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EXPLORING ETHICAL LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES OF DISTRICT OFFICIALS: A CASE STUDY OF ONE EDUCATION DISTRICT IN KWAZULU-NATAL

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2021

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

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BY

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A thesis submitted in the fulfilment of the academic requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Supervisor: Dr S.E. Mthiyane

Date of submission: July 2021

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Bongani Johannes Dlungwane, declare that this research report: **"Exploring ethical 8leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal"** is my own original work and that:

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STATEMENT BY THE SUPERVISOR

I, Dr S.E. Mthiyane,

As the candidate's Supervisor agree/do not agree to the submission of this thesis.

_____ _____

Supervisor's signature Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my deepest and sincere gratitude to the following contributors to the successful production of this thesis:

It would have not been possible for me to have come this far and produce this piece of work without God's love and mercy for He has guided me through all the storms to this end.

Dr S. E. Mthiyane, my supervisor; brother, motivator; your invaluable wisdom and support, warmth, compassion and dedication that you demonstrated throughout this journey. At times where I showed signs of faltering you did not give up on me. Instead, you kept on imbuing me with your never fading enthusiasm, strength and energetic spirit to propel me forward. Thank you Dr. you truly reflect ethical/servanthood and *Ubuntu* principles in your supervision and leadership. You are a real role model, and the best leader.

The University of the Witwatersrand for affording me this treasure trove opportunity to pursue my PhD study. Wits administration staff, Ms Matsie Mabeta and Ayanda Zwane for their priceless support in times of need.

The Provincial Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal, for allowing me access to their District Office to conduct this research.

To all the district officials who embraced me with warm hands when I invited them to be my study participants and make it possible to obtain the data used in this study. For obvious ethical reasons, I cannot mention the district office but their officials in the researched district office contributions are profoundly appreciated.

DEDICATION

This thesis is especially dedicated to:

My late parents, Mr Mbalekelwa Phillemon and Thandekile Agnes, who were truly a blessing to me. Thank you for raising me, and for teaching me to understand that only the sky is the limit.

My beautiful wife, Nontokozo this is your achievement as well, your unwavering support through thick and thin has yielded this success. Thank you so much.

My wonderful and beloved children, Sinothando, Thandolwenkosi, and Sithandiwe, I highly appreciate your support and understanding as, at times, I had to come home very late while you had already retired to your beds. I hope this research will teach and convince you that nothing is impossible if you willingly demonstrate commitment and dedication and also strive for excellence in the educational realm. “It always seems impossible until it is done” (Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, former President of South Africa).

“An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge” (Proverbs 18: 15).

“For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money, and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it” (Ecclesiastes 7: 12).

God bless my family and South Africa.

ABSTRACT

This qualitative, interpretivist case study sought to explore the conceptualisations and enactments of ethical leadership by officials based in one education district office in KwaZulu-Natal. The study was underpinned by two analytical frameworks: Shapiro and Stefkovich's Multiple Ethical Paradigm and Khoza's Attuned Leadership: African Humanism. Purposive sampling was used to identify the research participants, while semi-structured interviews, documents reviews and questionnaires were employed to generate data which was analysed thematically. The findings seem to suggest that the researched district officials had a profound conceptualisation of ethics (propriety, compassion, care, empathy, honesty and trustworthiness, role modelling; collaboration and teamwork), however, there appeared to be a disjuncture between the conceptualisation and enactment of ethical leadership. The findings also indicate that most district officials were selfish and did not care about their core duties which constitutes the basic values of ethical leadership. Some were running the different sections of the District Office as a private property and spent most of the time absent from work; hired their own companies to work in schools by colluding with unscrupulous school principals and circuit managers; received bribes; they sometimes exchanged teaching and management posts for sexual favours and money and engaged in general nepotism. The findings also showed that there were networks of unethical practices linking the schools, circuit offices which escalated to the district office. Based on the study findings, this research report recommends that there should be an overhaul of the recruitment process in the Department of Education. When recruiting the district officials, in addition to the interview process, there should also be easement tools to assess the character and the integrity of the potential official. The frequency of unethical practices suggests a deep moral decay in society,therefore, it is recommended that ethics education should be made compulsory, not only in Higher Education teacher training institutions but also through in- service staff development programmes. Furthermore, the South African Council for Educators (SACE) should be de-politicised, be decentralised and, made more visible to play the developmental role which it was created to in the first place. While this study acknowledges that the district officials work in a highly unionized and politicised environment, they should recognise their agency as transformational and morally upright people that they have a responsibility to promote professional ethics and minimise unethical practices both in the District Office and the schools under their care.

Keywords: Attuned leadership, ethical leadership, school district, *Ubuntu* leadership.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Research Office

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CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H20/02/12**
PROJECT TITLE	Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr B Dlungwane
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Education/
DATE CONSIDERED	14 February 2020
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Risk Level: Low
EXPIRY DATE	25 May 2023
DATE 26 May 2020	**CHAIRPERSON** (Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr S Mthiyane

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

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I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

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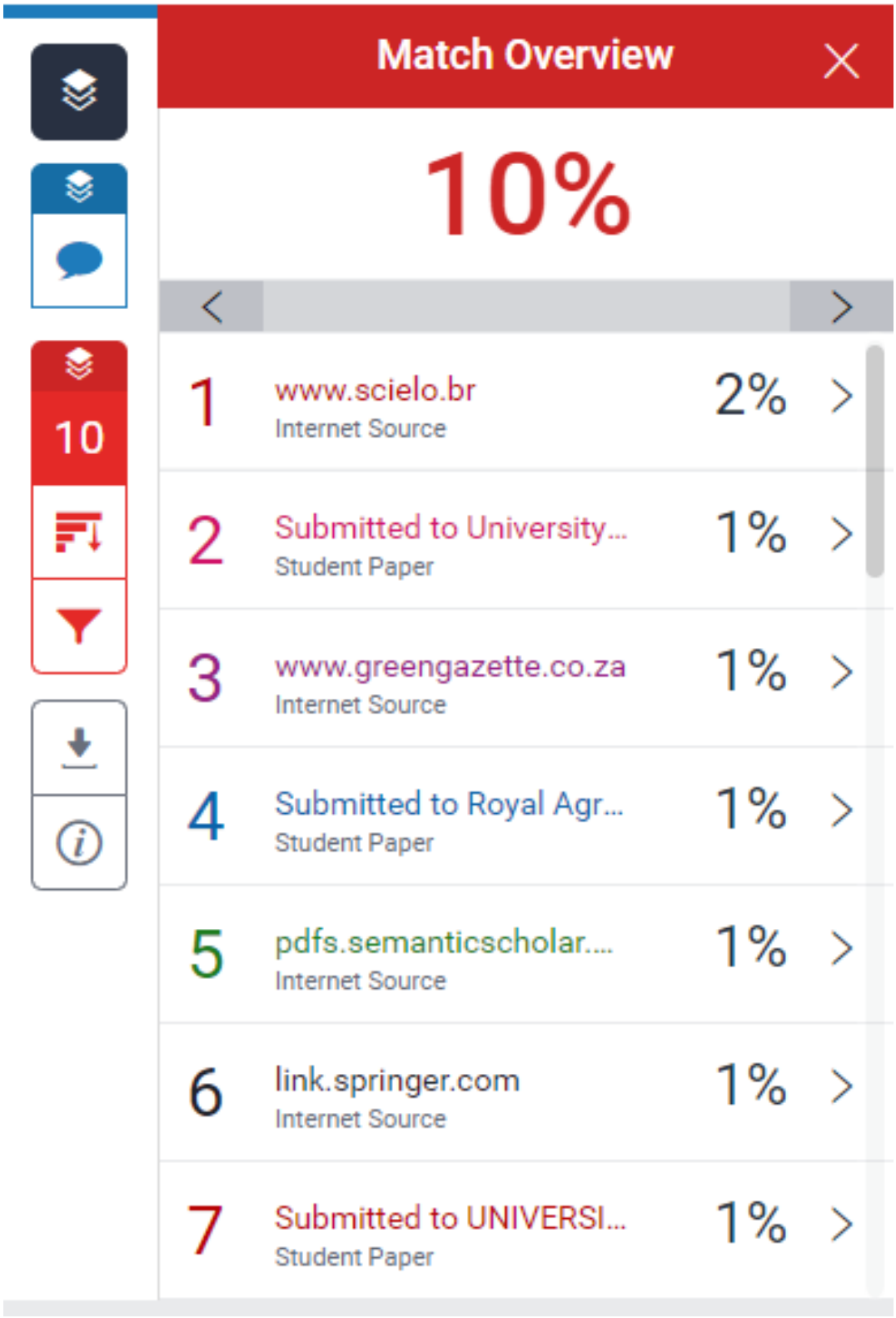

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY

MEC	Member of the Executive Council
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
LTSM	Learner and Teacher Support Material
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SGB	School Governing Body
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
TLS	Teaching and Learning Services
CMC	Circuit Management Centre
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background

The general public everywhere in the world bases its perceptions of the government on the nature and quality of the services it experiences at the hands of public servants (Department of Education, 1997). The "face" of government is the face and voice of the frontline service providers. This is all that people experience and if the service is poor or unfriendly, then the government is immediately constituted as inefficient and bureaucratic (Department of Education, 1997). If the service is bad, the government is bad and if the service is good, government is good-it is simple as that. This is true the world over and it is no different in South Africa (Department of Education, 1997). Furthermore, there has been expressions of concern for the declining ethical leadership standards in the Department of Basic Education in South Africa (Corruption Watch Report, 2014). This report reveals that some public offices like education district offices are becoming fertile grounds for corruption and fingers district officials as the number one culprits (Corruption Watch Report, 2014). Thus, it is no surprise that scholarly research concerning ethical leadership is on the rise (Avey, Palanski & Walumbwa, 2010). The challenge of of ethical leadership has become a pervasive issue for leaders and academics in a variety of fields (Avey, Palanski & Walumbwa, 2010). Drawing from Avey, Palanski and Walumbwa (2010), there is a great need for a research study of this type to be carried out.

1.2 Problem statement

An alarming number of cases of unethical conduct within the South African Education Department have recently been exposed through the internet, social networks and the media (Corruption Watch, 2017). This research is then contextualised against the backdrop of various

reports and allegations of malpractices and unethical behaviour such as misappropriation of school funds, fraud, pilfering of cash, theft and improper control of financial records in both schools and the provincial education departments published in the electronic and print media (Mestry, 2004; Corruption Watch, 2013; Roane, 2013). In 2011 and 2013 non-governmental organisations such as Corruption Watch and Transparency International published incriminatory reports of corruption in the various provincial education departments in South Africa. Another form of unethical behaviour which seems to be on the increase is that of individuals claiming fraudulent qualifications. This has become so serious that the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) has been asked to scrutinise and verify all qualifications in government departments (South African Government News Agency, 2015).

Likewise, other reports listed embezzlement of school funds as the most common illegal practice among the school principals and departmental officials. This and other reports further listed corruption cases in schools and government offices which included fourteen office-based officials and six school principals expelled because they were benefitting from the school nutrition funds which was intended for poor learners. According to the Transparency International Report (2011), in 2009 the former Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan reported the School Nutrition Programme was plagued by corruption and maladministration where it was estimated the government was paying approximately R26-00 for a loaf of bread, more than twice the average value. The report by former Minister Gordhan also stated that "…these are leakages in the system that have become a part of our lives and I believe it is imperative that we collectively take action to put a stop to it" (Mapping Transparency, Accountability and Integrity in Primary Education in South Africa Report, p.41, 2011). Other forms of unethical conducts listed include abuse of the sick leave system by teachers and non-teaching personnel (this is also confirmed by the Human Sciences Research Council Report in 2010); teachers coming to school drunk; teachers holding teacher union meetings during teaching time while

learners played outside; contracts given out to family or friends or school governing body members and some teachers charging learners R350-00 or asking them for sexual favours (also called Sexually Transmitted Marks by some) to give the good grades for university entry (Human Rights Watch), 2001; Monama, 2008; Corruption Watch, 2013). Shockingly, in April 2014, the City Press newspaper reported that members and officials of a well -known teacher union were selling posts in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and North West provinces. Subsequently, in KwaZulu-Natal, a school principal who was also alleged to be a former teacher union official in the KwaZulu -Natal Department of Education and two school principals who were arrested for the alleged crime of selling of teaching and managemnet posts (Harper & Masondo, 2014).

The gravity of the allegations of selling of teaching and management posts in the Department of Basic Education even prompted the Minister (Mrs Motshekga), to institute a high ranking investigation led by Prof John Volmink to probe this matter. The Interim Report of the Volmink Investigation was made public on 17 December 2015 by Minister Motshekga. The Report confirmed that:

1. That there was corruption and undue influence in the appointment of teachers and school principals.
2. That there were weaknesses in the system.
3. That the authority of the state and power of certain stakeholders in the appointment process would need to be reviewed.

(Press Statement by Minister Motshekga 17 Dec.2015)

The Final Report of the Volmink Investigation was released in March 2016 despite many threats from SADTU. Interestingly, more than five years later, the Report is gathering dust in the Minister's office and it remains to be seen how she will implement its recommendations. Meanwhile, teachers continue to die as a result of unethical appointment practices and disputes

over teaching and management posts, especially in KwaZulu-Natal. The recent deaths were those of school principals in KwaMashu and Umbumbulu in Durban, who were gunned down on the school premises (The Mercury, 20 July 2020; Isolezwe, 22 April 2021). In addition, on the eve of the publication of the 2014 National Senior Certificate (NSC) results, the electronic and print media was bombarded with the news that 58 examination centres in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape were involved in group copying in the NSC examination and teachers who might have colluded with the cheating would face drastic measures by uMalusi, the national quality assuring body for the schooling sector (Mlambo & SAPA, 2014). In contrast, in order to promote ethical culture specifically and human rights in education in general, the Department of Education (2002) published a document called the *Manifesto on Values, Human Rights and Democracy*. This document propagates 16 educational strategies to promote values and ethical behaviour in education.

Three of these strategies which are relevant to this research are: role modelling, ethics and accountability. The events published in the above named reports suggest that public offices are plagued by serious ethical challenges. Given the prominent ethical scandals in almost every type of organisation, be it private or public, and especially in the Education Department and schools, the importance of empirical research on ethics in educational institutions seems obvious. This study is thus significant and will contribute to debates and knowledge in South Africa about ethical behaviour in education considering that empirical research on ethical leadership is still in its infancy (Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005; 2005; Meyer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes & Salvador, 2009).

In the light of the above reports of unethical and sometimes criminal behaviour in the schools, district offices and the Provincial Departments of Education, it is obvious that there are serious ethical lapses in the education system. The ethical procedures as prescribed in various pieces of legislation and policies are not being realised. Hence the purpose of this study is to explore

the conceptions, experiences and enactment of ethical leadership in the researched education district from the perspectives of the District Director, Circuit Managers, Examinations and Assessment Sub-directorate, Governance and Management Sub-directorate, Nutrition Sub-directorate and Subject Advisors.

1.3 Purpose and rationale for the study

The motivating factor to assume this research was inspired by my experience as an educator for 18 years and a District Official for 19 years, I have taught during the apartheid era. In my own experiences as an educator and District Official I have witnessed an increase in the corrupt and unethical behaviour of some departmental officials. As an official of the Department of Education, I have been appointed several times to conduct investigations at schools where there has been theft and misappropriation of school finances as well as jobs that have been given to unqualified individuals who have influence over senior officials of the Department of Education. In some instances, school teachers were involved in intimate relationships with learners at school and in some cases they were convicted for such conduct. In other cases the teachers would be protected by the same officials in the district office for reasons best known to them. In yet another school, the principal and matron of the school hostelwere engaged in a wide range of unethical behaviours. These included embezzling funds from the school's hostel finances, stealing and selling of food and cleaning material belonging to the school hostel and the illegal renting out of rooms and hiring of hostel facilities. The remuneration of these activities was diverted to their personal finances.

The said unethical behaviour was reported to the Department of Education, but without consequences. Even the said allegations were reported to District Director, However these individuals involved made it extremely difficult to prove. It is the indication that the unethical conduct practised at schools, is the direct result of poor ethical leadership from District Office.

The experiences of unethical conduct that I have witnessed as an educator and District Official are not isolated.

In communicating with other colleagues in the district office, it appears that this conduct is widespread and on the increase. Similarly, the text book scandal of 2013 in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo encapsulates the extent of corruption and other unethical practices within the Department of Education (eTV news, 2013). Non-delivery of textbooks to schools in Limpopo, a province placed under national administration in December 2011, provoked a storm of anger and outrage between May and July in 2012. Litigation by Section 27, a Non-Government Organisation (NGO), for delivery of textbooks precipitated a textbook crisis of unprecedented proportions: Judge Jody Kollapen ordered that textbooks be in schools by 15th June 2012 but a report prepared for the Department and Section 27 found that as at June 2012 all textbooks were not yet in schools. Between June and July, there were a number of revelations linking what became known as 'the textbook debacle' with corruption. Into the open were brought a report by a dismissed administrator full of details about fraud, corruption, mismanagement and maladministration in the province, an early whistle-blower left in the doldrums; and a shadowy textbook distributor with close ties to the ruling party was fighting the cancellation of a contract through the courts. Subsequent to this maladministration and poor service delivery, both national and provincial departments were placed under severe pressure, with calls for the national Minister of Basic Education to resign. SA Breaking News (2015) further reported on another unethical scandal involving the selling of posts by senior members of certain teacher unions and officials of the Department of Education (Matroos, 2014).

The rise in incidents of unethical conduct within the Department of Education has become more apparent by another report by SA Breaking News in which 2089 learners in the Eastern Cape and 778 in KwaZulu-Natal were implicated in a mass cheating scandal during the 2014 Grade 12 examinations (Ispas, 2015). In addition to the report by Corruption Watch, the

corruption perceptions index of 2013 by Transparency International (TI) has ranked South Africa the 72 most corrupt country out of 177 countries globally. The 2013 Afro Barometer Report shows that 66% of South African citizens believe the government is not addressing the issue of corruption in an effective manner. A report (2014) by Institute of Security Studies indicates that in 2011 it was reported in parliament that between R20-30 billion was lost from the government procurement budget each year due to public officials stealing funds which were allocated for service delivery. The South African public is aware of the fact that politicians and public officials are diverting money from service delivery (Corruption Watch, 2013). Mestry (2006) claims that many schools experience mismanagement and misappropriation of funds as well. Given the above unethical behaviours, this study seeks to solicit the conceptualisations, experiences and practices of departmental officials about ethical leadership and how this leadership approach could be used to curb unethical conduct from the district office under study.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study hinges on the premise laid by Hargreaves and Harris (2015), who argue that more needs to be known about leadership. Naturally, at its core, leadership is related to influence and power. Barring an organisational setting, a leader has by hierarchical status the legitimate right and obligation to exhibit a certain amount of decisive authority towards his subordinates (Ciulla, 2004). She/he allocates scarce resources, distributes working tasks, rewards, and disciplines.

In order to understand leadership comprehensively, one has to acknowledge that the exhibition of leadership always bears risk of potential misuse of those authoritative privileges. Academic literature delivers several examples of those ‘dark or toxic sides’ of leadership (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser, 2007; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). While I agree with the scholars such as Hargreaves

and Harris (2015) that much is known about leadership, I argue that there is very little known about leadership; I also argue that there is very little known about ethical leadership especially in schools and in district offices (Winston, 2007; Neill & Bourke, 2010; Cuellar & Giles, 2011). Emerging from the literature on ethics and leadership, it is evident that little has been researched on ethical leadership specifically in district offices; most of the studies seem to have been conducted in the business sector (Treviño, Weaver & Reynolds, 2006; Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008; den Nieuwenboer & Kish-Gephart, 2014). Therefore, this study is important because it is hoped it will contribute to new knowledge about ethical leadership in education especially from a district office perspective.

Further, there has been an increased amount of research into unethical conduct, ethical development and ethical leadership (Brown, *et al.*, 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Salawu, 2012; Naidoo, 2012).

Salawu (2012) was instrumental in demonstrating how the said paradigm of ethical development could be used to restore good morals and ethics and reduce unethical behaviour. His research is relevant because ethical development in this study is considered to be crucial in transforming education in South Africa. The construct of ethical leadership in terms of social learning developed by Brown, et al. (2005) provides a definition of ethical leadership which is widely accepted by researchers (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Eisenbeiss, 2012; Eisenbeiss & Giessner, 2012; Lawton & Petz, 2013). Subsequently there have been many studies into the antecedents and outcomes of ethical leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Eisenbeiss, 2012; Eisenbeiss & Giessner, 2012; Lawton & Paez 2013).

This research will be useful in the recognition of the practice of ethical leadership at the different research sites participating in the study. Shapira-Lischinsky (2011) and Bullough (2012) have also researched ethical and moral dilemmas which are unique to teaching and

teacher education. This has revealed more information about how teachers handle ethical issues on a daily basis. Naidoo (2012) has investigated different forms of unethical conduct within the public sector in South Africa together with the legislation addressing unethical conduct and the need for ethical leadership to curb it. Although South Africa has implemented strategies and policies to reduce unethical behaviour, they have proved to be mostly unsuccessful because of weak governmental structures to monitor implementation, gaps in legislation which do not sufficiently address all forms of unethical conduct and senior government leaders who are exceedingly corrupt (Naidoo, 2012). Given the above state of professional ethics in South African schools, the importance of empirical research on ethical leadership in Department of Education seemed obvious. This study is thus significant and will no doubt contribute to debates and knowledge about ethical leadership practices in South African schools in the context of transformation (Mthiyane, 2018). Manyaka and Sabola (2013) have expanded on research by probing ethical training in South Africa.

All of the above research has facilitated the progress of the present research does not seem to sufficiently probe what unethical conduct occurs within district office specifically and how leadership is experienced and practised in schools by the officials of the Department, especially at a district level. Given the magnitude of these challenges, a study of this nature is a necessity. Consequently, I argue that ethical leadership decadence in public entities is a problem that needs to be addressed urgently.

Reviewing aunthetic literature on ethical leadership, existing work raises two main areas of differences to ethical leadership. First, the literature stresses the importance of a leader actively influencing followers' behaviour by applying so-called transactional patterns.

On the contrary, authentic leadership does not imply such an influential element. Second, authentic leadership focuses even more on leader characteristics and capabilities. Most

importantly, authentic leadership emphasises the significance of authenticity and self-awareness which are somewhat less related to ethical leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006). On the other hand, Dane and Sonenshein (2014) unpack the nature and the consequences of ethical expertise, which they define ethical expertise as the degree to which one is knowledgeable about and skilled at applying moral values within a given work context. It is significant that Dane and Sonesnshein (2014, p. 3) propose that ethical expertise enables individuals to overcome a range of challenges associated with ethical decision-making. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) argue that the four perspectives of paradigm (ethics of justice, critique, care and profession) should help district officials solve real-life, complex dilemmas that they frequently face in their schools and in their communities. By using different paradigms, district officials should become aware of the perspectives they tend to use most often when solving ethical issues (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005).

Given the above background, problem statement, the purpose and rationale, this study is significant and it will contribute to new knowledge by adding contributing perspectives from the District Director, Chief Education Specialist, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Circuit Managers and Subject Advisors on ethical leadership in relation to one education district in KwaZulu-Natal. Research (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006 & De Cremer, Van Dijk, & Pillutla, 2010) indicates that education district are least researched; and so, such crucial data is significant if we are to comprehend the phenomenon of ethical leadership better.

The findings of the study may be useful to the education policy makers and implementers in the various fields of education. This may be useful to authorities who appoint district officials as well as those who monitor the performance and functionality of schools.

1.5 Research objectives and critical questions

This research project was driven by the following key research objectives:

- To elicit conceptualisations, experiences and practices of research participants regarding ethical leadership behaviour in the researched district office.
- To explore opinions/perceptions of district officials about the causes of unethical conduct (if any) in the district office.
- To solicit views of research participants on how the Department of Education should minimise or eradicate unethical behaviour in the researched District.

1.6 Critical research questions to be asked

In pursuit of the above research objectives, this research project was guided by the following broad critical questions:

- What are the conceptualisations, experiences and practices of research participants regarding ethical leadership behaviour in the researched district office?
- What are the perspectives of the district office officials about the causes of unethical conduct (if any) among officials in district office?
- How should the Department of Education minimise or eradicate unethical behaviour among the district office officials?

1.7 Discussion of key concepts used in the study

In order to facilitate a common comprehension in this research study, the following broad key concepts frequently used through this thesis are discussed below. They are: leadership, ethics, ethical leadership and District Office.

1.7.1 Leadership

The popular Chinese philosopher, Lao-tzu, states that leadership means to "lead people and walk behind them". The leaders willingly follow tells us what they will do and then they do what they said they will do. Ethical leaders need to be trustworthy and reliable (Schoeman,2012). They need to walk the talk and talk the walk. In essence ethical leaders should prioritise the interest of their organisations by always promoting fair practices and also demonstrate through their actions. He further asserts that good leadership role models do not fall into the 'telling but not doing' trap and they address the ethics 'knowing-doing' gap. Leaders who delegate tasks only provide the guidelines as to how the task must be performed; they frequently check how far the task is done and motivate the followers (Van Deventer, 2003). In this process (Bush, 2003), shares professional values lead to the development of trust and willingness to give and receive criticism, in order to enhance practice.

In addition, the leaders need to shift from the notion of concern for goals and roles to the task of building purposes into leadership structure and embodying these purposes in everything that leaders do, with the effect of transforming the organisational members from neutral to committed followers. The moment followers are treated as significant stakeholders in the development of the organisation, they begin to willingly serve the organisation. Van Deventer (2003) argues that leadership can occur at any level and in response to myriad situations, and is not necessarily tied to the post level, position, or organisational role. He draws on the concept of *Ubuntu,* which states that a person's humanity is expressed through people.

A leader should stick to the core values of *Ubuntu,* which are morality, interdependence, human dignity and lastly human potential (Van Deventer, 2003). I a nutshell, picking the last core value, leaders have a responsibility to enhance the leadership skills of the followers by delegating tasks to them that would empower them; however, they need to show that they trust and believe in the capabilities of the one delegated to perform the task. Bush (2003) speaks of

dispersed and distributed leadership, where the followers are having a voice in decision making. The significance of follower involvement in decision making increases the commitment.

Most importantly, Caroselli (2000) maintains that when leaders follow through, they monitor the work they have empowered others to do. Schuitema (1998) defines a leader as a person who bases his/her behaviour on values that have a direct impact on people. Moreover, a leader is identified by Schuitema (1998) as possessing the following traits: honesty, a leader is at all-time committed to the truth; nurturing, a leader cares for the followers; respect, granting importance to others and not claiming importance for the self and co-operation, the leader puts aside his or her own interest in pursuit for the goal of the collective. Justice is holding people accountable when they have deliberately overstepped the mark. Leadership is a special talent based on timeless wisdom that not all people possess. Further, it is based on one's vision, principle and integrity (Pushpa, 2012). Leadership is making happen what would have not happened anyway; it entails working at the edge of what is acceptable (Richard Pascale in Charlton, 1992). Ethical leadership is about enabling ordinary people to produce extra-ordinary things in the face of challenge and change, and to constantly turn in superior performance, to the long-term benefit of all concerned (Charlton, 1992). Hester and Kilian (2010) assert that ethical leadership is about relationships and relationships are sustained by shared moral values, therefore, it is value based.

The same is propounded by Andrew (20150, who asserts that ethics are like leadership, are about human relationships, and are about what leaders should do and what leaders should be like as humans. Leadership is a process whereby the individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Bello, 2012). The importance of leadership in organisations is promoting ethical conduct. Leaders set the tone for the organisational goals and behaviour (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Sebudubudu and Botlhomilwe (2011) define

leadership as an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situations and the perceptions and expectations of the members. Thus, leaders are the agents of change. Sebudubudu and Botlhomilwe (2011) further assert that leadership occurs when a group member modifies the motivation or the competencies of others in a group. A leader is a person representing others in all kinds of ways from dictating to them to moderately influencing them (Oliver, 2012).

1.7.2 Ethics

Bhatti (2007) states that ethics imply moral principles or philosophy of conduct, actions, decisions and dealings on the part of a person or organisation. Therefore, ethics determines the desirability of conduct, dealings and practices of the people and their organisation, on the precepts of logic and well accepted socio-moral-legal norms (Bhatti, 2007). In the same light, ethics refers to the study of moral principles or values that determine whether conduct or actions are right or wrong (Kocabas & Karakose, 2009; Warner, 2011; Tang, Bavik, Chen & Tjosvold, 2015) and should be a unique source of competitive advantage (Schoeman, 2015). It is a study of choices that people make and their outcomes, to determine whether choices are good or bad (Warner, 2011). Ethics is a philosophical word derived from Greek word "ethos" which refers to one's moral character and a way in which society expects people to behave in accordance with the accepted norms and principles (Pushpa, 2012).

Similarly, Mihelič *et al.* (2010) define ethics as the code of values and moral principles that guide individual or group behaviour with respect what is "good" or "right" as opposed to "bad" or "wrong" in a given situation. Bello (2012) asserts that ethical behaviour has to begin at the top. Human beings are moral agents; therefore, they are responsible for their choices, and they have a duty to make their own choices in a morally responsible way. However, due to the variety of virtues that people hold, there is a need for codes of ethics to shape their conduct in the organisation. Ethics is a set of principles or values which entail the common will of the

society. Moreover, it is a code of conduct that regulates the actions of individuals, groups, or the organisations in line with normative principles (Tutar, Altinoz & Cakroglu, 2011). Andrew (2015) contends that ethics has to do with what leaders do and who leaders are, and that ethics are concerned with the nature of leaders' behaviour as well as with the virtuousness of such behaviour. In any decision –making process, ethical issues are embraced either directly or indirectly. The choices that leaders make and how they respond in a given circumstance are informed by ethics.

1.7.3 Ethical leadership

Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005, p.33) define ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of appropriate conduct to the followers through two-way communication and decision-making". Further, they argue that ethical leadership entails engaging in a transparent manner with the followers. Ethical leadership is relational, in the sense that it is constructed in and through the social interactions with followers. In addition, being an ethical leader is about being a moral manger. Treviño and Brown (2005) state that ethical leadership can be viewed as those personal characteristics of a leader that entail honesty, trustworthiness and integrity. Ethical leadership is about values.

Simply put, ethical leadership is a style of leadership that is concerned with demonstrating appropriate conduct by developing meaningful relationships, modelling right behaviour, and reinforcing ethical leadership through communication and decision making (Brown and Mitchell, 2010). Bello (2012) contends that trustworthiness, honesty, care and fairness are deep driving concerns, which are not only affecting leaders but followers as well. Bello (2012) refers to ethical leadership as a necessary response to the then credit crisis, the worst global recession since the 1930s, and to different scandals in former leading corporate business organisations. Bello (2012) further illuminates his point by stating that, apart from cases of unethical practices

in developed nations, there is ample evidence also in developing countries. Most importantly, he contends that ethical behaviour embraces vital principles such as honesty, integrity, fairness, and concern for others; furthermore, he contends that ethical behaviour is a situation where the leaders engage in behaviour that benefits others and refrain from behaviour that can cause harm to others. Ethical leadership encourages ethical behaviour by consistently practising and managing ethics as well as holding every person accountable (Nyukorong, 2014).

Moreover, ethical leaders can engage in various activities to encourage and support ethical practices within an organisation (Nyukorong, 2014). Ethical leadership is generally linked with dimensions of values, vision, and virtue. In addition, ethical leaders have a responsibility to create ethical awareness; granting responsibilities to the people; adopting participatory and democratic administration and, most importantly, creating a positive organisational climate is suitable for organisational requirements as it is honest and reliable (Katranci, Sungu & Saglam, 2015). Ethical Leadership is essential in the workplace as it focuses on promoting ethical behaviour and effective interaction between leaders and followers. Ethical leadership leads to valuable outcomes and has a positive influence on organisational effectiveness by increasing top-management's effectiveness as well as followers' performance, hence leading to job satisfaction (Engelbrecht, Heine & Mahembe, 2014).

Ethical leaders have to have a moral conviction to challenge any policies that are contrary to caring and inclusive learning environment (Ezzani, 2014). Similarly, Perry and Hallet (2014) point out that leaders' character and action give dignity and worth to the followers and work to ensure that dignity and worth is communicated systematically. The latter assertions corroborate that of Hazrati, Alvani, and Zadeh (2013), who contend that the leader is a character who is doing the right things rather than doing things right, despite outside pressures. In essence, when the leader is doing things right, he or she is only doing what is expected to do when supervised, whereas, when the leader is doing right things, even if there is no one who

sees the leader, he or she continues to conform to the moral principles not because he/she is afraid of the law. Hazrati *et al.* further maintain that ethical leaders have a duty to develop trust among followers in the organisation to execute organisational goals. A leader's role is to chart, provide meaning and direction to the subordinates to influence them toward a common goal. Leadership is the ability to influence the followers by depending on moral force (Tutar, Altnoz, & Cakiroglu, 2011). Zhu, May and Avolio (2004) contend that leaders are obliged to set a moral example for their organisational members and determine organisational activities. Simply put, a leader need not to opt for short cuts and unethical means to save the organisation, thus compromising the ethical standards of the organisation.

Meanwhile, Henry (2009) posits that ethical leadership always creates an environment that cares about employees in totality so that they commit to serving the organisation to realise its goals, thus ensuring that the organisation remains a reputable one. In turn, the followers or employees proudly and willingly take care of business and processes, achieving fulfilment. Hester and Kalian (20100 also corroborate the latter assertions as they contend that the purpose of ethical leadership is to protect and promote the wellbeing of all persons. They further argue that the means for realising this goal are complex and need much reflection and consideration.

1.7.4 District Office

A district office is the management sub-unit of a Provincial Education Department (PED). It is the headquarters of its district which is responsible for the Basic Education institutions in its district. It is an area of a province which is demarcated by a Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for administrative purposes. The district is thus the first-level administrative sub-section of Provincial Education Department (PED). Depending on the context, the term "district" is used to describe either the geographic area or the administrative unit (Department of Education, 1997).

1.8 Demarcation of the study

The demarcation of the study is also called delimitations of the study (Leedy and Ormrod (2001). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), the delimitations of the study deal with the parameters of the study, i.e. the ways in which an investigation has been narrowed (reduced) in size (number of participants; number of research sites); the time involved; etc. to make it manageable. Similarly, delimitations are formed from the deliberate and conscious decisions of the researcher to specify and define the boundaries and parameters of the research (Marree & van der Westhuizen, 2009). Thus the researcher should take into account three considerations: has to limit the size; select the general location, and lastly, delineate the specific boundaries. This study was located in one peri-urban education district in KwaZulu-Natal and located within specific officials in the district office such as the District Director, Chief Education Specialists, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, Circuit Managers and Subject Advisors. These were chosen because they would probably share similar experiences of ethical leadership.

With the ontological assumption, the voices of the district officials are so significant in the triangulation purposes. These participants are chosen on the grounds that they have first-hand ontological perspective about their contexts. In purposive sampling the researcher must first think critically about the parameters of the population and then choose the sample case accordingly.

1.9 Organisation of the thesis

This study comprises of nine Chapters which are organised as follows:

Chapter One provides an introduction and the background to the study, the study focus, the problem statement, purpose and rationale for the study, significance of the study, the research

objectives and critical questions which guide the study, clarification of key concepts, delimitations of the study, the organisation of the thesis and conclusion.

Chapter Two provides the review of international, continental and national literature that underpins the phenomenon of ethical leadership by the District Office, which is the focus of this study.

Chapter Three provides the discussion of the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study.

These theoretical frameworks are Shapiro and Stefkovisch's (2005) Model of Ethical Leadership and the *Ubuntu* Leadership Theory propounded by Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership: African Humanism as Compass (Ubuntu Leadership Theory).

Chapter Four discusses the research design and the methodology chosen for the study. The research paradigm is discussed with reference to ontological assumptions, epistemological assumptions, rhetorical assumptions and methodological assumptions. The research design, research methodology and sampling are discussed. Moreover, the case study design is outlined in depth in this chapter, as well as data generation and data analysis methods, which are both interviews and document reviews. Ethical issues and issues of trustworthiness are also discussed in detail. Owing to the voluminous nature of data that was generated during the study, it was necessary to divide the section of data findings and discussion into three chapters as follows:

Chapter Five deals with data presentation and the *descriptive analysis* of the conceptualisations, practices and the experiences of the District Director and Chief Education Specialist (District Office) about ethical leadership in district office. As part of my analysis, I will make sense of the data what it suggests in relation to the phenomenon under the microscope, comparing and contrasting the findings where necessary.

Chapter Six deals with data presentation and *descriptive analysis* of the causes of unethical conduct (if any) among the Chief Education Specialist (CMC) and Circuit Managers. Further, this chapter will discuss the perspectives of participants regarding their level of preparation (while training to become teachers) or in-service courses to enable the development of ethical behaviour and leadership in the district office, provided by the Department of Education and SACE for district officials.

Chapter Seven consists of the presentation and discussion of the *descriptive analysis* of what Deputy Chief Education Specialist and Subject Advisors suggest should be done to combat unethical behaviour of some district officials by the Department of Education and the South African Council of Educators.

Chapter Eight provides *an evaluative and theoretical analysis* of the major themes emerging from the findings; summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and implications for future research, and contribution to the already existing body of knowledge. The interpretations will be compared /contrasted with relevant literature and theory.

Chapter Nine provides conclusions informed by the study (how the study answered the key research questions), the implications of the study, the recommendations as well as suggestions for future research.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the entire research project on the understandings, practices and experiences of district officials about ethical leadership in district office. The problem statement, the purpose and the rationale for the study, the key questions of the study, clarification of key concepts/terms, delimitations and organisation of the study have all been presented. The following chapter reviews the literature that underpins this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has outlined the introductory part of the study. This chapter focuses on the literature review from the international, continental and national literature that explores issues of ethical leadership.

2.2 Literature review

The literature review is discussed under the following sub-headings: understanding literature review; the role of education district office; conceptualising ethical leadership; ethics-"the heart of leadership"; challenges of ethical leadership; achieving ethical leadership; legislative landscape supporting ethical conduct in South Africa, ethical decision making in leadership, dimensions of ethical leadership, ethical leadership and followers and integrity.

2.2.1 Understanding literature review

Bless and Higson-Smith (2010) point out that the significance of reviewing literature is to sharpen and deepen the theoretical framework of research and familarise the researcher with cutting-edge development in the field of research. Moreover, the researcher gets exposed to the problem, hypothesis and results that other researchers obtained, in order not to replicate efforts but instead to widen and deepen them. Furthermore, the researchers has to locate gaps in knowledge as well as weaknesses in the previous studies conducted. This empowers the researcher to determine what has already been done and what is yet to be produced or improved. The researcher remains with the responsibility to discover and draw connection, and contradictions between various research results by comparing them to one another (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2010).

2.2.2 The role of education district office

The central aim of this study was to explore ethical leadership perspectives, the understandings, experiences and practices of ethical leadership in one education district and its implications for school leadership, management and governance. In addition, the Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996a), (Chapter 10) states that the Public Service should deliver services "…of a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained." Public offices such as district offices are not excluded in this constitutional requirement either but form the core as they are responsible for education in each district.

In terms of Section 3 (4) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996) (NEPA), the education district has a role to play in education in South Africa, and by extension their role in promoting ethical values-based leadership in schools under their care. The role includes the following: District Office is a local hub of Provincial Education and provides the vital lines of communication between the provincial head office and the education institutions in their care. Subject to provincial plan, its task is to work collaboratively with principals and educators in schools, with the vital assistance of circuit offices, to improve educational access and retention, give management and professional support, and help schools to achieve excellence in learning and teaching. Furthermore, in terms of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996), the district offices, supported by their circuit offices, have four main roles which they must execute with due priority being given to the schools most in need of their services. In each province the power to demarcate, name and organise education districts vests with the Member of Executive Council for Education, who is the executive authority responsible for the organisation of Provincial Education Department (Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994) (PSA), s, 1, 3 (7) (a)).

The MEC also determines districts' public service staff establishment in terms of the PSA (s. 3 (7) (a)) and determines the educator staff establishment in terms of the Employment of

Educators Act, 1998 (EEA) (Act 76 of 1998). (s. 5 (1)). An MEC must determine the educator establishment of a province subject to national post provisioning and remuneration are subject to continuous adjustment through collective agreements in the appropriate bargaining chamber, in terms of the relevant labour legislation (Department of Education, 1997).

2.2.3 Conceptualising ethical leadership

Leadership has been conceptualised from different perspectives based on the purpose of the study, organisational contexts and the underlying process. Most definitions of leadership involve *the influence process;* there is little else in common among the definitions of leadership (Yukl, 2013). Morality, integrity, trustworthiness, fairness, concern for others are at the heart of many of the emerging approaches including *authentic* (Luthans & Avolio, 2013), *spiritual* (Fry, 2010) and *ethical* (Brown *et al.* 2010)) leadership. Following the social learning and social exchange perspectives, most research into ethical leadership (Liu *et al.* 2013); Meyer *et al.* 2012; Schaubroeck *et al.* 2012 is based on Yukl *et al.'s* (2014) definition of ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (p. 120). In addition, from the past to present, many studies were conducted on leadership. These research studies have given rise to the emergence of various theories and approaches. One of these approaches is ethical leadership. The literature of ethical leadership is a new area of research and expressed as the undiscovered aspect of leadership (Stouten, Van Dijke & De Cremer, 2012). Several definitions of leadership have been proposed by various contemporary scholars creating a potpourri of definitions; there occur as many definitions of the word as there are authors, possibly due to the word leadership having been taken from common vocabulary and defined technically (Yukl, 2013). Early scholars of leadership defined the term from a preserve of heroic accomplishments of mainly military leaders such as Napoleon Bonaparte or Abraham Lincoln,

hence the advent of the "great-man theory" Manning & Curtis, 2015). The theory has been criticized for putting emphasis on events and for being anti-feminist. Later scholars defined leadership from whatever criticism for failing to provide a definitive list of leadership traits despite enormous number of tests having been in this area for over a century (Northouse, 2015). Leadership can be defined "as process of social influence whereby a leader steers members of a group towards a goal" (Yukl, 2013). Furthermore, Yukl *et al.* (2013) posit that the interpersonal skills and wisdom qualities described in other servant leadership models could enhance problem solving but do not necessarily result in decisions that are ethical. Yukl *et al.* (2013) summarise the most relevant principles of ethical leadership as: (a) honesty and integrity (including consistency of actions with espoused values), (b) behavior intended to communicate or enforce ethical standards, (c) fairness in decision-making and the distribution of rewards (no favoritism or use of rewards to motivate improper behaviour), and (d) behaviour that shows kindness, compassion, and concern for the needs and and feelings of others (rather than attempts to manipulate, abuse, and exploit others for personal gain) (p.40).

As Bedi, Alpaslan and Green (2015) explain, attention has been given to *defining the moral principles* or qualities that leaders ought to demonstrate and adhere to (the goals), but they also suggest a shift in research from issues of definition toward *identifying the contents and actions* of those who exercise leadership over ethics and capturing the influence that they exert. An ethical leader is a leader who combined moral and bureaucratic power in his/her personality and created values and belief system in terms of defining the truth (Sergiovanni, 2015). For Hassan, Wright and Yukl (2014), ethical leadership is made up of being an ethical role model, treating people fairly, and actively managing ethics in the organisation.

Overall, although grouped in different ways, the existing literature sorts the effects and actions of leaders in relation to ethics into two groups: those emanating from the nature and behaviour of the leader as a person, encouraging emulation, and those arising from the systems and

practices that they set up to regulate conduct on their behalf. The ethical behaviour of leaders also forms a key component of other leadership theories, including authentic leadership, spiritual leadership, and servant leadership (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Yukl *et al.* 2013). For example, "ethical leaders use transactional forms of leadership and authentic leaders don't" (Kalshoven, Den Hartog, and Hoogh, 2011, 52). If the relationship between such leadership theories is "blurred" and overlapping (Bedi, Alpaslan, & Green 2015), this is unsurprising given that most such theories –explicitly ethical or otherwise –are essentially concerned with agency, that is, how influence over others can be achieved. This leads to a second issue: the criticism that ethical leadership constructs remain vague because in focusing on influencing mechanisms, they do not specify normative reference points that ethical leaders can use in promoting followers to behave ethically (Bedi, Alpaslan, & Green, 2015; Eisenbeiss, 2012). In principle, therefore, transformational leaders can promote ethical or unethical behaviour. However, questions remain about how leaders combine action as "moral persons" and "moral managers "to influence ethical conduct (Kalshoven, Den Hartog, & De Hoogh, 2011).

2.2.4 Ethics -"the heart of leadership"

Ethics is a philosophical term originating from Greek word "ethos" meaning custom or character. It is concerned with describing and prescribing moral requirements and behaviours, which suggests that there are acceptable and unacceptable ways of behaving that serve as a function of philosophical principles (Minkes, Small, & Chatterjee, 1999). Ethical behaviour is defined as behaviour which is morally accepted as "good" and "right" as opposed to "bad" or "wrong" in a given situation (Sims, 1992). Ethics is the code of values and moral principles that guides individual or group behaviour with respect to what is right or wrong.

Ethical behaviour is both legally and morally acceptable to the larger community (L.K. Treviño, 1986). Ethical dilemmas though, are present in uncertain situations, in which different interests, values, beliefs pertaining to multiple stakeholders are in conflict. Ethics has always

been at "the heart of leadership" (Perry *et al.* 2014) and has significant potential to affect public trust in all forms of government (Joyce, 2014), but unfortunately a great many contemporary scholars, educators, and practitioners have downplayed that fact, contributing to a wave after wave of organisational scandals. Previous research has identified a number of factors that can shape standards of conduct within an organisation, among which the role of leadership has attracted significant attention (Steinbauer *et al.* 2014). Indeed, the ethical behaviour of leaders has come to assume global importance, with leaders being implicated in high profile; ethical scandals and integrity violations (Hassan, Wright, & Yukl, 2014). Providing ethical leadership may well be a leader's most significant task. Werner (2011) argues that the issue of ethics and ethical behaviour has become very popular around the world, including in South Africa.

The foregoing assertion is corroborated by Temple (2011), who avers that corruption is viewed as a critical reason behind Africa's social and economic problems. In addition, no matter how rich the nation or the institution may be, if the conduct of its affairs is dishonest, if there is high rate of fraud, misappropriation of public funds, no accountability, and constant falsification of documents, that society or organisation is bound to fail (Temple, 2011). Werner (2011) asserts that every organisation has an obligation to its shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers and community at large. Similarly, Engelbrecht *et al.* 2014) maintain that ethical leadership encapsulates and accommodates the followers in decision-making processes and facilitates the well-being and potential growth of the employees. Thus, employees tend to show dedication in serving their organisations as they have trust in those leaders who demonstrate credibility and trustworthiness in their behaviour.

Engelbrecht *et al.* (2017) aver that a credible leader is more likely to create a significant level of trust between him/her and subordinates. Further to that, they maintain that leaders who embrace a moral perspective, values of integrity and trustworthiness, are caring. Most importantly, ethical leaders are always honest and fair in the execution of their duties, and in

their decision making. Moreover, ethical leaders are mindful and considerate of the welfare of their subordinates, while they give priority to the realization of organisational goals. Engelbrecht *et al.* (2017) further, argue that ethical leaders need to demonstrate ethical behaviour such as morality, reliability, justice, and care.

Similarly, Werner (2011) opines that bahaviours of leaders need to conform to the code of ethics by ensuring that both the leaders themselves and workers conform to the organisation's established values and ethical rules. Ethical leaders are principle-centred in their personal and professional lives. They demonstrate high care level and concern of the community they serve in their decision making. Moreover, ethical leaders preach what they practice and do not rely on a reactive approach for the implementation of ethical conduct (Malik, Awais, Tismal, and Qureshi, 2016). Cheteni and Shindika (2017) argue that ethical leaders need to attract the attention of their followers to key messages on ethics by establishing platforms to engage in ethics discourse and by using reinforcement to support those messages. They further state that reinforcement of ethics requires leaders to carefully make organisational decisions that are aligned to ethical values and take into cognizance that right decisions are always the ones that are guided by ethics. Bello (2012) opines that the success of an organisation is dependent on good quality relationships that are built on respect and trust. Thus, ethical leaders need to fully comprehend that trust and respect are the vital ingredients of success which germinate and grow in deep fertile soil, which is integrity, honesty, fairness, equity, justice and compassion (Bello, 2012).

He further maintains that a moral person always displays good character, honesty, trustworthiness and concern for the subordinates' welfare. Moreover, such a leader is approachable to the subordinates.

Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) argue that ethical leaders need to make fair and principled decisions, act as role models for ethical conduct, and acknowledge and reward the ethical behavior of their subordinates. Further, ethical leaders' fair and caring treatment and open communication show an element of trust that subordinates need to reciprocate. In a nutshell, everyone in the organisation has a responsibility to meet the highest ethical standards. Similarly, Ouma (2017) opines that leader by virtue of his/her position stand as a role model, hence he/she needs to demonstrate ethical behavior in his/her conduct to the community. Nzimakwe (2014) posits that what is good for the organisation is good for the leader. Therefore, what is embarrassing for the followers of the leader is embarrassing for the entire organisation. Ouma (2017) emphasises the organisation/employee relationship and argues that ethically led organisations serve as models for ethical leadership for other organisation. Ouma (2017) further argues that ethical leadership cultivates credibility and respect for the leader and organisation. Werner (2011) further argues that organisational leaders have a moral duty to promote the interest of the employees by providing them with career opportunities, job security and good working conditions, and by developing their competences. Suganingrat, Yasa, Sintaasih and Subudi (2017) contend that an ethical leader who shows and promotes ethical codes that resonate with the followers' expectations usually gains the confidence of the followers, based on his/her ethical behavior. Furthermore, they maintain that the followers dedicate their energy towards the attainment of the organisational goals in appreciation, and they also feel secured under the leadership of an ethical leader.

Similarly, Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) argue that ethical leaders inspire their followers through an ethical vision and provide the freedom for the employees to take initiative in the workplace. Werner (2011) avers that team building has gained popularity amongst leaders of organisations, with the intention of improving relations amongst organisational members and improving productivity and alignment of the organisational goals. Engelbrecht *et al.* (2017); Qian, Wang,

Han, and Song (2017) posit that when employees view their leader as fair and considerate in treating them, they tend to support their leader by putting in extra effort and becoming more actively engaged in work. Nzimakwe (2014) avers that leaders with *Ubuntu* always emphasise and model the significance of respecting individuals. Ouma (2017) maintains that followers find it easy to follow an ethical leader because they know they can trust their leader to do what is right for them. Most significantly, leaders tend to place value on teamwork and supporting each other. Therefore, ethical leadership is a matter of serious concern in various organisations (Ouma, 2017). Engelbrecht *et al.* (2017) argue that a leader who displays integrity leaves his/her subordinates with no option but to trust him/her.

2.2.5 Challenges of ethical leadership

Despite the evidence for the effectiveness of ethical leaders, there are numerous examples of unethical behaviours that are obtaining in various institutions. Ciulla (1995) asserts that we are living in a world where leaders are often disappointing. Further, she argues that the more defective our leaders are, the greater our desire to have highly ethical leaders. Affirming the latter assertion, Fulmer (2004) also argues that the challenge of ethical leadership has become a ubiquitous issue for executives in different fields. Mohiuddin and Hossain (2016) argue that, in organisations where unethical leadership prospers, leaders fall short in following rules, failing to take responsibility for unethical behaviours, and go to the extent of avoiding even the appearance of integrity and honesty.

Chetini and Shindika (2017) posit that the need for education on ethics is an open secret as it has helped public officials deal with the challenges of moral decay at the workplace. They further point out that ethics education has brought about awareness of ethics issues and has cultivated an attitude of moral obligation and personal responsibility in the public service.

Similarly, Sama and Shoat (2007) report that scandals continue to rock the professional business sector. They further assert that the understanding of the drivers of ethical lapses becomes a major pursuit of academics and practitioners alike. Brown and Treviño (2006) corroborate Fulmer (2004), in stating that ethical leadership lapses need to be understood and addressed given prominent ethical scandals in virtually every type of organisation. Meyer *et al.* (2012) asserts that the empirical research on ethical leadership is still in its infancy stage and a myriad of questions still remain unattended. Hence, this study is pursued with the view to solicit the conceptualisations, experiences and practices of departmental officials about ethical leadership and how this leadership approach could be used to curb unethical conduct from the district office understudy.

Soma and Shoaf (2007) also point out that ethical lapses are even manifesting themselves among church leaders. "Even the church has come under serious scrutiny, jarring communities' perception of professional majority and calling to question the integrity of those practicing in these sectors" (Soma & Shoaf, 2007, p. 40). Brown and Treviño (2006) emphasise that many people are confused as to what is going on in various organisations as the reports about business scandals and other forms are on the rise in various sorts of media. Brown and Treviño (2006, p. 1) affirm the concern over ethical lapses in various organisations as they pose a critical question that "following Enron and other recent ethics scandals, in business, government, sports, non-profit organisations, and even religious organisations, people are asking themselves, what is wrong with our leaders?" Unfortunately, employees are likely to follow leaders that are seen to be unethical and even likely to take advantage of them (Mohiuddin & Hossain, 2016). The influence of ethical leadership on employee moral justification can also be explained through these two aspects of leadership style (Liu, Long, & Loi, 2012). First as moral people, ethical leaders pay attention to, and consistently align their own behaviour with, moral standards. From observing their leaders' behaviours, employees learn that unethical

behaviour is morally unacceptable and, therefore, do not justify it (Liu *et al.* 2012). Because ethical leaders are credible role models for ethical behaviours, employees cannot dilute their own faulty actions by diffusing responsibility; this inhibits employee moral justification (Liu *et al.* 2012). Second, as moral managers, ethical leaders demand that employees have high ethical standards, are accountable for the moral consequences of their behaviours, and care for others' interests (Moore *et al.* (2012). However, individuals use moral justification to make harming others appear acceptable to both themselves and others. Individuals who engage in moral justification are concerned about their self-interests and shirk responsibility for their unethical behaviours (Moore *et al.,* 2012; Vitell *et al.,* 2011). The demand and influence of ethical leadership are contradictory to the cognitive process of moral justification and inhibit individuals from engaging in moral justification. Therefore, I argued that ethical leadership would decrease employee justification. However, moral justification deactivates one's self-regulatory mechanisms from working effectively, as engaging in unethical behaviours is inconsistent with the individual's internal moral standard, which can result in feelings of guilt (Moore *et al.* 2012, Vitell *et al.,* 2011). Therefore, I argued that, through the reframing of their cognitive perceptions, moral justification would allow individuals to engage in unethical behaviour without experiencing distress. In some empirical studies, scholars have also found that moral justification is positively related to unethical decision making (Stevens *et al.,* 2012) and unethical behaviour (Barsky, 2011; Moore *et al.,* 2012).

2.2.6 Achieving ethical environment in the work place

Cheteni and Shindika (2017) maintain that ethical leaders achieve an ethical environment at work by establishing practices that are strictly conforming to conserving ethical values. Importantly, ethical leaders demonstrate to their followers that ethical standards are a priority, even when they need to be conformed to at the expense of their organisation's immediate objectives. Werner (2011) posits that team building is the essential strategy to develop

organisation and can be used as means to build cohesion, exposing any hidden agendas, and also to increase level of trust amongst members, thus reducing resistance, conflict amongst staff members and resolving the team tension. Werner (2011) asserts that, when there are role models in the work environment, individuals will strive to emulate those models. He further assert that employees are affected similarly when as they witness sanctions misconduct and rewards for positive conduct. Therefore, it is possible that the existing lapses can be addressed only if the leaders adhere to the principles of ethical leadership. Yukl (2010, p. 99) ”point out that many executives today face many difficult and potentially explosive situations in which they have to make decisions that can prove positive either for their organisations or for others (subordinates and stakeholders)”. They further advise that successful executives need to have a clear understanding of their world and, if they lack that understanding, they need to devise ways and means to have it. Asar, Kaya and Sahin (2012) corroborate the latter sentiments as they contend that the leadership process demands the distribution of tasks be executed in the organisation a fair manner and that leadership shares rights and responsibilities in a just manner. They further argue that leaders should align their conduct to ethical principles, which involve justice, equality, honesty, trustworthiness and human rights, to mention a few. Malik *et al.* (2016) contend that treating employees contributes immensely to positive moral behaviour and a positive approach in the work place. Meanwhile, Werner (2011) asserts that ethical leadership and decisions-making in organisations have been the focus of manty concerns related to ethics, more so in the light of high- profile corporate scandals. Most significantly Werner *et al.* (2011) posit that ethical leadership and ethical decision making in the organisations are significantly based on their accountability to various stakeholders. When organisations and their stakeholders are subscribing to the said principle, they are more likely to be successful (Winston, 2010). Malik *et al.* (2016) contend that employees are heavily

dependent on the appropriate guidelines from their leaders in order to satisfy the organisational goals and expectations.

2.2.7 Legislative landscape supporting ethical conduct in South Africa

Increasing levels of unethical conduct in public offices have caused government to pass legislation specifically directed at curbing corruption and developing ethical behaviour. This legislation includes amongst others the South African Constitution, the Public Service Act (Act No 103 of 1994) and the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), (Act 1 of 1999). The government has, in addition, established organisations to support the implementation of legislation. Some of these organisations are the Auditor General, Public Protector and the Electoral Commission. The effectiveness of this legislative framework together with its supporting bodies can be debated but they nevertheless form a basis to combat unethical bahaviour (Bruce, 2014). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) is the supreme law of our country. It provides the legal foundation for the existence of the Republic, sets out the rights and duties of its citizens, and defines the structure of the Government. It has been called the "birth certificate "of a free and democratic South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996). A new constitution was adopted in 1996 under the platform of non-racialism and equality of all citizens (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The new constitution tried to address such mythical values of apartheid in the public sector. Section 195 of the Constitution states that public administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution. Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation (Republic of South Africa, 1996). In response to Section 195 of the Constitution, Rosenbaum (1997) contended that public sectors were re-shaped for their new role in the country. Among seven other transformation priorities, public sector ethics,

efficacy and accountability were emphasised. Since then, Malunga (2014) asserts that South Africa has responded by implementing a range of legislation and the creation of democratic institutions as vital shields in its quest to build national integrity and fight corruption. This was not easy because the heterogeneous and multi-cultural society still experienced a flood of corruption as well as moral relativism and moral contextualisation of the apartheid regime (Hillard & Ferreira, 2001). To suit the needs of the country, particularly the public sector, several ethics and governance measures were adopted related to international and national frameworks (Malunga, 2014). Such measures (policies, legislative and regulatory frameworks) consist of the key institutions, sectors, laws, practices and specific mechanisms that together contribute to enhancing good governance.

