celebration today. She was awarded and thanked for her positive contributions to the community… (documented: 31 August 2014)

Once again, as mentioned in the previous chapter, documents of any organisation show that the organisation has got measures in place that supports its' ability to function productively (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 361). School B is actively involved in improving their teaching and learning, and supports community projects.

4.3.4 School performance of School B

The table below is an indicator of School B's performances in the Annual National Assessments (ANA's) over a period of three years.

Table 4.2 School Performance according to Annual National Assessment (ANA) results 2011-2013

	2011	2011	2012	2012	2013	2013
Grade	English	Mathematics	English	Mathematics	English	Mathematics
1	50%	59%	53%	79%	79%	76%
2	43%	58%	57%	38%	70%	65%
3	34%	25%	54%	50%	73%	81%
4	39%	31%	44%	37%	43%	40%
5	32%	32%	45%	37%	39%	50%
6	43%	34%	45%	27%	60%	65%

The above results are favourable and encouraging. This is a positive indication that School B is performing well regardless of its, unpromising context.

4.3.5 Interviews

This research strategy requires information concerning participants' insight into their practice. The open-ended questions in the interviews in this case were more of an advantage, as this allowed for the participant to elaborate on any aspect of their practice and experience. Seven interviews in total were conducted in School B.

4.3.6 Interview with the principal of School B

The principal from School B is a female, between the ages of 50-60 years old. On our introduction, she held a very friendly, but professional disposition. The interview was conducted in her office. This was a fairly big space, and was well furnished. The principal informed me that she had completed her SPTD, BA, BEd Honours at the University of Johannesburg. In 2012, she received an official visit from the Minister of Education and she has also received the National Teachers award.

Response to questions relating to leadership roles in School B

The principal's response to her leadership was practical. She was well-aware that a single leadership style was not possible, and even mentioned that sometimes not everyone on the staff would be happy with her leadership style, but argued that organisational functionality was a priority. She could be perceived as an individual that does not like to be in the spot-light, but is confident in handling most situations. Her leadership style was to empower her staff, so that they became actively involved in the leadership process of the school, leading to a positive response from her staff.

> *I use a number of leadership styles. There is no 'one-size-fits-all'. It depends on the situation. For example, if there is a deadlock, then a decision would have to be made and as a leader, I would make the final decision. I do prefer leading from behind. This allows for the teachers to feel that they have come up with the decision or suggestions. So they take it as* [sic] *it was their decision. As a leader, I'm not going to satisfy everyone all the time. There are times when I have to put my foot down. I think that 99.9% of the time we work well as a staff together.*

The role of a principal is complex, and there are times that one has to be able to lead and manage simultaneously. There are also instances where the role of the principal deviates from the job description, and the principal is required to perform other kinds of roles, such as to be a nurse, lawyer, and even a mother. These situations call for the principal to negotiate the most suitable outcome.

> *I consider myself as* [sic] *a loving person, and a forgiving person. This plays an important role in my duty. I am able to divide schoolwork from my personal life. My personal issues are kept separate. I have sympathy for others. I put myself in the shoes of the other person. I enjoy finding out about my learners getting to know their background is important to me. I try to understand where the child comes from. I try to understand by putting myself in the same situation.*

The principal displays a personal interest in the learners' welfare. In doing so, she builds the school community, towards improving their social conditions to cope with the daily activities expected at school.

Responses to questions regarding the role of the principal in monitoring teaching and learning specific to the curriculum

When asked about her role in monitoring teaching and learning in the school, the principal responded as follows: she was head of curriculum support, and had worked with SGB before she was appointed as principal. She pointed out that with the curriculum taught in the school, support was an important factor, and liaising with other principals and teachers from outside of the school was a useful tool. The principal played an active role in the monitoring and moderation of the school's performance.

> *I have to be 'hands on'* [sic]. *I check learner's books. I do moderation. There is a management plan for assessment. I analyse results and submit it to the Department of*

Education. I compile school results to see where we are and how we are doing. We award certificates, so learners are recognised for their achievements. As you can see. I have just signed all these certificates that will be handed out in assembly.

Professional development was a priority for this principal as she believed that educators needed to be developed continuously. They should be lifelong learners. With continuous changes in curriculum, teachers need to empower themselves to cope with the changes. Empowerment, according to her, was essential to best practices.

Responses to questions on the functionality of the school by the principal

The principals' response to the functionality of the school supported teaching and learning. The teachers, parents and learners were all involved in the learning process at the school.

The core practices of a school are obvious it has to be teaching and learning. Teaching and learning must take place. Support for teaching and learning must, must happen. There's no question about that.

Teachers were expected to be punctual, and absenteeism was not tolerated. In order for the school to function well, they needed systems in place. Parents were well-informed, and also supported the information meetings.

With learners and teachers in isolation it's not favourable we also want the support from home. It's not just our job but the parents as well. When parents and teachers work together it makes our job easier. We have good support from parents. Parents meetings are well-attended. Parents get together for parent teacher day. When you understand the parents and the community the learners come from you end up understanding the learners better.

The context from which the learners came was important to the principal. To improve learner performance, the staff were required to understand the dynamics of the learners they were teaching. This would help them to deal with issues that might arise and which might hinder teaching and learning.

4.3.7 Interview with (acting) Deputy Principal of School B

The deputy principal is a female, and has been with the school for a number of years. She holds a teaching degree as well as a BEd Honours degree. She achieved the National Award for "Excellence in Primary Teaching". She was first in the cluster, and took second place in the district.

Responses to the questions regarding the participant's leadership role in the school as the (acting) Deputy Principal

As the Deputy Principal, her main duties involved ensuring that effective teaching and learning was taking place. This could be achieved by attending workshops to empower her in curriculum development, and ensured that the various departments within the school were functioning optimally. With the introduction of CAPS, the Deputy Principal felt that good lesson preparation and, more importantly, good methods of implementation of core subject knowledge, were essential:

> *I attend workshops. These are different workshops to help with curriculum development. I ensure that every department checks strengths and weaknesses. We are all on same par when we go to these workshops, we are looking for good methods. The workshops help us so that we can produce good lessons in classes* [sic]. *It's important to understand and know the development that's taking place. As acting deputy, it's important that you have to be* [sic] *knowledgeable. I need to know so that I can tell the others what to do.*

An important point made by the Deputy was that the school required a triangulation between the parents, teachers and learners, in order for success to be achieved. This helps to eradicate misconceptions that could arise due to poor communication.

> *I have good relationships with the parents. The school is made up of three people: the teachers, parents and pupils. It's like a three-legged pot we have to work together we can't stand alone. I think we have less challenges because of our good practices*.

Staff development is important at this school, and the deputy principal is actively involved in this process. It does require additional self-development in order to assist teachers. Therefore, the deputy ought to have a good understanding of the requirements. Teachers seem to respond positively to the staff development offered at the school.

> *They have to come. One has to have an instrument to work from look at the CAPS document it's about recording, moderation etc. So, as a leader, you need to help and assist the educators to use these instruments correctly. You also have to know the knowledge base, if you want to teach someone else to do it. Especially* [sic] *I think when you give your expectations after you moderate, they know what to expect. You must come as a helper and a supporter.*

Open communication is key to success. Disputes that may arise within the school are discussed openly, with the aim of reaching a consensus. So, differences are set aside, so as to benefit the learners and encompass the school's mission and vision statements.

