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RESEARCH REPORT

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

IN

DISADVANTAGED TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS:

CASE STUDIES

OF

TWO KLIPTOWN / ELDORADO PARK PRIMARY SCHOOLS

DATE: 17 MARCH 2014

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The study explored successful school leadership practices in disadvantaged communities through a case study of two primary schools in Kliptown/Eldorado Park, Gauteng.

Many schools in South Africa in disadvantaged areas seem to be underperforming and unable to shirk this scourge of underperformance. However, there are some schools that manage to excel in dire circumstances. The objective is to determine why some schools manage to excel when others cannot under the same circumstances. A descriptive design with a qualitative approach was applied, using interviews, focus groups, observations and document analysis to gather data.

The study examines the leadership styles, strategies and practices that help principals in adverse circumstances make a success of their schools and looks at how they achieve and sustain success, cope with everyday township challenges and maintain their identity. Such a body of knowledge could serve as a beacon of hope to schools and communities that face similar challenges, but fail to achieve success.

The findings show that the principals of both primary schools are acutely aware of their environment and how this can adversely affect educators and learners. They adopt an inclusive and transformational approach to teaching and appoint the most suited and experienced personnel. Good leadership practices and a culture of cooperation are what distinguish performing schools from underperforming ones.

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LIST OF ABBEVIATIONS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DoE	Department of Education
ELRC	Education Labour Relation Council
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HOD	Head of Department
MDG	Millennium Development Goals Report
NNSSF Bill	National Norms and Standards for School Funding Bill
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
PLG	Professional Learning Groups
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SAQA	South Africans Qualifications Authority
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	Senior Management Team

UN United Nations

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the reader to the statement of the problem, aim research objectives, research questions and research assumptions of the study. It also states the rationale for the study and outlines the national and local context within which the study is located. Lastly, it gives a brief exposition of the outline of the research report.

1.2 Problem Statement

In South Africa successful schools have been identified in poverty-stricken areas, although they are however more commonly associated with schools in more afluent areas Yet, research does identify successful and well functioning schools with strong leadership, amongst poverty stricken township communities (Christie, 2010).

According to Van der Berg (2008), after many reform initiatives, ranging from new curricula to funding projects, South Africa remains at the bottom of international and national achievement. What is most significant is that historically disadvantaged communities are the underachievers (Fleisch, 2007; Van der Berg, Servaas, 2008). Thus, when compared with first and some third world countries, South African children are not only receiving poor quality education, but also fail to deliver positive results in test scores. Research indicates that it is improper management or a lack of sound management that leads to the dismal performance in the most disadvantaged schools (Bush, 2012; 2006; Niemann & Kotze, 2006; Thurlow, Bush & Coleman, 2003). Township schools are not only associated with poor leadership, but with the poor

performance of both educators and learners (Taylor, 2008; Brown, 2010). Some researchers have attributed this to the well documented legacy of apartheid as well as poor, or lack of, capacity-building for school managers (Spaul, 2012; Ncgobo & Tikly, 2010; Christie, 2007; Brown, 2010). However, there have been well documented cases that have identified impoverished schools that have overcome adversity (Christie, 2001, 2007; Ncgobo & Tikly, 2010; Kamper, 2008; Pattillo, 2010). Christie *et al.* (2007), Prew (2007) and Kamper (2008), assert that given the dismal performance of the majority of township schools, there are however, schools that excel in the face of adversity.

The distinct practices executed by these principals are unknown. It was against this backdrop that this study was conducted.

1.3 Research Questions

- What leadership practices lead to success in township primary schools?
- How do successful principals deal with the adversity they face in these communities which shape the context of the school environment?
- How, given the constant change of the education realm, does the principal stay informed and manage his/her school to ensure quality teaching and learning?

1.4 Research Assumptions

This study is based on the following assumptions:

- There are school leadership practices that lead to the success of the schools in disadvantaged communities.
- The way in which successful principals respond to adversities they are faced with in disadvantaged communities, shape the context of the school environment.
- Principals who are informed of policies and the changes required are more effective and efficient at managing teaching and learning.

1.5 Research Aim

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences and leadership strategies of two successful primary school principals operating in disadvantage communities Kliptown/Eldorado Park, Gauteng.

1.6 Research Objectives

Based on the research assumptions stated above, the objectives of the study are to:

- Identify the practices that lead to principals' success in disadvantaged schools
- Ascertain the strategies principals employ or the leadership qualities they display in dealing with challenges that frame their and learners' environment
- identify how the principal secures positive teacher and learner performance

1.7 Significance Of The Study

This study hopes to contribute to knowledge about the distinct practices of principals who achieve success with schools in disadvantaged communities. These practices could be emulated by others, not so successful, and used to support neighbouring schools to improve their practices.

1.8 Rationale Of The Study

This research is informed by an interest in understanding the role of leadership operating in a terrain where failure is more common than success. The terrain is characterised by poor or no capacity building for principals, poorly trained educators, schools that are ill equipped in terms of infrastructure and resources, an illiterate community and hungry and abused learners (Muzah, 2011; Brown, 2010; Ncgobo et al., 2008; Christie, 2007). For most principals serving disadvantaged communities, this has become a daunting task (Bhengu, 2005). How then, given the contextual terrain, is it possible for some schools to succeed, what are the leadership stategies they employ, what do they do differently from their unsuccessful counterparts, how do they uplift their community and negotiate their didactic identity and how do they manage their schools to achieve success? Given the complex and fluid environment of schooling, didactic identity of the principals refers to the array of hats that the principal assumes to set the direction of the school to achieve its purpose.

The Department of Education has identified 792 underperforming primary schools in Gauteng which are mostly confined to townships (Gauteng Department of Education Annual Performance Plan, 2012/2013). It thus becomes vital to understand how some

schools facing the same socio-conomic challenges become outliers. How is it possible to achieve success where many others have failed? This research attempts to understand what principals of successful school do to attain that success.

From the above, the role and impact of school principals is key in leveraging positive student outcomes and a productive workforce, especially for principals functioning in disadvantaged communities (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Sammons, Hillman, Mortimore, 1995; Coleman, 2003; Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo, 2008). Empirical evidence of effective schools repeatedly reveals that effective schools are led by skilled principals practicing sound leadership (Leithwood et al., 2006; Fullan, 2006; Bush et al., 2011; Sammons et al., 1995). This research attempts to understand how successful school principals, functioning in disadvantaged communities, ensure and achieve success in their schools.

Research indicates that schools in challenging circumstances that are successful are headed by strong management (Harris, 2002; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, 2006; Prew, 2007; Christie, 2007). Literature on schools in challenging circumstances has identified the role of the principal as crucial to the success of schools (Leithwood et al., 2006). Fullan (2006), Bush et al. (2011) and Sammons et al. (1995), affirm that effective schools are led by skilled principals practicing sound leadership. These schools that excel against the odds are known to districts, neighbouring schools and communities, their success becomes a beacon of hope (Taylor, 2008; Spaul, 2012)

1.9 Policies To Enhance Learner Performance

1.9.1 The Green Paper

In 2009 the South African government drew on the Green Paper, embodying twelve (12) national priorities, the first being to improve the quality of basic education in South Africa. The Action Plan To 2014 highlights the challenges and solutions of basic education to improve the lives of South African learners in more than 25 000 public schools. This plan is to support the basic education sector with planning, professionalism and accountability, ultimately improving the quality of deliverance of schooling in South Africa. The plan embodies twenty seven (27) goals of which the first two focus on learners in primary schools, especially those in the exit phases – grades three (3) and six (6). Central to this plan, is the aim to create a more functional school environment for managers to affect required changes. This is vital as more than one third of South Africa's schools are situated in previously disadvantaged communities (Department of Education). It is essential to improve the quality of education to ensure improved learner outcomes for future development of the country (Department of Basic Education-Action Plan To 2014).

1.9.2 The Ten Point Plan

The Ten Point Plan, introduced to schools and which was endorsed by the Minister, stresses the need for better and improved teaching and learning in primary schools, highlighting the seriousness of schooling in South Africa. The Action Plan To 2014 is in line with the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals Report (MDG) of 2013, which up to date is the most successful global anti-poverty initiative and consists of eight goals. The first two goals are to alleviate hunger and poverty and the second is to ensure primary education for all children. According to the report dire poverty is the

reason most cited as to why most children of primary age do not attend school and will not complete primary school. This is significant as the majority of dysfunctional schools in South Africa are situated in townships and the success rate of learners is between 0 - 20 percent (Nieman & Kotze, 2006; Fataar & Patterson, 2006).

Chapter Overview

The above policies and the implementation thereof are is vital as more than one third of South Africa's schools are situated in previously disadvantaged communities (Department of Education). Poor and ineffective leadership has been identified as the cause of schools failing (Niemann & Kotze, 2006). Van den Berg (2009) argues that quality education is needed to alleviate the cycle of poverty mostly confined to township schools and that quality leadership is essential to achieve positive learner outcomes. On the other hand, Christie et al. (2007) note that the quality of education is essential when one looks at the schooling system, maintaining that leadership is key to a school's success. It is essential to improve the quality of education to ensure improved learner outcomes for future development of the country (Department of Basic Education-Action Plan To 2014). One needs to note that school leadership is one of many factors, at school level, that influence learner performance (Leithwood & Levin, 2005; Leithwood & Riehl, 2006; Bush et al., 2003). As the accounting officer, the principal is responsible for learner and teacher performance and his main purpose is to see to the core function of the institution, which is teaching and learning. Principals are under tremendous pressure to improve learner performance and deliver quality education.

1.10 National Context Of The Study

Since the inception of the new government in 1994 numerous policies and frameworks, including the National Education Policy Act of 1996; South African Qualifications Authority of 1996 (SAQA), South African Schools Act of 1996, and the National Norms and Standards for School Funding Bill (1998) (NNSSF) were introduced to address the apartheid legacy and required a great amount of accountability of school leaders (Weber, 2001; Soudien and Sayed, 2004; Christie, 2008; Naidu et al., 2008). According to Christie (2008), school governance and the rights and responsibilities of stakeholders are enshrined in the South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA). Decentralisation, which concerns the devolution of financial authority and governance to schools, was central to this policy. In this new dispensation, principals and Senior Management Teams (SMT) and School Governing Bodies (SGB) are responsible for the daily operations and functioning of the school (Prew, 2007; Weber, 2003; Christie, 2008; De Grauwe, 2004:2; Education Labour Relational Council (ELRC)). Naidu et al. (2008), state that school principals in particular, face challenges in navigating the changes within their schools. They not only have to effect change, they must also ensure quality teaching and learning. These can be quite cumbersome given the contextual terrain of some schools. Scores of research studies have focused on school leaders and their ability, or lack thereof, to affect effectiveness in schools (Leithwood et al., 2006; Roberts & Roach, 2006; Christie, 2010; Prew, 2007; Huber, 2004).

1.10.1 Educational And Socio-Economic Challenges Facing Principals

One of the most challenging tasks principals have had to deal with, according to Naidu et al. (2008), is the devolution of power through school-based management, which is in sharp contrast to the top-down approach of the apartheid era. During this era principals

were only expected to execute the prescribed racial policies and curricular (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997; McLennan & Thurlow, 2003; Fleisch, 2007). Fleisch (2007), Christie (1998) and Lethoka, Heystek and Maree (2001) assert that resistance to apartheid over a long period (1980-1990) has impacted the stature of the school principal negatively and has undermined certain educational practices. The Department of Education's drive to change the operational requirements for principals (through the proclamation of new policies) has rendered principals completely unprepared for the new challenges, given their past experiences (McLennan & Thurlow, 2003; Bush et al, 2003). These changes in education, combined with the undermined role of the principal, have resulted in the collapse of teaching and learning in many black urban and rural schools (Fleisch, 2007; Naidu et al., 2008; Christie, 1998; Lethoka, Heystek & Maree (2001). As a result school leaders have a complete lack of confidence and exude absolute despondence because of not having adequate solutions (McLennan & Thurlow, 2003).

A further challenge is that the framework in which South African schools operate is, to a great extent, influenced by the legacy of apartheid (Christie, 2008; Fleisch, 2007). Thurlow and McLennan (2003) and Fleisch (2007) point out that this past has created vast economic disparities amongst different spheres of society, thus rendering South Africa a hybrid of first and third world pockets, highlighting the two parallel economies of the South African schooling system. Where previously white and Indian schools were well resourced and mostly situated in affluent or safe areas, most black and coloured schools were situated in poverty stricken, gang-infested areas (Fleisch, 2007). These disparities created and required different approaches from school managers and educators in fulfilling their core duties (Christie, 2008; McLennan & Thurlow, 2003).

Research indicates that both primary and secondary school learners are failing to perform well despite government's commitment to equal and quality education through the adoption of transformational policies and intervention strategies, (Van der Berg & Louw, 2006; Christie,2008; McLennan & Thurlow, 2003; Department of Basic Education (DBE) - Action Plan, 2014; 2011). Poor performance was evident in the 2005 test scores overseen by the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) where South Africa came ninth (9) out of fourteen (14) countries (Christie, 2008). According to Fleisch (2007), South Africa's poor performance in standardised international testing programmes such as SACMEQ and TIMMS should be viewed within the context of the apartheid legacy. Christie (1998) identifies one of the consequences of the apartheid education as the 'breakdown of the culture of teaching and learning'. This breakdown in teaching and learning gave rise to a 'culture of resistance', triggering negative behaviours amongst learners such as: vandalism, violence, high absenteeism in both teachers and learners, and low morale (Lethoka et al., 2001; Christie, 1998; Fleisch, 2007). Poor quality of teaching and learning, in the absence of a secure and productive environment, is prevalent in most black township schools (Lethoka, Heystek & Maree, 2001:311; Christie, 2007; Muzah, 2011) and the lack of teaching, learning and performance is most noticeable in the results of the exit exams of learners (Fleisch, 2007).

Brown (2006) and Bush (2009) assert that, given the volatile history, government has failed to incorporate capacity building, adequate training programmes and leadership development to support the educational change essential for the post apartheid schooling system, which required a democratic and collaborative workforce. Lethoka *et al.* (2001) add that in the current epoch, school managers have to navigate domestic challenges, transformation visions and international policy trends brought about by the Department of Education (DoE). According to Huber (2004), schools are influenced by

societies and their communities thus school leaders need to consider these elements in their running and management of schools, this is especially evident in township schools. Furthermore, constant change in society, the community and the home requires school leaders to have the vision to deal with this fluid environment. This is a daunting task for school principals since they are unprepared (in terms of training and experience) for this new self-management role in post-apartheid South Africa (Bush, Glover, Bischoff, Moloi, Heystek & Joubert, 2006:13; Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997).

In illustration of this context it is agreed that schooling in South Africa takes place in different socio-economic conditions, not only in more affluent school environments but also in poverty stricken ones. According to Sayed and Sayed (2004), the NNSSF Bill of 1998 was adopted as part of Government's drive for equity and to try and iron out these discrepancies. This bill outlines the structure for funding provinces and schools (Christie, 2008), categorising schools to allow government to make provision for schools most in need of resources and support (Action Plan to 2014). Thus, schools have been divided into five socio-economic quintiles; depending on the level or degree of poverty in that community, with one (1) being the poorest (Action Plan to 2014). Statistics of the Department of Education of 2009 placed 8 960 from a total of 24 699 schools in quintile one. This means that more than one third of South African schools fall into quintile one. In the mid category, quintile three, there were 5 723 schools, making this the second highest quintile. Despite these challenges experienced by schools, government expects them to deliver quality teaching and learning (Christie, 2010; Prew, 2007). Notwithstanding all these challenges there are schools in disadvantaged social settings which are performing well (Fataar, 2003; Christie, 2010).

1.11 Local Context Of The Study

This study explores successful school leadership practices within a specific context, namely Kliptown/Eldorado Park in Gauteng and illustrates school how leadership in impoverished communities makes a difference. According to the Gauteng Province's Township Enterprise Initiative, these communities are mostly confined to townships, which Mampane and Bouwer (2011) maintain, are plagued by crime, violence and high levels of unemployment, resulting in unstable household incomes and living conditions (Fataar, 2007:607). These challenges could be attributed to what Chipkip (2005:144-16) describes as the "absence of virtuous or respectable family reproduction". According to Fataar (2007:599-612) "virtuous reproduction refers to the situation where families make ends meet on the basis of stable employment and income that enable them to rear the children at some distance from the illicit networks".

Furthermore, a report of 2004, the Johannesburg Development Agency (2004) noted that two thirds of the population in Kliptown consists of women, which accounts for the single parent homes and high teenage pregnancies. The study illuminates the work of two selected primary school principals within the Kliptown/Eldorado Park Townships. Kliptown/Eldorado Park comprises of twenty (20) primary schools of which seven (7) have been identified as successful based on a 50% pass rate in the Annual National Assessment of 2012.

The greater Kliptown area is situated between Soweto to the west and Johannesburg to the east. It is positioned between the residential areas of Eldorado Park, Pimville, Dlamini and Klipspruit. Kliptown gained its prominence in June 1956 with the adoption of the Declaration of the Freedom Charter. Eldorado Park was established during the "apartheid era" as a homeland or growth point for the "coloured" people of

Johannesburg. The area is made up of formal and informal housing, semi-detached houses and flats. While informal settlements vary in size, housing densities are high and service levels are limited or non-existent. As with many of South Africa's townships, Kliptown/Eldorado Park is notorious for its monotonous rows of sub-economic houses and flats are home to approximately 2 million people. In addition this township is characterized by a high level of poverty amongst many of its inhabitants. Added to this is the absence of a stable family unit and the continuous violence and abuse which pose a serious threat to the youth.

As with most townships in South Africa, Kliptown/Eldorado Park is plagued with alcohol and substance abuse, few employment opportunities, a high dropout school rate and poverty. Eldorado Park came under scrutiny for the high substance abuse leading to many dysfunctional households and its impact on the youth. This in turn placed the focus on school leaders and staff to provide adequate and structured programs for learners such as sport and cultural activities after contact time. Economically, there are not many opportunities in greater Kliptown/Eldorado Park area to alleviate the high unemployment numbers, the low levels of education and those suffering from health related illnesses such as HIV/AIDS (Johannesburg Development Agency, 2004). Unemployment has reached epidemic levels and crime and drug abuse are rife under the young people.

Chapter1:

Chapter 1 describes the context of the study, rationale, overview of the literature, the purpose, objectives, research methodology and definition of terms.

Chapter 2: Literature review and Theoretical Framework

In Chapter 2 a literature review regarding the relevant international and national literature is discussed. Furthermore it also explained and discussed the theoretical framework that underpins the study.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

Chapter 3 describes and explains the research methodology applied to this study.

Chapter 4: Data analysis, interpretation and discussion of School A

Chapter 4 provides a discussion and presentation of the results obtained in this study.

Chapter 5: Data analysis, interpretation and discussion of School B

Chapter 5 provides a discussion and presentation of the results obtained in this study**.**

Chapter 6: Discussion, conclusion and recommendations

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the study. The importance of principal leadership as highlighted. Furthermore, it provided a brief overview of the research problem and the methodology used to conduct the research. Chapter 2 will discuss the related literature.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A literature review enables the researcher to identify what is known and not known regarding the topic. It provides a theoretical foundation of the research topic and evaluates and assesses existing literature within the selected field. The literature review provides the researcher with the current theoretical and scientific knowledge about the matter of concern, thus enabling the identification of knowledge gaps or expansion of existing theory within the field (Msewli, 2011:47; Badenhorst, 2012:43).

There is vast international literature on successful leadership. However, this study found that there was limited research on successful school leadership within the South African context. The study draws on both international and South African research to attempt to understand the challenges faced by disadvantaged schools and to determine what, if any, role leadership plays in disadvantaged schools with a high success rate.

This chapter provides an overview of the literature concerning successful primary school leadership. It comprises a review of local and international research on school leadership in challenging contexts, drawing out sources of disadvantage and pointing to successful leadership strategies in such schools. The chapter includes a review of theoretical literature in order to show how leadership has been conceptualized, and of empirical evidence, to demonstrate whether and how research evidence supports conceptions of successful school leadership in challenging contexts.