South Africa's Constitution, for example, describes how the Government is formed, how it is elected and how it functions. It outlines the Government's powers as well as the limits to these powers and entrenches the rights of the people. It also sets out how government will be accountable to the people who elect it. The Constitution forms the basis of public life in South Africa, but it does more than just describing the details and bolts of the functioning of the State (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Our Constitution reflects the hopes and aspirations of a nation. Given South Africa's past, it is not surprising that our Constitution frequently stresses the need to create a society that is "open and democratic", and that it emphasises dignity, justice and equality (Republic of South Africa, 1996). In addition, South Africa has had exposure to constitutional democracy since December 1996 when it was signed into law. The South African Constitution (Chapter 10, Section 195 (1) (a) stipulates that "*public administration must be accountable and high standard of professional ethics must be promoted."* The expectation of the Constitution is therefore that all government departments and officials execute their duties to the best of their ability in a fair, moral and ethical manner (Manayaka & Sebola, 2013). Naidoo (2012) also points out that the constitution infers that there should be strict measures

to ensure accountability, accessibility and transparency within government. Chapter 10 of the constitution (1996) encourages the use of ethical leadership to reduce unethical behavior and foster good governance (Naidoo, 2012). The constitution serves as an initial point of reference which establishes an ethical climate in which government offices and public servants can effectively function. This includes the Department of Education, schools, principals, teachers, school governing bodies and learners. All stakeholders in education should thus align their conduct to the ethical principles as outlined in the constitution. In addition, district officials should possibly contemplate or even attempt the use of ethical leadership in their leadership practices. In my own opinion this should be done with the intention of not only guiding their own conduct but also influencing the ethical conduct of their subordinates.

In order to promote accountability and an ethical culture in the public sector in South Africa, the Government has since 1994 introduced several laws and policies. In 2005, the South African government launched an initiative *Batho Pele*, meaning *people first*, which was aimed at improving integrity with public administration through tighter monitoring of officials performance and compliance with ethical practices. However, Raga and Taylor (2005) argued that such legislation and proliferation of ethical codes of conduct would still be unlikely to put unethical behavior to an end, and suggested that public officials should be indoctrinated with attitudes and virtues for guiding human conduct, since the public sector presented numerous testing situations due to its diversity. Importantly, integrity training helps officials to gain confidence in providing efficient, ethical, and accountable services. Moreover, it commenced with the Public Service Act 103 of 1994 as amended which gave birth to *Batho Pele Principles* of consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money. Furthermore, this law stipulates, among others, that all employees should put the public first in the execution of their official duties; serve the public in an unbiased and impartial manner in order to create confidence in the public service; district

officials should not abuse their positions to promote or prejudice the interest of any gratification (as defined in the Prevention and Combating Activities Act, 2004) from an employee or any person in return for performing or not performing his or her official duties and should refrain from party political activities in the workplace such as district office.

The Public Service Act (Act No 103 of 1994) as amended also encourages the ethical behavior of public officials, such as district officials, and provides structured measures for managing incompetent and unethical officials (Bruce, 2014). The PFMA addresses the effective use of financial management including the formation of tender boards to assess the awarding of tenders in government departments (Manyaka & Nkuna, 2014). The fundamental aims of the PFMA are to develop financial management in government offices so that they can meet the present day requirements, increase accountability especially of accounting officers, promote accessibility of the public to correct information and to decrease unethical conduct (Majila, Taylor & Raga, 2014; Manyaka & Nkuna, 2014). All officials within the district, and the Department of Education from the level of the minister to the level of an educator have a legal, social and ethical obligation to adhere to these acts. The Protected Disclosures Act (2000) promotes and protects whistleblowing. Whistleblowing is defined as the act of reporting and exposing any unethical bahaviour within an establishment. By endorsing whistleblowing this act serves to reduce unethical conduct by providing a platform for individuals to report any unethical behavior. The Public Service Regulations (2001) provide a code of conduct which all public officials are expected to abide by. It provides individuals in the public sector with a practical guide to adhere to the legislation addressing correct ethical conduct. The aims of these regulations are to increase professionalism in government offices by outlining ethical expectations of individuals and procedures (Manyaka & Sebola, 2013). The Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act (Act 12 of 2004) is another piece of legislation designed to curb unethical behavior. It provides a more structured framework to reduce unethical

conduct (Bruce, 2014). This act outlines procedures to be followed when investigating corruption, it provides limitations on individuals and organisations found guilty of unethical conduct and obligates government departments to report corruption cases involving R100 000 or more to the South African Revenue Service. The act requires public offices to engage in unplanned audits of departments and projects in order to expose possible unethical practices. Furthermore, the act also requires government departments to actively utilise preventative plans such as risk management and fraud prevention strategies. The National Treasury has also instituted more stringent regulations for procurement practices in the public sector. There is also South African legislation pertaining only to the ethical conduct of members of the education sector. The South African Council for Educators (SACE) Act (Act No 31 of 2000) provides for the establishment of this body. All practicing educators are required to register with SACE. One of the key functions of this council, is to prescribe, preserve and defend the professional and ethical standards for educators. The SACE Code of Professional Ethics has therefore been formulated to promote the proper ethical conduct of educators.

Furthermore, the SACE Act No. 31 of 2000 provides for a Code of Professional Ethics for educators who are expected to act in an ethical, proper and becoming manner such that they do not bring the teaching profession into disrepute. SACE like all the other professional councils, maintains and improves standards of professional conduct through its code of professional ethics. Section 5 (c) (i) commands that SACE "must compile, maintain and from time to time review a code of professional ethics for educators who are registered or provisionally registered with the council". In addition, policy on the South African Standards of School Principals (2016) also demands that school principals should subscribe to ethical standards which should guide their behaviour as they lead and manage their schools. For this reason, Christie (2010) contends that various expectations of organisational leadership together with newly introduced policy framework have remarkably changed the work of the school principal. According to the

Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) (2016); South African Schools Act, No 84 of (1996), section 16 A, the school principal is tasked to implement the policies and legislation. Arguably, it is this policy that tries to inculcate the culture of ethical leadership amongst school principals and departmental officials. Similarly, Hewison (2006) contends that school leadership should be viewed as both the source of, and the possible solution to most problems of the modern education economy. Surprisingly, some school principals are found wanting in matters relating to the clear understanding of their professional mandate or roles and responsibilities. In an attempt to bridge this knowledge deficiency, the National Minister of Basic Education, Angelina Matsie Motshekga developed a framework which underpins the school principals' area of operation. The objective of this policy is to be able to enhance the quality of leadership, establish commonalities with regards to the well-functioning of all schools. This policy aims at improving school principals'professionalism and development in terms of understanding leadership roles. Further, it is believed that this has a potential to address the legacy of poor learner-outcomes.

The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (200) emphasises that education has an important role in developing the moral and ethical frameworks of learners by actively promoting such values as equality, equity, accountability, social justice, social honour respect and Ubuntu. The South African Schools Act (Act No 84 of 1996) also addresses the ethical condut of learners as well as that of governing body members in schools. It requires all schools to formulate a code of conduct for learners as well as code of conduct for governing body members in order to guide their ethical conduct. These codes of conducts in schools must also stipulate disciplinary measures as well as procedures involving due process. This act also requires school governing bodies to adhere to strict financial regulations in terms of the management of school assets and funds. The Employment of Educators Act (Act No 76 of 1998) also addresses the ethical behaviour of educators by stating the different forms of

misconduct that could be displayed by educators in schools together with the relevant disciplinary procedures and due process measures. The above legislation is again directed at improving the ethical conduct of individuals in the public sector including education.

The South African Constitution also allows for the establishment of organisations to apply and enforce legislation concerning unethical behaviour and ethical leadership. These institutions include the Auditor General and the Public Protector. In order for the legislation to be effectively implemented then other government bodies such as the Electoral Commission, Public Service Commission (PSC), an institution established in terms of Chapter 10 of the 1996 Constitution with a mandate of promoting a high standard of professional ethics in the public sector and to investigate, monitor, and evaluate the organisation, administration, and personnel practices of public service (PSC, 2010).

In addition, institution focuses on performing a vital role in the development of the Code of Conduct for the Public Sector that forms the basis of the public sector's integrity framework as it sets values for ethical conduct across the country. Another institution is the Public Protector, which is a national Ombudsman established under Section 181 of the Constitution which forms part of the national integrity framework, and has two mandated dimensions (Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), 2003; Disoloane, 2012; Malunga, 2014). The Public Protector's role in anticorruption is also recognised in the key anticorruption statutes, including the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Act, the Protected Disclosures Act and Public Finance Management Act. For example, the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act specifically gives the Public Protector the authority to investigate any improper or dishonest act, or omission or offences referred to in the Act, with respect to public money (Madonsela, 2010; Malunga, 2014).

In addition, the Constitutional Court, parliament and provincial legislatures need to also actively cooperate and ensure that the practices of public offices are ethical (Manyaka & Nkuna, 2014). The primary role of the Public Protector is to investigate any suspected forms of unethical conduct in public administration of government affairs. The central function of the Auditor General is to audit all financial accounts of every government department to ensure the effective use of public resources and to expose unethical practices. The PSC reports on the occurrence of different forms of unethical conduct and the extent to which they have been resolved. The Electoral Commission nurtures an ethical climate by ensuring free and fair elections. Parliament develops ethics by passing legislation and by also reviewing annual reports from government and private institutions. Provincial legislatures foster the development of ethics and reduce unethical conduct by passing provincial legislation and creating provincial bodies that regulate ethical conduct. Despite the different forms of legislation that have been passed and the various organisations that have been established, unethical conduct in South African public offices continues to increase (Majila, *et al.*, 2014; Bruce, 2014). Some of the unethical behaviours that have become prominent in education are those of fraud and bribery, mismanagement of government funds, abuse of government resources, procurement irregularities and appointment irregularities (Serfontein & de Waal, 2015). This lack of effectiveness of legislation and established organisations could possibly be due to the gaps in legislation which still allow for unethical practices and the incapacity of investigative and regulatory bodies to effectively prosecute offenders using more stringent rules and more severe punishments (Bruce, 2014). Given the magnitude of this challenge, a study of this nature was a necessity. Consequently, I argue that ethical leadership decadence in public entities such as a district office is an urgent problem that needs to be addressed.

2.2.8 Ethical decision-making in leadership

The main aim of studying leadership is about effectiveness in leadership (Boonzaier, 2008; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Leadership is a relationship between people (Northhouse, 2010) and therefore, the ability to ethically influence others is a major determination of effective leadership. In his book, *Ethics and Leadership,* William Hitt (1990, as cited in Waggoner, 2010, p. 4) lists three requirements of leaders that allow them to capitalise on their ability to influence ethical conduct. These three requirements are: "(1) achieve an understanding of ethics which include the key concepts; values, morals, virtues and principles; the educational leader must have an idea of how values laid the groundwork for ethical beliefs, a system of values acts as the backbone of a decision-making template. (2) Serve as a role model in making ethical decisions; and (3) develop and implement a plan of action for promoting ethical conduct on the part of his or her staff." A leader with an *understanding of ethics, history of ethical decision-making* and the ability to develop and execute plans of action shows stability, empathy, integrity and resolve. These traits shown in a leader's track record will infuse a greater sense of trust within followers and therefore educational leader will be able to sustain good leadership and ethical conduct from followers.

Educational leaders are confronted with several challenges daily. For instance, district officials as leaders contend with staff issues, district improvement, structural changes, instructional matters, budgetary cuts, and parent concerns (Johnson, 2008; Devos & Bouckenooghe, 2009; Watkins & Moak, 2011). Furthermore, educational leaders are faced with improving the academic achievement of all students (Hughes & Jones, 2010-2011; Hildebrand, 2012). Ethical leadership is often confronted with intricate circumstances and moral dilemmas where clear-cut solutions are not available due to the complexity of the subject matter (Eisenbeiss, 2012). Moral dilemmas may emerge from the situation whereby the departmental officials have to decide in the shortage of resources whether they invest in to the programme designed to

support organisational goals. Educational leaders sometimes have to make decisions on which educational stream will be kept between science, commerce or general when they are faced with shortage of resources or decreasing number of learners in the school (enrolment). Educational leaders also have to decide on strategies for garnering input from parents (parental involvement) and community members, methods for communicating current and desired educational results to all stakeholders (which is everyone from students and parents to taxpayers and employers), and how to develop and implement change to ensure that all children gain functional use of what has been identified as essential skills and knowledge in order to increase equity of opportunity in adulthood (Vogel, 2012, p. 2). To better understand how to deal with the ethical dilemmas especially in district office both researchers and practitioners have adopted multiple-ethical paradigms (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; 2011). In this approach, several values have been identified as common considerations in moral decision-making. These include values reflected in the ethic of care, profession, justice (i.e. fairness and utilitarianism), critique (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; 2011), and community (Furman, 2004). It has been argued that leaders can and should utilise these ethical perspectives simultaneously (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). On the other hand, other author such as Eisenbeiss (2012) assert that conflict resolution through ethical judgement is extremely difficult. The four central orientations of ethical leadership can assist leaders in attaining ethically justifiable judgements. Leaders can apply the central orientations in terms of two dimensions: a horizontal collective dimension and a vertical time dimension in attempting to filter out the important facets of a moral dilemma and to methodically determine the consequences of all possible solutions (Eisenbeiss, 2012). The horizontal collective dimension refers to the identification and inclusion of all the relevant stakeholder groups involved in the dilemma and/or likely to be affected by the decision (Eisenbeiss, 2012). Leaders can use the central orientations to analyse the alternative solutions and their consequences, not only regarding its stakeholders, but to also consider the interests

and needs of more distal and vulnerable stakeholders such as social groups, the community, and the environment (Eisenbeiss, 2012). The vertical time dimension concerns the long-term focus of decision making and involves anticipating and taking future developments into consideration. Consequently, leaders can use the four central orientations to determine the consequences of a possible course of action, immediately and in the future. I agree with the idea put forward by Eisenbeiss (2012) that leaders can apply the central orientations in decision-making. However, it will be a great idea to infuse the multiple-ethical paradigms within the central orientations.

Waggoner (2010) proposes an idea of Template for Ethical Decision-Making and posits that decision-making requires three general steps: description, reflection and prescription. He further believes that designing and carrying out template for decision-making will cover these steps and produce successful, ethical results. A template for decision-making is necessary due to the number of problems and decisions a leader is faced with every day. As today's society advances, it becomes more interlaced and complex. This constant change in civilization requires more effective actions from leaders when faced with an increasing number of multifaceted issues. I am strongly persuaded by Waggoner (2010) on the three general steps required in decision making because it allows the leader to collect and generate the most information. Moreover, in the utilisation of the three steps the leader will be able to analyse the consequences and manage to identify possible solutions. Waggoner (2010) further posits that there are five steps contained in a process that leads to the best decision under given circumstances. In her book, *The Responsible Administrator,* Terry Cooper (1998), as cited in Waggoner (2010), initially designed the following model for public service roles however, it can and should be adopted by all leaders. The overall course of action is the same, however, certain details have been extended to be appropriate and attainable for any leader. The first step is referred to as the descriptive task. This refers to when a problem surfaces to a leader's

attention. Whether the leader comes across the problem on his or her own following a template or someone else brings it to his or her attention, it is important to gather more information about the issue. When obtaining information, it is important to stay neutral. If included parties are labelled good or bad before completing the decision-making process, it defeats the purpose of following a template. If sides of an issue are labelled in the first phase of decision-making, it is hard to develop an accurate analysis of the issue because these initial labels act as blinders during the next steps. Gathering the most information that time permits allows the succeeding steps to be more accurate and complete (Waggoner, 2010). The second steps is to define the ethical issue, which can be the most difficult step (Waggoner, 2010). *Realizing* there is an "ethically problematic situation" is not challenging, however *"articulating the specific values and principles* at stake is extremely challenging" (Cooper, 1998, p. 22, as cited in Waggoner (2010). Not analysing the specific ethical issues, at stake results in purely practical decisions that disregard values and principles. Decisions based solely on previous acts cause ethics to be swept under the carpet. At this stage, analysing the specific ethical issues, the ethic of critique put forward by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005), must be taken into consideration. The ethic of critique is about the barriers to previous acts. So by reviewing the consequences of decision taken based on the previous act will assist the leader in articulating *the specific values and principles* at stake. This step may also consider the "moral person" as part of the ethical leader and the importance of why the understanding of ethics is important for the leader, especially in taking decisions. Without ethical consideration for specific situations, problems are generalised, and solutions become unethical and ineffective. In order to clarify this dimension, Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) theory is discussed further as part of the theoretical framework for this study in the ensuing chapter.

The third step of the decision-making model is identifying alternative courses of action. According to Waggoner (2010), this is time-consuming process. One must be careful at this

stage of decision-making because it is easy to develop the "either-or view," which is the most common trap in the ethical process" (Ciulla, 1998, p. 23), as cited in Waggoner, (2010). When brainstorming, people tend to stop once they have two or three possible solutions, however, rarely does an issue have so few possible solutions. "Either-or thinking" limits the number of possible solutions because either you have to do this or that. Removing either-or thinking allows more acknowledged alternatives and an increased likelihood of finding the best solution. Educational leaders need to analyse, solve problems and came up with the devise a strategic interventions, so to rely on either-or thinking will hinder their creativity in working on possible solutions. Therefore, I agree with the notion that critises "Either-or thinking" strategy. Projecting probable consequences is the fourth step. Once the list of alternative solutions is large enough, the positive and negative consequences of each possible decision need to be calculated. Projecting possible consequences requires the skill of *moral imagination.* This is the ability to produce a "movie in our minds with realistic characters, a believable script and clear imagery" (Cooper, 1998, p. 24), as cited in Waggoner, (2010). Creating these movies turns projecting probable consequences from a traditional informal process to a more formal, conscious and systematic procedure. (Cooper, 1998, p. 24), as cited in Waggoner, (2010). The more imagination used to project probable consequences of solutions, the more ethical decision-making is enhanced. A vivid imagination leads to greater understanding of probable outcomes and attached emotions. Projecting probable consequences with moral imagination connects the sensible and emotional dimensions of ethical decision-making. According to Maxwell (2014, p. 11), "Leaders are paid to be dreamers. The higher you go in leadership, the more your work is about the future." Great leaders are both highly visionary and highly practical. Their vision helps them see beyond the immediate. They can envision what's coming and what must be done. To be highly visionary and highly practical for the leader alone are not enough. The leader also needs the "buy-in" of the follower so that the vision is implemented.

This will depend on the leadership (1) personal level where leadership is determined by an individual's trustworthiness. This is dependent on leadership character (Who the leader as a person, is the integrity shown by the individual when living according to his/her system) and leadership competence (What the individual is able to do, the ability and skills to perform and to motivate people to follow him/her when directing the organisation). (2) Interpersonal level Leadership at this level is determined by an individual's ability to build mutual trust and cooperation, interpret the meaning of events and obtain necessary resources and support. (3) Managerial level; at managerial level, there are several determinants of effective leadership. These determinants entail the ability to: develop and empower people, build task commitment and optimism and organise and coordinate activities and (4) organisational level; Effective leadership is most widely illustrated at an organisational level, where the individual has to portray the ability to: create alignment of objectives and strategies, strengthen collective identity, encourage and facilitate collective learning and promote social justice and morality.

Members' satisfaction and commitment are increased with a climate of fairness, compassion and social responsibility. To maintain such climate requires active efforts to protect individual rights, encourage social responsibility and oppose unethical practices. Effective leaders set an example of moral behavior and they take necessary actions to promote social justice (Hough, Thompsons, Strickland, & Gamble, 2007). In addition, for the leaders to acquire the "buy-in" of their followers so that the vision is implemented, they must be able to motivate active involvement by members in solving problems, making decisions and implementing changes. Open communication between members and leadership is essential. Finding a fit is the last step of ethical decision-making. The key to finding the best solution is to find a balance between *duty oriented and consequence-oriented obligations.* The balance must be between primary obligations to ethical principles and the consequences with the chosen course of action. It is not possible to separate the two because you cannot follow your duty to principles if the

consequences do nor respect the principles. Finding the most ethical and effective alternative is possible by using this template for decision-making (Waggoner, 2010). This is an effective model because it allows for balance between theory and consequences and guarantees personal satisfaction with decisions. It also allows a leader to develop ethical autonomy by combining prudent reason with emotional connection. According to Aristotle (2005), as cited in, Riggio, Zhu, Maroosis and Reina (2010, p. 237), prudence is the wisdom that manages or dictates a proper balance between two extremes in a world of shifting contexts and priorities. Because prudence is critical, a leader cannot be ethical unless he or she is prudent. It is unrealistic to expect a leader to use this template with every problem, but when used for more significant problems a leader will develop intuition for ethical decision-making when time does not permit all the steps (Cooper, p.1998, p. 28), as cited in Waggoner, (2010). With practice and hands on experience, this decision-making template provides values and keeps leaders from wandering down unethical decision-making paths. The decision-making template provides steps that allow the best solution for each circumstances, but there are also different levels and seriousness of ethical reflection for each issue (Waggoner, 2010).

"Doing the right thing" is not good enough because without reflection a person does not understand why the right decision was made and he or she is less likely to make correct decisions in the future. Without reflection, good ethics are just a habit, but with reflection, good ethics are from reason and choice, not 'just because' (Holland & Skinner, 1998), as cited in Waggoner, 2010). The level of moral rules does not necessarily make decisions consistent but involves limited logical and methodical reflection. The most practical decisions made by departmental officials are usually based on the pressure and the demands by the Department of Education in a short period and these force some educational leaders to become problem-solvers and can prevent sufficient ethical reflection. The pressure forces them not to rely on the ethic of justice and other important ethics such as ethic of care, critique and profession omitted

in the process of decision-making. When leaders are unable to reach a decision using moral rules, they are forced to enter the third level, ethical analysis. Because this level is usually entered when there are conflicts or when things do not feel right, an examination of morals is sometimes necessary. Although this level is not typical for a routine problem, "sometimes an issue is so unique, so complex, or so profound in the consequences of its resolution that we have no choice but to re-examine the ethical principles that are implicit in our routine norms of conduct (Cooper, 1998, p. 12), as cited in Waggoner, 2012). This reassessment of morals, values and principles provides clarification and contemplation of all involved aspects. These aspects range from leaders' personal integrity to leaders' obligation to the public (Cooper, 1998, p. 14), as cited in Waggoner, (2010). A specific review of the values and principles involved becomes useful by setting conditions and qualifications for action. Due to the intense speed and demands of today's leaders, reflection is forgotten because of lack of time (Waggoner, 2010). In addition, ethical issues are multifaceted, meaning that each stage in decision-making is fluid, dynamic, and multidimensional (Waggoner, 2010). The author further posits that problem-identification is aided or stagnated by moral sensitivity. Furthermore, Nevarez and Wood (2010), as cited in Woods and Hilton, (2012, p. 198) state that ethical decision-making models have four primary steps in common: identification of a problem, gathering data, conceptualising and evaluating alternative courses of action, and implementing a course of action. Therefore, in response to the foregoing, it is imperative in this study to elucidate the four ethical paradigms (ethic of justice, ethic of critique, ethic of care and ethic of the profession) at the level of definition and contextual discussion in the next chapter. According to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005), ethical paradigms aid ethical decision-making in several ways. Paradigms support leaders in examining the frames or ways of thinking that they are most inclined to use, contemplating actions outside their normative behaviors and approaches, considering more holistic steps to issue resolution, and engaging in reflexive

practice. The practice of ethical decision-making requires leaders to view issues that they encounter through multiple ethical lenses before making decisions. This will allow leaders to take more thoughtful actions that are less influenced by personal bias (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Caldwell, Shapiro & Gross, 2007; Woods & Hilton, 2012, p. 210).

2.2.9 Dimensions of ethical leadership

There are seven dimensions of ethical leadership (Kalshoven *et al.,* 2011). First, fairness is an important form of ethical behaviour. Ethical leaders act with integrity and treat others fairly. According to Brown *et al.* (2005) ethical leaders receive positive evaluations from followers, because they treat employees in a fair and respectful way and create a trusting environment that positively influences employees' satisfaction and dedication (Weaver, Treviño & Agle, 2005; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). Hence, ethical leadership also involves aspects of fairness such as to consider three general steps: description, reflection and prescription, and to gather more information about the issue.

When obtaining information, it is important to stay neutral (Waggoner, 2010). In creating a fair and trustful environment, ethical leaders stimulate ethical and prosocial employee behaviors (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). They make principled and fair choices, are trustworthy and honest, do not practice favoritism, and take responsibility for their own actions (Treviño *et al.,* 2003; Brown *et al.,* 2003; 2005; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). Secondly, ethical leaders allow subordinates a say in decision-making and listen to their ideas and concerns and provide followers with voice (Brown *et al.,* 2005; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008). Sharing power also allows subordinates more control and makes them less dependent on their leaders (Yukl, 2014) Humbleness in a leader is a facet of human decency and probity. The leader should not employ symbols of grandeur to gain respect and force others into silence/ submission. The leader should demonstrate competence along with caring so that respect is truly won (Khoza,

2011, p. 81). Third, ethical leaders are transparent and engage in open communication which known as role clarification (Brown *et al.,* 2005). Ethical leaders clarify responsibilities, expectations, and performance goals, so that subordinates know what is expected from them and understand when their performance is up to par. Subordinates do not worry unnecessarily about unclear expectations and know how they can meaningfully contribute to meeting the unit's or organisation's goals. Ethical and skillful leaders focus their attention on the key aspects of the organisation which is vision and communicate it clearly and convincingly to all the members of the organisation. They also invite other stakeholders through participatory communication strategies (Leithwood, *et al.,* 2008). Still on this point of open communication, ethical leaders believe and trust their followers. It is one thing to communicate to people because you believe you have something of value to say but it is another to communicate with them because you believe they add value to the organisation. To acknowledge followers 'opinions also helps to build the culture of shared vision and indicate how much you care/respect for them.

The core of the shared culture and value addition are attributes that Ladkin (2008, p. 64) considers as important, namely, leading skillfully and ethically in such a fashion as to exhibit three dominant attributes: "visionary" in recognising themselves and the situations, "consistency" similarity among himself and other's ideas and communication, and "rationality" achievement of goals. Ladkin (2008, p. 64) further posts that leading skillfully engages in recreation of the ethical aspects of a leader's efforts' and whether the leader's purpose fits with the full awareness of the human atmosphere. An important one is people orientation or having a true concern for people (Trevin *et al.,* 2003). The people orientation component in ethical leadership suggests genuinely caring about, respecting and supporting subordinates and where possible, ensuring that their needs are met (Kalshoven *et.al.* 2011). Before the leader reflects genuinely caring about the followers, he must first sense what is

happening among people and know their hopes, fears and concerns. According to Maxwell (2014, p. 11), “leaders touch a heart before they ask for a hand” which suggests, for leaders to be effective, they need to connect with the people. Maxwell (2014) further states that, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care about them.” You develop credibility with people when you connect with them and demonstrate that you genuinely care and want them to help them. And thus, they usually respond in kind and want to help in return. In addition to fairness, power sharing and role clarification (De Hoog & Den Hartog, 2008; Kalshoven *et al.,* 2011) also include people-orientated behavior, integrity, ethical guidance, and concern for sustainability as attributes required of an ethical leader.

Ethical leadership also incorporates two important dimensions, and these are: the moral person dimension which overlaps with the ethical dimensions inherent to more traditional leadership styles and the other dimensions is that of ethical leadership as moral manager (Treviño, Hartman & Brown, 2009). Moral persons also possess personal traits and characteristics such as honesty, integrity and trustworthiness (Toor & Ofori, 2009; Brown & Mitchell, 2010).

2.2.9.1 Moral person dimension

In his book*; The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Maxwell states that “people buy into the leaders, then vision” (2014, p. 12). People do not at first follow worthy causes. They follow worthy leaders who promote worthy causes they can believe in. People buy into the leader first, then the leader’s vision. Then the first aspect of ethical leadership is that of the moral person, which presents observer’s perception of the leader’s personal traits, character and altruistic motivation (Treviño, Hartman & Brown, 2000). True leadership always begins with the inner person. People can sense the depth of a person’s character. The moral person aspect is reflected as fair and principled decision-makers, caring about the wider society, including other people, and leaders that behave ethically in both personal and professional life (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leaders are thought to embody certain traits which represent the characteristics

that people display consistently over time. Studies on the attributes of perceived ethical leaders recognise integrity as a central characteristic of the individual leader (Brown *et al.*, 2005).

2.2.9.2 Personality Traits

According to Kalshoven *et al.*, (2011), there are five personality traits, and these are: agreeableness, openness, extraversion, conscientiousness and neuroticism. Agreeableness describes an individual as being altruistic, trusting, kind and cooperative. Openness describes an individual as being imaginative, curious, artistic, and insightful. Extraversion describes an individual as being dependable, responsible, dutiful, and determined. Lastly, neuroticism describes an individual as being anxious, hostile, impulsive and stresses (Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011). In addition, Brown and Treviño (2006) posit that two of the Big Five; which are main leadership personality trait are positively related with ethical leadership, namely agreeableness and conscientiousness are closely related to ethical leadership. "Agreeableness" reflects the tendencies of being kind, trusting and taking the needs of the other human beings into account. Likewise, individuals with high levels of agreeableness are described as caring, empathic to others and sharing their power. Furthermore, Jansen-Campbell and Graziano (2001, as cited in Yate, 2011) state that individual's high on agreeableness are more likely to use constructive tactics to help others. The use of constructive tactics is a key component of ethical leadership (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). Leaders high in agreeableness tend to be trustworthy and display a concern for others. Those rated high in conscientious tend to be goal oriented, self-disciplined, and well organised. This may lead to an ability to define leader-follower constructive interactions, suggesting a capacity to function as contingent reward leaders, thus affecting employee attitudes and conduct (Bono & Judge, 2004, as cited in Yate, 2011). Furthermore, individuals who are high on conscientious also show character traits like those possessed by ethical leaders. For instance, they think carefully before acting, adhere closely to their moral obligations, do the right things not only for themselves and treat their fellow co-

workers in a consistent way (Kalshoven *et al*., 2011). In addition, emotional stability might be a beneficial character trait for a person to cope with their own emotions more effectively during their work (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009; Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011). In addition, emotional stability might be a beneficial character trait for a person to cope with their own emotions more effectively during their work (Walumbwa and Schaubroeck, 2009; Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011).

2.2.9.3 Personality and leader effectiveness

According to Armit, Loewenthal, Eckert, West and Lee (2015, p. 7), the first major stream of research reflects a long-standing fascination with the personality traits of those who become leaders. From this broader leadership research evidence, they have identified core personality traits associated with leadership effectiveness including moral character of a leader (Yukl, 2013 as cited in Armit, et al., 2015, p. 7). High energy level and stress tolerance; they have high levels of stamina and can work effectively over long periods. They are also less affected by conflicts, crisis events and pressure, maintaining equilibrium more than others.

They can think relatively calmly in crisis situations and communicate that calmness and confidence to others. Self-confidence; they believe they can be effective in difficult situations and give those they lead a sense of confidence and efficacy. They tend to be optimistic and confident in the face of difficulties. They are more likely to deal with difficult situations rather than deny or avoid them. However, excessive self-confidence or self-esteem can make leaders prone to making risky or wrong decisions. Internal locus of control ; they believe what happens around them is more under their control than the control of external forces and are motivated to act to influence and control events. This is associated with a tendency to be proactive rather than passive. They also believe the can influence, persuade and motivate others and win their allegiance to courses of action. Emotional maturity; they have emotional maturity and intelligence in the sense that they are less prone to moodiness, irritability and angry outburst.

They are positive and optimistic, communicating their positivity to others. They are aware of their own strengths, weaknesses and typical reactions to situations. Personal integrity; consistency between espoused values and behaviour is characteristic of those with high levels of personal integrity, along with honesty, transparency and trustworthiness. Such leaders also keep promises to staff and other stakeholder groups and tend not to use their leadership primarily out of self-interest. Socialised power motivation; they seek power, but primarily to achieve organisational objectives and to support the growth, development and advancement of those they lead. Achievement orientation; high achievement orientation is associated with leadership effectiveness, but this is not a linear relationship. Managers with a very high achievement orientation can become insensitive to the effects of their desires on those around them who feel driven by their leader's ambition. Low needs for affiliation; this refers to the need to be liked and accepted by others, which effective leaders do not have. Those who did would be likely to put their need to be liked ahead of making good decisions in difficult situations or ahead of having to manage poor performance among their followers.

Neither do they have extremely low affiliation needs, which would mean they were uncaring of others and their opinions. Another body of research (Boyatzis, 1982, as cited in Armit, Loewenthal, Eckert, West and Lee, (2015) has focused on the competencies related to leadership effectiveness, including motives, skills, knowledge, self-image and some specific behaviors. The research suggests the following competencies are important for leaders; (1) Technical competence wins the respect of followers. It includes knowledge about the organisation; Department of Education and schools, its strategy, structure and processes, knowledge about the curriculum; curriculum adjustment, teaching methods and teaching strategies; and knowledge about the organisation's environment. (2) Conceptual skills mean understanding the complex environments of organisations (both internal and external) to be able make sense of situations rather than deem them too complex to be comprehended or

managed. The ability to analyse, plan and make decisions is central to organisational functioning, so leaders who have conceptual skills will increase the confidence of followers within the organisation. (3) Interpersonal skills are vital: understanding the needs and feelings of followers; educators, monitoring the effects of own behaviours and being aware of emotional reactions to others are essential. To lead effectively, a leader should be ethical and moral. To lead you need to have a feel for people, you need to have empathy. The wellbeing of the people you lead must be your absolute priority (Khoza, 2012, p. xix).

2.2.9.4 Trait versus Process

Statements such as "She is born leader" and "He was born to lead" imply a perspective toward leadership that is trait based. Yulk (2014, p. 13) states that the trait approach emphasises she outlines leaders attributes such as personality, motives, values, and skills. Underlying this approach was the assumption that some people are natural leaders, endowed with certain traits not possessed by other people". This perspective is also supported by Kelly (2011) as she outlines eight leadership theories, she put forward a "Great man" theory of leadership.

Kelly assumes that the capacity for leadership is inherent that great leaders are born, not made (Kelly, & that 2011, p. 1). The assumption here is that people inherit certain qualities and traits that make them better suited to leadership. This is very different from describing leadership as a process. The trait viewpoint suggests that leadership is inherent in a few select people and that leadership is restricted to only those few who have special talents with which they are born (Yukl, 2014). Mangena (2011) argues that this position is untenable good so it is not always the case that the leader is judged by his or her individual capacity but sometimes by environmental circumstances. Thus, good environments create good leaders. Mangena believes that a child who grows in an environment characterised by violence, intolerance and corruption, even if he or she were to have those innate abilities to lead will be corrupted to the extent that the potential to become a good leader will die. Mangena concludes that "great leaders are made,

not born" (Mangena, 2011, p. 102). I therefore believe that both perspectives whether leader build or made, contribute to be a good leader, but my point is that it is much easier for a moral person to be groomed to become a great leader than the one who was born and bred in the corrupt environment without principles and values. I addition, being a good leader requires a lot of hard work and effort and the environment plays an important role in nurturing leaders of good standing.

To sum up, according to De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008), personal characteristics are related to ethical leadership, such as the leader's personality and upbringing. Personal traits fall into five groups of leader social responsibility; moral legal standard of conduct, internal obligation, concern for others, concern about consequences, and self-judgement. De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) have expected that individual attributes of the leader social responsibility, which are categorised as moral standard of conduct, internal obligation, concern for others, concern about consequences, and self-judgement would be positively related to ethical leadership behavior (Zehir & Erdogan, 2011).

Armit, *et al,* (2015, p. 8) posit that only a few studies have vigorously tested the assumption that personality traits and competencies have a casual impact on leader effectiveness or emergence as a leader. For at least some personality traits and competencies, it is not clear which comes first, being in a leadership position or possessing the trait or competency.

2.2.9.5 Moral manager dimension

Besides the moral person, Treviño, *et al.* (2000) labelled the other part of ethical leadership as moral manger. Moral persons possess personal traits and characteristics such as honesty, integrity and trustworthiness. Beyond these personality attributes and traits, ethical leadership can be distinguished from more traditional leadership styles through the moral manager dimension. The moral manager dimension of ethical leadership captures the proactive

behaviours by which the ethical leader influences the followers 'actions and beliefs about ethics. These proactive efforts include communicating high performance expectations, role-modelling behaviours that are normatively appropriate and good for the collective, using reinforcement systems to hold people responsible for appropriate conduct, and treating people fairly and with respect (Toor & Ofori, 2009; Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Brown and Treviño, 2006; Eisenbeiss, 2012; Naidoo, 2012 and Piccolo *et al.* (2012) further posit that a moral manager sets ethics on the agenda and visibly uses and communicates ethics to stimulate followers to make them more accountable for their behaviour. Moral managers really try to set an example for their followers on how to behave ethically by making ethical decisions and by rewarding the desirable outcome (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

A number of authors (Brown *et al.*, 2005; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Piccolo *et al.*, 2010) have identified three key elements of the moral manager dimension of ethical leadership and these are: (1) The leader's role in modelling through visible action, reinforcement, and communication about ethics and values; (2) is reinforcement of ethical standards through rewards and discipline (Brown *et al.*, 2005) and (3) two-way communication about both the positive and the negative aspects of ethics and integrity (Brown *et al.*, 2005; De Hoogh & den Hartog 2008). Such communication entails highlighting the ethical dimension of decisions, tasks, and situations, clarifying norms and role expectations, and providing guidance on the appropriate course of action (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Piccolo *et al.*, 2010). Practice what you preach, that is where credibility comes from. Importantly, the leaders must have an idea that the learning experience of reinforcement lies not just with the person (s) being rewarded or punished, but also occurs vicariously and anticipatory amongst those that observe the reinforcement actions of the leader (Cooper 2006; Lamboo, Lasthuizen, & Huberts 2008; Brown, Mayer *et al.*, 2009). Likewise, Bandura (1977, 1986) states that leaders must be attractive and credible role models. In addition, ethical leaders are only perceived as credible

and trustworthy when they act on what they preach, so that followers are likely to copy their behaviours (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Rewards should thus be made readily visible to other followers as well, not just those involved (Lasthuizen, 2008). Similarly, in dealing with unethical behaviour, leaders should apply a fair and balanced amount of authority in each situation, so as to prevent resentment and cynicism yet still send a clear message that ethical lapses are not tolerated (Johnson, 2005). In addition, leaders who are high on conscientiousness should easily apply fairness to followers also. For instance, they think carefully before acting, adhere closely to their moral obligations, do the right things not only for themselves but treat their fellow co-workers in a constant way as well (Kalshoven *et al.,* 2011).

Good leadership "must include strong morals and be effective at the same time because a leader's role is to utilize tension and conflict within people's value systems and play the role of raising people's value systems and play the role of raising people's consciousness" (Ciulla, p. 13). A good leader, in Ciulla's eyes, will maximise outputs from a follower and achieve the highest results without compromising ethical beliefs. This outcome involves many outside variables; however, to achieve this result a leader must first determine strong personal ethics. Only then can a leader potentially practise good leadership (Waggoner, 2010). It is thus essential that ethical leaders are aware of how their decisions and behaviours might be interpreted by followers, make efforts to avoid conduct that could be perceived as inconsistent with moral norms, values, and rules, and explicate the reasoning behind their decisions and behaviours if needed (Weaver *et al.,* 2005).

2.3 Ethical leadership and followers

Yukl (2011) defines leadership as the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done to achieve organisational goals and how to do it. The leader should be trustworthy to be able to influence the followers. A trusted individual is the one who behaves

consistently in a predictable manner, has integrity and keeps his/her promises. Leaders and followers share objectives of an organisation (Yukl, 2011). Even though they share the objectives, but the leader is the one who is responsible for directing the group of people towards achieving the organisational goals. Leaders should use their own behaviour to influence and change their followers' behaviour. This could be done by stimulating their followers 'higher-order needs and encouraging them to go beyond their own self-interest for the benefit of the organisation (Boonzier, 2008). Therefore, the relationship between the ethical leader and the followers is also important to be reviewed for purpose of this study.

Further, ethical leadership is of great importance in handling moral incidents and fostering employees' ethical behaviours in organisations given that good leaders are obliged to set a moral example for their followers (Brown *et al.,* 2005). Studies examining ethical leadership posit that it is significantly associated to employees' prosocial behaviour, counterproductive behavior, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Another study by Ruiz-Palomino and Martinez-Canas (2011) was conducted on the relationship between the leader role modelling and employee behaviour. These researchers found a positive relationship between ethical leaders' role modelling and employees' ethical intentions.

More specifically, these authors posit that the social learning theory is the most appropriate theoretical perspective to explain this relationship. The research on ethical leadership to date shows that ethical leaders inspire high levels of commitment and trust and foster desirable behaviors among followers (Brown *et al.,* 2005; Den Hartog & De Hoogh 2009; Kalshoven *et al.,* 2011; Piccolo, *et al.,* 2010).

The last part of the definition of ethical reflects the fact that ethical leaders consider the ethical consequences of their decisions and make principled and fair choices that can be observed and emulated by others (Brown *et al.,* 2005). Consequently, when leaders behave in an ethical

manner, they communicate the importance of ethics; and use punishment and reward systems to encourage ethical behaviour; group norms for acceptable behavior are formed and employees in a work environment will be less likely to engage in unethical behavior (Mayer, *et al.,* 2012).

Ethical behaviour is thus very critical to leaders' credibility and their potential to meaningfully influence followers at all levels in the organisation (Piccolo, *et al.,* 2010). Ethical leaders who are highly responsible for their actions can be perceived by their followers as effective (Kalshoven *et al.,* 2011). Thus, followers are likely to copy behaviors of the ethical leaders, which again should positively influence organisational effectiveness (Kalshoven & Den Hartog, 2009). In addition, leaders are encouraged to be open, approachable and willing to listen to their followers (Hurberts, Kaptein & Lasthuizen, 2007). To be ethical, leaders need to create an environment where followers feel comfortable and safe to talk to their leaders and peers about ethics-related matters; to discuss the ethical dilemmas they are confronted with and ask for advice; to be honest about the mistakes they have made; and to report any deviant behavior they encountered-including the ethical failures of their leaders (Kaptein, *et al.,* 2005; Huberts, Kaptein, & Lasthuizen 2007). In conclusion, Piccolo, *et al.,* (2010) suggest that ethical leader behavior helps followers see their job as more meaningful, which translates into showing increased motivation, efforts and productive behaviour.

An important way in which ethical leaders affect the self-concept and beliefs of followers is through acting as role models for their followers (Brown *et al.,* 2005). Moral managers consciously attempt to foster their followers' moral behaviour by setting clear moral standards and expectations and creating ground rules for moral conduct (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Thus, it is that Brown *et al.,* (2005), characterise a leader who behaves according to a set of normative ethics such as visible rolemodelling, transparent communication, acknowledging employee

behaviour by rewarding ethical behaviour and disciplining unethical conduct and also promote ethics to the leadership agenda as a leader with integrity.

2.4 Integrity

The first part of integrity is the judgement of whether a leader's actions are consistent with his or her words, and the second clause is the judgement whether those actions are consistent with actions deemed by the followers to be ethical and moral. Leader integrity is included in the moral leader's approach most notably discussed by Brown *et al.* (2005) and Brown and Treviño (2006). They describe the moral leader as the one who behaves according to the general concept of ethnicity and integrity. According to Brown *et al.* (2005, p. 120), moral leaders demonstrate normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making. Leaders who keep promises and behave consistently can be trusted or believed because they work or behave as expected (Simons, 2002, as cited in Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011). Similarly, Yukl (2011) describes leaders as being ethical when they keep promises and behave consistently. Thus, ethical leaders keep their promises and act consistently, in a predictable way. Similarly, Palanski and Yammarino (2007) begin their discussion of integrity with the general but vague definition of integrity as wholeness. Integrity as wholeness refers to something like the integrity of the hull of a ship, suggesting that the hull is watertight, or the integrity of a bridge, where the two ends are anchored, and the span supported.

For leaders, integrity as wholeness speaks to a general consistency among all elements of a person, such as the person's values, beliefs, words, and actions. Following the same logic, Furrow (2005, p. 136) supports the idea of integrity as wholeness and posits that integrity is the extent to which various leadership commitments form a harmonious, intact whole. This definition suggests that the key for integrity is the alignment of leadership commitments.

Likewise, Palanski and Yammarino (2009) consider integrity as a virtue, which is defined as a discrete component of good character. These authors further classify the various meanings of integrity in the management literature into five main categories and these are: (1) integrity as wholeness; (2) integrity as consistency between words and actions; (3) integrity as consistency in adversity; (4) integrity as being true to oneself; (5) and integrity as morality or ethics (including constructs such as honesty, trustworthiness, justice and compassion). On the other hand, Lasthuizen (2008) views integrity as the sense of acting in accordance with the generally accepted moral values and norms. To conclude, Kannan-Narasimham and Lawrance (2012) describe behavioural integrity as the perceived pattern of alignment between an actor's words and deeds (Kannan-Narasimham & Lawrance, 2012). Integrity can also be referred to as the consistency of leaders' personal beliefs and values. I can further argue that integrity will assist an ethical leader to promote honesty and mirrors his or her actions with their values and beliefs.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed relevant literature on ethical leadership. I began the chapter with a discussion of the ethical leadership and the differences between an ethical leader and just an ordinary leader. Acceptable leaderhip is ethical, effective, and demonstrates normative and appropriate conduct by displaying role modelling and transparent communiation. It stresses good employee behaviour by acknowledging ethical leadership and policy landscapes that promote ethical leadership in South Africa. The literature presented in this chapter shall be used in analysing the data generated from the participants. This chapter again concludes with a detailed discussion on ethical decision-making in schools and district leadership. The subsequent chapter presents theoretical frameworks that shall be used to analyse data generated in this research.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provided a review of international, continental and national (local) literature. This chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks of the study which are: Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) model of ethical leadership (multiple paradigms approach) and Khoza's (2011) Attuned leadership: African humanism as a compass. These two models were selected to complement each other where one had a shortcoming. These theories are explained below and their relevance to this study is justified.

3.2 Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) Model of Ethical Leadership

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) conceived a model of ethical leadership based on four domains of ethics. They grounded their model on four ethics which are: the ethic of justice, the ethic of critique, the ethic of care and the ethic of of the profession. This model is discusse below.

3.2.1 The ethic of justice

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that ethic of justice is based on rights and laws. They further posit that educational leaders and ethicists from this tradition have had a profound influence on approaches to education and educational leadership. Moreover, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) state that the ethic of justice indicates that institutions should teach principles, in particular those of justice, equity, and respect for liberty. Acar, Kaya, and Sahin (2012) maintain that, while ethical leaders may take success as their target, they also look for doing their work within the frame of justice, honesty and ethical standards. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) borrow from Sergiovanni (1992) in maintaining that there should be deep concern for the welfare of the district office as an organisation by taking into account not only the employees and subordinates but families as well.

Oliver (2012) opines that the demand for justice is the cornerstone for society and its leadership. In underscoring the significance of the model of justice, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) posit that the ethic of justice may take into account a variety of issues which include, amongst many, equity versus equality; the fairness of rules, laws, and policies; whether laws are absolute, and if expectations are to be made, under what circumstances; and the rights of individuals versus the greater good of the community. Oliver (2011) corroborates Shapiro and Stefkovich as he argues that leadership stems from the desire of social justice, the fair management of the interests of all the members of the organisation. Moreover, Oliver (2012) maintains that, where justice needs to be guarded, guardians (leaders) are needed to represent and protected the common interest of followers. Acar, Kaya, and Sahin (2012) posit that when ethical leadership focuses on justice, the behaviours of the employees are positively affected from the situation. They further argue that the practice of organisational justice evokes trust in the leader by the followers.

The relevance of the ethic of justice to education becomes paramount when ditrict officials make decisions relating to misconduct of the surbodinates. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) state that the ethic of justice frequently serves as a foundation for legal principles and ideals. Hence, Oliver (2011) opines that employees are not much interested in leadership but want justice. The legality of actions of individuals is sometimes relative. In agreement with the latter view is the assertion that, what is legal in some places may be considered illegal in others. They pose an important question of what is to be done if the law is wrong. The solution to the latter is to consider ethics to make fair and just decisions.

3.2.2 The ethic of critique

The ethic of critique has its roots in critical theory (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005) and emphasises that institutions produce inequities similar to those in societies.

Shapiro and Stefkovich (20050 posit that educational leaders need to comprehend that their offices are political as well as educational locations. Hence, ethics is not a matter of individual choice or relativism, but a social discourse grounded in struggles that refuses to accept needless human suffering and exploitation. Mncube (2012) avers that any form of shutting up the voices of employees undermines their constitutional right to democracy and justice as they have a right to be listened to. Smit, Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2007) assert that employers shoul be interested in the behaviour of employees because the attitudes give warning of the potential problems. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that the ethic of critique serves as a vehicle in the struggle against inequalities. Smit, Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2007) argue that ethical decisions need to involve the equitable, fair and impartial distribution of benefits and costs among the individuals and groups. In this study, this latter notion is most appropriate in that district officials need to create space for the voices of the followers and as such treat them fairly and justly in the workplace. Moreover, learners' and employees interests need to be prioritised. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that through the critical analyisis of social class and the distribution of resources, having taken into account divisions of wealth and power, there is the possibility that more knowledgeable, moral and sensitive district officials may be prepared. Kalshoven and Hartog (2009) opine that ethical leaders provide followers with voice, listen to in puts and allow them to share in decision making that concerns their tasks. This can, in turn, assist in rectifying the wrongs in district offices. Mncube (2012) argues that organisational decision-making processes need to be inclusive for everyone to own decisions taken within the organisation.

3.2.3 The ethic of care

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) argue that the ethic of care is significant, not solely to scholars, but to educational leaders who are often asked to make moral decisions. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that the primary responsibility of the school is to care for children (learners). Owens and Ennis (2005) argue, in the same line, that teachers' ethic of care requires the teacher to be responsive to the learners' interests and should make manifest teachers'desire for relationship and connectedness to learners. Further, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) state that educational leaders need to be both outstanding leaders and learnes who are willing to listen to others when encountering the need to make vital moral decisions. The ethic of care asks that individuals consider the consequences of their decisions and actions. Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) assert that a leader who embraces ethics in his/her practices is likely to demonstrate honesty, fairness and care towards others and should be seen to be dedicated to open communication and to involving others in decision-making processes. Ethical leaders need to put the interests of their employees first. Owen and Ennis (2005) state that human caring and the memory of caring and being cared for underpin the bases of the ethic of care.

Additionally, the caring educational leader is sensitive to the needs of the employees and acts in their interests. Kimber and Campbell (2015) posit the most dillemas district officials encounter relate to employees. District officials need to put the interest of employees first. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that leaders need to reflect solutions that show concerns for others as part of their decision-making. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) maintain that a caring leader does not tell subordinates to care but rather shows them how to care by creating caring relationships amongst them. Through shared moral values and honesty and caring, fairness and modelling ethical leadership, leaders can foster employees' work engagement (Engelbrecht *et al.,* 2014). Moreover, Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) contend that ethical leaders care about their followers and engage in frequent ethical discourse with them. Meanwhile,

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) posit that caring leaders devote their serious attention into thinking about negotiating and carrying out actions in the best interest of the followers.

Further, those leaders establish a passionate belief in themselves and their employees as creators and evaluators of knowledge, exhibit the willingness to respect and honour the divese nature subordinates, varied skills and styles. District offices are institutions established to promote social change and establish social norms. These institutions are dedicated to the well-being of employees, but employees generally are not in control of what is occurring in these institutions (Katranci, Singu, and Saglam, 2015). Yates (2014) argues that ethical leaders are concerned for others. Moreover, ethical leaders are those that promote collegiality and participative decision-making, treat their followers with consideration, and are fair to and care for others.

3.2.4 The ethic of profession

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that the amalgamation of the ethics of justice, care, critique and of the profession closes any ethical gaps that leaders of institutions may encounter. Threrefore, district officials need to have ethics as their guiding compass in their practices. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that professional ethics calls for a dynamic process that requires district officials to develop their own personal and professional codes that have to be inclusive of the ethic of justice. Thererfore, district officials need to consider the professional codes of ethics established by professional associations such as South African Council of Educators (SACE), and both the professional community and community standards in which the leader works are significant for the leader in crafting his/her professional codes of ethics. In a nutshell, the leader has to understand the community he/she works for and accommodate their ethics. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) posit that the process of formulating a code of ethics involves an understanding of oneself as well as others.

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) contend that there are possible clashes in the codes of ethics. Those clashes are when an individual's personal ethical code conflicts with professional code of ethics; when personal and professional code of ethics conflict with community practices and customs; and clashes between the personal codes among members of District senior managemnet to mention a few. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) attest that ethical codes set by the state and professional associations tend to be deficient in their responsiveness, in that they are somewhat detached from the day-to day personal and professional dilemmas district officials encounter. In accentuating their argument, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) draw from Lebacqz (1985) and Nash (1996) respectively, that professional codes of ethics serve as guideposts for the profession, and they display the highest moral ideals of the profession, thus presenting an ideal image of the moral character of both the profession and of being professional. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) further posit that due to dissonance or disagreement between what is set for district officials and what is happening in district office, there is a great need for district officials to develop their own personal and professional codes. In addition, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that leaders need to be take cognisance of community standards in their decision-making process.

Notably, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) contend that for district officials to develop their own personal and professional codes they need to understand themselves as well as others. Moreover, district officials need to recognise that the preparation of the departmental officials to live and work in the 21st century needs very special leaders who have grappled with their own personal and professional codes and have taken time to reflect on the different forms of ethics, having in mind the diverse backgrounds of the employees employed in the district office. In addition, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that for district officials, coming to grips with with clashes that may emerge among ethical codes and making ethical decisions in the light of their best professional judgement means a judgement that considers the interest of

the employees as of paramount importance in all ethical decision making. All departmental officials were expected to work under a code of ethics that is intended to guide their professional conduct in the field (Brown, Bessette, & Chan, 2006). With the above said, Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) ethical leadership model is most relevant for this study, as it provides guidelines for what constitutes good ethical leadership. I believe, through this multiple paradigm approach, that district officials ethical leadership practices in multiple challenging contexts can be enhanced.

3.3 Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model (African Humanism-Ubuntu)

As I mentioned earlier in my introductory chapter, that the aim of this study is to explore ethical leadership of district officials. I also decided to supplement the above theoretical lens of Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) Model of Ethical leadership with Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model (African Humanism-Ubuntu). Ubuntu is an African philosophy of humanness which provides a compass for direction of ethical leadership. So, ethical leadership from an African perspective is mostly related with self-actualisation, moral leadership, moral perception and unbiased dealing (Walumbwa, *et al.,* 2008). Therefore, ethical leadership is based on personal characteristics and qualities of the leader which are perceived by their employees as normatively appropriate like honesty and fairness. African humanism or Ubuntu evokes both reason and empathy as the basis for ethical leadership.

In the African culture and in the spirit of Ubuntu, even though you do not know the person who comes to your home in need for assistance, because they are human like you, kindness and generosity will be extended to him/her. Influenced by this spirit of humanity, Africans act out of compassion, based on an understanding of common human condition, recognising morality and dependence on one another. This implies respect for the other, helpfulness, sharing, caring, unselfishness, a sense of community (commonwealth) and respect. This is what encapsulates Khoza's (2011) model of African Humanism-Ubuntu.

To illustrate Ubuntu further, in the interview between the late former President Nelson Mandela and Mr Tim Modise, Mr Mandela as cited in Khoza (2011) illuminates this philosophy (of Ubuntu) when he says:

> *In the old days when we were young, a traveler would stop at a village and once he stopped he did not have to ask for food or water, once he stopped the people gave him food at the table. That is one aspect of Ubuntu, but it will have various aspects; respect, helpfulness, caring, community sharing, trust and usefulness.*

African genius lies in caring for people which is one of the aspects of Ubuntu. According to Khoza (2011), Ubuntu is a concept that brings to the force images of supportiveness, cooperation, and solidarity. It is the basis of a social contract that stems from but surpasses the narrow confines of the nuclear family to be extended attraction network of the community. Similarly, the late former President, Mr Nelson Mandela, describes Ubuntu as a philosophy constituting a universal truth, a way of life, which underpins an open and caring society (Mandela, 2006). In Africa, the *Ubuntu* philosophy is an ethical code that glues society together, lubricates tolerance and respect for human dignity. *Ubuntu* offers an indigenized African framework that would add unique flavor and drive to leadership. Khoza (2011) posits that Ubuntu is articulated in the Zulu proverb "*Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu"* which means a person is regarded as a person because of other people. In essence, this means in the absence of other human beings, a person was likely to behave like an animal. In the next section below, I therefore discuss various aspects of Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model in relation to my study. These are: Being, Humanness, Individualism, Compassion, Moral necessity and Commonwealth (Khoza, 2011).

3.3.1 Being

According to Khoza (2011), my being and your being are the creation of our collective being, the being of humanity itself. This leads to the proposition that we are necessarily moral beings because each of us owes existence to all others. This is not because others are useful to us but because we are bound by reason and feelings to acknowledge the personhood of others as we seek to be acknowledged for our own (Khoza, 2011). In metaphysical terms, Ubuntu is first and foremost a statement of being-the 'I am' in all of us. It declares that each one of us, in our separate lives, draws existence from the collective and we are only a person through other persons. It does not stop here. The divine and everlasting spirit of the Almighty unites us, while our ancestors who leave us for the world beyond the grave are ever-present to remind us of our spiritual bonds and duties towards community. We all exist in the light of a great spirit. These metaphysical statements make fundamental assertions about the nature of our existence that are not reducible to anything else. When it comes to Great Spirit we enter the realm of faith. The reach of this metaphysics is enormous. Its repercussions flow through all subsequent statements about who and what are; *ontologically,* how we should see the world; *epistemologically*, what our knowledge amounts to. Ubuntu recognises that knowledge accumulates from generation to generation. It is our collective knowledge, built on traditions that are culturally handed down, and derived from the study of the known world as well as introspection of ourselves; *logically*, what is reasonable; *ethically*, how we should act for the good of all. Ubuntu assumes that we are by nature moral, because it would not be possible for humans to exist collectively, or even individually, without an innate ethical sense; aesthetically, how beauty can be collectively perceived; and *politically*, how decisions should be made (Khoza, 2011).

One cannot exist as a human being in isolation. Interconnectedness is both a precondition of social living and the basis of individual and group morality. It affirms one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others, and hence respecting them, the philosophy is inherently moral (Khoza, 2011). According to Vogel (2012), moral principles express a sense of duty and obligation to others and are shared by a group of people. Beliefs and values of what is right and what is wrong therefore provide the basis of discussion and agreement within a group as to what is considered moral by that group. These agreements on moral principles then provide a foundation for an ethical framework, which provides a system of rules or principles that guide us in making decisions in a particular situation (Northouse, 2010, p.378).

3.3.2 Humanness

The second aspect of Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model is humanness. According to Khoza (2011), welcoming a stranger depicts the spirit of Ubuntu as deeply humane. The term 'humanness' is used to describe compassion. Based on the Zulu meaning of the word Ubuntu, from the proverb "Umuntu Ngumuntu ngabantu", humanness is the quality of being human, considering the whole of humankind as a group. Humanness implies that we are all in some sense bound to each other because we draw our being from the collective. In addition, to be humane is a feature of human nature and a quality of an individual or society system. To be human is to know kindliness to other living beings. When we come to speak of humanness, however, we got the deepest level, implying that one human being can emphasise with another because they take "their being" form each other, and each draw on the collective spirit of humanity (Khoza 2011, p. 88). In addition, to be human is to show kindness to other living beings. One should be specifies to promote happiness and spare suffering wherever possible. In this sense, we can talk of humanity as caring species or use the term to refer to the quality of humanity (compassion).

When we approach humanity from a Christian theological perspective, following the Book of Genesis from the Bible, we possess the knowledge of good and evil and every kind of good-natured or devilish behavior in between. In most other theologies, the 'human in us 'also knows good from evil (Khoza, 2011).