Responses to participants view of the principals contributions to leadership

When asked about the principal's contributions to leadership, the deputy responded that the principal took on the role of a mother. She gave the staff direction, and knew them on a personal level. This brought her a deeper understanding of her staff. This also meant that the

staff felt comfortable with their leader. The principal shared her knowledge openly with her staff and empowered them to move forward.

> *You see, if you have a mother who has direction, it's easy. Like our principal is focused on the staff, then you get the leadership direction from that. Our principal is active, and knows her staff well. As an acting deputy principal, under her direction I'm learning a lot for sure. I've learnt that leading the school and giving good practices* [sic] *are important. Like the driver of the bus, she is so knowledgeable (reference to principal). Her skills are contagious.*

The principal is understanding, and allows for staff input, but ultimately focuses on teaching and learning, and the impact this has on the organisation as a whole.

The responses to the questions about the positive impact of leadership on the school

The deputy's response with regards to the impact of leadership style on the school was that the principal should lead by example. The principal is able to guide her staff in the direction in which she wants them to orientate themslves.

> *… through her being our exemplary*[sic]. *Walking not exactly the same walk, but doing what she would have done. All I know is that teaching and learning is taking place, whether the principal is there or not. There is effective teaching and learning taking place. As you can see, when you came into the school it was* break [time]. *Now after break, the staffroom is empty, all the teachers are back in their classes and the learners are working. Even though the principal is not here, what she has taught us is still taking place.*

The development and support of the staff has impacted positively on the school, to the extent that even in the absence of the principal, teachers continue to carry out their duties for the

day. The leadership of this school has created a happy, stimulating and functional environment, promoting good productivity.

4.3.8 Interview with HOD 1 of School B

The HOD 1 of school B was between the ages of 30-40 years old. She had started at the school in 2002, and had been with the school for the past 12 years. Her first qualification was an HDE, and she also completed the ACE training specialising in Life Orientation and Guidance. She was currently the HOD of the Foundation Phase.

Responses to the questions involving the participant's leadership role in the school as an HOD

According to HOD 1, her job had many responsibilities, as she was a member of various committees. This is mandatory in a public school, where the paper-work sometimes becomes overwhelming. HOD 1 had a positive attitude towards mentoring both the existing and new staff in her phase. Regular meetings with the staff played an important role in good functionality of the phase.

> *I manage the teachers by conducting workshops. For the new teachers, I help them with ways to cope in the grade* [sic], *and the old ones as well. I belong to different committee's example the LTSM, SBST and so forth.*

In addition, there was moderation of lesson preparation files as well as learners' books, which had to be conducted regularly. Curriculum is monitored to ensure that teachers are deliver lessons that promote positive learning for the learners. Where there are areas of concern, they are dealt with by the HOD. The teachers respond positively to the guidance they receive from the HOD.

Yes they do respond positively, because we always run workshops for them. If you (hold the position) *as an HOD, you must know that all will come to you if they have a problem. I help where I can help. Sometimes I am unable to help because I have my own work to do.*

What was of major concern for the HOD 1 was that the demands of the position were sometimes overwhelming. As an individual, she was obliged to assist the teachers, as well as meet her own deadlines, and this was difficult for her. Being in the position of authority required her to know what was happening most of the time, and she felt that she had no one to really confide in when it came to her personal stress.

Responses to participants view of the principals contributions to leadership

In response to the questions about the principal's contributions to leadership HOD 1 agreed that the principal would support individuals but also made it clear that if you applied for the position of the HOD you needed to do what was expected.

No, not really if you applied for the position you are expected to do the work. You drown or swim. Other SMT members do get help. I feel that the work is overwhelming. It's not easy to come down to your phase for help when you are supposed to be the one who's leading them.

The principal has had a positive impact on the school according to HOD 1. There has been a drastic increase in the number of learners attending the school since the principal became the head. It is clear that the principals' expectations of the teachers are not 'camouflaged', as she walks around the school every morning ensuring that teachers are actively involved with the learners. She expects teachers to be engaging with the learners and not simply to be sitting down giving instructions from their desks.

The responses to the questions about the positive impact of leadership on the school

HOD 1 agrees that the principal does not allow teachers to become too comfortable in their positions. She has high expectations, and motivates them to improve their abilities. She is also very straightforward, and does not allow for teachers to take advantage of the situation. She has both a caring and strict nature. She has improved the quality of this school, and now it is a well sought after school in the community, by both teacher and learners alike.

> *I think she is democratic as well as autocratic, at the same time. Before she does anything, we all come together and come to an agreement. In the mornings she takes rounds around the school. She makes sure that the teachers are not sitting down* [but that] *they should be teaching. She wants interactive learning to be taking place. She is also a very straight-forward person. If she doesn't like something, you will know about it.*

HOD 1 brings us to the understanding that the principal is strict on curriculum issues and that teaching and learning is important in the school. These issues are non-negotiable. The main function of the leader is to lead. It is also to govern and mentor. So the leader must maintain a motherhood position. You also have to become a religious person. In the extreme case, for example, where there is a death of a member of the school, the principal has to be versatile, and must play a pastoral role to those affected. Leadership requires a person with intellectual ability, as well as someone that is able to persevere. Being a principal is not an easy task, as there are challenges that need to be faced daily.

4.3.9 Interview with HOD 2 of School B

HOD 2 has been with the school for the past 27 years. She holds a Higher Diploma in Education as well as a Diploma in Remedial Education from the University of South Africa. She holds the position of HOD for the Grade four and five in curriculum, as well as being in charge of the support staff of the school.

Responses to the questions involving the participant's leadership role in the school as an HOD

The interview with the HOD 2 took place in her office. She responded to questions involving her role in the leadership as being proactive. She was the IQMS co-ordinator and was directly involved with teachers and their ability to deliver lessons. She has explained that there were systems in place that monitored the teachers, in terms of how they implemented the curriculum. HODs play a pivotal role in ensuring that between the teachers' mark books and the learners' work books, results reflected were authentic.

> *As far as curriculum is concerned, I monitor the lesson plans and activities teachers prepare for the learners. I also check and moderate tasks for CAPS. Moderation for different levels is checked. We are moderating scripts after* [they have] *been marked. I also check records and learners books and compare marks to ensure that the teachers' records are the same. Everything needs to correspond.*

During weekly meetings with the principal, the SMT is able to report back as well as discuss issues that take place during the week.

Responses to participants' views on the principals' contributions to leadership

HOD 2 feels that she has received no official guidance since her appointment at the school, but is nonetheless content with the way the principal is leading the school. She sees the principal as a team player, and as an individual who values contributions from colleagues.

> *No, I have received no official guidance. But I have attended a few workshops. That has helped me a lot. I also learn as I go along. The principal, she* [sic] *takes contributions into consideration she's not the leader alone it's a team effort.*

The HOD emphasised that the principal promoted good practices as she communicated well with all stakeholders involved in the school. The learners were, however, her first priority as she held them in high esteem and cared for them in earnest.