The selection of the literature was informed by a systematic review linked to the three central themes of the research questions: successful practices of school leadership, features of leadership which enable successful academic performance, and an understanding of socio-economic and educational conditions, with their impact on academic achievement. The selection strategy involved examining electronic databases using a combination of keywords around leadership practices (leaders, principal, teacher-leadership) and challenging circumstances (disadvantage, poverty). Further, the strategy involved hand or electronic searches of the tables of contents and abstracts of educational leadership journals. More specifically, the chapter reviewed the literature specific to disadvantaged schools, with a particular focus on those limited sources that directly pertain to South African township settings. While articles in peer-reviewed journals form a major part of materials reviewed here, conference papers, books, dissertations, theses, and a variety of research reports were also included as source materials.

2.2 Concepts of Leadership

According to Bush (2006) and Cheng (n.d.), there are more than 350 definitions of leadership, each interpreted differently. A few of these definitions are: the primary task of a leader at a school is to guarantee an environment that inspires people through influence, to work effectively and to realise the goals of the institution (Early & Weindling, 2004); leadership is the relationship between leaders and followers where one in power exerts influence over the followers to achieve the desired outcome (Raynor, 2008); leadership is the ability to direct, support and elevate people to achieve desired outcomes (Dimmock & Walker, 2000); leadership is about involving all stakeholders at school level, is goal orientated and driven (Huber, 2004) and leadership is the ability to lead and influence people and their activities through creating a platform

of open communication and risk taking, which is not always based on prescribed policies (Heystek, 2007). Davies and Ellison (1997) state that leaders set the medium and long term vision of an organisation and have the foresight to affect changes which will ensure the achievement of the school vision.

A school vision is aligned to the central purpose of schools, which is quality teaching and learning. Leithwood and Riehl (2006) maintain that successful leaders live the vision of the school and inspire others to follow suit. Harris and Chapman (n.d.) found that successful leaders were driven by their own personal values and moral compass which heavily influenced the vision of the school. Said leaders lived their vision through their deeds; they communicated the vision and aligned the educators and learners to the vision of the school. This reflects Elmore's (2010) view that people's values, thinking, attitudes and beliefs are embedded in and shaped by organisational culture. Similarly, the context of the school is important in that it shapes and determines the principals' behaviour, especially principals functioning in poorly performing schools.

Bush and Glover (2009) have found that leadership influence on learner outcome is indirect and through others, with the influence of leadership on learner achievement estimated at 5 to 7 %. Since the principal's influence is indirect and accounts for only 5 to 7%, teaching and learning management and effective and efficient curriculum delivery by practitioners could be achieved through: (a) modelling; (b) monitoring and (d) dialogue (Bush, 2009). Reynolds (n.d.) and Jacobson *et al.* (2004) maintain that leadership in failing schools was not the exclusive duty of the school principal, but that of other stakeholders as well.

Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009) argue that school leadership is vital in securing and preserving an environment conducive for quality teaching and learning and that the process or the route to securing the ideal environment is crucial. Principals and

managers are in a position to provide necessary resources, and can erect the required support structures to enhance the work environment for those directly involved with learners (Hallinger, 2005; Simkin et al., 2010). It was mentioned elsewhere in this study that principals' influence is indirect and that principals affect learning outcomes through organisational culture, school structures and people. In such schools, a bureaucratic form of management might be more conducive to attaining the desired educational outcomes (Hallinger, 2005).

Harris (2009) argues that many reviews on successful school leadership in disadvantaged settings failed to attribute these successes to a particular leadership model, but showed that values, personal qualities, goals and contextual dimensions, led them to succeed. Richards and Roach (2008) concur. In contrast, Hallinger and Heck (1998) maintain that during the 1980s, instructional leadership and transformational leadership dominated the educational arena. Later studies linked successful leadership to a more distributed and egalitarian form of leadership (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Muijs et al., 2004). Hallinger (2003) and Huber (2004) state that the degree of leadership success is linked to factors within the school, such as the context, internal and external policies and the community, which in turn determine the leadership approach or model adopted.

Thus, school leadership involves the ability to influence others, directing and achieving goals, and the ability to delegate and empower all role-players. Bush (2006) and Cheng (2003) describe influencing others as a reciprocal process that can be exercised directly or indirectly within the organisation and is not exclusive to a position of power (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006).

Hargreaves (1997) sees the role of the principal as creating and managing knowledge through knowing and understanding the "intellectual capacity" of staff and the "organisational capital." These two variables are fundamental in the management of teaching and learning and are embedded in school structures and processes (Hayes et al., 2004). Since the way people do things is embedded in their thinking, values and knowledge, these structures and processes need to be synchronised with the school vision (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). All schools, then, should develop a vision for sustained improvement and leaders should communicate, understand and live that vision so that others will embrace and internalise it. Huffman (2001) states that without a clear and well defined vision, no structure will hold up in the face of adversity.

There are many definitions, models, typologies and theories on leadership with as many commonalities as there are differences (Bush, 2006). In the South African township of Soshanguve, Prew (2007) found that successful principals exercised a variety of leadership models, influenced by diverse situations and contexts. According to Roberts and Roach (2006), the adoption of a model depends on the developmental stage of the school, the set goals to be achieved, the situation and the complex environment faced by leaders. Thus, it can be said that successful principals reflect on and adapt their leadership approach to suit the context within which they function (Leithwood et al., 2003).

2.2.1 Instructional Leadership

Previously, the school principal's role was synonymous with instructional leadership and he was viewed as the authority in teaching and learning (Marks & Pinty, 2003). His

focus was on improving the school and academic achievements through "or*ganisational culture, school structures and the people"* (Hallinger et al., 1998), thus driving and directing instructional leadership. However, this role is no longer one dimensional but consists of a variety of tasks to be shared by the various role players in the school system (Spillane, 2005). The multitude of tasks as proposed by Blasé & Blasé (1999:350) is: (a) supervision of classroom instruction (b) capacity building of staff and (c) curriculum development. In the current epoch, instructional leadership has departed from prescribed rules and controlled supervision and has shifted towards a reciprocal relationship of stakeholders for curriculum enrichment and improvement. This shift was achieved through healthy dialogue amongst educators which allowed for reflection and professional growth in their key performance areas (Blasé & Blasé, 1999:350). Hallinger and Heck (2005:234) confirm that the role of the instructional leader should be a shared task amongst all individuals within the organisation.

However, Hays *et al.* (2003) argue that given the move toward a more collegial and collaborative approach of managing teaching and learning, the task at hand still remains the sole responsibility of the instructional leader to ensure effective and efficient delivery of the curriculum. Measures to be put in place to achieve the latter include suitable monitoring systems and an environment conducive to performing the core duties of teaching and learning. Fidler (1997) avers that the structure implemented should indicate clear line function responsibility, reporting lines and the overall structural composition of the school.

Teaching and learning are influenced indirectly by instructional leadership (Bush et al., 2003). Hallinger and Heck (1998:167) state that the leader affects learner outcomes through other people, who are seen by Hayes *et al.* (2004) as the educators and their

circumstances. Taylor (2008) states organisational culture, school structures and the people shape leaders and the extent to which influence outcomes.

2.2.2 Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Transformational leadership gained its prominence during the restructuring period of the 1990s (Leithwood, 1992). Although, according to Moolenaar, Daly and Sleegers (2010), literature has produced many leadership models that focus on innovation and reform, transformational leadership remains the model used most frequently since it focusses on both the objectives of the institution and the development and empowerment of the people. Bass (1990) asserts that managers initially start off with the transactional model which is concerned with exchange of rewards to establish a trust factor between employer and employee when delivery takes place. However, since few managers are in the position to secure certain rewards in the current dispensation, this model is not sustainable and requires a move to the transformational model which demands a higher intrinsic level of trust and commitment to achieve organisational goals thus creating an enabling and sustainable working environment.

Bush (2003) sees transformational leadership as the ability of the leader to harness the intellectual capacity of a group of members to accomplish organisational goals. Marks and Pinty (2003) see the relationship between leader and followers as central to transformational leadership. Huber (2004) postulates that transformational leadership has its focus on increasing people's commitment and enhancing true participation, which contribute positively to school development. Transformational leadership is said to ''add value'' since it encourage people to improve their work processes. According to Moolenaar *et al.* (2010) the inclusive and participative approach, which transformational leadership embrace, leads to improved innovation levels in schools and often to the

over-performance on initial expectation set by teachers for themselves. Moolenaar (2010) further claims that the collaborative work element associated with transformational leadership elevates organizational objectives beyond those of the individual.

Avolio and Bass (1999) see transformational leadership as an approach where one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. It is pro-active, involves change, the building of trusting relationships and a culture of empowerment based on respect. For this reason Hallinger (2003) states that transformational leadership is embedded in distributed leadership and seeks to bring about changes in individuals practice to teaching and learning. It is not only focused the ability to delegate but requires the sharing of power. School leaders are required to set the example and model the way (Hallinger, 2003). When principals assume this approach it not only does it yield positive results for work satisfaction but inspires the staff to better performance. On the other hand the transactional leader monitors performance, reward the staff members for good performance and when problems arise it is addressed as soon as it is noted (Hallinger, 2003).

Huber (2004) asserts that transactional leadership is the conduit for the smooth running of the day to day tasks of the organisation, whose importance cannot be underestimated. Moolenaar *et al.* (2010), state that transactional leadership has its focus on control and maintenance of the ‘’transactions’’ between the leader and his followers. This transactional relationship, which has its core focus on compliance, is maintained by the leader through incentives or consequences. Although Leithwood

(1992) could find no relationship between transactional leadership and changes as perceived by teachers, he claims that there is a strong correlation between transformational leadership and the attitudes of teachers with regards to changes in instructional behaviour at school (Leithwood,1992). Leithwood (1992) affirms ''second-order'' changes require the leadership's focus to be aligned with changing objectives. Because of its inclusive and collaborative transactional leadership can facilitate changing processes (Leithwood, 1992).

2.2.3 Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership holds that power or authority does not rest within one individual, ordinarily the principal, but with a concert of players (Harris, 2004). Knowledge and skill should be leveraged to all participants throughout the learning institution, thus creating leaders in all (Spillane, 2005:141). Distributed leadership is not only about making every person a leader, but about practices emanating from liaisons amongst role players. Spillane (2005:145) states that leadership practice involves many leaders with or without official acknowledgement since leaders are not only those performing heroic actions. Leadership is not an action aimed at followers, but followers are one of three entities contained in leadership practice.

According to Robinson (2008:243), the following are central to leadership: (a) leader, (b) follower and (c) task or situation. Leadership is defined as the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others, in particular contexts, around specific tasks. According to Robinson (2008), the above addresses the question of what leadership does, but how it is done is by harnessing the emotional and intellectual capital of all stakeholders, utilising all available resources to support change in the organisation.

2.2.4 Leadership in Disadvantaged Schools: International Perspective

Education is seen as the vehicle to alleviate poverty, unemployment and to produce a knowledgeable society and schools, across the board, should provide equal and quality education to all regardless of background (Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdo & Wheeler, 2006). Schools in low socio economic locations face challenges that range from crime and substance abuse to violence (Harris, 2009). In addition, school leaders serving such communities face high levels of unemployment, medical and psychological related issues and low educational achievement, high learner-teacher ratios and learner absenteeism (Harris, 2009; Jacobson, Johnson, Ylimaki & Giles, 2005). Governments, worldwide, have placed high importance on schools in disadvanged communties and the challenges they face (Fullan, 2006; Harris, 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Chapman & Harris, 2010).

Although improvement of afflicted schools becomes ardouos, a difference can be made and the belief that social background is definitive of low performance no longer holds true since success has been achieved by some disadvantaged schools (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins,2006; Christie et al., 2007). In Fullan's (2006) view, the emphasis should not be on "what" successful principals did, but rather on "how" they managed to achieve success in challenging settings given the nature of the contextual terrain in which their schools operate. Failing schools have succeeded as a result of outstanding leadership that is focused on fostering and securing quality teaching and learning (Sammons et al., 1995, Leithwood, et al., 2006; Harris, 2009; Matthews, 2009; Hopkins, 2006). Thus the view held by Bush (2009) and Leithwood and Riehl (2003) that principals indirectly influence learner achievement, could hold true.

Jacobson, Johnson, Ylimaki and Giles, (2005:611) found that the core practices that were often employed by successful principals included (i) setting direction; (ii) developing people and (iii) developing the organisation. Of importance, is that there should be concrete evidence of these core practices since social influence have a severe impact on the behaviour and practices of management. Fullan (2006), however, notes that principals generally experience difficulty in navigating policies and change efforts in their schools. As a result principals, on numerous occasions, have had to "*recalibrate*" the contextual constraints and conditions. Jacobson *et al.* (2005) agrees that disadvantaged schools are severely impacted by the context and external community, thus influencing the behaviour of management and core practices. In support of this Henneveld and Craig (1996) stress that one needs to be cognisant that school improvement does not take place in the same way, given the context of schools.

A study in a rural area in Cyprus, focussing on identifying skills, qualities, practices and values displayed by school principals, found that principals in the schools could not harness the collective skills and resources needed to succeed (Pashiardis, Savvides, Lytra & Angelidou, 2011). On the other hand, Matthews (2009) identified the following practices as key to principals' success; the appointing of quality staff and their ongoing development, provision of adequate support and high expectations for all learners and maintaining focus on the core function of the school. Furthermore the role of the principal to lead and direct instruction was pinpointed as an outstanding feature to the schools successes, together with the ability to draw support and establish relationship with parents. In addition, continous monitoring and evaluation of both teachers' and learners' work was central to achieving outstanding academic success.

Hayes, Christie, Mills and Llingard (2004) contend that the influence of leadership practices on learner cognition is indirect and minimal, while teacher characteristics are

more influential. Hayes *et al.* (2004) claim that good quality teachers, impact positively on impoverished learners and better results are obtained if the focus is directly on the educators and their challenges. According to Leithwood (1992), successful school leaders, not only focus on learner performance but also on educator development and proper support, leading instruction through self-evaluation. Fullan (2006:13) agrees that schools which achieve success in the face of adversity exhibit the "capacity" to pursue their core business of teaching and learning, which is reflected through learner achievement. Hopkins (2006) opines that the total intellectual and emotional skill of all staff should be harnessed to facilitate the core and Oduro (2005:7) agrees that leadership is not exclusive task of an individual but the collective competence of all participants in an egalitarian environment.

According to Leithwood and Riehl (2003), the role and impact of school leadership is central in leveraging positive student outcomes and ensuring a committed and productive workforce. Although the principal's influence on student outcome and the success of the school is indirect, that influence on learner performance accounts for one quarter of all school factors (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Harris, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2003). Leadership indirectly influences the construction of an aesthetically sound learning environment and successful school leadership are instrumental in creating an environment conducive to quality teaching and learning since the work environment has a direct influence on the behaviours of the employees and directly impacts the output impacts (Hopkins, Harris, Stoll & Mackay, 2010).

The practices displayed by school leadership in challenging circumstances include professional leadership, shared vision and goals; an environment conducive to quality teaching and learning; purposeful teaching and high expectations of both teachers and learners. Other characteristics include monitoring the progress of learners, educators and leadership, pupil rights and responsibilities, home-school partnerships and a

learning organisation (Sammons et al., 1995). Nonetheless, Sammons et al., (1995:5) caution against thinking that these key descriptors could be emulated without taking contextual factors of the particular schools into account. They should rather be viewed as a measure of self-evaluation.

2.2.5 Leadership in Disadvantaged Schools: National Perspective

While Niemann and Kotze (2006:609) found numerous dysfunctional schools in the public sector with a 0-20% pass rate and a culture where teaching and learning were impaired, they assert that both public and private school domains in South Africa range from very effective to dysfunctional. As such, quality education and the delivery thereof, are crucial to eliminate the cycle of poverty and unemployment which is mostly evident in the performance of learners in township schools (Fleisch, 2008; Spaul, 2012). However, quality education has become a cumbersome challenge to policy makers in South Africa where a majority of the dysfunctional or poorly performing schools are situated in townships and are synonymous with poor leadership and the dismal performance of both educators and learners (Van den Berg, 2009). In many cases the poor performance can be attributed to factors such as poor health, low income, dysfunctional homes and the well documented legacy of apartheid (Fleisch, 2008). In yet others, some principals were found to prioritise financial and human resources above all else in dire contrast to what is stipulated in the SASA Bush (2006). The role of principals, as leaders, becomes crucial to high poverty schools and Kamper (2008) is adamant that high poverty schools require excellent leaders, so improvement and development of these principals are central to alleviating poverty.

However, though faced with all these problems, there are high poverty schools that excel in the face of adversity (Taylor, 2008 ; Spaul, 2012). According to Bush (2009), in order to achieve success, principals should focus on their core duty which is the

managing of teaching and learning and measures should be put in place to closely monitor learner performance. In the current epoch newly appointed principals with a mere teaching qualification are not efficiently equipped to deal with challenges such as problem-solving and decision-making with regard to SGBs, parents, learners and educators (Bush & Oduro, 2011; Brown (2010). Such appointees are left unprepared for the challenging role of effective leadership which requires well prepared and trained principals. Bush *et al.* (2011), recognise sound leadership as essential to turning around low performance schools (Bush, Joubert, Kuggundu & van Rooyen, 2010). Arguments that are put forward by Brown, (2010) and Spaul (2012) that since South African principals in disadvantaged communities require sound management and development, the ongoing training of these principals is crucial to addressing the performance of schools serving impoverished communities.

Against this backdrop, Ncgobo and Tikly (2008) note that leadership is not the only factor responsible for school success. Given the diverse context and well documented apartheid legacy, the focus should be on a framework that can be used to evaluate effective leadership that is dispersed throughout all schools; effective leadership that empowers staff, learners and the community and draws on transformational leadership which is common amongst more affluent schools. Successful leaders seem to be guided by their own value systems and those of stakeholders although they initially sought to understand and align these values before focusing on internal and external needs. Values of the community are also often prevalent for transformation and changes to occur and as such, effective leaders need to understand organisational cultures which are evident in the thinking and behaviour of people. In township schools that are excelling, it seems that principals delegate financial and time tabling tasks, which are normally reserved for principals or Heads of Department, practicing

leadership as a shared responsibility among all stakeholders like SMTs, HODs, pupils, parents and members of the community (Ncgobo & Tikly, 2008).

Taylor (2008), argues that it is crucial that principals, as curriculum managers, secure monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure effective delivery of the curriculum. Principals are key in the success of schools and are responsible to lead the core by (a) creating a culture conducive to teaching and learning, which is in fact the sole purpose of schools (b) developing a culture of reading and writing, (c) implementing systems to monitor and evaluate curriculum delivery through regular tests and (d) establishing opportunities for professional development and increasing educator knowledge through professional cluster meetings or peer learning groups. Other researchers, such as Roberts and Roach (2006) thought it best to focus on behaviour patterns displayed by the principal in a given situation rather than on identifying specific leadership models. They propose that in most of the successful schools, principals tend to focus strongly on personal values such as honesty, integrity and respect. Other qualities they have in common are dedication, a passion for education and learning, loyalty to staff, love for learners and putting learners' interests first. Furthermore, these principals actively encouraged staff to challenge and question their own views. Self-reflection by the principal also evidently plays a part in how these principals develop and manage their schools, this reflection mostly occurring when resistance from teachers, parents and learners is experienced.

The value-driven nature of leadership, in effective schools, came through in both national and international literature. The ability to adopt various leadership roles was also a contributing factor to principals' success and principals who selected and

embraced innovation were more successful than their counterparts (Prew, 2007). Leaders have to lead by example by arriving early, staying late, and consciously tailoring their behaviour, thus modelling good leadership practice as a way of securing good performance from staff. Christie, Butler and Patterson (2007) found that across South Africa, the majority of well-performing schools had supportive leadership and management, strong inner capacity in terms of teaching and learning, and a strong sense of urgency and successful principals exercised a variety of leadership models, influenced by diverse situations and contexts. Principals therefore need to display good relationships with the district, the community and parents, as well as foster and establish relationships with outside bodies.