3.3.3 Compassion

The third aspect of Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model is compassion. According to Khoza (2011), 'Ethical Leadership' and 'compassion' are not words we commonly link together. Most leaders are conditioned to put business before kindness, to lead with their heads, not their hearts. The popular perception of a powerful leader is someone who's tough, strong and results-driven. The reality is that powerful leaders, amongst their other traits, have the conviction, confidence and courage to cultivate connectivity and compassion. Rationality, human reason is one aspect of being human; the other is compassionate and human kindness. To feel is an individual experience; but to share feeling is to experience, intuitively the pains and joys of others (Khoza, 2011).

Empathy is the foundation of compassion. The world 'compassion' is often taken to mean pity, or sympathy for suffering, but more broadly it means loving understanding applied to others. Where sympathy is a one-way expression of personal feeling applied to others, compassionate rests on the empathy we feel when we have knowledge of the inner state of others. It calls forth a heartfelt connection in situations where others are suffering and acting when possible, to help relieve it. Through how they are and what they do, compassionate leaders craft emotionally healthy and positively energised workplaces. They genuinely care for others 'well-being and are watchful to their needs, which they put before their own. They are aware of the impact their feelings have on others. They connect through empathy to keep them in touch and in tune with what other people think and feel. And they use positive emotions to inspire and dissipate toxic emotions that are discouraging.

The principle upon which we drive our sense of being is one of empathy leading to compassion. It is the reason, it is intuition; it is not singular but is reciprocal. It is not directed from the self to other, it encompasses all of us. Leadership requires intuition and understanding, no leader can get along and be effective without a leap of understanding into the hearts and minds of the followers. The strength of African moral philosophy is that it will influence a leader to exercise compassion when considering a decision (Khoza, 2011). He further argues that compassion rest on the empathy we feel when we have knowledge of the "inner state of others". Leadership without compassion is "hollow". To lead effectively, a leader should be ethical and moral. To lead you need to have a 'feel' for people, you need to have empathy. The wellbeing of the people you lead must be your absolute priority (Khoza, 2011, p. 81). As per Maxwell's keen observation, "leaders touch a heart before they ask for a hand" (2014, p. 11), which suggest that , for leaders to be effective, they need to connect with the people. Going a little further, Maxwell (2014) states that, "People don't care how much you know until know how much you care about them". To lead, you need to conceptually understand the problems, situations and decisions your peers and employees are facing. People around you want to know that you get to understand their challenges. You know the facts. Without a solid cognitive understanding of what's going on, followers will be able to connect with you around their projects and problems.

Ethical leaders care about connecting with the people they lead. They see connectivity as the conduit for almost everything else they do, and compassion is the key. Compassionate leaders inspire people with purpose, hope, optimism and energy because they resonate, emphathise and connect. They should ensure clear and transparent communication with the employees and clients. They should set an example for others. They should ensure expression of their emotions both precisely and candidly. Compassion and connectivity are not only telling social and emotional factors in creating vibrant work relationships.

Research reveals they are also key to maintain emotional balance, build up reserves of resilience, insulate yourself from the harmful effects of toxic emotions, relieve leadership stress and re-energise and renew yourself (Cropper, 2009).

It is worth noting that, apart from being compassionate towards others, we will need their compassion and forgiveness at points in our lives. We need the love and understanding of others, and when given it becomes a mutually reinforcing we can bridge the differences between us and learn to love each other as follower being. Compassion is the other side of what followers of Kant see as the rational duty to treat others as we ourselves deserve to be treated (Khoza, 2011). Being compassionate can encourage healthy relationships as well as can ensure a more empathetic work environment. Compassionate leaders always put others needs before their own. They create a tuning in with other thoughts and feelings. This is what Robert Greenleaf calls “servant leadership”. John Maxwell put it this way: Servant-leaders never pursue a mission at the expense of their people. Rather, servant-leaders earn the loyalty and best efforts of their people by serving the interests and investing in the development of those they lead. A servant-leader leads to see others succeed (Maxwell, 2010).

To be without compassion is to cut oneself off the very source of one’s being. On the other hand, leadership without compassion is paralysed. It cannot reach into the community and resonate with the expectations and desires of the followership (Khoza, 2011). When you are in a leadership position, vision, integrity and compassion are infinitely more important than the words you say. These three traits are very important to be an effective an ethical leader. Maxwell (2010) got it right when he said, integrity is all-inclusive. It is not something you demonstrate at home or church and set on a shelf at work. People of integrity do not live bifurcated lives; their morals, ethics, treatment of others and overall character are the same wherever they are, whatever they are doing.

Ina similar context, Mkhize (2008) refers to Ubuntu as the process of becoming a human being and calls for a mode of being in the world, which requires each person to maintain social justice, to be empathetic to others, to be respectful and to have a conscience. Ubuntu is further described by Bekker (2008) as the capacity for compassion, reciprocity, and dignity. The Ubuntu philosophy believes in group solidarity, which is central to the survival of African communities (Mbigi & Maree 2005). Ubuntu continually broadens the sphere of morality to ensure that leaders do not put themselves above others but seek to be at their service. Serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability is a natural extension of Ubuntu (Khoza, 2011). The first part of integrity is the judgement of whether a leader's actions are consistent with his or her words, and the second clause is the judgement whether those actions are consistent with actions deemed by the followers to be ethical and moral. Leader integrity is included in the moral leader's approach most notably discussed by Brown *et al.* (2005) and Brown and Treviño (2006). They describe the moral leader as the one who behaves as per the general concept of ethical and integrity. Similarly, Yukl (2006) describes leaders as being ethical when they keep promises and behave consistently. Thus, ethical leaders keep their promises and act consistently, in a predictable way. Furthermore, Alqahtani and Alkrdem (2015) state that an educational leader who promotes the success of all learners by acting with integrity, with fairness and in an ethical manner. They further state that an educational leader who promotes the success of all learners by acting with integrity, dedication, humility, openness, creativity, honesty, forward-thinking competence, inspiration, intelligence fairness and assertiveness. At district office, district officials need to act in accordance with ethical values, being role models, having an intellectual and moral influence on people, and providing individualised support (Cezmi & Toprak, 2014). Apparently, there is no true leadership without service to community and there is no interest greater than the "common interest-certainly not narrow self-interest" (Khoza, 2011, p. 17).

For Africans, we are more inclined to regard empathy, rather than logical necessity, as a driving force of collective duty to treat others fairly and with decency. On the other hand, Westerners are accustomed to regarding reason rather that empathy as the basis of moral duty. Reasoning is not enough. It does not explain or substantiate our emotional, empathetic connection with each other, which derive from a source other than reason. The people you lead also want to know that you feel what they feel and that you understand them on an emotional level (Khoza, 2011).

According to Frost (2004), all leaders create pain; it goes with the territory. In addition to sometimes providing inspiration and excitement, leadership is about pushing limits, setting new directions, taking decisions that are not necessarily popular with one's followers and they often feel angry, disillusioned, frustrated or afraid. He further argues that good leaders understand these dynamics and take steps to mitigate, minimise or mop up the pain they create (Frost, 2004). The same situation is happening to some schools; most of the time school principals get busier and more stressed, they begin to lose 'groundedness'. They become unfriendly and lose their sense of connection that is essential for compassion. They focus even more on themselves and how tired they are, which disconnects them from other staff members. Prolonged periods of discord like this promotes toxic emotions and behavior that easily spread to infect the people they lead. The whole situation creates unnecessary pain and suffering in the work environment. Therefore, an ethical leader who is guided by Ubuntu and who is compassionate would be sensible enough. For example, he/she would be conscious about his own feelings, about the impact of his words on the followers and he would be focused on others needs and feelings. He would be very much responsive and would show empathy to others. Compassionate leaders are in a fair situation of dealing with crisis, encourage followers to better actions and are effective and efficient communicators (Frost, 2004; Khoza, 2011). These

leaders have what Daniel Goleman calls emotional intelligence: the ability to have self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills.

While African, East and West have differences in how we understand compassion, there's commonality on some of its essential components. For example, Respect and Caring toward others, which is resonated by The Dalai Lama, who defines it as *''a mental attitude, associated with a sense of commitment, responsibility and respect".* Selfless and Unconditional: to put others 'needs before yours and not 'favor-trade', expect something in return or give or withhold compassion depending on whether we see someone as friend or enemy. *Compassion means to give selflessly.* And, Empathy: compassion is a deep understanding of the emotional state of another. It leads us to feel empathy, where empathy is what enables us to connect with others, which can lead us to feel compassionate. The dimension compassion is the value that illustrates the quality of understanding of the other one's problems and the urge for helping him. When Africans grow up, we learn that we are all interconnected and only by sharing and giving away we eventually receive (Khoza, 2004).

3.3.4 Individualism

The fourth aspect of Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model is individualism. According to Khoza (2011), "I am because of you; I am because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am" say all about an individual in terms of his/her relationship with others. This also includes *umuntu ngumutu ngabantu,* which could also be translated as "a person is a persons" through other persons. In addition, these views illustrate that I-as a subject-depend on you. Thus, my subjectivity is not driving force but dependability outcome (Khoza, 2011). This notion also strengthens by Dalai Lama's assertion when he says*" if you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion"* (Dalai Lama). These, roughly, are the teachings, the descriptions and prescriptions of Ubuntu (Mkhize; 2008, Khoza; 2011).

As I presented above an ethic of compassion, so it was noted that, Ubuntu takes plurality seriously. It is intended to ensure that all voices are heard. One would expect such an ethic to be inclusive rather than exclusive, that is, that it would include, not exclude; accommodate, not separate.

As such, the notion of agreeing to disagree emphasises Ubuntu's respect for individuality. However, be it perceived, within the context of the Ubuntu ethic, personal identity does not primarily reside in individualistic properties, but in relationships. Ubuntu defines the individual in terms of his/her relationship with others. Individuals exist in their relationships with other people, we don't form relationships; relationships form us. This is not to say that one's identity is being dictated by others. Rather, as Foster (2007, p.237) points out, in the context of the community that is Ubuntu, personal identity resides in reciprocal interconnection: although the community enriches, builds up, maintains and develops the community. The individual is the focus of community consciousness. We are gifted with our power and capacities precisely to contribute to the growth and wellbeing of society, and others have a right to expect that we will give and not merely take. Ubuntu excludes an oppressive communalism. Ubuntu, suggests that an individual grows more fully human, truer in his/her identity, through engagement with other persons (Foster 2007; Mkhize, 2008; Khoza, 2011). As an individual, I need to think philosophically about what I am doing and why. As humans, we need to take responsibility for ourselves and our actions. Learning and practicing compassion will help us feel more content and at peace with our actions. Learning and practicing compassion will help us feel more content and at peace with ourselves and more concerned for others because "I am because of you; I am because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am" (Khoza, 2011).

3.5 Moral necessity

The fifth aspect of Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model is moral necessity. According to Khoza (2011), we are special because we are moral creatures. Ethically, Ubuntu assumes that we are by nature moral, again because it would not be possible for humans to exist collectively, or even individually, without an innate ethical sense (Khoza, 2011). Ethical centeredness does not ensure that we necessarily always act morally. It does mean that virtue has authority over our entire being. It has noted that virtue seems largely absent in public life and justice seems rigid and impoverished. Among the reasons is the over-emphasis on thought and under-emphasis on feelings. Moral behavior is a necessary part of being human. Because we are all humans, the individual's moral sense is an acknowledgement of the authority of virtue over human interactions. Whether virtue is present or not in our relationships is up to us as moral beings. We ignore the authority of virtue at the cost of our consciences. Moral necessity has strong implications for the philosophy of ethical leadership. It makes sense to talk of a 'leadership imperative' that is necessarily focused on the common good. If all leaders are in essence moral beings, the leadership must at all times strive to do good and avoid moral wickedness. Virtue is leadership's beacon (Khoza, 2011, p. 102).

Ubuntu joins the broad category of philosophies that affirm the dignity and worth of all people, based on the ability to determine right and wrong by appealing to universal human qualities, including prudence and emotional intelligence (Khoza, 2011). Therefore, it makes sense when Riggio, Zhu, Maroosis and Reina (2010, p. 237) state that prudence is the wisdom that manages or dictates a proper balance between two extremes in a world of shifting contexts and priorities. Because prudence is critical, a leader cannot be ethical unless he or she is prudent. Hence, leadership is about sense and sensing, about thought and feeling, about insight into and harmony with the followership; so, as I mentioned before: no leader can get along and be effective without the leap of understanding into the hearts and minds of the followers.

In Africa, we say a person is a person because of other people. This also fits in the relationship between a leader and followers. Mutual dependence is the ethic of African humanism, or Ubuntu (Khoza, 2011). So, leaders need to be trained to exercise both mental and emotional intelligence. Therefore, reasoning is necessary because it cements society and affirms the values by which we are guided. Certainly, humans, must reason to solve problems not just technical problems, but existential problems about how to live and get along with others (Khoza, 2011).

Furthermore, Malunga (2009) posits that as a role model, the leader legitimizes his or her relationship by a commitment to such African values such as honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, compassion, empathy, dignity, and respect for others. Ubuntu is thus treated as ethical benchmark of African societies and provides a guide to the Africans in whatever settings they are in (Mangena, 2007). In short, to be ethical is a "universal duty". African humanism makes up for a deficiency in Western individualist rationalism by insisting that morality is an expression of the collective spirit and not merely an individual duty. Ethical leadership is an extension of this duty and spirit (Khoza, 2011, p.33).

Moved by Ubuntu, the community genuinely extends its welcome to the stranger because 'he is of us', a follower human. Not that we have calculated that it will gain an advantage for us. This behavior is conditional, it is concerned with consequences. It should be empathically not about advantage but about giving for the sake of giving because the stranger is human. Ubuntu predicates an absolute standard of moral behavior not related to pleasure or practical benefit because we are moral creature.

`3.3.6 Commonwealth

The sixth and the last aspect of Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model is commonwealth. According to Khoza (2011), we know that we owe our existence to the commonwealth of others and we search for the meaning of being in our relationships with others, modern brain science shows that we are equipped to open our hearts and minds to the realities faced by others. This is where the moral certainties of reason break down and we enter more complex and difficult areas where compassion may provide the answers. Commonwealth emphasises the link between common action and common benefits. It is about collectives and communitarian values. So, Ubuntu is a living force that bridges differences between people and makes shared vison and action possible (Khoza, 2011). In stark contrast, Western individualism is not satisfactorily rooted in the human nature, of human beings or in their relationships with each other. It lacks the essential dimension of common humanity based on both reason and, for lack of any single term, emotional intelligence, social awareness, compassion and spirituality (Khoza, 2011). However, the meaning that Africans give to the word 'personhood', recognizing that our person is more than individual personality but is our social being in the eyes of others. Moving to leadership, I feel that, District officials with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others and does not feel threatened that others are able and good. Ubuntu is the crux of being human. Khoza (2011) stresses that a good leader is a leader that appreciates that the success of others does not diminish his own success but adds to the good of the commonwealth. A leader generates trust because what glues the relationship between the leader and the followers is simply, trust. A leader practices introspection and self-renewal. This suggests the fact that man cannot live in isolation. Ubuntu means that each individual expression is ideally expressed in relationship with others. Ubuntu is a concrete manifestation of the interconnectedness of human beings.

Respect entails listening to the other person and it also involves humility, honesty and treating others as you want them to treat you (Khoza, 2011). Furthermore, good leadership strives for transformation too. A leader who embraces Ubuntu will see the public good as not just an aggregation of individual benefits, but as a gain for the whole community that is greater than the sum of its parts (Khoza, 2011).

The tremendous power of Ubuntu resides in its very simple formulation that is very person's being is dependent on every other. In African culture, smiling and laughing is very basic behavior, especially within the Ubuntu lifestyle. Empathy is not only related to the dimension compassion, but also belongs to the dimension of respect. In Africa, the idea of humanism has been identified variously as Ubuntu. Based on African Humanness, once people have a true understanding of themselves, they can gain a better understanding of others and so create more effective business and personal relationships. Ubuntu is about reviving the aspects of being in leadership. These aspects include respect for the other, helpfulness, sharing, caring, unselfishness, and a sense of community. It is an all-embracing intellectual, emotional, spiritual and psychological acknowledgement of commonality. Generally speaking, Ubuntu provides a compass for the direction of ethical leadership.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I commenced by explaining the origins of theory. I proceeded to presesent and analyse the primary theory employed by this study which is Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) Model of ethical leadership. Four ethical approaches for district leadership that were presented in this theory are: the ethics of justice, care, critique and the profession. An ethic of justice focuses on rights, law and policies, and concepts such as fairness, equality, and individual freedom. An ethic of care is described as relational and aligns with ideas of respect, love, and regard for others, an ethic of critique is rooted in critical theory and aligns with principles of social justice and human dignity and ethic of the profession is about serving the best interests

of the learner as the main focus of ethical decision. I further discussed the secondary theory used in my study, which is Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model. Briefly, this model encompasses the following: Being, Humanness, Individualism, Compasssion, Moral necessity and Commonwealth. As these theories complement each other, I utilised them to effectively analyse and understand the phenomenon of ethical leadership in one education district. The subsequent chapter discusses the research design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framing underpinning the study. This chapter presents the research design and methodological aspects of the study. I commence the chapter by discussing the research paradigm and philosophical assumptions underpinning the study; thereafter I discuss the case study research design. Furthermore, I present the research methodology followed by the selection of research participants, the methods used to generate data which include individual interviews, questionnaires and documents review. In addition, I discuss how I analysed the generated data.

4.2 Paradigmatic disposition

Any research project that is conducted in human sciences has to declare the paradigmatic position of the study (Creswell, 2009). Such a decision is important in that it reveals the relevance of the design and the methods that were used to generate data that would answer the critical questions. There is a general consensus among many scholars about what a research paradigm is and what its efficacies are. For instance, Creswell (2013) and Nieuwenhuis (2012) define a paradigm as a worldview that we bring to our research. A paradigm defines how one views the world and one's relationship with it (Flick, 2014). The basic beliefs include ontology, epistemology and methodology. Hartas (2010), Mack (2010) and Creswell (2013) describe *ontology* as the form and nature of reality that is to be studied as well as what can be known about it. They define *epistemology* as the nature of the relationship between the researcher and that what can be known. Basically it involves how one has come to know what one knows. Lastly, *methodology* outlines how or the process through which the researcher has come to understand the phenomenon being studied.

The ontological assumption (i.e. the theory of reality) in the study was that there were multiple realities for various participants as they also bring their worldviews to the conversations with the researcher and attach different meanings to them. In other words, the conceptualisations experiences and practices of departmental officials about ethical leadership and how this leadership approach may be understood and enacted differently by the participants that participate in the research.

According to Creswell (2013) and Nieuwenhuis (2012), there are four major paradigms in research, namely, positivism, interpretivism, critical and post-positivism. Each of the four paradigms implies a different way of social theorising. Positivist paradigm is rational and operates according to scientific laws and rules, interpretivism focuses on the meaning that individuals or communities assign to their experiences, critical theory is concerned with the critical meanings of experiences as they relate to gender, race, class and other kinds of social oppression and post-positivism which they believe in multiple perspectives from participants rather than a single reality (Nieuwenhuis, 2012; Creswell, 2013). For the purpose of this study, I opted to use interpretivist paradigm because it describes meanings and understanding of the participants' definitions of situations (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). Through this study, I wanted to explore ethical leadership perspectives, conceptions, experiences and enactment of ethical leadership in the researched education district from the perspectives of the District Director, Chief Education Specialist (District Office), Chief Education Specialist (Circuit Management), Circuit Managers, Deputy Chief Education Specialists and Subject Advisors, from their own perspectives and through my interactions with them in their natural settings.

4.2.1 Interpretivist paradigm

This study used the interpretivist worldview. Interpretivist holds to the assumption that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences and their meanings in relation to certain objects or things. This worldview propounds an ontological assumption that meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, Creswell (2013) contends that the goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views

In the case of this study, the ethical leadership of district officials, in contexts with multiple challenges, was explored. It was the district officials who clearly understood the various challenges they faced which impacted somehow on their execution of their leadership roles. To elicit the challenges district officials faced, officials themselves were the most directly affected people, hence they were best to explain their challenges and their responses to those challenges in the execution of their duties. Creswell (2013) asserts that interpretivist researchers often address the process of interaction amongst individuals, and they focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work. Furthermore, Creswell (2013) points outs that the researcher's intent is to make sense of the meanings others have about the world. In addition, interpretivist researchers often address the process of interaction among individuals, and they focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work, in order to understand the historical and cultural setting of the participants (Creswell, 2013).

As this study was embedded in the interpretivist approach, its ontological assumptions are that the researchers are in the continuous quest for understanding multiple realities. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) maintain that interpretivist researchers use systematic procedures but maintain that there are multiple realities that are socially constructed. Meanwhile, Creswell (2013) argues that interpretive positions provide a broad or wide lens or perspective on all

aspects of a qualitative research project. Researchers have a sizeable number of participants, whose interpretations of their contextual experiences may somehow vary. The study is concerned with the participants' interpretations of their situations individually. Therefore, this paradigm was deemed appropriate for the study because I sought to understand the subjective experiences of the participants when they executed their leadership practices in the district office and whether these are underpinned by professional ethics as stipulated by Chapter 10 of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and other pieces of law relevant to this study.

The goal of research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation. Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In other words, they are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction 'with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives. (Creswell, 2013). Thus, interpretivism researchers often address the "process" of interaction among individuals (Creswell, 2013, p. 53). They also focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants. Researchers recognise that their own background shapes their interpretation, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural, and historical experiences (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the researchers make an interpretation of what they find, an interpretation shaped by their own experiences and background. The researcher's intent, then, is to interpret the meanings others have about the world is often called "interpretive" research (Creswell, 2013). There are, however, some reservations to make against such views (McMillan & Schumacher,2010) who state that "It should be clear from above that the word 'qualitative' is not a synonym for 'interpretive'. Qualitative research may or not be interpretive, depending on the underlying philosophical assumptions of the researcher". Likewise, according to Goldkuhl (2012), the core idea of interpretivism is to work with these subjective meanings already there

in the social world; i.e. to acknowledge their existence, to reconstruct them, to understand them, to avoid distorting them, to use them as building blocks in theorising. ”The aim of all interpretive research is to understand how members of a social group, through their participation in social processes, enact their particular realities and endow them with meaning, and to show how these meanings, beliefs and intentions of the members help to constitute their actions”(Godkuhl, 2012, p. 5).

To conclude this section, in this study, research questions were broader and general so that the participants could construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons. The more open-ended the questioning, the better, I could be able to listen carefully to what participants say or do about the ethical leadership in the district office.

4.3 Philosophical assumptions

In the choice of qualitative research, inquirers make certain assumptions. These philosophical assumptions consist of a stance towards the nature of reality (ontology), how the researcher knows what she or he knows (epistemology), the role of values in the research (axiology), the language of research (rhetoric), and the methods used in the process (methodology) (Creswell, 2013). I realized, however, that the basic philosophical assumptions relate to ontology, epistemology, axiology, rhetoric, and methodology as central features of all qualitative studies.

Therefore, it is also important for me to consider different research paradigms and matters of ontology, epistemology and axiology. Since these parameters describe perceptions, beliefs, assumptions and the nature of reality and truth (or knowledge of that reality), as well as the individuals values (Creswell, 2013), they can influence the way in which the research is undertaken, from design through to conclusions, and it is therefore important to understand and discuss these aspects in order that approaches congruent to the nature and aims of the particular

inquiry are adopted, and to ensure that researcher biases are understood, exposed, and minimised.

4.3.1 Ontology

Goldkuhl (2012) describes ontology as the researcher's view on the nature of reality; and specifically, as he or she asks himself whether this is an objective reality that really exists or only a subjective reality created in our minds. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) maintain that post-positivist researchers believe that one reality exists but it can only be imperfectly known (never know it completely), and that the truth can be discovered within the confines of probability. For everyday example, they use the example of a workplace report, asking one to question whether it describes what is really going on, or only what the author thinks is going on. They further highlight the complexity that is introduced when considering phenomena such as culture, power or control, and whether they really exist or are simply an illusion, further extending the discussion as to how individuals (and groups) determine these realities –does the reality exist only through experiences of it (subjectivism), or does it exist independently of those who live it (objectivism). MacMillan and Schumacher (2010) argue that interpretivist researchers use systematic procedures but argues that there are multiple realities that are socially constructed. Rather, there are multiple realities/truths constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest from many different perspectives. According to Creswell (2013), people impose order on the world perceived in an effort to construct meaning which lies in cognition not in elements external to us; information impinging on our cognitive systems is screened, translated, altered, perhaps rejected by the knowledge that already exist in that system; the resulting knowledge is idiosyncratic and is purposeful. The ontological issue relates to the nature of reality and its characteristics. When researchers conduct qualitative research, they are embracing the idea of multiple realities (Creswell, 2013). Different

researchers embrace different realities, as do also the individuals being studied and the readers of a qualitative study.

When studying individuals, qualitative researchers conduct a study with the intent of reporting these multiple realities (Creswell, 2013). In this study, I made use of multiple realities of the various study participants to explore ethical leadership in district office which shall include the use of multiple quotations based on the actual words of different individuals (District Director, Chief Education Specialist, Circuit Managers and Subject Advisors) and presenting different perspectives from individuals when analysing data. To compile a phenomenology, I reported how individuals participating in the study view their experiences from their different ontological stances.

4.3.2 Epistemology

The term epistemology comes from the Greek word "episteme", which means knowledge. In simple terms, epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge or how we come to know (Trochim, 2000, as cited in Krauss, 2005, p. 758). Epistemology is intimately related to ontology and methodology; as ontology involves the philosophy of reality, epistemology addresses how we come to know that reality while methodology identifies the practices used to attain knowledge of it. Epistemology poses the following questions: What is the relationship between the knower and what is known? How do we know what we know? What count as knowledge? In the naturalist or constructivist view, knowledge is established through the meanings attached to the phenomena studied; researchers interact with the participants of study to obtain data; inquiry changes both researcher and study participants; and knowledge is context and time-dependent (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Within an epistemological assumption, conducting a qualitative study means that researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied. In practice, qualitative

researchers conduct their studies in the "field" where the participants are saying (Creswell, 2013, p. 18). In this study, I spent much time in the field to get to know and understand the participants and the phenomenon which is exploring ethical leadership in a district office utilising a case study design. In a nutshell, researchers need to disclose where they have positioned themselves in the study. Every study conducted has to contribute to the already existing knowledge. Therefore, this study is not unique and is not unrelated to the previous studies. As Yin (2014) posits, to strengthen the value of this study, the views of the participants that seem to be in agreement with each other should be used as quotations to corroborate each other. I made the interpretations of the quotations in my attempt to represent the participants' voices. Employing various data generation methods assists the researcher in understanding different behavioural patterns of the district officials. Yin (2014) claims that the use of multiple sources of data generation addresses various behavioral patterns of the case being studied. Semi-structured interviews, as the main method, and documentary reviews, as a subsidiary method for triangulation purposes, have been chosen for this study. Therefore, this study uses a case study to solicit various views of participants who function from varied levels of operation within the same organisation.

4.3.3 Axiology

According to Heron (1996), axiology is a branch of philosophy that studies judgements about value. The role that your own values play in all stages of the research process is of great importance if you wish your research results to be credible. Heron (1996) argues that our values are the guiding reason for all human action. Heron (1996), further posits that researchers demonstrate axiological skill by being able to articulate their values as a basis for making judgements about what research they are conducting and how they go about doing it.

For example, in this study I placed great importance in data that was generated through interviews. This in itself suggests that I place much personal value on the interaction with my participants more than their anonymous views.

All researchers bring value to a study, but qualitative researchers like to make explicit those values (Creswell, 2013). As researcher, I consciously brought my own values to bear on this study. This impacts on (1) my choice of research area, (2) what my research questions are, (3) choice of method, (4) research design and data generation methods, and (5) the analysis and presentation of the data. To deal with these issues, we should 'recognise and acknowledge that research cannot be value free' (Bryman, 2008, p. 25). So, I should forewarn my readers of the limitations of the study so that they could judge for themselves. In this chapter, issues of limitations were discussed.

Further, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the generation of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes (Creswell, 2013, p. 39). This is the axiological assumption that characterise qualitative research. In this research project, to ensure that the study brings value, I used multiple sources of evidence such as the multiple quotations based on the actual words of different individuals (District Director, Chief Education Specialist, Circuit Managers and Subject Advisors) to address a broader range of historical and behavioral issues (Yin, 2014) which in this study is the question as to how officials enact ethical leadership in the research district office. The converging line is developed in this study. Thus, any case study finding is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources (Yin, 2014, p. 120). In addition, the final written report or presentation included the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem and it extends the literature or signals a call for action.

To conclude this section, in considering research philosophy and approach, it is important to consider how the individual values of the searcher may play out in each stage of the research process. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) cite Heron (1996), who posits that our values are the reason for our action.

4.3.4 Rhetorical assumptions

Creswell (2013) posits that qualitative researchers tend to embrace the rhetorical assumptions that writing needs to be personal and literary in form. Instead of quantitative terms such as internal validity, external validity, objectivity, etc., qualitative researchers choose to use terms such as credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. Creswell (2013) further contends that the language of the qualitative researcher becomes personal, literary and based on definitions that evolve during a study, rather than being defined by the researcher. In a study of this nature it must be possible conduct a similar study in another field and produce similar results. Again, if another study can be conducted in this field it has to be able to yield the same results. Most importantly, in qualitative studies, the use of terms such as respondent is not encouraged but "participants" is. The findings of the study need to be relevant to the case studied and also be representative of the phenomenon under study. For this study to conform to the forgoing assertion, district officials from one education district office were identified as the participants, so that they share their conceptualisations, experiences and practices regarding ethical leadership behaviour in the district office. Moreover, this study referred to district officials as the participants, to conform to the conventions of qualitative research. This study sets out evidence that it would produce similar outcomes when conducted in a similar context, due to the nature of challenges that are manifesting themselves in district office in particular.

4.3.5 Methodological assumptions

The procedures of qualitative research, or its methodology, are characterised as inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher's experience in generating and analysing the data. The logic that the qualitative researcher follows is inductive, from the ground up, rather than handed down entirely from a theory or from the perspectives of the inquirer (Creswell, 2013). The research process for qualitative researchers is emergent. This means that the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and that all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to generate data. For example, the questions may change, the forms of data generation may shift, and the individuals studied, and the sites visited may be modified. The key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and to address the research to obtain that information (Creswell, 2013, p. 39). In this study, the research question are subject to change in the middle of the study to reflect better the types of questions that may be needed to understand the research problem better. In response, the data generation strategy, planned before the study, may need to be modified to accompany the new questions. In this qualitative study, I typically gathered multiple forms of data, through interviews, document reviews and observing, rather than relying on a single data source. Then I reviewed all the data and made sense of it, organising it into categories or themes that cut across all the data sources.

In this study, the attempt was to find out the understandings, conceptualisations and the perceptions of district officials about the ethical leadership in the district office. The questions are broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically will be forged in discussions or interactions with other persons. The more open-ended the questioning, the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what people say or do in their life setting. Thus, constructivist researchers often address the "processes" of interaction among individuals. Notably, the study is also focused on the specific contexts in

which people live and work to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants in this study, I will keep two sets of notes: 0ne describing the environment in which my study takes place and the other containing theoretical memorandum, such as observations which contradict or enhance your original theoretical ideas. These extensive notes are another important aspect of enhancing trustworthiness of research done within the interpretive paradigm (Babbie & Mouton, 2011 p. 275). The researcher's intent in this study is to make sense (or interpret) the meanings others have about ethical leadership practices in the district office.

4.4 Research design in qualitative research

Research design is defined as the methodological process of accumulating and rationally evaluating empirical data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It involves the accumulation, examination and interpretation of data in order to comprehend a phenomenon (William, 2010). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explain that a research design is a broad, general plan that outlines all the details, steps and methods on how empirical data will be generated in order to answer the research questions of the study. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) refer to the research design as a plan or strategy of how the researcher intends to generate and analyse data in order to answer the research questions. Essentially it is a plan aimed at guiding the development of answers to be obtained from research questions. Therefore, the research design outlines the entire plan of the study and describes the steps to be followed when one is conducting the study. Nieuwenhuis, (2012) purported that there are three major types of research designs, namely the qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Qualitative research design is an inquiry. The research design therefore includes information of where and when the study took place. It also includes details of the participants of the study and why those participants were chosen. In addition, it also contains all the methods of data collection and analysis that were utilised in the study. The research design for this study was a case study.

A case study extensively investigates a singular enclosed, confined or restricted entity (Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2010; Petty, Thomson & Stew, 2012). Creswell (2013) agrees that a case study is a detailed examination of a single system within a specific context. Wahyuni (2012) further emphasises that a case study design involves the exploration of a solitary issue which is usually current. Cohen, *et al*., (2011) affirms that case studies are very useful research designs to investigate real, true and modern systems. He also suggest that case studies can investigate phenomenon which cannot be probed by numerical analysis. The term case, system or entity may refer to a curriculum, course, incident, process, task, theme, action, exercise, undertaking, or a group of individuals linked together within a particular context (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Petty, *et al*., 2012). The context of the single case to be investigated may be characterised by time, setting or attributes of the participants (Cohen, 2011). A case study is also characterised by the use of many different sources of data and extensive data collection and analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Cohen, *et al*., 2011; Wahyuni, 2012). Wahyuni (2012) and Yin (2014) argue that the research design was the reasonable arrangement for the researcher to link data to the research question. A case study design was preeminently fit to handle this study because the design gives the flexibility to explore the understandings, experiences and practices of ethical leadership in South Africa and its implications in public offices such as a district office. Cronin (2014) and Yin (2014) posit that researchers making use of case study design generated an excellent method for gathering data to provide evidence for the sequence and the reasons the interviewee experiences occurred in a particular manner. In short, the research design describes the steps one has to follow in conducting one's study.

Creswell (2013, p.5) further defines it as "…the entire process of research from conceptualising a problem to writing research questions, and on data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing." In addition, Creswell (2013) posits that there are three types of research designs namely the qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods.

Creswell (2013, p. 11) also suggests that novice researchers should guard against choosing more than one approach in their research and it was for this reason that I foregrounded my research project in a qualitative approach utilising a multi-site case study design. As a novice researcher, I felt utilising one design (a qualitative case study design) was sufficient in view of what it could do to assist me in terms of my study aims. Schurink (2011) posit that qualitative researchers are interested in the meaning participants give to their life experiences; how they create their worlds and what significance they attribute to their experiences. These researchers state that qualitative researchers use some form of a case study to immerse themselves in the activities of a single person or a small number of people in order to obtain an intimate familiarity with their social words and to look at patterns in the research participants' lives, words and actions in the context of the case as a whole. Similarly, in my own study, I wanted to explore ethical leadership perspectives, conceptions, experiences and enactment of ethical leadership in the researched district office and what significance they attributed to those experiences and how they were responding to it. For purposes of this study, I believed this could be accomplished by utilising a case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal. This is discussed further in the sampling section of this chapter.

In addition, Creswell (2013) states that qualitative research involves a closer attention to the interpretive nature of inquiry and positioning the study within the political, social and cultural context of the researchers, the participants and the readers of the study. Furthermore, Creswell (2013) suggests that in order for qualitative researchers to study a human problem, the generation of data occurs in a natural setting where the participants experience the issue or problem under study, the researcher becomes sensitive to the people and places under study; the qualitative researchers become key research instruments collecting data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior and interviewing participants. According to Creswell (2013), they do not tend to use or rely on questionnaires or instruments developed by

other researchers. Likewise, qualitative researchers use multiple sources of data such as interviews, observations and documents, rather than rely on a single data source. Similarly, when analysing data, qualitative researchers also often use a theoretical lens to view their studies and, in addition, this form of research makes an interpretation of what qualitative researchers see, hear and understand (Creswell, 2013). In line with Creswell, I generated my data utilising various methods and this assisted me in triangulation. I also performed my analysis from the bottom up (deductive analysis), i.e. from the perspective of the participant.

Moreover, qualitative, researchers attempt to develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study. This involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in the situation, and generally sketching the larger picture of what emerges. The final written report includes the voices of participants, the reflectivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem and it extends the literature or signals a call to action as suggested by Creswell (2013), when presenting and analysing data. Since I foregrounded my research project in qualitative research, I also used multiple sources to generate data, also used inductive rather than deductive data analysis pattern or themes; also focused on the participants' meanings of the issues rather than those of a researcher; had particular theories (which were presented and discussed in Chapter Three) that I utilised to analyse and interpret data; and, as a researcher. I also had to make an interpretation of what I saw, heard, observed and understood.

4.5 Research methodology

As indicated above, this was a qualitative study utilising a case study design of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal. MacMillan and Schumacher (2010) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) mention three types of strategies of enquiry, which are: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. However, in this study qualitative enquiry was used. Qualitative methodology explores multiple realities and seeks to understand social situations

from the participants' perspectives. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) and McMillan (2010) report that, of the three methodologies, qualitative and quantitative are used frequently to identify various modes of enquiry or approaches to research. However, there is an increase in the use of mixed methods by reserachers.

This view is corroborated by Mirriam (2009) and Schensul (2012) who state that qualitative researchers are interested in comprehending how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. Further, qualitative researchers believe that their task is to acquire insight and develop an understanding by getting closer to the data in order to understand from the perspectives of those being studied and to obtain social knowledge (Merriam, 2009). In addition, Terre-Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006) also state that qualitative methods try to describe and interpret people's feelings and experiences in human terms. In short, qualitative research places more emphasis on the study of the phenomena from the perspectives of insiders (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer, 2012). My study was a case study of one education district. This research approach suited my study perfectly as I sought to understand, from the district official's perspectives, their conceptions, experiences and enactment of ethical leadership in the district office.

I am aware of the possible pitfalls and limitations that are inherent in case study research, as well as its advantages as compared to other research methodologies. In addition, the data was generated from multiple methods (that is, interviews, and documents review). In other words, a case study involves being where the action is, taking evidence from the participants. Case study also has limitations and pitfalls. It can be lengthy because it provides detailed information about the case, for instance, the ten participants provided a lengthy account of their experiences. Case study is prone to bias because it entails personal impressions. In order to avoid biaseness, the researcher employed different techniques. Semi-structured interviews, as the main method, and documentary reviews and questionnaires as a subsidiary method for triangulation purposes

purposes, have been chosen for this study. Therefore, this study uses a case study to solicit various views of participants who function from varied levels of operation within the same district office (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Cohen, *et al.,* 2011). Silverman (2010) posits that the case study is not generalisable. It means that it is not possible to generalise from one case to another.

4.6 Selection of research participants

A sampling is a small proportion of the population that is selected for observation and analysis (Best & Kahn, 2006). Sampling in qualitative research usually relies on small numbers with the aim of studying the phenomenon in depth and detail (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton 1990). The goal of qualitative research can be stated as *"in-depth understanding"*. Participants are conveniently selected to ensure the quality of data collected (Creswell, 2006). All qualitative research uses the design strategies of emergent design flexibility and purposeful sampling, and most use naturalistic inquiry. These design strategies indicate that the research is a work in progress that may change as the data are generated and samples are selected for their usefulness rather than for randomness. The concept of purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research. This means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study.

Decisions need to be made about who or what should be sampled, what form the sampling will take, and how many people or sites need to be sampled (Creswell, 2013, p. 125). Best and Kahn (2006, p. 19) further state that purposeful sampling is often used in qualitative research studies. The researcher used the District Organogram to purposively select those individuals who hold rich information, those who are the most interesting, and those who manifest the charactersistics of the greates interest to the researcher. The research is thus aimed at explaining a phenomenon rather than making a generalisation (Best & Khan, 2006). According to Marshall

and Rossman (2006), sampling can change during a study and researchers need to be flexible, but despite this, plan as much as possible for their sampling strategy.

The participants of this study included a District Director, three Chief Education Specialists (Circuit Management Centre), three Chief Education Specialist (District Office), (CES's) three Deputy Chief Education Specialist (DCES's) and three Subject Advisors. The above mentioned participants were purposively selected because they are known to provide important information that could not be obtained from other sampling designs. In addition, the researcher used the District Organogram to purposively select those individuals on the basis of position they held in the district office under study (Gray, 2014). Gray (2014) also posits that purposive samples are chosen because they are known to provide important information that could not be obtained from other sampling designs. They would also, because of their position, be involved in numerous activities since they are managers and section heads. In view of these reasons section heads would therefore probably be very aware and knowledgeable about many ethical and unethical leadership practices within the Department of Basic Education. They could also potentially provide information about the reasons why these types of behaviours occur. As managers they could also offer solutions to unethical conduct and strategies to promote ethical behaviour and ethical leadership in the District and possibly schools. The participants in this study were therefore purposively and conveniently sampled.

The participants were guaranteed anonymity by withholding their real names from all parts of this study. Instead pseudonyms were utilised. Furthermore, consent letters were signed by participants indicating their understanding that they were interviewed and audiotaped. The contents of the interviews, audiotapes, and the field notes were used for data collection purposes only. All participants were also notified of their rights to withdraw from this study at any time and for any reason, without incurring any penalty.

4.7 Data generation methods

There are two major approaches to generating data about a phenomenon (Kumar, 2011). The data can be generated as primary data or as secondary data (Kumar, 2011). Data generated using the primary data approach is said to be generated from the primary sources. The primary sources in this study included finding out first-hand data through interviewing and questionnaires. Secondary resources include documents such as census, personal records, earlier research, and so forth. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggest five major methods for data generation which are questionnaires, interviews, document review, focus group, and the use of of audio-visual materials. However, this study only used interviews, document reviews and questionnaires.

Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) propound eight main kinds of data generation methods which include: interviews, accounts, observations, tests, personal constructs, role playing, and visual media. Creswell (2013) states that the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the phenomenon and the research question. In a nutshell, the data generation methods are significant in generating the data that provides answers to the problem or research questions. Out of the numerous mentioned data methods, interviews, and documents review were chosen for this study, so as to yield relevant and rich data.

Yin (2012) posits that that good case studies benefit from having multiple source of evidence. It was for that reason that this study utilises various data generation methods such as semi-structured interviews, documents reviews and questionnaires in this study. This also allowed me to ensure triangulation. Cohen, *et al.* (2011, p.141), Moore, *et al.* (2012) define triangulation as finding agreement among evidence collected from multiple sources and utilising various methods. Triangulation also increases the validity and trustworthiness (credibility) of findings. Further, according to Cohen, *et al.*, (2011, p. 141), the advantages of the multi-methods

approach in social research are manifold. Triangulation techniques in the social sciences attempt to explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and in doing so, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data.

In contrast, using a single method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality being explored. The researcher needs to be confident that the data generated are not simply artefacts of one specific method of collection. Such confidence can only be achieved, as far as nomothetic research is concerned, when different methods of date collection yield the same results. In addition, the more methods contrast with each other, the greater the researcher's confidence. If for example, the results of a questionnaire survey correspond to those of an observational study of the same phenomena, the more the researcher will be confident about the findings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Triangulation may also utilise either normative or interpretive techniques; or it may draw on methods from both these approaches and use them in combination. In addition, according to Cohen, *et al.* (2011), triangulation is intended as a check on members' construction data.

An interview schedule or guide was crafted in advance to guide the semi-structured interviews I held with participants. Schedules were also crafted for both questionnaires and documents review. Greef (2010) maintains that having a schedule beforehand forces the researcher to think explicitly about what s/he hopes the interview might cover. It also forces the researcher to think of difficulties that might be encountered, for example in terms of wording the questions or sensitive areas; the researcher also has to think about the broad range of themes or question areas to be covered in the interview. The areas must then be arranged into the most appropriate sequence (from simple to complex, and from broad to more specific, in order to allow the participants to gradually adjust to the pattern of the interview schedule). Greef (2010) also

states that questions should follow a logical sequence; be limited to a few questions only and should ensure that they cover the topic thoroughly.

4.7.1 Interviews

Nieuwenhuis (2012) argues that an interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions in order to get relevant information regarding main issues being investigated. In the context of research, interviews are used to generate data that will assist in answering the research questions. The purpose of conducting interviews is to share ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participant (Niewenhuis, 2012). This suggests that an interview can be viewed as an oral questionnaire, since the interviewee provides an oral response as opposed to writing a response. The purpose of qualitative interviews is to see the world through the eyes of the participants. The participants can be valuable sources of information, provided they are used correctly. In the context of this study, the aim of using interviews was to obtain rich descriptive data that would help to understand the participants' construction of knowledge and social reality. Chen, *et al.,* (2011) posit that interviews can lead to subjectivity and bias with regard to the interviewer.

Niewenhuis (2012) postulates that in a qualitative research we differentiate between open-ended, semi-structured and structured interviews. An open-ended interview often takes the form of a discussion with the purpose that the researcher explores with the participant her or his views, ideas, beliefs and attitudes about certain events or phenomena (Niewenhuis, 2012). Semi-structured interviews can be used in research to corroborate data emerging from other data sources. Lastly, in the structured interview, questions are detailed and developed in advance, and these are much the same as survey research (Niewenhuis, 2012). Given the advantages and disadvantages of structured and semi-structured interviews. I opted for the semi-structured interviews due to their more advantages over structured interviews.

4.7.2 Semi-structured interviews

Creswell (2013) posits that semi-structured interviews are the most commonly used type of interviews in qualitative social research. Interview guides with a set of questions are prepared when one is using semi-structured interviews. I needed to gather information about the understandings, experiences and enactment of ethical leadership in one education district from the perspectives of the district officials such as District Director, Chief Education Specialists Deputy Chief Education Specialists, Circuit Managers and Subject Advisors. Consistency is important in semi-structured interviews, therefore, I gave all the participants individual questions (Merriam, 2009). I encouraged participants to talk about their experiences in response to the open-ended questions. However, the ordering of further questions was determined by their individual responses. A semi-structured method was chosen in this study as the most appropriate method to achieve research aims. The study largely draws on semi-structured interviews as its primary source of empirical data-gathering. Semi-structured interviews form the major technique for data generation in this study. In addition, semi-structured interview has some flexibility and allows the researcher to explore more questions and allows the participants the opportunity for deep reflection. In a semi-structured interview conducted from an interpretive viewpoint, it is not only the response of the interviewee to a given a question that is of interest, but also the manner in which it is interpreted by the interviewee (Downling & Brown, 2010).

The participants were district officials. All of them were sixteen and I had to conduct sixteen sessions of interviews. As they were interviewed they brought varied and comprehensive responses about their respective offices. Nieuwenhuis (2012) argues that semi-structured interviews allow for further questioning and discussion as inspired by the initial responses, with the discussion yielding rich insights as it may differ from the original question. Moreover,

the semi-structured interviews make allowances to seek clarification and elaborating during the interview process (Dawson, 2009); Cohen, *et al.,* 2011; Nieuwenhuis, 2012). I probed deeper into the responses given by the participants. The participants felt more relaxed engaging in dialogue to elicit information.

Prior to the interview the date, time and venue were negotiated with the interviewees. I informed each participant that the interview was expected to last about half an hour. I outlined the full purpose of the research and how the interview data was going to be used. The interview took place in the following places under severe Covid 19 restrictions: District Board Room, Offices or at home. Social distancing was practiced during interviews, with seating arrangements of more than 1.5 metres apart. Hand sanitizers were provided for the participants. For interviews conducted with participants partaking from home, interviews were conducted telephonically at a time and place that was suitable for the interviewees. Some scholars like Cohen *et.,al* 2012); argues that the ideal location is where there are no interruptions and distractions. I conducted the interviews in a place that was physically and emotionally comfortable for the participants. They made their choices about the right place where they would feel comfortable and not distracted during our conversations. I also informed the participants about recording the interviews. According to Check and Schutt (2012), data recording is a process that involves the recording of information using a voice-recorder during the process of the interviews. The interviews took approximately 30 minutes and I relied mainly on audio-recording as the participants had consented to be tape-recorded. I chose to use the voice-recorder since I assumed this was the most suitable method of picking up the real responses by the participants, thereby ensuring the accuracy of the data captured. The use of voice-recorder also allowed me to concentrate on the interview and the participants' responses.

There were few limitations and drawbacks in the semi-structured interviews as it is time-consumption. To mention a few, semi-structured interviews are prone to bias (Merriam, 2009;

Bertram and Christiansen, 2014). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) posit that semi-structured interviews are prone to bias and unfairness on the part of the interviewer. In addition, semi-structured interviews can be time exhaustive. The process of conducting interviews, transcribing them, analysing the data, providing feedback and reporting is time-consuming. To circumvent this challenge, I crafted an interview schedule in advance to guide the semi-structured interviews.

In addressing issues of bias, I prepared an individual interview schedule to avoid ambiguity and to ensure some form of consistency, sequence and phrasing of the main questions. I used interview schedules based on ethical leadership. Kumar (2011) posits that an interview schedule is a written list of questions, open-ended or closed-ended, prepared for use by the interviewer in a person-to-person interaction. I prepared an interview guide prior to the interviews with suggested questions as this helped to structure the course of the interview to follow. Dowling and Brown (2010) contend that through the interview technique, the researcher may arouse the subject to greater insight into his or her own experiences, and thereby explore significant areas not anticipated in the original plan of investigation. Kvale and Brinkman (2010) suggest that an interview guide for semi-structured interviews comprises an outline of the topics that are covered in the interview with the suggested questions. I ensured that the questions that appeared on the interview schedule were adequately addressed. I guaranteed the participants that all information was confidential, and that no names used would be transcribed when writing a text. I spoke to interviewees in a language that they preferred and felt comfortable with.

Referring to actual interviews, I assured that the interviewee had time to respond. I conducted interviews on a face-to-face basis, while considering COVID-19 restrictions of maintaining 1.5 metres,providing hand sanitizers and wearing a mask during the interview. The focus was on describing, analysing and gaining understanding and insights into the perspectives of the

participants on the conceptualisations, experiences and practices of district officials about ethical leadership and how this leadership approach could be used to curb unethical conduct from one education district in KwaZulu-Natal. Although the interview was tape –recorded, I jotted down some key points to record any non-verbal cues. I made notes as a backup during the interview.

When an interview was concluded, the tape-recorded data from the participants was recorded and analysed based on the information that came out of this study. I assured the participants that the recordings were strictly for the researcher's ease of referencing and that they would be kept in a safe place with my supervisor and would be destroyed after they had been used. Tape-recording allow for the tapes to be replayed and the transcriptions improved. After the interviews were conducted I engaged in transcribing the data. Thus the draft transcripts were given to the interviewees to read so as to ensure that I had not misunderstood responses or even omitted pertinent issues related to them. I gave the interviewees a chance to make deletions, modifications or additions so as to clarify their responses. I further gave participants the full transcript of their individual interviews to read and verify. The table below presents an overview of participants and their qualifications and the number of years they occupied their respective positions.

Table 1. Brief profile of participants

	Age	Gender	Race	Education	Position	No. of years in the Post
District Director	56	Male	Black	Bachelor of Education	District Director	10

Chief Education Specialist A	58	Male	Black	Master for Education	Chief Education Specialist	08
Chief Education Specialist B	58	Male	Black	Bachelor of Education	Chief Education Specialist	09
Chief Education Specialist C	54	Female	Black	Bachelor of Education	Chief Education Specialist	10
Chief Education Specialist A1	57	Male	Black	Master of Education	Chief Education Specialist	12
Chief Education Specialist A2	58	Male	Black	Bachelor of Education	Chief Education Specialist	14
Chief Education Specialist A3	59	Male	Black	Bachelor of Education	Chief Education specialist	15

Circuit Manager B1	55	Male	Black	Bachelor of Education	Circuit Manager	09
Circuit Manager B2	48	Male	Black	Bachelor of Education	Circuit Manager	
Circuit Manager B3	59	Male	Black	Master of Education	Circuit Manager	08
Deputy Chief Education Specialist C1	54	Female	Black	Bachelor of Education	Deputy Chief Education Specialist	09
Deputy Chief Education Specialist C2	52	Female	Black	Master of Education	Deputy Chief Education Specialist	10
Deputy Chief Education Specialist C3	53	Male	Black	Bachelor of Education	Deputy Chief Education Specialist	12

Subject Advisor D	56	Male	Black	Master of Education	Subject Advisor	13
Subject Advisor E	54	Male	Black	Bachelor of Education	Subject Advisor	11
Subject Advisor F	53	Female	Black	Bachelor of Education	Subject Advisor	12

Table 2. Diagrammatical representation of interview participants in the district office

District Office	**Number of Participants**
District Director	**1**
Chief Education Specialist (District Office)	**3**
Chief Education Specialist (Circuit Office)	**3**
Circuit Managers	**3**
Deputy Chief Education Specialist	**3**
Subject Advisors	**3**

TOTAL	**16**

4.7.3 Documents review

Semi-structured interviews were the main method used to generate data. Besides semi-structured interviews being the main methods to generate data, there were documents that were reviewed as a way of cross-checking what had emerged from the interviews. Documents are any written proof that give information about the investigated phenomena and are existent with/without research being conducted (Fitzgerald, 2010). Documents review focuses on all types of written communications that may shed light on the phenomenon that is being investigated. In other words, documents are written records of events I classified documents into primary and secondary sources.

Other documents such as memos, Manco minutes of meetings, working papers and drafts of proposals are informal documents that provide an internal perspective of the organisation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It is against this background that documents were reviewed and used as a secondary method to generate data.

Primary sources were original written materials of the author's own experiences and observations. Secondary sources consist of materials that were derived from someone else as the original source. The author further states that documents can complement the work of the researcher and other data resources. Documents review took many forms, for example: history of the institution, memoranda, agendas, minutes of meetings, and administrative documents (Yin, 2011). These documentary records provided a descriptive and historical context of the institution, the cultural values the insiders attached to distinct social occasions and internal activities, and the overall social realities that existed in the district office. This revealed important information with regards to the context and of the district office. This suggests that documents reveal aspects that were not found through the interviews. For this study, subject to

confidentiality considerations, the following official written documents were scrutinised, for data generation that relate to the issues of ethical conduct in the Department of Education and schools (this include the SACE Code of Professional Ethics, South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 as amended, the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 as amended, the Public Finance Management Act and the recently published South African Standard for Principals (2016). Other important aspects that were taken into consideration while reviewing the documents were: to look at the availability of documents, trying to find out whether departmental officials were contextualised with the relevant information on the department policies and other relevant documents such as *Batho Pele* documents.

The Department of Public Service and Administration introduced the concept of *Batho Pele*, "people first" in 1997. This notion was expanded in White Paper on transforming the public service, also known as the *Batho Pele* White Paper, which provides a policy framework to ensure that *Batho Pele* is woven into the very fabric of government. The success of the *Batho Pele* principles (DPSA, 1997) of consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money will depend to the district leadership style. The eight principles *of Batho Pele*, as listed above, have more to do with human values and dignity than operational process. *Batho Pele* is a way of conducting oneself in the presence of others. It is a preparedness to acknowledge their rights and needs and a willingness to help them that add value to their lives. *Batho Pele* is a commitment to other people that echoes through the ages of human compassion. *Batho Pele* encourages the institution to provide services efficiently, without asking for favours in return for the services (Public Service and Administration (PSA), 1997). That was why I felt it important in this study to check with district officials on how they infuse the principles of *Batho Pele* in their daily activities and in the departmental policies. Reviewing such documents gave me the clue about the participants' views around *Batho Pele* principles (DPSA, 1997) that are in line with ethical leadership in the

district office. Following the *Batho Pele* principles will stimulate ethical behaviour to the district officials. Finally, Cohen *et al.*, (2011) state that documents can be accessed at a time convenient to the researcher. Access to documents was negotiated with senior officials of the district office in advance.

4.8 Data analysis procedures

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of generated data (De Vos, 2010). Further, qualitative data analysis is also a research for general statements about relationships among the categories of data. TerreBlanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2010) posit that data analysis involves reading through data repeatedly and engaging in activities of breaking the data down (thematising and categorising) and building it up again in a novel way (elaborating and interpreting).

Data analysis involves three steps, which are: the scanning and cleaning of data, organising the data, and lastly, re-presenting the data (Vithal & Jansen, 2010). Check and Schutt (2012) define qualitative data analysis as the techniques used to search and code textual and oral data, and to explore relationships among the resulting categories. Qualitative data analysis involves and focuses on texts, which can be pictures or any other images that the researcher examines. The texts that qualitative researchers analyse are most often transcripts of interviews or notes from the participant observation sessions (Check & Schutt, 2012). De Vos (2010) asserts that data generation and analysis go hand in hand in order to establish logical interpretation of the data. However, De Vos (2010) posits that data analysis does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not tidy. The data for qualitative research mostly of notes jotted in the field or during interviews or text transcribed from the audio and/or video recordings are essential and need to be carefully analysed (Check & Schutt, 2012). The analysis of data requires special care from the researcher. De Vos (2010) asserts that, once data is generated, it is prudent for the researcher

to make backup copies of all data and, further, to put one master copy away somewhere secure for safekeeping.

Field notes are detailed interview and observations notes that are made by the researcher. De Vos (2010) states that, in social research, the analytic process demands a heightened awareness of the data, a focused attention to the data, and openness to the subtle, tacit undercurrents of social life. Further, De Vos (2010) points out that identifying silent themes, recurring ideas or language patterns of belief that link people and settings is the most intellectually challenging phase of data analysis but that it is helpful in integrating the entire endeavour. Field notes need to be made of everything said during interview.

Tape recordings and dictation need to be transcribed to text before they can be subjected to the same processing as handwritten notes. Once the data was generated, it was immediately transcribed and preliminary analysis began. Analysis may be described as the attempt to organise, account for and provide explanations of data so that some kind of sense may be made of it in terms of participant's definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). De Vos (2010) states that qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. She (De Vos) further states that data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the qualities of data collected. From the above statements it can be said that analysis involves bringing meaning (sense) to the data obtained. In addition, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 461) state that "…qualitative data often focuses on smaller numbers of people than quantitative data, yet the data tend to be detailed and rich." Cohen, *et al.* further state that a researcher needs to decide earlier whether to present data individual by individual, and then, if desired, to combine key issues emerging across the individuals or whether to proceed by working within a largely predetermined analytical frame of issues that crosses the individuals concerned. Moreover, the researcher reads the transcripts in their entirety several times; this is done so that patterns are identified,

and the researcher becomes familiar with the data. Therefore, the researcher has to make notes on the margins to identify important statements and to propose ways of coding data. De Vos (2010) asserts that organising data is the first step in data analysis away from the site, which begins with an inventory of what the researcher has. The final stage involves writing the report as the researcher presents the data, an organisation of what was found through interviews and in documents reviews.

4.9 Issues of trustworthiness

In qualitative research the faith, assurance and trust one can have in a study including its findings is referred to as trustworthiness (Petty, *et al.,* 2012). Trustworthiness comprises of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Wellington, 2000). Validity in qualitative research refers to the truthfulness, intensity, extent and relevancy of achieved data, suitability of participants and the impartiality of the researcher. (Cohen, *et al.,* 2011). Validity is assessed throughout the criteria of credibility and transferability in qualitative research (Wahyuni, 2012).