> *She communicates with the SGB, staff, HOD's and department. She also loves her learners. She takes time seriously. She doesn't want to waste time. She makes sure that time is not wasted. Teachers need to be in class. Learners must benefit from the curriculum. If we are not meeting deadlines, she will make arrangements for that work to be covered before learners move on.*

According to HOD 2, the principal arranged additional classes so as to ensure the completion of the curriculum. The aim was that learners could not progress to the next grade without fully understanding the subject content of the current grade. Even during the union strikes, this school continued to stay open, unlike many other schools in the area. The above extract confirms that the school is not unionised, and that there are no factions among the staff. Teachers are expected to be at school for the purpose of teaching and learning and they work together, harmoniously.

The responses to the questions about the positive impact of leadership on the school

The leadership has had a positive influence on HOD 2, because she feels that through the leadership of the principal, she has had the training to eventually become a leader herself. She sees the school as a community that needs to function as a whole in order to be successful.

> *It is to see to it that everything goes well. Things need to go according to the year plan from the beginning of the year. Every term is well-planned. Teaching and learning are very important. The thing is I like to help, and to see the learners getting somewhere. I don't have any fears since I'm in a management position.*

The above extract revealed a certain level of accountability that the leadership of the school promotes. Teachers are encouraged to maintain good practices such as adhering to department regulations. Planning is a priority, and yearly plans are followed strictly.

4.3.10 Interview with parent 1 of School B

Parent 1 has a Human Resources Diploma from the University of South Africa. She is currently unemployed. The school has offered her a means of income in her services; which is to cook meals for the learners of the school. She has a son in Grade R at the school.

Response to the parents' choice of school

The parents' response with regards to her choice of school is that this school has a good reputation in the community. The distance to school is short, with no additional transport cost involved. This is a Quintile 3 school and therefore children receive a meal as well as the required stationery for the year.

Responses to parents' observations with regard to the management of teaching and learning at School B

The school has established a name in the community as it participates in a number of events. The learners of this school are constant recipients of awards. The school gates are closed once the bell has sounded, and teachers are always punctual for classes. The teachers involve the parents in their children's learning by encouraging them to attend workshops and parents meetings. Children receive reports once a term and teachers have discussions with the parent's about their children's progress throughout the year. They have a diary to communicate various issues with the parents.

> *They hold workshops to assist parents here. The Grade R teacher has helped me to understand my child. She has taught me so that I can teach my child when I am at home with my child. You see, that is good.*

During contact time, the school is quiet, and the principal is seen walking around the school. Parents are allowed to ask teachers for assistance if they do not understand the content of the subjects taught. The teachers are available at school after 2pm. The school also provides a homework session after school to assist learners to complete their homework, thus consolidating the work taught during contact time. It also ensures that the learners receive the necessary help if parents are unable to meet the demands of the current curriculum.

> *We have access to our children's exercise books at any time. The diaries are a good form of communication. She even brings in a psychologist if learners are experiencing problems. The teachers, parents and learners are all included. There are parents after school that help the children with their homework and this is good, because if we don't understand, the children got help from those parents. The school pays the parents so it helps them with an income as well. So the school is also creating jobs.*

The school offers a valuable service to their learners, where it is also promoting community growth, as mentioned by Parent 1 above, where the school pays parents to help the learners with their homework. This has had a positive impact on the community at large.

Responses to parents' contributions to the school

There is definitely an open communication channel between the parents and the school as articulated by Parent 1. The school ensures that the parents are updated on various school events of which they are informed via the school diary, and also through newsletters. If parents are experiencing communication problems, they are assisted by the teachers to help their children. This is valued by the parents, as confirmed by Parent 1 in the extract below.

> *... very much, so they are available if you need to speak to them. As* [I] *previously said, they assist us as parents and they give guidance to us in many ways. So they are good. In the last meeting, they actually said this is the information we got from a*

parent, and we are putting this forward. So yes, they use what parents say. Yes, we are notified. There is a newsletter, the diary. If we don't understand something, the teachers explain it to us. We are allowed to come after school to see them.

Parents feel that they are part of the learning process, and they are proud when the school acknowledges that ideas by parents are utilised, and add value to the school.

4.3.11 Interview with Parent 2 of School B

Parent 2 has been affiliated with the school for a number of years. She has two children attending the school; one in Grade 1 and the other in Grade 3. She has a matriculation certificate, and also assists the school in the management of serving the learners their daily meals.

Response to the parents' choice of school

Parents 2 choose this school for her children, because it has a good reputation, which it has maintained for a number of years. She is also pleased by the quality of text-books and other learning materials that are available at the school.

From past results, this is a very good school. There results of the school since 1994 have been good. I like the teachers, they are proactive in their work. The children are given appealing text-books. My children, they are up early, and they want to be here. Even in holidays.

This parent admitted that learners are happy and want to attend this school. She confirmed the fact that the school has created a conducive environment that fosters a healthy learning space, to the extent that learners want to be at school even during school holidays.

Responses to parents' observations with regard to the management of teaching and learning at School B

Parents are kept informed of the day-to-day running of the school with the aid of a school diary and newsletters. Communication is an important tool, and this school involves parents in their children's learning.

> *By using the diary we communicate. If I didn't understand the number lines for maths* [for example], *I wrote a note to the teacher. The teacher gave me examples which I followed, and I was able to help my child with her homework. Like I said before, they use the diary and newsletter. If your child is sick, they will call you.*

Teaching and learning is pivotal at the school, and in the event that a learner is absent, the school would call the parents to find out the reason for this. This means that registers are updated timeously, not only as a departmental regulation, but also out of concern for learners receiving the full benefit of being at school.

The parents are given intellectual assistance to cope with the curriculum, so as to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning at the school is of a high standard. Teachers are always encouraged to improve their teaching methods.

Responses to parents' contributions to the school

The community at large play an important role in the success of the school. Parents are called upon to render assistance at school functions. They are also asked to assess their children's books and to be actively involved in their children's learning.

> *After 2pm you are able to see the teacher to discuss any matter that is* [sic] *worrying you. They are trying all different means* [sic] *to assist parents. We are notified by the diary and newsletters.*

The principal is also available if a parent has an issue of concern. She is willing to take calls as well as meet with parents on appointments. Parent 2 confirmed this in the extract below, noting that the principal is actively involved in the welfare of the school and is visible and approachable to parents.

> *Yes she is. But you need to make an appointment. Or, if you call, you can call at any time. That's okay with her. She is always there if there is a crisis, or if you need help. She is around she doesn't keep to herself. So I would consider her approachable.*

When parents feel that they are making a difference to learning, they are more positive, and become actively involved in their children's educational journey.

4.3.12 Overview of School B

This overview constituted a presentation of the findings of School B. The data collection methods included interviews, observations and document analysis. As far as the interviews were concerned School B's principal granted me access to the school, having tried to contact the principal telephonically on a number of occasions. Most of the participants were willing to participate and answered questions, while others held some reservations until they fully understood the purpose of the study. From my observations made during site visits, I could conclude that the school was functioning effectively, and that the principal was involved in the daily running of the school. With regards to the document analysis, all the relevant documents were displayed on the walls of the principal's office. Unfortunately School B had been burgled, and files that had previously been well-kept were in uncharacteristic chaos, however, the school made its best attempt to make documents available to support this research.