Kamper (2008), using Stoll and Finks's (1996) invitational leadership model in his study of six (6) successful high poverty schools found that his model seemed to address the essence of school leadership in the impoverished schools he was studying. Seemingly, these leaders practiced an array of leadership models depending on the goal and principals displayed a passion for the welfare of the learners, parents and educators. They showed an ability to successfully harness the intellectual and emotional capacity of staff and the efficient and productive distribution of resources. The schools' culture promoted respect and personal values aligned to the vision, while the schools' focus was on the core function and the ongoing professional development of educators, as well as on establishing stable and ongoing relationships with parents and the community - one of the pillars of the schools success; promoting unity amongst staff; teachers are encouraged to take ownership of work and the school; the appointment of well qualified and motivated teaching staff and the ability to establish relationship with the outside community, donors and businesses.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This section provides a theoretical framework for understanding the role of successful school leadership practices. A theoretical framework in a study guides the researcher and provides an understanding of the research topic and gathered data (Brink et al., 2006). The theoretical framework for this study is based on the four (4) core practices by Leithwood and Riehl (2006). These four core practices assist with understanding successful school leadership and can be applied to most learning organisations (Leithwood et al., 2006). Managing of teaching and learning is a core practice proposed by Leithwood and Riehl (2006). The management of teaching and learning is not only applicable and used within the field of educational leadership. It could also be used within other sectors such as business. The core practices relates to: setting direction, developing people, developing the organization and managing teaching and learning. Both qualitative and quantitative research done on successful practices of principals has indicated that most of the models used to measure successful leadership failed to indicate the how and that there is much to learn from this topic(Leithwood et al., 2006). An explanation of the four core practices are now provided.

2.3.1 Giving Direction

Despite the fact that pincipals' impact on learner achievement is indirect and accounts for only one third of the pass rate, they are conduits for change since their position allows them to create an environment where teachers can teach and learners can learn (Simkin, Charmer & Suss, 2010). School leaders are responsible for setting the direction of the school which lends itself to the vision and mission and which embodies the core function or purpose of the institution (Simkin et al., 2010). It is Davies and Ellison's (1997) view that leaders set the medium and long term vision of an

organisation and have the foresight to affect changes which will ensure the achievement of the school vision. Therefore it is argued that these leaders identify and articulate the vision by harnessing teacher knowledge and skill with regards to the core purpose which is teaching and learning. They do so by creating shared meaning; identifying goals, communicating and showing understanding which lead to the attainment of the vision (Elmore, 2010).

Leaders are strategically positioned to affect shared understanding and establish consultative cultures where staff can reflect and clearly communicate their understanding about learners and practices, such as subject methodology, content and accountability (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Bush & Glover, 2009). They should therefore clearly articulate performance benchmarks for both teachers and learners since effective leaders promote and foster collaborative cultures based on shared goals, not individual goals (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The culture and the manner in which people think and behave are embedded in the vision of the school. Monitoring organisational performance would require the management to put systems and structures in place that would enhance and facilitate continuous learning and reflection on teaching and learning (Hopkins, Harris, Stoll & Mackay, 2010; Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Lastly, they should ensure healthy and continuous dialogue which is aligned to the achievement of said goals (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Day et al., 2009).

2.3.2 Developing People

According to Bush (2009), the principals' effect on learners is indirect and achieved through and with others. Bush (2006) also states that the principals' influence on learner performance is only 5.7%. One can therefore surmise that principals and management are both key in creating an environment effective for teaching and learning (Early & Weindling, 2004). For teaching to be effective, it becomes imperative that

school managers ensure the internal and external development of educators (Elmore, 2010). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) believe that mangagers should ensure the ongoing and sustainable development of educators by providing them with intellectual stimulation, through constructive discourse, erecting support structures through professional learning groups (PLG's), and evaluating meaningful monitoring which will enable educators to improve and change their practice and skill. Professional learning groups are defined by Muijs *et al.* (2005) and Hopkins (2006) as where educators reflect evaluate and share their knowledge whilst taking responsibility for teaching and learning.

2.3.3 Redesigning the Organisation

Fullan (1991) argues that principals play a vital role in nurturing and securing an environment that is conducive to success, such as the development of collective goals, collaborative work structures and climates and procedures to monitor results (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). According to Fullan and Hargreaves (2000), collaborative cultures create and sustain more satisfying and productive work environments. This could be achieved through the school culture, organisational structures, empowering of staff through decision making and establishing relationships with external school communities. The principal's action or leadership practice becomes crucial in directing and nurturing the behaviour and the inner state or motivation of staff members to achieve the objectives of the organisation (Owens, 2004).

Schools need to function and create environments conducive to the delivery of high quality teaching and learning. The school environment which is embedded and discerned in the school culture, and is more often discerned in people's behaviour

requires that the school embrace and promote a culture of quality teaching and learning for the development of both learners and educators (Bush & Glover,2006). Organisational culture according to Schein (1988) is a system of fundamental assumptions conceived by a given group that becomes the barometer as to how it perceives, reacts and feels to its various environments. Niemann and Kotze (2006) concur that organisational culture is the set of values, norms, principles for behaviour and shared expectations that influence the way in which individuals, groups and teams interact with each other and co-operate to achieve organisational goals.

Senge (1990) sees a learning organisation as a place where people continually expand their capacity to create desired results and where aspirations are set free. Thus, only if an organisation can offer ongoing development will it become a learning organisation. Fullan (2006) describes an effective school leader, who affects capacity, as one who is able to harness the knowledge and experience of educators; establish professional learning groups/communities (PLG/PLC) amongst educators and management and has collective and synergised focus; time, access and expertise. Hayes *et al.* (2004) places the responsibility for the PLC squarely at the feet of the school principals, who lead the instructional core, since the focus of the PLC should be improved outcomes of all learners and it should both support and exert pressure.

2.3.3 Managing Teaching and Learning

In South Africa, one of the key performance areas for school principals as stated in the South African Schools Act, 1996 (SASA), Education Labour Relation Council of 1998 (ELRC) and the South African Standard for School Leadership, is the effective and efficient delivery of teaching and learning.

Bush (2010) states that principals are responsible for staff structures, for ensuring delivery of tasks central to the organization and implementing effective accountability and assessment structures (Bush, 2010). Principals, as accounting officers of the institution, have a vital role to play in influencing the culture and mindset of the role-players. They need to emphasise academic aspects such as staff development programmes, involving educators in decision-making, providing resources where possible, supervision and provision of instructional time (Kruger, 2003:207).

The concept of a "culture of learning and teaching" refers to the mind-set of all role players with regard to teaching and learning and the presence of quality teaching and learning processes in schools (Lethoka, Heystek & Maree, 2001). The above authors identify negative attitudes of teachers and learners, lack of resources, poor relationships among principals, educators, learners and parents, poor leadership and pitiable organisation skills that are fundamental in establishing a sound culture of learning and teaching as discernible characteristics synonymous with poor culture of teaching and learning (Kruger, 2003:207). According to Fleisch (2007) this poor culture of teaching and learning is mostly evident in the exit exams of township schools. Furthermore it also gives rise to resistance against authority, i.e. the principal.

However, principals' role in the current dispensation has evolved through policy and assumes a variety of roles in a very complex and fluid environment which requires of them to form trusting relationships and power sharing, which at times can be very challenging (Brown, 2006). According to Fullan (1998), today's leadership is expected to transfer power while keeping some form of control, to inspire employees to greater heights and create a universal culture within the learning institution. Even though this

could be challenging for some principals, for those who wish to be effective they need to establish collaborative work cultures with SMTs, educators, learners and parents and harness the collective skill of all to focus on the core (Christie, 2007). In South Africa the management of teaching and learning is conducted through the establishment of senior management teams (SMTs). In the majority of schools the middle manager (HoD) is the curriculum driver.

Research indicates that as principals are central to the success of the school, the pathways and strategies taken by the principal to sustain positive learner and teacher performance should be well thought through (Day et al., 2009). Central to optimum school functionality is its people as they are the resources which principals deploy to execute their strategy. Therefore it is imperative that school leaders acknowledge those directly involve with learners, through actively involving educators in decisions that impact them, establish collaborative and consultative cultures, acknowledge and affirm educators when needed (Hoadley et al., 2009). Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) emphasise the importance of delegating responsibility, which allows teachers to participate and become knowing partners in cultivating participative values. This will enhance the facilitation of teamwork and human relationships. Both the leader and the workers are involved in decision making, which enhances personal and professional growth as well as autonomy amongst the staff (Booyens, 2002).

Bush and Glover (2009) opine that school leaders should prioritise the management of high quality teaching and learning and ensure positive learner throughput . For this reason (Spillaine, 2003) suggests that school leaders become the leaders of instruction, allowing school leaders to take on an active and direct role in the management of

teaching and learning. This view is also substantiated by Bush and Glover (2009) who advocate that principals assume the role of the instructional leader, focussing on the core of the school business. Hallinger (2003) cautions against thinking that this form of leadership is the only one for the principal. Principals exercise a variety of roles depending on the context, needs and limitations of the school. It will be detrimental for any principal to solely focus on curriculum management (Hallinger, 2003). Distributed leadership which is embedded in transformational leadership is concerned with the delegation of task by instilling and embedding a sense of shared responsibility and accountability in all stake holders.

2.4 Conclusion

In view of the above literature review, one can deduce that for schools globally and not only in South Africa functioning in challenging contexts, well trained and credible leadership is required.

The purpose of this chapter was to explore and understand successful school leadership in disadvantaged communities in South Africa

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology that was used to explore successful school leadership in disadvantaged communities in Gauteng.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The foregoing chapters provided an account of the background to the study with a comprehensive literature review regarding successful leadership in disadvantaged communities, both internationally and nationally. This chapter describes the research methodology utilised in this study. It looks at the aim of the study and the objectives, the research design, population and sampling methods used, data collection process and data analysis and interpretation methods used.

Research methodology refers to the manner in which the researcher intends to address the research question (Msweli, 2011).

3.2 Research Question

A research question is a well formulated and focused statement that guides and frames the research intends (Badenhorst, 2012).

The research question directing this study was: What are the experiences and leadership strategies of two successful primary school principals operating in disadvantage communities Kliptown/Eldorado Park, Gauteng.

The questions directing this study are:

- What leadership practices lead to success in township primary schools?

- How do successful principals deal with the adversity they face and which shapes the context of the school environment in these communities?
- How, given the constant change of the education realm, does the principal stay informed and manage his/her school to ensure quality teaching and learning?

3.3 Research Aim

According to De Vos, Strydom and Delport (2005) a research aim or purpose is to clarify the research intent of the study.

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences and leadership strategies of two successful primary school principals operating in disadvantage communities Kliptown/Eldorado Park, Gauteng.

3.4 Research Design

A research design refers to the manner in which inquiry will take place and specifies the stages that will be followed in conducting the research (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This study entailed a descriptive design with a qualitative approach to explore successful leadership practices of two primary school principals in Kliptown/Eldorado Park, Gauteng

This study used a descriptive design with a qualitative approach to explore successful leadership in disadvantage communities. Descriptive research aims to describe

phenomena under study, in this case, factors influencing successful principal practices and data can be gathered in spoken or written form (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2005).

According to Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006), qualitative research originated in the field of interpretive studies, the underlying premise of this epistemology being that human experience is best understood once knowledge of the social, linguistic and historical characteristics is gained. Moreover, human experience or behaviour is mutually dependent on social, linguistic and historical context (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). De Vos *et al.* (2005) view the qualitative approach as a way to obtain a primary account and knowledge of the phenomena under study and to acquire an in-depth understanding. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) define qualitative research as a means to assist the researcher in understanding human experiences. Subsequently a qualitative methodology was employed, through a case study conducted at two primary schools in Kliptown/Eldorado Park, disadvantaged townships in Gauteng.

A case study is a design that guides the rigorous exploration of a single unit of study, such as a person, family, group, community or institution (Grove, Burns &Gray, 2013).

In this case, the researcher explored the experiences of the principals, deputies and educators to gain insight into the leadership practices of successful schools. Qualitative studies provide researchers with an array of design inquiry and De Vos *et al.* (2005), identify biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case studies as

the five designs of inquiry that are most often used because of their popularity. However, this study focused on only one of these design inquiries, namely case studies.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) define “bounded systems” case study as those that explore a specific unit or individual in detail, thereby allowing researchers to understand the participants’ perception of their experiences within their own social environment. “Bounded” in this definition, refers to a unique place and setting. Baxter and Jack (2008) participants should not be manipulated during a case study. Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006) maintain that case studies have certain constraints in that the verification of causal links is restrictive and the validity of information may be questionable. They caution against generalisations based on the hypothesis of a single case study. Video and audio recordings are a common practice that allow reanalysis, enables data verification and enhances authentication of case studies. In this research, the case study focused on the practices of successful principals of two primary schools in Kliptown/Eldorado Park.

3.5 Population and Sampling

Population refers to all elements, either people or objects that are the main focus of the topic under study (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The populations of this study consisted of educators teaching at a successful school in a disadvantaged community. These educators were Principals, Deputy Principals, Heads of Department and Post Level One Educators.

A sample is a fraction of a larger piece selected by the researcher (Brink, Van der Walt & Van Rensburg, 2008). This research employed a purposive sampling method**.** Purposive sampling entails a researcher deliberately choosing people to participate in a study due to the experience they have about the topic under study (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

The socio-economic classification of schools is done in quintiles, ranging from one to five with one being the poorest. Two primary schools in Kliptown/Eldorado Park were sampled in this study since these townships are categorised as a Quintile One, thus making all schools there relevant and applicable to the study. A sample, representing the selected participants would consist of teaching staff at two primary schools in Kliptown, Johannesburg (Burns & Grove, 2009). Purposive sampling was applied to recruit key informants such as the principal, 2 deputies, 2 HODs and 3 teachers, a total of 8 selected participants. The 3 educators could not occupy managerial positions, as this would provide views other than that of management. The above process was duplicated at the second school, and the same sampling method of the first school was replicated. The research, however, continued with the interviewing process until data saturation occurred after the 16 interviews. Data saturation occurs when additional participants do not provide new information (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

The sample size was small since selection was based on purposive sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) agree that a study might have a small sample size based on the premise that the researcher is guided by the scope of the study. Purposive sampling is described by Burns and Grove (2009) as a selection criterion based on theoretical reason for which chosen cases are good examples of the topic under study. This kind of sampling is done at the discretion of the researcher and would comprise

elements most definitive or representative of the population (de Vos et al., 2006). Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research and the selected schools exhibited the phenomena of successful school leadership practices. The principals in this case study are generally viewed as facilitating good leadership principles by the Department of Education (DoE) due to a successful achievement of 50% or more in the Annual National Results of 2012 and this study aims to understand the subject of best practice.

3.5.1 Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria are the predetermined guidelines that will ascertain if a subject or person can be included in the research study (Grove et al., 2013). The inclusion criteria for this study adheres to the following requirements, situated in a township and classified as “no fee school”, because of the economic level of the community around the school. Since these schools often have a feeding scheme and rely on government funding, educators employed there were deemed relevant to this study.

3.6 Instrumentation

In-depth, face-to-face interviews, focus groups, observation and document analysis were used as the instrument. The face-to-face interviews and focus groups were conducted with the assistance of an interview schedule. According to Brink *et al.* (2006) an interview schedule is an interview guide consisting of open and closed questions. According to De Vos *et al*. (2009), a semi-structured interview guide allows for the researcher to obtain multiple responses to set questions and allows for detailed responses.

3.6.1 Interviews

An interview is a method of data collection in which the researcher seeks in-depth information from the interviewees participating in the study (Grove et al., 2013). In this study face-to-face interviews were held with only the Senior Management Teams of the two case study schools.

3.6.2 Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide was used to direct the interviews during data collection. An interview guide is a list of questions and probes used to direct interviews (Brink et al., 2008). According to De Vos et al. (2009), a semi-structured interview directs and allows for consistency within the interviews and assists the researcher to obtain multiple responses to set questions and allows for detailed responses. The semi-structured interview guide gives the researcher and participant more flexibility compared to an unstructured interview guide (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Questions in the interview guide were open-ended. The questions were based on the objectives of the study.

The study utilised three different interview schedules, each relating to a different hierarchical level: Post Level One Educators, Deputy Principals and Heads of Department and the Principals. The interview guide consisted of two parts: The first part of each interview guide contained questions concerning the biographical details of the participants. The second part of each questionnaire dealt with leadership and management of the school and was directed at the post level one non-managerial educators to determine how they experienced leadership and management at the

school. The second part of the interview schedule for the deputies and heads of department focused on their experience of the principals' leadership, management styles and functions. The part of the interview schedule for the principals focused on their leadership and management styles in the schools, their ability to function in that specific environment and their relationship with the community.

For this research, in-depth face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were held with the principals and senior management teams (SMTs). The latter consisted of the two Deputy Principals and Heads of Department (HODs). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), face-to-face interviews have a much higher response rate than questionnaires and afford the interviewer the opportunity to observe both the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the interviewee. Due to the "bounded" nature of this inquiry, in-depth semi-structured interviews give the researcher the opportunity to understand and ascertain the participants understanding of their social setting. The nature of an in-depth interview requires that participants feel comfortable in their own environment to discuss, clarify and respond freely to questions. Thus semi-structured open-ended questions are the most appropriate way to conduct interviews as they place no limitations on the scope of the answers of the participants, unlike structured interviews which have a pre-selection of answers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

3.2.3 Observation

The researcher observed school principals manage their schools and the culture of the organisation, the researcher observed them in action. Observation as a research method mainly pertains to seeing and hearing how participants behave whilst recording the data as observations are made (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). According to Terre

Blanche et al. (2006), observations take place in real time as certain scenarios in the school unfold. In the interpretive approach, occurrences are observed in their natural setting. Low-inference observation was applied in order to allow recording of specific behaviours as observed without making judgments (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Since the principal is at the core of this study, most of the time allocated was spent observing activities directly related to him. These activities included meetings with parents, staff members and learners. The activities of the Principal, Deputies and educators in staff meetings and at intervals were also observed. During observation sessions the researcher specifically focused on activities that relate to whether the principal practice participative decision making, demonstrating respect towards the staff members, the parents and learners. The researchers also focused to observe how the principal provided structure to teaching and learning as well as activities that relate to conflict management. The researcher did not participate or contribute to any activity during this process other than to take notes to enable her to reflect on the participants' behaviour. These activities were managed and coordinated by means of a comprehensive observation schedule (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). A characteristic of the unstructured approach is that notes are taken down as events unfold in real time. Recording events as they unfold gives the researcher additional information to support or refute responses obtained through interviews and focus groups, thus sampling occurred through continuous observation to obtain a better understanding of how the schools functioned (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

3.2.4 Focus Groups Interviews

The use of focus groups allows for input from multiple participants at the same time (Watson, McKenna,Cowman & Keady, 2008). This methodology enriches the quality of the data collected because of the dialogue and exchange of experiences by respondents in a social setting (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). According to Watson et al. (2008) this allows the researcher to observe group dynamics in terms of what and how they think and it gives insight into the underpinning reasons for the observed thinking processes. Focus groups enabled the researcher to focus on group analysis and observing patterns and trends within a single group and/or among various focus groups (De Vos et. al., 2005). Individual interviews on the other hand are face-to-face interviews that the researcher conducts with one participant. It allows the researcher to obtain an in-depth description of the participants experience (Watson et al., 2008).

Focus group interviews for the purpose of this study were conducted with non-managerial staff members, meaning teachers in groups of three per school. Heads of Department assisted with selecting the focus group, selection criteria calling for combinations of new and senior teachers. The interviews, for which participants were asked to avail themselves for one hour, were conducted after contact time.