It makes sense that when the findings have been presented, they are deemed by the research community to be trustworthy; otherwise, there is no justification for conducting research in the first place. The final product has to be as truthful. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the researcher to convince the research community that the process followed in conducting research enabled him or her to say with confidence what presented is to be trusted. Golafshani (2003); Shenton (2004); Barbie and Mouton (2009), and Kumar (2011) posit that trustworthiness in qualitative research is determined by credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Yin (2012) further contends that it is important for the researcher to check and re-check the consistency of the findings from different as well as the same source. For this study, I had the responsibility to demonstrate that the entire research process was trustworthy. In this study, I employed various strategies such as semi-structured interviews, documents review and

observations to generate data in order to obtain relevant information that would address my research questions. I used more than one method of data generation in order to enhance trustworthiness of the findings. The notion of trustworthiness incorporates concepts such credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Merriam, 2009). In the research, the model of Merriam (2009) was employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

4.9.1 Credibility

Yin (2014) conducted studies to determine the accuracy of qualitative research findings and the ability to demonstrate the study's credibility through verification. Credibility is a practice which demands candidates examine the review and the outcomes of the contained data to weigh if the review and outcomes are correct version of their answers (Birt *et al.*, 2016; Melaggan, Bezuidenhout, & Botha 2013; Trainor & Graue, 2014). I made use of expert research techniques to guarantee the credibility of this research, including triangulation and member checking. The use of triangulation of multiple sources of data provided credibility to a study (Yin, 2014). Marshall and Rossman (2016) argue that triangulation was an important technique to warrant the data analyses are trustworthy and qualitative research must use member checking to improve the soundness of the research. To guarantee that the study outcomes are reliable, researchers should use methodological triangulation to give a comprehensive appreciation of the phenomenon (Yin, 2014). Thus, I used methodological triangulation and member checking for this research as recommended by these skilled researchers.

I ensured credibility of the study where I listened to the responses of the participants through the tape-recorder. I ensured data credibility through using different sources, sites and even different data generation methods. I corroborated interview data with data from the documents review. Therefore, the notion of triangulation of data generation methods was implemented to try to and ensure that what emerged from the interviewees was either supported or refuted by what was recorded in the documents kept in each public office.

4.9.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts and settings (Yin, 2014). Black *et al.* (2013) and Soares et al. posit that the excellence of qualitative research anchors on reliability, trustworthiness, transferability, and confirmability. Soares *et al.* (2015) argue that transferability needed precise descriptions of the research procedures, the background of the research, and a concluding report to guarantee the research met the necessities of transferability. Cope (2014) states that transferability of a qualitative study was vital if the research outcomes were to make sense for readers not involved in research. Hussein (2015) states that transferability provided a window to outside viewers that the findings could apply to other settings, and groups, which aligned with the suggestions of Anyan (2013), Black *et al.* (2013), Cope (2014), Hussein (2015), and Soares *et al.* (2015, however, transferability is left up to the reader to decide (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

This suggests that the understanding can be transferred to new contexts in other studies to provide a framework with which to reflect on arrangement of meaning and action that occurred in these new contexts. I therefore, ensured transferability by carefully defining the research background and the expectations that were important to this study. A detailed description of each and every step I took was done, including the analysis of data. I analysed and described data for the purpose of giving the reader a thorough explanation about what was happening in the district office under study. I provided detailed records of the research process so that other researchers who wish to conduct a similar study in similar contexts can do so. In other words the findings of this study can be applicable to other district offices in the same contexts.

4.9.3 Dependability

Dependability is associated with reliability in the context of quantitative research. In qualitative research dependability is concerned with whether we obtain the same results if we can observe the same study twice (Trochin & Donnely, 2007). This view is substantiated by De Vos (2010)

who postulates that dependability means that when the study was to be repeated with the same or similar participants in the same context, its findings should be similar. Within the framework of the study I ensured the dependability of my study by following a careful plan of action for the research. Dependability of the study is achieve when the reader is convinced that the findings did indeed occur, as I said it did. Dependability audit becomes important as one of the techniques of ensuring that the findings of a study are dependable. Triangulation of participants and that of methods of generating data is one of the techniques of enhancing dependability of the findings.

4.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability occurs when a researcher shows that their study data accurately reflects the participant's answers and not the researcher's biased views (Cope, 2014; Hussein, 2015). This research study correctly shows the candidates' opinions. Most qualitative researchers connected confirmability to dependability in pointing to the neutrality and correctness of the information (Houghton *et al.*, 2013). Importantly, the maintenance of an audit trail in both data collection and analysis will demonstrate confirmability of the approaches employed (Wamba et al., 2015) I preserved a comprehensive audit trail of information collection, reviewing techniques, member checking outcomes, and study outcomes to guarantee confirmability.

To ensure confirmability, in this study, I ensured that my interpretations of what the participants had told me were checked with them. For instance, during the interviews, I did member-checking in order to verify my initial understanding of what they were telling me. As explained in previous sections above, even the transcripts of the interviews were given back to them to check accuracy. That is but one way in which confirmability can be applied in research, and in that way, I was confident that what I wrote was not based on my assumptions and biases.

4.9.5 Triangulation

Triangulation means a process of utilising multiple source of information (such sa people, times and settings) and methods or techniques (interviews, observations and documents), reserachers, theories and types of data (texts and recordings) to support findings generated in a case study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Krefting, 1991; Maree, 2011; Maree, 2012; Rule & John, 2011; Shenton, 2004). While Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that triangulation originated from the metaphor of radio triangulation or broadcast utilising directional antennae set up at two ends of a known baseline, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) argue that triangulation originated from the application or use of trigonometry to navigation and surveying. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) add that when the concept of triangulation was received in qualitative research it bore its old meaning which was 'verification of facts'. The idea was that different sources of data worked better than one source because many sources give a fuller and better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). According to Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2009), triangulation is used in a research project with the sole purpose of allowing the data to correlate positively. Based on the aforesaid statement, it has become clear to me that triangulation has the ability to enhance research quality and strengthen research rigour or trustworthiness (Rule, *et al.,* 2011). In addition, triangulation assists the researcher in minimising inaccuracy or bias resulting from the utilisation of a single method, theory and researcher (Rule, *et al.*, 2011).

As expected, it is common knowledge that human behaviour is not easy to comprehend, hence, triangulation, as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) put it endeavours to demonstrate the richness and complexity of it by researching it from a multiplicity of sources of information and methods. Krefting (1991) conducted a study in Canada on 'Rigor in qualitative research. The assessment of trustworthiness and a consequence identifies four types of working triangulation methods, namely, triangulation of data methods, triangulation of data sources,

theoretical triangulation and triangulation of investigators. In addition, Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Cohen, Manion and Morrison (p. 196, 2011; Lincoln and Guba, (1985), sponsor other types of triangulation in research, namely: time triangulation, space triangulation, combined levels of triangulation but this study employed only methodological triangulation (triangulation of data methods), data triangulation, triangulation of data resources, theoretical triangulation and space triangulation techniques. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that no individual item of data ought to be given serious scrutiny unless it can be adequately triangulated. District official's experiences and perceptions (conceptualisation) of ethical leadership in district office contexts could not be taken at face value, therefore to avoid running that risk; I had to triangulate in order to test their truthfulness by subjecting their views to validation through triangular techniques named above. This hopefully resulted in credible results, a well structured, well-cordinated and coherent data analysis and presentation of the findings. In addition, the use of triangulation helps the researcher to convince the reader or audience that the research work was carefully done (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Without disregarding Bogdan and Biklen's (2007, p. 116) word of caution that the term or concept of triangulation shoul be used and not talked about because it "confuses more that it clarifies, intimidates more than enlightens," in an attempt to filter in triangulation in this study, I used two different data generation methods or techniques such as semi-structured interviews and documents review (triangulation of data methods). There were also multiple sources of data because I had to interview sixteen research participants, namely one District Director, three Chief Education Specialists (District Office), three Chief Education Specialists (CMC), three Circuit Managers, three Deputy Chief Education Specialists and three Subject Advisors (triangulation of data sources). The data generated from ten participants operating in the district office and was triangulated by interviewing six participants operating at a circuit level so that they could validate the data by either confirming or refuting the data that had been generated.

I also conducted multiple semi-structured interviews with the same study participants as another form of triangulation of data sources (Loh, 2013). This served to establish whether there was any faltering by the participants in a way of self-contradictory statements. To put it exactly in Shenton's (2004) words, here individual perspectives and experiences can be verified against others and,eventually, a rich image of the needs, attitudes, or behaviours of those under examination can be constructed in accordance with the contributions of a range of participants. The theoretical frameworks of ethical leadership and attuned (Ubuntu) leadership (theoretical triangulation) further provided credibility to the study findings by adding a different dimension in the content analysis of the data.

The bottom line, as Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest, is that triangulation was loaned from natural sciences by social sciences with the aim of justifying that in order to establish the truth or fact you need to utilise more than one source of information (data). Furthermore, triangulation of investigators was done through involving other teams or groups of researchers with diversified approaches to the examination of the ethical leadership as a reality or phenomenon under investigation (Krefting, 1991). Lastly, space (site) triangulation was also done in this fashion, based on Shenton's (2004) understanding; perspectives of sixteen different district officials operating in one education district, managing twelve different sub-directorates, were conveniently sampled and utilised for interviews and documents review, as a result, this study involved these above mentioned participants with the purpose of achieving a diversity of views regarding ethical leadership. Shento (2004) adds that if the outcomes (results) that emerge out of these diffrerent offices (district level and circuit level) were similar, the study findings would achieve credibility in the eyes of the readers and other reseachers.

4.10. Ethics in research

The University of the Witwatersrand has a rigorous Research Ethics Policy that applies to all graduate and undergraduate students who are involved in research on or off the campuses of

the university. In addition, any person not affiliated with the University of the Witwatersrand who wishes to conduct research with the University of the Witwatersrand students is bound by the same ethics framework. Ethics in research are concerned with the beliefs about what is right or wrong from a moral perspective (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Further, research ethics are focused on what is morally proper and improper when engaged with research participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Interviews have an ethical dimension; they concern interpersonal interaction and produce information about human conditions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). In addition, the researcher has a responsibility to strike a balance between the demands placed on them and their participants' rights and values that may threatened by research (this is known as the costs/benefits ratio) (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Furthermore, there is a great need for obtaining the consent and cooperation of the participants who are to assist in the research and of the significant others in the institutions providing the research facilities (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

Each member of the University community is responsible for implementing this policy in relation to scholarly work with which she or he is associated and to avoid any activity which might be considered to be in violation of this Policy. All students have to familiarise themselves with and sign and undertaking to comply with the University's "Code of Conduct for Research". This is also corroborated by Strydom (2010, p. 56) who states that, "until recently professional ethics and conduct (in research) have for the most part been ignored". Strydom (2010) further cautions that anyone involved in research needs to be aware of what is proper and improper.

MacMillan and Schumacher (2010) accentuate the necessity of keeping the research innocuous to the participants. The principle of *primum non nocere* (first of all, do not harm) is maintained by ensuring the subjects (participants) privacy, anonymity and appropriate storing of data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Check and Schutt (2012) corroborate the foregoing assertion

by underscoring the need to observe privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. Moreover, the researcher must throughout the analytic process consider how the findings will be used and how participants in the setting will react. In addition, selected research participants should be negotiated with, early in the study, regarding the steps that will be taken to protect privacy and to maintain confidentiality. Further, respondents should be afforded the opportunity to review reports or other reports before their public release, to gauge the extent to which they feel their privacy has been appropriately preserved, while Strydom (2010) describes ethics as a set of formal principles which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental projects and respondents. Strydom's views are also corroborated by Litchman (2011) who postulates that a basic principle of conducting experiments on humans is that voluntary consent is essential. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 85) define ethics as "…a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others." What this means is that in pursuit of knowledge and truth respecting the dignity of participants takes precedence. Thus ethics are an essential part of every research project.

"The essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 91). Alston and Bowles (2003, p. 21) add that, "…confidentiality means that the information given to the researcher will not be divulged to others, except in reporting research results as agreed, and that the information will not be used for any purpose other than the research." Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 92) also state that another "…way of protecting a participant's right to privacy is through the promise of anonymity and confidentiality". With the above statement in mind, I assured the participants of anonymity and confidentiality that their names would be kept anonymous. All these aspects were of paramount importance in my study and were given due consideration when addressing ethical issues.

There are many ethical issues in research, but for the purpose of this study, the following were noted and applied:

Privacy: I informed my participants that I would not reveal information that would clearly identify them or their offices. Instead, *nom deplumes/fictitious names* were used for both their offices and themselves so that confidentiality was guaranteed. Participants were informed of the same.

Informed consent: Cohen, *et al.* (2011) posits that much social research necessitates obtaining the consent and co-operation of participants who assist in investigations in what the researcher is exploring. The principle of informed consent (to understand what will happen in the study and then agree to participate) arises from the respondents 'right to freedom and self-determination. For consent to be considered to be truly informed participants must understand the nature, purpose and likely consequence of a research project; given this understanding, they agree to participate without coercion, knowing that they can withdraw at any time (Gallagher, Haywood, Jones & Milne, 2010). Mitchell and Jolley (2007) also suggest that participants should freely volunteer to be in the study and sign an informed consent form. Consent thus protects and respects the right to self-determination.

As part of the right to self-determination, the respondents have a right to refuse to take part, or to withdraw at any time they so wish without incurring any penalty. Cohen, *et al.* (2011, p. 80) state that the principle of informed consent has four elements which are: *competence, voluntarism, full information* and *comprehension.* Further, these researchers state that if these four elements are present, researchers can be assured that the respondents' rights will be given appropriate consideration. In addition, Cohen, *et al.* (2011, p. 80) also state that informed consent requires an explanation and description of several variables, including, for example: the purpose, contents and procedures of the research and any foreseeable risks, negative

outcomes, discomfort or consequences and how they will be handled. Participants will be within their right to voluntary withdrawal, re-joining the project, rights and obligations to confidentiality and non-disclosure of the research, the participants involved and outcomes. The disclosure of any alternative procedures that may be advantageous and opportunities for participants to ask questions about any aspect of the research and signed contracts (informed consent form) for participation.

In this regard, I also endeavoured to obtain all the participants consent without coercion. These participants, as indicated earlier, were district officials such as District Director, Chief Education Specialists, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, Circuit Managers and Subject Advisors. Written permission from the relevant education authority was obtained and attached to the letter to the Heads of Sub-directorate as proof that the research project was legitimate and approved. The same letter of approval is also attached as appendix at the end of this thesis. Furthermore, I indicated to participants that they were free to withdraw from the project at any time if they wished without giving any reason.

Access and acceptance: Cohen, *et al.* (2011) also posit that the relevance of the principle of informed consent becomes apparent at the initial stage of the research project, that of access to the institution or organisation where the research is to be conducted, and acceptance by those whose permission one needs before embarking on the task. Cohen, *et al.* (2011) also cautions that researchers cannot expect access to an institution as a matter of right. They have to demonstrate that they are worthy, as researchers and human beings, of being accorded the facilities needed to carry out their research.

The first stage involves the gaining of official permission to undertake one's research in the target community. In this regard I gained access to the district office through arranging a personal meeting with the District Director, where I outlined the purpose of my research, and

a description of the methods that I was going to use. I had initially anticipated difficulties in gaining access to district officials since I was researching a rather sensitive area (of professional ethics), and was not sure how much detail of the study I should initially disclose. I informed the District Director and the participants of the exact details of the methods of data production that I was going to employ in the study. I explained as fully as I could and did not deliberately withhold any information. I worked well within the guidelines for reasonably informed consent. As indicated previously in this chapter, I also guaranteed the relevant officials at the district office that all participants would remain anonymous, and that I would not disclose any information that would identify the district office in which the study was carried out.

Ethical considerations pervade the whole process of research; at the stage of access and acceptance, where appropriateness of topic, design, methods, and guarantees of confidentiality, analysis and dissemination of findings must be negotiated with relative openness, sensitivity, honesty, accuracy and scientific impartiality (Cohen, *et al.* 2011).

In line with the University of the Witwatersrand Research Ethics Policy, before conducting the research, ethical clearance was obtained from the ethical Clearance Office of the University. The rerlevant authorities in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education were approached to obtain official permission and approval was granted to pursue the study in a chosen district office. The aim of the study was also outlined. The researcher also discussed the nature and scope of the projected study with them.

Pertinent issues surrounding the observations, interviews and document review were also discussed. Informed consent forms and issues of privacy were also explained to all the participants. Glesne and Peshkin (2012, pp. 111-112) state that through informed consent, potential study participants are made aware that their participation is voluntary. In addition, any aspects of the research that might affect their well-being and privacy are highlighted and

they are informed that they may freely choose to stop participation at any point of the study. This was strictly observed.

4.11. Limitations of the study

Limitations include the restraining and restrictive factors that delineate a study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The limitations of the research allow the researcher to plan the study within such constraints as access, time, participants and finances (Cohen, *et. al*.2011). They can include any features of the research design and methodology that affect the interpretation of the data (Simon & Goes, 2013). This study is limited to one District Office in KwaZulu-Natal. However, my goal, like Cohen, *et al.* (2011) is also to locate a small number of individuals who are making a commitment to work with me and to gain in-depth insight into the perspective and practices of ethical leadership. The sources of data will be constrained to the senior officials who would probably be most knowledgeable about ethical leadership practices in their respective sub-directorate and would possibly provide sufficient data about these aspects. The number of participants will be restricted to sixteen because of time and financial constraints. Finance will be another constraint as this research is not financed by any other individual or organisation and the researcher is studying at the university outside his province. That made it difficult for the researcher to meet his supervisor frequently. The number of researchers will be restricted to a single researcher which is me. Additional finance would allow for a greater number of assistant researchers to generate data in the field.

Finally, the research is in the form of a small scale interpretative study which is subjective and contextual and therefore cannot be generalised to other district offices. It could potentially unravel important issues which can be further investigated in different environments on a more extensive scale.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research design and methodology employed and the general methodological constituents that construct and locate the entire study. From the inception, I discussed the research paradigmatic assumptions which underpin this thesis. I then advanced to discuss the research design, research methodology, participants' sampling strategy, data generation techniques, data analysis procedures, ethical issues, issues of trustworthiness, triangulation and limitations of the study. In this chapter, I demonstrated that this study is in interpretivism (paradigm) and it has adopted a case study research design and qualitative research methodology. In addition, I engaged in an elaboration process to provide a motivation for the selection of the research paradigm, research design and research methodology to endeavour to respond to my three critical questions presented in Chapter One. It is therefore my belief that a clear and convincing framework of the nature of my study's paradigmatic assumptions of ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodological and methods were adequately presented. In the entire chapter, it became crystal clear that the study participants' knowledge supports ethical leadership practices that change reality, and these participants' perspectives and practices, in turn, produce knowledge. Thus, any knowledge production is not an independent representation or even reproduction of the research reality, since phenomenon is produced or created by power knowledge complexes (Altrichter & Elliot, 2000). The next chapter presents and discusses data on the perspectives of district officials regarding ethical leadership in the researched district.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR AND CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALISTS ON ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter was devoted to the research design and methodology that guided this study. Due to the voluminous nature of the data generated from the field, data presentation is subdivided into three chapters, namely Chapter Five, Six and Seven. This chapter presents the first set of data generated from the District Director and Chief Education Specialists in the district office. Chapter Six presents data generated from Chief Education Specialists and Circuit Managers at the circuit level, while Chapter Seven concludes the data presentation by presenting the data generated from Deputy Chief Education Specialists and Subject Advisors in the district office. As indicated in the previous chapter, semi-structured interviews were used as the main method to generate data. In addition, documents reviews and questionnaires were also used. In presenting the data, I also used pseudonyms to protect the research participants. The chapter begins with the general view of the majority of participants leading to the narrative that unfolds and conveyed through quotations and paraphrasing of the conversations with the participants, revealing major themes that highlighted the conceptualisations, practices and experiences of the district officials in exploring ethical leadership perspectives. A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal. The narratives are structured around questions and themes that lead to the identified and summarised key findings. A critique of the findings is then facilitated through the infusion of the research questions, literature review and theoretical frameworks that were explored at great lengths in Chapter Two and Three respectively.

In order to create cohesion, maintain focus and to remind the reader of the broad critical questions that were presented in the introductory chapter, the critical questions are represented here:

This study sought to find answers to the following critical questions:

- What are the conceptualisations, experiences and practices of research participants regarding ethical leadership behaviour in the researched district office?
- What are perspectives of the district office officials about the causes of unethical conduct (if any) among officials in the district office?
- How should the Department of Education minimise or eradicate unethical behaviour among the district office officials?

Further, in presenting the data, I wanted to ensure that the voices of the participants were not lost. To this end, "*verbatim"* quotations are used throughout in the data presentation, analysis and interpretation. The classifying of convergence and divergence in analysing data facilitated the use of inductive analysis that enabled the emergence of themes. Relevant findings are then analysed through content analysis as discussed in the previous chapter on research design and methodology.

5.2 Discussion of findings

The following responses were from the District Director and Chief Education Specialist of the researched district.

5.2.1 Contextual conceptualisations and practices of Ethics and Ethical leadership

Throughout the data generation process, I noticed that district officials were overwhelmed by the concepts of "ethics" and "ethical leadership" and they believe that these concepts were very relevant and interesting topics when one observes what they were currently experiencing, especially in the district office and education. In general, some participants felt that the issue of ethics was too broad and asserted that ethics was a set of beliefs accepted by a community and adopted as follows: a set of principles; morality; caring; integrity; creativity; vision; judgement; communication; knowledge; honesty and passion. The participants subsequently

elucidated that ethical leadership is a form of leadership that is underpinned by the same foundation of ethical standards and ideals. According to Mr Mageba (District Director):

> *Ethics is what is morally accepted or just a set of general principles that we set ourselves…When I look now at ethical leadership, to me it looks like a type of leadership that is transparent, participative and visionary.*
>
> (Mr Mageba, the District Director)

His statement was supported by Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) Further Education and Training (FET)-Curriculum Sub-directorate) who said:

> *Well, ethics, I suppose is how one would run the sub-directorate in terms of value orientation and with morals…Ethical leadership is basically understanding everybody's point of view. Informing everybody of what'sgoing on…*
> *Taking everyone into consideration.*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

The majority of the district officials believed that ethics was about moral behaviour, how a person conducts himself/herself within the Department of Education and in the community. Participants also emphasised this point by referring to days gone by when teaching posts were mainly occupied by the ministers of religion because these members of the community were known to be ethical. They further described an ethical person as someone who would avoid temptations, such as sexual relationships with female colleagues, to negate bias, conform to the ethical code of conduct for office-based educators and avoid negatively affecting the working relationships and the ethos of the Department of Education. In addition, ethics involved the moral behaviour of all involved in the institution. In this regard, Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessment Sub-directorate) articulated thus:

> *I think ethics deals with the moral behaviour of a person. It is about the manner in which a person conducts himself/herself in the institution and also in the*

community. It refers to the manner in which a leader conducts himself/herself within the public office and even outside the office. Long ago, not everyone could be an education leader or an educator. Only ministers of religion could be educators and ministers lived in accordance with Bible prescripts.

(Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist Examination and Assessment)

Similarly, Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) also emphasised that:

I think it is a good thing based on teaching that is happening in our institutions. It is also about the behaviour as well-how the people in the institutions behave and also the roles that they play in those institutions. All in all, I know that it is a good thing that people can observe and offer in an institution.

(Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

Likewise, one of the themes that kept cropping up was the notion of caring as a trait of an ethical leader. The majority of participants believe that an ethical leader should care about other people. Mr Mageba (District Director) further said:

Caring stems from understanding the environment. It is important for me as a District Director to listen and be receptive to changing times. Understanding times and seasons that are ever-changing is essential.

(Mr Mageba, the District Director)

He further added:

As the District Director, I have to understand the numerous ailments plaguing the workforce at this time. A leader has to walk in the shoes of a member whose health deteriorates and leads to underperformance. I have to understand issues of incapacity among staff members that stem from health, economic and moral challenges, to have a hearing ear. So for me it is very important to set a very high standard, to be an example to my colleagues of honesty, ethics, morals and values.

(Mr Mageba, the District Director)

During our meeting with Mr Mageba, (District Director), I observed that the District Director displayed exemplary conduct and cared about his colleagues. I observed him remind one of his subordinates about an Educator Assistance Programme (EAP) appointment. The District Director then informed me that his colleague had lost a family member, so she was going through a difficult time and she noticed that she was not coping. He emphasised the importance of giving individual support and the involvement of EAP. The findings showed that the majority of the participants in this study made sure that quality standards were being adhered to in their different Sub-directorates and in education in general. The above sentiments were echoed by Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) who said:

> *I always set a standard that in all our deliberations, we should aim at achieving above expectation. Excellent results/outcomes will never come from average effort. All of us should openly acknowledge whether or not we are making it.*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

All the district officials made a point that ethical leadership, in the district office, was to lead in such a manner that it primarily benefited the learners. The discussion so far has revealed that the majority of the participants had an idea of what ethics were. They revealed that ethics was about moral behaviour, how a person conducts himself/herself and resists temptations. The findings seem to be supported by Mitchell (2012) who views ethics as the moral principles that govern an individual's way of thinking and acting. Ethics can also be defined as that branch of philosophy dealing with values that relate to human conduct, especially with respect to the rightness or wrongness of specific actions and to the goodness or badness of the motives for and ends of, such actions (Gebler, 2010). This study also found that district officials viewed an ethical leader as someone who cared about other people, someone who had good character, who took good care of the subordinates, who was principled and displayed consistency in

decision- making. Similarly, Brown (2014) seems to corroborate the views of the participants about thorough investigation when solving any problem. Problem solving begins with gathering the necessary information and identifying problem areas. Alternative are then generated, along with forecasts of possible results. An alternative is chosen and a detailed plan of action is formulated. The decision is implemented, an alternative is chosen, and finally an evaluation of the decision is made (Brown, 2014). District officials have ethical responsibilities which means they must be knowledgeable and can use or make moral judgements and decisions with the dignity of each person in mind, while promoting equality in all aspects of education (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). District officials should use an ethical reasoning framework when making decisions. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005, p. 25) further suggest that decisions made in the best interests of the institutions are those incorporating individual rights, accepting and teaching staff-members to accept responsibility for their actions.

The findings were also in line with the Attuned Leadership framework propounded by Khoza (2011) who posits that the leader should demonstrate competence along with caring so that respect is truly won. He further argues that no leader can get along and be effective without a leap of understanding into the hearts and minds of the followers. The strength of African moral philosophy is that it will influence a leader to exercise compassion when considering a decision (Khoza, 2011). He further argues that compassion stems from the empathy we feel when we have knowledge of the "inner state of others", leadership without a compassion is "hollow." To lead effectively, a leader has to be ethical and moral. To lead you need to have a "feel" for people, you need to have empathy. The well-being of the people you lead must be your absolute priority (Khoza, 2011, p. 81). Furthermore, according to Maxwell (2014, p. 11), "leaders touch a heart before they ask for a hand", which suggests, for leaders to be effective, they need to connect with people. Maxwell (2014) further states that "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care about them." Also, views of district officials about

caring resonated with the ethic of care put forward by (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). They argue that the ethic of care is based on empathy and responsibility for the well-being of everyone; it focuses on the needs and desires of the individual (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Wood & Hilton, 2012). In addition, an ethic of care is characterised by virtues such as compassion, understanding and trust (Shapiro & Gross, 2008). District officials employing an ethic of care are encouraged to foster an understanding of multiple sociocultural realities (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005), with the purpose of improving the standpoint of others. Likewise, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) also note that an ethic of care reinforces the importance of learner's development, focusing particularly on aiding learners in achieving their educational and career goals. Developing an environment that fosters care and affirms the value of learners is crucial, as it can lead to enhanced learners' success (Wood & Hilton, 2012). Furthermore, an ethic of care requires district officials to attend to issues of learners' success (Rosenthal, 2006), thereby placing the focus of others on the best interests of learners (Begley & Stefkovich, 2007).

Ethics is a set of beliefs accepted by a community and adopted as norm, ethics are about moral behaviour, the manner in which a person conducts himself/herself within the district office and in the community. District officials believe that the teaching profession is ethical in nature. They even referred to the olden days when teaching was a calling and was mainly the domain of ministers of religion because these members of the community were known to be ethical. All the participants believe that an ethical leader should care about other people. They emphasised that caring stems from understanding the environment. Further to this, district officials were aware that the core key business of the Department of Education is to deliver quality education to learners.

The other finding was that some officials viewed an ethical person as someone who is of exemplary conduct in dealing with groups of people and ensured that ethical standards were

maintained. Being an official of the department means that you are a role model, not only to subordinates, but also to the whole community. Therefore, you have to model good behaviour, demonstrate good character and be a good example. In this regard, Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessment-Sub-directorate) had the following to say:

> *As an official and a leader in the district office, I am a role model so the way I conduct myself is important.*
>
> (Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

He succinctly highlighted ethical leadership and character traits and said:

> *As a leader, you need to conduct yourself in an appropriate and ethical manner in the eyes of the people you lead. You need to avoid temptation. There may be instances when temptation arises so if you know the ethical code, you can resist because you know that this is going to negatively affect you work environment, and even the morale of the staff. It is important that there are no secrets and that a leader lives by an ethical code.*

Likewise, Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) also asserted:

> *I strongly believe in good character, so to me character is the number one value. If my character is not ethical or moral, it is possible that I could use the sub-directorate assets and allocation for my self-enrichment. It is easy to manipulate SGB members since some are poor and susceptible to corruption. We can collude and sell promotional posts to educators. But because I am Christian, I am afraid to do that because God will punish me harshly.*
>
> (Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

The above findings were corroborated by the following finding extracted from the questionnaire. Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) said Ethical leadership would be defined as:

…exemplary conduct displayed by an individual amongst a group of people who look up to that person. Someone who encourages followers to do likewise, ensuring that those beliefs are maintained.

(Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

Furthermore, Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) also believe that trust is important in ethical leadership, she said:

I try to earn the trust of my colleagues by speedily processing their monthly petrol claims and being able to keep their issues and problems confidential.

(Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

Mr Mageba, (District Director), shared similar sentiments and said:

When a colleague divulges or discloses personal or sensitive information that requires confidentiality from my side, my colleague must be assured that everything is in safe hands. It is critically important that such concerns/anxieties are afforded the requisite confidentiality.

(Mr Mageba, the District Director)

He further said:

By being transparent amongst my colleague as well as being trustworthy. By being knowledgeable. Communication skills are also important.

(Mr Mageba, the District Director)

Echoing the same view, Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) insisted:

…Communicate with all stakeholders, treat them equally and respect them. Do all my expected duties as an official by observing policies and applying them accordingly.

(Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

The majority of the participants believe that religious upbringing has a positive influence on being a good leader. They also argued that a leader who is grounded by religion manages to maintain moral propriety. This is particularly important in an education environment in which SGB's may be ignorant of some basic financial management skills and therefore may be easily deceived. In this regard, Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) revealed that:

> *As a Governance and Management Coordinator, it is easy to influence SGB members because some are poor and corrupt I can talk to them and influence them to sign a bank cheque. However, because I know that God is my judge and He is looking at me, I would not steal Department of Education funds, even if I don't have money.*
>
> (Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

Furthermore, Mr Mageba, (District Director) proudly believes that, as a District Director, he is a good and ethical leader. In this regard, he professed:

> *As a devout believer, I am scripturally bound to express ethical values like love, humility, joy, being at peace and self-control (to mention a few). Against them there is no law (Gal 5:22-23). This is my "constitution."*
>
> (Mr Mageba, the District Director)

Similarly, Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Su-directorate) stated that:

> *Long ago, not everyone could be an educator. Only ministers of religion could be educators, and ministers live by the Bible.*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

The majority of participants in this study believed that ethics and ethical leadership were necessary in the district office as the departmental officials were role models that subordinates looked up to. The District Director as the officer presiding over accountability believed that

district officials would do their jobs well if they were ethical and, if unethical, they would fail to serve the Department of Education well. Ethics also helped district officials to engage with their subordinates. Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessment Sub-directorate) had the following to say:

> *When dealing with different characters there are challenges and you learn how to deal with those particular personalities in the district.*
>
> (Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

The majority of participants stated that institutions were businesses, so good conduct has to be maintained in order to produce a good product. In their case, the product was the provision of quality education. Again, Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessment Sub-directorate), emphasised the importance of ethics in the district. He said:

> *…ethical leaders are needed because they set a good standard that many can follow. Departmental officials are the only senior people whom educators meet on a daily basis. If the district officials are seen living a life which is immoral, this would tarnish the image of the Department of Education. Therefore, teaching and learning as the non-negotiables will be compromised.*
>
> (Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education, Examination and Assessment)

The majority of the participants believd that ethics should be central to education leadership as it involved honesty, and everything evolved around being ethical. Ethics also demand that leaders be moral and not to rely on policies. The participants also felt that policies alone might not address real issues in the district office and Department of Education at large. In this regard, Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate), had the following to say:

> *Policies are rigid sometimes, but to act ethically you also have to have empathy. For example, the policy dictates that if you find an official sleeping on duty it*

becomes a case, but if you applied ethics you would ask what the problem is and might find out that he/she is sick.

(Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

Mr Mageba, District Director, shared similar sentiments and said:

Ethics should not be central to district leadership only. It should be distributed evenly. The senior management should display ethical behaviour. The district officials and educators should also be agents of ethical behaviour because after office hours they are a reflection of society at large. It is not a senior management issue only but a societal issue.

(Mr Mageba, the District Director)

The discussion so far found that trust was important in ethical leadership. Ethical leadership was manifested by being transparent amongst staff as well as being trustworthy. Moreover, the study found that communicating with all stakeholders and treating them equally and respecting them built trust. Furthermore, this study found that ethics and ethical leadership were necessary in the district office in order to provide quality education as per the mandate of the Department of Education.

The findings seem to suggest that to be ethical means doing the right things. According to district officials, open communication with subordinates was beneficial to them and the district as it built trust and helped subordinates to disclose personal and sensitive information which, ordinarily, they would not do if the element of trust did not exist. Open communication also indicates that the District Director respects and is concerned with his subordinates' well-being. These findings also suggest that religious upbringing has a positive influence on fashioning a good leader. A leader who is grounded in religion found it easy to avoid temptations and managed to express ethical values such as humility and caring. The view of the majority of participants about the importance of trust in leadership is corroborated by Waggoner (2010). She posits that trust is considered the glue of leadership and promotes long-term success. Trust

is usually gained in two ways. First, followers look up at a leader's history and also observe them in the present. A trustworthy past and present is realistic with good ethics (Waggoner, 2010). Secondly, according to Maxwell (2014, p. 12), "People buy into the leader, then the vision." The people find the leader and then the dream. That's how the Law of Buy-In works. People don't at first follow worthy causes. They follow worthy leaders who promote worthy causes they can believe in. People buy into the leader first, then the leader's vision (Maxwell, 2014).

Also, the view of the majority of the participants that an ethical leader is expected to be an example and demonstrate good character is corroborated by the study conducted by Cezmi and Toprak (2014). The study found that an ethical leader needs to act in accordance with ethical values, being a role model, having an intellectual and moral influence on people and providing individualized support (Cezmi & Toprak, 2014). This is also in line with the findings of Brown & Treviño, 2006; Eisenbeiss, 2012; Naidoo, 2012 and Piccolo, *et al.*, 2012) who posit that, moral managers place ethics on the agenda and visibly use and communicate ethics to stimulate their followers to make them more accountable for their behaviour. Moral managers really try to set an example for their followers on how to behave ethically by making ethical decisions and by rewarding the desirable outcome (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Furthermore, effective leaders set an example of moral behaviour and they take necessary actions to promote social justice (Hough, Thompson, Strickland, & Gamble, 2007). At the district office, a District Director needs to act in accordance with ethical values, be a role model, have an intellectual and moral influence on people and provide individualised support (Cezmi & Toprak, 2014). Furthermore, these findings are also corroborated by Shapiro & Stefkovich (2005), when they posit that care is based on empathy and responsibility for the well-being of everyone; it focuses on the needs and desires of the individual (Shapiro & Stefkovich (2005). Shapiro and Gross (2008) further state that an ethic of care is characterised by virtues such as compassion,

understanding and trust. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) suggest that the ethical frameworks of justice, critique and care need expanding. In application, the principles expounded by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) would demand that district officials consider professional codes and personal ethical principles, as well as standards of the profession. Therefore, it is within this context that the SACE Code of Conduct for Educators stipulates how educators ought to behave in their working lives as professional educators. District officials as leaders ought to indicate that the Code of Conduct for Educators provides moral prescriptions. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) further propose that leaders respond to dilemmas through use of multiple lenses, which would be a suitable strategy for district officials to apply.

Furthermore, these findings are in line with view of Khoza (2011) when he claims that to be human is to show kindliness to other living beings. Therefore, Ubuntu continually broadens the sphere of morality to ensure that leaders do not elevate themselves above others but are seen to be at their service. Serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability is a natural extension of Ubuntu (Khoza, 2011). He further states that my being and your being are the creation of our collective being, the being of humanity itself. This leads to the proposition that we are essentially moral beings because each of us owes our existence to all others. This is not because others are useful to us but because we are bound by reason and feelings to acknowledge the personhood of others as we seek to be acknowledged for our own (Khoza, 2011).

To conclude, open communication with all stakeholders, treating them equally and respectfully are the pillars of trust. To be an ethical leader, district officials believe that one should consistently observe good behaviour and set a high standard which many can follow. District officials believe that all stakeholders should be agents of ethical behaviour because education is not exclusively a senior management issue but a societal issue.

5.2.2 Experiences of District Director and Chief Education Specialists regarding Ethics and Ethical leadership

Talking to all the district officials in the district office understudy, my data seemed to suggest that there was a myriad of unethical practices that were occurring at the researched district office. Findings posit that not so long ago the teaching profession was regarded as a noble profession. Office-based educators and educators were trusted by communities. However, the majority of the participants claimed that some principals in schools colluded with some of the district officials to misappropriate school funds by making the SGB sign blank cheques. They are taking advantage of the fact that some parents, especially in rural and township schools, are financially illiterate. Finances in most schools seem to be a problem as some principals and district officials are accounting officers and are acting unethically by stealing from the schools and the Department of Education as well. Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) clearly articulated that:

> *Some of unethical practices by principals and officials involve school finances. Both principals and officials are accounting officers so if they are not living by the moral code, they can end up embezzling school funds and, in the end, they can be jailed.*

(Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

He further stated that:

> *Some officials and principals are not trustworthy as they have companies and use the funds allocated for Norms and Standards for gambling. They have companies that run feeding schemes and they hire their own companies to work in their schools.*

(Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

Some district officials and some school principals not only embezzle school funds, they don't ensure that the curriculum is followed correctly.

Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) stated:

> *When I visited some of our schools in the district I discovered that some of the principals are mostly not at schools. They don't visit classes and they say that their HOD is doing that and that their clerk is doing the school finances. If the principal does not go to school, he/she ends up not knowing what is going on in their own school. I also observed that other principals are not teaching and are not checking educators' work. They rely on HOD's to do their work. They are paid to do their duties but are not doing them.*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and GET)

The majority of the participants stated that some schools in the district are dysfunctional, since some school principals are not doing justice to their schools. In this regard, Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessment Sub-directorate) said:

> *As a leader, you need to set a good example. You must be early, be there all the time and if there is a meeting, get someone to substitute for you. This will assist in enforcing discipline.*
>
> Mr Sokesimbobe, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

A practice perceived as unethical and demonstrated by many principals and some district officials, involved disregarding the needs of the school and the Department of Education entirely and focusing only on lining their pockets. Some of them, in cahoots with educator union officials, made applicants to pay bribes when applying for vacant positions at schools. In relation to this, Mr Mageba (District Director) said:

> *Schools in the district do not have appointing powers, these are vested in the province. By law, schools, working through the district office, are required to recommend an appointment. Therein lies the problem. Teaching posts are being sold and some senior managers allegedly sleep with the applicants to confirm them. Normally these issues come out when a person has not obtained a post, despite either paying the money or sleeping with the senior manager to get position.*
>
> (Mr Mageba, the District Director)

Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) stated that:

> *There was a lot of speculation that appointments were bought by The South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). This can be attributed to inexperience and indifference on the part of some district officials, or maybe a lack of accountability. Unfortunately, to a large extent one can't question their decisions.*
>
> (Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

Some of the officials are not doing their work as required and some of them are ill-informed about the scope of the work they are supposed to do at the district office. Some of them invoke their constitutional rights over those of the Department of Education; they perceive themselves to be above reproach because they are affiliated to the educator unions. They lack dedication, they are lazy and their children are attending private and former Model C schools. Some of the officials buy their teaching qualifications and feel that entitlement should supersede hard work. Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) bemoaned this state of affairs:

> *Sometimes you get a person jumping from level one to level four or level one to level three. They haven't been through the mill… they don't have the skills or the experience... they put their rights first, forgetting that rights go together with responsibilities. Also, since most of the officials are affiliated to educator unions, they tend to see themselves as superior to the Department of Education they are serving. There is also a lack of dedication amongst our officials in schools and in the district office.*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

She added:

> *Some educators and officials are lazy. Even when they are at work, they are busy with their cell phones and WhatsApp instead of utilising their time productively and implementing departmental policies. They are chatting with friends, thus*

compromising the provision of quality teaching. They are always complaining. They don't want to improve their educational qualifications because the other distractions in their lives are more attractive.

(Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

Some educators and officials are not honest and lack commitment, often being absent from work for no good reason. Senior management of the district indicated that were worried about the high rate of absenteeism, however, even as senior management of the district, they find it very difficult to control. The only thing they do is make an appeal to both educators and district officials to ensure that leave is legitimate. Mr Sokesimbone, Cheief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessment Sub-directorate) had the following to say:

…if any person is absent for an extended period there should be an attachment to the leave application, such as a medical certificate. The Department of Education states that a medical certificate is not required if it is only one or two days of leave, but we know that people take advantage of this policy. Even submitting these documents sometimes does not help. We have to motivate officials, appeal to their conscience and talk about morality-doing good things at schools and in the district office.

(Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

My document review corroborated the findings from interviews on absenteeism. I noted that one official submitted a 3-month sick leave application. His supervisor was so frustrated he even said that:

This official does not want to work anymore. He was taking 3 months "sick leave" and was supposed to return to work in March 2020. Instead, he submitted an additional 3 week sick leave application and now wants another 3 months of sick leave. What is that?! He is kidding! I have to call this person. He is not serious.

(Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

Love affairs among the district officials were also reported by most of the participants in this study. Participants felt that intimate relationships between senior officials and junior officials caused problems because the junior official involved then expects to be treated favourably, and that creates challenges to both the District Director and senior managers of the district. Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) argued that:

> *If a senior member of the district is in love with a junior official there would problems because that junior official would expect preferential treatment or demand different treatment from the senior official. The danger is that this would lead to feelings of superiority or entitlement on the part of the junior official and would likely prevent the senior official from discharging his duties efficiently and effectively.*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

Some of the officials were promoting *stokvels* (setting up financial loans) during office hours. *Stokvels for* money is unethical and can end up causing fights among officials. Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) said:

> *..officials running stokvels among the staff members is wrong because they end up using time set aside for service delivery to plan their stokvels. Their occasional fighting over their stokvels also affects service delivery in the district, which is wrong. In addition, some insiders are coming to the district to borrow money.*
>
> (Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Manageemnt)

The senior management at the district office has also had their share of challenges when it comes to unethical practices, some of which have manifested at the level of Chief Education Specialists and Circuit Managers. The District Director and district officials believe that Chief Education Specialists and Circuit Managers are leaders who should display exemplary conduct. Unfortunately, some of them tended to befriend certain school principals and this compromised

the monitoring process. When the time comes for the application of the Performance Management Development System (PMDS), a formal developmental process of self-evaluation and structured discussion aimed at the personal, professional, and career development of an individual member of staff in the Department of Education, favouritism invariably takes place. The above sentiments were echoed by Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessment Sub-directorate) who said:

> *The Head of Section (supervisor) dislikes and sabotages supervisors who are doing good work and supports officials who are inefficient. Efficient officials are not given what they deserve.*
>
> (Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

He further argued that:

> *I often see that efficient officials are the ones who are marginalised and inefficient officials are the ones who are getting what they don't deserve, simply because they are buddies with senior management.*
>
> (Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

During her interview Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) made that point clear and said:

> *Most of the time it's power and your position and the abuse of the position…when it goes to your head that's when you start ill –treating people because you think you are better than anyone else… And sometimes you are insecure and you show your insecurities by being dictatorial and overexerting your authority.*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

Based on the above discussions, this study revealed the most unethical practices by district officials, which include colluding with principals in embezzling school funds, selling teaching and management posts and illegally operating and hiring their own companies to run feeding schemes in their schools. These findings suggest that most unethical practices in the district

office are engaged in by senior management. Furthermore, findings suggest that the Department of Education is struggling to source District Directors who will lead their districts with integrity.

The Report of the Ministerial Task Team appointed by Angie Motshekga to investigate allegations of the selling of teaching and management posts in schools, district offices and in some Provincial Departments of Education by members of an educator union and departmental officials (Volmink, 2016) corroborates the findings of this study. The world has seen that there are unethical and even toxic leaders, who exploit the loopholes in management systems and seek to fulfil their personal desires at the expense of their organisations and its employees (Padilla *et al.,* 2007). Given the prominent ethical scandals in virtually every type of organisation, widely publicised cases of ethical abuse have involved large corporations and the abuse of company resources, misrepresentation of financial performance and illegal marketing practices (Winston, 2005).

Furthermore, the above finding is consistent with Starratt (2004) and Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) when they posit that education leadership is no longer conceptualised in terms of technical efficiency but as a predominantly moral and ethical activity (Starratt, 2004; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). Further, Zubay and Soltis (2005) insist that education has a moral nature because it is concerned with the development of human beings in all their dimensions. The moral character of education requires education leaders to promote education as a moral activity, to see themselves as moral agents, and to act ethically with the aim of making a difference in the lives of the people served by the system (Fullan, 2008; Kaser & Halbert, 2009). The above findings are also in line with the fifth aspect of Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model which is moral necessity. According to Khoza (2011), we are special because we are moral creatures. Ethically, Ubuntu assumes that we are by nature moral, again because it would not be possible for humans to exist collectively, or even individually, without

an innate ethical sense (Khoza, 2011). In addition, the best interests of learners must remain central to a leader's preparation and inquiry (Stefkovich, 2006). Therefore, the above notions corroborate the suggestion of the findings that the district offices needs ethical leaders in order to thrive.

District officials have ethical responsibilities, which means that they must be knowledgeable and be able to use and make moral judgements and decisions with the dignity of each person in mind, while promoting equality in all aspects of education (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Begley & Stefkovich, 2007). Furthermore, the findings presented are corroborated by Khoza (2011). He states that a leader who embraces Ubuntu will see the public good as not just an aggregation of individual benefits, but as a gain for the whole community that is greater than the sum of its parts. "Our humanness overrides our differences." (Khoza, 2011, p. 32).

To conclude this section, the majority of participants who participated in this study mentioned a number of unethical behaviours practised by senior management of the district office under study. The first one was love affairs amongst district officials; secondly, the issue of colluding of some officials with school principals in embezzling of school funds, selling of teaching and management posts in schools and in some Provincial Departments of Education. Thirdly, the data seems to suggest that some of the senior officials of the district behave unethically because their appointment is illegal and most of them are underqualified and are underperforming.

5.2.3 Causes of unethical behaviour

The majority of the district officials who participated in this study believe that schools, the district office and departmental offices are full of ignorant and selfish people. They do not care about the delivery of quality education; the only thing that matters to them are big salaries. In this regard, Mr Mageba, District Director, said:

> *…others are there for positions and do not care about their roles and responsibilities, they just want the money. There are fights over positions just to get money, there is no dream about moving the Department of Education forward.*
>
> (Mr Mageba, the District Director)

He articulated:

> *Some officials fight and kill each other over positions, which is a bad thing, so our intentions are not the same. They have got their own agenda and aim to fulfil their own goals. Some officials say they won't work for the government and will do their own thing to enrich themselves.*
>
> (Mr Mageba, the District Director)

Similarly, Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessment Sub-directorate) said:

> *They just do as they like. They do not care because they have no conscience.*
>
> (Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

The majority of the officials who participated in this study believe that school finances were a challenge in instances where school principals and some officials of the Department of Education are not equipped to handle even their personal finances. If the person is drowning in debts most of the time that person will not appreciate his/her salary and will always want more. As a result, that person ends up engaging in unlawful activity to supplement his/her salary. Furthermore, district officials believe that a person would continue to act unlawfully if their salary was on a low notch. Some officials end up being service providers to supplement income in these instances and this represents a conflict of interest. The majority of district officials felt that the Department of Education condones unethical behaviour because most of the time there is no follow-up when cases are reported; the perception being that Department of Education officials do not want to be seen as "bad" people by imposing the required sanctions. They are too protective. They also claimed that adequate salaries were necessary.

Surprisingly, participants revealed that there is an established pattern of unethical practices and they contend that even departmental officials are involved. They leverage departmental funds for their own good and share their spoils with school principals. As a case in point, Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment Sub-directorate) revealed as much when he said:

> *A share would be given to the principal, so you can see that it is not only the principals who are corrupt. They work together with their seniors.*
>
> (Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

Other factors that district officials claim perpetuate unethical practices in the district and schools was absence of punishment for those caught involved unethical practices. He said:

> "*Lack of follow-up if the matter is reported to the Departmental offices."*
>
> (Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) asserted this point, emphatically stating that:

> *One thing that I have noticed is that if there is a case that is reported to the SAPS or to SACE, it gets full attention. Usually circuit officers are too protective and don't report transgressions. I am not saying they do not do their work, but it is only in a few cases where a person ends up being charged or sentenced. The circuit officers usually do not want to be seen as being bad people.*
>
> (Mr Khethomthndayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

Pressure at work and Teacher Unions also play a crucial role in promoting unethical behaviour among schools and in the district office. All participants believe that Teacher Unions empower officials to engage in unethical practices. Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS-FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) lamented the involvement of Teacher Unions when she said:

It becomes very difficult because Teacher Unions work hand in hand with the Department of Education. A good example is that we are not allowed to investigate Teacher Union principals. The union itself decides who must investigate their members. This interference resulted in the continued poor performances of schools in the district.

(Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist,

On the other hand, Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessment Su-directorate) complained about pressure during the interview, he said:

There is a lot of pressure in this office. Pressure at work causes officials to behave unethically, especially when the officials are the ones who are blamed for poor performance and this may lead them to do things that are unethical in order to change this situation.

(Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, (Examination and Assessment)

The above discussion has shown that a great deal needs to be done in order to address the issue of unethical practices in schools and in the district office. This study found that some officials do not care about anything besides their big salaries. In short, they do not have conscience and Ubuntu. As a result some school principals are behaving exactly like them. Another finding of this study is that the incompetency of the SGBs also contributed to unethical behavior, demonstrated by both schools and district officials. Some officials take advantage of the incompetency of SGBs and misappropriate funds allocated to schools. Further findings are that work pressure, societal expectations and poor salaries of some officials play a huge role in prompting unethical behaviour on the part of principals and departmental officials. Therefore, the findings suggest that the Department of Education is struggling to employ ethical leaders who lead their institutions with integrity. The findings also suggest that the Department of Education contributes to unethical practices happening in schools and district office because they fail to do follow-ups on some of the reported cases.

Van Zyl and Boshoff (2010) also corroborate findings from this study, viz. that leadership sets the example as behavioural role models and their philosophies and behaviour resultantly can be seen to affect ethical behaviour of other employees. It could be argued that all approaches to leadership and change should be underpinned by a set of ethical values that influence the actions of leaders and the consequences of change initiatives (Burnes & Jackson, 2011; Burnes & Oswick, 2012). Leaders consequently have a critical role to play to promote ethical behaviour in their institutions, especially in education, as the 21st century educational leader faces the intimidating task of remaining ethical while continuing a voyage that combines the leader's personal and professional beliefs (Cuellar & Giles, 2012). Further, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that the moral aspect of the profession is to serve the best interests of the learner as the focus of ethical decisions. Additionally, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) also posit that the ethic of the profession should be central to complete the ethical frameworks of justice, critique and care. The findings of this study are also corroborated by Khoza (2011) when he posits that Ubuntu continually broadens the sphere of morality to ensure that leaders do not put themselves above others but seek to be at their service. Serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability is a natural extension of Ubuntu, (Khoza, 2011). Some of the participants of this study at the district office do not have a *"calling"* but entered the profession because they were desperate for a job. Furthermore, some officials do not care about the vision of the Department of Education they are serving. The only thing that matters to them is hefty salaries. In addition, the Department of Education, which is supposed to curb unacceptable behaviour in district offices, is run by some of the officials that are partners with school principals in embezzling Norms and Standards allocations and are engaging in other unethical activities. Therefore, unethical practices at schools, the district office and the Provincial Department of Education are still a major concern.

5.2.4 The perception of District Director and Chief Education Specialists regarding education on ethics

The majority of participants in this study indicated that while training to become educators, they heard something mentioned about ethics, although it was not emphasised. Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub directorate) said that,

> *There was some information in my training, but it was not sufficient.*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

She further asserted that:

> *I was never exposed to any training in relation to ethical education.*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

In contrast, Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessment Sub-directorate) said:

> *I do not think during our time that there was any course on ethics but in Education Management it was mentioned. Some examples on the ethical behavior of educators were presented, but ethics as a whole was just a topic.*
>
> (Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

He further elaborated on this notion and said:

> *There was no module entitled ethics, it would just be a topic. Ethics should be taught to assist educators and to build the nation.*
>
> (Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

Regarding in-service training, district officials mentioned that none of the training has focused on ethics. The majority of participants felt that the Department of Education was not doing enough in this regard. Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) said that:

...I think they are lacking in that regard, they only focus on teaching and learning.

(Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Manageemnt)

He further claimed that:

There is none that I remember. I do not remember attending one.

(Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

Even though the majority of participants who participated in this study did not undergo any formal training on ethics, they believe that ethics education is crucial because as office-based educators they are leading the nation and are role models.

During the interview, Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS-FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

It is important that ethics is practised all the time and it should be taught. If as departmental officials are not ethical, the whole nation will be in a chaos.

(Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

In the same vein, Mr Mageba, District Director, extended the argument:

...we do not care about anything. I think universities are producing "machines." We are robots (robots do not care), we are just managing our Sub-directorate either ethically or unethically. The only thing I do is carry out instructions from my superiors.

(Mr Mageba, the District Director)

Surprisingly, the majority of participants in this study were all aware of the SACE Code of Professional Ethics for Educators but only one of them had attended training on this. Mr Mageba, District Director, also pointed this out and stated:

I am aware about the SACE Code of Professional Ethics for Educators but there are no workshops conducted by the Provincial Department of Education on SACE policies, except for CPTD. The SACE Code of Professional Ethics should be

decentralised. During the Provincial National Teaching Awards (NTA) they have a speaker on the SACE Code, but it is not enough as not all office-based educators attend these Awards. SACE should have representatives in every circuit management and district office.

(Mr Mageba, the District Director)

District officials knew that SACE has a Code of Conduct for Educators, but they felt it was not enough. Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) candidly admitted:

No, I have not attended any training on SACE.

(Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

In contrast, Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessment Sub-directorate) was adamant:

The only training we attended was when we entered for CPTD, but thereafter, there was no training. Also, if you attend meetings at the Provincial National Educators Awards, they would have a speaker from SACE but not all office-based educators attend these awards, so it is like a drop in the ocean. SACE should have representatives everywhere. If a district could be allocated one person from SACE then this would be ideal.

(Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

Furthermore, Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) opined as follows:

Sometimes, if you only read about something, it is not enough. You need someone to develop you, someone who will tell you everything about ethical conduct and not just present you with a document that you need to go through on your own without assistance. I think it is high time SACE rolled out programmes on ethics that are made available to us in the form of workshops that will assist us on a practical level. I am still new in this position and it is very difficult for me.

(Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

Based on the above discussion, this study found out that district officials did not receive any proper training on ethics during the period when they were undergoing educator training. This study also found out that the district officials never attended any training on ethics.

This suggests that district officials do not have any capacity to influence their staff members to behave ethically.

Leadership is a relationship between people (Northhouse, 2010) and therefore, the ability to ethically influence others is a major determination of effective leadership. Hitt (1990) as cited in Waggoner (2010, p. 4) lists three requirements of leaders that allow them to capitalise on their ability to influence ethics and these requirements are: "(1) achieve an understanding of ethics which includes the key concepts such as values, morals, virtues and principles; the district officials must have an idea of values to lay the groundwork for ethical beliefs and a system of values that acts as the backbone of a decision-making template. (2) Serve as a role model in making ethical decisions; and (3) develop and implement a plan of action for promoting ethical conduct on the part of their staff." A leader with an understanding of ethics, a history of ethical decision-making and the ability to develop and execute plans of action shows stability, empathy, integrity and resolve. These traits shown in a leader's track record will infuse a greater sense of trust within followers and, therefore, a district official will be able to sustain good leadership and extract ethical conduct from followers. This study is also consistent with findings of Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) who posit that the ethic of profession acknowledges that there are guiding values (e.g., principles, codes, assumptions, and expected behaviours) within each profession. Thus, adhering to these values is an obligatory duty to a leader's craft. Professional codes of ethics are paramount in honouring the ethic of profession (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). These findings are also in line with SACE (2000), when SACE indicated that, in performing their duties, educators are required to act professionally and,

specifically, to act ethically (SACE, 2000). Therefore, to lead effectively, a leader should be ethical and moral. Also, leaders need to be trained to exercise both cognitive and emotional intelligence. Certainly, humans must use reason to solve problems-not just technical problems, but existential problems about how to live and get along with others (Khoza, 2011).

Most of the Higher Institutions that train educators do not pay much attention to ethics and ethical leadership in education. The majority of participants in this study were not well trained on how to influence ethical behaviour among staff members. Even SACE does not do much regarding ethical issues in schools and district offices. The Provincial Department of Education has never bothered to develop educators and departmental officials in terms of ethics. Therefore, the appeal of the majority of district officials is that SACE and the Department of Education must engage on this matter and increase their visibility with regard to ethics training.

5.2.5 Perspectives of District Director and Chief Education Specialists on how to arrest unethical behaviours

Due to the unethical practices and challenges facing the district office under study in addressing ethical issues, the majority of the participants believe that something needed to be done. Some of them suggested that to root out unethical behaviour among district officials, the Department of Education needed to adopt a good strategy. There was no strong monitoring and oversight of ethics violations in the Department of Basic Education (DBE). There were no workshops to assist educators and office-based educators to keep up to date with strategies to effectively monitor employee conduct. They suggested that the DBE should have more people visit schools and the district office for support and higher level evaluation systems should be established. In this regard, Mr Mageba, District Director, asserted:

> *For these ethics to be fully implemented, there should be adequate personnel to deal with ethical conduct in the district office, and schools must be regulated by*

introducing ethics committees. Scheduled meetings should be held and minutes taken to show that these ethics committees do meet and must be taken seriously.

(Mr Mageba, thee District Director)

Some of the participants had countless questions about the objectives of SACE and the Department of Education in dealing with ethics in the district office. SACE and the Department of Education were far removed from schools and the district office. SACE only reacted when there was a case reported. District officials believe that unethical practices that were observed in schools and in the district office would have been few and far between if SACE had officials in all school districts. Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) made her point clear when she articulated:

I think SACE could be closer to the district office and not only be in charge when the cases are in the media. They should be in charge when the problem arises as well. They must have an official in each District Office/Circuit Office who will schedule meetings for both school-based educators and office-based educators and gather information about misconduct at schools and in the district offices. He/she will get the idea about what is happening in schools and district office. SACE only reacts, they should also intervene.

(Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

Furthermore, Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessment Sub-directorate) asserted:

Sometimes if you only read about something, it is not enough. You need someone to develop you. Someone who will tell you everything about ethical conduct written there not just to get a document and go through it on your own without the assistance of the person who wrote it. I think it is the high time SACE came out to roll up the programmes where they will come down to us and workshop us about these ethics so that it is something that is always there in our minds and we know exactly what we need to do. I am a new official and it becomes very difficult for me.

(Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

Certainly, the Department of Education has some good policies but some of the district officials view them as *"blunt"* and confusing. SACE and the Department of Education seem to be errant in not creating capacity amongst district officials to understand and apply sound ethical practices.

Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) said:

> *...policies exist but there is no understanding of those policies, even though we are educated. If there is no understanding of the policies, they need to be workshopped.*
>
> (Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

He further articulated this point, *"District officials must know the advantages of good ethics. "They need to be trained."* In addition, Mr Mageba, District Director, claimed that circuit management officials sometimes fail to support them in implementing policies. He said during the interview:

> *...many of the policies are not implemented. You find out if you are trying to do certain things in addressing a problem at circuit or district level, that you do not get support, especially from both Circuit Officials and District Officials. As a result, the principals end up being perceived as bad/ineffective people who are harassing educators at schools. Support is really what is needed but, in most cases, we don't get it.*
>
> (Mr Mageba, the District Director)

The truth is, communities are part of the district office and to address the issue of unethical conduct on the part of district officials, they should be involved. Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) believes that parents were contributing to the spread of unethical conduct in schools and in the district office by being "accomplices" of errant officials. The majority of the participants in this study felt that capacitating parents

through training workshops would be a great investment in education and in the community as a whole. Once again, Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) said:

> *As an official responsible for School Governance, I discovered that if an educator has fallen in love with a learner, they bribe the parent representatives on the SGB by giving them money and the parents are satisfied with this. That case will not go anywhere because the principal does not know about it. The parents themselves are accomplices. Parents can be better informed regarding ways of disciplining educators. I recommend parental empowerment. Parents usually do not attend meetings called by the district School Governance Component. If officials are deployed widely to talk to the community, not only in those communities where learners are learning, accountability would improve and consequences would exist for errant educators.*
>
> (Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Managemen)

Whilst the training of parents for the role they are supposed to fulfil on SGBs is desirable, it is important to note that these parents do not have much authority over educators at schools. This gives educators carte blanche to do as they please with the learners. In this regard, Mr Khethomthandayo said:

> *SGBs do not have power over educators, educators are drinking in front of their children and their children are suffering. Parents must be given a mandate to intervene up to a certain level.*
>
> (Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

Other district officials suggested that at universities where educators are trained, there should be modules on Ethics. Many professions, including teaching, have their own specific code of ethics to which all members of those professions are expected to adhere. Educators are considered ethical in their practice if they adhere to the SACE Code of Professional Ethics for Educators. So, introducing modules on Ethics at the universities will provide educators with a

basis for making difficult ethical decisions. Receiving grounding in ethics at an early stage of a teaching career will help educators to develop and maintain ethical habits.

This said, all the struggles in addressing unethical behaviour in schools and the district office will be in vain if the issues of individual personality and background is ignored. The Department of Education must establish a way to conduct background checks on both school based-educators and office-based educators before they are employed. Police clearance certificates should be mandatory to prevent criminals such as rapists taking up district office jobs. In addition, those who have served sentences must provide proof of their rehabilitation. Some of the district officials claimed that acting unethically becomes a habit, which is problematic because it requires a very "painful struggle" to suppress it. Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) was more definite when she asserted:

> *In a departmental official, we need a quality that incorporates solid ethics. District officials must not involve themselves in criminal activities. They are expected to be ethical.*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

Mr Sokesimbone, Chief education Specialist (Examination and Assessment Sub-directorate) argued that knowing the background of the individual would also help in controlling absenteeism because most of the time when officials are absent from office, it is not because of illness. Sometimes they feigned illness. Mr Sokesimbone mentioned some of these things during his interview:

> *Mostly, officials are absent for spurious reasons. They must be compelled to provide medical certificates when they return to work. Knowing and understanding their family backgrounds may also assist in preventing this absenteeism. Some say they are sick whilst it is common knowledge that they are attending a party at their*

home. Getting to know people on a more personal level and observing certain warning signs will assist in preventing this type of behaviour.

(Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

A drastic shift from focusing on CVs and qualifications when recruiting and employing school based-educators or office based-educators is needed. Qualifications are necessary but are not enough. The Department of Education must find ways to go beyond them during the recruitment process. Most officials are still behaving unethically, which suggests that qualifications and interview scores do not guarantee the appointment of ethical and quality district officials. Something more has to be done. The majority of the participants in this study believe that something is missing and suggested that when prospective employees are being interviewed, questioning should also focus on the background of the candidates. Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) had the following to say:

…so, what I am trying to say is that the score for personality in the interview must carry a lot of weight. It would be a great help to establish both the work capacity and the personal attributes of a candidate at an interview.

(Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS: FET)

Mr Khethomthandayo Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) supported this notion when he briefly succinctly avered:

Moral virtues must be tested. You may perform very well in teaching but when it comes to leadership, this is another thing entirely.

(Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, (Governance and Managemant)

Similarly, Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) argued that most of the district officials in the district office do not have the capacity to manage their offices. They are selfish and focus exclusively on self-enrichment. She was concerned and frustrated and said:

They must look at qualities - does this person really deserve to be in this position? Certain qualities are crucial when the position involves finance. A person with many personal debts is doomed to fail if they are awarded a position that requires them to manage funds.

(Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

Another finding of this study was the issue of teacher unions. The participants were overwhelmed, angry and frustrated by their actions. Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) was candid about his stance with regard to unions:

…also, the meetings are held now and again. They do not stick to the time that is allocated for the meetings. It is causing havoc in schools and in the district office, which close to cater for these meetings. Most of the time they blame the Department of Education for allowing this to happen in schools and the district office. It becomes very difficult because teacher unions work hand in hand with the Provincial Department of Education.

(Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

The majority of the participants in this study were convinced that the Department of Education was doing nothing and was reluctant to act against the unions, especially the one in question, which was in an alliance with the ruling party. Mr Mageba, District Director, expressed his concern:

As a District Director I am facing difficult challenges. If an employer does not have definite procedures on how to engage with teacher unions, that employer will always be overwhelmed by the teacher unions. If the employer is subdued by the unions, it will be difficult for us as district officials, who are serving the Department of Basic Education in leadership positions, to deal with the issue of unions. There is nothing we can do.

(Mr Mageba, the District Director)

He added:

> *You see, there is this grey area impacting those who are in positions of authority between the employer and the teacher unions. Those who are in positions of authority are the ones who are supposed to come up with definite and clear procedures for negotiation. At times, you hear that there is a workshop arranged by the Department of Education and teacher unions then arrive and disrupt it. Unions also reject the procedures of the Department of Education in the marking centres. The department is powerless to stop them and the problem persists.*
>
> (Mr Mageba, the District Director)

Based on the above discussions, this study established that the employer needs to have clear and definite procedures in place to deal with unethical behaviour in the district office and in education in general. District offices do not have ethics committees, which are necessary to help curb unethical practices in the district offices. The study also established that the Department of Education is pushing schools in the district to focus more on producing results than developing learners holistically. As a result educators and district officials are viewed as "machines." In appointing district officials, the focus is more on qualifications than the personality, background and the character of the applicants. Finally, the Department of Education and SACE are not visible and available to schools and district offices when it comes to issues of ethics, ethical behavior and training. SACE has good policies but it tends to only react to issues rather than anticipating and preventing them.

The above findings suggest that the Department of Basic Education needs ethical and moral leaders in education, particularly in the district office. The findings also suggest that unethical practices are endemic and as a result the whole system is sick. The findings also suggest that the system (Department of Education) either be rehabilitated or totally overhauled.

Researchers such as Ardichvili and Jondle (2009), Hannah, *et al.*, (2011), corroborate the view on introducing moral and ethical leaders in education. Ethical leadership is of great importance

to handling moral incidents and fostering employees' ethical behaviours in organisations given that good leaders are obliged to set a moral example for their followers. District officials have ethical responsibilities which means they must be knowledgeable and be able to use make moral judgements and decisions with the dignity of each person in mind, while promoting equality in all aspects of education (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). District officials should use an ethical reasoning framework when making decisions.

Similarly, this study established that unethical practices in the district office are a result of the lack of good leadership. Ncube (2010) corroborates the findings of this study when he argues that most of the problems bedeviling Africa today are a result of lack of good leadership. She therefore suggests Ubuntu as the solution to Africa's problems. Furthermore, Mangena (2011) posits that most of the challenges facing African leadership today are not only requiring Ubuntu as a general transformative philosophy as stated by Ncube (2010) but as a specific ethical guide that leads to the promotion of the common good of the entire community.

Furthermore, studies conducted on the attributes of perceived ethical leaders (Brown, *et al.*, 2005; Bennis & Nanus, 2007, 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2008) seem to corroborate suggestions of district officials about focusing more on the background and the personality of the individual when appointing district officials. The study recognises integrity as a central characteristic of the individual leader (Brown, *et al.,* 2005; Bennis & Nanus, 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2008). Moreover, this is also in line with views of Nelson Mandela, a South African icon, who described Ubuntu as a philosophy constituting a universal truth, a way of life, which underpins an open society (Mandela, 2006). In Africa, *Ubuntu* philosophy is the ethical code that glues the society together, lubricates tolerance and respects human dignity. *Ubuntu* offers an indigenised African framework that would add a unique flavor and drive to leadership. In addition, Ubuntu is essentially transformative since it directs organisations towards an ethics of care (Khoza, 2011). In this context, the ethic of care requires leaders to consider "multiple

voices" in the decision-making process (Shapiro & Stefkovich 2005, p. 18). The ethic of care is based on empathy and responsibility for the well-being of everyone; it focuses on the needs and desires of the individual (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Wood & Hilton, 2012). As such, an ethic of care is characterised by virtues such as compassion, understanding and trust (Shapiro & Gross, 2008).

According to Khoza (2011), qualities that are especially important in leadership when serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability, is a natural extension of Ubuntu. Furthermore, Alqahtani and Alkrdem (2015) state that a district official, especially the District Director should demonstrate integrity, dedication, humility, openness, creativity, honesty, forward-thinking competence, inspiration, intelligence fairness and assertiveness. At a district office, a District Director, as an accountable officer, needs to act in accordance with ethical values, be a role model, have an intellectual and moral influence on people and provide individualised support (Cezmi & Topra, 2014).

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented a descriptive discussion of the experiences and perspectives of District Director and Chief Education Specialists in the district office regarding ethics and ethical leadership elicited through the interviews, documents review and questionnaires were presented and discussed in terms of research questions, literature review as well as the theoretical frameworks. In a nutshell, a researched district office faced multiple challenges of unethical behaviour on the part of some district officials. In order to respond proactively to the challenges, they faced, some of the district officials tried to instil values to promote ethical behaviour among departmental officials. Others were dong nothing: they do not have any idea where to start. The forthcoming chapter further provides descriptive discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALISTS AND CIRCUIT MANAGERS REGARDING ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AT A CIRCUIT LEVEL

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter was devoted to the presentation of the experiences and perceptions of the District Director and Chief Education Specialists in the district office regarding ethics and ethical leadership. As indicated in the preceding chapter, due to the voluminous nature of the data generated, this data presentation section was subdivided into three chapters as explained in Chapter Five. Specifically, in this chapter I present the perceptions of Chief Education Specialists and Circuit Managers regarding ethics and ethical leadership in the circuit offices. A critique of the findings is then facilitated through the research questions, literature review and the theoretical frameworks that were explored at great length in Chapters Two and Three respectively. Pertinent findings are then analysed through content analysis, as explained and discussed in the research methodology chapter.

6.2 Discussion of findings

The following responses were from the Chief Education Specialist and Circuit Managers.

6.2.1 Contextual conceptualisations and practices of Ethics and Ethical Leadership

All the participants' conceptualisations of ethical leadership were congruent with what I found in literature that I surveyed, which seemed to emphasise integrity, honesty, dignity, fairness, character, transparency, accountability, morality and the modelling of good behaviour. However, what struck me the most about participants' descriptions in this study was the acknowledgement of contextual realities where these Chief Education Specialists and Circuit Managers were aware of the scourge of corruption and how it had eroded the people's sense of trust in the public administration system and their own agency role in retaining trust though financial transparency, if they wanted to lead their circuit management centres with integrity.

On the other hand, all participants correctly concluded that ethics are morals, conduct and behaviour. They believe that ethics is the way you engage with other people, or how you approach others. In short, ethics is about how you carry yourself in public.

This is what Mr Thathakahle (Chief Education Specialist) had to say:

> *Ethical leadership tries to inculcate moral values such as honesty, dignity and transparency. This means leading your schools free of corruption and in such a way that you acknowledge the rights of others. In addition, this means leaders that do not just say things but who "walk the talk." In a nutshell, it is about doing the right thing to shame the devil.*
>
> (Mr Thathakahle, Chief Education Specialist)

Likewise, Mr Lugayeni (Chief Education Specialist) agreed stating that:

> *Ethical leadership refers to a type of leadership where a leader demonstrates high levels of moral value, honesty, accountability and fairness. For instance, in my case as a Chief Education Specialist, I would have to observe morality and display exemplary conduct to my colleagues. As an ethical leader, I would also be expected to observe professionalism, do the right things and not hide anything or sweep anything under the carpet; financial transparency and accountability are important to all stakeholders; not to allow myself to be misled by people promising heaven and earth and display a kind of behaviour that would inspire my colleagues.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

Mr Soshangane (Circuit Manager) expressed a similar view:

> *Ethical leadership is a kind of leadership that demonstrates character, morality and models good behaviour that others should emulate. This is especially important to any person that is in a public office.*

Similarly, Mr Soshanguve (Circuit Manager) articulated:

> *The ability to empower people, especially women, despite a culture that might exist that dictates that it should not be done. You see, women are still disadvantaged in our communities. This is not correct in terms of human rights and especially our*

constitution. So, ethical leadership to me means that despite an environment that disadvantages women, I should be able to stand up and lead the way. An ethical leader should be able to wield his/her leadership position to influence conservative school governing bodies and communities to give women an opportunity to lead.

(Mr Soshanguve, Circuit Manager)

What was particularly striking for me about the above conceptualisations was that they were all framed within the participants' contextual realities where patriarchy, struggle for women's rights, poverty, endemic corruption, materialism, tenderpreneurship, bribery and nepotism were rife. The significance of context in understanding leadership is crucial (Wallace & Tomlinson, 2012). These researchers posit that leaders should not deny the wider pressures flowing from the charges in their environments and should be sensitive to the situations they find themselves in, whilst being creative around structural limits within the parameters of their agency to influence their environments.

In this regard, as educational leaders, the Chief Educations Specialists and Circuit Managers seemed to understand their agency and to value the notion of exemplary leadership (walking the talk) in accordance with which a leader is expected to model good behaviour (Brown, Treviño & Harrison 2005; Southworth, 2010; Tracy, 2014). They equated it to modelling good behaviour, which they said they promoted in their schools as they wanted to earn the trust of their teachers and learners and thereby extract good performance from them. They regarded honesty, especially in managing school finances, as particularly important as they understood that corruption had eroded peoples' sense of trust in the public administration system and they believed the only way to regain lost trust and respect was through financial transparency.

In this regard, Mr Thabekhulu (Circuit Manager) presented his observation:

What I have observed, which creates many conflicts in schools, is lack of transparency and trust in managing and reporting on school finances and the non-involvement of all stakeholders, especially teachers and parents. I advise school

principals in my circuit that there should be regular meetings during which financial reports are given to both the teachers and parents. This is crucial if you want to build a relationship of trust.

(Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manager)

These participants also demonstrated an appreciation of the very powerful and influential role they were playing in the Department of Education, despite the demanding and complex roles their positions entailed. The roles included working with school governing body members who were sometimes influenced by service providers who were unethical in their practices. Despite this, they understood that it was important to be above board in everything they did. In this regard, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005), Khoza (2011), Ciulla (2013) and Tracy (2014) posit that integrity and trust are at the heart of leadership and it is difficult to lead institutions if leaders do not have these values. Similarly, Maxwell (2015) posits that trust and integrity are the fundamentals of leadership and any leader who violates these is finished as a leader. Likewise, Chief Education Specialists in this study understood that it was important to display exemplary and ethical leadership behaviour in their dealings with the various stakeholders if they were to retain a sense of integrity and respectability in a context that was rife with corruption involving tender irregularities, bribery and nepotism. They believed this could eventually create an ethical culture within the school and the district office. In this regard, Mr Mehlomakhulu (Chief Education Specialist) had the following to say:

I think our school principals needs to lead and teach by example. Displaying values such as honesty, dignity, openness and respect influences the learners and educators to do the same. This is also linked to the notion of Ubuntu because for me, ethics and Ubuntu go hand in glove. Ubuntu incorporates honesty, trustworthiness, integrity and respect for others.

(Mr Mehlomakhulu, Chief Education Specialist)

Similarly, Mr Thabekhulu (Circuit Manager) also stated that:

> *It is of utmost importance that as a leader I am ethical. I am a representative of the Department of Education and there are so many people who look up to me as a leader and a role model - the community, the learners, the educators and many other stakeholders.So, I must maintain high ethical standards because I am accountable and my conduct must be exemplary.*
>
> (Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manager)

The above sentiments further strengthen the notion of role-modelling ethical behaviour by district officials. All the participants understood that, as leaders, it began with them before it filtered down to the subordinates. However, eventually, everyone has a responsibility. The above is further illustrated succinctly by Mr Thabekhulu (Circuit Manager) who shared a story with me when he had just been appointed as a circuit manager in a rural village. When he initially visited the school, he noticed that the school grounds and toilets were dirty and the school had no cleaner employed. He arranged a meeting with the school principal, staff members and all stakeholders during which an agreement was reached that all of them, the school principal, the teachers and learners, would clean the school and he would be a volunteer-in-chief. He then acquired bags and cleaning chemicals for the exercise. The learners were surprised as they had never seen a leader who cleaned the school yard and toilets with them. Subsequently, the circuit manager was the talk of the village for some time and he had earned the trust and respect of the school community. This type of role-modelling behaviour and the involvement of other stakeholders strengthens the argument that if followers see and believe that their leaders are honest, they (followers) will reciprocate the trust and better performance is likely to occur.

Another finding, which perhaps was unique and different from the Western literature that I have perused was the willingness of some of the participants to speak out against the oppression

of women, even though they were working in a patriarchal community in which this oppression was tacitly approved. Again, Mr Soshanguve (Circuit Manager) stated:

> *The ability to empower people, especially women, despite the existence of a culture that rejects this notion of empowerment. You see women are still disadvantaged in our society and one knows that this is not correct. So, ethical leadership to me dictates that despite the existence of an environment that disadvantages women, being able to wield his/her leadership to influence a move in this particular direction.*
>
> (Mr Soshanguve, Circuit Manager)

This was strikingly powerful for me as it demonstrated that this departmental official understood that acknowledging the rights of others and their dignity was part of empowerment and social justice for all people, not just black people who were oppressed during Apartheid but particularly women, as they had endured racial and gender/patriarchal discrimination during Apartheid. Viewed from the dimensions of the *ethic of justice, the ethic of critique and the ethic of care by* Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) Multiple Ethical Paradigms model, the findings suggest that the said official does not only care about the image and the physical appearance of his schools but also can critique his social environment, which is still oppressive. In this way, he demonstrates that he cares about fairness and the well-being of others, especially those that are still oppressed by certain gender practices and patriarchal discrimination.

During the data generation process, I noted that all participants had a great deal to share with me concerning the attributes of an ethical leader. Some of the aspects that came to the fore during interviews pertaining to ethical leadership that I am going to dwell on in the next discussion are; (1*) ethical leadership in caring about other people; (2) ethical leadership as a trusted individual; and (3) ethical leadership in creating open communication.*

As I mentioned above, the participants were willing to share a great deal with me about ethical leadership. They were very excited about the concept even though, at the outset, they were both sceptical and curious about "ethics" and "ethical leadership" applications within schools and education in general. All the participants who participated in this study believe that in order to qualify as an ethical leader you have to demonstrate the element of "*care"* in your leadership role.

In this regard, Mr Thabekhulu (Circuit Manager) articulated this very well during the interview when he said:

> *Understand the feelings of your subordinates and be a father to them when they are experiencing times of difficulty.*
>
> (Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manager)

To be a "*father"* according to Mr Thabekhulu (Circuit Manager) is to create an environment for your subordinates, both educators and learners, that is conducive to the development of this perception of a leader. It is also to instill Ubuntu in staff members by teaching them the importance of helping one another. Being a "father," according to the participant, is not a title suitable for all leaders. A "Father" is one who promotes the well-being of followers, who solves their problems and maintains confidentiality. Further to this, being a "father" is to show sympathy and have empathy for other people.

Similarly, Mr Mehlomakhulu (Chief Education Specialist) supported this notion appropriately when he said:

> *By showing empathy and sympathy to all stakeholders one takes cognisance of the welfare of others.*
>
> (Mr Mehlomakhulu, Chief Education Specialist)

In addition, participants claimed that genuine care is fair, honest and unbiased, meaning that a leader has to acknowledge the element of humanity. Expectations to be realistic take into

account different characteristics of humans. According to participants, for an ethical leader to take into account different characteristics of humans, he/she would establish a support structure that caters for different areas of a person's life. Mr Lugayeni (Chief Education Specialist) advocated:

> *…establish support structures within education and schools that will cater for different areas of a person's life, for example, social, spiritual, physical, economic and academic.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

He further emphasised his point by stating:

> *Acknowledge personal achievements and emphathise when unfortunate events occur. The leader must find out how best to help in such times.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

The following quotation, extracted from the questionnaire, seems to corroborate the views of participants that an ethical leader cares about their followers. Mr Lugayeni (Chief Education Specialist) stated that:

> *This can be demonstrated by showing concern for staff members, parents, learners and educators. Departmental officials must emphathise with the people they work with, and not only be strictly task or work-oriented.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

So far, the study found that all participants have a clear understanding of ethics. They believe that ethics is the same as values and morals and is something related to professionalism in teaching and learning. This study also found that participants view ethics as being about a set of principles that help one to decide between right and wrong. Furthermore, the study found that an ethical leader cares about people. Caring stems from being *"father"* to followers and being able to acknowledge the element of humanity. The findings on ethical leadership and caring are corroborated by Khoza (2011). The latter posits that the leader should demonstrate

competence along with caring so that respect is truly won. Maxwell (2014) further states that: People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care about them. Also, the views of participants about caring were corroborated by the ethic of care put forward by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005). They argue that ethic of care is based on empathy and responsibility for the well-being of everyone; it focuses on the needs and desires of the individual (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Wood & Hilton, 2012). In addition, the ethic of care is characterised by virtues such as compassion, understanding, and trust (Shapiro & Gross, 2008).

Therefore, these findings seem to suggest that at schools and at district office level, leaders should take good care of followers in order to be trusted. These findings are also in line with Khoza (2011), who argues that no leader can get along and be effective without an understanding of the hearts and minds of the followers. The strength of African moral philosophy is that it influences a leader to exercise compassion when considering a decision (Khoza, 2011). He further argues that compassion rests on the empathy we feel when we have knowledge of the "inner state of others" and leadership without compassion is "hollow." To lead effectively, a leader has to be ethical and moral. To lead you need to have a "feel" for people: you need to have empathy. The wellbeing of the people you lead must be your absolute priority (Khoza, 2011, p. 81). In addition, Mkhize (2008) refers to Ubuntu as the process of becoming a human being and calls for a particular mode of being in the world, which requires each person to maintain social justice, to be empathetic towards others, to be respectful and to have a conscience.

All the circuit officials who participated in this study believe that an ethical leader cares about their followers. They further claimed that caring stems from being a "father" to followers. However, in practice, not all the officials demonstrated caring towards their followers. In contrast, all the circuit members who participated in this study believe that the ethical leader is

the one who is trusted and the one who treats followers fairly and in a respectful way. In addition, participants believe that to be trusted the leader must be an exemplar to the followers. An ethical leader is the one whom they may lean on for support. In this regard, Mr Mehlomakhulu (Circuit Manager) had this to say:

> *I can say ethical leadership is to lead primarily by example and then treat everybody the same, "ungabi nabantu obakhethayo" [treat everyone equally].*
>
> (Mr Mehlomakhulu, Circuit Manager)

In addition, all the participants who participated in this study believe that ethics and ethical leadership are necessary at schools and in education. Ethical leadership will help the institution to run properly. Hence, ethical leadership is about morals and values, how you treat other people and how you conduct yourself. Ethical leadership is to lead by example and to be consistent in your dealings with all subordinates and be responsible with a clear propensity to act on issues correctly and honestly.

Mr Mehlomakhulu (Circuit Manager) further articulated:

> *It is necessary for productivity and excellence in the school and in education. Leaders will also know the incorrect actions that can harm the institution. It is important because institutions should be driven by ethics and there should be reminders all the time of the core business of the office, since along the way people forget these things. For the sake of the functionality of the department we need to know what the do's and don'ts at the institution are.*
>
> (Mr Mehlomakhulu, Circuit Manager)

In addition, the above sentiments were echoed by Mr Khawuleza (Chief Education Specialist) who said:

> *In schools is where we develop pupils who are going to be the members of society who are trusted, in South Africa, as well as in the entire world.*
>
> (Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist)

In short, participants believe that learners need to be taught about the importance of values and principles while they are still young and innocent. Mr Lugayeni (Chief Education Specialist) further stated:

> *…because your behaviour is based on how you were moulded. You cannot change a behaviour when you are old. You have to be moulded whilst you are still young. This is why it is important to instill values whilst learners are still young. When they are adults and working, they will know what is expected of them. For example, I have mentioned the use of the code of conduct. They will know that there are laws. You do not do anything you want to do. You have to follow certain laws. So even if they are at work, they will know what is expected of them.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

The discussion so far has shown that trustworthiness, fairness, having a "*strong backbone"* and being principled were regarded as important traits of an ethical leader. Furthermore, this study found that ethical leaders are characteristically trusted by followers. To be trusted the leader has to show humanity and fairness in his/her leadership role. Moreover, this study found that the ethical leader manages to create open, healthy communication. Also, this study found that ethical leadership is necessary in education because it is where future leaders were moulded. Also, it is important to instill values and principles in the learners whilst they are still young. These findings were corroborated by the view of Borgonovi and Burns (2015) who posit that education and trust are fundamentally intertwined and dependent on each other. Trust is the glue that binds the leader to her/his followers and creates the capacity for institutional success.

Furthermore, the views of participants that a leader, in order to be trusted, has to show humanity and fairness in his/her leadership role and has to be principled, are corroborated by Khoza (2011). He posits that, to lead, you need to have a "feel" for people, as well as empathy. The well-being of the people you lead must be your absolute priority (Khoza, 2011). Moreover, Mkhize (2008) and Khoza (2011) refer to Ubuntu as the process of becoming a human being and calls for a particular mode of being in the world, which requires each person to maintain social justice, to be empathetic towards others, to be respectful and to have a conscience. These findings are also corroborated by Stefkovich (2005), who posits that care is based on empathy and responsibility for the well-being of each individual; it focuses on the needs and desires of the individual; (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). Shapiro and Gross (2008) further state that an ethic of care is characterised by virtues such as compassion, understanding and trust. Furthermore, these findings are in line with Khoza (2011), who claims that to be human is to show kindness to other living beings. When he speaks of humanness, however, he goes to the deepest level, implying that one human being can emphasise with another because they take "their being" from each other, and each draw on the collective spirit of humanity (Khoza, 2011, p. 88).

Therefore, Ubuntu continually broadens the sphere of morality to ensure that leaders do not position themselves above others but seek to be at their service. Serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability is a natural extension of Ubuntu (Khoza, 2011).

The findings suggest that schools and Provincial Departments of Education in particular need to move towards ethical leadership. Since ethical leaders are trusted, they will manage to achieve the vision and goal of the Department of Education to deliver quality education and, together with educators, instill good morals in the next generation. In addition, trust is an important precondition for accountability and capacity building.

The majority of the participants in this study believe that ethical leadership is to be firm though reasonable when dealing with educators or followers. Ethical leadership is the employment of principle in deciding what is right or wrong at an institution. Also, ethical leadership is about transparency, allowing members to express their views on your leadership. Therefore, ethics and ethical leadership is viewed by participants as necessary at the Department of Education to deliver quality education and instill good morals in the next generation.

6.2.2 Experiences of Chief Education Specialists and Circuit Managers regarding Ethics and Ethical leadership

The majority of the Chief Education Specialists and Circuit Managers listed a litany of experiences that they regarded as unethical, both at schools and at other levels within the Provincial Education Department. These included manipulation of the process of promotional posts, the alleged "capture" of the Provincial Education Department by a particular teacher union, the disgruntlement and work-to-rule inclinations of teachers and principals who believed they were overlooked for promotional posts, inflating prices of goods/services rendered to the schools such as Learner Teaching Support Material (LTSM), cheating in the National Senior Certificate examinations and the deliberate falsification of Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) scores, bribery where temporary teachers were expected to pay the school principals a bribe to secure employment at a school, moonlighting as business people or local government councilors during working hours, materialism and tenderpreneurship as well as a sense of entitlement by some, especially those that were occupying leadership positions within teacher unions. Below I discuss some of these practices.

One of the most disturbing findings of this study was the practice of manipulation of promotional posts whereby junior applicants, who were teacher union activists or were politically connected, were promoted to senior management posts (both at schools and at other levels of the Department of Education) whilst more qualified and experienced candidates were

overlooked. This resulted in disgruntlement and lethargy amongst the disenfranchised. The manipulation began by ensuring that pliable parent members were elected onto the school governing bodies (SGBs). In some cases, both the Chief Education Specialists and Circuit Managers (senior management) were allegedly involved in the manipulation process by ensuring that influential positions were occupied by people connected to them. The findings seem to suggest that they did not only manipulate promotional posts but also the tender processes within schools, such as the allocation of school nutrition tenders or minor renovation projects taking place in those schools under their authority. According to Mr Khawuleza (Chief Education Specialist)

> *The burning issue is the sale of promotional posts where some unscrupulous officials are believed to be clandestinely meeting with some teacher union officials and allocating posts even before interviews have been conducted. Posts are allocated to those who swear allegiance to a particular teacher union or political party. Besides the promotional post, you know, in schools where there are projects involving big sums of money, especially Section 21 schools, tenders are manipulated by both the school principal and our senior managers, sometimes with the knowledge of the SGB chairperson as well. The network of corruption is vast.*
>
> (Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist)

Mr Lugayeni (Chief Education Specialist) also emphasised that:

> *People are cunning and abuse democracy to promote their narrow self-interests.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

Many of the research participants also pointed out that the situation has deteriorated to such an extent that many of their colleagues were disgruntled and prematurely leaving the Provincial Department of Education (mainly through early retirements) because of what they viewed as nepotism, patronage or political bias in the system. In this regard Mr Soshangane (Circuit Manager) said:

We have got several disgruntled servants in the Department who, if you could get insight into their thinking, will tell you, each one of them, that they are disgruntled, frustrated, fed-up and stressed. That is why you'll find that many of them are now taking their pensions.

(Mr Soshangane, Circuit Manager)

Those that were still in the employ of the Department of Education were not enthusiastic about their work anymore. Instead they worked to rule and were not prepared to go the extra mile as they used to do in the past. In this regard, Mr Soshanguve (Circuit Manager) articulated:

The promotion of a person with the minimum qualifications to a post, over and above a person who is highly qualified, better experienced and more deserving, is a serious shortcoming I have seen.

(Mr Soshanguve, Circuit Manager)

Mr Soshanguve further noted a sense of arrogance and a sense of entitlement among many of the politically connected officials and said:

Once they are at the top, instead of upgrading themselves academically, some brag about the material things that they have accumulated because of the position. They treat us like dirt.

(Mr Soshanguve, Circuit Manager)

The above finding is an affront to ethical leadership, which promotes humbleness, humanness (Ubuntu), having a sense of moral duty to serve without expecting anything in return; being approachable and hospitable; competency; respect; putting other people's interests above his/her own and serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability (Khoza, 2011).

The participants also noted the negative 'material trends that have crept up in the Department of Education over the years. Mr Soshangane (Circuit Manager) said:

I am so worried when I see how officials in our Department have become power-mongers, how we are selfish, how we are materialistic. These days, people die in

this profession because we fight over positions. We no longer look at how much this person will deliver. We only look at what we will get and what we want, we don't mind who we walk over and we don't mind what will break along the way.

(Mr Soshangane, Circuit Manager)

Mr Soshangane further added:

You'll also notice that people have ulterior motives for getting into School Governing Bodies. They do so not to serve their schools but their vested interests and this is compromising the quality of education and the service that we are providing. Today, the image of this very noble profession is dented on all sides. People are no longer honest, they don't care and they're not serving the nation but their own stomachs.

(Mr Soshangane, Circuit Manager)

The above sentiments were echoed by Mr Thabekhulu (Circuit Manager) who expressed the concern:

Our Department is not aware that there is havoc that is taking place in our system of education. You find that when a person who is incompetent is elevated to a higher position the incompetency will filter down to those below because that person will be messing-up and the ensuing mudslide engulfs all of the people on the ground. So, the whole system is in chaos.

(Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manager)

Mr Thabekhulu further added:

That is why we are having so many problems in our education system because people who should be leading and delivering from the top are confused. So, what else can we expect from people who are incompetent and blind? The whole system will be in tatters.

(Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manager)

The above findings are corroborated by Clarke (2007) who posits that some people adopt an approach that promotes the get-rich scheme, the self-indulgent *"What's in it for me?"* in

financial transactions and the abuse of public resources. They also engage in the politics of power and materialism rather that of service. Viewed from Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2011) Multiple Ethical Paradigm (ethics of justice, critique, care and profession), the above findings paint a bleak picture of people who could not care less about adherence to law and do not care about other people, nor the profession of teaching, which used to be regarded as noble. The behaviour of the members of the school governing bodies are supposed to be guided by the Code of Conduct for School Governing Bodies yet the above findings suggest a crude desire for power and a financial appetite that rails against the spirit of professional ethics as propounded in Chapter Ten of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996). Another finding of this study was the strong perception on the part of all the research participants that the Provincial Education Department was now in the control of a teacher union and that generally, teacher unions were not playing a positive role as social partners. In contrast, the participants perceived them as destructive entities that hindered the provision of effective and quality teaching and learning in schools. Several participants advanced the argument that they tended to fear the teacher unions more than the Department of Education. Further to this, they mentioned several incidents that they contend ''proved'' that the Department was already ''captured.'' There was a strategy of having school principals and officials perceived as stumbling blocks displaced for long periods of time without their cases being heard; the lodging of endless disputes if there were advertised promotional posts and selections that did not favour their preferred candidates, or disruptions of workshops organised by the district and other officials of the Provincial Education Departments. Mr Lugayeni (Chief Education Specialist) mentioned the incident below and this was corroborated by other participants who attended the principals meeting. He recalled:

> *Not so long ago, we were in a principals meeting with the District Director, circuit managers, the former HOD of the province as well as the former MEC of*

Education. Known officials of a teacher union came and picketed inside the venue thus disrupting the meeting. It could not proceed. They were unhappy that the meeting coincided with some other meeting they had organised....have you ever heard of something like that where junior officials disrupt a meeting of senior officials in the Department? To this day, no one has been sanctioned for that. The tail seems to be wagging the dog here.

(Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

The officials of the teacher union claimed to represent the interests of their members who were educators and parents. However, it is inconceivable that leaders who project themselves as the vanguard of the working class and the poor should disrupt and even attempt to destroy the very future of the children of the working class and the poor in the name of labour rights. The participants were of the opinion that because the children of these union members attended former Model C schools, which were relatively peaceful and orderly, they did not care about what was happening in the schools they were disrupting. The study participants also mentioned that there was a clandestine campaign called "*Operation Gudluka Singene"* in the researched district and this campaign, loosely translated, meant 'remove the school principals and officials that were perceived to be undesirable and replace them with "*deployees"* that were politically-connected.' In some cases, the officials to be removed were perceived to belong to a faction within the same teacher union which was no longer dominant.

The scramble for power and control by the teacher union and ultimately the Provincial Department of Education was consistent with the metaphor of "feeding" that incorporates the belief that each faction should "feed" for a certain period and then get out to allow the others to do the same. The trouble and conflict begins when those feeding do not want to vacate the table when their time is said to be up, or those on the outside become impatient with those at the table. These findings were consistent with the findings of Mahlangu and Pitsoe (2011), Pattillo (2012), Zengele (2013), Bhengu, Naicker and Mthiyane (2014) who found that the

impact of teacher unionism on education in South Africa was devastating and acidic. To compound matters, in Zingele's (2013) study, teacher union officials (who were research participants) were not shy to state that their interests were paramount over those of the Department of Education and the learners. This suggests that either the Provincial Education Department has very weak administrative systems or it has a symbiotic relationship with the said teacher union and the perceived ceding of control of education by the Department to the teacher union directly serves their common agenda (Kahn, 2016). The deployment and patronage policies of the current government have also long been criticised for eroding professionalism and ethics in various government departments as officials become loyal to their political principles rather than the principles of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) as clearly stated in Chapter Two. This is a threat to the very Constitution that South Africans applaud as among the best in the world and it should not be allowed to continue. Furthermore, the National Planning Commission (2011) also acknowledges the significance of recruiting people to leadership positions solely on merit. Unfortunately, as the findings above suggest, this is not always the case. Other factors such as political/teacher union affiliation play a role to the detriment of education delivery in the province. The study also found that most participants were not happy with the performance of the Provincial Education Department and SACE in promoting ethical values in the education system. Mr Khawuleza (Chief Education Specialist) had the following to say:

> *The SACE Code of Professional Ethics is a document that is referred to mostly only when an educator has committed an act of misconduct and is being investigated e.g. for administering corporal punishment or for financial mismanagement. The Department does not provide proactive and sufficient exposure to educators regarding good ethical behaviour and leadership. Furthermore, the disciplinary processes of the Department are designed such that very few officials, at all levels of the system, eventually face the wrath of the law. The Department charges and suspends officials indefinitely and this is against*

Just Administrative Action and eventually the courts reinstate them and the Department loses the case. The Department is a toothless dog that barks but does not bite…

(Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist)

He further said:

Equally, the SACE officials as the custodians of the Code must do more capacity building workshops instead of only showing up when misconduct has been committed.

(Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist)

Mr Thathakahle (Chief Education Specialist) shared similar sentiments and said:

You only get to know about them when a teacher has committed misconduct. There is nothing that is given to new educators when they are employed that indicates what is expected of them. The only thing that they do is to give you a membership form.

(Mr Thathakahle, Chief Education Specialist)

Further, Mr Thathakahle said:

SACE is too removed from us. SACE must come down to the people at district level, not only be there in Centurion. They must at least have satellite offices in the province and at all districts so that they reach the educators in their institutions.

(Mr Thathakahle, Chief Education Specialist)

Mr Soshangane (Circuit Manager) also said:

SACE is just a glorified ivory tower, something that is far away. Something that you have never seen and only see when you want to become a teacher, so that you register and get your SACE certificate as an educator. So, because they do not conduct workshops, it's something that is far away from the people it purports to serve.

(Mr Soshangane, Circuit Manager)

The above quotations seem to suggest that SACE is too centralised and this is to the detriment of the service they are supposed to render. The participants have suggested workable solutions such as decentralisation of their services to serve educators regarding their development. This will assist in capacity development for educators as well.

This study's findings suggest that there is an increasing prevalence of serious shortcomings, and a sense of impunity regarding ethical leadership practices in some of the schools and in the District office of the Provincial Department of Education. To reduce the prevalence of unethical behaviour among all those involved in education, the participants aptly emphasised the need for values-driven leadership in building stable, functional schools (and societies in the long term) and the role that should be played by universities in developing such leadership capabilities, along with a moral framework that will put the country on a different path (Mouton, 2015; Jonas, 2017). It is in this context that universities should develop compulsory courses in ethics education for pre-service educators while simultaneously partnering with the National and Provincial Departments of Education to develop leadership programmes for aspiring and serving school leaders to develop, not just their instructional leadership skills but their ethical leadership capabilities as well. The participants were of the view that the planned Advanced Diploma in Education (School Leadership) programme is a positive contribution but should have a module/theme that deals with ethics education

6.2.3 Causes of unethical behaviour

Some of the participants who participated in this study divulged challenges they faced when dealing with unethical practices. Most of the time school principals did not take them seriously and they tended to observe the movements of the circuit managers. When circuit managers were not around, they would exploit the opportunity to engage in unlawful activity. In addition, these school principals were aware of the regulations pertaining to disciplinary processes and

when their letters of warning expired, they once again deliberately committed offences for which they had previously been sanctioned. Mr Thabekhulu (Circuit Manager) said:

> *You have to go to those school principals engaging in unethical practices and tell them what is expected of them, but when you return to your office, they resume the same behaviour. So, the act of being ethical is innate, he or she must act justly, whether the circuit manager is there or not. You cannot teach a person to be ethical. If you observe this behaviour, call the person to order by issuing a verbal or written warning. A written warning has to be kept on file for a certain period, but unfortunately we see people continue with the unethical behaviour after the written warning has expired.*
>
> (Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manager)

The findings seem to suggest that the Department of Education does not have sufficient mechanisms to correct ethical problems, and participants indicated that the DoE officials do not teach educators about ethics. Similarly, SACE was also fingered for not offering workshops to educators on ethical behaviour. Further, participants felt that SACE is not closely connected to educators; they have rules but they are not in touch with reality. In addition, participants mentioned lack of in-service training on ethics for educators by the employer, including from higher education institutions when training to become educators. Mr Soshangane (Circuit Manager) also stated that:

> *I am only beginning to notice some of these things as a result of being circuit manager. They invite us as circuit managers for workshops to discuss these ethical matters, but they do not hold such workshops for the school principals and educators to hear for themselves from SACE. I think the Department of Education should assist by organising workshops and addressing this topic more frequently.*
>
> (Mr Soshangane, Circuit Manager)

In addition, Mr Thabekhulu (Circuit Manager) also emphasized that:

> *…the Department is lacking workshops and research findings should be implemented to assist educators, using external district officials who oversee the schools.*
>
> (Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manger)

Similarly, Mr Soshangane (Circuit Manager) expressed this appropriately and said:

> *The problems originate from where they were trained. Maybe the institution must try to emphasise the SACE code of conduct while educators are still being trained. Some join SACE when they have already started working. They are not taught how to conduct themselves. When they go to the schools to teach, they do not know to behave. When they see the learners, they do not see them as children because they are almost the same age as them.*
>
> (Mr Soshangane, Circuit Manager)

However, participants felt that pressure on school principals and circuit managers by the Department of Education to produce good results causes school principals and educators to encourage learners to cheat during final examinations. The participants also mentioned that high failure rates were caused by infrastructure and Post Provisioning Norm (PPN) rations that have not been solved. Further, the failure of the Department of Education to discipline educators appropriately in previously reported cases causes other school principals and educators to behave with impunity. Mr Thabekhulu (Circuit Manager) said:

> *I think the way the department reacts when a school fails puts pressure on the principals. You end up thinking of other ways of improving marks-in an illegal manner-whereby children are permitted to cheat. The ethics issue is not emphasised and follow-ups are not done in such cases, even if reported, so the lesson is lost for other educators.*
>
> (Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manager)

On the other hand, educators' unions present obstacles in terms of acting in accordance with ethical values. Mr Khawuleza (Chief Education Specialist) also stated:

> *I think they have a close relationship with their members, so they do not stand for the truth. They want to impress their members. Even if you are wrong they will support you. By doing so, they are compounding the problem.*
>
> (Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist)

Participants viewed incompetent and unethical behaviour of the principal and the circuit manager as the reason for pervasive unethical practices in schools and in the Department of Education. According Mr Lugayeni (Chief Education Specialist)

> *Lack of knowledge and networking, as well as not being updated on the most recent educational policies and issues. Lack of dedication on the part of the principal and officials may cause them to neglect the promotion of ethical conduct on the part of staff.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

His view is echoed by his colleague Mr Mehlomakhulu (Chief Education Specialist) when he indicated that:

> *If the leaders lack leadership skills, sufficient qualities of leadership will still create a good environment. Truthfully speaking, there are times when people do all it takes to intentionality ruin a good environment. A good leader must take this into account.*
>
> (Mr Mehlomakhulu, Chief Education Specialist)

The issue of SGBs and recruitment was never left unmentioned when it comes to aspects that motivate the unethical behaviour of educators in schools. Most of the SGBs are not populated by an educated cohort. If they are educated, that school is very lucky. In this regard, Mr Mehlomakhulu (Chief Education Specialist) said:

Mostly, the Department of Education "relies on the interviews" when appointing educators, some people are very good at selling themselves. They appear to speak with authority on everything but when it comes to working they fail to deliver.

(Mr Mehlomakhulu, Chief Education Specialist)

In this section, I found a number of factors that seemed to contribute towards the unethical behaviour of school principals. First among these is the quality of principals the department has in some of the schools. It has been noted that some of the school principals are struggling to address the issue of bad behaviour of staff members at schools.

The reasons may vary; it may be that school principals lack the knowledge and skills to effectively manage human resources or they are complicit in this struggle to discredit the teaching profession. The majority of participants were accusing school principals of having a lot of skeletons in their closets, as a result of which they lack the courage to confront other culprits. Secondly, most of them lack knowledge and understanding of how to behave professionally. They did not receive any training on ethics. Oddly, they were depending on circuit managers to show them how to behave ethically. Thirdly, this study found that a long incumbency at work makes people complacent and leads to the building of networks that support their unethical practices. In effect, school principals ended up using their schools as tools to satisfy their personal needs. Lastly, educator unions tend to support educators, even when they are in the wrong. They also convince educators not to follow procedures and instructions from their employers.

These findings seem to suggest that a vigorous intervention from the Department of Education in addressing the issue of unethical behaviour in schools is not yet in effect. Further, the findings seem to suggest that the role and responsibility of principals in dealing with unethical behaviour is not well articulated. Accordingly, some of them were failing to play their part in positively influencing educators to behave ethically and instead were influencing them to do

otherwise. For the leader to be able to influence people or followers, they have to be trusted. You cannot be a leader without followers; followers choose to accept a leader before leadership may commence. Followers accept leaders they can trust. These findings were also in line with the views of Waggoner who posits that trust is considered to be the glue of leadership and promotes long-term success (Waggoner, 2010). These findings are also validated by Kalshoven *et al*. (2011) when they aver that without good ethics it is extremely difficult for a leader to develop integrity, authenticity, an identity or other traits that produce effective leadership. Furthermore, school principals are supposed to set clear and ethical standards that are frequently communicated to their followers (Kalshoven *et al.,* 2011). Even though school principals have the right to also be leaders in educator unions, they have to apply the *ethic critique* to analyse and evaluate the role and responsibilities of being a president of an educator union and weigh this up against the responsibilities of the critical school leadership position (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). School principals are expected to critique and analyse any policy before implementing it. This should help the school principal to identify conflicts of interest whilst objectively evaluating key morals and values inherent in accepting a leadership position in an educator union (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005).

Findings of this study indicate that some of the educator union leaders back the educators even though they are at fault. These findings imply that school principals who are educator union leaders are working together with educators in tarnishing the reputation of the teaching profession. The Standards for Principalship (2016) also demands that school principals should subscribe to ethical standards which should guide their behaviour as they lead and manage their schools. School principals are expected to model good behaviour in order to be a good example to educators. In accepting a position to lead educator unions, school principals are liable to influence educators to be union activist instead of conforming to ethical norms. It is taken as a given that educators are considered ethical in their practice if they adhere to the SACE Code

of Professional Ethics for Educators. Further, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that the moral aspect of the profession is to serve the best interests of the learner as the focus of ethical decisions. Additionally, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) also posit that the ethic of the profession should be central to complete the ethical frameworks of justice, critique and care. In addition, the findings of this study are also corroborated by Khoza (2011) when he posits that Ubuntu continually broadens the sphere of morality to ensure that leaders do not put themselves above others but seek to be at their service. Serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability is a natural extension of Ubuntu (Khoza, 2011).

To conclude, the majority of participants revealed that it is a challenge to address the issue of unethical behaviour in schools. Most of them felt that educators are demotivated because they are not earning enough money to satisfy their needs. Some of the educators in schools are under a lot of pressure as the Department of Education is pushing them very hard to produce good results. In some instances this pressure contributes to educator absenteeism.

6.2.4 The perception of the Chief Education Specialists and Circuit Managers regarding education on ethics

The majority who participated in this study were never exposed to any training on ethics while training to become educators. Similarly, when already employed as office-based educators, and undergoing in-service training, few of them attended workshops that addressed ethics. Even though participants did not attend any training on ethics, they believed that as an office-based educators it was important to undergo such training. Mr Lugayeni (Chief Education Specialist) had to say:

> *You will know what is expected of you as the office-based educator if you undergo training.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

Similarly, Mr Khawuleza (Chief Education Specialist) said:

> *It is important if it can be done monthly so that principals and educators will be in a position to know what is correct and will be reminded of these aspects. It is to avoid mistakes at work and to afford educators opportunities for introspection.*
>
> (Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist)

The majority of the participants who participated in this study felt that SACE was just for educator registration and nothing else. Both chief education specialists and circuit managers believe that SACE forces educators to register and thereby confirm that they are practising. Mr Mehlomakhulu (Circuit Manager) also stated that:

> *It is a good thing because it stipulates the conduct that the school principals and educators should follow. I talk about the relationships between educators and the learners, the community and the Department. If it is incorporated into educator training, the educator will come out knowing what is expected so I think it is very important.*
>
> (Mr Mehlomakhulu, Circuit Manager)

So far, this study has found that all participants claimed that they were never trained on ethics while training to become educators. Most of them, especially circuit managers, had attended single workshops on ethics but felt that the workshop was not enough. Also, this study found that the SACE document is very long and is written in very complex language, which is difficult to understand. Thus, the purpose of the code of conduct is not known to some of the school leaders and senior management of the circuit office. Therefore, these findings seem to suggest that the circuit management do not know much about ethics and the Code of Professional Ethics. The ethics of professions acknowledge that there are guiding values (e.g. principles, codes, assumptions, morals and expected behaviours) within each profession. Thus, adhering to these values is an obligatory duty of a leader. In particular, professional codes of ethics are paramount in honouring the ethics of a profession (Shapir & Stefkovich, 2005). These findings

are aligned with SACE protocols, which indicate that, in performing their duties, educators are required to act professionally and, specifically, to act ethically (SACE, 2000). The South African Council for Educators (SACE) has responded to these challenges by developing the Code of Professional Ethics. These findings also seem to suggest that the Department of Education and SACE are not expending much effort on instilling ethics in educators. Workshops on ethics, according to the findings of this study, are critically important in teaching and leading in a school. This is also in line with Khoza (2011). He posits that to lead effectively, a leader has to be ethical and moral (Khoza, 2011). He further argues that leaders need to be trained to exercise both cognitive and emotional intelligence. Therefore, reasoning is necessary because it cements good societal morals and affirm the values by which we are guided. Certainly, humans must use reason to solve problems-not just technical problems, but existential problems about how to live and get along with others (Khoza, 2011). Furthermore, these findings suggest that the SACE document is complicated and is not easily understood. This view is held by educators who have expressed their frustrations about following the complex document and is corroborated by Brown (2014). He posits that the goals that work best conform to certain attributes or characteristics. They are clear and are easily understood (Brown, 2014). The Educators' Code of Professional Ethics postulates that developing the ethics of the profession means making the Code a part of every educator's professional life. To achieve this, the Code must be more than just a piece of paper but must influence the way educators act in their relations with other people (SACE, 2000).

The majority of participants who participated in this study were never exposed to any training on ethics while training to become educators. Both chief education specialists and circuit managers felt that one workshop on ethics was inadequate. Instead, they prefer continuous training on ethics in order for them to be able to consistently behave accordingly.

6.2.5 Perspectives of Chief Education Specialists and Circuit Managers on how to arrest unethical behaviour in the district office

The majority of participants who participated in this study all believe that the Department of Education should organise workshops for school principals, office-based educators and educators on ethics and to take actions where there is any breach of the code. In this regard, Mr Mehlomakhulu (Chief Education Specialist) said:

> *I also think there should be a tougher stance in dealing with offenders. This might go a long way in discouraging educators from engaging in unethical behaviour and errant school principals should be arrested or have their duties terminated.*
>
> (Mr Mehlomakhulu, Chief Education Specialist)

In addition, SACE should have some short courses on its code of professional ethics for candidates before registration, upon completion of their educational degrees. Random workshops should also be the norm, just like random workshops for the curriculum. Again, Mr Lugayeni (Chief Education Specialist) stated:

> *The most problematic issue is pride whereby some schools principals maintain bad attitudes. Workshops are needed to assist. I think the Department of Education should assist by organising workshops and addressing this topic at large.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

Similarly, Mr Lugayeni (Chief Education Specialist) also stated that:

> *Yes. They know what is expected but we are trying to emphasise that if you are a school principal or an educator, this is what is expected from you because some tend to forget so it is better to remind them continuously by workshopping them on values and ethics.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

He further asserted:

> *I suggest that SACE be the module for educators because you are told that once you are done you have to register with SACE whilst not even being aware of the SACE Code of Professional Ethics. SACE should become part of the studies when you reach the final year.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

Similarly, Mr Mehlomakhulu (Chief Education Specialist) also emphasised that:

> *Implementing and enforcing SACE and school code of conduct by introducing ethics training programmes.*
>
> (Mr Mehlomakhulu, Chief Education Specialist)

In contrast, participants believe that most School Governing Body (SGB) members were not strong enough ethically to recommend the most suitable candidate for the post of school principal during the selection process. Therefore, participants felt that the SGBs should not recommend during the appointments. Mr Soshangane (Circuit Manger) asserted this vey lucidly when he said:

> *Let us start in schools. In schools, there are SGBs. Most of the SGBs are not educated. If they are educated, that school is very lucky. The SGBs have the power to choose the educators and the principals so I suggest that the power be removed from the SGB in terms of recommending principals and educators for schools. That must be the district or Provincial Department of Education's responsibility.*
>
> (Mr Soshangane, Circuit Manager)

In contrast, participants believe that a change in the recruitment process will assist in addressing unethical behaviour observed in schools. In schools, the district office officials and Provincial Department of Education should ratify the appointment, which will be based on observed performance or, alternatively, interviews that incorporate ethical questions. He further asserted that:

> *Mostly, not to rely on the interviews – some people are very good at selling themselves. They present themselves well but when it comes to working they fail to deliver so I think interviews must be removed and we go back to senior management of the district appointing after evaluating the performance of a particular individual.*
>
> (*Mr* Soshangane, Circuit Manager)

Besides the issues of training, recruitment and the role of the School Governing Body (SGB), other elements need to be considered, such as the time spent by an individual in the same environment, particularly principals and circuit managers. The circuit managers should not be permanently appointed in one district or circuit, they must rotate. To conclude this discussion, one chief education specialist suggested that the need existed for principals to meet and share their problems and revive the status of the profession by attempting to address the problems identified. Then the Department of Education can come in after principals have highlighted relevant issues and solutions can be sought. The above sentiments were echoed by Mr Soshangane (Circuit Manager) who said:

> *School principals are not fans of paperwork. Team-building activities may help a lot in terms of fostering cohesion among staff members. Yes, team-building may be expensive but sometimes simple activities removed from paperwork and learners may help.*
>
> (Mr Soshangane, Circuit Manager)

The study also found that the majority of the participants were not well equipped with SACE Code of Professional Ethics knowledge. Surprisingly, circuit managers seemed to have much to do to address this knowledge gap. Consequently, in order to address unethical conduct, the Department of Education should organise workshops for both school and office-based educators on ethics and strongly censure those who behave unethically. Also, SACE should have some short courses on its code of professional ethics before registration and immediately after educators complete their educational degrees. Random workshops should also be

considered because some educators tend to forget what is expected of them. Therefore, regular refresher courses on values and ethics have value. Further to this, this study found that at many schools there are SGB members that are not educated or well-informed about educational imperatives. If they are educated and enlightened, that school is very lucky. Hence, participants suggested that the power to appoint be removed from SGBs and the district or Provincial Department of Education be the one responsible for recommendations and appointments. Likewise, this study found that in order to eliminate unethical behaviour, district officials and Provincial Department of Education officials should observe the prospective future leaders and ensure that appointments are based on tangible performance measures or alternatively, on interviews also incorporating ethical questions. Furthermore, this study found that circuit managers who occupy the same position, in the same circuit and same district for protracted periods tend to be susceptible to bribery and corruption. Therefore, participants felt that they should rotate. In addition, this study also found that school principals do not like paperwork. They prefer team-building activities. They believe that team-building may help significantly in terms of fostering cohesion among staff members.

Therefore, these findings seem to suggest that SACE must be one of the compulsory modules for educators in higher institutions. Also, these findings seem to suggest that chief education specialists and circuit managers do not have clear ideas on what they are supposed to do to instill ethical values in educators. Further, the above findings seem to suggest that recruitment processes need to be reviewed as well the period of incumbency of department officials in a circuit or district offices. Findings also seem to suggest that unethical activities observed at schools originated from and are embraced by certain Department of Education officials. Also, some of the circuit managers are party to the unethical conduct observed at schools. Long incumbency by circuit or district officials could afford them the opportunity to build unhealthy and corrupt networks. To conclude, findings seem to suggest that personal traits are important

for ethical leadership. In addition, an individual with good ethics, principles and cognitive moral capacity will lead better than any other ordinary person. Good personal ethics are the backbone of ethical leadership. The abundant variables that determine effective leadership are affected by good ethics.

The aforementioned findings were also corroborated by Waggoner (2010) who states that without ethics, a leader is likely to fail, and with ethics a leader is more likely to develop effective leadership. Furthermore, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) argue that educational leadership is no longer conceptualised in terms of technical efficiency but as a predominantly moral and ethical activity (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). They further state that educational leadership faced with dilemmas and who are challenged to make complex decisions, justified those decisions as made in the best interests of the learners (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Shapiro, 2006; Stefkovich & Begley, 2007). The findings of this study are also commensurate with the research on ethical leadership, which suggests that ethical leaders inspire high levels of commitment and trust and foster desirable behaviours among followers (Brown, *et al.* 2005; Den Hartog & De Hoogh 2009'Piccolo, *et al.* 2010; Kalshoven *et al.,* 2011). Therefore, it is essential to teach educators about ethics. Also, SACE should be closely connected to educator development, as that will curb the unethical practices that are widely observed and reported in the researched district office.

In addition, district officials must adopt multiple-ethical paradigms put forward by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) in order to address the issue of the unethical behaviour of department officials and instill an ethical culture in the district office. Furthermore, to lead effectively, a leader has to be ethical and moral. It is clear that leaders need to be trained to exercise both cognitive and emotional intelligence. Certainly, humans must use reason to solve problems-not just technical problems, but existential problems about how to live and get along with others (Khoza, 2011).