Chapter Five

Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a cross-case analysis of the findings presented in the previous chapter. It identifies patterns and trends in the findings, which will be used as themes. The chapter also interprets the findings of the study in terms of the research questions, the theoretical framework, and the literature to which the study refers. The data was triangulated to cross-check and compare the data between the two schools. The data collected from the schools was categorised and organised for purposes of identifying themes and interpretations.

The data was derived from observations, documents and interviews as explained in Chapter Three. The information gathered was edited into transcripts, which was then sorted for redundancies, and the data was collated verbatim, where the actual words spoken were transcribed. The aim of the analysis was to gain insight that may lead to answers for the research questions of the study. The data was analysed from the interviews, so as to generate an understanding of the management strategies implemented resulting in the success of the two schools.

The study was informed by the following claims:

1. 'The role the principal plays towards the success of a school facing difficult circumstances.'
2. 'The ability of principals to share their leadership duties.'
3. 'How schools successfully negotiate their unpromising contextual issues.'

Given the above claims, researchers like Leithwood (2006), as well as Bush and Glover (2009), propose that the core business of schools is to provide quality teaching and learning, and for a school to achieve this there must be good leadership. Therefore, the principal,

together with the SMT, occupy a pivotal position in providing a quality educational experience for students. The study is aimed at developing an understanding the way in which these schools operate in their unpromising circumstances; paying special attention to leadership strategies, SMT competencies and the ability to negotiate unpromising contexts to support leaner achievement.

The contextual issues that emerged during my observations, document analysis and interviews were: professional development to improve teaching and learning; shared instructional leadership; the school in its context; safety within the school environment; and collegiality, care and respect. These issues became the bases of the themes of this research as they culminated towards the success of the schools in their unpromising contexts.

5.2 Discussion of emerging themes

While working through the data, I was able to establish the themes towards answering the main research question, namely: what is the role of the principal towards the success of a school facing difficult circumstances? In analysing the findings of the two schools, I found common patterns that were aimed at answering the research question. The themes that were established were common to both case study schools, and assisted me in understanding the contribution of successful leadership practices of principals in unpromising contexts. The themes that emerged from the data highlight the importance of the principal, together with the SMT, in promoting teaching and learning to improve learner performances. The themes that emerged from the analysis of the data are as follows:

5.2.1 The move towards shared instructional leadership

This theme became evident from my observations and interviews, whereby the principals of both school A and School B worked closely with the SMT to manage teaching and learning in their schools. The principals did not see it as an individual task to manage teaching and learning, but as a team effort.

> Respondent Principal 1: *"The role of the principal is to ensure that teaching and learning takes place ….we need to work as a collective."*

> Respondent Principal 2: *"...I do prefer leading from behind. This allows for the teachers to feel that they have come up with the decision."*

This does not affirm Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) earlier work, where they suggested that the principal was the main instructional leader in a school, but more closely linked to research by Glickman (1989), that is not only impossible, but also impractical, for one particular individual to be the sole implementer of teaching and learning when an organisation requires team effort in order to function optimally. Much later, Hallinger (2003) disputes the notion of the principal of managing teaching and learning alone, and places emphasis that instructional leaders lead with a "combination of expertise and charisma, they are hands-on principals" (Hallinger, 2003: 33).

Therefore, both respondents echoed the sentiment that shared instructional leadership involves the active collaboration of the principal and teachers on curriculum, instruction and assessment processes. This requires the principal to seek the ideas, insights and expertise of head teachers in these areas, and to work with teachers for school improvement. The principal, together with the SMT, share the responsibility for staff development, curriculum development, and supervision of assessment tasks. In doing so, the principal is not the sole instructional leader but the "leader of instructional leaders" (Glickman, 1989: 6).

Furthermore, it emerged from the case studies of School A and School B (see Chapter Four) that the duties of the HODs play a pivotal role in ensuring that teachers are imparting the curriculum effectively to learners. The findings give credence to Hopkins' (2000) observation that instructional leadership is a collaborative activity, and Lee and Dimmock (1999: 485) argue that principals can act as curriculum leaders, and that heads of department or subject coordinators can act as curriculum managers. The HOD's from both School A and School B mentioned that teacher's preparation files were assessed by them in accordance to curriculum regulations, mark books were also moderated with learner profiles to ensure that the marks corresponded, and were legitimate. In addition to this moderation, both pre- and post- were conducted of all summative evaluations, as well as tests and examinations.

Bush and Glover (2002) stress that the definition of instructional leadership points to the direction of the influence process. Here, instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning and on the behaviour of teachers, when working with students. Evidence from the case study indicates that principals from school A and School B seem to agree that their influence is targeted at student learning via the teachers, with the emphasis being on the direction and impact of the influence, rather than on the influence process itself.

Instructional leadership is a very important dimension, because it targets the school's central activities of teaching and learning. However, a critique would be that this paradigm underestimates other aspects of school life, such as sport, socialisation, student welfare, and self-esteem (Bush, 2003: 16-17).

This is not what evolved an analysis of data collected from School A. Sport development, together with academic achievement, played a vital role in developing the learner holistically. The school had been the recipients of sports awards for a number of codes of sports, namely: netball and soccer, without neglecting the importance of developing their learners academically. This also emerges from School B, as mentioned by the deputy principal and parent B that the school had been in the local newspapers for being the best school for academics as well as for sport.

The findings from the case study show that instructional leadership can exists harmoniously with academic performance, and critiques the paradigm that instructional leadership only focuses on the school's central activities of teaching and learning, neglecting other aspects of school life, such as sport, socialisation, student welfare, and self-esteem (Bush, 2003: 16-17).

The case study also revealed that the principals of School A and School B have used their experience and knowledge of leadership strategies to involve all stakeholders in the management of teaching and learning in their schools. The principal from School B is not

fully supportive of the view generated by such studies as Hopkins (2000), as she mentions that even though the HOD's moderate teacher's work, she ultimately submits the statistics required to the Department of Education, but before doing this, she conducts a final moderation.

Crucially, stakeholders in schools require a sense of continuity and purpose; they need clarification on roles and responsibilities; and they need to recognise that they are not completely without resources in tackling their problems (Bush, 2003: 16-17). To achieve this it is important that the principal provides clear, consistent and attainable goals that educators need to focus on to improve teaching and learning. Shared leadership is essential, but accountability is just as important. The move to the principals sharing of the load of teaching and learning is imperative, but ensuring that there is consistency by eradicating inequalities, is vitally important as well.

5.2.2 Professional development to improve teaching and learning

Evidence from both School A and School B placed emphasis on teacher development, by encouraging teachers to attend workshops offered by the Department of Education, or those organised by the educational bodies. School B had a mentorship programme overseen by one of the HODs, and mention was made by this HOD that teachers found the in-service training very valuable. School B's HOD pointed out that due to their concern for improved mathematics results, lessons were practiced before being presented to the learners. Staff development programmes in both School A and School B were conducted by HODs in an effort to improve lesson delivery and these meetings were conducted on a weekly basis.

There is growing consensus among educational researchers that professional development for teachers and administrators lies at the center of educational reform and instructional improvement (Elmore and Burney, 1997: 2). In most reforms, focus has been placed on the content students should be taught, changing the structures and processes by which schools are held accountable, and by changing the governance structures by which accountability is defined.