3.2.5 Document Analysis

Document analysis can be defined as a non interaction strategy which requires none or little activity between participant and researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Documents are concrete evidence of people's everyday functioning, behaviour and knowledge which further add substance to statements (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Documents and objects could be personal or official, with personal documents normally narrated in the first person, giving descriptions of people's actions, beliefs and

experiences. Official documents in this “bounded system” consisted of minutes of meetings, working papers, etc. Objects could be symbols and physical entities such as logos, academic and sport trophies, award plaques and mascots (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Compared to interviews and participant observation, the use of documents is a simplified manner of collecting data since this process requires no transcription of data and is self-explanatory (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). McMillan and Schumacher (2006) maintain that the researcher requires descriptive data with regard to the origin and usage of the artifacts to conduct a proper analysis. This pertains to how documents were produced or obtained, by whom, how and where they were used and the purpose thereof. In this study the documentation analysed was minutes of meetings, school newsletters, teaching and learning files. These documents were scrutinised for reflection and indicators of how teaching and learning as well leadership and management are conducted. Much was revealed about the culture, values and operation of the school since most of people’s behaviours and attitudes are embedded in culture. Furthermore, interpretation of the documents was used to corroborate data collected from interviews and observations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). This study also involved official documents and objects for example, minutes of meetings, absenteeism registers and school newsletters that contributed and validated that which was discussed in the interviews. Copies of the documents used were obtained from principals, and especially minutes of meetings and planning files, supported what was said in interviews with regard to core business of the school and performance of the principals.

3.7 Pilot Study

No pilot study was done for the schools in this study. A pilot study is a preliminary study on small samples that helps the researcher determines the feasibility of the research. It will also be a means to test the instrument for ambiguity and accuracy (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:94).

3.7.1 Pilot Interview

According to Hill, Knox and Thompson (2005), a pilot study affords the researcher an opportunity to establish whether semi structured questions would address the phenomenon under study and if they would elicits in-depth experiences. No pilot interview was done for this research.

3.8 Validity and Trustworthiness

Validity is the extent of similarity between the explanation of phenomena and the truth (Blanche et al., 2006). Validity in a qualitative study is concerned with truthfulness and honesty. De Vos et al. (2005) propose that criteria to ensure trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. The criteria to ascertain trustworthiness of a study is credibility, the alternative to internal validity which requires an alignment between the findings and the method. .

3.8.1 Credibility

Qualitative research can be evaluated according to its credibility, which has to be convincing and believable. To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, the researcher

employed member checking, a process through which participants verify the data and the accuracy with which it was interpreted (Creswell, 2007). Once the recordings were transcribed the researcher gave copies to the participants to ensure that their responses were recorded correctly. This process contributed to the credibility and accuracy of the data by affording the participants the opportunity to clarify the researcher's interpretation of their contribution and to withdraw statements if they wished to. However, not one participant refuted any of their statements in the transcriptions in some cases they just scanned through the document or some just said it does not matter.

The researcher used document analysis, e.g. minutes of meetings and assessment files to substantiate what was said during interviews. These documents were also interpreted to corroborate data collected from interviews and observations (as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2006). Documents were readily made available by the principals after interviews were conducted. With School A, the principal was not in the interviews with the SMT and so asked them to forward the documents to the researcher. Minutes of meetings, absenteeism registers and school newsletters were other documents and objects that contributed and validated what was discussed in interviews.

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the applicability of the sample findings to the rest of the population or other populations (De Vos et al., 2005). Thus, the method used in this study should get the same results if applied by other researchers. The theoretical framework as proposed by Leithwood and Riehl (2006) served as a reference and indicated what data were collected. Additionally, a rich description of the setting,

procedure and participants could help other researchers determine whether the findings are transferable to another setting or context as advised by Brink et al. (2012).

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability is the alternative to reliability where the researcher aims to have a better understanding of the situation by accounting for the changing environment in the case selected for study (De Vos et al., 2005). Consequently the researcher provided detailed descriptions of the differences and similarities between school A and B. In other words, how each of the principals managed to create successfulness, how they deal with difficult issues as well as efforts to enhance continued professional development (personally and for the educators). Dependability also relates to the acceptability of the findings of the study; the truthfulness of the processes and procedures that was followed during the study (Brink et al, 2012).

3.8.4 Conformability

Conformability relates to whether there is an internal agreement between the findings of the study (the final themes) and the raw data (Brink et al., 2012; De Vos et al., 2006). This was created by substantiating the themes and subthemes with verbatim quotes from the transcripts.

3.9 Data Collection Process

Burns and Grove (2009) describe data collection as the precise, systematic gathering of information relevant to the research purpose or the specific objectives, questions or hypotheses of a study. The qualitative research method used in this study to collect data involved face-to-face and focus group interviews. Focus groups are group

discussions that generate a rich understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs on a topic determined by the researcher (Morgan, 1998).

3.9.1 Recruitment

The University of the Witwatersrand granted ethical clearance and Ms. Ann Pitt, an educational specialist of the Gauteng Department of Education was contacted by the researcher because of her knowledge about performing schools and familiarity with the specific area. The principals of the two performing case study schools that fit the inclusion criteria were approached upon her recommendation. She was also present when the background to the study and the selection criteria were introduced to the principals.

For the focus group interview, the principal of school A recruited the deputy principal who then recruited post level one educators of different ages and years of teaching experience. The managerial team was recruited with the assistance of the principal himself and everyone consented to participate. At school B, the principal assisted the researcher to recruit participants and everyone consented to participate. Prior to the interviews, participants were informed of the purpose of the study and the use of an audio recorder, in order to ensure a calm and participative environment (De Vos et al., 2006). Overall, 8 participants from each of the two schools participated in the interviews and focus groups.

Interviews were conducted after contact time and were completely voluntary after consent was obtained from respondents for the use of audio and possibly video recordings. The use of these methods to capture participants' spoken words and expressions may support and strengthen the accuracy and reliability of the study (De Vos et al., 2006).

All the interviews were conducted at school and during school hours, some in a classroom, deputy's office, staffroom and library depending on the events of the day, and venues at the school were convenient. Interviews and focus group discussion lasted for about an hour and longer. The interviews were mostly conducted and explained in English except with the one head of department who asked to converse in Afrikaans as he was able to express himself more accurately. A tape recorder was used to audio-tape all the interviews and the researcher wrote field notes immediately after each interview since notes can be very useful during data collection and analysis (De Vos et al., 2006).

As stated elsewhere, eight individual interviews were initially conducted with various categories of staff and seeing that saturation was reached there was no need for additional interviews. According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006), researchers should know how the data should be analysed in order that the research paradigm and data should answer the research question, if not, they should not proceed. In this case, transcriptions of the recordings were done by a transcription company. These audio transcriptions, from which themes and similarities emerged, provided the researcher with visual data for analysis and an ongoing opportunity to engage with the data which, according to De Vos et al. (2006), usually generates new understanding.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Researchers are guided by three fundamental principles: respect for persons, beneficence and justice. These, in turn, are based on human rights such as the right to self-determination and fair treatment, which includes confidentiality and anonymity and protection from discomfort and harm (Brink, Van Der Walt & Van Rensburg, 2006). In this study the researcher adhered to these principles as follows:

3.10.1 Informed Consent

Consent to conduct research was obtained from The Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand and the Gauteng Department of Education.

Permission to audio-tape discussions as well as written consent was obtained from participants prior to the interview sessions.

3.10.2 The Principle of Respect For Persons

The participants' right to autonomy was respected since they had the right to decide whether or not to participate in the study. Participants were informed that they had the right to refuse to participate and that should they consent to participate, they may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. According to Brink et al. (2006),

participants have the right to refuse to provide information and to ask for clarification about the purpose of the study. Adhering to this, participants were not pressurized to divulge more information than they were comfortable.

3.10.3 Beneficence

The principle of beneficence relates to maintaining the well-being of the participants, in other words not to cause harm. Since qualitative research can be intrusive therefore the researcher took care to be considerate and did not force issues that would make the participants uncomfortable or hostile (Brink et al., 2006).

3.10.4 Principle of Justice

The principle of justice relates to the fair treatment of participants. In this regard, the researcher respected any agreements with the participant, for example, conducting interviews in a professional way and being punctual for interview sessions.

3.10.5 Confidentiality

The participants were ensured of confidentiality and that no information would be divulged without their permission other than in this study.

Terre Blanche et al. (2006) note that focus groups should be informed about the issue of confidentiality seeing that the researcher cannot guarantee that all members would

treat information as confidential. Findings will be shared with the Gauteng Department of Education if requested and with participants in the form of a report. In addition, the raw data (the recordings) would be locked and stored in a safe place for at least five years. Only people directly involved in the study would have access to the data.

3.10.6 Anonymity

The participants were not referred to by name. Pseudonyms are used when direct quotes from the raw data are used and transcripts of the interviews and the recordings of the interviews were coded. The names of participants involved in the interviews and focus groups will not be divulged in any academic writing or the research report.

3.11 Data Analysis

De Vos et al. (2006) describe data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of data collected. In addition, Terre Blanche et al. (2006), state that data analysis happens in conjunction with data collection. The purpose of data analysis is to make sense of the collected information through findings. Interpretive analysis, according to Terre Blanche et al. (2006), should show thorough analysis and understanding of the features, processes, transactions and context that represents the phenomena under study. Qualitative analysis typically comprises five analytic steps as explained by Terre Blanche et al. (2006).

3.11.1 Familiarization and Immersion

Firstly the researcher should become familiar with the data. The authors affirm that the researcher should from the start be engrossed in the material gathered allowing the researcher to become familiar with the data thus enabling greater meaning and understanding. Memos were made throughout the process to record emerging ideas. Transcriptions and field notes were read and reread in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the respondents' replies.

3.11.2 Inducing Themes

Once collected, data is coded, categorised and interpreted (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006), information is grouped by recognising similarities and labelling the emerging themes and sub-themes generated from the data. These themes develop naturally from the data and should speak to the research question. This phase lends itself more to an outsider's perspective without losing focus of what was said. Data analysis involves a number of dimensions such as strange and familiar, description and interpretation and part and whole (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

3.11.3 Coding

Through the process of coding the researcher increases, amends and recreates data, thus making various analyses possible. De Vos et al. (2006) claims that this process of themes and codes provide the ground for the researcher to question, evaluate, challenge the understanding and search for dissimilar patterns, incorporating or

dismissing data that is not useful or central to the study. In this study, schools were labeled as school A and school B, participants were labeled according to their position and a number for example HoD 1 school A, HoD 2 school A, etc. Colour coding was used for the different themes and categories.

3.11.4 Elaboration

This process suggests the obtaining of finer subtleties of meanings, finding the connection between meanings, identifying commonalities and differences while considering generalities and uniqueness which were not captured in the original coding system. The process of coding, elaborating and recoding should continue until no new insights emerge (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

3.11.5 Interpretation and Checking

This refers to the written report of the phenomenon being studied. The report presents the analysed themes as sub-headings. One way of checking interpretation is to discuss it with other people. It is important to talk to people who are familiar with the topic as well as those who are not, as the latter may be able to provide a fresh perspective (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed description of the experience and insight of successful principals working in disadvantaged schools, employing an exploratory descriptive design. An in-depth account of the data collection and data analysis processes as well

as the steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the information obtained was also provided.

An in depth description of the data analysis as well as the research results is discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS SCHOOL A ONLY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the data and discusses the findings of case School A. Data, collected through interviews, focus groups, observation and document analysis was analysed to explain the leadership in two successful township primary schools. One-on-one face to face interviews were held with the Senior Management Team (SMT) which consisted of one deputy principal and three Heads of Department (HODs). Three post level 1 educators were in the focus group.

In order to comply with the anonymity and confidentiality agreement with interviewees, respondents will be identified by their positions at the school, i.e. The Principal; Deputy Principal; Head of Department or HOD one and two and Participant one, two and three. Verbatim quotations from the transcriptions were used to authenticate the trustworthiness of the data collected.

4.2 Background and Context of School A

4.2.1 Environment

School A is situated in Eldorado-Park on the southern part of Greater Johannesburg. Eldorado-park, which was established during the apartheid era for the coloured people of Johannesburg, has approximately 2 million inhabitants and is characterised by a high level of poverty amongst many of its inhabitants. Unemployment, crime and drug abuse, overwhelming absence of a stable family unit, continuous violence and abuse are common in Eldorado Park and pose a serious threat to the youth.

Against this backdrop, it is important to note that neither of the schools selected for the study ever underperformed and both excel in sport and academically. School A first opened on the 19th July 1982 and its second principal was appointed in January 1988. Its learner population comes mostly from African/Black and Coloured children in and around the surrounding area. Learners who live in low cost houses within walking distance of the school, some who live as squatters in the back yards of these low cost houses because their parents cannot afford a house, are also accommodated by the school.

4.2.2 Profile of Current Principal

In October of 2010 the first female principal, with 24 years education experience, was appointed at the school. She had been a post level one (1) PL1 educator for 10 years at various schools. At the current school she had been HOD for 5 years, then Deputy Principal for 6 years and Acting Principal for a year before her appointment as Principal in 2010. She indicated that she has been instrumental in the implementation of many programs, policies and processes in all the institutions where she has worked. During conversations with the principal, she also indicated that she regularly consults with her predecessor for guidance and advice and that she honors his legacy and maintains and models what she has learnt from him.

4.2.3 The Predecessor of The Current Principal

During interviews, focus groups and conversations with educators and the principal the previous principal's presence could be felt in that his name was mentioned in every conversation and interview. He was principal there for 22 years and general consensus was that he made the school what it is. He is the reason that everyone at the school exhibits the sense of ownership and pride that prevails and that the school, grounds and admin is as it is. One educator mentioned that when he did his rounds children and educators would scamper to classrooms unlike with the current principal. All credit is given to him.

During his tenure as principal he also ensured her a regular salary increase. He was old school, respectful, could speak to the masses, understood the community, and was a no nonsense man. He led by example therefore educators never wanted to disappoint him. It became evident that these educators had revered him and did what he expected. Late coming was not tolerated by this principal so educators were always present and punctual. Now, educators are more relaxed. Even though this principal has retired his presence is still felt at the school.

Table 4.1: School A - Enrolment Numbers

YEAR	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS	1108	1028	1093	1076	1175
NO OF EDUCATORS	30	28	28	28	27

Since all schooling from grade 1 to 9 is compulsory in South Africa and primary schooling spans from grade 1 to 7 the above enrollment statistics represent all learners from grades 1 to 7. This is the current principal's third year in this position so enrollment totals of five years were used for the statistics to establish whether there was any change in the enrollment pattern due to the appointment of a new principal.

From interviews and incidental conversations it became clear that the predecessor left an indelible mark and was held in high esteem by both staff and the community. This necessitated a look at some of the enrollment statistics of when he was there to see if they had changed after the appointment of the current principal. Although the enrollment figures show little decline in learner enrollment but there was a reduction in staff. Growth in learner numbers is good for any school and with school A fluctuations might be attributed to the number of grade Rs going to Grade 1 and of Grade 7s leaving for high school. The District might also be a factor since it refers children to schools that perform when they have space available. If schools are in good standing with the community, parents refer relatives and friends such schools. However, since the recommended prescribed or guided teacher–pupil ratio is 1:35 for the foundation phase and 1:40 in the intermediate phase, this could account for the reduction in staff.

To prevent overcrowded classes the SGB, when reviewing and affecting policies, would recommend capping of admissions to affect this. The Norms and Standards inform school principals about the staff establishments for the next year. If the numbers at the beginning of the year do not justify more staff recruitment but an influx of learners occurs during the year, principals, can apply for growth posts, with the necessary motivations.

4.2.4 School Performance – Annual National Assessment (ANA) 2008 to 2012

This school was identified by The District as one of the schools that excels both academically and culturally. The leadership is well established and the school has a rich history within the community which regards it school as “the” school to attend. Even the educators themselves enroll their own children at the school because of their self belief and trust in leadership (Deputy Principal). However, the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results could not be produced since the disc on which the results are stored was lost and they did not have any hard copies or electronic files. The principal did, however, promise to obtain the results of the last five (5) years from the district office.

4.2.5 School Successes

The school excelled not only in the classroom but also on the sports field and athletic track. The school’s sporting prowess is evidenced in it constantly being at the top of the table when competing at the Inter-Primary Athletics. All the sporting trophies and award certificates are displayed in the school foyer. The school has also participated in the International Assessment for P Mathematics and Languages for a number of years and many of the learners received “Honours” boasting the high quality of teaching and learning within the school.

4.3 Documentary Analysis

Document analysis is a methodology used in the social sciences and is an important part of most schemes of triangulation. Thus, any documents that are relevant to the study and could contribute to the validity of the study. In this study the documentation analysed was minutes of meetings, school newsletters, teaching and learning files to

see if they reflected teaching and learning and leadership and management. These documents pertaining to the initial meeting held with the school and the district official were obtained from the school after the principal had had a meeting with the respondent and insisted that they take accountability as they should be familiar with their key performance area and administrative duties. Upon receiving the documents from the principal, she reiterated that her role as principal is not one dimensional, and that the complexity of her environment and demands from district, department, community and school requires her to put on various hats, mentor, mother, advisor etc. The school had no ANA file or any record of their performance of the last 5 years, but did produce: minutes of staff and SMT meetings, school newsletters and working documents of the three phases such as educator planning, key performance areas and monitoring of educators.

The minutes of meeting; staff and SMT were very informative as they revealed how the principal goes about to achieve goals. The almost verbatim recordings of the deputy principal who is responsible for taking minutes during meetings revealed that she communicates clearly and uses systems such as support and monitoring to achieve high performance. Direct quotes/statements were indicated in bold letters and dialogues were recorded as they took place. This gave a clear understanding of daily operation of the school and how communication took place. The principal speaks her mind, is fearlessly unapologetic in her stride to maintain order and compliance, makes conscious decisions to involve and develop the staff, but adopts a very autocratic stance when it comes to departmental compliance. Since she is still establishing her authority, she leaves nothing to chance which can be blamed on her having occupied the post for only three years. Some of the participants in the focus group, however, indicated that they feel disrespected by her directness, the manner in which she converses and the way everything is a directive: "*This is not a friendly request this is an*

instruction". The minutes also gave credence to this. The principal is well aware of the perceptions of her staff members, but is not fazed, as long as set goals are achieved and educators comply.

The researcher observed staff meetings from 10.01.2013 until 22.10.2013. Minutes taken at the beginning of the first term focused on the following: Professional conduct, curriculum delivery, syllabi compliance, dress code and regular meeting with SGB, planning for lost curriculum delivery- public holidays, teacher strikes, teacher absenteeism. They revealed that the law was laid down that no late coming, late being more than 30 minutes, would be tolerated so every educator would arrive on time, 07.30 or else would complete a form for unpaid leave. She also asked that circuit managers attend regular staff meeting so staff could bring up issues with them directly.

Other rules that were noted in the minutes were about dress code, cell phones that had to be switched off during contact time with learners. However, that she was not interested "in tell tale stories" of who is or is not using cell phones. Learners would be treated with respect, no name calling or threats would be hauled at learners. They and their parents were to be treated with respect. She would also arrange a workshop for educators so that they know what is expected of a "21st century educator". Lastly, in order to promote positive communication and discipline, a diary and merit system was put in place.

HODs were informed of the chain of command which should be respected by all stakeholders; that educators should respect and consult with their heads who are their

first line of report before coming to her. Following protocol and adhering to systems and structures that are in place contributes to the smooth running of the school. These systems are there for support and if not adhered to measures will be taken against that particular educator for example, if not planning on coming to work, educators are responsible to arrange a substitute – three references should be given to choose from with contact details and proper references. The principal outlined the disciplinary procedures in case of non-compliance and stated that HODs have to keep records of this process since a paper trail could serve as evidence. SMT and staff minutes suggest that curriculum delivery is discussed at length and on a regular basis. Weekly monitoring, resources, common papers, assessment tasks etc and that they must be in sync with the curriculum coverage for every term, are also discussed. The principal relies heavily on her SMT to perform their duties so she demands answers and enforces the belief that they will assume accountability for their phases and manage them with military precision. After the first term, results were scrutinized and the weak links were explored and revisited. Performance stats of each phase were written down and HODs were duly ordered to explain why results were low.

DuFour and Marzano (2009) identify intended curriculum, implemented curriculum and attained curriculum and maintain that the latter should be well managed as it focuses on what learners are actually taught. Well aware of this, the HODs mentioned that sometimes what was intended to be taught did not take place due to time constraints and this impacted on the amount and quality of tasks given to learners. What stands the principal in good stead with staff when she articulates her opinions and demands accountability is her extensive knowledge of policies and subject methodology. Participants agree she is very knowledgeable but that at times she steps on toes with statements such as: “*Not gonna tolerate Lazy Educators*”.

