

https://dspace.org/

Exploring the role of school leadership in enhancing an ethical culture in a school in the Johannesburg East Ddistrict, Gauteng

Bhengu, Sicelo Fortunas

2022

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/33975

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

ABSTRACT

This research report presents the findings of a qualitative case study that sought to explore the role of school leadership in enhancing an ethical culture in a school. The study was motivated by various factors such as the unethical and corrupt behaviours at schools including the brewing of an unethical culture where the school governing body colluded with a teacher union in an attempt to overthrow the school principal and also get rid of an unfavourable HOD that seemed to have been appointed fairly and ethically by the school principal. This study utilized interpretivism as a lens to analyse data. Interpretivism is widely used in studies where a researcher seeks to understand and interpret everyday happenings, experiences and social structures as well as the values that people attach to these phenomena. Two Level One teachers and the school principal and deputy principal were selected as participants. Semi-structured interviews and documents reviews were utilised to generate data. These were found adaptable and flexible, allowing the researcher to probe for more information as well as clarification. The theoretical framework that underpins the study is called the Multiple Ethical Paradigms which looks at ethics of leadership from four perspectives or lens, namely the ethic of justice, ethic of critique, ethic of care and the ethic of the profession.

The findings highlight that there was a general understanding of ethical culture amongst the leaders and teachers in a school. The main research question that underpinned this study was centred on the participants' conceptualisations of the role ethical school leadership in enhancing an ethical culture in schools. There were contending opinions by the school principals on whether they had the sole responsibility of shaping an ethical culture in their schools. Data seemed to suggest that leaders have a huge responsibility to shape and be the curator of the school culture. It is also important to note that the rest of the stakeholders also have a responsibility to contribute and promote an ethical culture in their respective spaces. Various recommendations based on the conclusion were presented. One of the recommendations was that schools and their leaders need to start having conversations with staff about ethical culture so that they can gain a better and more practical understanding based on the finding that teachers didn't know practical ways of enhancing an ethical culture. On the same token another recommendation was targeted towards leaders of schools. Leaders need to equip themselves with practical ways of enhancing an ethical culture such as leading decisively, contributing to the strategic planning sessions and firmly setting the tone and path to creating an environment that has an ethical culture.