The strongest support for monitoring teaching and learning occurs where there is a shared vision (Bush et al., 2009; 2008; Bush and Glover, 2009). In both School A and School B the principals were keen to demonstrate a commitment to academic goals. This was more apparent when it came to the principal of School A. Evidence from School A suggests that the principal took a keen interest in the implementation of policy, as he would explain to his HOD's any new policy requirements in detail, so as to avoid the cascading of information. On receiving tablets by the Department of Education, the principal of School A requested training for the implementation of the new technology. He was so determined to understand this new system, that he received help from an NGO that has given the school an IT specialists and trained the teachers at School A to be able to fully implement the use of the tablets that were given to the school. This is in keeping with the point of view of authors such as Leithwood et al. (2006), who assert that school principals as instructional leaders in challenging schooling contexts need to devise a system of monitoring teaching and learning that is learner-centered amongst the staff, which can inspire the educators and provide compelling purpose for continual professional growth (Hallinger and Heck, 2002).

Evidence from the case study suggests that in order to see remarkable changes in student performance, one has to assume that changes in policy and organisation will result in a different kind of teaching, which will in turn result in a different kind of learning for students, who are likely to demonstrate this learning by doing better on measures of performance.

Furthermore, the case study revealed that the one element of weakness in our South African context is the knowledge required for teachers and administrators to engage in a different kind of teaching and learning (Elmore & Burney, 1997: 2). It is important to acknowledge that policies, by themselves, are unable to impart new knowledge (ibid). The policy rather, creates the occasion for educators to seek out new knowledge and turn that knowledge into new practice. Hence, professional development is the main link connecting policy to practice.

It is therefore important to have a better understanding of professional development and all that it entails. In general, professional development focuses on concrete classroom applications of ideas; it exposes teachers to actual practice, rather than to descriptions of

practice; it involves opportunities for observation, critique, and reflection. Furthermore, it involves opportunities for group support and collaboration; and it involves deliberate evaluation and feedback by skilled practitioners with expertise about good teaching (Elmore & Burney, 1997: 2). It is imperative that we remember, while we know a good deal about characteristics of good professional development, that we know a great deal less about how to organise successful professional development so as to influence practice in large numbers of schools and classrooms.

School B extended their development to include parents. The school have accomplished this by conducting workshops for parents in an effort for parents to, in turn, familiarise themselves with the curriculum, and thus support their children academically in achieving better results.

The strategies implemented to improve teacher development for both School A and School B saw a marked improvement in their ANA results for three consecutive years in English and Mathematics in their documentary analysis (Yin, 2008). The imperative for good professional development in these schools is a given. The uncertainty about effects of instructional guidance looms even larger when considering the content of guidance that is offer to teachers and learners (Cohen & Spillane, 1993: 28). Cohen and Spillane (1993) propose to transform teaching and learning from relatively dull and routine practices into exciting and intellectually demanding ones, with the vision for novel assessments that are tied both to new curriculum frameworks, as well as to radically revised instructional materials. The combination is seen as a way to dramatically change learning and teaching. School A was involved in story skirmish, and this was a good incentive to promote reading within the school, where even parents were excited about the challenge of reading, as parent A of School A acknowledge and they fully supported this new initiative. In addition to this, the principal and the deputy principal of School B were recipients of the national teachers' awards, once again promoting professional development.

Both School A and School B present evidence that they have adopted a fundamental change in their approach to empowering their teaching staff through workshops, peer assistance and

in-service training, and by doing so they have maintained, if not improved, their learners' overall performance, proving that even though context has an impact on learner performances, it is not the determining factor if you have dedicated staff and good instructional leadership.

5.2.3 School within its context

It is evident that the job of the principal is within the framework of his or her particular context. Regardless of the similarities in the daily functioning of a school, we need to remember the pressures facing leaders in developing countries are particularly acute, including serious poverty and killer diseases, and limited human and material resources. Inevitably, this has led to increased accountability pressures on site-based leaders, who have to deal with increasing complexity and unremitting change (Bush, 2009: 377). These contextual problems exert enormous pressure on school principals, who are often overwhelmed by the duties they are expected to perform.

The evidence from the case studies (see Chapter Four) highlights the fact that the principals from school A and School B have ensured that teachers and learners have an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning regardless of their contextual issues. Hargreaves (1997) argues that the first task that the school as an organisation faces would be to maintain what he terms "social-control" over teachers and students, so that they work towards achieving the pre-determined goal of the organisation. It is clear that although the issues were different, both the principal of School A and School B harboured the ability to maintain the social-control of their schools.

Further evidence from the case study shows the principal of School A to have noted that there were a number of girl learners in Grades Five to Seven that were absent from school regularly. This meant that they were missing out on valuable teaching time, which would impact on their academic performance. After some investigation it was brought to his attention that the reason for the girls not attending school was due to the fact that they did not have access to sanitary towels during their menstruation cycles. He then called an independent company requesting assistance to provide the learners with sanitary towels. His

request was not only granted, but the company also decided to provide all the girl learners with a toiletry pack on a monthly basis. In addition to this, the company held a hygiene awareness camp at the school for all learners that wished to attend. Leadership can therefore be understood as a process of influence, based on clear values and beliefs, leading to a "vision" for the school, with concrete outcomes.

This affirms evidence from School B, where the principal found that learners were arriving at school without homework being completed, and was convinced that there were extenuating circumstances. When she spoke to parents about this issue, she was alerted to the fact that many parents were unable to complete the homework themselves, let alone render assistance to their children. To deal with this challenge, the principal of School B decided to create an avenue of work for parents who were unemployed, but who were able to assist the learners after school to complete their homework at school. This resulted in more students doing their homework, which aids as consolidation to classwork, as well creating employment for parents to improve their socioeconomic status. The vision is articulated by leaders who seek to gain the commitment of staff and stakeholders to the ideal of a better future for the school and its learners.

Findings from both schools demonstrate that the main purpose of schooling is to promote teaching and learning. While many South Africans live in challenging circumstances, school provides one of the few levers by means of which to improve the opportunities of deprived children and young people. Ultimately, higher standards can be achieved through good leadership, and appropriate management of teaching and learning. By developing the capabilities of leaders and educators, learner achievement will improve in the vast majority of schools that are in unpromising contexts in South Africa and the divide that currently exists will be narrowed as a result. The context will be difficult to change, but the empowerment of leaders is a more achievable goal.

Contemporary research studies, like Harris and Chapman (2002) and Harris et al. (2006) have identified some common features or characteristics of effective leadership in schools in challenging circumstances. While it is important to have insight into successful leadership

practices in schools, it is also important to understand that schooling should help people to understand the cultural and natural worlds in which they live, to communicate with others, and to act in the world in ethical ways (ibid.). Ethical living is a practice at School B, where it was found that the principal was one of the recipients of a community service award from a local church, because of her dedication to the improvement of social standards in her community. Evidence from the case study also points to the fact that the principal of School A was involved in supporting the community through his annual visit to the senior citizens home, where learners spent time with the elderly.

This echoes the principal's ability to successfully engage with all stakeholders in exemplary leadership practices. This can be achieved by sharing responsibilities successfully with other members of staff. Although the school is an organisation, it cannot function in isolation. What transpires in the community affects the school. By the principals of School A and School B addressing social issues within the community, it has strengthened the support by all stakeholders for school activities, and also successfully contributed to learners receiving the full benefit of school, when their support system at home is ballasted. In this way, it is possible to see a mutual school working together with the community can be successful.