Discussion of curriculum delivery not only takes place at SMT and staff level but also within phase meetings, where the heads are in control. Evidence from HODs' work documents, agendas and registers support this. For example one such notice had the following agenda – curriculum issues, progression retention, management plan, learner profiles and term assessment plans (TAP). Accompanying the agenda was a register to sign acceptance of such a meeting since HODs are required to keep record. The principal stressed the fact that HODs should closely monitor what was prescribed and what was actually attained. More so, she demanded a two week follow up on syllabi and progress reports from the heads followed by an accountability session between the principal and individual staff members. Educators could use this session to indicate where support is needed. The principal is not afraid to delegate, share responsibility and power with her team. HODs are responsible to manage their phase, the teachers, learners and parents and provided the researcher with work documents supporting this line function. Only when situations cannot be resolved does the principal intervene and she was clear that regular phase meetings and planning would be conducted and reported on. The accounting session requested by the principal in the minutes was confirmed with the focus group interview where it was confirmed that such accounting sessions were held every term in 2013.

School newsletters from 10.01.2013 until 04.10.2013 were perused to see what information was being communicated to parents regarding their children's education and whether this information was relevant to learners overall development at school. Communication to parents centered on curriculum matters, such as spelling tests; mathematics tests, exams and external exams, progress meetings and cultural activities

such as inter school sport. Very few letters concerning school fees and fundraising were issued to parents.

Observation was used as one of the methods to understand the phenomena under study and gave the researcher much insight into the running and culture of this particular school. The researcher observed that security is tight with a visitor's form that has to be completed at the gate, upon which parking is allotted. The school grounds and parking area were clean, and the foyer and toilets well maintained. Ground staff was friendly and, like learners, wore uniforms. Starting and dismal times were honoured and foundation phase learners were escorted in neat rows to the gate by their respective educators. In the foyer there was an attendance register for educators and a late coming log book which were administered by the deputy principal. Late comers' names were highlighted. The secretary's office window was tinted with a small hole to communicate; if you aimed properly you could zone in on her and then speak. The door to the administrative section – secretaries, HODs' and principal's office was locked and secured with a safety gate. Since there was no handle on the outside, the door could only be opened from the inside meaning that one gained access only through a bell. This space was securely enclosed and cordoned off from the rest of the staff, which was unsettling and thought provoking. Ordinary educators only entered the administrative block during break times which is evident that policies and protocol are maintained.

On some occasions the principal was observed outside seeing someone off. Although her diary gave an indication of her busy schedule, two days of the week she was office bound and could attend to parents, classroom issues and administrative duties.

4.4 Interviews

Participants were selected by means of purposive sampling. The research topic was to explore successful leadership in disadvantaged schools that have passed the external exam known as the ANA. Other requirements included that the schools should have a feeding scheme and not be classified by the GDE as an underperforming school. The chosen schools met all of the above criteria mentioned throughout the study. Individual interviews were conducted with leadership figures at this school and other participants had experienced the leadership at school A. The leadership figures consisted of the principal, one deputy principal and two departmental heads. The participants were therefore able to describe the journey of successful leadership.

The focus group interview was conducted with three level one educators. As level-one educators have entry level posts only, they are not involved in informal leadership positions and could provide a non-managerial view of how they experienced the leadership at the school.

4.4.1 Interview with The Principal: School A

Prior to the scheduled interview, the principal was introduced to the researcher by the district official, who was instrumental in identifying the two schools for this study. During this meeting, the principal was acquainted to the background and aims of the study and possible dates for the interviews and observation times were agreed upon, to be confirmed with the staff. We further agreed that the deputy principal would support the researcher with the selection criteria of the focus group participants; the SMT was a given. The focus group required post level-one educators, representing different phases and differ in age that would allow for various perceptions regarding management at the school.

From the onset the principal made it clear that the school had always excelled, and that she was in the fortunate position to have been groomed by her predecessor. She noted down everything discusses thus leaving a well documented paper trail. She was adamant about the SMT signing agendas, attendance registers, logbooks, work documents for phase meetings, minutes of staff and that SMT-meetings should all be well documented. The researcher discovered something in the minutes, during document analysis, that one interviewee had said about the principal that serves as proof of the accuracy of the paper trail and that it is her way of enforcing compliance and gaining cooperation. Additionally, it also serves as a method to protect herself. Seeing that everything else was in place and well maintained, the performance hard copy that was not available just did not make sense.

However, being a relatively young female principal in her third year after succeeding her successful and much revered predecessor, she is still establishing her authority and is set to uphold the good name and performance of the school. Her first strategy to maintain the high performance was to hold every staff member, even non-teaching staff, accountable for the daily operation of the school. To do this, she holds regular SMT, staff, phase meetings and accounting sessions and outlines key performance areas and clear reporting lines to all so as to eliminate confusion or excuses. She refuses to see educators who should consult an immediate line manager with issues pertaining to their area of responsibility, but bypass him and come directly to her. This form of power sharing and delegation that the principal advocates and practices leads to greater cohesion, contribution and responsibility amongst staff members, whilst it also contributes to the development of the personnel. The principal at School A draws on this, admitting that she is ultimately responsible for the running of the School and in

order for things to run smoothly, systems had to be in place, a chain of command had to be followed, and everyone should be held accountable.

> *"Since I can't do everything, I have put a chain of command in place especially of who is in charge. Follow the chain of command. Nobody bypasses the chain of command and I hold everyone accountable. You follow that chain of command so that the day-to-day running of the school occurs in an orderly fashion."*

Everyone commits to professional conduct and the basic respect for school, teaching time and compliance. The school provides a service to the community, which is teaching and learning, and late arrival, not submitting or completing prescribed work on time affect the daily operation of the school, and in turn impact negatively on performance. Through constant communication she clearly outlines procedures so everyone understands how their behaviour will impact school. The principal and her heads closely monitor and assess performance, through regular accounting sessions with educators, monitoring of learner books, assessment files, class visits and grade meetings. These sessions are not just about taking responsibility for poor performance but identifying problems and supporting the educator, thus giving the educator opportunity to reflect. According to Olivier and Venter (2003), never has the role and functions of educators been more challenging than in the current epoch and need to be looked at holistically. Failure amongst educators to achieve could be attributed to large classes, staff reduction and the subsequent increased workload which in turn leads to teachers feeling undervalued, stressed and de-motivated (Rangraje, Van der Merwe,

Urbani and van der Walt 2005; Hammit, 2008). These reasons were highlighted when enrolment figures were discussed. Although the increase in learner numbers is often regarded as positive, that is not the in when teacher numbers decrease, leading to larger classes and educator performance becoming challenging.

The principal who is aware of the importance of high teacher morale and its impact on performance is very supportive, yet firm and will provide support to educators to achieve outstanding performance. Due to her subject knowledge she feels that she can support teachers in class and does so when necessary. Educators submit planning every two weeks and department heads check them and learner workbooks against assessment files, where after they provide her with a report. Thus, this calls for SMT efficiency, commitment and work ethics to preserve and promote practices that lead to performance of both learners and educators. In this regard, Mackenzie (2007) says that principals' role as supporter and promoter of interactive professionalism is essential in ensuring that educators are motivated, productive and participative stakeholders ensuring quality teaching and learning in schools. She states:

> *"I have instructed my HODs to give me monthly reports in terms of curriculum delivery so I can get an idea of what is happening in the classroom". It is my job to ensure quality assurance, so I go into the classes, take the learners' books and while I am sitting there, browse through them. Whenever needed we give support especially in maths and languages."*

As to how the principal involves staff when it comes to decision-making her response was:

> *"Most of the time you have power over the people and sometime you have power with the people. Power over the people is an instruction not up for discussion. Power with the people is when discussion and deliberation takes place and decisions are made together".*

The principal acknowledges the importance of teacher buy-in in taking responsibility for promoting and cultivating open and fair debates. Not only does this stimulate and give them the platform to deliberate issues, it also provides them the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them. The latter is empowering for educators as they are the ones directly involved with learners and should be acknowledged. Prior to going into staff meetings the principal and her SMT will thrash out and deliberate the problem. This is the platform for them to challenge and disagree with her, not in the staff meeting: *"They will not challenge me in a staff meeting that is why we thrash it out in the SMT meetings*". They will not pick each other apart in a staff meeting as this will destroy trust in the management and dent worker morale, in keeping with Niemann and Kotze's (2006) view that one of the most discernable features of positive school culture is cohesion and participation. As a team they also have an open mind that staff will not always agree but that it is important to accept differences and work together to grow and sustain a great working relationship with staff. When all are on-board it easy to stay focused and to attain desired outcomes. Davidoff and Lazarus, (1997) concede that a

participative environment not only establishes trusting relationships, but leads to efficient and effective delivery function.

Principal A also understands that one cannot rely on educators alone and part of her long-term goal is to ensure cooperation from parents since the school is an integral part of the community. This school has a long and successful history with the community and has served generations of families. As to how she involves her parents and get disciplined learners who value learning, she provided the following strategy:

> *"My strategy as the manager of the institution is to get the parents involved and I also put a lot of responsibility and accountability on my parents. I want parents to practice what we preach at school. Parents must check their children's books and if they are not happy with what is in that book, should pick up the phone and make an appointment with the school to discuss the problem."*

This approach where parents are encouraged to support the learning of their children is vital for learners' development in making them aware of accounting systems to which they have to answer at home and school. Furthermore, the school has a merit/demerit and diary system is in place not only to support performance but to serve as communication between parents and the school. From the above it is clear that the principal encourages parents to take ownership of their children's learning by, firstly checking their books, and secondly making them aware that they are entitled to

question what they do not understand. She further empowers them by providing them with a strategy to solve problems: call the school, discuss matters and find solutions together. Giving parents the opportunity to liaise with the child's educator in a respectful manner is paramount to the school's success and lays the foundation for a good working relationship between parents and the school.

4.4.2 Interview with Deputy Principal: School A

The interview with the deputy principal took place on the date agreed upon with the principal. The SMT is an all female team, relatively new to their positions. The deputy is relatively new to the school and the position which she has been occupying for 13th months. Only HOD 2 had been in a management post for ten years. The deputy principal stated that a principal who led by example and was commitment to the school's value system could influence the culture of the school. Since the principal wants the school to do well, she steps in when needed*: "She is not afraid of hard work and won't say that is not my job."*

The deputy felt that the principal applies the rules to everybody on the staff and that she does not demand anything from teachers which she will not do herself. Being on time and on task is crucial to the functioning and the culture of the school, so if the principal and deputy were disrespectful of time and task this would soon affect the rest of the staff. It is evident from the extract that the principal lives the culture and the values that she wants the school to have. Her leadership style is direct and purposeful and though she does not always get it right, her staff views her as a role model and recognises her ability and resilience to make things work. She consistently models behaviour that supports the school's culture and value system. School culture is central to every

institution because it is definitive of individuals' attitudes and is discerned in the way things are done. According to Hargreaves (1997), a way in which leaders can mould and influence school culture is through role-modelling to ultimately achieve organisational goals. The deputy reveals that when new educators arrive and experience challenges with certain areas, especially in the foundation phase, the principal will go in and assist with teaching:

> *"I must say our principal leads by example. When we needed someone to teach physical education, she volunteered to do it."*

According to the deputy, the principal establishes clear lines of communication, function and responsibility since people who know what is expected of them and who to report to, contribute to stability and order in the work place. She opines that management ensures the daily functioning of the school by keeping disruptions to a minimum and maintaining starting and closing times. The staff is viewed as a team, vital to the school and is encouraged to communicate, comment, take initiative and participate vertically as well as horizontally. On this basis, everyone comes together at the start of the school day for prayer, led on a rotational basis, and a daily briefing. If there is a problem, staff is brought on board as soon as practically and professionally appropriate. McEwen (2002) asserts that effective principals are individuals who model and communicate a strong and viable vision based on character, personal responsibility and accountability. Systems in place ensure that the curriculum is followed, teacher preparation and assessment files are checked every two weeks, HODs do regular class visits to ascertain whether prescribed lesson plans are aligned with learner books and books are marked and that meetings are held once a month. Lesson plan alignment to learner

books and the curriculum are called pacesetters and these are made available to parents so that accounting takes place at school and at home. Bush (2006) admits that schools need good leaders and managers to function effectively in practicing their core function, namely quality teaching and learning.

As a way to ensure quality teaching and learning at the school, accounting sessions are held with HODs and educators to follow up on curriculum delivery and iron out challenges experienced during that term. These sessions are used to explain weak or good performance, look at what worked or did not, teachers can ask to be removed from a particular grade or phase and/or request more assistance in subject methodology, discipline or whatever challenge is experienced. The principal, who is a stickler for rules, expects educators to wait in front of their classrooms when they receive learners as their presence would reduce noise levels and would ensure learners behaved themselves and arrive on time. According to the deputy, although this is basic procedure the principal constantly reminds educators about this and she is a stickler to discipline and orderly conduct of both educators and learners. She is upfront and often reminds staff of departmental procedures for unpunctuality, etc., since she strives for unity in the school and relies on everyone's full participation to succeed. It is not just about departmental procedures but to instill discipline and pride in educators for what they do. She also reminds the teachers that it is not about the individual but about the school and upholding its good standing in the community.

From the above it is evident that the principal realises the importance of presenting the school as a unified entity that works together as a team. The deputy principal made it clear that the principal encourages teamwork amongst staff and aims to develop

educators and increase their knowledge through regular workshops on, for example, subject methodology.

4.4.3 Interview with Head of Department One (1): School A

Although the interview took place in the morning during contact time as teachers have a tight schedule, the principal made sure that no teaching time was compromised. The interview took place in the empty classroom but with a relaxed atmosphere. Out of all the participants, this one was by far the most articulate, candid and confident. She states that the previous principal, who advocated the notion of work first and family last, had laid a solid foundation for the current principal since this mantra was embraced by the whole school and is still lived by most in that the school will be first priority.

HOD 1 was forthright in her view that the school's success was due to the structures that are put in place and clearly define reporting lines and roles in order to meet objectives. These structures and systems are up and running and adhered to by all. Since the principal encourages educators to review their key performance areas against the Education Labour Relation Council (ELRC) document, it helps her success rate of implementing targets and achieving objectives. She communicates the content and context of this policy to her staff to create transparency in regards to structure, targets and objectives, since requirements of teaching capacity and responsibilities associated with particular roles are encapsulated in the ELRC policy. Teachers thus accept that the requirements set by the principal are part of their duties and this creates greater cohesion and cooperation. The principal outlines communication and line function structures for both educators and learners smoothing out the daily operation of the school. This obviates anyone claiming ignorance of task or disciplinary procedure. The

principal's ensuring that structures are clearly understood by everyone and that everyone is clear as to their roles and who to report to ties in with Early and Weindling's (2004) view that the manager is one the one who ensures that structures are efficient and suited for accomplishing planned requirements, and delegates responsibilities and authority for carrying out the plan.

> *"At the beginning of the year we go through each and every job description, where we are told this is your role for the year and we expect you to delivery and we sign. The structures are in place because the principal, deputy, HoD, everyone, know what they have to do."*

The principal relies on her management team to manage teaching and learning in the various phases, so every HOD has a group of teachers to manage and monitoring and assessment tools are in place.

> *"The common goal is to have that child read and write and if everybody knows their core function, then we will have common goal."*

4.4.4 Interview with Head of Department Two (2): School A

HOD 2 was not available previously, due to ill health, so this interview only took place in the fourth term, in the library. On being asked about the principal's leadership and management, she responded that the principal prioritised a learning environment that

led learners to perform well, thus putting pressure on educators to perform and deliver good results. She also makes sure that educators are on time and in class otherwise they sign a late register. Educators communicate absenteeism in advance so proper planning can be done to ensure the most appropriate substitute is appointed and work can continue. Minutes of meetings prove that this is indeed implemented.

Another strategy is the structures and monitoring tools in place for monitoring teaching and learning. Where possible, resources are provided and a timetable is adhered to. From this it is clear that the principal and management ensure that the fundamentals are in place and teaching time is honoured. The principal visits class so that she knows what goes on in the school and she allows her HODs to manage their divisions, thus affording them the opportunity to lead and accept responsibility, only intervening if asked.

Every HOD is to manage her grade holistically - discipline, books, conflict with parents or learners, teacher preparation files, teacher pacesetters, etc. After every quarter management has a meeting to discuss performance statistics and this file is sent to the district. At the start of every new term there is an accounting session between individual educators and the principal, in which account is given of poor results and support is discussed. Prior to the meeting with the individual educators the SMT will sit and deliberate on possible reasons based on their observations and evaluation of teacher, learner books and files. Based on the aforementioned procedure, one can deduce that there is a culture of accountability. The HOD observed that the school has a strong foundation phase which attests to educators' dedication. Although one or two

educators are challenging, most are capable of working independently and need very little supervision or monitoring:

> *"She will have a list in front of her when she checks our things, make notes and tell you. So each teacher has a certain drive to ensure that their class performs at their best."*

Teamwork is encouraged, not only academically but also culturally, so that educators who experience challenges are assisted. Working relationships with neighbouring schools are also encouraged so that they can share good practices and get a better understanding of the community they serve. Ultimately, it is about the learners and creating a caring environment conducive to quality teaching and learning.

> *"Network with teachers within this school but also from outside."*

When asked if the school would function well in the absence of the principal, HOD 2 was confident that it would since they know what is expected of them. She said that at one time the principal had been absent for a month but that things went on as normal. No one educator did anything different. Well functioning structures were in place before the principal's appointment and the staff is motivated, has a sense of ownership and pride and would not bring the school in disrepute.

4.4.5 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group interviews were held with non managerial staff to provide the researcher with a different perspective of that of the school principal and the senior management team. According to De Vos et al. (2005), focus group interviews bring together participants with the same experience to provide rich and varied opinions with regards to the topic. As much as this could provide detailed information, it could also be restrictive on members. Focus group discussions took place on a Friday in the school library after contact time. Discussions went on so long that the researcher and participants got locked in and the principal had to be called to come and open the gates.

The focus group participants consisted of three female post level one educators - educator one (1) with 36 years teaching experience, educator two (2) 21 years, and educator three just more than 8 months. Of the three, two participants acknowledged that the principal inherited a mature staff and structures that work. The latter was due to the previous principal who, as an autocratic and a bureaucrat, made sure that all procedures were in place and working. They all agreed that the principal is a knowledgeable leader who uses accounting session to evaluate her team's performance, analyses results, communicates openly and regularly and provides a platform to develop and support them. She held a meeting with them to discuss their key performance areas and made them sign to make them accountable. Minutes of meetings confirm that the principal closely monitors and evaluates performance and the delivery of curriculum.

> *"From Mr. Predecessor's time as principal there was already structure at the school. He was old school so you knew if you*

come to school prep must be in place because the HOD checks our prep on a two week basis" (Educator 1,School A)

"In the Foundation Phase we have systems in place. We have our management plan and every fortnight, our planning goes to the HOD and she gives us a report to sign. Then every third week the learners' books are sent in for evaluation against pacesetter. We each also have our duties like prayer duty, picking up papers, scholar patrol duty, assembly duty; we each get a chance to have the assembly":(Educator 2, School A)

"I agree with Educator 1, that in the intermediate phase learner books and teacher files are checked regularly to see if we are up to date with our work. If you don't understand something, you can go to another teacher and ask." (Educator 3, School A)

The principal pays more attention to the school vision and invites teachers to discuss their weakness and strengths and how their skill in a specific area could benefit the institution and help it realise its goals. This open communication allows educators to reflect on and improve their practice and management gets to utilize educators in subject areas where they could function at optimal level. Educator 3 saw this as a positive way for management to support, encourage and direct educators to be productive in the classroom. This form of inclusive support eliminates barriers that would force educators to function and work in isolation and makes it comfortable for educators to address their classroom practice with management, encouraging teamwork.