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented a descriptive analysis of the conceptualisations, practices and experiences of Chief Education Specialists and Circuit Managers elicited through the interviews, documents review and questionnaires were presented and discussed in terms of research questions, literature review as well as the chosen theoretical frameworks. In a nutshell, some of the school principals and their circuit managers were abusing power by exchanging posts for sex and spent most of the schools and office hours doing personal business. As a result, the reputation of the teaching profession is being compromised. In order to rebuild the reputation of the teaching profession, district officials believed that ethics and ethical leadership should be emphasised at schools and in the district officials.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PERSPECTIVES OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALISTS AND SUBJECT ADVISORS REGARDING ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

7.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter was devoted to the presentation, analysis and discussion of the perceptions of Deputy Chief Education Specialists and Subject Advisors concerning ethics and ethical leadership in the researched district office. As indicated earlier in Chapter Five, due to the voluminous nature of the data generated, the data presentation section was subdivided into three chapters. Specifically, this chapter details the findings emanating from the data generated from Deputy Chief Education Specialists and Subject Advisors. Similar to the previous two chapters, a critique of the findings is facilitated through the research questions, literature review and the theoretical frameworks that were explored at length in the initial chapters. Pertinent findings are then analysed through content analysis as explained and discussed in the research methodology chapter of this study.

7.2 Discussion and findings

The following responses were from Deputy Chief Education Specialists and Subject Advisors at the district office that formed part of the study.

7.2.1 Contextual conceptualisations and practices of ethics and ethical leadership

It was a great and humbling experience for me as a researcher to interact with the afore-mentioned officials throughout the district office under study as they were so remarkably welcoming and cooperative. In spite of their welcoming spirit, they were initially very anxious and sceptical, fearing that I was about to expose them to something unpleasant. As time progressed, they became visibly relaxed and shared with me wonderful and interesting stories about their conceptualisations and perceptions on how ethics and ethical leadership was enacted in the researched district office. The concepts of "policy", "law" and "following rules"

were widely presented when ethics and ethical leadership, as conceptualised by district officials, was discussed. The majority of district officials who participated in this study were unanimous that ethics meant doing things correctly and behaving in accordance with the Department of Education policies and laws, and that ethics has elements of morality. Ms. Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) articulated her view:

> *I think it is when you do things in accordance with the law. Not your own. Doing things that are guided by the laws.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

Further, Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialists (Special Needs Education Services (SNES) Sub-directorate) said:

> *My understanding of ethics is doing the correct or appropriate things and behaving in a manner that does not go against policies and law, following policy and some element of morality in the way someone does things.*
>
> (Mr Magebhula, SNES)

Similarly, Ms. Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Employee Assessment Programme (EAP) Sub-directorate) opined:

> *I can say ethics is a set of moral principles within a certain group or certain institutions. We know that all institutions have their own policies, if you follow those principles, you have ethics.*
>
> (Ms Sofasonke, EAP)

Furthermore, Ms. Masombuka, Subject Advisor (Teaching and learning Services) (TLS) General Education Training (GET) Curriculum Sub-directorate) stated that:

> *Ethics is the behaviour acceptable in the workplace, morals with a good prospect of enhancing respect among district office colleagues. Moreover, ethics is about time management and being present at district and public offices.*
>
> (Ms Masombuka, TLS and GET)

She also emphasised that absenteeism affects the working environment. She submitted a lucid example when she advocated:

> *...for example, as an official you must uphold your values and respect your colleagues.There must be respect and also time management. You must be at office at all times because in other public offices you find that officials abscond for a period of a month or more and this affects good working relationships. I think ethics is more about the way you present yourself in the workplace.*
>
> (Ms Masombuka, TLS and GET)

Similarly, Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) advanced a different perspective when he stated that ethics is the way in which you conduct business such that it is to the advantage of the people and the organisation you are working for and in line with the law and professional conduct, as well as African humanism/Ubuntu. He articulated his point succinctly during the interview when he emphatically stated:

> *Ethics is the way you conduct business in such a way that it is to the advantage of yourself and the people and in adherence with the rules set by the organisation you are working for. It is to do things within the law without endangering those working with you. It is the way you conduct yourself professionally, obeying the rules, regulations and laws as set down by the district office and Department of Education.*

(Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

However, Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor, (TLS: GET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) viewed ethics as principles, personality and a consciousness. He presented this as follows:

> *Ethics to me is like principles, or one can say personality. It also comes in a form of consciousness. That's how I understand it. Ethics depends on individuals. Some people do not value the ethics that you have but like I said, it depends on individuals. That's how I understand it.*

(Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

In contrast, some officials participating in this study believed that ethics were mainly the domain of the District Director. Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) said that:

> *I can say ethics are rules you have to follow as a leader.*

(Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor)

She further stressed that:

> *These are the rules for conduct that are being set to be followed by the district senior management, such as in the recruitment process, which stresses appropriate and non-discriminatory treatment of officials.*

(Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor)

Similarly, Ms. Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) asserted:

> *I think that ethics come from the senior management, including the District Director and management committee (Manco), who support us and show us how things are done in the Department of Education so that we can also grow together.*

(Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

However, Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES- Sub-directorate) hinted at an important aspect about ethics. He indicated that ethics is about Ubuntu;

I think it's when you have Ubuntu and know the way to treat people

(Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

In short, the majority of participants who participated in this study believe that ethics is to do something that is right and follow the rules. Interestingly, those who participated in this study believe that a leader who has ethics leads better than any other ordinary leader. Some of the participants believe that an ethical leader is the manager who follows the rules of the Department of Education and treats all the district officials in a fair and equitable manner. Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP-Sub-directorate) articulated his view very well when he said:

I think ethical leadership has to do with a leader or manager who does things in the right way, following the policies and rules of the profession and operating in a fair manner in relation to all stakeholders-both the employer (Department of Education) and the officials he/she works with. What is special about an ethical leader is that he/she is also guided by morals.

(Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

He further argued:

What is special about ethical leadership is that the leader will be leading according to established rules without deviating from what is expected by the Department of Education or by the employer.

(Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

Similarly, Mr Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS-GET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) expressed the following view:

> *I think it is the way you lead as a District Director, as a leader, the rules you set are congruent with the regulations set by SACE for educators, and not in accordance with your own agenda.*
>
> (Mr Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

The majority of participants also believe that an ethical leader uses the policies of the Department of Education and puts aside his/her feelings. "*They must not be guided by feelings"* because that will lead to some form of oppression of one's colleagues, Mr Masombuka stressed. Further, he believes that things that are said when in anger end up prompting one to make a lot of mistakes. He said:

> *Personally, if I do things that are emotive and not rational, I soon realise the error of my ways. If I cool down and let my temper subside, I find that I provide a reasonable response to a situation.*
>
> (Mr Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

Findings from my observation were in line with the findings from semi-structured interviews that an ethical leader follows rules, does not deviate from policies and he/she puts feelings aside.

The majority of the participants mentioned that an ethical individual is the one who follows the rules and regulations set by the Department of Education. One of the district officials made a point during the interview when he mentioned that ethical leadership is not just about following the rules but also ensuring that followers do the same. He further argued that an ethical leader is someone who oversees the implementation of principles and is able to identify if rules are not followed. Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor (TLS-GET- Curriculum-Sub-directorate) stated this very lucidly when he said:

An ethical leader is someone in a managerial position who has to make sure that his subordinates operate in accordance with a code of ethics. For example, a doctor signs a code of ethics to confirm that his primary duty is to save the lives of patients. For educators, for example, the appropriate ethics would be to educate someone in such a way as to equip them with knowledge. An ethical leader is someone who provides oversight, ensuring that people adhere to the established principles and don't deviate, who points them in the right direction. He/she also identifies if any codes are broken and provides the appropriate remediation.

(Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

The majority of participants also believe that ethical leadership is to lead by example, to be a leader who exhibits transparency, kindness and patience. Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET-Curriculum Sub-directorate

Ethical leadership means being honest and transparent in leading people. For example, if you are a leader you must lead by example. You must not tell people to do something that you are failing to do, so it is mostly about being practical. You must demonstrate the appropriate conduct so that the people that you are leading can discern the difference between right and wrong in the workplace.

(Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

During the data generation process, when I was busy coding data generated through questionnaire, I noticed that participants had a lot to say about exemplary leadership. Mr Thetha further said:

It must all begin with the District Directors who must be exemplary in their conduct. If they wish to instill a habit of punctuality in their subordinates, they themselves should be punctual in the workplace.

(Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

Similarly, Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET-Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

> *…an ethical leader recognises the difference between right and wrong and strives to set an example of good conduct.*
>
> (Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor)

Likewise, she further asserted that:

> *Leaders should be humble and lead by example, be involved in most activities and also team-building exercises. This will create openness between the District Director and the district officials.*
>
> (Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor)

On the other hand, Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) believes that it could be a problem if there is an imposition of ethics because, in general, people do not like things being imposed upon them. He said:

> *For example, if an ethical code is followed by the senior management, the district officials will also follow this example and endeavor to do what is right.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

The majority of participants appeared to not be opinionated *"out-of-the-box"* thinkers. They are rather reserved and would reluctantly voice their opinions. Therefore, participants believe that the District Director should be approachable, friendly and the kind of a person who can provide a *"shoulder to cry on."* There should be suggestion boxes for officials to express their opinions without fear of being victimised. Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES) Sub-directorate said:

> *District officials should be able to rely on the head to always put a hearty smile on their faces.*
>
> (Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist SNES)

His colleague also maintained that a district office that has an ethical District Director is a very good public institution. He said:

> *…it is always good to come to a district office in which the environment is always happy and the standard of the district is very high.*
>
> (Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

He further stated:

> *I prefer an ethical leader. Ethics play a key role in the smooth running of a district, and for that matter, the entire society. If District Directors are unethical, their district offices will be dysfunctional.*
>
> (Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

Echoing the same sentiment, Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP) Sub-directorate said:

> *I would prefer a District Director that is ethical so that we understand all that is required of us and are protected in every way. Transparency is very important.*
>
> (Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

In addition, the majority of participants in this study felt that, if possible, the District Director should be able to detect *"officials' changes of mood"* and endeavor to engage with them personally, with the aim of assisting them with words of encouragement. To conclude, participants believe that transparency is the bottom line whenever there are decisions to be made. There should be transparency in everything, after which *"trust will take its course."* However, the reality is that some officials are not transparent with their subordinates. That makes it difficult to be trusted, he argued further that:

> *Some officials cannot be trusted and as a result a District Director won't be open about certain things.*
>
> (Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

This study found that district officials correctly concluded that ethics are morals and principles. They also believe that ethics has to do with doing the right thing and behaving in a manner that does not contradict established policies and law. In short, ethics is about following policy and some element of morality in the way someone does things. Surprisingly, this study also found that the majority of participants believe that ethics is only for the senior management. The study also found that an ethical leader is a leader who *"follows the rules and puts feelings aside."* Ethical leaders lead better than any other ordinary leader because they lead by the book without deviating from what is expected by the Department of Education or by the employer. Also, district officials must not be guided exclusively by emotions because that will lead to some form of oppression of their colleagues or subordinates. Furthermore, this study found that an ethical leader is "*an overseer who leads by example",* who makes sure that people do adhere to established principles and corrects them when they deviate from these practices. It is the business of the ethical District Director to identify any broken codes and to pay attention to this. District officials should be humble and lead by example and be involved in most activities, such as team-building exercises. This finding is corroborated by Yukl (2013), who views leadership as being about influence or the ability to influence followers. It is noteworthy that Yukl (2013) further posits that without influence, it is impossible to be a leader. Of course, having influence means that there is a greater need on the part of leaders to exercise their influence ethically. This will also create openness between the District Director and district officials. The finding is also in line with van Zyl and Boshoff (2010) who claim that leadership sets the example; as behavioural role models, their philosophies and behaviour invariably affect the ethical behaviour of employees."

Moreover, the study found that the ethical leader "exhibits traits of transparency, kindness and patience." It is also noted that transparency determines trust and the flow of information. In much the same way, kindness and patience help the District Director to be able to detect district

officials' changes of mood. This will afford him occasion to approach them personally, with the aim of assisting them with words of encouragement. In other words, the ethical leader is able to connect with the inner state of the officials and intervene accordingly. These findings are consistent with Starratt (2004); Shapiro and Stefkovich, (2005) as they argue that education leadership is conceptualised as a predominantly moral and ethical activity (Starratt, 2004; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). Since district officials have ethical responsibilities, they must be acknowledgeable and able to use and make moral judgements and decisions with the dignity of each person in mind, while promoting equality in all aspects of education (Starratt, 2005; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Begley & Stefkovich, 2005). Therefore, these findings seem to suggest that district officials must be knowledgeable and be principled in order to model good behaviour. Plus, they have to be able to connect with the inner feelings of subordinates in order to positively influence them. These views, which are echoed by participants, are congruent with Khoza (2011) when he posits that, Ubuntu philosophy is the ethical code that glues the society together, lubricates tolerance and respects human dignity. He further states that Ubuntu offers an indigenised African framework that would add a unique flavour and drive to ethical leadership. The strength of African moral philosophy is that it will influence a leader to exercise compassion when considering a decision (Khoza, 2011)."

To encapsulate the above discussion, the majority of participants in this study viewed an ethical leader as the one who models good behaviour, the one who leads by example, is transparent and has demonstrates kindness and patience. More concisely, an ethical leader is a leader who possesses emotional intellect. The greater proportion of the participants in this study believe that ethical leadership manifests itself in the manner in which the senior management treats subordinates. They assumed that an ethical leader should not be a boss, but a leader doing things that will motivate district officials to be proficient and discerning in doing their work. They also believe that if an official has a problem, or is sick, an ethical leader needs to offer

support and protect his/her dignity. Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS-GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) stated that:

> *...maybe you're a leader, you shouldn't be a boss but a leader and this means you lead by example and shouldn't use your powers to keep reminding us that you are the District Director. You should do things that will mould us into leaders like you one day.*
>
> (Mr Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

In much the same fashion, Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor (TLS-GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

> *Ethical leaders should know that we are all human beings and we have feelings. They need to acknowledge that every individual is important. They must have an approachable manner and must not use harsh words when addressing their subordinates.*
>
> (Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

Further, Ms. Masilela, Subject Advisor (TLS-GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) believes that ethical leadership is demonstrated by being a servant leader. She said during her interview:

> *...ethical leadership can be demonstrated when one does not elevate one's status and dignity as a District Director above that of subordinates. This can be achieved by being a servant leader as opposed to being too proud and bossy to serve and respect others.*
>
> (*Ms* Masilela, Subject Advisor)

The majority of participants in this study claimed that some leaders are not consistent in their behaviour. Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) mentioned this during the interview:

> *Sometimes leaders like District Directors can be humble, but sometimes they are not. To demonstrate humility, they must remember that despite being in a position of authority, they need people under their authority to be free to express their*

opinions. District Directors should reach out to their subordinates and make them feel comfortable, thus empowering them to raise anything that may be of concern.

(Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

In addition, he stated that:

Humility is rare as most leaders tend to leverage their elevated positions for their own advantage. Leaders should be humble so that the other officials feel they can approach them, should the need arise. In other words, District Directors should be open and approachable. Humility is part of our African culture, so it should be the easiest thing to do. Some leaders lack this humility, which does not appear to be very prevalent anymore.

(Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

In addition, the majority of the participants in this study also believe that ethical leadership has to do with equal treatment of all people in the workplace, being democratic and taking the views of others into account when making decisions. Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES Sub-directorate) articulated:

An ethical leader is obviously an official who is ethical in the sense that he/she is not biased and therefore treats everyone equally and fairly. He or she follows Department of Education policies and guidelines.

(Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

He further argued that:

An ethical leader has good management skills and is able to know what to do in certain circumstances. That leader is also able to consult and draw on input from his/her network of fellow officials.

(Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

Similarly, Mr. Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP Sub-directorate) stated this during his interview:

> *I think the ethical leader is someone who treats his subordinates equally. He does not have secrets and he keeps everything transparent. He does everything in the best interests of the district office and education, as opposed to benefitting himself. He is a leader who displays humanity and who believes that as a leader he needs to lead by example.*
>
> (Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

He further said:

> *Everyone should be equal in the workplace, especially with regard to personal interactions. There shouldn't be people who are treated in a certain way because the leader benefits from a relationship with them. If the leader has made certain rules, the rules should apply to all of us.*
>
> (Mr Sofasonke, Deputy, Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

Even though the majority of participants in this study believe in equal treatment, at the district office this is not always the case. The following findings supported this notion. Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) said:

> *A minority of leaders tend to be fair but, in most cases, they have their favourites. Fairness should be displayed in all district activities. There should be transparency and wide consultation so that other members do not become disgruntled.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

In addition, he elaborated on the reason behind unfairness very clearly when he said:

> *Sometimes senior officials can be unfair. For example, they have "spies" that gather information on other officials for them. The "spies" are also motivated by incentives, such as better positions, as reward for this activity.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

Although the majority of participants in this study during the semi-structured interviews mentioned that their supervisor treated them equitably, the following response refutes the above contention. Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES Sub-directorate) said this about his supervisor:

> *She does not include other people's opinions. She believes in her ideologies only.*
> (Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

Further, Mr Magebhula said:

> *My supervisor does not treat us equally. I don't know if it's because she has her favourites? If one person has a problem she will follow up and address it in its entirety, whereas she can be quite indifferent to other people who have similar issues. When some of us call in sick, she does not trust our motives. However, one of our colleagues had a habit of being absent and she kept telling us to have empathy with his situation, this just illustrates that we are not treated equally.*
> Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

Interestingly, the majority of participants in this study were fully convinced that ethics and ethical leadership are necessary at district office level. They believe that an ethical leader provides good leadership, puts things in order, limits misconduct and reduces the chances of violation of the Code of Professional Ethics. Generally, they assumed that ethics and ethical leadership principles assist the senior management or educational leader to lead with integrity. Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP Sub-directorate) stated that:

> *According to my understanding, when you are a leader you must lead with integrity. Ethics are about doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong. So, as a public office, ethics must be central to everything the district does because it builds future leaders.*
> (Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

Furthermore, Mr Sofasonke said:

> *...because they give us good leadership. They also put things in order. Misconduct and violations of the Code of Professional Ethics will be reduced. Therefore, ethical leaders should be promoted. They are very important and useful for the survival of the district and education in general.*
>
> (Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

Similarly, Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) argued that:

> *...for a leader to command authority or for the leader to achieve his or her goals he/he has to do things in an ethical manner, especially in relation to his or her subordinates. They are more likely to work willingly with him/her if they know that he or she is ethical. Once they observe unethical behaviour on the part of the leader, it will be difficult for the leader to lead or control them.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

Observing ethical modes of conflict, Mr Mageba, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES Sub-directorate) supported the above notion when he said:

> *...if an institution has conflict then we cannot work properly in some offices. I think ethics are necessary in district offices so that things can run smoothly.*
>
> (Mr Mageba, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

However, Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP Sub-directorate) offered a different view when he said:

> *...people will take chances. It is human nature. If they see that there is a loophole, they will attempt to exploit that loophole. So, it is sometimes necessary to have someone to identify loopholes and close them before they become serious problems. So yes, there is a need for ethics. There is not necessarily a need for someone to police the office but just someone to oversee the district office operations and fulfil the vision of the Department of Education.*

(Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

In addition, the majority of the participants in this study believe that ethics and ethical leadership was needed in the district office in order to effect the mandate and vision of the Department of Education. Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) quipped:

> *Because without ethics, one might end up leading in a way that suits you and not your organisation, so we need ethics and rules in the district office.*
>
> (Mr Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) also believes that ethics and ethical leadership in the district office will make things go well. He said: "*People are assured of success and growth to another level if the ethics are there."* Similarly, Ms Masilela believes that ethics and ethical leadership were important so that district officials would be able to support one another and develop trust: She said:

> *Because they create trust in the district office and as we know service delivery in the district will be affected if good ethics are not adhered to.*
>
> (Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

In support of the above view on indispensable ethics, Mr Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) added:

> *If there are no ethics it would be difficult for the leader to operate. The subordinates will not take him/her seriously. They will not feel any obligation to do so. Actually, it encourages the junior officials to behave in a wayward manner as well.*
>
> (Mr Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

Similarly, Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

> *…because without ethics, people would forego the established rules and be self-serving, but if they are educated, they will know that they shouldn't do some things because the consequences are not pleasant. This will maintain order and guide us away from unethical conduct.*
>
> (Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

The discussion so far found that an ethical leader is a "*leader"* not a *"boss."* Also, ethical leadership can be demonstrated when one does not regard one's status and dignity as a District Director as superior to that of subordinates. This can be demonstrated by being a servant leader as opposed to being too proud and bossy to serve and respect others. In the same vein, the study found that an ethical leader treats followers equally and is informative. Besides treating all officials equally, an ethical leader is also expected to acknowledge and appreciate the great work done by district officials. In addition, this study found that an ethical leader is the leader who cares and respects other people. This finding deeply resonates with Treviño and Brown (2007), who argue that ethical leaders are characterised as honest, caring and principled individuals who make fair and balanced decisions. Also, the finding is in line with Kalshoven *et al*, (2011) as they posit that ethical leaders treat their followers with respect, keep promises, allow employees to have an input in decisions and clarify expectations and responsibilities. Furthermore, the above findings are also endorsed by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005). They argue that care is based on empathy and responsibility for the well-being of each individual; it focuses on the needs and desires of the individual (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). In addition, the findings of this study are also consistent with the tenets of Khoza's Attuned Leadership (2011), particularly when he postulates that Ubuntu incessantly broadens the sphere of morality to ensure that leaders do not put themselves above others but seek to be at their service. Serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability is a natural extension of Ubuntu (Khoza, 20110. However, this study found that some of the district officials lack information. They do

not attend workshops. They do not further their studies. Furthermore, the study found that ethics and ethical leadership are necessary at district offices because it informs good leadership practice, puts things in order, limits misconduct and reduces the violation of Code of Professional Ethics. In addition, district offices can benefit because the ethical person will know how to do the right thing and will be able to disseminate the information to other district officials.

Therefore, the findings seem to suggest that in order to be a good and ethical leader the District Director needs to take good care of district officials. The findings also seem to suggest that district officials need to be congratulated when a job is well done. That will motivate them to do more in future. Furthermore, these findings seem to suggest that open communication, transparency and fairness build trust with followers. A District Director who demonstrates the above traits is more likely to be trusted by followers or officials. Interestingly, the above findings are corroborated by Mangena (2011). The latter states that leaders in Africa are not supposed to be *"great men"* but servants of the people. Also, the findings are corroborated by Walumbwa *et al.*, (2008), they posit that ethical leadership is mostly related to self-actualisation, moral relationship, moral perception and unbiased dealing.

In a nutshell, being a good and ethical leader does not demand that a leader be a great man or a saint. Rather, a little caring and an understanding heart and mind are required. As a result all of the district's officials will notice and appreciate the District Director's leadership and start to trust and follow him/her.

7.2.2 Experiences of Deputy Chief Education Specialist and Subject Advisors regarding Ethics and Ethical leadership

The majority of the participants in this study believe that having an intimate relationship among departmental officials is unethical. What counts is the perception of the conduct in the

community; it can bring the profession into disrepute. For example, an extra marital relationship within the community is considered unethical.

Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) said:

> *…the senior management officials sleep with fellow junior female officials and are impregnating them. They are promising them better positions in exchange for these favours.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

She further pointed out:

> *…with senior officials, unethical behaviour occurs when they have favourite junior officials. When I recently got here, there was a female official who had a liking for our supervisor, I even sat down and spoke to her, telling her that what she is doing is wrong and unethical because they are always together in the office during working hours.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

In like manner, Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES Sub-directorate) observed:

> *Sometimes it happens that a senior official impregnates a junior colleague. It is also not uncommon for junior officials to engage in illicit relationships amongst themselves. If ethics are applied, they become central in avoiding all of this behaviour.*
>
> (Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

In contrast, Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP Sub-directorate) submitted this crucial point during the interview. He said:

> *Normally a departmental official is regarded as a community leader. The eyes of the Department of Education will be on him/her. You find that some senior officials, who are known to be married, engage in relationships with other staff members or someone's wife in the very same office. I have heard of such cases and it portrays the leader in a bad light.*

(Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

The majority of the participants in this study believe that using the district budget for one's personal gain and agenda, as well as the mismanagement of funds, is unethical.

Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate)

> *Most of the senior leaders do not consider their offices to be a working place but a place they own and also a place where they obtain personal benefits.*
>
> (Ms Masombuka, Subject advisor)

She further argued:

> *In other offices, you find that District Manco don't know anything about the district budget. I think every departmental official must know about the use of the district budget. Leaders must learn to be transparent as well.*
>
> (Ms Masombuka, subject Advisor)

Moreover, Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

> *When the time comes for the senior officials to appoint, you find that they will appoint their friends or a family member. That is nepotism. The appointed officials misbehave because they know that the leader is not going to do anything to discipline them and in most cases you find that they end up becoming part of the leadership of the district. Sometimes they force them into the system by creating positions just so that a friend can join the district office.*
>
> (Ms Masilela, Subject advisor)

Furthermore, the majority of participants in this study mentioned that there was no clear communication in the district office. Some leaders were withholding crucial information from them, but would give it to their friends, which causes problems. On the other hand, Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

They think they are doing well but from our perspective we see that they are doing the wrong thing. For instance, if there is something relevant to us as officials, we often only find out during our sub-directorate meetings, not beforehand.

(Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

On the other hand, Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

Not following the Departmental policies would be unethical. Unfair or biased actions would also be unethical, as too would be disclosing information that is confidential. Discussing an official's confidential issues with someone else is also unethical.

(Mr Masilela, Subject Advisor)

Some officials collude with the SGB, especially the chairperson, in order to misuse school funds at some schools in the district. One of the district officials, Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) articulated this clearly:

…and sometimes you find that in the governing body there's a member who has been there for years. Upon investigation you find that they don't have a child at the school, and that leads to the serious mismanagement of funds because they are friends and they can just sign fraudulent cheques and misappropriate funds with impunity.

(Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

In addition, some participants viewed unjustifiable absenteeism by some departmental officials as unethical. Some officials were hardly in their offices and were running their businesses during office hours without declaring this to their employer. These district officials were *"Taking time off for private matters and recording this as 'attending' Provincial Meetings*."(Ms Nozulu). Further, Ms Nozulu mentioned that:

…a departmental official routinely takes trips during office hours. You hear that he has gone to pray elsewhere but he hasn't done his job and he has left during

office hours. He is often absent for the entire day and sometimes he doesn't come back.

(Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

Her colleague (Mr Magebhula) supported her when he said:

I find that to be unethical. Some officials give false information about why they have been absent from duty.

(Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, (SNES)

Further, Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES: Sub-directorate) said:

…they decide which is best for themselves, their business or their official duties. That is when they engage in unethical conduct. Some choose not to come to the office because of insignificant problems that do not warrant absenteeism. Some even decide that even if they are sanctioned for misconduct they will just accept the punishment and move on.

(Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP: Sub-directorate) supported him when he said:

…officials being absent; you get officials that don't come to work for two weeks then they come back with a doctor's note. You find that the sick note is fake.

(Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

Sharing the same concerns about absenteeism, Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

Some officials collude with school principals by giving question papers to the learners before the date of writing. This is unethical because you are sabotaging the child's future.

(Mr Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

Furthermore, the majority of participants indicated very clearly that other officials, together with school principals and educators, do not care about learners. Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

> *Some educators were going to class unprepared. If you are unprepared there will be noise in the class and no teaching and learning taking place.*
>
> (Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

However, Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) mentioned the following point during the interview:

> *The way you address and present yourself to the learners, by calling them bad names or coming to school drunk is wrong. You are supposed to convey a good image as a leader to the community.*
>
> (Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor)

To further compound matters, Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub- directorate) made a very interesting point and she said:

> *In this age of technology, most officials have accesses to smartphones. They have access to chat groups and so forth, so you often find officials sitting and chatting to their friends instead of actually performing their core functions. That is unethical because you are not being paid to chat on the phone. You are being paid to perform your duties. You are here to demonstrate passion, as well as compassion.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

Reflecting upon this notion of unethical behaviour demonstrated by some school principals and educators at schools, a few participants highlighted some unethical practices. They mentioned the delay caused by educators when classes are meant to resume after the school break. In the event that they return to class, there are poor marking habits. As Subject Advisors we noticed a lot of unethical practices. For example, some educators do not use the correct rubrics to assess

learners, thus causing some deserving learners to fail. The converse is also true. Due to work loads and the pressure to meet deadlines, non-deserving learners are promoted. She argued further:

> *The moment educators decides to bunk lessons, it affects the schools in the district and their pass rates. You might not see it with the lower grades, but the matric results will reveal all. An educator who always attends lessons is being ethical.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

Similarly, her colleague Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES: Sub-directorate) said:

> *We often use rubrics to allocate marks, but some educators will not even bother to follow the appropriate rubric and the learners are affected because educators are marking in accordance with their own standards and this doesn't always go according to plan. Then the wrong learners pass and fail.*
>
> (Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

Moreover, the majority of the Subject Advisors who participated in this study believe that some school principals and heads of departments abuse their power by ordering educators to do their jobs, especially paperwork. During file submission they do not properly control the work of educators and they do not care about the developmental workshops available to improve the capacity of their educators. Due to laziness, many school principals and heads of department deliberately avoid abiding by the rules. Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP Sub-directorate) said.

> *Some HODs have insufficient knowledge about their subjects. When you enquire about something with them they will tell you that they do not know and they refer you to the principal.*
>
> (Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

Findings from the data generated through questionnaires also corroborated findings from the semi-structured interviews. These revealed that when principals and HODs did not respect educators and treat them equitably and did not manage schools in their district efficiently, they were viewed as unethical. The following quotations were extracted from some of the questionnaires:

> *…unable to differentiate between personal matters that cannot be discussed with others. Being bossy to staff members and does not rule the school ethically.*
>
> *Not respecting colleagues. Reminding them that he/she is a leader.*
>
> (Mr Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

Furthermore, findings from questionnaires also seemed to be consistent with findings from semi-structured interviews that most of the senior officials were involved in bribery, were abusing other junior officials and treating them inequitably. The following was stated by Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP Sub-directorate) during the interview:

> *Giving the scope of questions to other officials when there is a promotional post in the district office. Having "spies" and not being responsive to other officials. Making decisions without consulting with other colleagues.*
>
> (Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

His/her colleagues supported this argument when it was said:

> *The problem starts with the Senior Manager (District Director). He/she gives preferential treatment to some officials and side-lines the others. He/she does not treat district officials equally. When the time comes to act accordingly, he/she finds it difficult to execute his/her responsibilities equitably.*
>
> (Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

Furthermore, findings from questionnaires also seemed to be consistent with findings from semi-structured interviews that most of the district senior managers were involved in bribery,

were abusing some officials and treating them unequally. The following were stated by some of the district officials during the interview:

> *Giving the scope of questions to other officials when there is a senior promotional post for Circuit Manager at stake. This is an unethical conduct.*
>
> (Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

So far, this study found that some of the senior managers in the district office were still behaving unethically. Moreover, some of them were occupying positions as district officials for their own to benefit, accepting bribes and concealing the budget and resources of the Department of Education from district officials so that it becomes easier for them to engage in fraud and corruption. Furthermore, some senior officials were taking time off for private matters and recording these activities as official departmental matters. The study also revealed that some officials and principals were involved in sexual relationships. In addition, some officials were absent from their duties for unjustifiable reasons. Some are hardly ever at their offices: they are running their own private businesses without declaring this to the Department of Education. Moreover, this study identified discriminatory practices on the part of senior management officials when dealing with junior officials at district office level and revealed that some senior management officials were sleeping with female officials in exchange for providing certain jobs.

This study also unexpectedly revealed some of the other unethical practices demonstrated by some senior officials, including the following: the use of smart phones and the spending of time on chat groups during office hours, lack of commitment leading to officials taking time off for private affairs, late-coming/early knock-off and absenteeism, not practising pastoral care and having illicit intimate/love relationships. In addition, educators not marking correctly and giving learners the examination paper before it is officially issued. The above findings suggest that the district office and schools need ethical leaders in order to run smoothly. This

is also consistent with the contention of Waggoner (2010), who claims that without ethics, a leader is likely to fail and with ethics a leader is more likely to develop effective leadership (Waggoner, 2010). These findings also suggest that senior management needs to model good behaviour so that officials behave in an upstanding fashion as well. For senior management to successfully model good behaviour they must be knowledgeable and principled/ethical. Plus, they have to be able to connect with the inner feelings of their subordinates in order to positively influence them. The findings are consistent with Khoza (2011), who argues that to be ethical is a universal duty. African humanism makes up for a deficiency in Western individualist rationalism by insisting that morality is an expression of the collective spirit and not merely an individual duty. Ethical leadership is an extension of this duty and spirit (Khoza, 2011).

In addition, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) call for educational leaders to consider professional codes and personal ethical principles, as well as standards of the profession. Likewise, the Code of Conduct for Educators also informs educators that they ought to act in a proper and becoming way, such that their behaviour does not bring the teaching profession into disrepute (SACE, 2000). To conclude, this discussion so far has indicated that bribery and corruption by some senior management members is an example of unethical practice routinely carried out in the district office. Some senior officials were treating departmental offices as their personal possession for their own benefit, concealing district resources and budget so that it becomes easier to for them to engage in misappropriation. In addition, some of the district officials were involved in bribery.

7.2.3 Causes of unethical behaviour

The majority of participants in this study believe that School Governing Bodies (SGBs) were not knowledgeable in matters pertaining to schools in the district and that they sheepishly abided by the dictates of their principals. They were not appropriately informed of their roles

and responsibilities. Likewise, participants believe that some parent SGBs members lack education and training on how the SGBs should operate and this becomes a legal and ethical factor. They trust principals because they think they are knowledgeable and therefore correct in whatever they say or do. In addition, lack of integrity and corruption within SGB's reduce their efficacy in terms of disciplining errant educators who are emboldened by the inability of these SGBs to hold them accountable. Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) said:

> *We can say they are lacking information because some may be uneducated. They cannot read and understand the documents they are signing. They also trust the principals.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

She further asserted:

> *How I see it is that the SGB members are "puppets" of school principals. I have never come across an SGB member who is strong enough to stand and make firm decisions, all they do is follow principal's orders.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

Further, on this point, the majority of the participants argued that unethical behaviour was prevalent in schools under the auspices of the district office. The majority of the participants mentioned that the personal history of principals and officials, along with insufficient salaries, may be the cause of unethical behaviour; greed/materialism was widely mentioned by participants as a cause of unethical behaviour on the part of both principals and departmental officials. They mentioned that some of the officials and principals that colluded with each other were not happy/satisfied with what they have.

Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES Sub-directorate) said:

There is a plethora of reasons why. One could be that some people are just inherently corrupt. The second reason could be that some people might not have adequate training on ethics and the SACE Code of Professional Ethics. A leader has to be trained, as opposed to just being promoted without some sort of training. Thirdly, people might be unethical because of laziness to think or to act.

(Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

His colleague, Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP Sub-directorate) stated his view and said:

Nowadays there is a culture of trying to keep up with the neighbours in terms of material things. If a neighbour buys a beautiful car, then they (the neighbours) also think of buying a similar car by syphoning department funds, even by creating ghost employees and collecting salaries.

(Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

Some of the district officials are moonlighting because of greed as they view their salaries as insufficient. Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

Salaries are not enough, debts are too high, social problems like sickness in the family, sexual appetite of males causing them to fail to control themselves.

(Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

However, Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) believes that some of the officials are greedy and corrupt. He said:

…they also sell vacancies to get money. There is an element of greed that motivates them to keep enriching themselves. That is why they will keep on doing it until they are finally caught red-handed.

(Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

Moreover, Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

I think it is because of greed and also I think they are politically connected and in charge of everything, thus making it is easy for them to use resources for their own benefit.

(Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor)

Also, Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) pointed out that:

It is greed because even if a person has a million, they still want more. Some may feel that the remuneration that they are getting is not enough. Others may be motivated by greed and corruption.

(Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist)

In addition, Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES Sub-directorate) mentioned that:

Another reason is greediness. Some of them are very greedy. They do not want to be content with what they have.

(Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

The majority of participants in this study also believe that the abuse of power, stemming from the relationships between the principals and senior management in District and Circuit Offices, may lead to the unethical behaviour prevalent in the Department of Education. Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, (EAP) mentioned this during the interview:

I think it is because of "fear of man." Also, there is the issue of favouritism, if I may put it like that. In addition, there are illicit relationships, such as the sexual misconduct that I mentioned before that causes them to break the rules laid down in the Code of Conduct. The other reason is power. Some need to be seen to be powerful and in control.

(Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

Furthermore, Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP Sub-directorate) said:

I think it is the abuse of power and also the corruption that is taking place these days. You might find that the principal is the "comrade" of the circuit manager and this encourages him/her to continue behaving unethically.

(Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

The majority of participants in this study believe that there are district officials and school principals who have routinely engaged in unethical practices and have never been caught. Also, some cases were reported but they were never attended to. This encourages departmental officials and some school principals to ignore established policies pertaining to conduct because there is no apparent punishment or accountability. In short, the failure of the Department of Education to discipline its senior management for misconduct serves to further encourage engagement in nefarious and unethical conduct on the part of said officials and colluding principals.

Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

…could be that sometimes when a case is reported, it disappears into thin air. We don't know whether or not they bribe their way out or the case is taken too lightly.

(Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) supported the above notion when he said:

I believe it's because those who have been in such situations have not been penalised and that is why others are not worried.

(Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

The lack of knowledge and ignorance concerning ethical standards together fuel misconduct, as demonstrated by senior management. Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

We can say that some senior officials here in the district were not adequately informed about ethics while they were still in university, or advised as to how to overcome issues that they were likely to face in schools and the district office.

(Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor)

Similarly, Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

Because there is no one who is focused on it or making sure that these things are happening. I have not seen any departmental circular or notice whereby all district officials are informed of the ethical standards expected by the Department of Education. Even when you are a new recruit, you are not told that you must abide by certain ethical standards. They are not being clearly revealed. Maybe you only become aware of these ethical standards after you have done something wrong? That's when you are told that you are not supposed to do something. That is when you realise what you do not know.

(Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor)

She added:

They decide which behavior suits them. That is when they act unethically. Some choose not to come to work because of minor problems that do not warrant absenteeism. Some decide that even if they commit serious misconduct there is no need to fear consequences from management. It's business as usual.

(Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor)

In conclusion, a few participants raised the point that pressure from the Department of Education to meet certain targets, and not feeling appreciated when they did a good job, contributed to unethical conduct in the form of some district officials colluding with school principals to cheat in National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations. Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET- Curriculum Sub-directorate) said

Yes, because if the pass rate does not meet the targeted one they end up allowing learners to cheat in order to achieve the targeted percentage.

(Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

On the other hand, her colleague Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) said:

> *…as we all know, we need to be appreciated for the good work we are doing, and I don't think anyone would want to continue doing work if they are not appreciated, this is why some district officials even leave their jobs and change occupation.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

The discussion so far has shown that the incompetence of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) are seen to be the one of the contributing factors why school principals and departmental officials are still behaving in an unethical fashion. This study found that SGBs trusted the school principals and district officials and therefore, they follow departmental officials' orders. This study also found that unethical practices are prevalent in schools under the auspices of the district office. In addition, it has been established that some district officials do not know much about ethics.

The findings suggest that district officials are more vulnerable and some lack crucial information. This is emphasised by Howley and Howley (2010), who posit that schools and education, in particular, are challenged by severe high levels of illiteracy and unemployment and poorly developed infrastructure. The findings also suggest that school principals and departmental officials took advantage of people who are misinformed and uneducated. Further, the findings suggest that departmental officials or senior management need to be more ethical in order to influence district officials to behave ethically. This is also consistent with the findings of Alqahtani and Alkrdem (2015) who state that an educational leader is a leader who promotes the success of all learners by acting with integrity, with fairness and in an ethical manner. These researchers further state that an educational leader should demonstrate integrity, dedication, humility, openness, creativity, honesty, forward-thinking competence, inspiration,

intelligence fairness and assertiveness. Similarly, Shapiro and Stefkovich, (2005) state that an educational leader has ethical responsibilities, which means they must be knowledgeable and able to use and make moral judgements and decisions with the dignity of each person in mind, while promoting equality in all aspects of education. Furthermore, the Code of Conduct for Educators also requires educators to exercise authority with compassion. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) note that the professional ethic often means codes, rules and principles, all of which are aligned with the traditional concepts of justice but maintain that their interpretation of the ethis of the profession considers other paradigms such as professional judgement and professional decision-making. The foregoing findings are in line with Khoza (2011), who argues that the strength of African moral philosophy is that it influences a leader to exercise compassion when considering a decision (Khoza, 2011). He further argues that compassion rests on the empathy that leaders feel when they have knowledge of the inner state of others. Leadership without compassion is dead. To lead effectively, a leader has to be ethical and moral. In addition, Ubuntu requires a leader to maintain social justice, to be empathetic towards others, to be respectful and to have a conscience (Khoza, 2011).

Therefore, to conclude this section, more needs to be done in order to address the issue of unethical behaviour widely reported as practised by some of the district officials.

7.2.4 The perceptions of Deputy Chief Education Specialist and Subject Advisors regarding education on ethics

The findings seem to suggest that the majority of the participants did not receive any instruction in ethical education while training to become educators. Some mentioned that only a few of them had heard about ethics, especially those that studied further at honours level, particularly in Educational Management. Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) said:

Yes, in a way they would talk about the way you need to behave, especially at Honours in Educational Management level.

(Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES Sub-directorate) noted that:

There were modules that were focused on professionalism and ethical issues, especially in management, but as students you do not put that into practice.

(Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

On the other hand, with regard to the issue of in-service training, only a few participants attended the training. Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP Sub- directorate) said:

I once attended a school in which my principal explained it to us and he even assisted us to register with SACE.

(Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

The majority of the participants did not attend any in-service training on ethical education organised by the Department or SACE. Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

No. I haven't attended training but there was a section that I read during my spare time that referred to it.

(Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

Furthermore, Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

No…I will be lying. The workshops and training I have attended have been about my induction, they had nothing to do with ethics.

(Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor)

Even though the majority of participants have not been exposed to ethical education, they believe that this kind of training is necessary. Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) mentioned the same when she said:

> *It is necessary, to understand why they are important and to know which ones are necessary and how they should be applied.*
>
> (Ms Masilela, Subject Avisor)

Further, Ms Masilela mentioned that "*it is necessary and must be done regularly so that it can assist both school-based educators and office-based educators."* Some of the participants were confused and did not have a clear understanding of SACE and what it stands for. Ms Nozulu, Subject Advisor TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) went on to articulate her confusion about the SACE Code of Professional Ethics when she said:

> *Yes, SACE is the Council for Educators. It is there to protect the educators, but they also punish them when they have a case. They have a right to revoke an educator's certificate (if found guilty of a serious offense) but at the same time they protect me and that is misleading. This confuses me a lot.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Subject Advisor)

She added:

> *I think the Department of Education and the district office don't have an interest in ethics because since I came here I have not been to any workshops conducted by the Department of Education or SACE to address ethics, so I think their focus is only on teaching and learning. Even though there are reported cases of some who behave unethically it ends up being unclear which steps were taken in response to the report. They just implement the policies with no feedback.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Subject Advisor)

Similarly, Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) said:

> *No. With SACE I have only filled in and signed a form to pledge that I will uphold the teaching profession, but I have never received any formal training on ethics. I think it is also the responsibility of the district office to ensure that the departmental officials are aware of ethical standards relating to conduct.*
>
> (Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

Some participants in this study confirmed that they were guided by the SACE Code of Conduct and know that non-conformity with the SACE Code of Conduct could result in one's teaching certificate being revoked. Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES Sub-directorate) mentioned that:

> *…they are the body with which educators are registered and they are able to cancel your certificate in instances of serious misconduct. In actual fact, they should be more involved in training educators.*
>
> (Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES0

Further, Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

> *…there has been no proper training, except filling in a form and having a SACE certificate, but the training is important.*
>
> (Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

The discussion so far has shown that the majority of participants did not attend any training on ethics and were confused when talking about ethics and the SACE Code of Conduct. They only know that if they do not abide by the SACE Code of Conduct, SACE could revoke their teaching certificates. So, all in all, the findings suggest that district officials were not fully aware of the SACE Code of Professional Ethics and also that the Department of Education did not do much to instill ethical awareness in educators. Therefore, these findings seem to suggest that departmental officials should place ethics training on their agendas and should

communicate appropriate ethical standards to both school-based educators and office-based educators in order to improve ethical compliance at the institutions under their authority. This is consistent with the contention of Brown and Treviño (2006), Eisenbeiss (2012), Naidoo (2012) and Piccolo, *et al.*, (2012) all of whom posit that moral managers place ethics on the agenda and visibly use and communicate ethics in order to stimulate their followers to make them more accountable for their behaviour. Moral managers really try to set an example for their followers on how to behave ethically by making ethical decisions and by rewarding the desirable outcome (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Furthermore, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) posit that educational administrators of the 21st century institutions need to develop personal and professional codes of ethics to lead institutions that are not only accountable but are also tolerant of a demographically diverse community. According to Khoza (2011), qualities that are especially important in leadership were serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability, which is a natural extension of Ubuntu.

To conclude this section, most of the district officials who participated in this study do not have a clear understanding of ethics and the SACE Code of Professional Ethics. The majority of them were never exposed to any training on ethical education, although they maintain that such training is very important to them.

7.2.5 Perspectives of Deputy Chief Education Specialists and Subject Advisors on how to arrest unethical behaviour in the district office

As expected, the participants in this study were aware that addressing unethical conduct would not be an easy task. The challenges in addressing unethical conduct include: offenders who try to cover their tracks, delays in handling cases that result in offences being repeated etc. They articulated some of the factors that may hinder the process of addressing unethical conduct. Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate) expressed her view very succinctly during her interview. She said:

A human being is very difficult to deal with. Ethics is a state of mind in a human being because in the moment a person will not even think about the ethics that guide him/her. They will just do something impulsively and later realise that they have made a mistake, but the damage would already have been done. That is why I say, I do not think it will end because it is difficult to deal with human beings. The human mind is very complex because what we value in terms of ethics, others do not. People are being taught but still some do not accept the guidance. By conducting and attending workshops, it may decrease, but not end per se.

(Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

In much the same way, Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (SNES Sub-directorate) echoed the same sentiment:

I think they do but it is not going to happen overnight. One thing that is going to take a while is changing the mindset, which dictates that when some people see others doing something and getting away with it, then they think they can do the same.

(Mr Magebhula, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, SNES)

The majority of the participants believe that workshops will assist in eliminating unethical behaviour among district officials. They affirm the view that workshops for departmental officials should be conducted. District Offices should communicate these things as this will help to eliminate unethical behaviour. Also, senior management should stop being dictated to by emotions and apply the law in punishing misconduct. The majority of participants in this study suggested that there should be consequences for anyone who conducts themselves unethically. According to Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (EAP Sub-directorate):

The only way they are going to root out the problem is to make examples of those who are caught behaving unlawfully - suspension or dismissal depending on the severity of the offence. If it is a senior official who steals money from the department, that officialshould be taken to court because it is wrong. Also, officials

who insist their salaries not be suspended, this must be stopped. They are on suspension but still receive their full salaries, which gives them the option of doing something extra whilst still getting paid by the Department of Education.

(Mr Sofasonke, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, EAP)

On a slightly different note, Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) emphasised the issue of training and workshops and said:

I think the Provincial Department of Education must try to implement ongoing workshops and those who have already been involved in cases must get punishment so that other officials will learn the hard way. Departmental officials must attend the workshops based on ethical leadership, that is how one becomes a moral leader and this will ensure that implementation is effective in the district office.

(Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

Likewise, Mr Thetha, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) supported the above insistence on workshops and expanded further, saying:

What should be done is to inform them about the disadvantages of engaging in unethical behaviour. The Department of Education must design a monitoring tool to monitor whether or not district officials are adhering to a code of ethics.

(Mr Thetha Subject Advisor)

It becomes very clear at this stage that a few district officials who participated in this study believe that District Committees must be established in order to uphold ethical standards at schools and in districts. Also, participants felt that the suggestion box must be utilised whereby anyone, including General Workers, Administrative Staff and Security Personnel, can suggest solutions and senior officials can also write down what they think is amiss within the district office. The suggestion box submissions must not read by anyone within the district office but an *"external entity like SACE."* If

submissions include information on "*affairs and drunk officials…the department will know."* (Ms Masilela, Subject Advisor, (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) added:

> *…we need to form District Committees at the district office that will be responsible for ethics. Also, all district officials must undergo training/workshops so that they are well-versed about ethics. Also, encouragement is needed to make sure that they all attend.*
>
> (Masilela, Subject Advisor)

In addition, participants claimed that the Department of Education must have a Special Directorate which will be involved in managing the school's assets. Also, participants felt that the Department of Education is mainly focused on *"teaching and learning"* and not on the functionality of the department as a whole.

Based on the data presented in this section, this study discovered numerous pathways to be followed in order to deal with the unethical conduct that has been widely reported at the district office. Some of them are presented as follows: firstly, this study established that dealing with unethical conduct is not an easy matter; the human being is a very difficult being to deal with. Secondly, ethics is a state of mind of a human being because at any given moment a person will not even rationalise that there are ethics that guide him/her (rather, they would have internalised ethics that determine conduct on a subconscious level). They will act and then later realise that they have made an error. Unfortunately, the damage would have already been done. Therefore, for now, unethical practices may decrease, but will not end *per se.*

In addition, conducting and attending workshops may also decrease unethical conduct because sometimes district officials plead ignorance and claim that they did not know that what they were doing was unethical. Both the Department of Education and universities do not exactly offer that training. Focus is placed on teaching the child. Therefore, departmental officials need to be educated, especially newly appointed officials. Henceforth, training must focus more on

the disadvantages of engaging in unethical behavior. District Committees must be established to uphold these ethics. Also, use of suggestion boxes must be encouraged, whereby anyone, including the Administrative Staff, Security Personnel, General Workers and Senior Management can also write down what they think is not right within the district office. The suggestion box must not be read by anyone within the district office but an "external entity like SACE." There must be some especially competent people who will be involved in managing the Department of Education assets and resources, to avoid finances being the scope solely of the unscrupulous departmental officials, school principals and SGBs. Furthermore, the study established that the only way to root out the problem is to make examples of those who are caught acting unlawfully. There must be consequences for anyone who conducts themselves unethically because other district officials can see some getting away with nefarious conduct and they then think they can do the same. This study also determined that some of those who have been suspended still get a full salary every month and they have got other businesses running. Therefore, findings seem to suggest that the district offices need competent and strong leadership. In addition, the current leadership needs to be reviewed and, where possible, be replaced with the honest, ethical and principled leaders to arrest the prevalence of unethical conduct at district office level. Since district officials need to act in accordance with ethical values and be role models, having an intellectual and moral influence on district officials is also important. These findings suggest that a dedicated focus on teaching the child exclusively needs to change: the focus must be more on both teaching and instilling ethical conduct at district office level. Further to this, these findings suggest that educational leaders need to be able to critique the current policies and procedures in order to address unethical conduct.

Likewise, a study conducted by Cezmi and Toprak (2014) found that an educational leader needs to act in accordance with ethical values, being a role model, having an intellectual and moral influence on people, and providing individualised support. Their findings seem to be

corroborated by views of the participants, namely, that officials need to act in accordance with ethical values, being role models and having intellectual and moral influence on district officials. This leadership dimension is also commensurate with the view of Yukl (2013) when he argues that ethical leadership is assumed to involve setting and pursuing ethical goals and influencing others in an ethical manner (Yukl, 2013).

Considered in tandem, the findings of this study are in line with the view of Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) when they argue that education leaders who were faced with dilemmas and challenged to make complex decisions, justified those decisions as made in the best interests of the learners. Therefore, educational leaders have ethical responsibilities, which means that they must be knowledgeable and be able to use and make moral judgements and decisions with the dignity of each person in mind, while promoting equality in all aspects of education (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2005; Begley and Stefkovich, 2007). In addition, the findings of this study also resonate with Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) view that district officials are daily faced with ethical dilemmas so they have to take decisions in the interests of the learners (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). Therefore, educational leaders have ethical responsibilities to make moral judgements and decisions with the dignity of each person in mind, while promoting equality in all aspects of education (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). In addition, Ubuntu is essential to institutional leadership since it directs the employees towards an *"ethics of care."* The humane style of leadership generated by African humanism puts people first. In Africa, the *Ubuntu* philosophy is an ethical code that glues society together, lubricates tolerance and respects human dignity. *Ubuntu* offers an indigenised African framework that would add a unique flavour and drive to leadership (Khoza, 2011).

7.3 Conclusion

In this chapter presented a discussion of the descriptive analysis of the conceptualisations, practices and experiences of various district officials regarding ethics and ethical leadership

elicited through the interviews, documents review and questionnaires were presented and discussed in terms of research questions, literature review as well as the theoretical frameworks underpinning this study. In a nutshell, the data presentation chapters have shown that at schools and in researched district office, school principals and some departmental officials are still behaving unethically, and findings indicated that they lack both humility and Ubuntu. Humility is part of our African culture, so it should be the easiest thing to do. But it is rare as most departmental officials tend to use their high panoramic positions to their own advantage and end up being unethical. Hence an education district office that has ethical district officials is regarded as functional and well managed district. Dstrict officials always feel good to be associated with that education district. Therefore, all district offices in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education need ethical leaders who are servant leaders as opposed to being too proud and bossy to serve and respect others. The subsequent chapter provides an evaluative and theoretical analysis of the major themes that emerged from the findings. The interpretations shall be compared and contrasted with relevant literature and theory.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION OF KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters were dedicated to the descriptive analysis and discussion of the research findings. Chapter Eight is devoted to the evaluative presentation and discussion of the key themes which emerged from the data that was responding directly to the research questions. Further, this section endeavours to create a synergy among critical questions, reviewed literature and the theoretical frameworks adopted in the study.

8.2 The following key themes emerged

The key themes which emerged from this investigation were the following: the contextual understanding of ethics and ethical leadership; ethical leaders modelling good behaviour (exemplary leadership; role of trust/integrity in ethical leadership as a pillar of an ethical leader; egotism and self-interest; collaborative leadership (stakeholders' involvement) and decline of Ubuntu values in the district office community.

8.2.1 Contextual conceptualisation of ethics and ethical leadership

The recurring key theme from the findings presented in the previous three chapters was that ethics was to do the right thing. The majority of the participants believe that ethics is a set of principles that people must use to decide what is right or wrong. Normally, what is right or wrong is guided by a set of beliefs by the group of people or a community. Furthermore, ethics is acceptable moral behaviour in the workplace, enhancing respect among colleagues in a district office. Moreover, ethics is about time management and being present at office. Hence, other important factors found by this study was the issue of "being accepted" and the "majority". In order to be accepted, it comprises the element of endorsement by the majority. Moreover, the leader understood that he/she had to operate within certain organisational

principles and ensure that those organisational principles were upheld in the presence or absence of other people. In addition, the leader had a responsibility to provide guidance to the followers by observing the organisational standards and ensuring that subordinates conform to the set standards. The study noted the dissonance between individual and organisational values. However, the study's findings suggest that the ethical leader had to synergise organisational values with his or her own, in the best interests of the organisation. The above findings are consistent with those of Northouse (2010) and Vogel (2012) who posit that ethics are the beliefs and values of what is right or wrong from a moral perspective. Further, ethics act as the guiding principles that guide an individual or a certain group of people in making decisions in a particular situation (Northouse, 2010 & Vogel, 2012). The following narratives serve to highlight this perception. Mr Mageba, District Director said during interview:

> *I think ethics deals with moral behaviour of a person. It is about how a person conducts himself/herself in the organisation. It refers to how an official conducts himself/herself within an organisation. Long ago, not everyone could be an educator. Only ministers of religion could be educators, and ministers live by the Bible.*

(Mr Mageba, the District Director)

Ms. Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET-Curriculum Sub-directorate)

> *Ethical leadership in institution is a set of moral principles that people must use to decide what is right or wrong (that is morality).*

(Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLSand FET)

Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate)

> *Ethical leadership means being honest and transparent in leading people. For example, if you are a leader you must lead by example. You must not tell people to do something that you are failing to do so it is mostly about being practical.*

You must demonstrate it so that the people that you are leading must see which is right and which is wrong in the workplace.

(Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

Further, Mr Mehlomakhulu, Circuit Manager said:

My understanding of ethics has to do with doing the correct or right things and behaving in the right manner which does not go against policies and law, following policy and some element of morality in the way someone does things.

(Mr Mehlomakhulu, Circuit Manager)

Based on the findings that have been presented so far, concisely, ethics is a set of principles people use to decide on what is right and wrong. Ethics is about moral behaviour, how a person conducts himself/herself within the organisation. Furthermore, in the past, education was regarded as a noble profession, so much that generally, before the state got involved, education was provided by missionaries or church schools. Therefore, departmental officials and leaders in education had to uphold impeccable ethical standards and were almost associated with the ministers of religion. Participants even referred to olden days where teaching posts were mainly occupied by the ministers of religion because these members of the community were known to uphold high ethical standards.

Furthermore, another major theme that emerged from the findings was that ethical leadership in district office was to lead in such a way that leadership benefits the subordinates and ultimately the learners in the district. Mr Khawuleza, Circuit Manager described an "*Ethical leader as the leader who manages the organisation in such a way that it benefits the subordinates and ultimately the learners in the district".*

(Mr Khawuleza, Circuit Manager)

This study also found that an ethical leader is someone who cares about other people, someone who has a good character, who takes good care of the learners and subordinates, who is

principled and consistent in decision-making. The findings of this study were consistent with view of Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) who argue that educational leaders are faced with ethical dilemmas and so should take decisions, and those decisions must be in the interests of the learners (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). Therefore, educational leaders have ethical responsibilities used to make moral judgements and decisions with the dignity of each person in mind, while promoting equality in all aspects of education (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). In addition, *Ubuntu* is essential to education leadership since it directs organisations towards an "ethics of care". The humane style of leadership generated by African humanism puts people first. In Africa, *Ubuntu* philosophy is the ethical code that glues the society together, lubricates tolerance and respects human dignity. *Ubuntu* offers an indigenised African framework that would add a unique flavour and drive to leadership (Khoza, 2011). Furthermore, an ethical leader is exemplary to others in the workplace, someone whom people look up to, someone who also encourages other people to do likewise and ensuring that ethical standards are kept or maintained. Being an educational leader means that you are a role model not only to subordinates but also to the whole community, therefore you are expected to model good behaviour, demonstrate a good character and be exemplary. Moreover, an ethical leader is a *"father or mother"* to the followers. Ethical leaders create a conducive environment for subordinates and instill a sense of *Ubuntu* to both staff members and learners at schools. To be a father/mother of an institution is to promote the well-being of followers, solve their problems and keep them confidential. In addition, an ethical leader shows sympathy and empathy to other people. Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET Curriculum Sub-directorate) supported this notion when she said:

> *By showing empathy and sympathy to all stakeholders and take into cognizance the welfare of others.*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLSand FET)

Likewise, Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-directorate articulated this very well when she said:

> *Understand the feelings of subordinates, and to be a father/mother to them when there are times of difficulties.*
>
> (Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

Likewise, Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor (TLS: GET Curriculum Sub-directorate) concurred with the above comment as follows:

> *Ethical leadership is to be honest and transparent in leading people. For example, if you are a leader you must lead by example. You must not tell people to do something that you are failing to do so it is mostly about being practical. You must demonstrate it so that the people that you are leading must see which is right and which is wrong in the workplace.*
>
> (Ms Masombuka, Subject Advisor)

Significantly, the findings also showed that the participants were influenced by their religious upbringing to be ethical and good leaders. They also argued that an educational leader who is grounded in religion manages to maintain being morally upright, despite the possibility that the School Governing Body (SGB) may be ignorant of some basic financial management skills and therefore may be easily deceived. Further, to be scripturally bound (in terms of Biblical orientation) derives educational leaders to express ethical values like love, humility, joy, being at peace and self-control. In other words, ethical leaders lead in such a way that followers notice that a leader has a heart to feel and the ear to listen to them. Ethical leadership is to be able to create an environment which is safe for future leaders to be moulded and to re-install the sensitive and critical layers of being an African or human being which is Ubuntu. Among other things the participants mentioned the following to illustrate the above argument: Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessments Sub-directorate) argued that:

Long ago, not everyone could be an educator/leader. Only ministers of religion could be educators, and ministers live by the Bible.

(Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education, Examination and Assessment)

The participants understandings of ethical leadership were in line with what I found in literature, such as: integrity, honesty, fairness, character, transparency, morality, modelling and good behaviour Participants further claimed that ethical leadership is about considering the best interest of the learner and fellow subordinates in every decision taken, achieving excellent results/outcomes and being scripturally bound.

Consequently, based on the findings of this study, it can be safely deduced that ethical leadership is about caring about other people; being a trusted individual; and creating open communication. Also, this study found that ethical leadership takes into account different characteristics of humans: He/she establishes a support structure which caters for different areas of a life of a person. Findings from this study also show that an ethical leader is grounded with ethics and spirituality or religious upbringing, and that both are rooted in *Ubuntu* that values the community, humanness and wellbeing of every person. This finding embraces the African philosophy of ethical leadership whereby a leader complements *Ubuntu* to achieve the desired goal. The Ubuntu philosophy espouses group solidarity, which is central to the survival of African communities (Mbigi & Maree, 2005). Moreover, Nelson Mandela, former South African president describes Ubuntu as a philosophy constituting a universal truth, a way of life, which underpins an open society (Mandela, 2006). In Africa, *Ubuntu* philosophy is the ethical code that glues society together, lubricates tolerance and respects human dignity. *Ubuntu* offers an indigenised African framework that would add a unique flavour and drive to leadership. *Ubuntu* springs from *"muntu"* (a human being), a word is found in all African languages in Africa, meaning human being human and concerned with others, summed up in the maxim 'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am' (Khoza, 2011). However, without good

ethics, it is extremely difficult for a leader to develop integrity, authenticity, an identity or other traits that produce effective leadership (Waggoner, 2010).

Furthermore, the findings from this study also complements the Western philosophy of ethical leadership. Resick, *et al.* (2006) describe ethical leaders as people-orientated, as and when an ethical leader reflects genuinely and caringly about other people. In addition, Brown and Treviño (2006) and (Piccolo *et al.,* 2012) posit that an ethical leader acts in a normatively appropriate manner. They further explain that to act in a normatively appropriate manner is to act consistently with general expectations regarding how leaders should behave in a work context. 'Normatively appropriate', implies that leaders are fair, honest, principled, and trustworthy in taking responsibility for their actions, and use rewards and punishments where appropriate to hold subordinates responsible for their actions (Piccolo, *et al.,* 2012). Ethical leaders, as described by Brown and Treviño (2006), should exhibit traits that are consistent with normative ethical principles such as honesty, fairness, and trustworthiness.

8.2.2 Ethical leaders model good behaviour (Exemplary leadership)

One of the prominent themes that emerged from the findings was that ethical leaders model consistently good behaviour (being exemplary) in the context of massive corruption and nepotism in society. In this study, participants repeatedly expressed a view of an ethical leader as someone who is exemplary to a certain group of people, someone to whom people look up to, someone who also encourages other people to do likewise and ensure that ethical standards were kept or maintained despite massive corruption and nepotism in the whole organisation where these leaders work. Being a departmental official means that you are a role model, not only to subordinates, but also to the whole organisation therefore, you have to model good behaviour, demonstrate a good character and be exemplary in your behaviour. Throughout, the data presentation and analysis, I noticed that senior management were viewed as pillars of hope in the district office.

Further, district officials are expected to model good behaviour as they supposed to lead with integrity. However, this study found that some of the district officials practiced unethical behaviour and these practices not only destroy the institution which an educational leader was leading but destroyed the whole organisation with negative consequences for the entire organisation. As I presented above, the educational leader is regarded as the pillar and the bridge to the future leaders of an organisation. Consequently, modeling good behaviour and consistently demonstrating what one preaches, is a cornerstone of being an ethical leader. With regard to such credible leadership, Brown and Treviño (2006) posit that good leadership always starts with the inner person and that the people can sense the depth of a person's character. They further argue that a moral person is fair, is a principled decision-maker, is caring about the wider society and behaves ethically in both his/her personal and professional life (Brown & Treviño, 2006). In addition, De Hoogh and Den-Hartog (2008) postulate that personal characteristics such as the leader's personality and upbringing are related to ethical leadership. The above views of the participants are also consistent with the sixth and the last aspect of Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model which is commonwealth. According to Khoza (2011), as people we owe our relationships to others. Commonwealth emphasises the link between common action and common benefits. It is about collective and communitarian values. So, *Ubuntu* is a living force that bridges differences between people and makes shared vision and action possible (Khoza, 2011). Furthermore, good leadership strives to fulfil the common good. Leadership is efficacious when the followership embraces the vision and strives for transformation too. A leader who embraces Ubuntu will see the public good as not as just an aggregation of individual benefits, but as a gain for the entire organisation that is greater than the sum of its parts (Khoza, 2011).

To link this with this study, Mr Mageba, District Director, said:

"As a District Director, I am a role model so the way I conduct myself is important".

(Mr Mageba, the District Director)

He further neatly related his character to ethical leadership when he said:

As a District Director, you need to conduct yourself in a good and ethical manner in the district. You need not be tempted. There can be instances that can come and tempt you so if you know the ethical code, you cannot be tempted because you know that this is going to negatively affect your work environment, even the morale of the subordinates because now there would be no secrets so it is important for a leader to live by the ethical code.

(M Mageba, the District Director)

Likewise, Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) also believe that an ethical leader should demonstrate good character. He said:

I strongly believe in good character, so to me character is the number one value.

If my character is not ethical or moral, it can be possible that I can use the district resources for my needs. It is easy to talk to the SGB-some are poor and corrupt. I can talk and sign the bank cheque but because I know God is my judge and He is looking at me, even if I don't have any money but I would not steal the Department's funds.

(Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

To be a good example allows the District Director to positively influence other people. It also allows the District Director to encourage followers to do likewise, ensuring that ethical standards are maintained. To be exemplary leaves no room for being neutral when it comes to ethical conduct. An educational leader either builds or destroys his/her institution. Thus, educational leader should either be ethical or not ethical and there is no sitting on the fence. So, it is greatly beneficial to have ethical leaders at district office who will be able to model good behaviour especially in the district as an organisation. A number of authors argue that

ethical behaviour is very critical to a leader's credibility and his/her ability to meaningfully influence followers at all levels in the organisation (Piccolo *et al.,* 2010). Furthermore, ethical leaders who are highly responsible for their actions can be perceived by their followers as effective (Kalshoven *et al.,* 2011). Hence, followers are likely to copy behaviours of the ethical leaders, which again should positively influence institutional effectiveness (Kalshoven & Den Hartog, 2009). In addition, leaders are also motivated to be open, approachable and willing to listen to their followers (Huberts *et al.,* 2007). Furthermore, district officials are not working alone at district office. There are staff members and different stakeholders. Accordingly, they have to set the tone; they have to lead all these people. Consequently, all these people have to follow and learn from choices of an educational leader. However, if the district official's model unethical behavior, a number of people will possibly learn and do as the district officials do. Hence, findings from this study indicate that to lead with integrity you have to be humble, to be a leader who has an ear to listen. Also, be the one who learns and improves, serving as a role model for what ethical behaviour looks like. District officials are supposed to model ethical leadership, with their judgements, words and conduct in full alignment. Kanna-Narasimhan and Lawrence (2012) also describe behavioural integrity as the perceived pattern of alignment between an actors 'words and deeds' ((Kannan-Nrasimhan & Lawrence, 2012). However, Palanski and Yammarino (2009) deem integrity as a virtue, which is defined as a distinct component of good character. These authors further categorise the various meanings of integrity in the management literature into five main categories and these are: (1) integrity as wholeness; (2) integrity as consistency between words and actions; (3) integrity as consistency in adversity; (4) integrity as being true to oneself; (5) and integrity as morality or ethics. Furthermore, the discussion is also in line with Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005), who posit that the ethics of the profession acknowledges that there are guiding values (e.g., principles, codes, assumptions, mores, and expected behaviours) within each profession. Thus, adhering to these

values is an obligatory duty to a leader's craft. Professional codes of ethics are paramount to honouring the ethic of the profession (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). At district office, district officials need to act in accordance with ethical values, being a role model, having an intellectual and moral influence on people, and providing individualised support (Cezmi & Toprak, 2014). Further, to lead effectively, a leader should be ethical and moral. Also, leaders need to be trained to exercise both mental and emotional intelligence (Khoza, 2011). According to Khoza (2011), qualities that are especially important in leadership, where serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability is a natural extension of *Ubuntu.* Furthermore, Alqahtani and Alkerdem (2015) state that an educational leader is a leader who promotes the success of his followers by acting with integrity, with fairness and in an ethical manner.

Likewise, if district officials want to see positive change in the institution including subordinates commitment, they have to be that change first. Everything must begin with them as leaders in the district office. District officials have to visualise the combined impact when everyone they lead follows their example. If the district office leadership example is positive, then they probably get enhanced ethical behaviour. If their examples are negative, then obviously, they get abundant unethical behaviour. Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manager supported this notion when he said:

> *It must all begin with the principals. They must be exemplary. For example, if they want to instill the idea of punctuality in their subordinates, they themselves should be punctual for work.*
>
> (Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manager)

Similarly, Mr Khawuleza (Chief Education Specialist) stated that:

> *...because as a leader you must lead by example. You must be the one showing what is expected of them. If you know that the most important thing is to be a role-model to fellow subordinates. You must be the first to show some respect, not that you are buying them, but you would be showing them what is expected of them.*

You must not be the one who is disorderly. You must know what is expected of you as a leader.

(Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist)

Furthermore, to emphasise the importance of modelling good behaviour, majority of participants who participated in this study believe that if ethics is forced on people that could be a problem, because in general people do not like things forced on them. One of district officials, Mr Thabekhulu, (Circuit Manager) said:

If this whole thing is followed the ethical code for example by the departmental officials then the subordinates will also follow because they will see them doing it and also try to do the right thing.

(Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manager)

So, modelling good behaviour to the followers precisely could motivate and prompt them to practice the same. To conclude this section, based on the presented theme of exemplary leadership, I then concluded that little things matter. In order to influence ethical behaviour of followers, district officials are expected to practice what they preach. Followers look up to their leaders to set the moral examples for them to follow (Ciulla, 2014). To be humble does not need much effort from the district officials. Also, one has to remain concerned for the greater good, strive for fairness, take responsibility and show respect for each individual also need little effort. Moreover, ethical leaders set high ethical standards and act in accordance with them. They influence ethical values of the district office through their ethical behaviour. Besides, leaders who serve as role models for their followers and show them the behavioural boundaries set within an organisation they are proclaimed as credible, honest, trustworthy, courageous and demonstrating integrity. The more district officials walk the talk (Brown, 2014), the more followers do the same as a result the higher level of trust and respect he/she generates from followers because, most of the time followers want to see their leaders in action.

8.2.3 Role of trust/integrity in ethical leadership

Another prominent theme that emerged from the findings of this study was the role of trust in ethical leadership. The majority of participants who participated in this study repeatedly stated that trust was the backbone of ethical leadership. Normally, trust is a choice enabling individuals to take a leap of faith based on the trust in the relationship, making reliable decisions beyond available evidence (Maxwell, 2010). In addition, trust is taken as an important precondition for instilling ethical behaviour among district officials and is closely related to the professionalism of district officials. Furthermore, based on the findings of this study, trust is essential for good governance and healthy work relationships. Building a shared culture in which trust can flourish is a difficult task for the majority of district officials. Similarly, while trust is hard to gain, it is easy to lose. Further, trust in education is very relevant and current unethical practices at district office such as chronic official's absenteeism, bribery, stealing of Department of Education resources, intimate relationships amongst departmental officials and nepotism raise the question how to restore trust in a complex system such the organisational system. This is particularly important as trust is essential for social and economic well-being of the district office as an organisation.

Almost all the participants believe that an ethical leader should care about other people. Interestingly, participants viewed the root of care differently. District officials believe that caring stems from understanding the environment. They feel that, it was important for the district officials to listen to one's condition(s) that change with the times. On the one hand, they emphasised that understanding times and seasons that are ever-changing is essential. On the other, the Chief Education Specialist and Circuit Managers believe that caring stems from being a "father" to followers and being able to acknowledge the element of humanity. In addition, District Director and Chief Education Specialist felt that caring stems from being honest, someone who upholds integrity, being approachable, being friendly and a kind of a

person who can be a “shoulder to cry on”. The notion presented at the beginning of this chapter by the District Director and the majority of Chief Education Specialists participants about trust in particular springs from being African who believe that all human beings are interconnected and share a common and communal responsibility for each other. Therefore, sympathy was important in African culture as well as *Ubuntu*, which is closely related to ethical leadership. Sympathy is the foundation from which a culture of caring is built. The roots for the need to help another person. Sympathy enables a team to achieve meaningful in life and maintain healthy and meaningful relationships (Khoza, 2011).

However, participants may have interpreted caring differently; but what is important is that caring was taken as an important element for the leader to build trust. In addition, participants claimed that genuine care is fair, honest and unbiased. An ethical leader should be able to take care of other people, and he/she has to acknowledge the element of humanity. Furthermore, the above findings are also corroborated by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005). They argue that care is based on empathy and responsibility for the well-being of everyone; it focuses on the needs and desires of the individual (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). In addition, the findings of this study are also consistent with Khoza (2011), who postulates that *Ubuntu* incessantly broadens the sphere of morality to ensure that leaders do not put themselves above others but seek to be at their service. Serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability is a natural extension of *Ubuntu* (Khoza, 2011). In addition, Ubuntu is essentially to district office leadership since it directs organisations towards an “ethics of care”. The humane style of leadership generated by African humanism puts people first. In Africa, *Ubuntu* philosophy is the ethical code that glues the society together, lubricates tolerance and respects human dignity. *Ubuntu* offers an indigenised African framework that would add a unique flavour and drive to leadership (Khoza, 2011).

According to participants, an ethical leader takes into account different characteristics of humans; he/she establishes support structures which cater for different areas of the life of a person. Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist said:

> *...establish support structures within the district office which will cater for different areas of life of a person, for example, social, spiritual, physical, economical and academic.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

In addition, Mr Soshangane, Circuit Manager, further elaborated on this point:

> *As the leader, as I have to understand the numerous ailments plaguing the workforce this time, a leader has to get into the shoes of a member whose health relatively deteriorates towards underperformance. I have to understand when to reduce responsibilities. I have understand issues of incapacity among subordinates; so caring stems from understanding of our health relationships, economic, moral challenges. Have a hearing ear.*
>
> (Mr Soshangane, Circuit Manager)

Furthermore, as I mentioned before that in order to build trust, the leader must be "father" to the followers. Ms Ntombela Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET Sub-directorate) articulated this very well during the interview when she said:

> *Understand feelings of subordinates and being a father to them when there are times of difficulties*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

She further stressed that: To be a "*father* "according to participants is to create a conducive environment for district officials. It is also to instill *Ubuntu* to staff members by teaching them the importance of helping one another. Moreover, to be a father is to promote the well-being of followers to solve their problems and keep it confidential. Further to be a father is to show

sympathy and empathy to other people. Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist Examination and Assessments Sub-directorate) supported this notion nicely when she said:

> *By showing empathy and sympathy to all stakeholders and take cognizance of the welfare of others. To build trust an educational leader must have a "strong backbone".*
>
> (Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

Likewise, caring and understanding were regarded as elements of trust. To be trusted by followers/colleagues, an educational leader must demonstrate genuine caring. Moreover, if one looks at the various philosophies on leadership, each adopts distinct attributes that are essential to create a bond between the leader and the followers who are being led. So, how the bond is created that provides the leader with a vehicle for success. Thus, trust is a twofold function that acts as the glue that binds the leader to his/her followers and provides the capacity for organisational and leadership success. Hence, trusting does not indicate softness, but it is a strength and a precondition of any alliance or mutual understanding (Ciulla, 2014). Maxwell (2010) also posits that integrity is important to building relationships. Similarly, character makes trust possible as a result, trust makes leadership possible. The role of the leader according to Ciulla (2014) is entrusted in achieving the goal of an organisation. So, in order for the leader to achieve the goal he/she mostly depends on other people in some different ways. Therefore, their goals can be achieved only by collective action. In addition, to be an ethical leader is manifested by being transparent to the staff as well as being trustworthy.

Moreover, the study found that being transparent, being trustworthy, to communicate with all stakeholders and treating them equally and to respect them built trust. Open communication with staff members was beneficial to them and the district office as it built trust and helped staff members to disclose personal and sensitive information which, ordinarily, they would not do if the element of trust did not exist. Open communication also indicates that the District

Director is concerned with the staff members' well-being. Respect and dignity are the building blocks of trust. The way in which the District Director conducts himself/herself around others who may be either staff members or the community members are very crucial in building trust. Africans, especially the Zulus, always take into consideration the human worth and interconnectedness of people. So, for them, in order to trust the district leadership, they observe the way the District Director, interacts with district stakeholders. Khoza (2011) puts this notion simpler when he says: "I am because we are". Khoza (2011) also speaks of "*being, humanness, individualism, compassion and moral necessity"* in his description of African Ethics. He further argues that a good leader is a leader that appreciates that the success of others does not diminish his own success, but rather adds to the good of the commonwealth. A leader that generate trust because what glues the relationship between leader and followers is, simply trust. A leader practices introspection and self-renewal. This suggests the fact that man cannot live in isolation. *Ubuntu* means that each individual expression is ideally expressed in relationship with others. *Ubuntu* is a concrete manifestation of the interconnectedness of human beings. Respect entails listening to other person humility, honesty and treating others as you want them to treat you (Khoza, 2011). This suggests that in order to be complete humans, we also need other human beings. In the same vein, Burchell and Robin (2011) posit that fairness, which includes balanced treatment for all in terms of rewards, absence of favoritism in hiring and promotions, and lack of discrimination and process for appeals. This model is literally grounded in the foundation of trust (Burchell & Robin, 2011). In addition, open and healthy communication between the district leadership and other stakeholders build trust. The ability to communicate appropriately is an essential component for effective leadership and to build trust. However, based on the findings of this study, it seems that too often leaders either do not communicate, over-communicate, communicate inappropriately through outbursts, anger or blaming, or simply do not communicate clearly, all of which undermine officials productivity

and performance. In addition, failing to listen attentively to feedback, ignoring alternative viewpoints, etc. can undermine leadership effectiveness and trust. The ability to communicate appropriately is an essential component for effective leadership and to build trust. Communication is identified as one of the most critical leadership skills. The ability to listen, read body language, asks questions, provide feedback and generate effective two-way communication builds trust and can unblock challenges of performance problems down the road. Also, the findings seem to indicate that no district leader can break the trust with subordinates and other stakeholders and expect to keep the same levels of influence he/she had with them before. Trust is a foundation of leadership. If you violate your people's trust, you no longer qualify to be called a good or ethical leader. It is important to maintain integrity by taking care of the little things. Ethical principles are not flexible. A little white lie is still a lie (Maxwell, 2010).

During the interview, Mr Mageba, (District Director) made his point very clear when he said:

> *Fairness goes hand in glove with trust. A person who practices fairness is trustworthy. A good leader always knows the importance of fairness, especially when dealing with people. What is right is right and what is wrong is wrong. Fair is fair, it cannot diluted.*
>
> (Mr Mageba, the District Director)

Likewise, humility is part of our African culture therefore in order to strengthen trust the district leadership must display elements of humility. This study found that in reality humility should be the easiest thing to do but is so difficult to some of the district officials. The majority of participants who participated in this study believe that an ethical leader should know that followers are human beings and they have feelings. He/she needs to show that everyone is important individually. District officials must have a good manner of approach and must not

use harsh words to their subordinates. The following quotation is extracted from one of the questionnaires:

> *Humility is rare as most departmental officials tend to use their high pyramids positions to their own advantage. District officials should be humble so that the other subordinates feel that they can approach them should the need arise. In other words, leaders should be open and approachable.*

Furthermore, Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET Curriculum Sub-directorate) said:

> *A good leader has to take into account the element of humanity when dealing with people, when implementing fairness and trust to his/her people. Rules are rules though sometimes a need to consider people as humans differs drastically.*
>
> (Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLSand FET)

Concisely, trust is crucial to ethical leadership in order for the district leadership to maintain, build or to restore trust he/she must be able to care about other people. Further the district officials as educational leaders must be able to create a conducive environment for the district office to be functional. To maintain and to build trust the District Director as a leader must create open communication whereby departmental officials feel free to participate and submit their views with ease. To conclude, the majority of participants believe that an ethical leader is the one who shows humanity or Ubuntu when dealing with others and also gives support and guidelines to followers. They also treat staff members equally and show good values to colleagues to make them feel comfortable at the workplace. As a result, trust will be maintained, built and restored.

8.2.4 Egotism and self-interest

Another recurring key theme throughout this study was that some district officials were self-centred and full of egocentricity. The findings suggest that most senior officials were running the district as their own property causing their subordinates to be rebellious. In addition, some

spent most of the time absent from work or attending to their own personal errands because they have got those powers. Other findings indicate that some senior officials were greedy and selfish and did not care about Department of Education policies. Their personal needs are more important to them. They often abuse power for personal gain and have a lot of skeletons in their closets. Consequently, they end up struggling to discipline some officials when it is required. Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manager summarised this very accurately when he said:

> *Unethical behaviour of the departmental officials themselves which can make them fear exposure of their skeletons in the cupboards.*
>
> (Mr Thabekhulu, Circuit Manager)

Considering the self-centredness and egocentricity of the departmental officials especially senior management, this manifests itself in many different ways, for example, from senior management practicing authoritarian leadership whereby they use such terms as 'my Sub-directorate' more often when referring to the district office where he/she is in charge, embezzling departmental resources and sometimes end up in jail, hiring their own companies to work in the district office, receiving bribes, sometimes exchanging promotional posts for sex and practicing general nepotism, fighting and killing one another over teaching and management positions and some were promoting *stokvels* (making financial loans) during working hours. It is interesting that these practices have nothing to do with improving organisational goals. This is all about senior official's self-interest or sheer greed. Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessments Sub-directorate extended his dissatisfaction about the practices of some of the district officials:

> *Sometimes they tend to practice authoritarian leadership where they do not give their subordinates a chance to raise their voices because you cannot manage alone. You need the views of other people. They tend to run the district as if they are running their private property because they do not involve others. They even say*

at 'my Sub-directorate' this is what will happen-while that thing has not been discussed by the entire members of the Sub-directorate. That is unethical.

(Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

Similarly, Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management Sub-directorate) asserted that:

...sometimes they (officials) put their needs ahead and forget that their core functions must take priority.

(Mr Khetomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist, Governance and Management)

People normally say *"imali impande yesono"* …meaning; *(all evil acts are rooted from the excessive love of money),* Sometimes some the departmental officials colluded with school principals. They do not use funds properly such as to buy school resources. Findings posit that not long ago the teaching profession was regarded as a noble profession. Educational leaders were trusted by communities but now the majority of the participants claimed that some members of senior management are abusing schools and departmental resources by way of making the SGB to sign blank cheques. They are using a chance that some parents, are financially illiterate. Furthermore, Mr Soshanguve (Circuit Manager) said:

What I usually notice among officials is an interest in the school's financial issues more than other aspects of their duties. They often do not use the funds to meet the needs of the schools and education, but sometimes to meet their own personal needs.

(Mr Soshanguve, Circuit Manager)

In addition, findings for this study reveal that using the school and Department of Education resources for own personal gain/purposes was perceived as one of the key unethical practices at the schools in the district office. Sadly, some officials were not only embezzling funds, but they also indirectly benefited from the funds allocated for the schools and department. In the previous theme, I discussed the issue of trust. I discussed why trust was important in education

and how participants were suggesting it could be built and restored. But findings from this study seem to suggest that some of the educational leaders were not trustworthy. They owned private companies and use them to run feeding schemes in some schools in the district and this was conflict of interest and highly unethical. This finding was in line with Riggio, Zhu, Maroosis and Reina (2010) who posit that if leaders behave in a way that seeks to benefit themselves at the expense of others, these acts are unjust. However, Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist articulated his view very well during the interview. He said:

> *Not doing what is expected of you to do, your core function in the district is to implement departmental policies. That what you should be doing, not running your side business during office hours, not being absent from work continuously for your own agenda. You have to take the needs of the schools and department foremost, before your needs. If you are not doing that then you are not following the ethics of the district office and Department of Education.*
>
> (Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist)

Shamefully, it appeared as if some district officials were only at district office for the positions. They did not care about their role as officials which is to lead Department of Education as educational leaders. They just wanted to earn a salary without any provision of quality education at the district office. Mr Mageba, District Director said:

> *Some officials fight and kill each other because of the positions, which is a bad thing, so our intentions are not the same. They have got their own agenda.*
>
> (Mr Mageba, the District Director)

Further, the findings in this study seem to suggest that family pressures, societal expectations and poor salaries of some officials play a huge role in unethical practices. Some senior officials believe their salaries are inadequate. They also claimed that they need more money in order to fulfil their financial needs. Another finding perceived as unethical demonstrated by district officials, was the practice of not prioritising the needs of the schools and department. Some of

them, in cahoots with teacher union officials, made applicants to pay bribes while applying for the promotional post in the district office. Mr Soshangane, Circuit Manager said:

> *Schools and district office do not have appointing powers, it is vested with the Provincial Department of Education, but schools and district are required to recommend appointments. Therein lies the problem, teaching and management posts are being sold, some officials sleep with the applicants to confirm them, though some of these things are allegations which have not been proven Normally these issued come out when the person had not obtained the post and has either paid money or slept with the official to get the senior position in the district office.*
>
> (Mr Soshangane, Circuit Manager)

In addition, findings from this study show that some district officials were illegally collecting money from officials that had recently been offered employment positions. Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist expressed this explicitly when he said:

> *I think what is unethical is receiving bribery, sometimes exchanging posts for sex and practicing nepotism.*
>
> (Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist)

Likewise, Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist said:

> *…they also sell vacancies to get money. There is an element of greed to keep on advantaging themselves. That is why they will keep on doing it until finally caught red-handed.*
>
> (Mr Lugayeni, Chief Education Specialist)

However, this study also found out that even at the Circuit Office there were unethical practices taking place there such as bribery. Consequently, participants suggested that circuit managers must not be in a position in the same circuit for no more than five years and be rotated.

To conclude this section, based on the findings of this study, some officials tend to put their needs first over those of the Department of Education, and they perceive themselves above

everybody else as they are affiliated to teacher unions. Some lack dedication and are lazy to work. These findings are consistent with the Report of the Ministerial Task Team appointed by Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga that investigated the allegations into the selling of teaching and management posts in schools and in some Provincial Departments of Education by members of teacher union and some Departmental officials (Volmink, 2016). Findings also seem to indicate that some of the educators bought their teaching qualifications. The findings also revealed that, there was an entitlement mentality which originated from family pressure, societal expectations and poor salaries of officials. Some departmental officials believe that their salaries are not adequate. They also claimed that they need more money in order to fulfil their financial needs. As a result, some of them were promoting *stokvels* (a stokvel is a financial group of saving money from which loans can be made to increase possible profits when dividends are paid) during office hours. Organising *stokvels* during office hours is unethical and can end up causing conflict among officials that will distract the provision of quality education in district office. They lack humanity. This finding was corroborated by Khoza (2011) who argues that a leader who embraces Ubuntu will see the public good as not just an aggregation of individual benefits, but as a gain for the whole society that is greater than the sum of its parts. "Our humanness overrides our differences" (Khoza, 2011, p. 32). Further, when Khoza argues on humanness, he goes to the deepest level, implying that one human being can empathise with another because they take "their being" from each other, and each draw on the collective spirit of humanity (Khoza, 2011, p. 88). Therefore, *Ubuntu* continually broadens the sphere of morality to ensure that leaders do not put themselves above others but seek to be at their service. Serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability is a natural extension of Ubuntu (Khoza, 2011). Further, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) also posit that the ethic of the profession should be central to complete the ethical frameworks of justice, critique and care.

8.2.5 Decline of Ubuntu values in the community

Another major theme that emerged also pointed to the decline of *Ubuntu* as an ethical issue.

Africans in particular used to be known for their *Ubuntu/*humanness but some of the district officials seem to have lost this value which used to bind them as people. The following practices seem to confirm this: dishonesty, lack of humanity, frequent absenteeism from work for no good reason, etc. In addition, dedication to the noble profession was no longer there. They did not have that spirit which used to characterise the profession in the past. Senior management were worried about the high rate of absenteeism. They viewed it as a major problem which was difficult to control. To aggravate this situation, some officials not only had the tendency of job reservations for pals: even worse, some officials were having sexual relationships with fellow female colleagues. Besides, some of them were drinking alcohol during office hours. Looking at all these unethical practices by district officials, it is obvious that they did not have a conscience and the spirit of *Ubuntu* anymore. Their behaviour was contradictory to what it should be a moral educational leader.

Throughout the data generation process, participants consistently articulated that absenteeism by some of officials was a challenge. The following excerpts by Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist illustrate this notion:

> *...if any official s absent there should be attachment such as medical certificate because the Department of Basic Education states that if it one or two days there should be no attachment but since we know that people take advantage of policies (play around with these things), they have to submit. Even submitting sometimes does not help. We have to motivate officials, appeal to their conscience and talk about morality-doing good things at schools and in district.*
>
> (Mr Khawuleza, Chief Education Specialist)

It is noteworthy that Mr Mehlomakhulu, Circuit Manager supported him when he said:

> *...officials being absent; you get departmental officials that don't come to work for two weeks then they come back with a doctor's note. You find that the letter is not legit and they were not sick.*
>
> (Mr Mehlomakhulu, Circuit Manager)

Therefore, it is evident from this study that many of the district officials are not dedicated to their work. Absenteeism, leaving office early, not working especially on pay days, reveals that they do not have Ubuntu and all were perceived by the majority of participants as unethical practices. Furthermore, evidence from this study, shows that love affairs between departmental officials were a breeding ground for many challenges within the district office. Love affairs between senior officials and female colleagues were also reported by most of the participants. Participants felt that intimate relationships between the senior management and staff members caused problems because the officials involved expected to be treated favourably, and that created challenges to the district senior management. Some of these challenges were: the leaking of examination questions to learners who were close to certain school principals, who colluded with some of the unscrupulous circuit managers in the schools in the district.

The following narratives by Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist (Examination and Assessments Sub-directorate) serve to highlight this perception:

> *Some school principals falls in love with a learners in the schools, the principal will be called names by the learners such as a "sbari" (brother in-law). This will affect other educators because the organisational climate of the school will be unstable and chaotic. During Examination that learner will be given an Exam paper before it is written by the whole school. That is unethical.*
>
> (Mr Sokesimbone, Chief Education Specialist, Examination and Assessment)

Similarly, Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Teacher Development Sub-Directorate) expressed her opinions with the following argument:

I understand that they are human beings as principals, but we must not point fingers at one person like we say it is educators or principals. Okay, they are wrong because they are older, and the learners are children. In a way, I also blame the way our learners dress, especially girl learners-the hairstyle they do –it is no longer at a level of being a child. Further, they are the ones who fancy the educators. May be the educator or principal was not prepared to be engaged with her, but the educator will look at the way the learner acts before him-the way they dress and showing all the body parts.

(Ms Nozulu, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Teacher Development)

I found this as a very weak argument because, in principle, educators are supposed to be the parents and guardians (*In loco parentis)* Being seduced by a learner does not justify their response. Parents trust educators for the safety of their children. At schools principals and educators are role models to the community. They are expected to portray good behaviour. In addition, the principle of *'in loco parentis'* places an obligation on educators to protect, not to violate, learners. Sleeping with learners, bribing parents and abusing alcohol indicated that they were abusing their power and took advantage of poor children. Based on the study findings, it was crystal clear that some people chose the teaching profession for wrong reasons They chose to be educational leaders because of lack of job opportunities elsewhere but do not necessary have the *"calling"* to the profession. Mr Mehlomakhulu, Circuit Manager said:

...there are not educators, some of them enter profession for wrong reasons because they were desperate.

(Mr Mehlomakhulu, Circuit Manager)

In addition, Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist (TLS: FET Curriculum Sub-directorate) mentioned the following very interesting point:

In this age of technology, most officials have access to smartphones. They have access to chat groups and so forth, so you often find departmental officials sitting there chatting to their friends instead of actually implementing Department of

Education policies. That is unethical because you are not being paid to chat on the phone. That is unethical. You are here to display passion and compassion.

(Ms Ntombela, Chief Education Specialist, TLS and FET)

Viewed from literature, Salawu (2012) argues that there cannot be ethical leadership without society's return to *Ubuntu* ethics. *Ubuntu* articulates an African view of the world anchored in its own person, culture, and society which is difficult to define in a Western context'. *Ubuntu* implies living virtuously in a spirit of caring and community, responsiveness and dignity, peace and harmony. *Ubuntu* springs from Muntu (a human being), a word found in all Bantu languages in Africa, meaning being human and concerned with others, summed up in the maxim *'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am'* (Khoza, 2011). In addition, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) called for educational leaders to consider professional codes and personal ethical principles, as well as standards of the profession. Likewise, the Code of conduct for Educators tells educators that they ought to act in a proper and becoming way such that their behaviour does not bring the teaching profession into disrepute (SACE, 2000). Furthermore, whilst the Code of Conduct for Educators tells educators that they ought to exercise authority with compassion, it also indicates that, in performing their duties, educators are required to act professionally and, specifically, to act ethically (SACE, 2000). Shamefully, the situation becomes worse when lack of *Ubuntu* demonstrated by the district officials because officials at the district office end up imitating them. District Senior Management are the ones who are supposed to influence the rest of the district officials to behave ethically and to demonstrate *Ubuntu.*

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that the only way to root out the unethical behaviour is to make examples of those who are caught. Suspension must be allowed, depending on the severity of the offense. Whether it a District Director or officials who committed a serious misconduct, they should have their day in court because their behaviour

is wrong and criminal. This study also found that some of the district officials were suspended but still received a salary. The message sent to the others is that you can do something wrong and with impunity. So, participants felt that stricter measures should be put in place. Finally, the study established that ethical leadership were supposed to be grounded in the central core of ethical principles that are unshaken by the dilemmas and other positions of difficulty. However, the current crop of leaders succumbs to the pressure from various stimuli. The weaknesses that some district officials display emanate from the desire to succeed, yet the conditions they find themselves in are extremely challenging. The challenging contexts that drive departmental officials to do things they would not normally do include the pressure to succeed, to get ahead, to meet the deadlines and expectations determined by the Department of Education. Similarly, numerous researchers including Conger and Riggio (20070 have established that leaders are generally afraid of chaos and failure and that as a result they violate common codes of decency and good conduct.

8.2.6 Collaborative leadership (stakeholders' involvement)

Linked to teamwork, collaboration is the essential means through which ethical leaders ensure that decisions are reached by consensus rather than by division or conflict. Therefore, this study established that district officials canvas the advice of their colleagues before making a decision; simply put, the process of decision making is one of consultation. Thus, the district officials seemed to have full understanding of the essence of collegiality as the establishment of a participatory culture in decision-making within the district office environment. Ethical leaders seemed to believe that power has to be shared with staff in a democracy rather than remaining the preserve of the educational leader (Bush, 2003). The foregoing suggest that, for the district officials to lead effectively, they require the support of staff members and other stakeholders. This study established that, despite challenging contexts, ethical leaders encourage participation and the input of the subordinates. However, they understand that sometimes they

must take decisions that will not satisfy every employee yet not be harmful to anyone. The advantage of ethical leaders is that they are caring and compassionate and go beyond professionally developing their subordinates and ensure that they actively avail themselves to their staff members. Moreover, ethical leaders show concern for their staff personal issues that affect them and dedicate themselves to assisting them to get through their challenges. In reciprocity, the subordinates are bound to comply with and honour the decisions of their leader, if these are fair and ethical. Moreover, staff members know their leader is fair and encourages them to speak out their opinions without fear of retribution; their behaviour then shows confidence and trust to their leader, thus teamwork and synergy amongst departmental officials is honed.

Studies conducted by Hester and Kilian (2010) and Andrew (2015) arrived at similar conclusions to those of this study, that ethical leadership is founded on relationships, therefore for relationships to thrive there must be synergy between the moral values of leaders and followers. District officials seem to comprehend that ethical leadership is not solely for senior management of the district officials; instead departmental officials as ethical leaders have to create ethical awareness, delegating tasks to the subordinates, and adopting participatory and democratic leadership, creating a positive organisational climate that is suitable for the organisational prerequisites, and being honest and reliable to gain the support of the staff members (Katranci, Sungu, & Saglam, 2015). District officials as ethical leaders encourage their subordinates to voice their opinions and suggestions, both on ethical matters and other work-related processes and work context, because ethical leaders convey high moral standards to staff members (Vu & Nguyen, 2017).

Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) reiterate the participants' assertion that the best weapon that subordinates have against uncertainty and change in education is working together. Therefore, district officials emphasise the importance of team work or collaboration among staff members.

District officials seemed to understand that team building is essential for proper collegiality, as the effectiveness of staff members is attainable through satisfying the desires of staff members. As Mr Khethomthandayo, Chief Education Specialist (Governance and Management sub-directorate put it, staff members' collaboration brings about the smooth functioning of the institution and also enhances the skills of staff members, their knowledge and abilities while working collaboratively. In addition, when departmental officials work together, they become more efficient and professional, thus the quality of their work as colleagues is enhanced. Similar sentiments were shared by Caroselli (2000), who posited that ethical leaders don't work in isolation. Instead they establish connections with their immediate followers, but also network with others at various levels inside and outside their organisations.

Further, ethical leaders solicit buy-in from the stakeholders well in advance of the implementation of the idea. Collaboration is important for establishing a professional culture in district offices. Educational leaders get motivated when they are afforded an opportunity to use their own discretion and are also shown that they are trusted by being given authority to make decisions and by being held accountable for the work of others (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). It is common knowledge that, when the leader shows trust to the subordinates, the subordinates go an extra mile to please the leader who appreciates them.

However, for the district officials to successfully gain the confidence of the subordinates, they seemed to understand that astuteness and good communication are vital features for effective collaboration. Without good communication, employees can become demotivated (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). Through collaborative enactment, district officials promote ethical behaviour and empower their subordinates, through providing them with the necessary opportunities to enable them to carry out their work as they learn from one another. District officials ensure that they treat their subordinates equally and promote fair and principled decision making. Thus, the study concludes that ethical leaders involve their subordinates in

decision-making processes and facilitate the well-being and potential growth of staff members (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2014), through collaboration.

8.2.7 Leaders' greed gives rise to unethical behaviour

This study established that leadership is a victim of greed that infested the majority of district officials. It is not surprising, though, that unethical leadership is so heightened in the education sector, considering how the majority of the departmental officials got into their positions, especially in district office. The majority of the district officials who demonstrate unethical leadership practices in the Department of Education are the ones who were deployed by their unions on the basis of their activism in union activities. Moreover, some of them skip post levels, deployed to senior management positions without any reasonable management experience. They gain these positions for self-enrichment, since they know they are backed by their cronies/comrades in the event that any scandalous activity that has been committed surfaces. It was surprising that the jobs for sex scandal did not yield any positive results (Harper & Masondo, 2014), yet an exorbitant amount of money was spent in trying to uproot unethical practices that infested the education sector. In some instances, departmental officials who are ethically inclined are either assassinated or directed to vacate positions for comrades.

The literature that I reviewed in Chapter Two corroborated the findings of this study that unethical leaders put their personal interests first, fail to show private virtues such as courage and temperance and put their narrow selfish interest before that of the larger group. Further some district officials are driven by greed in their endeavours, which encourages dishonesty, blinds them to the needs of others, and focuses attention on selfish interest rather than the greater good (Conger & Riggio, 2007). These unethical district officials know exactly what they are doing and why, which is an attempt to satisfy their narrow selfish-interest, personal gain, ambition and downright greed (Manjunatha & Maqsud, 2013). Unethical conduct distorts

leaders' character and undermines human value (Manala, 2014). Dorasamy (2010) attributes greed to lack of personal ethics and lack of concern for the collective good.

8.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and evaluatively analysed the various key themes that emerged from the findings. These themes were significant in that I believe they directly respond to the research objectives and questions of the study. The following chapter explores the lessons learnt, the recommendations, the contribution to knowledge and the implications for further results.

CHAPTER NINE

REFLECTIVE LESSONS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

9.1 Introduction

The previous research chapter was dedicated to the presentation and analysis of the key themes that emerged from the analysis of the data. Having closely analysed the data presented in Chapter Five, Six and Seven and also the key themes that emerged and were presented in Chapter Eight, this chapter presents a reflective summary of the lessons learned, establishes the findings related to each research questions, draws conclusions from the findings, makes recommendations for the further study and sets out its contribution to knowledge and implications for further research on ethical leadership in the researched district office as well as in the Department of Education are presented.

9.2 Reflective lessons learned from the study

The study explored ethical leadership perspectives, the understandings, experiences and practices of ethical leadership in one education district office in KZN Department of Education and its implications in public offices. This study adopted a qualitative enquiry approach to solicit a deeper understanding of the participants' regarding ethical leadership in the district office. The findings seem to suggest that ethical leadership mostly related with self-actualisation, moral relationships, moral perceptions and unbiased dealings (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, ethical leadership is based on personal characteristics and qualities of the leader, which are perceived by their co-workers as normatively appropriate like honesty and fairness. Resick *et al.* (2006) also describe ethical leaders as people-oriented. Further, literature on ethical leadership suggests that it is the duty of leaders to engage in frequent open communication and guidance with all employees about ethics and ethical standards, for

example, ethics should be part of the everyday processes and procedures of the organisational life as employees look up to leaders in shaping their ethical conduct (Brown *et al.,* 2005; Brown, 2007). Furthermore, after careful consideration of the findings and the key themes of this study, the study revealed a number of lessons learned. Ethics are a set of principles and values that people must use to decide between what is right or wrong and those principles were crucial for any leader who wanted to lead with integrity. Normally, what is right or wrong is guided by a set of beliefs by the group of people or community. In short, ethics is the acceptable behaviour in the workplace enhancing respect among colleagues or employees. Moreover, at district office in particular, ethics is more about interconnectedness, accountability, responsibility and humanity/*Ubuntu.*

Furthermore, another important lesson from this study was that ethical leadership particularly at district office, is to lead in such a way that it benefits all employees. In addition, this study also established that an ethical leader is someone who cares about other people, someone who has a good character, who takes good care of all employees in the district. In other words, an ethical leader is a *"father/mother* to his staff members; he/she creates a conducive environment for his/her subordinates to deliver strategic goals of the Department of Education; promotes the well-being of all; genuinely solves departmental officials problems and understands the significance of confidentiality. Furthermore, to be "a father/ mother" is to show sympathy and empathy to other people.

Ina addition, the findings also showed that religious upbringing has a positive influence on an ethical leader. Participants argued that a leader who is grounded in religion manages to maintain being morally upright despite the possibility that the SGB or otherstakeholders may be lacking some basic financial management skills and, therefore, may be easily deceived or corrupted. Further, to be grounded in religion influences district senior management to express ethical values like love, humility, joy, being at peace and self-control. In other words, ethical

leaders lead in such a way that followers observe that he/she has a heart and ear to feel and listen to them. Ethical leadership is an ability to create an environment which is safe for future leaders to be moulded and to re-instill the sensitive and critical values of being an African or human being which is *Ubuntu*. Both ethics and spirituality or religious upbringing are rooted in *Ubuntu,* and a leader who is grounded in *Ubuntu* (who values the community, has humanness and wellbeing of every person) is regarded as an ethical leader. Findings from this study also showed that district officials are regarded as sources of hope and the pillars of the education system. Since an ethical leader is exemplary to a certain group of people, someone whom people look up to, someone who also encourages other people to do likewise and ensures that ethical standards are kept or maintained, a district office needs a leader who is ethical in order to improve the quality of education in the Department of Basic Education. Being an educational leader means that you are a role model not only to subordinates but also to the community at large which depends on (him/her) transform their lives. As a result, an educational leader's character matters the most to the community he/she serves as a servant of the people. Besides, trust is regarded as an important precondition for instilling ethical behaviour among officials of the district. Trust is also associated with the professionalism of officials. Thus, trust acts as a twofold glue that binds the leader to his/her followers including the entire community members and provides the capacity for organisational and leadership success.

The discussion presented above deeply resonates with the findings of the study by Wilson (2014) who posits that of all the values that constitute an organisation's culture, ethical values are considered highly important for leaders and followers. Ethics are the moral principles that govern an individual's way of thinking and acting (Mitchell, 2012). Without ethics, a leader is likely to fail and with ethics a leader is more likely to develop effective leadership (Waggoner, 2010). Without good ethics, it is extremely difficult for a leader to develop integrity,

authenticity, an identity or other traits that produce effective leadership. Without these characteristics, it is impossible for a leader to develop trust. Trust is a strength and a precondition of any mutual understanding (Ciulla, 2014).

Further, Maxwell (2010) posits that integrity is important to building relationships. Character also makes trust possible. As a result, trust makes leadership possible. The role of the leader according to Ciulla (2014) is entrusted in achieving the goal of an organisation. So, for the leader to be able to influence people or followers, they should be trusted. You cannot be a leader without followers; followers must first *choose* to accept a leader before leadership may commence. Followers accept leaders they can trust. Literature on ethical leadership suggests that it is the study of leaders to engage in frequent communication and guidance with all employees about ethics and ethical standards. For example, ethics should be part of the everyday processes and procedures of the organisational life as employees look up to leaders in shaping their ethical conduct (Brown *et al.*, 200; Brown, 2007). Further to this, Khoza (2011) argues that a leader who embraces Ubuntu will see the public good as not as just an aggregation of individual benefits, but as again for the whole community that is greater than the sum of its parts. He furthers state that, to be without compassion is to cut oneself off the very source of one's being. On the other hand, leadership without compassion is paralysed. It cannot reach into the community and resonate with the expectations and desires of the followership (Khoza, 2011).

Likewise, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) call for educational leaders to consider professional codes and personal ethical principles, as well as standards of the profession, as they created a dynamic model that placed the best interest of the learner at the heart of the ethics of the educational profession. Furthermore, the Educators' Code of Professional Ethics postulates that developing the ethics of the profession means making the Code a part of every educator's professional life. To achieve this, the Code must be more than just a piece of paper but must

influence the way educators/officials act in their relations with other people (SACE, 2000). It must be a living document. The ethic of the profession acknowledges that there are guiding values; for examples, principles, codes, assumptions, mores, and expected behaviours within each profession. Thus, adhering to these values is an obligatory duty to a leader's craft. In particular, professional codes of ethics are paramount to honouring the ethic of the profession (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005).

In contrast, the majority of the participants indicated that, the district and the Department of Basic Education faced a plethora of unethical practices demonstrated mostly by departmental officials. The findings of this study suggest that some of the district officials were failing the Department of Baisc Education. On the basis of this failure, most participants believe that some of the officials were not leading well. Unethical practices demonstrated by the senior management not only destroyed their institution but the whole Provincial Department of Education, ultimately leading to negative impact to the economy and the wellness of the whole country. In addition, findings from this study seem to suggest that many district officials were not trustworthy. They owned private companies and illegally used them to run feeding schemes with school principals in their schools in the district. However, trust in education was very critical and relevant considering the current issues at district office where unethical behavior such as educator, departmental official's absenteeism, bribery, intimate relationships among officials, as well as misuse of resources and nepotism were rife. All these issues raise the question on how to restore trust in a complex system such as the Department of Basic Education. I therefore, believe that all district officials need to be trusted by their subordinates and employees of the department. Ethical leaders take good care of other people. Leadership, according to Khoza (2011), requires intuition and understanding: no leader can get along and be effective without a leap of understanding into the hearts and minds of the followers. The strength of African moral philosophy is that it will influence a leader to exercise compassion

when considering a decision (Khoza, 2011). He further argues that compassion rests on the empathy we feel when we have knowledge of the "inner state of others". Leadership without a compassion is "hollow". To lead effectively, a leaders should be ethical and moral. To lead you need to have a 'feel' for people, you need to have empathy. The wellbeing of the people you lead must be your absolute priority (Khoza, 2011, p. 81). Other findings of this study indicate that some of the district officials were selfish and greedy. They do not care about education. Their personal interests and needs are more important to them. They often abuse power for personal gain. They have a lot of skeleton in their closets; as a result, they end up struggling to discipline their subordinates when necessary. Some of them even collude with principals and SGBs to sign blank cheques.

In contrast, structural loopholes in the recruitment process, whereby the education system ends up attracting and absorbing incompetent, inhumane beings, care less about ethics at the district office. This occurs at all levels even at the leadership level and this leads to the escalation of the problem of unethical practices noted at the district. The majority of the participants who participated in this study felt that the current recruitment process was flawed in many different ways. They believe that the critical elements of leadership, which includes the individual character, are being neglected. As a result, they believe that the ethical part of the potential leader should be scrutinised during the recruitment process. Further, findings of this study indicate that family pressure, societal expectations and poor salaries of departmental officials played a huge role in the unethical behavior of some of the officials. They also claimed that they needed more money to fulfil their financial needs. However, the findings of this study showed that some officials were greedy, self-centered and egocentric. Suffice to point out that Khoza (2011) states that the individual is the locus of community consciousness. We are gifted with our power and capacities precisely to contribute to the growth and wellbeing of society, and others have a right to expect that we will give and not merely take. Ubuntu excludes an

oppressive communalism (Khoza, 2011). He further posits that Ubuntu continually broadens the sphere of morality to ensure that leaders do not put themselves above others but seek to be at their service. Serving others with a sense of integrity and accountability is a natural extension of *Ubuntu* (Khoza, 2011).

Similarly, the weakness of the procedures of the Department of Education in dealing with acts of misconduct and other unethical practices aggravates the situation among district officials. Most of the time when the Department of Education is dealing with unethical/misconduct cases, they treat the perpetrators with *"velvet gloves*". This study also found that some senior officials of the district were suspended for lengthy periods of time but still received salaries. For example, this study found that three senior officials were suspended for more than three years for corruption and stealing, but still received a full salary every month while they were running their private business. Justice delayed is justice denied. In most cases, the investigators do not follow procedures and so the Department of Basic Education would lose cases on a technicality. These delays sent a message to others that you can do something wrong and no one will do anything about it. So, participants felt that stricter measures should be put in place to fight the unethical practices of the district official who committed serious misconduct in the district. Consequently, some cases of unethical behaviour ended up not being reported. However, this study revealed that even at circuit office there were cases of bribery. Hence, participants suggested that circuit managers should not be located in the same circuit office for more than two years. Instead, they should be rotated after a particular period of time to prevent them building any relationships with the school principals and the SGB chairpersons to avoid bribery and other unethical practices.

The study also noted that individual upbringing and family values played a major role in ethical behaviour of departmental officials. However, findings also indicate that district officials were never exposed to any form of pre-service or in-service training on ethics and the SACE Code

of Professional Ethics. Unfortunately, the study found that Higher Education Institutions training educators, the Department of Baisc Education and SACE were not innocent in this crisis that is taking place in institutions. However, the findings of this study indicate that the other way to root out the unethical behaviour is to make examples of those who are caught. Consequently, findings of this study challenge the South African Council of Educators and Department of Basic Education to grow teeth and be visible to support the crusade against unethical practices at schools and in the district office.

Further, even though the Department of Basic Education (DoE) and SACE were perceived by the majority of the participants as doing little in fighting unethical behaviour by the departmental officials, the DoE has enacted a number of laws and policies to guide the behaviour of departmental officials in the Department of Basic Education such as: (1) The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998-Section 17 of this Act stipulates that an educator must be dismissed if he/she found guilty of having a sexual relationship with a learner; (2) The Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) which states that educators are expected to practice and promote an ethical culture and also develop a sense of respect and responsibility towards others; (3) The SACE Act (No. 31 of 2000) also provides for a Code of Professional Ethics for Educators which stipulates that educators should act in an ethical, proper and becoming manner such that they do not bring the teaching profession into disrepute and (4) The Standards for Principalship (2016) which also demands that school principals should subscribe to ethical standards which should guide behaviour as they lead and manage their schools.

However, even after the advent of the above pieces of legislation and policies, the unethical behaviour of principals and educators is still reported. Early in 2015 several Grade Twelve learners did not receive their results due to a suspected cheating scandal that occurred in some schools in KwaZulu-Natal and a few other provinces during the Grade Twelve examinations in 2014. What was troubling in that episode was that educators were suspected to have been

involved and this is highly unethical. In addition, the above pieces of legislation and policies do not seem to have the desired outcomes. Crime such as theft of school funds, corruption and other unethical practices are still perpetrated by educators, school principals and district officials. School governing bodies and other officials within Departments (Corruption Watch, 2013; Roane, 2013; SACE Annual Reports, 2009-2013) engage in unethical conduct and these behaviours call into question the efficacy of ethical leadership in situations that are outlined above. In addition, school governing bodies recommend educators for employment in various positions of responsibility, not because of their knowledge and potential teaching and management expertise but because of nefarious underhand activities such as bribery and nepotism (Clarke, 2007). The alleged involvement of some teacher union/s in selling of educator and management posts in various provinces, including the threatening and/or killing of whistle-blowers (Harper & Masondo, 2014) seriously all undermine ethical behaviour in the Department of Education.

9.3 Conclusions

As a result of the findings presented in Chapters 5-7 and key themes in Chapter 8, this study yielded the following conclusions:

The district officials in this study had a profound understanding of ethics and ethical leadership. Ethical leadership was very much desired, considering the high levels of unethical bahaviour that were obtaining in the district. However, though district officials were committed to instilling ethical behaviour amongst their colleagues, this somehow proves to be a mammoth task. Moreover, fearing for their lives and victimisation, district officials could not report infractions that are happening right under their noses. Hence, the need was emphasised for creating appropriate platforms for whistle blowers to register unethical behaviours/practices, without fearing for their lives and becoming victims of the circumstances. The impact of unethical practices of some district officials have had dire consequences in the functionality of

schools and the district office. As a result of schools and district dysfunctionality caused by unethical practices, the need for in-service training becomes so much more pronounced. In essence, collaboration is seen as fundamentally significant in fostering unity and trust within organisations thus yielding organisational success. Likewise, teamwork emerged as the significant organ for the forging unity and trust among stakeholders. However, the success of teamwork was mainly attributed by participants to the commitment of leadership and management of the schools, district and department.

The Department of Education and SACE failed as the watchdog for educator conduct and welfare to make a positive impact in developing programmes to educate district officials about ethics and ethical leadership. A code of ethics and a district operational plan and strategy are suggested as essential instruments, mainly for district leadership to mitigate the infractions thriving in their organisations. However, if not communicated to the relevant stakeholders and enforced, these are as good as non-existent, so clear communication is fundamentally vital for organisation effectiveness. Role modelling is suggested as the fundamental components of ethical leadership. To gain the respect and support of their subordinates, district officials need to demonstrate propriety, if their subordinates are to reciprocate.

9.4 Recommendations

This section presents and expounds the recommendations which emanated from the critical questions, findings and conclusions of the study.

9.4.1 Participants' conceptualisation of ethical leadership

This study established that district officials had considerable understanding of ethics and ethical leadership. It became clear that there was a close link between the two, as ethics are the building blocks of ethical leadership and knowledge of ethics shapes the leader's ability to differentiate between right and wrong. Knowledge of ethics forms the essential toolkit for

ethical leadership, which is underpinned by credibility, honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, compassion, justice and fairness to mention a few. Thus, ethics and ethical leadership are recommended to be the guiding compass for district officials and for the creation of an ethical climate in district offices. Further, district officials need to understand that, through their credible leadership, they directly influence the behaviour of the subordinates and other employees at the district office, while at the same time setting a tone for the expected kind of behaviour they wish to inform the district and school cultures (Heres & Lasthuizen, 2010; Engelbrecht, Heine, & Mahembe, 2016). Therefore, it is recommended that district officials should demonstrate integrity to be trusted and to gain the confidence of their subordinates and the schools they work with . An ethically credible and caring leader is essential to influence subordinates and other employees through ethical forces, which are honesty, trust, consideration and fairness (UI-Aabdeen, Khan, Farooq, Salman, & Rizwan, 2016). The advantage of ethics is that it inculcates trust amongst employees in the organisation, thus creating a positive work climate.

The district officials' "fair and caring treatment and open communication signal trust that subordinates are likely to reciprocate" (Engelbrecht, Heine & Mahembe, 2017, p. 370). The foregoing is realised if district officials conform to moral principles, which are about understanding the difference between right and wrong. Further, Eranil and Özbilen (2017) state that the creation of a positive working environment harnesses the quality of work done, as it increases employees' job satisfaction levels. Moreover, the morale and organisational commitment get rekindled due to the positive organisational climate. The significance of fairness in leadership is that employees feel valued and appreciated. When the leader is fair, he is also transparent because, when taking decisions, other members need to know how the decision was taken. Fairness and transparency cement the positive relationship between the leader and the follower. In addition, fairness and transparency eliminate the room for

unnecessary conflicts and employees avoid infractions that could dilute a positive work climate.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, ethical leadership calls for the district officials to craft codes of ethics and ensure that they communicate them well to the staff members. In the crafting process, they need to involve their subordinates. Eranil and Özbilen (2017) posit that ethical educational leaders provide the creation of a productive working environment and are in constant communication with their subordinates, with the view to exchange ideas. They further (Eranil & Özbilen, 2017) posit that, based on ethical principles in their conduct, ethical departmental officials treat their staff members with respect and fairly. The only best way through which district officials can thwart the risk of unethical behaviours is by providing ethical leadership, safeguarding and promoting moral values. This is significant, as without ethical leadership, district offices success and its survival are at stake (Mihelič, Lipičnik, & Tekavčič, 2010).

Likewise, the literature presented in this study showed that it is essential for the leaders to be ethical and demonstrate through their actions the need for the followers to emulate ethical leadership. The literature revealed that the cooperation of employees towards the realisation of the organisational goals is dependent on the leader's conduct. Eranil and Özbilen (2017) posit that the leader has to make the decisions that are morally right. They further posit that moral decisions strengthen organisational commitment by contributing to the development of ethical values that support truth, honesty, and loyalty within the organisation. This calls for district officials to have a deeper understanding of ethics to be able to appropriately practice ethical leadership. Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005) posit that district officials need to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner through their actions, interpersonal relationships and promotion of ethical conduct of staff members through communication. Good communication

creates solid links between the leaders and subordinates, thus enabling a pleasurable work climate. Effective communication nourishes individual inspiration.