The schools are working in accordance with the proposals of the South African Standard for School Leadership Draft Policy (2005), as it emphasises that every school exists within its individual social and economic community, and the broader community also has a direct influence on and is influenced by the school. Therefore, just as the wider community in which the school is located represents a source of resources and support for the school, so the school itself can play a vital role in the well-being and development of its wider community.

5.2.4 Safety within the school environment

While it is important for learners to attend school, it is equally important for them to feel safe in their environment of learning. Given the socioeconomic status of schools in unpromising environments, where crime and violence is prevalent (Christie, 2001), I observed that School A and School B held an atmosphere of calmness and tranquillity. The learners were quiet, and moved from class to class in an orderly fashion. The sound of laughter echoing in the

school was not uncommon, and can be taken as evidence of the fact that learners felt safe and secure in their environment.

The schools in a study that had been undertaken by Christie (2001) highlighted the demarcation of safe and orderly space for the teachers and learners of the schools progressing in unpromising contexts. Christie (2001) found that in these schools, boundaries were in place, operating both symbolical and materially.

In both School A and School B there was evidence of this, as the schools were fenced off creating an external boundary preventing anyone untoward from the surrounding community to enter freely. Although this was to some extend symbolic protection only, where School B had a recent burglary, for the learners of the school, it is clear that they felt safe within the confines of the school grounds during their contact time. Both schools had security guards at the gates, recording information on anyone entering the school premises. In addition to this, within the school grounds there were areas that had been specifically demarcated for quiet zones, teachers' only areas, as well as parking facilities for teachers or visitors. School B had named their classrooms according to the various zones in the area (eg: Meadowlands, Protea, etc.) instead of using the common numeric system or teachers' names. This was interesting, as it alleviated the issue of sectional factions within the school community. This was a common issue experienced in this type of environment as mention by Christie (2001), and is often the influence of violent political rivalry amongst the various traditional groups of Zulu, and Xhosa etc.

Evidence from the case study reveals that the principal of School A had developed alliances with the local police, as well as the social services of the hospital in the area. This was in an effort to support learners who were experiencing domestic violence, or who were victims of abuse. Providing a safe place within the boundaries of the school was a need that the schools took seriously, even if they were not totally successful. According to Glickman's et al. (2001) model of instructional leadership, school principals need to be proactive in applying evidenced-based research to deal with issues that may spill over and affect the teaching and learning in the school. Principals must facilitate the creation of conditions that promote

student motivation. Showing respect for learners requires appreciation of the circumstances affecting their learning (Cooney, 2006).

Regular routines that included social relations of authority and accountability were in place. Document analysis provides evidence that punctuality was high on the agenda at these schools. The HOD 2 of school A mentioned that the principal was the first to arrive and the last to leave the school. This showed that regularised norms and practices were not without hierarchy. The assemblies conducted in School A and School B reinforced collegiality within the community of the school, promoting unity that was enabling rather than constraining. These schools provided a safe environment for the duration of teaching and learning and in doing so, evoked a sense of positivity for all stakeholders.

5.2.5 Collegiality, care and respect

In order for instructional improvement to be successful the principal is required to set clear instructions and then decentralise responsibility (Elmore, 1997: 11). As mentioned during the interview of the Deputy Principal of School B, even without the principal being present at a school, the school still continued to work optimally. This can only be achieved if the staff is willing to take the initiative and responsibility for themselves and the students. You can only achieve this kind of result when people cultivate a deep personal and professional respect and caring for each other. Without collegiality on this level, you cannot generate the level of enthusiasm, energy and commitment that is required to hold the organisation together. The findings from the HOD 2 of School A's interview highlighted that most of an individuals' time was spent at their place of work, and that they therefore needed to be happy in this environment. Daily lunches together provided an opportunity for teachers to discuss various events of the day and also share any issues of concern.

Elmore (1997) underscores the fact that professionalism and working in a school system is not a narrow version of life, but rather that it stems from life itself and should thus take into account the full range of personal values and feelings that people have. The findings from the interview of Parent 2 of School A reveals, that the principal was someone that could be confided in, with assured confidentiality. This supports the argument made by Elmore (ibid.),

who forwards that improvements in practice require exceptional personal commitment on the part of every person in the organisation, not just too good instructional leadership, but also to meet the basics needs of the human beings involved in creating good instruction.

Elmore writes about the "blurring of the boundaries" (Elmore, 1997: 11) between the deeply personal and the culture of the organisation, of offering mutual support and acknowledgement for people undergoing emotional strain in their personal lives. Also, what is important is the nurturing of self-respect of people, making them willing to take personal risks by trying out new ideas, and in doing so creating a culture of mutual respect among administrators, teachers, students and parents. This was exhibited in findings by the principal of School B, who was referred to as a manner of mother to her colleagues, who was responsible for steering the school in the right direction. HOD 1 of School B also mentioned that a principal had many titles to fulfil, where she was a priest for funerals, a social worker, and a role model, amongst other roles. A deep and sustained change in teaching and learning alone cannot be sustained simply by managing people effectively around common purposes, or by creating norms and structures that reinforce accountability. It does, however, require people's personal commitment to each other, along with willingness to manifest that commitment by demonstrating mutual care and concern.

The evidence from the case study show that the principals of School A and School B show care for their staff, learners and parents alike, and that they have also successfully gained the confidence of all stakeholders of their organisation. This can be attributed to the success of these schools, to the extent that even in the absence of their leadership and regardless of the contextual situation these organisations are still able to function optimally.

5.3 Chapter overview

This chapter draws on the findings of the two case study schools. Patterns and trends were identified. They were presented and analysed as themes in this chapter. Five themes were identified to answer the main research question. Even though some of the themes that emerged are not in conjunction to the theoretical framework, they came out strongly and had to be addressed. This answered the main question of the study, namely the success of schools in unpromising contexts. The findings highlighted that the principals played a pivotal role in instructional leadership, but that they were not solely responsible for the management of

teaching and learning in their schools. The school as a community took cognisance of their environment, as well as of teacher development, and these factors contributed to the school's success.

Chapter Six

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of my research. The main focus of this research study dealt with the instructional role of the principal together with the SMT and their ability to produce good results in an unpromising context. It is stated in the chapter on methodology that the selection of schools was based on their ANA results, as well as their contextual issues of poor socioeconomic status. The adverse effects of the surrounding community, characterised by low socioeconomic means, has not had an effect on the academic performances of the two schools.

6.2 Summary

The study focused on the role of the principal in managing teaching and learning in an unpromising context. The study was based on the assumption that the two principals of the Klipspruit schools in Soweto were focusing on teaching and learning. This was prompted by the schools favourable ANA results. The township has its own challenges (see Chapter One and Two) due to its adverse socioeconomic conditions. However, their circumstances have not had a negative effect on the schools performances, and both schools have been a positive influence, both within the school's community, as well as beyond its borders.

The study also looked at related literature pertaining to the management of teaching and learning also known as instructional leadership. Various empirical studies were drawn upon to explore the various leadership styles that have been observed more broadly, with emphasis on instructional leadership. Recent studies like Harris and Chapman (2002) Harris et al. (2006) have identified some common characteristics of effective leadership in schools in challenging circumstances.