> *"What I also like, the second term when we came back Mrs Principal called us all in for different subjects. You had to come and explain why your marks are low. That was something quite nice for me personally."*

> *"That is how you can keep track of the teacher's strengths. Someone else might be teaching and failing in a subject you are at and you could exchange." (Educator 3, School A)*

:

> "*The HoD prepares by asking you questions about difficulties you were*

*experiencing in your learning area so shocked that you are not shocked when the principal calls you in." (*Educator 3, School A)

Participants felt that resource management and learner discipline needed structural support. Learner discipline remains challenging even though there are systems such as the demerit system, detention, suspension and diary entries. Other problems included the fact that the administrative building is under lock and key, denying direct access to pigeon holes and the waiting period for copies and other documentation that is inordinately long. Educators and HoDs are also encouraged to deal with parents directly, which the new educator found very traumatic. She feels that the principal should be more supportive and not send parent directly to educators' classes as this is very intimidating and unsettling.

:

"*There is a new system; you can't go into the office. The door is closed." (Educator1, School A)*

"At the beginning of the year we give reams of paper but there is either no paper or ink to make copies. It just frustrates me."

"You need to buzz to enter."

"I requested a document and had to wait for three days. I was so traumatised that day, I almost cried." (Educator 3, School A)

It seems that the principal is knowledgeable about policies and school administrative functions and adopts a directive approach when introducing and implementing new school policies and structures. Seeing that the mature and established staff is constantly measuring her against her predecessor, who was well-respected, she has to establish herself. She does this through a directive manner but counter balances it by seldom making decisions that do not include the staff. They realise, however, that latter is not always possible and some situations call for autonomous decisions. Participants admit that she tries to involve them as much as possible and feel that their opinions do matter to her. Furthermore they affirm that she delegates well, shares her power with her SMT and that she encourages and recognises teamwork, relying on their solidarity to work through challenges. It is evident that she utilizes their skills to achieve and sustain the targets aligned to the vision.

:

"It is rare that something happens and the next day you aren't aware of it. If something happens and you are not aware of it, it is because it does not affect you." (Educator 3)

"Yes and sometimes we have to vote when a decision has to be made." (Educator 2)

> *"Especially when it comes to functions. She will ask who can make it and if you are not available, to come see her in her office and explain why." (Educator 1)*

Interviews revealed that educators have no reservations about challenging her and questioning her authority. This could be why she is so directive and authoritative at times and has a no-nonsense attitude toward the staff, particularly when it comes to performance and compliance. Although they admire her knowledge, she sometimes says things that provoke staff to challenge her like:

> *"If you can't take the heat, move out of the kitchen." (Educator 3)*

> *"The moment she says that, you can see a lot of faces in the staffroom change." (Educator1/2/3)*

> *"Teachers like to challenge her but she can take it because she is a good principal and knows what she is talking about." (Educator 3)*

> *"She is knowledgeable, especially in the classes." (Educator 2/3)*

Sometimes, however, the staff challenges her only because she is a woman. Despite all this, she manages the school and has a very supportive team.

> *"I think a lot of the teachers don't like the fact that they are managed by a woman. I think that is one of the biggest problems at the school." (Educator 3)*

> *You can't bulldoze her even though she is a woman." (Educator 1/2/3)*

4.5 Conclusion

The data suggests that although the principal is faced with some challenges, she is well-equipped for her task. The staff needed to make a paradigm shift from being managed by an experienced male principal with an autocratic management style to being managed by a relatively younger female with a different management style. This approach is characterized by empowering the staff through power sharing, making each individual educator accountable and drawing on team spirit and pride to maintain collegiality. Furthermore she involves the staff in decision-making and allows them to take charge of their teaching and learning. This is done through open communication and reflection on performance and targets. Allowing staff input in what they teach and supporting them in teaching areas they are most comfortable with, places the onus on educators to ultimately assume responsibility for their performance and ensure delivery of quality. Encouraging open discussion of results in an inclusive and participative manner leads to greater working relationships between the staff and SMT.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS SCHOOL B ONLY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a detailed account of the findings of case school B. The chapter will give a background and context school B and interpret and present information that was obtained through documentary analysis and observation. Data from interviews with the principal, deputy principal, head of departments and focus groups will also be presented.

5.2 Background and Context of School B

School B, established on 17 July 1979, had a principal, 34 educators and 1061 learners, which means it was overcrowded and understaffed. The school, situated in Klipspruit, was the only one in that area and had to make provision for learners from ext 6 and ext 7 as well since there were no schools in those areas. The school started with platoon classes (double shift) and two teachers from each grade shared one classroom. The school day was from 7h30-17h00 and books and furniture were borrowed from other schools. Despite these setbacks teaching and learning took place and in 1981 the second principal was appointed with a staff of 53 and a learner roll of 1536. This principal introduced the staff to the use of computers and motivated them to further their studies. He was a believer and advocate of strong family values. Like with School A, he left an invaluable legacy which up to this day is reported on and referred to by educators. The current principal appreciates that he inherited a performing school from a visionary predecessor who had laid the foundation and created an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

Table 5.1: School B Performance: Annual National Assessment (ANA) 2008 to 2012

YEAR	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS					697
AVERAGE PERCENTAGE %	49.75	49.99	48.35	DID NOT WRITE ANA	60.

The Annual National Assessment (ANA) is used to identify learners who need support and district officials use the results to design school improvement plans in order to deliver the appropriate support (Department of Basic Education-Action Plan to 2014, 2011).

At this school, the foundation phase (Grade 1 to 3) is the performing phase and the school relies on it to carry the total percentage. Educators in this phase have been at the school for more than twenty years, and since they are the strongest group the principal does not change staff in this phase. As the HOD of the foundation phase is also the ANA-coordinator, a file with the results was readily available for copying. The HODs enforced curriculum delivery in this school and had good subject knowledge, knew curriculum requirements, and monitored both learner and teacher work and workbooks.

Unlike with the previous school, this one had a low staff turnover. From the biographical data and staff composition, it was noted that the majority of educators have been at the school for 20 years and more. The principal tries to maintain his staff and where possible, and in conjunction with his SMT and SGB, tries to recruit and secure the best person for a post.

Based on the results it can be deduced that teacher deployment is done purposefully. As indicated the foundation phase has been virtually untouched or unchanged for quite a number of years, so the teachers have stood the test of time and qualified their ability by delivering constantly good results. This performance attests to their strength to teach in the phase and adapt to changes as CAPS were introduced to the foundation phase in 2011. Transition from grade 3 to grade 4, which is intermediate, is intricate and learners need to adapt in order to achieve. Teachers in this phase especially need to be strong and experienced. Thus, staff qualifications, years of experience and subject preferences need to be considered when teachers are deployed as this would indicate their confidence to teach a subject.

Within the Intermediate phase the leadership also needs to look at subject and grade allocation to ensure a healthy and positive staff to deliver the best at all times. This guides us towards specialist teaching and having the right person for the job i.e. having someone with a good Mathematics qualification, experience and ability, teaching the subject and deriving maximum results. The type of teaching structures used, whether they are doing class teaching or subject teaching across the phase(Intermediate) is also a factor when it comes to learner performance. The SMT therefore needed to be abreast of the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching staff making use of them in the best way possible, it can be argued they do a lot of reflection and possibly employ SWAT analysis as an instrument to guide the institution forward. This was evident with

my site observations and monitoring of the principal. He applied for a growth post and also wrote a letter of motivation to keep an educator which was to retire. In the SMT meeting I observed the principal requested that candidates be screened for interviews.

5.3 Documentary Analysis

Documentary analysis is a social research method employed for the detailed examination of documents relevant to the study (De Vos et al., 2005). At school B the researcher was provided a copy of the principal's diary, agendas for his meetings with staff and the SMT and school newsletters for three months. ANA results of the last 5 years, excluding those of 201, were also made available and the latest ones discussed.

5.3.1 Minutes of Meeting

Minutes of meetings were requested to scrutinise the content, purpose and outcomes and to see what they contained about the core business of the institution. The latter is important since the core business is teaching and learning and the study wants to determine whether successful achievement in disadvantaged schools is because of leadership and management.

Although there were no formal minutes of SMT meetings, agendas of said meetings were noted in the principal's diary, and signed attendance registers were on file. The following were on the agendas: 1) Teaching and learning – teacher absenteeism; Grade meetings, ANA planning, Exam Question papers, school planning for 2014, the 450

support forms, growth post application; 2) GDE workshop for staff and parents; 3) Services rendered to school; 4) Fund raising event and community project.

As part of the data collection, the researcher was allowed to observe a meeting between the principal and the SMT, which included the deputy principal and four HoDs. The principal chaired the meeting, while the deputy principal looked more like an observer than part of the management team. From the way the principal ran the meeting, it was evident that he was definitely the one in charge of the school. He did most of the talking, sharing information, checking in on the previous discussions, questioning them about results and progress, mark schedules, etc. HoDs then gave updates about their phase, educator duties and where each was, and so forth. The meeting was very structured and from the discussion it became clear that he requires accountability from his staff. Through constant communication with HoDs he closely monitors and stays abreast of what is happening at the school. This corresponds with Hallinger and Heck's (1998) view that principals should be immersed with the core and if challenges are experienced with performance, they should adopt a more bureaucratic approach. In contrast, DuFour and Marzano (2009) cautions that principals should not get too involved with the instructional role, monitoring and checking in on employees nut should rather that focus on the attained curriculum in order to measure actual learning..

5.3.2 School Newsletters

School newsletters concerned: athletics, school funding, community update, school closing time and the exam timetable (ANA exam and final exam). One newsletter requested the attendance of parents for a GDE support workshop. Most of the communication was mainly concerned with donation requests, fun day, denim-tekkie

day and community funding project. This form of communication did not reveal much of the school's core.

5.3.3 School Logbook

The school logbook showed that district officials had visited the school a few times in 2013. The first visit was to see if curriculum delivery was taking place successfully. The second visit was to get the compliance register to verify compliance with regard to the management of teaching and learning. The logbook showed that compliance visits were regular as were visits to monitor and verify assessments and examinations. Other entries concerned the monitoring of educator leave, learner support, support in finances, etc.

5.4 Site Observations

Visits were scheduled and arranged with the principal. The school is fenced, security tight and the school grounds and foyer immaculate. The GDE mission and vision statement, sport trophies and award certificates are displayed in the foyer. Unlike school A, the atmosphere was more relaxed in that the relationship between the two secretaries was amiable and the door was always open on days that the researcher visited. The researcher observed that most educators and learners arrived well before the starting time and that starting and dismal time was honoured, so too SMT meetings that take place Monday mornings at 07:45 promptly and end at 8:00. Both educators and learners visited the office to consult the principal about class changes, mark schedules, funding, social events, reporting and clarifying. The dynamics of the school remind the researcher of a pastor leading his flock that reveres and consult him,

displaying a pleasing disposition toward him. One HoD said: “he *leads and we follow as a team*”. There were parents in the foyer waiting to see the principal, and the principal was in and about, checking in on classes and making sure that everyone was where they were supposed to be. On the whole, the atmosphere at the school was relaxed and bustling at the same time with so many people up and about in the office looking or waiting to see the principal. The researcher picked up that there was a good relationship between the school, parents and community.

5.5 Interviews

Purposive sampling was done which called for participants who have experienced the leadership at school B. Individual interviews were conducted with leadership figures at this school: the principal, deputy principal and three departmental heads. Seeing that they were part of management, the participants were able to describe the leadership at the school. On the non-managerial side, the researcher conducted focus group interviews with three level one educators to get a different perspective of the school leadership and management.

5.4.1 Interview with The Principal

The interview with the principal took place in the morning at his office, although more than one meeting was scheduled as a result of his busy schedule and in an attempt to establish his routine and functions. During the interview, open-ended questions were posed to the principal in order to get his personal view of his role as principal. He indicated that he had received professional development in school management and this was reflected in his knowledge about leadership and management. His preferred

style is participative leadership and management, working towards sustaining trusting relationships with his staff members since participation and trust is central to achieving his goals for the school. Because he displays trust in their integrity, allows them space and invites their input it is easier to direct the focus, get cooperation and limit reckless behaviour on their part. He admits that although he tries to make educators part of the decision-making it is not always possible to consult, so he will make the decision. However, provide clear lines of communication, reporting structures and capacity building essential for the smooth running of the school. In addition, he takes an interest in and supports his educators in their careers and personal life. Thus, he does home visits for illness or loss of family members for both educators and learners, for the latter also when attendance, behaviour and performance are questionable. This is his way of giving direction and achieving some short term goals.

Although the principal acknowledges that he is the ultimate accounting officer, all should be held to account and as such, he expects clear and upfront communication from staff if they are not able to attend school as he needs to ensure that all classes are manned appropriately and deadlines are adhered to. Also, he relies on the SMT to pass relevant information on to their particular phase through regular meetings. He plans in advance to ensure that teaching takes place and this was observed when he wrote a motivation letter to the district, for a growth post to keep an educator who was at retirement age. He also mentioned available posts in the SMT meeting and highlighted the importance of recruiting the most suitable and qualified person. The principal prioritises the purpose of school and leads the school by holding educators accountable, through maintaining order and nurturing a disciplined staff that is focus on performance that is measurable. One respondent had this to say about the principal: "*driving you to perform even better makes him successful because you are getting the work done and it is an easier task for him"*

Asked how he empowers his staff to ensure commitment and performance with less policing his answer was ‘exposure and mentoring’ and from the school logbook it was clear that the district was also there to offer support to teachers and learners who needed it. McDonnald, Tullai-McGuiness and Madigon (2010) confirm that when workers are provided with support, opportunity and collaboration they experienced a greater sense of empowerment. The principal indicated that the various staff members show distinct ownership which is indicative of their commitment to achieving and sustaining a successful school. He contributes this commitment to the fact that most have been at the school for more than twenty years and do not want the school to be declared underperforming. ANA is also a contributing factor. Matthews (2009) claims that external pressure such as district and national exams can have a positive effect on school performance.

The principal said that his predecessor had provided him with opportunities for in-service training when needed, so he tries to do the same for his staff which was confirmed by the SMT which further indicated that the principal displays good work ethic and has a sound knowledge of curriculum and administrative duties.

5.4.2 Interview with The Deputy Principal: School B

The interview with the deputy principal took place in the morning in his office as arranged with the principal. The purpose of the study was explained to him. The aim was to determine how the principal leads and manages the school and whether his leadership contributed to the school’s success. The deputy’s reply was that it is the

principal's dedication and good work ethic that keeps the school ahead of the neighbouring schools. The principal has almost thirty years' experience, is well skilled in the daily operation and technical side of running the school and the deputy could well learn him. The deputy agrees that the principal practices an inclusive form of management that is value driven. The principal always consults with his management team and other stakeholders but at times the "old school mentality" gets the better of him and he makes decisions on his own. He further acknowledges that as deputy he learnt a lot from the principal although this was not always a smooth and pleasant ride.

> *"I have learned a lot, he does have skills, leadership skills. He knows how to resolve conflict issues and also how to run the budget of the school."*

He shared that as the first person of colour "black" to join the school on management level he experienced a lot of racial discrimination with regards to his ability and efficiency. This was very trying since it came mostly from management, the principal was the driving force and others on management soon followed suit. Although he is no longer the only person of colour, racial issues are still very prevalent within the school amongst staff. However he did acknowledge that there were other managerial issues but did not impact on the performance of staff.

Secondly the success of the school could be attributed to the commitment of educators which is always acknowledged by management. Moreover communication with regards to their key performance area is another contributing factor to the schools success. These teachers have worked with the principal for more than twenty years, support him

and trust his judgment and they have a great sense of ownership and commitment which definitely contributes to the schools success. Providing quality education is key to their success and work does not stop when the bell rings. Their loyalty to and pride in the school's good performance and standing contribute to effective curriculum delivery. Curriculum delivery is ensured through reporting structures and key performance areas, which are well managed and monitored to ensure positive learner output. All educators submit their preparation file on Monday together with their formal assessments. Formal assessments need to be in line with the teacher assessment plans and parents meet with educators four times per year to discuss learner performance. The majority of parents are very supportive of their children's educators and this in turn makes teaching at the school very pleasant.

> *"What makes the school perform better is because the commitment from the educators and HODs".*

5.4.3 Interview with Head of Department One

The interview with the Head of Department took place at school during school hours in one of the classes. This HoD is at the school for thirty two years and has been teaching with the principal prior to his appointment. The HoD revealed that the current principal has learned a great deal from his predecessor. She indicated that the schools success can be attributed to the principal's emotional intelligence and his participative management approach. His ability to appreciate and empathize with his staff and school community allows for greater support, respect and understanding. This approach whether learned or inborn has earned the principal great support from the community. He is caring and very concerned with the well being of learners, more

importantly is that the school environment should be accommodative to learners well being. He is focused on achieving the goals and sustaining good relationship with staff members which he accomplishes through teamwork.

> *"He leads and we follow as a team"*
> *"…Well um, communication, most important"*

Secondly the HOD attested that while the principal is concerned with maintaining good relationship his main objective is to ensure that teaching and learning takes place. Therefore Monday mornings are reserved for SMT meeting to discuss the week ahead, everything that was not achieved the previous week, possible challenges, communication from the department and events that might impact on daily operation of the school. Information shared during this meeting is also filtered to the staff, through staff meetings or grade meetings. HODs, managing their respective departments, have to account for performance through regular monitoring and support processes which are well observed by both principal and deputy. It is further expected that HODs provide documented follow-ups to educators and principal when support and development took place therefore, comprehensible duties with reporting lines are communicated to both educators and SMT. She acknowledges that the principal could never have been this successful if he did not have a supportive, efficient and disciplined staff and SMT.

> *"…and driving you to perform even better makes him successful"*

5.4.4 Interview with Head of Department Two

The interview with the Head of Department took place at school during school hours in one of the classes. In response to my question; how does the principal lead and manage the school, the HOD indicated that firstly he is very transparent with regards to all communications. The second factor critical to his success, is that he places the learner first through the monitoring of teaching and learning. She indicated that the principal is "*very concerned about the teaching and learning in the school".* As to how, the HOD indicated the following:

> *"He is aware of what is happening in the foundation phase, he is aware of what happens in the senior phase. Every week each teacher hands in her file, her profile and the HODs check it but he also go through it. So he is aware". He will ask us what we are doing for this week, what is our aim, what do we want to reach at the end of this week…*

From the above it is clear that principal is set on playing a pivotal role in ensuring curriculum delivery, regular planning to meet objectives and to ensure smooth running of the school. Key performance areas and reporting lines are outlined to staff to create stability and consistency. According the HOD the principal delegates well, he has follow-up session on a Monday morning with his SMT to ascertain if objectives have been met, he conducts school rounds to ensure everyone is in class. She admits that the SMT and educators work well together to deliver quality teaching. The above extract suggests that the principal seems to have tight control on the management of teaching and learning. Educators report to him directly (this supported by observation

that the deputy's role that being in charge of curriculum is done in conjunction with the principal). The principal is always in the clear as to what is going on, in terms of curricula, who is absent, who did not meet deadlines. His SMT reports every detail and incident to him.

> *"He always acknowledges Women's day at this school and that makes us feel special and it makes us want to do and want to work and just want to give our best in the classroom and outside the classroom"*

Secondly, the HODs say it is the principal's ability to acknowledge and praise the staff that contributes to his success. The principal recognizes Teacher's day, Women's and World Teachers day these gestures of validating them not only motivates the staff but also unites them to achieve their objectives. More so when they have gone the extra mile by working on weekends he acknowledge this in staff meetings, he is not oblivious of their commitment. She further stated that the principal displays interest in their personal life. The principal being a church minster, this title stands him in good stead, as staff shares openly with him and where they pray together. She also mentioned that his ability to communicate contributes to the trust factor, more so when problems do arise this is communicated to them immediately in staff meetings. In addition she admits that the staff is very established and very little change has taken place in terms of staff turnover which contributes to them working well together and preserve the ethos of the school. Lastly the majority of staff has come through the ranks with the principal and there is a lot of trust and respects amongst them which helps them to identify problems and work through challenges together.