9.4.2 Ethics education should be made compulsory in Higher Education

The findings of this study indicate that there was a desperate lack of ethics in some of the district officials. It was also noted that ethics education had an important role in all spheres of life. Ethics are related to our values and virtues therefore our actions and experiences are subject to ethics. Consequently, we are all responsible for all our decisions and actions. Ethics is the study of what is wrong and what is right. Good-evil, right-wrong, virtue-vice, justice and injustice are some ethical concepts. Further, still, education is a fundamental moral process of human life. Therefore, in higher education ethics have a very important role to play. District officials play a pivotal role as front-liners in very education system. They are role models for their subordinates who consciously or subconsciously emulate their behaviour. Therefore, Higher Education Institutions which are responsible for training educators have to produce quality ethical educators and educational leaders. Specifically, such institutions need to place ethics education at the centre of their curriculum. Findings of this study indicate that district officials did not receive any training on ethics while training to become educators, the emphasis was more on teaching and learning. Now is the time to go beyond teaching and learning when we conceptualise education. The role of Higher Education Institutions as training centres should be crucial in providing ethics education. Thus, introducing modules on Ethics Education at universities could provide educators a platform to discuss and learn about ethics so that when confronted by situations where they have to make difficult ethical decisions, they are theoretically equipped to respond appropriately. In addition, having been grounded in ethics at an early stage of their teaching careers could help educators' development as ethical persons, a necessary characteristics for an ethical leader. In addition, this kind of ethical education could develop educators to realise what is right/wrong and thus make good ethical decisions in their

profession. In addition, educators could learn to evaluate different moral standpoint and thus be guided by that evaluation/analysis when confronted with ethical decisions.

This recommendation is in line with Biesta (2006) who states that we should go beyond learning on how we think about educational practice. This researcher posits that you can teach norms easily, but you cannot teach people to obey rules unless you teach them ethics. Therefore, teaching ethics has an important and necessary place in education. Educators who graduated from universities may be well-educated persons in their professions; but that in itself is not enough. This recalls a point that Aristotle poignantly makes: *"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."* Similarly, Arthur Ward says: *"The mediocre educator tells. The good educator explains. The superior educator demonstrates. The great educator inspires".* Therefore, for educators/officials to inspire, they need proper training on ethics education.

9.4.3 SACE should be depoliticised, decentralised, made more to play its developmental role

The findings of this study indicate that the Department of Education has been lethargic and, as things stood, did not have sufficient mechanisms to correct ethical problem in schools and district. Further, the majority of participants (Deputy Chief Education Specialists, Circuit Managers and Subject Advisors) indicated that the DoE Provincial officials do not teach educators and district officials about ethics. Similarly, SACE was also accused of not offering workshops to schools and district officials on ethical behaviour. Participants felt that SACE was not closely connected with institutions-they (SACE) had rules but they were not in touch with reality at schools and district offices. SACE is perceived as "captured" by the Teacher Unions for example, they also investigated the sale of teaching and management posts and found no wrong-doing while the Volmink investigation found incriminating evidence against

certain teacher unions (Department of Education, 2015). This is seen as failure on the part of SACE as its senior people are former teacher union officials (politicisation).

In contrast, this study showed that ethical practices were lacking among district officials and, most dishearteningly, the Department of Education and SACE were struggling to instill ethics in educators. Consequently, schools and district offices as institutions (and the image and reputation of the teaching profession) is put into disrepute. I therefore, recommend that the administration of SACE must be decentralised to the district and circuit level to monitor the problem of unethical practices that happen at schools and district office and be made more visible. In order for this to happen, SACE and the Department of Education need to ensure that educators and departmental officials have the knowledge and understanding of what is right/wrong or wrong/unethical and what is the expected ethical behaviour of district officials. The main aim of training district officials on ethics is to influence their moral choices through values, rules, laws, regulations and a code of professional ethics. Training may help educators and district officials to arrive at informed and defensible decisions when confronted by ethical problems. They must develop skills and strategies for exploring and solving ethical problems.

In addition, district officials should be at the position to recognise ethical problems when they occur and be capable of recognising what is at risk. In a nutshell, training district officials on ethics and the Code of Professional Ethics increases official's ethical consciousness. In contrast, community training on ethics should focus more on descriptive facts about *Ubuntu,* morals and values. A healthy family environment and ethical institutions are vital good character formation and ethical leadership training. According to Jansen (2011), the crisis of ethical leadership is a crisis of parental and educational leadership. It is a crisis that manifests the neglect of *Ubuntu* in the family and at organisations. Further, Salawu (2012) argues that there cannot be ethical leadership without society's return to *Ubuntu* ethics (Salawu, 2012). *Ubuntu* is a concrete manifestation of the interconnectedness of human beings. In the African

culture and in the spirit of *Ubuntu,* even though you do not know the person who comes to your door step but in need for assistance, because they are human like you, kindness and generosity will be extended to him/her. Influenced by this spirit of humanity, Africans act out of compassion, based on an understanding of common human condition, recognising morality and dependence on one another. This implies respect for the other, helpfulness, sharing, caring, unselfishness, a sense of community and respect (Khoza, 2011).

Furthermore, in Africa, *Ubuntu* philosophy is the ethical code that glues the society together, lubricates tolerance and respect for human dignity. *Ubuntu* offers an indeginised African framework that would add a unique flavour and drive to leadership (Khoza, 2011).

9.4.4 Recruitment process to be reviewed

Based on the views of most the participants, being a district official is considered a moral activity, because it is recognised that how departmental officials fulfil their public duties influences the lives of fellow employees. Therefore, once an educator or departmental official is employed and has signed the assumption of duty forms, that educator or official accepts both the public trust and the responsibilities to practice the profession according to the highest possible degree of ethical conduct and standards. Such responsibilities include commitment to the profession and its ethical code. The public expects that their behaviour exemplifies ethical and moral integrity. The majority of the participants felt that district officials serve as role models who should recognise that their conduct, both on and off the district, can profoundly impact their professional image. In order for this to happen, the Department of Basic Education needs an ethical cohort of district officials to lead ethically in the district. Ethical leaders create an environment of trust within the work place. Putting ethics into action and making them visible across the institution requires practice and procedures. This study has shown that most of the district officials do not have capacity to build an organisation like district office ethically and intellectually. They do not have a vision about their organisation but just think selfishly

about how an institution can benefit them personally. Therefore, it would be of great benefit to the Department of Basic Education, society and the whole nation to make it a point that each educational leader employed is a person of good character who is deemed fit to be a good and ethical leader who has a strong sense of character and humility.

Further, findings of this study indicate that poverty and negative early childhood experiences stripped some officials of their humanity and moral consciousness. Therefore, the Department of Basic Education is struggling to have educational leaders who lead their offices with integrity. Bases on this reasoning, I therefore, strongly recommend that the Department of Basic Education, over and above the interview process when recruiting departmental officials, must also design an assessment tool to assess the character and the integrity of the potential official. The DoE should also conduct background checks before any employment confirmation. Academic qualifications and experience are necessary but should not be taken as enough. The suggested assessment tool for the character of the potential departmental official could be contextualised to assess, among other things, the inner character of the of the person, how he/she values *Ubuntu principles* such as humanness, interdependence, caring, sharing, fostering participation, service for the collective good, the leader's integrity, honesty, justice and accountability. Currently, the Department of Basic Education, when conducting the recruitment process, especially at district level, tends to focus on an official's adult achievements and not on an official's early life history. As a result, character and the moral virtues of the individual get unduly neglected. It is a huge mistake to appoint potential criminals into district leadership. It is inconceivable that people who have bribed, killed or raped others become educational leaders in the current system. Ideally, ethical leadership requires an individual who has attained self-actualisation, transcendence and freedom, exemplified by leaders such as former president Nelson Mandela and the retired Archbishop Tutu. Mandela's transcendence was illustrated by his forgiveness of his oppressors after spending twenty-seven

years in prison. Transcendence and self-actualisation are unachievable without rigorous self-reflection and emotional intelligence to overcome egoism, selfishness and greed (Mandela, 2006).

9.4.5 The role of school governing bodies in the recruitment process should be reviewed

The findings of this study also indicated that incompetency of the School Governing Bodies (SGB) contributed to unethical behaviour demonstrated by school principals and district officials. Some departmental officials took advantage of the incompetency of SGBs colluding with unscrupulous school principals, departmental officials, and abuse the Department of Basic Education resources. In addition, the SGBs were easily duped to follow the principals and officials orders while some trusted departmental official's decisions too much, without using their own discretion. The majority of the participants who participated in this study believed that the powers to recruit educators, and other school personnel should be removed from the SGBs and that, instead the Provincial Department of Education be responsible for recommendation and appointment. I believe that initially the idea of including the SGBs in the recruitment process was a good idea to democratise education system, but has been massively abused.

Therefore, I recommend that all the members of the community must have a stake in the affairs of the Department of Basic Education, since education is a societal issue. Competent and reliable people with good standing in the community must be recruited to be members of the SGBs, regardless of whether person has a child at school or not. The Department of Basic Education must allocate a certain percentage to the ordinary members of the community. For instance, 60% must be allocated to the parents and 40% to the ordinary members of the community.

9.4.6 Rotation of officials within the Department of Basic Education

The findings of this study revealed that there was a cascading chain of command concerning unethical practices at district office. The District Office senior officials were involved in unethical practices that were widely reported at schools and district office such as nepotism and bribery. The officials who were supposed to curb the unacceptable/unethical behaviour in schools and education were themselves partners with school principals in embezzling school funds and engaged in other unethical practices. Based on these findings, I therefore recommend that circuit managers must not be stationed in the same circuit for more than five years and should be rotated to minimize corrupt relationships with school principals. This is especially necessary since spending long periods of time at the same circuit or district office would give them enough time to build unhealthy relationships and corruption networks and to be involved in bribery and corruption.

9.5 Contribution to knowledge

This study was conducted with district officials, a case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal. The central aim of this study was to explore ethical leadership perspectives, the understandings, experiences and enactment of ethical leadership in the researched education district from the perspectives of the District Director, Chief Education Specialists, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, Circuit Managers and Subject Advisors. This section advances an argument for the contribution of this study to the already existing body of knowledge; the following claims are put forward. There are a few research studies on ethical leadership in education (Treviño *et al.,* 2006; Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008; Den Nieuwenboer & Kish-Gephart, 2014). In addition, research on ethical leadership in education contexts is relatively sparse (Meyer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes & Salvador, 2009; Brown & Treviño, 2009; Noonan, 2010; Oliver, 2012). However, this was a small-scale study that explored the perspectives, experiences and practices of ethical leadership of one education

district officials in KwaZulu-Natal. It is suggested that a larger study be conducted involving participants from other districts and provinces and using mixed methods. This study not only affirmed that district offices need ethical leaders to thrive, but also highlighted the significance of interconnectedness, *Ubuntu* and religious upbringing in enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the district officials as leaders. There are some of the characteristics of ethical leaders. Since ethical leader's model good behaviour, walking the talk, beliefs in group solidarity, valuing the community and the well-being of every person are important. In addition, this study also contributes to the debates on ethical leadership and awareness and how the theory of ethical leadership could be utilised to enhance district leadership.

9.5.1 Contribution to policy and practice

The findings of this study are significant for both the Department of Basic Education and the South African Council of for Educators (SACE), in addressing the ascending level of unethical behaviours in districts among district officials. SACE is contemplating effecting some amendments to the code of professional ethics, for district officials to effectively fight unethical practices that are reported to be happening in districts. The primary concern is the skepticism among witnesses and victims in continuing with the case and testifying, after the culprit or his/her friends have persuaded either parents or victims to accept the bribe and cancel the case.

The findings of this study acknowledge the importance of policy and practice in ensuring that all the stakeholders understand what is expected of them within the organisation. However, the findings put emphasis on collaboration in the decision-making processes for the stakeholders to have ownership of the policy. The findings revealed that the effectiveness of the subordinates is dependent on the inclusive approach of the leader in the decision-making process and ensuring that there is communication of the policy or code of conduct.

The findings indicated that ethical leaders value the interests of their subordinates, hence they involve them in decision-making processes

that lead to high motivation and increased commitment to the realisation of organisational goals (MacKinnon, 2008; Moreno, 2010; Meylahn & Musiyambiri, 2017). In the presence of clear policies, there is no room for district officials to engage in something unethical by manipulating the discourse, for example, in arguing that, sometimes, unethical conduct may not be illegal (Norman, 2012). District officials should have a clear vision and mission, and code of conduct for employees that is ethics compliant. SACE should, as well, make the necessary amendments for stakeholders to know their jurisdiction of behaviour. The findings revealed that the knowledge of participants regarding ethical leadership was vast. The majority of the participants underscored the importance of a code of ethics for the smooth functioning of the organisation. The findings emphasised the significance of a shared vision and mission for compliance and for maintaining trust and respect. Most importantly, when there is a policy in place, leaders are prone to be fair in their decision-making processes.

9.5.2 Methodological contribution

This study used a qualitative case study design, which was used in conjunction with other methods for triangulation to ensure trustworthiness in exploring the phenomenon of ethical leadership in a district office. The foregoing was the most pivotal methodological contributor to the study. This is importantly so, because the use of qualitative research gave credibility to this research since it is the most suitable means for exploring and understanding the meanings that individuals give to social or human problems. The foregoing essentially allows the researcher to make interpretations to produce meaning from the generated data (Creswell, 2009; Bellamy, 2012). This study should further offer a valuable contribution regarding the understanding, exploring, discovering and clarifying of situations, perceptions, beliefs and experiences shared by the participants about the phenomenon in question (Kumar, 2011).

Moreover, a methodological contribution emerged through the ways of generating data and analysing and interpreting it to aid the researcher to formulate warranted descriptive and interpretive inferences (Bellamy, 2012). This study used the interpretivist paradigm. As earlier on stated in Chapter Four, the interpretivist paradigm satisfies the need for the researcher to interpret and make sense of the meanings of the people from their own contexts (Creswell, 2007). Data generated through the interpretivist paradigm is rich and credible as it provides multiple realities and seeks to comprehend the social situation from the perspectives of those who directly experience it. Influenced by Denzin and Lincoln's (2003) assertion that all research is interpretive and guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the worlds and how it should be understood, and by Creswell's (2009) assertion that meaning are varied and multiple, leading to the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories, is essential in stimulating the researcher to be broad-minded in working with the generated data. This is more importantly because interpretive practice provides a surfeit of data for the researcher to artistically and or politically interpret, in order to make sense of the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

In the quest to understand the participants 'world, semi-structured interviews became the most relevant means since they allow the researcher to probe the participants for better understanding of the participants' responses. As a result, I interviewed the participants to make sense of their world, and experiences they have in their world as (Merriam, 2009) suggests. I used document reviews to compensate for the shortcomings of the interviews and provided a juxtaposition for triangulation purposes to give credibility and confirmability to the findings of the study. Hence the findings from semi-structured interviews and document reviews aided me to compare and contrast the findings. I was also influenced by the fact that district office management keep records of all the incidents occurring at schools and district as well as of policies that guide employees conduct. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) refer to the foregoing assertion as "fitness

for purpose". In addition, I used TerreBlanche, Durrheim and Kelly's (2006) thematic or categorising analysis, underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm, to develop themes according to the two sets of the study participants. Adopting this thematic analysis aides in strengthening the research and having a profound understanding of the participants' perceptions of their lived experiences. In sum, the use of varied sources to triangulate eliminated the room for criticism and instead offered the study credibility.

9.5.3 Theoretical contribution

This study was foregrounded on two major theories namely Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) multiple ethical paradigm model and Khoza's (2011) Attuned leadership: African Humanism as Compass. Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership accentuates *Ubuntu* principles which include but are not limited to inclusivity, compassion, humanness, morality and propriety. These two models were selected to complement each other where one had a shortcoming. These models offered extensive worthwhile findings regarding what constitutes ethical leadership practices. Moreover, they demonstrated what leaders can do to create a healthy organisational climate, by improving communication, developing strategies to get others actively involved, allowing different views to flouring without prejudice, and, most importantly, promoting inclusivity and creating a code to guide bahaviour in district office, as organisations. Noting the role of Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) multiple ethical model in this study, which promotes the ethic of care, justice, critique and profession, the study offers tools to leaders for ethical leadership. Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) multiple model is effectively complemented by Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership: African Humanism as Compass. This is an African philosophy that advocates the significance of *Ubuntu*, which entails being, humanness, individualism, compassion and moral necessity in leading organisations efficiently. It is worth noting that these models complemented each other regarding ethical leadership. In essence, these models were a perfect fit for strengthening the quality of the findings.

Concerning the theoretical frameworks, the participant's conceptualisations of ethical leadership, I used both models. Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) multiple model underscores the importance of justice as a legal principle, which is essential in treating others fairly and consistently within the organisation. Further, these models underscored the importance of collaboration and treating others in a caring manner. The importance of collaboration was emphasised in both these models. This suggests that ethical leaders should be inclusive in their decision-making and should prioritise subordinates' welfare. The ethic of profession encourages leaders to formulate policies that are inclusive of subordinates' ethics and of the community. Both models encourage leaders to benefit learners in the school environment. Compassion and caring are significant features of ethical leadership that both theories promote, for effective and efficient organisations. Subordinates need to be valued and allowed to make their contribution. For the theme of role modelling, the ethic of profession is essential, in that leaders have to demonstrate the high moral character of both the profession and the professional for others to emulate.

Theme two emphasised the significance of fairness, trust and just conduct, which both theories advocate for leaders to manifest in their practices for the benefit of their organisations. The ethic of justice advocates that leadership should be informed by a desire for social justice, and fair management of the interests of all members within the organisation. Therefore, for leaders to be good exemplars to their subordinates, they need to be fair, just and honest when making decisions and conduct. The theme of fostering partnerships resonates with Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership, since individualism is discouraged while collectivism is promoted. This philosophy of attuned leadership projects *Ubuntu* as the beacon of collective existence, yet it also acknowledges that the individual is an essential organ of the broader community, hence is free to put forward his/her views, perceptions and emotions etc., to expand the social pool of knowledge. Mangena (2012) reiterates that, through communication, elders manage to bring

about a common moral position for the community. Attuned leadership reminds leaders to reflect on and empathise with their subordinates, as they look up to them for direction. Moreover, it reminds leaders that the success of any organisation is dependent on a shared vision and common purpose.

Therefore, leaders ought to know that they have a responsibility to fulfil the hopes and be the champions of their subordinates. The attuned leadership model suggests that trust concretises the relationship between shareholders, customers, competitors and society at large. The importance of working together was strongly emphasised in the study as the participants repeatedly spoke about teamwork as a crucial contributor to organisational success. The latter assertion embraces what *Ubuntu* advocates, which is collectivism. The findings suggest that conditions in the district office could be improved should the district officials subscribe to *Ubuntu*, which is an African philosophy. The creation of avenues to report unethical behaviours, both models fit well, as the ethic of justice encourages people to work within the framework of justice which advocates that leaders should demonstrate deep concern for the welfare of the district community, meanwhile the ethic of care contends that leaders should consider the consequences of their decisions and actions and should have a listening ear. Meanwhile *ubuntu* favours collectivism and human relationships over material things. In addition, leaders are encouraged to treat their subordinates with respect and make life more humane for subordinates (Nzimakwe, 2014). Suffice to say that the findings indicated the void of ethics which manifested itself in numerous ways in Districts despite understanding of what constitutes ethics and ethical leadership. Promotion of *ubuntu* as a beacon of attuned leadership theory should be a solution to how some district offices are led and managed.

The findings show that Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model, coupled with Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) multiple ethical leadership model, could strongly revive ethics and ethical leadership to the benefit of learners, employees and the government as the resources can be

used for what they are meant to accomplish. Attuned leadership and the multiple ethical leadership model speak to caring and compassion, respectively, as essential in transforming the current dearth of ethics in schools, district and the Department of Education. As earlier on stated, that *ubuntu* is a beacon of collectivism, hence *ubuntu* is projected as collective shared experience and solidarity that significantly direct both organisational and human resource development (Khoza, 2011; Msila, 2014). The use of the attuned leadership model, which is fairly new in the field of research, offers an important dimension which can be an alternative option to the dominant Western theories. In the context of South Africa, *ubuntu* has a huge role to play considering the current unethical practices ranging from some officials having intimate relationships amongst each other. I believe it can also contribute in improving communication between district and community members.

Having used these two models which cross-pollinate perfectly, I confidently argue that they have enhanced the authenticity and originality of this study. As Khoza (2011) asserts, *ubuntu* theory as an African philosophy had been challenged for its relevance due to among other reasons, the conduct of African leaders who demonstrate lack of interests in the welfare of others and cling onto power for their selfish and narrow interests. However, one swallow does not make a summer. Numerous other African leaders, such as the late President Mandela and retired Archibishop Tutu, have demonstrated the positive impact of *ubuntu* leadership in their behaviour. Hence, for this study both models proved to be relevant.

9.6 Implications for further research

9.6.1 Implications for Department of Basic Education

Having looked at the findings of this study in tandem with the policies and the pieces of legislation that promote ethics and ethical practices in districts or a district it is reasonable to suggest that if the Department of Basic Education and SACE want to manage ethical issues in

schools and district offices, they should forge a closer and stronger working relationship that promotes ethical standards in schools and in the Department of Education in general. It should not take that long for them (Department of Basic Education and SACE) to address unethical issues reported because the DBE is an employer and SACE is the body that is responsible for ethical practices within the DBE. In contrast, findings of this study implicate that there is a very tenuous working relationship between SACE and the Department of Basic Education. Education, consequently causing a number of cases to take time to be resolved while other cases reported end up unresolved.

9.6.2 Implications for SACE

Based on the findings of this study, SACE is perceived as "captured" by the Teacher Unions. For example, they also investigated the sale of teaching and management posts and found no wrong doing while the Volmink investigation found incriminating evidence against certain teacher unions. This is seen as a failure on the part of SACE as its senior people are former teacher union officials (politicisation). The failure of teachers and the teacher union's officials to engage with SACE has implication on the trust relationship between these people and SACE. In other words, they do not trust SACE that is why they did not want to share information with them. That explains why Volmink managed to get all the information they found while conducting the investigation. SACE must de-politicised and SACE must discharge its responsibilities without any fear or favour.

9.6.3 Implications for district officials

The findings suggest that most district officials were running sub-directorate as their own property, causing officials to be rebellious. In addition, some spent most of the time absent from work or attending to their own personal errands because they have got unchecked and untrammeled powers. If the district officials are not trusted, honest, do not walk the talk, it becomes very difficult for subordinates to trust them. So, the implications of these will be that,

in schools and district offices, there will be always the problems stemming from the issue of trust. The above statement implicates that district officials must be trusted. For now, the findings of this study indicate that there is a deficit of trust in district officials.

9.6.4 Implications for higher education

Many participants claimed that while training to become educators in Universities, they were hardly exposed to ethics education, if at all. Implications for this are that higher education institutions that offer training and development to school principals, educators and district officials must ensure that they offer modules that speak to ethics and ethical leadership.

9.6.5 Implications for further research

This study was a very small-scale study that explored the perspectives, experiences and practices of ethical leadership of district officials in one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.

Moreover, this study only scratched the surface on the unethical behaviour/practices of the officials of the Department of Basic Education. Therefore, there is a need for further magnitudinally scalable quantitative research on conceptualisation of ethics and ethical leadership at other levels of the Department of Basic Education. The findings of this research may also be consolidated or further developed through any future study that will focus on the background of district officials in relationship to their behaviour.

9.7 Conclusion

The recommendations that have been suggested for the district officials, the Department of Education and SACE are not conclusive by any means. Instead, they are intended to shed light on how ethical leadership can help in guiding the leadership styles they forge to provide quality education among stakeholders. Moreover, they illuminate key aspects that are essential if a leader is to be regarded as ethical. The recommendation that district officials should promote collaboration is essential for the district officials, in that they can delegate tasks and allow their

subordinates to freely work on their own, because they trust one another. However, to root-out the unethical practices that are widely observed and reported at the districts, SACE and the Department of Education must take an effective lead and make examples of those who are caught out. All stakeholders must emphasise education that speaks to ethics and ethical awareness including the Department of Higher Education. Therefore, the above recommendations are meant to help both the Department of Education and SACE address the unethical practices of district officials.

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APPENDICES

A. Confirmation of candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
B. Permission letter to the KZN Department of Education
C. Permission letter from KZN Department of Education
D. Permission letter to District Director
E. Permission letter to Chief Education Specialist- CMC
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G. Permission letter to Deputy Chief Education Specialist
H. Permission letter to the Circuit Manager
I. Permission letter to Subject Advisor
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K. Individual interview Schedule for Chief Education Specialist - CMC
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APPENDIX A

(Confirmation of candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy)

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

PERSON NUMBER: 2284679

30 April 2020

Mr Bongani Dlungwane
Cc Dr Siphiwe E Mthiyane

Dear Mr Dlungwane

Results for the Doctor of Philosophy in Education

I am writing to inform you that the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has considered your proposal entitled *"Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal"* and recommended that you should be admitted to candidature subject to corrections suggested by the readers.

Corrections must be addressed to the satisfaction of the supervisor.

Kindly liaise with your supervisor regarding the contents of the reader's report, the readers report was emailed to your supervisor.

I confirm that **Dr Siphiwe E Mthiyane** has been appointed as your supervisor.

Your attention is drawn to the Senate's requirement that all higher degree candidates submit brief written reports on their progress to the Faculty Office once a year.

Please note that higher degree candidates are required to renew their registration in January each year.

Please keep us informed of any changes of address during the year.

Yours sincerely

Thabo Makuru
Faculty Officer
Faculty of Humanities
Education Campus
Tell: 011 717 3018

APPENDIX B

(Permission letter to the KZN Department of Education)

Attention: The Head of Department (Dr E.V Nzama)

Department of Basic Education

Province of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X9137

Pietermaritzburg

3201

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Bongani Johannes Dlungwane, a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my degree requirements, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in Umlazi District under your jurisdiction. The tittle of my study is: **Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.**

This study aims seeks to solicit the conceptualisations, experiences and practices of district officials about ethical leadership and how this leadership approach could be used to curb unethical conduct from the district office understudy. The planned study will focus on District Director, Chief Education Specialist, Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Circuit Manager and Subject Advisors and other levels in the Department of Education. The study will use Semi-structured interviews and documents review. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the district officials. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30-40 minutes and each interview will be Voice-recorded.

In addition, I will review some documents such as; school policy, code of conduct for educators, log book, and other relevant reports such as minutes of the meetings. The aim of reviewing such documents will be to check documents that relate to the issues of ethical conduct in the Department of Education and schools this include the SACE Code of Professional Ethics, South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996 as amended, the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 as amended, the Public Finance Management Act and the recently

published South African Standard for Principals (2016). Other important aspect that will be taken in to consideration while reviewing the documents are; to look at the availability of documents, to try to find out whether district officials are contextualised with relevant information on the documents such as Batho Pele Principles.

Response will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews, and they will be purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr S.E Mthiyane; Tel: 011-7173092. E-mail: Siphiwe. Mthiyane@wits.ac.za

You may also contact the Research Office through: Shaun Schoeman Coordinator Ethics and Research Committees. Tel: 011 717 1408 Email: shaun.schoeman@wits.ac.za

In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me directly using the following contacts details: Bongani Johannes Dlungwane: 031-9036785; Cell: 072 295 5663 E-mail: bonganidlungwane@gmail.com

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Mr B.J. Dlungwane

APPENDIX C

(Permission letter from KZN Department of Education)

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Buyi Ntuli **Tel:** 033 392 1063/1051 **Ref.:**2/4/8/4046

Mr Bongani Dlungwane
3 Crawford Place
AMANZIMTOTI
4126

Dear Mr Dlungwane

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"EXPLORING ETHICAL LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES OF DISTRICT OFFICIALS: A CASE STUDY OF ONE EDUCATION DISTRICT IN KWAZULU-NATAL"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 28 January 2020 to 10 January 2022.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma/Ms Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UMLAZI DISTRICT

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 28 January 2020

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa
Physical Address: 247 Burger Street • Anton Lembede Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201
Tel.: +27 33 392 1063 • **Fax.:** +27 033 392 1203• **Email:**Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za •**Web:**www.kzneducation.gov.za
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APPENDIX D

(Permission letter to District Director)

Informed Consent Letter

Attention: The District Director

XXXX District Office

XXXX

XXXX

Dear Sir

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Bongani Johannes Dlungwane. I am a PhD student studying at University of Witwatersrand. As part of my degree requirement I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. Please be informed that I have sought the necessary ethical clearance from the School of Education at Wits (Protocol Number 2284679)) and permission from the KwaZulu-Natal department of Education) and has been granted. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research with you at the district office in your capacity as the District Director. The title of my study is: **Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.**

This study aims to explore ethical leadership perspectives, conceptions, experiences and enactment of ethical leadership in the researched education district from the perspectives of the District Director, Circuit manager, Examination and Assessment Sub-Directorate, Governance and Management Sub-Directorate and Subject Advisors. The study will use semi-structured interviews, documents review and observations. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with district officials. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes and each interview will be recorded.

In addition, for this study I will be a non-participant observer. This means I will be in the background as undisruptive as possible, recording information. I will make it very clear to the groups from the state that they should ignore my presence as much as it is humanly possible. I

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The planned study will focus on district officials (especially three Chief Education Specialist (CMC), Chief Education Specialist (Examinations and Assessment), at a district, (CESs) three Deputy Chief Education Specialist (DCESs), six Subject Advisors and three Circuit Managers.

PLEASE NOTE THAT:

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All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent your names.

Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you wish so without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.

The interviews shall be recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview.

You will be contacted in time about the interviews.

For further information feel free to contact my supervisor Dr S.E. Mthiyane who is located at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand.

His contact details: e-mail:Siphiwe.Mthiyane@wits.ac.za; Phone number: 011-717 3092.

You may also contact the HSSREC-Research Office through: Shaun Schoeman Coordinator Ethics and Research Committees.

Tel: 011 717 1408 Email: shaun.schoeman@wits.ac.za. In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me directly using the following contact details: Bongani Johannes Dlungwane: 0319036785; Cell: 072 295 5663 Email: bonganidlungwane@gmail.com

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely

Mr B.J Dlungwane

DECLARATION

I……. (Full names of participants) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: ***Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.***

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant:---------- Date: ----------

Signature of Witness/ Research Assistant: ---------- Date: ----------

Thanking you in advance

Mr Bongani J. Dlungwane

APPENDIX E

(Permission letter to Chief Education Specialist CMC)

Informed Consent Letter

Attention: The Chief Education Specialist- CMC

XXXX District Office

XXXX

XXXX

Dear Sir

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Bongani Johannes Dlungwane. I am a PhD student studying at University of Witwatersrand. As part of my degree requirement I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. Please be informed that I have sought the necessary ethical clearance from the School of Education at Wits (Protocol Number 2284679)) and permission from the KwaZulu-Natal department of Education) and has been granted. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research with you at the district office in your capacity as the Chief Education Specialist. The title of my study is: **Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.**

This study aims to explore ethical leadership perspectives, conceptions, experiences and enactment of ethical leadership in the researched education district from the perspectives of the District Director, Circuit manager, Examination and Assessment Sub-Directorate, Governance and Management Sub-Directorate and Subject Advisors. The study will use semi-structured interviews, documents review and observations. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with district officials. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes and each interview will be recorded.

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Tel: 011 717 1408 Email: shaun.schoeman@wits.ac.za. In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me directly using the following contact details: Bongani Johannes Dlungwane: 0319036785; Cell: 072 295 5663 Email: bonganidlungwane@gmail.com

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely

Mr B.J Dlungwane

DECLARATION

I……. (Full names of participants) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: ***Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.***

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant:---------- Date: ----------

Signature of Witness/ Research Assistant: ---------- Date: ----------

Thanking you in advance

Mr Bongani J. Dlungwane

APPENDIX F

(Permission letter to Chief Education Specialist District Office)

Informed Consent Letter

Attention: The Chief Education Specialist- District Office

XXXX District Office

XXXX

XXXX

Dear Sir

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Bongani Johannes Dlungwane. I am a PhD student studying at University of Witwatersrand. As part of my degree requirement I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. Please be informed that I have sought the necessary ethical clearance from the School of Education at Wits (Protocol Number 2284679)) and permission from the KwaZulu-Natal department of Education) and has been granted. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research with you at the district office in your capacity as the Chief Education Specialist. The title of my study is: **Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.**

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PLEASE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may receive as part of their participation in this research project.

Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstances.

All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent your names.

Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you wish so without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.

The interviews shall be recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview.

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Tel: 011 717 1408 Email: shaun.schoeman@wits.ac.za. In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me directly using the following contact details: Bongani Johannes Dlungwane:0319036785; Cell: 072 295 5663 Email: bonganidlungwane@gmail.com

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely

Mr B.J Dlungwane

DECLARATION

I……. (Full names of participants) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: ***Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.***

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant:---------- Date: ----------

Signature of Witness/ Research Assistant: ---------- Date: ----------

Thanking you in advance

Mr Bongani J. Dlungwane

APPENDIX G

(Permission letter to Deputy Chief Education Specialist

Informed Consent Letter

Attention: Deputy Chief Education Specialist

XXXX District Office

XXXX

XXXX

Dear Sir

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Bongani Johannes Dlungwane. I am a PhD student studying at University of Witwatersrand. As part of my degree requirement I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. Please be informed that I have sought the necessary ethical clearance from the School of Education at Wits (Protocol Number 2284679) and permission from the KwaZulu-Natal department of Education) and has been granted. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research with you at the district office in your capacity as the Subject Advisor). The title of my study is: **Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.**

This study aims to explore ethical leadership perspectives, conceptions, experiences and enactment of ethical leadership in the researched education district from the perspectives of the District Director, Circuit Manager, Examination and Assessment Sub-Directorate, Governance and Management Sub-Directorate and Subject Advisors. The study will use semi-structured interviews, documents review and observations. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with district officials. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes and each interview will be recorded.

In addition, for this study I will be a non-participant observer. This means I will be in the background as undisruptive as possible, recording information. I will make it very clear to the groups from the state that they should ignore my presence as much as it is humanly possible. I

will use observations as a means to supplement and strengthened data that I will gather through interviews and documents review. As I conducted observations, I will simultaneously transcribed them. This will assist me in reducing the risk of omitting crucial data if I transcribed the observations much later. I will conduct the observations for the entire duration of the scheduled district management committee meetings (MANCO), extended management committee meetings, as well as circuit management centres meetings at circuit offices. When observing district meetings, I will focus on: listening to what participants are saying and observe what they do, I will also take extensive notes on what they are saying, the details of who is speaking and the length of discussion; the seating plan of the members in the meeting; the speaking turns and contribution by each official. This is important as it shows power relations among the participants. After the observations, I will record the notes as quickly as possible.

The planned study will focus on district officials (especially three Chief Education Specialist (CMC), Chief Education Specialist (Examinations and Assessment), at a district, (CESs) three Deputy Chief Education Specialist (DCESs), six Subject Advisors and three Circuit Managers.

PLEASE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may receive as part of their participation in this research project.

Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstances.

All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent your names.

Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you wish so without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.

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Tel: 011 717 1408 Email: shaun.schoeman@wits.ac.za. In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me directly using the following contact details: Bongani Johannes Dlungwane:0319036785; Cell: 072 295 5663 Email: bonganidlungwane@gmail.com

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely

Mr B.J Dlungwane

DECLARATION

I……. (Full names of participants) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: ***Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.***

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant:---------- Date: ----------

Signature of Witness/ Research Assistant: ---------- Date: ----------

Thanking you in advance

Mr Bongani J. Dlungwane

APPENDIX H

(Permission letter to the Circuit Manager)

Informed Consent Letter

Attention: The Circuit Manager

XXXX District Office

XXXX

XXXX

Dear Sir

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Bongani Johannes Dlungwane. I am a PhD student studying at University of Witwatersrand. As part of my degree requirement I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. Please be informed that I have sought the necessary ethical clearance from the School of Education at Wits (Protocol Number 2284679)) and permission from the KwaZulu-Natal department of Education) and has been granted. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research with you at the district office in your capacity as the Circuit Manager. The title of my study is: **Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.**

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The interviews shall be recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview.

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Tel: 011 717 1408 Email: shaun.schoeman@wits.ac.za. In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me directly using the following contact details: Bongani Johannes Dlungwane:0319036785; Cell: 072 295 5663 Email: bonganidlungwane@gmail.com

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely

Mr B.J Dlungwane

DECLARATION

I……. (Full names of participants) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: ***Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.***

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant:---------- Date: ----------

Signature of Witness/ Research Assistant: ---------- Date: ----------

Thanking you in advance

Mr Bongani J. Dlungwane

APPENDIX I

(Permission letter to Subject Advisor)

Informed Consent Letter

Attention: Subject Advisor

XXXX District Office

XXXX

XXXX

Dear Sir

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Bongani Johannes Dlungwane. I am a PhD student studying at University of Witwatersrand. As part of my degree requirement I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. Please be informed that I have sought the necessary ethical clearance from the School of Education at Wits (Protocol Number 2284679)) and permission from the KwaZulu-Natal department of Education) and has been granted. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research with you at the district office in your capacity as the Subject Advisor). The title of my study is: **Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.**

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The interviews shall be recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview.

You will be contacted in time about the interviews.

For further information feel free to contact my supervisor Dr S.E. Mthiyane who is located at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand.

His contact details: e-mail:Siphiwe.Mthiyane@wits.ac.za; Phone number: 011-717 3092.

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Tel: 011 717 1408 Email: shaun.schoeman@wits.ac.za. In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me directly using the following contact details: Bongani Johannes Dlungwane:0319036785; Cell: 072 295 5663 Email: bonganidlungwane@gmail.com

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely

Mr B.J Dlungwane

DECLARATION

I……. (Full names of participants) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: ***Exploring ethical leadership perspectives of district officials: A case study of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal.***

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant:---------- Date: ----------

Signature of Witness/ Research Assistant: ---------- Date: ----------

Thanking you in advance

Mr Bongani J. Dlungwane

APPENDIX J

(Individual interview Schedule for District Director)

A: Interview schedule for District Director

Biographical information of each participant

1.1 Age (optional):

1.2 Gender:

1.3 Present position:

1.4 Years of experience:

Background

Introduce myself and thank the participant for participating in the interview process. I will also emphasise the issue of anonymity and confidentiality as I discussed about it in our plenary meetings.

A. Understanding of ethics and ethical leadership

1. In your own view as a District Director, what is your understanding of ethics and ethical leadership in district office?

   PROBE…

2. Do you think ethics and ethical leaders are necessary in education? Why?

B. Practices and experiences on ethical leadership

1. Please share with me, when a problem/ issue surface to your attention or somebody brings it to your attention, what steps do you normal take to address the problem? PROBE; I will probe more to find out what ethical dimensions determine the final decision.

2. What is it in your leadership experience that you regard as unethical practice?

3. How are you going to ensure that ethical standards are being adhered to in financial administration /management in district office under your supervision? PROBE…

4. How are you going to ensure the ethical standards are being adhered to in leave management in education?
   PROBE...

5. What is your regard as unethical practices in the educator recruitment system in district office?
   PROBE…

6. Which values do you emphasise in district office and do you think those values promote ethical behaviour? Why? (please elaborate)

7. Is there any strategy you used to instil ethical behaviour among your subordinates? Please elaborate.

8. On a daily basis when you faced by the situation which demands you to act unethically, do you think you can manage to be ethical? Why? Please elaborate.

9. What do you think are the most unethical about conduct demonstrated by District Officials?

C. Unethical practices

1. Could you share with me any practices (Share with me as many as you can remember) that could be termed as unethical at the District Office by:
   a) Chief Education Specialist
   b) Circuit Managers
   c) Subject Advisors

2. What do those in charge at the Department of Education do about the unethical practices you have shared above? Please elaborate.

3. Do you believe the Department of Education and SACE have sufficient mechanism to uproot unethical behaviour among district officials? Why? Please elaborate.

4. In your own opinion, do you think ethics is central to district office leadership? If yes, why? If no, why not?

D. Reason for unethical conduct

1. In your opinion, why do some of the district officials, despite the plethora of legislation against unethical conduct, do they continue to be ethical? Please elaborate.
   PROBE…

E. Training on ethics

1. While training at University, were you ever exposed to ethical education in any of the courses you took? Please share with me.
2. In your service as a leader for a number of years now, have you ever attended an in-service training course/ workshop on Ethics? If yes please elaborate
   PROBE…Was it sufficient (yes/no), why? Please elaborate.
3. If your answers to the above questions have been to the negative- do you think it is necessary to undergo training on ethics in education and why?
4. As a District Director, are you aware of SACE Code of Professional Ethics? Have you attended any of their training courses? Please elaborate.
5. What are your views regarding the SACE Code of Professionalism Ethics? Please elaborate.

F. Addressing unethical behaviour

1. In conclusion, what do you think should be done to arrest the tide of unethical behaviour among District Officials? Pleas elaborate
   PROBE…
2. Is there any question that is relevant to this study that I have not asked but you feel it could enhance my study? Please, now is your chance to share with me.

Conclusion

Thank you very much for participating in this study. If you have any comment with regard to this interview please feel free to comment, otherwise we have come to the end of the interview session.

APPENDIX K

(Individual interview Schedule for Chief Education Specialist – CMC)

Interview schedule for Chief Education Specialist

Biographical information of each participant

1.1 Age (optional)
1.2 Gender:

1.3 Present position:

1.4 Years of experience:

Background

Introduce myself and thank the participant for participating in the interview process. I will also emphasise the issue of anonymity and confidentiality as I discussed about it in our plenary meetings.

A. Understanding of ethics and ethical leadership

1. In your own view as a Chief Education Specialist what is your understanding of ethics and ethical leadership in your Circuit?

   PROBE…

2. Do you think ethics and ethical leaders are necessary in education?
   Why?

B. Practices and experiences on ethical leadership

1. Please share with me, when a problem/ issue surface to your attention or somebody brings it to your attention, what steps do you normal take to address the problem?
   PROBE; I will probe more to find out what ethical dimensions determine the final decision.

2. What is it in your leadership experience that you regard as unethical practice?

3. How are you going to ensure that ethical standards are being adhered to in financial administration /management in the circuit office and schools under your supervision?
   PROBE…

4. How are you going to ensure the ethical standards are being adhered to in leave management in circuit office and schools?
   PROBE...

5. What is your regard as unethical practices in the educator recruitment system in schools?
   PROBE…

6. Which values do you emphasise in schools and do you think those values promote ethical behaviour? Why? (please elaborate)

7. Is there any strategy you used to instil ethical behaviour among your subordinates? Please elaborate.

8. On a daily basis when you faced by the situation which demands you to act unethically, do you think you can manage to be ethical? Why? Please elaborate.

9. What do you think are the most unethical about conduct demonstrated by Principals?

10. What do you think are the most unethical about conduct demonstrated by teachers?

C. Unethical practices

1. Could you share with me any practices (Share with me as many as you can remember) that could be termed as unethical at the school by:
   a) The teachers at the school
   b) The HOD at the school
   c) The Principal

2. What do those in charge at the Department of Education do about the unethical practices you have shared above? Please elaborate.

3. Do you believe the Department of Education and SACE have sufficient mechanism to uproot unethical behaviour among school Principals and teachers? Why? Please elaborate.

4. In your own opinion, do you think ethics is central to school leadership? If yes, why? If no, why not?

D. Reason for unethical conduct

1. In your opinion, why do some of the Principals, despite the plethora of legislation against unethical conduct, do they continue to be unethical? Please elaborate.
2. In your opinion, why do some of the teachers, despite the plethora of legislation against unethical conduct, do they continue to be unethical? Please elaborate.

   PROBE…

E. Training on ethics

1. While training as a teacher at College or University, were you ever exposed to ethical education in any of the courses you took? Please share with me.
2. In your service as an educational leader for a number of years now, have you ever attended an in-service training course/ workshop on Ethics? If yes please elaborate PROBE…Was it sufficient (yes/no), why? Please elaborate.
3. If your answers to the above questions have been to the negative- do you think it is necessary to undergo training on ethics in education and why?
4. As a Chief Education Specialist, are you aware of SACE Code of Professional Ethics? Have you attended any of their training courses? Please elaborate.
5. What are your views regarding the SACE? Please elaborate.

F. Addressing unethical behaviour

1. In conclusion, what do you think should be done to arrest the tide of unethical behaviour among school Principals and teachers at your circuit Please elaborate PROBE…

2. Is there any question that is relevant to this study that I have not asked but you feel it could enhance my study? Please, now is your chance to share with me.

Conclusion

Thank you very much for participating in this study. If you have any comment regard to this interview please feel free to comment, otherwise we have come to the end of the interview session.

APPENDIX L

(Interview schedule for Chief Education Specialist District Office)

Biographical information of each participant

1.1 Age (optional)
1.2 Gender:

1.3 Present position:

1.4 Years of experience:

Background

Introduce myself and thank the participant for participating in the interview process. I will also emphasise the issue of anonymity and confidentiality as I discussed about it in our plenary meetings.

A. Understanding of ethics and ethical leadership

1. In your own view as a Chief Education Specialist what is your understanding of ethics and ethical leadership in district office?

PROBE…

2. Do you think ethics and ethical leaders are necessary in education?
   Why?

B. Practices and experiences on ethical leadership

1. Please share with me, when a problem/ issue surface to your attention or somebody brings it to your attention, what steps do you normal take to address the problem?
   PROBE; I will probe more to find out what ethical dimensions determine the final decision.

2. What is it in your leadership experience that you regard as unethical practice?

3. How are you going to ensure that ethical standards are being adhered to in financial administration /management in district office under your supervision?
   PROBE…

4. How are you going to ensure the ethical standards are being adhered to in leave management in education?
   PROBE...

1. What is your regard as unethical practices in the educator recruitment system in district office?
   PROBE…

2. Which values do you emphasise in district office and do you think those values promote ethical behaviour? Why? (please elaborate)

3. Is there any strategy you used to instil ethical behaviour among your subordinates? Please elaborate.

4. On a daily basis when you faced by the situation which demands you to act unethically, do you think you can manage to be ethical? Why? Please elaborate.

5. What do you think are the most unethical about conduct demonstrated by District Officials?

C. Unethical practices

1. Could you share with me any practices (Share with me as many as you can remember) that could be termed as unethical at the District Office by your subordinates.

2. What do those in charge at the Department of Basic Education do about the unethical practices you have shared above? Please elaborate.

3. Do you believe the Department of Baisc Education and SACE have sufficient mechanism to uproot unethical behaviour among district officials? Why? Please elaborate.

4. In your own opinion, do you think ethics is central to district office leadership? If yes, why? If no, why not?

D. Reason for unethical conduct

1. In your opinion, why do some of the district officials, despite the plethora of legislation against unethical conduct, do they continue to be ethical? Please elaborate.

   PROBE…

E. Training on ethics

1. While training at University, were you ever exposed to ethical education in any of the courses you took? Please share with me.
2. In your service as an educational leader for a number of years now, have you ever attended an in-service training course/ workshop on Ethics? If yes please elaborate PROBE…Was it sufficient (yes/no), why? Please elaborate.
3. If your answers to the above questions have been to the negative- do you think it is necessary to undergo training on ethics in education and why?
4. As a Chief Education Specialist, are you aware of SACE Code of Professional Ethics? Have you attended any of their training courses? Please elaborate.

5. What are your views regarding the SACE Code of Professionalism Ethics? Please elaborate.

F. Addressing unethical behaviour

1. In conclusion, what do you think should be done to arrest the tide of unethical behaviour among District Officials? Pleas elaborate

   PROBE…
2. Is there any question that is relevant to this study that I have not asked but you feel it could enhance my study? Please, now is your chance to share with me.

Conclusion

Thank you very much for participating in this study. If you have any comment regard to this interview please feel free to comment, otherwise we have come to the end of the interview session.

APPENDIX M

(Interview schedule for Deputy Chief Education Specialist)

Individual interview Schedule for Subject Advisor

A: Interview schedule for Subject Advisor

Biographical information of each participant

1.1 Age (optional):
1.2 Gender:
1.3 Present position:
1.4 Years of experience:

Background

Introduce myself and thank the participant for participating in the interview process. I will also emphasise the issue of anonymity and confidentiality as I discussed about it in our plenary meetings.

A. Understanding of ethics and ethical leadership

1. In your own view as a Subject Advisor what is your understanding of ethics and ethical leadership in the district office?

   PROBE…

2. Do you think ethics and ethical leaders are necessary in schools?
   Why?

B. Practices and experiences on ethical leadership

1. Please share with me, when a problem/ issue surface to your attention or somebody brings it to your attention, what steps do you normal take to address the problem?
   PROBE; I will probe more to find out what ethical dimensions determine the final decision.

2. What is it in your leadership experience that you regard as unethical practice?

3. How are you going to ensure that ethical standards are being adhered to in financial administration /management in the schools under your supervision?
   PROBE…

4. How are you going to ensure the ethical standards are being adhered to in leave management in schools?
   PROBE...

5. What is your regard as unethical practices in the educator recruitment system in schools?
   PROBE…

6. Which values do you emphasise in schools and do you think those values promote ethical behaviour? Why? (please elaborate)

7. Is there any strategy you used to instil ethical behaviour among your subordinates? Please elaborate.

8. On a daily basis when you faced by the situation which demands you to act unethically, do you think you can manage to be ethical? Why? Please elaborate.

9. What do you think are the most unethical about conduct demonstrated by teachers?

C. Unethical practices

1. Could you share with me any practices (Share with me as many as you can remember) that could be termed as unethical at the school by:
   a) The teachers at the school
   b) The HOD at the school
   c) The Principal

2. What do those in charge at the Department of Education do about the unethical practices you have shared above? Please elaborate.

3. Do you believe the Department of Education and SACE have sufficient mechanism to uproot unethical behaviour among school Principals and teachers? Why? Please elaborate.

4. In your own opinion, do you think ethics is central to school leadership? If yes, why? If no, why not?

D. Reason for unethical conduct

1. In your opinion, why do some of the Principals, despite the plethora of legislation against unethical conduct, do they continue to be unethica? Please elaborate.
2. In your opinion, why do some of the teachers, despite the plethora of legislation against unethical conduct, do they continue to be unethical? Please elaborate.

   PROBE…

E. Training on ethics

1. While training as a teacher at College or University, were you ever exposed to ethical education in any of the courses you took? Please share with me.
2. In your service as a teacher for a number of years now, have you ever attended an in-service training course/ workshop on Ethics? If yes please elaborate
   PROBE…Was it sufficient (yes/no), why? Please elaborate.
3. If your answers to the above questions have been to the negative- do you think it is necessary to undergo training on ethics in education and why?
4. As a Subject Advisor, are you aware of SACE Code of Professional Ethics? Have you attended any of their training courses? Please elaborate.
5. What are your views regarding the SACE Code of Professionalism Ethics? Please elaborate.

F. Addressing unethical behaviour

1. In conclusion, what do you think should be done to arrest the tide of unethical behaviour among school Principals and teachers at schools. Please elaborate
   PROBE…

2. Is there any question that is relevant to this study that I have not asked but you feel it could enhance my study? Please, now is your chance to share with me.

Conclusion

Thank you very much for participating in this study. If you have any comment regard to this interview please feel free to comment, otherwise we have come to the end of the interview session.

APPENDIX N

(Individual interview Schedule for the Circuit Manager)

A: Interview schedule for the Circuit Manager

Biographical information of each participant

1.1 Age (optional):
1.2 Gender:
1.3 Present position:
1.4 Years of experience:

Background

Introduce myself and thank the participant for participating in the interview process. I will also emphasise the issue of anonymous and confidential as I discussed about it in our plenary meetings.

B. Understanding of ethics and ethical leadership

1. In your own view as a circuit manager what is your understanding of ethics and ethical leadership in your Circuit?

   PROBE…

2. Do you think ethics and ethical leaders are necessary in education?
   Why?

C. Practices and experiences on ethical leadership

1. Please share with me, when a problem/ issue surface to your attention or somebody brings it to your attention, what steps do you normal take to address the problem?
   PROBE; I will probe more to find out what ethical dimensions determine the final decision.

2. What is it in your leadership experience that you regard as unethical practice?

3. How are you going to ensure that ethical standards are being adhered to in financial administration /management in the schools under your supervision?

PROBE…

4. How are you going to ensure the ethical standards are being adhered to in leave management in schools?
   PROBE...

5. What is your regard as unethical practices in the educator recruitment system in schools?
   PROBE…

6. Which values do you emphasise in schools and do you think those values promote ethical behaviour? Why? (please elaborate)

7. Is there any strategy you used to instil ethical behaviour among your subordinates? Please elaborate.

8. On a daily basis when you faced by the situation which demands you to act unethically, do you think you can manage to be ethical? Why? Please elaborate.

9. What do you think are the most unethical about conduct demonstrated by Principals?

10. What do you think are the most unethical about conduct demonstrated by teachers?

D. Unethical practices

1. Could you share with me any practices (Share with me as many as you can remember) that could be termed as unethical at the school by:
   d) The teachers at the school
   e) The HOD at the school
   f) The Principal

2. What do those in charge at the Department of Education do about the unethical practices you have shared above? Please elaborate.

3. Do you believe the Department of Education and SACE have sufficient mechanism to uproot unethical behaviour among school Principals and teachers? Why? Please elaborate.

4. In your own opinion, do you think ethics is central to school leadership? If yes, why? If no, why not?

E. Reason for unethical conduct

1. In your opinion, why do some of the Principals, despite the plethora of legislation against unethical conduct, do they continue to be ethical? Please elaborate.
2. In your opinion, why do some of the teachers, despite the plethora of legislation against unethical conduct, do they continue to be ethical? Please elaborate.

   PROBE…

F. Training on ethics

1. While training as a teacher at College or University, were you ever exposed to ethical education in any of the courses you took? Please share with me.
2. In your service as an educational leader for a number of years now, have you ever attended an in-service training course/ workshop on Ethics? If yes please elaborate PROBE…Was it sufficient (yes/no), why? Please elaborate.
3. If your answers to the above questions have been to the negative- do you think it is necessary to undergo training on ethics in education and why?
4. As a Circuit Manager, are you aware of SACE Code of Professional Ethics? Have you attended any of their training courses? Please elaborate.
5. What are your views regarding the SACE Code of Professionalism Ethics? Please elaborate.

G. Addressing unethical behaviour

1. In conclusion, what do you think should be done to arrest the tide of unethical behaviour among school Principals and teachers at your circuit Please elaborate

PROBE…

2. Is there any question that is relevant to this study that I have not asked but you feel it could enhance my study? Please, now is your chance to share with me.

Conclusion

Thank you very much for participating in this study. If you have any comment regard to this interview please feel free to comment, otherwise we have come to the end of the interview session.

APPENDIX O

(Individual interview Schedule for Subject Advisor)

A. Interview schedule for Subject Advisor

Biographical information of each participant

1.1 Age (optional):

1.2 Gender:

1.3 Present position:

1.4 Years of experience:

Background

Introduce myself and thank the participant for participating in the interview process. I will also emphasise the issue of anonymous and confidential as I discussed about it in our plenary meetings.

B. Understanding of ethics and ethical leadership

1. In your own view as a Subject Advisor what is your understanding of ethics and ethical leadership in the district office?

PROBE…

2. Do you think ethics and ethical leaders are necessary in schools?

Why?

C. Practices and experiences on ethical leadership

1. Please share with me, when a problem/ issue surface to your attention or somebody brings it to your attention, what steps do you normal take to address the problem?

PROBE; I will probe more to find out what ethical dimensions determine the final decision.

2. What is it in your leadership experience that you regard as unethical practice?

3. How are you going to ensure that ethical standards are being adhered to in financial administration /management in the schools under your supervision?

PROBE…

4. How are you going to ensure the ethical standards are being adhered to in leave management in schools?

PROBE...

5. What is your regard as unethical practices in the educator recruitment system in schools?

PROBE…

6. Which values do you emphasise in schools and do you think those values promote ethical behaviour? Why? (please elaborate)

7. Is there any strategy you used to instil ethical behaviour among your subordinates? Please elaborate.

8. On a daily basis when you faced by the situation which demands you to act unethically, do you think you can manage to be ethical? Why? Please elaborate.

9. What do you think are the most unethical about conduct demonstrated by teachers?

D. Unethical practices

1. Could you share with me any practices (Share with me as many as you can remember) that could be termed as unethical at the school by:

    g) The teachers at the school

    h) The HOD at the school

    i) The Principal

2. What do those in charge at the Department of Education do about the unethical practices you have shared above? Please elaborate.

3. Do you believe the Department of Education and SACE have sufficient mechanism to uproot unethical behaviour among school Principals and teachers? Why? Please elaborate.

4. In your own opinion, do you think ethics is central to school leadership? If yes, why? If no, why not?

E. Reason for unethical conduct

1. In your opinion, why do some of the Principals, despite the plethora of legislation against unethical conduct, do they continue to be ethical? Please elaborate.
2. In your opinion, why do some of the teachers, despite the plethora of legislation against unethical conduct, do they continue to be ethical? Please elaborate.

PROBE…

F. Training on ethics

1. While training as a teacher at College or University, were you ever exposed to ethical education in any of the courses you took? Please share with me.
2. In your service as a teacher for a number of years now, have you ever attended an in-service training course/ workshop on Ethics? If yes please elaborate

PROBE…Was it sufficient (yes/no), why? Please elaborate.

3. If your answers to the above questions have been to the negative- do you think it is necessary to undergo training on ethics in education and why?
4. As a Subject Advisor, are you aware of SACE Code of Professional Ethics? Have you attended any of their training courses? Please elaborate.
5. What are your views regarding the SACE Code of Professionalism Ethics? Please elaborate.

G. Addressing unethical behaviour

1. In conclusion, what do you think should be done to arrest the tide of unethical behaviour among school Principals and teachers at schools. Please elaborate

PROBE…

2. Is there any question that is relevant to this study that I have not asked but you feel it could enhance my study? Please, now is your chance to share with me.

Conclusion

Thank you very much for participating in this study. If you have any comment regard to this interview please feel free to comment, otherwise we have come to the end of the interview session.

APPENDIX P

(Document Review)

DOCUMENTS REVIEW SCHEDULE/GUIDE

In addition to the semi-structured interviews as the primary data generating method, the documents analysis was so utilised as a data generating method. This was consistent with Kimchi, Polivka and Stevenson's (1991) assertion that research methods triangulation entails the utilization of two or more research methods in one study at a level of design or data generation. Further, the chief purpose of using different documents as data sources was to enhance the credibility of the research findings. This study intended to scrutinize many types of district office records or documents but after realising that some Sub-directorates did not have other documents I, as a researcher ended up scrutinising the district vision, mission statements, Manco scheduled meetings minutes, Sub-directorate reports and districts reports only with a lifespan of four years 2016-2019.

No.	Document/s	Nature of analysis/review
1.	District vision/mission	1. Do these speak to the core-business of the district? 2. Were these communicated to all departmental officials? 3. How these were formulated or was there any consultation?

2.	Manco minutes	1. Do these meetings discuss leadership matters? 2. Do these meetings discuss provision of quality education and district improvement strategies? 3. Encouraging innovation, appreciating and rewarding excellence
3.	Sub-directorates reports	1. Evidence of the understanding of ethical leadership or service delivery including its dimensions. 2. Evidence of departmental professional development. 3. Evidence of the enactment of ethical leadership.
4.	District reports	1. Positive issues which support ethical leadership domains. 2. Records of malpractices or unethical behaviours.

APPENDIX Q

(Language clearance certificate from the Language Editor)

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19 MARCH 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

This serves to inform that I have read the final version of the thesis titled:

EXPLORING ETHICAL LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES OF DISTRICT OFFICIALS: A CASE STUDY OF ONE EDUCATION DISTRICT IN KWAZULU–NATAL, by B.J. DLUNGWANE, student No: 2284679.

To the best of my knowledge, all the proposed amendments have been effected and the work is free of spelling and grammatical errors. I am of the view that the quality of language used meets generally accepted academic standards.

Yours faithfully



DR S. GOVENDER

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Cambridge Certificate for English Medium Teachers

MPA, D Admin.