The theoretical framework for this study was based on the work of Leithwood et al. (2006), who identified four core categories of practices that are common to successful leadership. These categories were further redefined into a small number of more specific leadership behaviours. This clearly explains how principals are able to use their leadership influence to produce good learner outcomes regardless of poor socioeconomic contextual factors. The model by Leithwood et al. (2006) covers the four broad categories, namely, setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organisation, and managing the instructional programme of teaching and learning. These were chosen as the theoretical frame of this study, for its strength in terms of understanding how principals manage teaching and learning.

The study further explained the methodology upon which research embarked. This included the selection of the sample, data collection procedures, ethical issues, reliability and validity were discussed (see Chapter Three). In addition to this the study, I further presented the findings of the two case schools through all the data collection methods which were used. A detailed description and analysis of the two case study schools were presented individually as School A and School B. The chapter commenced with a general introduction to the reason for the choice of the two particular schools. This will be followed by findings presented per individual school with regards to the background and context of the schools, site observations, and documentary analysis of the ANA results and the presentation of the interviews of each participant.

The chapter detailing findings was followed by the discussion chapter, where cross-case analysis was presented. The data collected from the two case study schools was organised and themes emerged from the findings. These themes were; shared instructional leadership, professional development to improve teaching and learning, the school within its context, safety within the school environment, collegiality, care and respect. The themes that emerged where then integrated with the literature in Chapter Two, to gain insight into the management of teaching and learning in the two case study schools.

6.3 Conclusion

The main research question that was addressed in the study was: 'what is the role of the principal in managing teaching and learning in an unpromising context?' In the beginning of this research report, I claimed that the core business of schools is to provide quality teaching and learning. For a school to achieve this there must be good leadership, therefore, the two case study schools were performing well, based on the principal's ability to manage teaching and learning within the schools context.

As I investigated the claim, it emerged from the study that the principal, together with the SMT, were responsible for the success of managing teaching and learning. I also discovered that the school had to work as a community, both within the framework of the school, as well as with the community of the surrounding area. This confirms Ruadenbush's (2005) observation that education may be regarded broadly as the process by which people learn the language, ideas, meanings, expectations and knowledge that they need to interact successfully in society; or more narrowly, as the formal institutional process occurring in all modern societies that assigns students to classrooms, supervised by teachers in schools to learn more specialised aspects of culture (Ruadenbush, 2005: 25). This can be achieved if school governance, through instructional guidance, produces the desired changes in classrooms.

The researched findings revealed that the principals of the schools, as well as the SMT members, played an important role in the success of the schools. Christie (2008), for example, notes that South Africa has gone through a number of educational reforms, in particular given our past dispensation of an apartheid educational system, where radical changes had to be implemented in the post-apartheid government, with the aim to break away from the previous inequalities. These changes have by no means improved education for all, but rather, have widened the gap in the process. These school principals have managed to bridge the gap by using leadership strategies that were context relevant, where both leaders were trained in educational leadership (see Chapter Four), which added to their ability to manipulate issues that arose towards a favourable outcome. Using the community to support the school was also a technique employed both principals.

The study also revealed that regardless of the population dynamics and poor socioeconomic conditions, the two case study schools were able to maintain good standards of learner achievement. According to Jansen (1995: 185), strong administrative leadership and a school climate conducive for learning are attributes towards high expectations for student achievement. The principals were able to implement strong administrative leadership through the assistance of the HODs (see Chapter Four).

What emerged from the study was that even if leadership is effective in handling teaching and learning, changes in curriculum can have an adverse effect on teachers' performance in the classroom. A great amount of time has to be invested in empowering teachers through staff development to successfully cope with changes in curriculum. Therefore the culture of the school ought to have a positive atmosphere if the desired results are to be obtained, where this can be accomplished through the implementation of good leadership practices. Hargreaves (2002) advocates that the diagnosis of a school culture is the first step toward the right direction.

Finally, crime was noted as a serious issue affecting schools. They were vulnerable to their socioeconomic surroundings. Establishing a safe learner environment was a constant battle for the staff at the two case study schools. Developing alliances with the community was only one way that protected them from crime in the area, but it was not a full solution, as School B became a victim to the loosing of equipment as well as resources, which it ought to be underscored, were acquired through great difficulty (see Chapter Four).

Reflecting on the study, it emerged that the leadership of the principal as well as the SMT in managing teaching and learning was pivotal. Implementation of the four categories of the theoretical frame work which was: setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organisation and managing the instructional programme of teaching and learning, is essential for the success of a school, including but not limited to high levels of academic achievement.

6.4 Recommendations

This study makes the following recommendations:

- schools in similar contexts should empower themselves by adopting these principals good practices as the success of a school depends largely on the principals' ability to manage teaching and learning within his/her context; and

- schools need to practice shared instructional leadership strategies in an effort to improve learner achievement.

6.5 Future Research

This is an under-researched area of study, particularly in South African primary schools. The availability of South African literature on successful school leadership was scarce when the study commenced, while the same literature appears to be over-represented in western countries. I therefore suggest that future South African researchers conduct similar studies, where in doing so, it would contribute tremendously to the challenges principals face in managing teaching and learning, particularly within township and rural primary schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INVITATION TO PRINCIPAL TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY (SCHOOL)

Invitation to Principal to participate in a research study

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Nitasha Marimandi and I am an educator at Jeppe High Preparatory School, as well as a part-time student at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research that is required for my Master's degree.

The focus of my research is on: **Successful schools in unpromising contexts and the role that principals play in promoting good leadership practices?** Your school has been selected on the basis of its good ANA results regardless of the unpromising contexts of the school. I would like to invite you to participate in this research study.

Should your school participate, the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interviews with you as the head of the school, the deputy principals, HOD's and parents, each interview lasting for at least 45 minutes. These interviews will focus on good leadership practices within the school.

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

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

Sincerely

Mrs. Nitasha Marimandi

Principal consent slip for school

I, _____, as (position)_____on behalf of _____ School, understand the nature, requirements and benefits of participating in the study, consent to participate in the study / do not consent to participate in the study.

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B: INVITATION TO PRINCIPAL

University of Witwatersrand
School of Education
27 St Andrews Street
Parktown
2001

To the Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Nitasha Marimandi and I am an educator at Jeppe High Preparatory School, as well as a part-time student at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research that is required for my Master's degree.

The focus of my research is on: **Successful schools in unpromising contexts and the role that principals play in promoting good leadership practices?** Your school has been selected on the basis of its good ANA results regardless of the unpromising contexts of the school.

I would like to invite you to become a participant in this investigation. Please note that your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to your future work with the researcher or the University. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Should you wish to participate; the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interviews with you as the principal of the school, each interview lasting for at least 45 minutes. These interviews will focus on your leadership practices within your school.

Anonymity is guaranteed. Your responses to the questions will not be seen by anyone apart from my supervisor and me. All data will be kept by me or archived in the Education library at the University of Witwatersrand.

Please indicate your willingness to participate by completing the consent slip below. If there are any queries I can be contacted on 0845541969 or email
jmarimandi@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance

_____
Mrs. Nitasha Marimandi
O845541969

Consent slip of the Principal

I, _____, am willing to participate / I am not willing to participate in this research study.
I understand the nature, requirements and benefits of participating in this study. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time.