5.4.5 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group interviews were held with non managerial staff as this provided the researcher a different perspective of the school principals other than that of the senior management team. According to De Vos et al. (2005), focus group interviews bring together participants with the same experience of the topic under study and provide rich and varied opinions with regards to the topic. As much as this could provide detailed information it could also be restrictive on members, but the adverse could also be applicable. Focus group discussion took place at school, in one of the classrooms. The focus group participants consisted of three female post level one educators. Educator one (1) has been at the school for 30 years, educator two (2) for 25 years and educator three more than 10 years. Educator 1 very objective with regards to the principal, whilst educator 2 was very pro-principal and acknowledged in a matter of fact manner: *"that is why the principal asked me to participate; I m so outspoken"*. During the interview it was evident that educator 2 was very protective of the principal and defended him when educator 1 had a different opinion, I had to remind them that each person has an opinion and the right to voice it. Educator 3 was quiet and spoke only when coaxed by educator 2. Educator 1 was undeterred by their opinions and stood her ground and defended her opinion.

> *"I suppose like everybody else, but I think if you are part of the management team I think it would be different you know, because I think although Mr Principal is very democratic in some things. I also believe he is very set in his ways about some things and sometimes I feel that you know you speak and you listen he may not at times take kindly to proposals on that*

level coming from somebody else because it wasn't questioned before." (Educator 1)

"Mr…… phoned and told me about ANA and he went into my class and he asked them this and that and I was very, very offended. Very offended. I didn't answer." (Educator 1)

Can I come in there? Ok let me just come in here by Educator 1 Mrs…..story about her brother's what's his name. I am going to come in and I am going to give you now from his side as well what happened. (Educator 2)

"So he was not aware that it was so severe. You understand and after speaking to me, I told her." (Educator 2)

Important to note was that educator1 highlighted the difficulties the deputy principal experienced with management and the principal and corroborated what he revealed in his interview. Whilst the other two participants did not acknowledge it rather educator one thought it to be her duty to clarify and defend the position of the principal and consequent behavior. Educator 1 had clear and well structured answers; she was very articulate and unbiased in her response. Educator 3 was cautious in her response and acknowledge that she never want to teach in a "black township school" not even if she was offered a promotion post she would teach in this "colored school" and travel all the

way from her home. She further stated that she has never experience any racial discrimination at the school unlike the experience of the deputy principal.

> "*I don't know anything about those things, since I came to this school from the principal or the staff, no I don't know anything about being black and white and whatever." (Educator 3)*

> *"So I said to him..... I said "Mr deputy relax, you know what people who are not accustomed to you being the deputy principal with have to get with the program. You are going nowhere. You are here to stay. So the people that are questioning your capabilities", you know what we are all different." (Educator 1)*

> *"so coming into a big school like this and having a promotion post and coming into a very set sort of management team, must have been challenging for him you know, because he is new, he has to adhere to rules he is not accustomed to." (Educator 1)*

As to how the principal lead and manage the school, the participants (Educator 1/2/3) recognised that the principal practices an inclusive form of management style that is value driven. Decisions are made with the input of the staff, regular staff meetings are

held to inform staff, staff can voice their opinions and input, more so educators can approach the principal on a one on one basis. From the extracts it was clear that this is a very mature staff, they have been at the school for more than two decades, they have taken ownership, maintaining the good standing of the school is something very dear to them. More so, is that these educators understand the obligation of the principal to deliver quality teaching and ensuring the success of the school. They realise that he has to strike a balance between respecting them when they cannot be on duty but at the same time they realise he has to maintain focus on the task at hand. This became very obvious when ***educator 1 said****: "I know he is not comfortable when we are absent. Even when you are sick he is not comfortable and it is the God's truth you know. He is not comfortable because he has to manage this institution".*

Another contributing factor to the schools success is the principals ability to retain good staff, this is clear when one looks at the foundation phase, which has been unchanged for the last 15 -20 years, and carries the positive results of the school. Moreover, two of the foundation phase educators serve on the SMT. Educators are familiar with their key performance areas as indicated in the extract and this was evident from the school results as well as the close monitoring of teaching and learning that takes place at the school.

> *So managing the school, I think he is doing an excellent job managing, he is also very accommodating, he really does not stand behind us. We know that these things has to be done and that he expects it from us and I think we are all mature and adult and responsible and accountable that we need to value our jobs, that it is not just a pay-cheque job, that we have a*

responsibility towards ourselves and the learners and more importantly to the school to do our best. (Educator 1)

Educator 1 indicated that it is custom for the staff to meet and discuss the ANA performance, during this session they analyse results and set the target for the next external exam. The external exam known as ANA is something they take serious at the school as failure of the exam can place them on the underperforming schools list, something they fear. This is also what drives them, fear of being declared an underperforming school. The participants acknowledge that results of the external exam are discussed in staff meetings where individual performance is highlighted and this in itself creates a spirit of competitiveness amongst educators. Educator 2 felt that this ultimately is a reflection of how good or bad an educator is. Educator 1 strongly disagreed as there are many other factors to consider when learners fail or do well.

"Ok let me be honest with you ANA is really really a big issue for every single educator. If there is an educator that can say ANA does not affect that person then that person is not telling the truth. It does affect us and our motivation for ANA is we don't want to go down. Let me tell you again we don't want to go down. We rather work towards going up and we.....(Educator 2)

But my opinion is.... the focus is so much on teaching and on the teacher and the responsibility, the onus lies on the

> *learners. We owe in part our knowledge, if we do not get the cooperation of our learners, there are no results. Right and we have to be very open. When it comes to the learner's responsibility it is not what it should be. Parents' involvement with homework and taking a keen interest, is not what it should be. (Educator 1)*

Secondly they all acknowledged that his daily interaction with stakeholders is grounded in his faith. The principal displays good work ethic, arrives on time, seldom stays absent, always available to his staff, treats them with respect, is not afraid to reprimand or disagree with them, has no qualms of calling one to order and use policy document to support his stance. He supports them both professionally and personal. This became evident when educator 1 and 3 shared that when one had a personal issue and educator 3 was hospitalised the principal came to visit her regularly and supported her through this trying time. More so, when serious discipline issues arise the principal and deputy principal take it upon themselves to support educators and do home visits of the said learners.

> "*even though you are a post level 1 educator you don't feel like a post level 1 educator, because some of your duties is post level 1 educator and then level 2, level 3, because he develops you. He helps you to grow and by giving you all that opportunities (Educator 2)*

"He has a good manner about him, he is approachable, you can go to him with very personal things and he will treat it with respects" (Educator 1)

"So with Mr Principal I think four times I went to hospital, he was coming there, he didn't send anyone, he came himself just to see me, what is your problem, how you are. He just carries most of the things with us. (Educator 3)

"You know and sometimes with the serious enough issues Mr Principal goes to their house and they get suspended for a week or two. Ja, he goes to that child's house, he wants to see their parents and ask questions about that. (Educator 3)

Communication was a third factor contributing to the success of the school. Staff is always on board as to what is going on at school; he relays all communication to them timeously. He is very transparent, everything is discussed at staff level from results to finances his staff is aware of his opinion and stance of the respective matters at hand. Clear targets are set and clear lines of responsibility are communicated to staff to secure the desired performance outcomes.

As a staff we normally get together and discuss the current outcome of ANA

*results and compare it with last year's. Right, so the principal wound run around the various grades and then obviously discuss where there is you know.... generally this year there was improvement right around, no matter how small, didn't go back. So the parents are also informed. In the meetings we then decide what is our target for the next year. (**Educator 1**)*

So I am talking from the experience that I got from the other schools, because some principals don't communicate, our principal communicates with us most of the time like when we do something, for example funding, then it is on a Saturday and when we come back on the Monday we will know how much we made….. Coming to the circulars, he gives us circulars; we know what is going on in the circulars. We know our rights– his management style – he does not run after us, he knows that when we are in the class we are doing our work.(Educator 3:)

5.6 Conclusion

It is evident from the interview data that the principal of School B is a committed individual. Majority of participants view his leadership as inclusive and value driven. Others referred to his style of leading and management as democratic, saying that he leads by example and advocates an open door policy. It emerged that he holds tight reigns on the management of teaching and learning; he delegates and does regular follow-up with his SMT; he encourages staff to communicate with him directly with regard to all aspects that will impact work performance, as this allows him to plan and continue with the task at hand, especially teacher absenteeism. His leadership approach is grounded in his faith and his personal values, such as integrity, honesty, respect and fostering relationships based on trust. He values his staff, retains and recruit the best candidates and supports and develops them to ensure confident and strong educators.

CHAPTER 6: CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

While chapters 4 and 5 dealt with the data, analysis and findings of the study at the two schools respectively, this chapter entails a cross-case analysis of the findings of the study as obtained at the two participating schools. Cross case analysis according to Mathison (2005) is an analysis that examines themes, similarities, and differences across cases. Cross-case analysis can be applied when the unit of analysis is a case, meaning any bounded unit. The bounded unit could be an individual, a group, place, organization, or interaction. The bounded unit in the context of this study is the two schools involved in the study; subsequently themes, patterns and trends across the two cases are now discussed.

6.2 Emerging Themes

Eight themes emerged from the interviews; leadership qualities; management strategies; internal relations; co-operation with external stakeholders; quality assurance; interpersonal skills; personal attributes and education specific issues.

6.2.1 Theme One: Leadership Styles Displayed In Leading and Setting Direction

Schools A and B, situated in disadvantaged communities, were identified by district officials as successful or functional in terms of good and consistent performance in their external exam (ANA) and general policy compliance. According to Fataar and Patterson (2002), a school can be classified as functional or dysfunctional based on the nature and extent of its response to policy change. How a school reacts to and handles the demands of policy change is normally determined by institutional culture. The data collected from the schools show that the management and leadership styles of the two principals have a huge effect on the culture of the schools. As discussed in chapter 4, interviews with staff in school A revealed that the principal leads by example, she would not expect anything from her staff that she would not do herself, a clear example of this was shown when she volunteered to teach Physical Education at the time the school needed one. She mentors and supports educators with methodology when needed and she honors starting time. She shares tasks with SMT which allows her time to do class visits. As way of exercising influence and providing direction, the relatively younger principal has built on a founded legacy and more remarkably, has managed to enforce her own management style of power-sharing and delegation, in contrast to the predecessor's autocratic style.

The principal from school B is at the exit phase of his career and has had the benefit of moulding the leadership of the school that reflects transformational leadership. The

interviews with his staff have revealed that he generally comes across as an older, wiser and very authoritative figure. His staff described him as a well informed and involved leader with a strong sense of discipline.

During my interaction with him, he demonstrated a clear impression that he respects his time and follows an orthodox approach of leadership. He maintains very close relationships with all members of his staff and displays uncompromising support. This was illustrated through four hospital visits during which one of the educators was in hospital. This paper interprets these behaviours and qualities as being in-line with a leadership core practices (as defined by Leithwood & Riehl, 2003/2006) called '*Developing the Organisation'.*

The approach to leading and directing that invites participation has enhanced the well functioning work culture of the schools in question. Setting direction entails that all effort should be directed through the setting of goals and influencing members through a well articulated vision (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; 2006). Vision, mission and goals according to Hallinger and Heck (2001) are at times used interchangeably in both practice and research. Amidst the confusion of the attainment of the said vision the authors aver that the one avenue to tap into to achieve the vision is through transformational leadership. Central to transformation leadership is the trust and participative features. Transformational leadership embodies features of both instructional and distributed leadership. In South Africa within the public schools visions are standardised and produced by the Department of Education. Schools are in the position to develop their own vision of attaining the set goals, but it should be aligned with the prescribed vision.

This research reveals that within the case study schools both principals A and B have focused on the commitment and inner motivation of staff to achieve high performance. For this to become a reality school A focussed on attendance of both educators and learners, together with curriculum attainment. The principal ensured that educators provide a substitute if they are absent and a register for late coming was implemented. Secondly regarding the actual curriculum, monitoring and evaluation system was put in place. HODs are advised to implement pace-setters to monitor the actual attainment of curriculum which will measure what was prescribed and what was actually attained, therefore learner books and assessment should be aligned with the actual curriculum attained. Furthermore the principal of school A has tasked her SMT with greater responsibility of managing their respective teams, allowing her more time for class visits, school rounds and ensuring that her presence and commitment is seen and felt by her colleagues.

This is important as principals are expected to perform an array of duties and have to rely on their SMT to execute certain role functions. Therefore the increased accountability within schools and collaborative work cultures alleviate some of the responsibilities placed on principals, allowing teachers to be developed and gain more insight into leadership functions and responsibility roles (Brown, 2008). In addition, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) acknowledge that principals can influence and direct the behaviour of people to attain the shared objectives and foster a developmental culture.

On the other hand principal of school B, ensuring high performance was to focus on maintenance of high teacher morale and recruiting the best possible candidates. This is crucial as the majority of his staff is at retirement level. Influencing the recruiting process to secure the best possible candidate is a priority and is possible due to the SASA whereby principals work closely with SGB. The SGB is responsible to ensure that

schools daily operations are conducted with minimal disruptions. Therefore alleviating and preventing absenteeism, non-compliance is important to Principal B. Recruiting and ensuring low absenteeism amongst staff was key as he requires an educator in class at all time to ensure the continuation of teaching. Furthermore, the principal was set on the mentoring of new educators. This was important so that the experienced educators could transfer their experience and knowledge to new educators. Additionally, this served as a much needed induction for new educators to comfortably assume their role with very little interruption. This finding supports what Matthews (2009) advocates regarding recruiting quality educators and maintaining a low level of staff turnover which is vital as this contributes to familiarity with key performance areas, maintaining consistency and positive performance. This helps with the securing of knowledge and skill which assist with the internal capacity of schools to address challenges (Elmore, 2010).

The findings demonstrate that the principals from both schools vary their leadership approach according to the situation. Further findings suggest that both place high value on teaching and learning, attendance, teacher-learner performance and disciplined educators. The leadership styles of the principals can be autocratic, democratic or participative, depending on the situation and goal. Democratic and participative are used interchangeably as both relate to power sharing and clear communication of objectives, so participative will be used to refer to both. This tie in with the findings from Kamper (2008) who states that the successful principals in disadvantaged communities tailored their approach to which ever outcome they desired. The principals adopted an approach that was to ensure the best possible outcome based on the need of the school. International studies conducted by Jacobson *et al*. (2005;2007) revealed that more often the approach principals assumed was influenced by their highly fluid environment.

According to Fataar and Patterson (2002), the success of a functional school lies in pro-active leadership, low levels of stress and sustained quality output. Both these schools have been performing consistently. Participative leadership relates to leaders that share power and information with subordinates, ultimately creating opportunities for deliberation, trust and teamwork (Yukl, 1999). Echols (2009) concludes that the participative leader strives for omnipresent involvement of all participants and creates a platform where participants are in the position to make decisions and take full responsibility for the achievement of set targets and objectives.

The themes show that both principals gravitate, especially the principal from school A, toward a more participative style. They share power with the educators and involve them (the educators) in the operational functions of the schools. The findings reveal that the principal from school A has discussions with her SMT first, then with the staff after which they will vote over issues. Educators from school A said that it is seldom that they are not involved in decision-making, but when it happens, it is because the decision (a) does not affect them directly, (b) will not impact on their teaching or students' of learning, (c) is the principal's to make as the one ultimately in charge. They understand that the principal cannot consult on everything as this is time-consuming and could undermine leadership. Rosener (1990) allows that participative management is at times a time-consuming process due to the gathering of information and that a continuous request for information and opinions can, at times be, perceived as not having one's own answers. According to Yukl (1999), an often overlooked dimension of participative management is the willingness of stakeholders to willingly partake.

At school B, the principal makes his stance on issues known to his staff and then invites feedback. He communicates openly with staff about issues and they in turn do the same. The principal did indicate, though, that he always consults with his SMT first before taking matters to the staff. He has been principal for a long time and sometimes acts autonomous, which his staff attributes to his being from “the old school” and not used to power-sharing. According to Fleisch and Christie (2010), it is very challenging for school leaders to suddenly after years of being autocratic adopt democratic and participative decision-making as this is in stark contrast to the autocratic top-down management they were conditioned to. This is clearly the case in school B.

Based on the theoretical framework proposed by Leithwood and Riehl (2003; 2006) which underpins the study, the role of leadership is to establish direction and purpose through the creation of clear, well defined school missions, clear goals and to maintain a sense of common purpose (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997). Leaders would develop a vision for the future and the strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve the vision. That vision should then be communicated to relevant stakeholders to (a) secure commitment and (b) give shared meaning that is well communicated and understood by all (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, 2006).

The above conclusions are definitive of the characteristics displayed by the two case study schools.

6.2.3 Theme Two: Managerial Strategies to Facilitate Teaching and Learning

This theme concerns the strategies that the respective principals use to facilitate teaching and learning. Both principals employ strategies that include distributed

leadership, teacher leadership, accountability and responsibility. They rely on their SMT to manage teaching and learning. Data from school A shows that the principal relies heavily on her deputy and HODs to manage and support their respective teams. HODs not only manage teaching and learning but also their teams holistically. If there is a problem in a specific grade albeit learner discipline or parent concern, the HOD has to deal with it. The principal is adamant educators need to respect and trust their line managers before she will intervene. She sees the management of teaching and learning as a task shared by all, which ties in with distributed leadership as proposed by Spillane (2006) and Hallinger & Heck (2005). This is in stark contrast to Marks and Pinty (2003) who view the principal as someone knee-deep in the instructional core and the only person in charge of instruction. DuFour and Marzano (2009) caution against principals getting in too deep with the instructional role of monitoring and checking in on employees and rather that they focus on the attained curriculum and what was understood from that.

The deputy principal from school A enjoys a much more collegial and collaborative relationship with the staff and HODs. This deputy's role is much more defined and there is clear evidence (interviews and document analysis) of the stability and structure she brings to the school in terms of teaching and learning on a day to day basis. Respondents revealed that both principals focus on attained curriculum although principal A takes it beyond the boundaries of SMT and have dialogues with the respective educators on their performance. This was both liberating and daunting for some educators.

Although both principals delegate, principal A has a more open relationship with her SMT whereby there is clear evidence of power sharing and trust which filters down to non-managerial staff. This is achieved through healthy dialogue that allows for reflection and professional growth in their key performance. In addition, an accounting session is held with the principal to determine their weaknesses and areas of support, how they intend to improve their practice and the setting of targets. The principal of school A provides her educators the opportunity to direct her to their speciality and set targets, allowing them a greater role in the management of their teaching and learning. With school B, on the other hand, there are no one-on-one discussions and results are analysed and discussed in the staffroom. This in itself motivates educators as they do not want to be shamed publicly and it emerged from the discussion that some educators view poor performance as a reflection of their lack of good practice. In some instances educators are motivated to perform when results are made public or there is applied external pressure (Matthew, 2009).

Based on the above it is clear that managing teaching and learning is central to the success of both schools, however I have observed that within the two schools leadership approaches regarding performance outcomes are contrasting. Principal from school A, although she heads the instructional core she allows through dialogue and reflection educators to assume responsibility for their teaching and performance. This is done individually with the involve educator in her office.

As with principal B, the same discussion is done publicly in a staff meeting and conducted directly the principal. Although both methods attract positive academic results, method of principal A associated with higher teacher morale.