_____ Date: _____
Signed consent of participant

APPENDIX C: INVITATION TO DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

University of Witwatersrand
School of Education
27 St Andrews Street
Parktown
2001

To the Deputy Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Nitasha Marimandi and I am an educator at Jeppe High Preparatory School, as well as a part-time student at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research that is required for my Master's degree.
The focus of my research is on: **Successful schools in unpromising contexts. What role do principals play in promoting good leadership practices?**

I would like to invite you to become a participant in this investigation. Please note that your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to your future work with the researcher or the University. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Should you wish to participate; the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interviews with you as the Deputy Principal of the school, each interview lasting for at least 45 minutes. These interviews will focus on the leadership you have experienced in your school as the Deputy Principal.

Anonymity is guaranteed. Your responses to the questions will not be seen by anyone apart from my supervisor and me. All data will be kept by me or archived in the Education library at the University of Witwatersrand.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by completing the consent slip below. If there are any queries I can be contacted on 0845541969 or email
jmarimandi@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance

_____
Mrs. Nitasha Marimandi
O845541969

Consent slip of the Deputy Principal

I, _____, am willing to participate / I am not willing to participate in this research study. I understand the nature, requirements and benefits of participating in the study. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time.

_____ Date: _____
Signed consent of participant

APPENDIX D: INVITATION TO HOD

University of Witwatersrand
School of Education
27 St Andrews Street
Parktown
2001

To the HOD

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Nitasha Marimandi and I am an educator at Jeppe High Preparatory School, as well as a part-time student at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research that is required for my Master's degree.
The focus of my research is on: **Successful schools in unpromising contexts. What role do principals play in promoting good leadership practices?**

I would like to invite you to become a participant in this investigation. Please note that your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to your future work with the researcher or the University. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Should you wish to participate; the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interviews with you as the HOD of the school, each interview lasting for at least 45 minutes. These interviews will focus on the leadership you have experienced in your school as the HOD.

Anonymity is guaranteed. Your responses to the questions will not be seen by anyone apart from my supervisor and me. All data will be kept by me or archived in the Education library at the University of Witwatersrand.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by completing the consent slip below. If there are any queries I can be contacted on 0845541969 or email
jmarimandi@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance

_____
Mrs. Nitasha Marimandi
O845541969

Consent slip of the HOD

I, _____, am willing to participate / I am not willing to participate in this research study. I understand the nature, requirements and benefits of participating in the study. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time.

_____ Date: _____
Signed consent of participant

APPENDIX E: INVITATION TO PARENT

University of Witwatersrand
School of Education
27 St Andrews Street
Parktown
2001

To the Parent

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Nitasha Marimandi and I am an educator at Jeppe High Preparatory School, as well as a part-time student at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research that is required for my Master's degree.
The focus of my research is on: **Successful schools in unpromising contexts. What role do principals play in promoting good leadership practices?**

I would like to invite you to become a participant in this investigation as your child is fortunate to be in a school that is able to maintain a high standard of education regardless of its unpromising contexts. Please note that your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to your future work with the researcher or the University. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Should you wish to participate; the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interviews with you as a parent serving on the Governing Body of the school, each interview lasting for at least 45 minutes. These interviews will focus on the leadership you have observed as a parent serving on the School Governing Body.

Anonymity is guaranteed. Your responses to the questions will not be seen by anyone apart from my supervisor and me. All data will be kept by me or archived in the Education library at the University of Witwatersrand.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by completing the consent slip below
If there are any queries I can be contacted on 0845541969 or email
jmarimandi@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance

_____
Mrs. Nitasha Marimandi
O845541969

Consent slip of Parent

I, _____, am willing to participate / I am not willing to participate in this research study. I understand the nature, requirements and benefits of participating in the study. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time.

_____ Date: _____
Signed consent of participant

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Sample Questions for the Semi Structured Interviews

The Principal

1. As a leader of the school how would you describe your leadership style?
2. How do you understand or maintain your role as the principal?
3. In what ways are you involved with the curriculum of the school?
4. How have you managed to improve learner performances?
5. What is your thinking around professional development?
6. What is your understanding of the core practices of a school?
7. Do you feel that empowering teachers is important in your school?
8. How are you perceived by the teachers in your school?
9. Do you feel community involvement is essential to developing your school?
10. Describe some important attributes of yourself?

The Deputy Principal and HOD's

1. What leadership role do you play in the functionality of the school?
2. How do you contribute to curriculum development?
3. Do you feel that you are given guidance in leadership?
4. How seriously are your contributions taken in the governance of the school?
5. What leadership style do you think your principal adopts?
6. Do teachers value your input in staff development?
7. What leadership style would you implement if you were the principal?
8. How do you see your principals' leadership promoting good practices?
9. What do you see as the main function of the leadership?
10. Would you ever consider becoming a principal yourself?

The HOD's

1. What leadership role do you play in the functionality of the school?
2. How do you contribute to curriculum development?
3. Do you feel that you are given guidance in leadership?
4. How seriously are your contributions taken in the governance of the school?
5. What leadership style do you think your principal adopts?
6. Do teachers value your input in staff development?
7. What leadership style would you implement if you were the principal?
8. How do you see your principals' leadership promoting good practices?
9. What do you see as the main function of the leadership?
10. Would you ever consider becoming a principal yourself?

The Parents

1. Why have you chosen this school for your child/children to attend?
2. Do you feel the school involves you as the parent in educating your child?
3. Does the school value your input as a parent?
4. Are you notified on school pertaining matters?
5. Is your child happy to come to school?
6. Does the school promote good teaching and learning?
7. How are you as a parent encouraged to assist your child by the school?
8. Is the principal willing to see you on issues of concern?
9. How accommodating is the staff of this school?
10. Do you think the principal is approachable and friendly?

APPENDIX G: Ethics Clearance

WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193•Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Telephone: +27 11 717 3007 • Fax: +27 11 717 3009 • Website: www.wits.ac.za

Student Number: 0205719M

Protocol Number: 2014ECE013M

04 June 2014

Dear Nitasha Marimandi

Application for Ethics Clearance: **Master of Education**

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

To explore two successful primary schools in an unpromising context of Klipspruit

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that clearance was granted.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely

M Mabeta

Matsie Mabeta
Wits School of Education

011 717 3416

CC: Supervisor- Dr Z Mbokazi

APPENDIX H: GDE Approval

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference no: D2014 / 402

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**28 March 2014**
Validity of Research Approval:	**28 March to 3 October 2014**
Name of Researcher:	**Marimandi N.**
Address of Researcher:	**18 Ferdinand Street**
	Suideroord
	Johannesburg
	2091
Telephone Number:	**011 680 3321 / 084 554 1969**
Fax Number:	**011 614 1086**
Email address:	**jmarimandi@gmail.com**
Research Topic:	**To explore two successful school in unpromising contexts of Klipspruit**
Number and type of schools:	**TWO Primary Schools**
District/s/HO	**Johannesburg North**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

2014/03/31

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
4. *A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*
5. *The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.*
6. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
7. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
8. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
9. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.*
10. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*
11. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*
12. *On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.*
13. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
14. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

.....

Dr David Makhado
Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 2014/03/31

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za