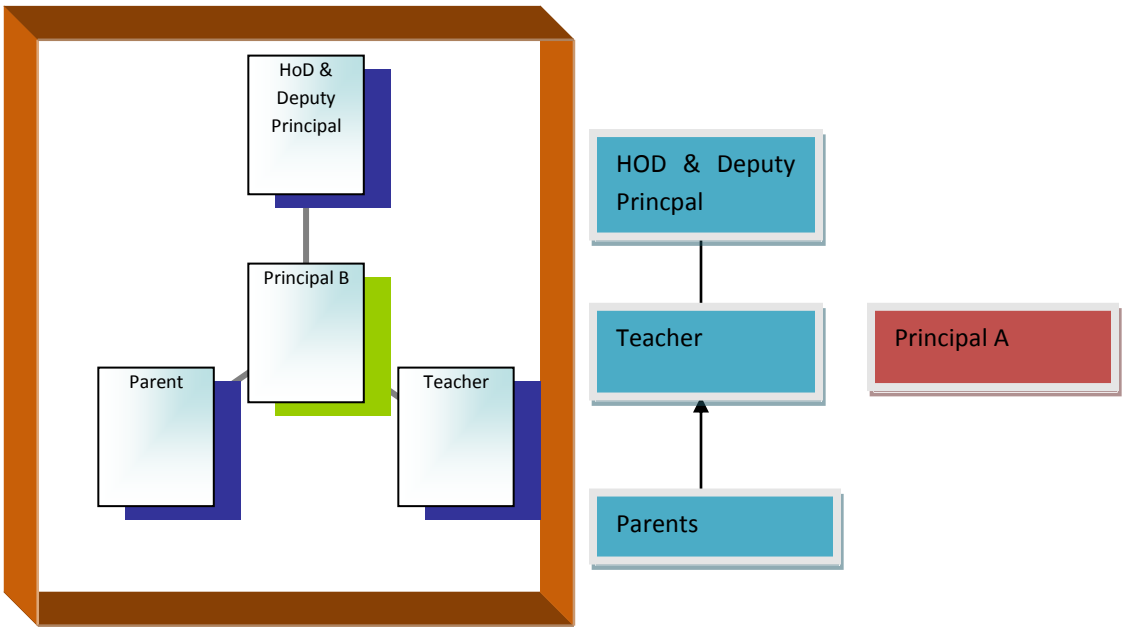
Managing teaching and learning is one of the core and most important key performance areas outlined in the SASA (Bush, 2008; Bush & Glover, 2009)). However, this does not imply that principals should exclusively focus on teaching and learning as this can be detrimental to the institution. It is only one of the key performance areas of the principal (Hallinger, 2003). Where management experiences challenges with teacher compliance and performance, managers are encouraged to assume a more bureaucratic approach, especially recommended in underperforming schools (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). It should be kept in mind that principals, in the current dispensation, function in a very complex environment and have to manage the institution holistically with the support of the SGB and SMT (Bush, 2008). This change puts pressure on them that could be alleviated by forming trusting relationships, sharing power and delegating tasks (Spillane, 2006).

6.2.4 Theme Three: Organisational Structures and Collaborative Cultures

The findings from both Schools A and B suggest that the implemented structures contribute to the daily functioning of the school. Respondents view these structures, systems of communication and reporting lines as the glue that holds the school together and encourages teamwork. Findings from focus group discussions and HOD interviews at Schools A and B, show that a collaborative culture, that allows educators to work in teams, is regarded as a life-line especially by those new to the teaching profession. At School B, the principal explained that it is important that new educators be mentored by the more experienced educators. In this way, knowledge and experience are transferred and retained at the school. Findings further suggest that both principals encourage teacher networking beyond the confinement of their schools. This is important as it

provides further support for teacher development and improves subject practice, especially since Bush (2008) opines that there is a move away from individual towards an emergent and collective form of learning, such as networking, and a stronger focus on school-wide leadership development. According to Fullan and Hargreaves (2000), teachers need to be empowered by redefining their roles; this includes the responsibility to become knowledgeable, participative workers within the wider educational arena.

Figure A – The Reporting Structures



The principals from School A and B are adamant that educators are equally responsible and accountable for the successful functioning of the school, therefore they include them in decision-making. The principal from School A considers it fortunate that her SMT displays impeccable work ethic and efficiently manages teams independently and holistically as explained in the previous theme, as depicted in *figure A* (principal A). Structures and procedures, if implemented incorrectly at schools and are complicated,

could affect performance adversely as they determine how systems in the school interrelate within the school and the broader community.

Based on the results it's clear that in both schools visionary planning and leadership occurred to improve the ANA results of the previous years. Furthermore it suggests that proper work is being done in the classes by the teachers when we look at curriculum delivery and pacing. The teachers are utilising their DBE workbooks effectively and maximizing opportunities for exercises and surely there must be homework program in place to furthermore strengthen the learners work. The SMT does have proper internal moderation processes in place to follow up on curriculum delivery, the pacing and moderation as well as feedback to the teachers. Moderation and Assessment is an integral part of improvement and needs meticulous planning and delivery which is bound by strategic timeframes followed at schools. The Standard of work is of a good quality and high order to effect positive change with end results of improvement as in this case. This in itself speaks of a high work rate and high standards which can only be attained under good leadership with a strong sense of teamwork and collegiality.

The above system is seen as a clear example of the results which can be yielded through having a proper structure and trusted, understood and known procedures.

Davidoff and Lazarus (1996) state that structure refers to ways in which individual or groups collaborate and relate to each other and procedures refer to rules, regulations and methods of implementation. Systems are put in place to eliminate confusion and allow for the smooth functioning of processes. Here, information flow and accountability

is of utmost importance. Staff, at both schools, is encouraged to communicate, comment and take initiative and participate vertically as well as horizontally with each other. However, within school A the organisational structure is more horizontal and collegial as decisions are taken collectively with a well defined reporting structure which leaves power with other members of school manager (Thomas & Mawhinney, 1987).

Organisational structure is a formal system of tasks and reporting relationships that control, coordinate, and motivate employees so that they cooperate to achieve an organisation's goals (Fidler, 1997). It is important that people within a school know what "things" to do, whom to report to and the functions of the other staff members. The structure implemented should indicate clear lines of authority and accountability and, with both schools, findings suggest that the various tasks of HODs and educators are prescribed and discussed and the division of work spelled out. At school A educators are made to sign an ELRC document that clearly outlines the lines of authority and responsibility. Signing of an ELRC is not applied at school B.

Although principal A is open to criticism from her staff and does not mind them disagreeing with her, her stance is that her SMT can challenge her or disagree in private, not in front of her staff as this can erode trust and affect worker morale. She keeps and maintains the structures and places high value on rules and regulations to ensure teacher compliance and attendance. Furthermore, she shares responsibility with her deputy and heads of department who are allowed to make decisions based on their key performance areas, clearly outlined to them and the staff. The principal from school B, on the other hand, maintains all the controls in that even though the HODs manage their team with regards to daily administrative duties and curriculum

compliance, they and the deputy report to him and can intervene at any level if and when desired (the principal).

Fullan and Hargreaves (2000) postulate that once structures and procedures that are democratic are accepted by all concerned, the culture of individualism which might cause anarchy and erode good work ethic would be eliminated. Drawing on Hoy and Miskel (1991), they declare that to be effective means the organisation should be doing the right things (Fidler, 1997).

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This study endeavoured to explore the role of successful principals in two primary schools in Kliptown/Eldorado Park, Johannesburg. The objectives of this aim were:

- To identify the practices that lead to principals success in disadvantaged schools
- To identify the leadership qualities they display when dealing with challenges that frame their environment
- To identify how the principals secure positive teacher and learner performance

7.2 Summary

7.2.1 Global View of the Research Report

Chapter 1 of the research study stated the problem and introduced the reader to the aim, research objectives and research questions. The rationale for the study and outline of the national and local context within which the study is located, were also dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 2 gave an extensive overview of the literature relevant to this study and to answer the primary research question: “What are the discerning practices of successful principals?” The reviewed literature served to develop the theoretical framework of core practices that guided the researcher.

Chapter 3 provided a detailed report regarding the goal and objectives, the research design, population and sampling, and the ethical principles that were applied in the study. A detailed account of data collection and analysis processes and the steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the information obtained, was also provided.

Chapters 4 and 5 presented the findings in School A and B. The results of the study were released, analysed, interpreted and discussed.

Chapter 6 presented a cross-case analysis, which is linked to the research question, findings and the literature, underpinned by the theoretical framework. In addition, the chapter identified patterns and trends in the findings which were converted into the themes.

7.2.2 Summary of the Salient Findings

This section of the research report presents the findings of the study in relation to the study objectives. Conclusions will be drawn in relation to the study objectives,

subsequently demonstrating the achievement thereof. This chapter will also describe possible limitations to the study.

Empirical evidence of effective schools reveals that successful school leaders create shared and common goals, and direct, align and influence members to attain those goals. They acknowledge, involve and support staff in creating structures that support the core function (Leithwood and Riehl, 2006). According to Harris (2009), leadership in schools is not the exclusive duty of the principal, but a shared task of all stakeholders. Researh indicates that learners in disadvantaged communities can perform regardless of their contextual terrain. Bush et al. (2011), exhort that turning low performance schools around requires a well prepared and skilled principal and excellent leadership. School leadership influence teaching and learning indirectly, and is central in leveraging positive student outcomes and ensusring a committed and productive workforce (Sammons, Hillman, Mortimore, 1995; Coleman, 2003; Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo, 2008).

Hallinger and Heck (1998:167) state that learner outcomes are affected by the leader through other people, i.e. the educators, and that leaders' influence will be evident through organisational culture, school structures and people. This notion is supported by Bush (2009), Hayes et al. (2003) and Taylor (2008).

a) Summary Findings of both Research Sites.

The findings from the two case study schools revealed that both principals exhibited features of the four core practices proposed by Leithwood and Riehl (2003; 2006). Analysed data from the two case schools suggest that both principals displayed strong characteristics of both transformational and participative leadership. Both principals

adopt a collegial approach to the management of teaching and learning, but maintain tight reins on the formation of structures such as monitoring, evaluation and accounting of teaching and learning. They consider it their primary function to ensure that erected managerial structures should support teaching and learning.

The two principals' leadership approaches are a direct result of their environment and needs that derived from it. They both adopt different leadership styles and will be autocratic when situations call for it and depending on desired outcomes, neither being willing to compromise on essentials or departmental requirements. This ties in with empirical evidence that leaders adapt their strategy to their schools' needs, outcomes desired, development and the environment (Jacobson et al., 2005; Huber, 2004)

Although the two principals are at different stages of their careers, as shown in chapters 4 and 5, their managerial strategies are directed toward realising the school core business, which is quality teaching and learning. Evidence suggests that:

- Leadership is dispersed throughout the schools; both principals make extensive use of their SMT, SGB and parents; structures supporting the vision are implemented democratically to ensure all are on board and active participants; accounting session on attained curriculum are regular and feedback constructive.
- Both were serious about disciplined behaviour, dress code, minimising absenteeism of both educators and learners, regular class visits from HODs and themselves, democratic implementation of structures and procedures to support an aesthetic teaching environment. This supported the construction of teamwork and creation of a collaborative culture amongst educators to improve practices and development.

- They recruit and appoint qualified educators, develop and support new educators, and ensure that mentors transfer knowledge and skill to mentees.

Both principals strive to align, direct and influence their staff toward achieving their common goal of teaching and learning. Their environment requires impeccable work ethic and that they lead by example in order to earn the respect and trust of teachers and learners so as to achieve desired outcomes. Creating a caring and nurturing environment for learners and educators is, setting high performance benchmarks and holding educators, parents and learners accountable for teaching and learning are important to both. They aim to develop their schools and support neighbouring schools through good practice, pride and sense of ownership.

Evidence from School A further suggests that this principal is open to criticism and allows her staff to challenge her and voice their opinions. This is a testament to her emotional intelligence and leadership qualities.

7.3 Conclusions

The principals' participatory practices seem to be the reason the two schools are successful in their endeavour to provide quality teaching and learning. These practices also create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect that encourages open communication and offers participation in decision making.

In responding to the questions of the research objectives the following are concluded:

Practices that lead to principal's success in disadvantaged schools

In both school A and B I have observed the following practices

- strong culture of discipline
- clearly outlined and defined duties
- clearly outlined and defined structures, procedures and recourse
- a strong support of staff in a collegial manner
- pro-active staff development

Leadership qualities displayed when dealing with challenges that frame their environment

- clear display of influence by the respective principals
- the demonstration of respect and trust towards all members
- constantly leading by example and showing commitment to the vision and policy
- a clear and well communicated vision and goals.

Secure positive teacher and learner performance

- establishing a culture of accountability and peer interdependence

7.4 Recommendations

- Based on the findings, one need to note that very little support is directed at the ongoing development of principals and their circumstances. The geographic

locations of the schools reflect the segregation of demarcated living areas of the different races. With the implication that these principals have been confined and expose to mainly the culture of the people who resides in these areas. Focus should be given to the training and ongoing development of these principals in cultural diversity as they now deals with employees from different cultural backgrounds with which they had limited professional interaction.

- Diversity in the main should also be a key focus area as research findings indicate that female leadership representation is limited at schools. The findings further revealed that gender discrimination against females are prevalent at the school, who find that they are more susceptible to criticism.
- As per the findings although these schools perform above the norm compare to schools of similar background they still experience big limitations with regards to resources compare to schools which are situated in more affluent areas**.**
- Based on the findings government should focus on innovative ways which creates a more permanent solution to the provision of resources instead of government current short term funding.

7.5 Limitations of The Study

The following limitations of the study are noted.

• This researched sampled two schools from the same area which are managed by the same education district. This being said, it is not the author's opinion that the same conclusion would be reached with a different sampling.

• Literature regarding the role of females at managerial level is limited within the field of education. Even though women are prominent in the field of education, leadership positions are preserved for males. This could be to those deeply entrenched

conceived notions upheld by the majority male selectors. These stereotypes are impacting and clouding their judgment ultimately crippling women's career advancement (Coleman, 2001).

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letters To The Schools

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

05 July 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Rozanne October. I am a student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting research on successful school leadership practices in disadvantaged township schools.

My research will involve interviewing the following key participants: Principals, Deputy Principals, two (2) Heads of Departments and three (3) Educators for one hour maximum. The interviews would only focus on the leadership they experience in their school and take place after contact time.

The current school has been identified by the school district as one that has been producing results and where leadership has proven to have a positive effect on learners, educators and the community in general.

I hereby request your assistance to facilitate the setting up of a meeting at which I wish to do a proposal on the topic of my research study to your management and staff after which I will meet individually with participants who wish to partake in the study.

Names and identities of participants and said school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing. Participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw at any time if they so wish. All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Your assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated and I look forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely

Rozanne October

03 Melrose Close

Midrand

0096

Rozanneoctober24@gmail.com

Appendix 2: Information Sheet Deputy Principal

05 July 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Rozanne October. I am a student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting research on successful school leadership practices in disadvantaged township schools.

My research will involve interviewing the following key participants: Principals, Deputy Principals and members of the School Management Team and three (3) Educators for one hour maximum. The interviews will only focus on the leadership they experience in their school and take place after contact time.

The current school has been identified by the school district as one that has been producing results and where leadership has proven to have a positive effect on learners, educators and the community in general.

I hereby request your assistance to facilitate the setting up of a meeting at which I wish to do a proposal on the topic of my research study to your management and staff after which I will meet individually with participants who wish to partake in the study.

Names and identities of participants and said school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing. Participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw at any time if they so wish to. All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Your assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated and I look forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely

Rozanne October

03 Melrose Close

Midrand

0096

Rozanneoctober24@gmail.com

Appendix 3: Information Sheet Teachers

05 July 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Rozanne October. I am a student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting research on successful school leadership practices in disadvantaged township schools.

My research will involve interviewing the following key participants: Principals, Deputy Principals and members of the School Management Team and three (3) Educators for one hour maximum. The interviews will only focus on the leadership they experience in their school and take place after contact time.

The current school has been identified by the school district as one that has been producing results and where leadership has proven to have a positive effect on learners, educators and the community in general

I hereby request your assistance to facilitate the setting up of a meeting at which I wish to do a proposal on the topic of my research study to your management and staff after which I will meet individually with participants who wish to partake in the study.

Names and identities of participants and said school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing. Participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw at any time if they so wish to. All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Your assistance in this matter will greatly appreciated and I look forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely

Rozanne October

03 Melrose Close

Midrand

0096

Rozanneoctober24@gmail.com

Appendix 4: Principal's Consent Form

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

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Permission to be audiotaped

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

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

Permission for interview

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

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

I know that Rozanne October will keep my information confidential

and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
YES/NO

I know that I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time. YES/NO

I know that I can ask not to be audiotaped. YES/NO

I know that all the data collected during this study will be kept in a secure place will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of this project.
YES/NO

Sign_____ Date_____

Appendix 5: Deputy Principal/HOD Consent Form

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

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Permission to be audiotaped

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

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

Permission for interview

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

I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the

questions asked. YES/NO

I know that Rozanne October will keep my information confidential

and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
YES/NO

I know that I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time. **YES/NO**

I know that I can ask not to be audiotaped. **YES/NO**

I know that all the data collected during this study will be kept in a secure place will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of this project.

YES/NO

Sign_____ Date_____

Appendix 6: Teacher's Consent Form

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

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Permission to be audiotaped

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

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

Permission for interview

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

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

I know that Rozanne October will keep my information confidential

and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
YES/NO

I know that I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time. YES/NO

I know that I can ask not to be audiotaped. YES/NO

I know that all the data collected during this study will be kept in a secure place will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of this project.
YES/NO

Sign_____ Date_____

RESEARCH TOOLS

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR THE PRINCIPAL (Semi-structured interview)

PLEASE TICK AS APPROPRIATE

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF PRINCIPAL

A. Gender:

MALE	FEMALE

B. Age group

25-34	35-49	50-64

C. Years of service as a teacher

D. Years of service as a principal of present school

E. Number of principalship

F. Level of study

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE SCHOOL

G. School quintile

H. Student enrolment

Male	Female

I. Age range of students

Appendix 7: Provisional Interview Questions (Pricincipal)

Describe the practices lead to your success?

Key performance areas definite of your role?

How are decisions made in the school?

How is professional growth ensured in the school?

What are the descriptors of the schools success? Other than the Annual National Assessment (ANA).

Describe the leadership style adopted to compliment the context of your environment?

Time management

What evidence are there of sustained success in the school?

How do you ensure and contribute to the positive work morale of the staff?

How do you go about to ensure a low-staff turn-over and the appointment of qualified educators?

SECTION 2

How do you deal with the adversity synonymous with the township that shapes the context of the school environment?

How the principal relates with stakeholders and the community

What structures are in place to incorporate the community and gain their respect

What measures are in place to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place?

What structures are in place to ensure tight teaching time-tabling is adhered to?

SECTION 3

How, given the constant change of the education realm, do you stay informed and manage the school to ensure quality teaching and learning

Personal attributes that are critical for success

About the role played by leadership towards success

Whether a school would achieve in spite of leadership

How do you view support from district?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPAL/Heads of Department (Semi-structured interviews)

Biographical Data on Deputy Principal

Gender

Male Female

Age group

25-34 35-49 50-64

Years of experience as a teacher

Years of services as the Deputy principal

Level of education

Certificate Diploma Degree Post degree

SECTION A

Questions about leadership and management in the school:

How does the principal lead and mange the school?

Critical experience that is key to leadership?

role as Deputy Principal of the school?

How is learning and teaching managed?

monitoring and evaluation systems are in place to ensure effective delivery of the core?

SECTION B

Questions about how the school negotiates identity with the community:

School relation to the stakeholders and the community

School involvement and communication with parents on school matters

Professional development of school governing body

Does the school have a school governing body?

What would the school do differently?

SECTION C

Questions about the existing leadership practices in the township

schools:

What are the leadership practices that are commonly found in township schools?

What are the challenges faced by principals in township schools?

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA ON FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Gender

Male Female

Age group

25-34 35-49 50-64

Years of service as teachers

Level of study

Certificate Diploma Degree Post degree

SECTION A

Questions about leadership and management in the school:

How does the principal lead and manage the school?

Do they agree with the statement that says excellent leadership is crucial in high poverty schools?

What are the descriptors of the schools success?

Does the principal have specific leadership styles?

Could the school achieve without leadership?

How would the school uphold success in the absence of the current principal?

The personal qualities of the principal observed.

Who gets the credit for school performance?

The special characteristics of the principal that are seen?

How teaching and learning is managed.

How decisions are made.

How relationships are in the school.

How parents and community are involved.

Wits School of Education

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Student Number:

516115

Protocol Number:

2013ECE137M

Date: 5 August 2013

Dear Rosanne October

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:

An Exploration of Successful school leadership practices in disadvantaged township schools: A case study of two Kliptown/Eldorado Park primary Schools

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



Matsie Mabeta
Wits School of Education

011 717 3416

CC Supervisor:

Dr. Z. Mbokazi