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Conceptualisations of ethical leadership and causes of unethical behavior in schools: perceptions of teachers and principals

Mkhwane, Mellisa Matsediso

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Conceptualisations of Ethical Leadership and causes of unethical behavior in schools: Perceptions of teachers and principals.

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Masters of Education in the School of Education, Leadership and Policy Studies

University of the Witwatersrand.

By Mellisa Matsediso Mkhwane (792663)

Protocol No. 2019ECE033M

Supervised by Dr P. Mthembu

2022

DECLARATION

I Mellissa Matsediso Mkhwane declare that **"Conceptualisations of Ethical leadership and causes of unethical behavior in schools: Perceptions of teachers and principals."** abides by the following rules:

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ii. This project does not contain other person's data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from another person.

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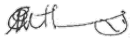
I further declare that this has not been previously submitted for any degree at another university.

Signed: M.M Mkhwane **Date: 11 March 2022**

Miss M.M Mkhwane

STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

This project is submitted with my approval.

Signed:  **Date: 8 April 2022**

Dr P. Mthembhu

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my son Tumelo, who has been a brave boy, growing without me being fully present as I completed my studies. My dearest mother (Sweetness), grandmother (Valentine) and aunt (Khanyisile) who have continuously believed in me, supported me and held me in prayer. My partner (Siviwe) who has supported me and encouraged me to keep going even when I felt I couldn't continue. My friend and academic soul mate, Fortunate who has been my go to person every time academics seemed to be stressful. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each one of you for your faithful support that propelled me to complete this project successfully.

A special dedication to Bhut'Makhosonke, your sudden departure left us broken and for a moment the whole world caved in on us. You will always be in our hearts, thank you for being an amazing person during the time you were borrowed to us.

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Firstly, I would like to extend gratitude and acknowledgement to God for gracing me with strength and resilience to complete this study even when the odds were against me as life presented itself with uncertainties.

I am grateful to my supervisor, **Professor S.E Mthiyane** for his commitment and guidance by assisting me throughout the process of this project, for his patience and continuous encouragement to complete what I started. This project is a success because of his endless support and unwavering patience.

My mother who mothered my son and provided emotional support when I felt like throwing in the towel.

My partner who stood by me emotionally to ensure that I complete this project successfully.

All the principals and teachers from the two schools that spared their time to participate in this research, my research richly benefited from their inputs.

ABSTRACT

This study explored the conceptualisations, experiences, practices, and awareness of, ethical leadership, accountability, and trust within schools in the South African context. Data was collected from school principals, post level-one, and -two teachers. This is a qualitative study that utilised a case study research design and is located under the interpretive paradigm. The findings of this study suggest that some principals and teachers possess significant understanding of 'ethics' and 'ethical leadership'. However, most teachers that were interviewed did not fully understand what the terms meant. The study also found numerous causes of unethical leadership, lack of accountability, and trust. The causes include lack of, exposure to laws and regulations such as the SACE Code of Professional Ethics, respect, and value for prescribed rules, and regulations. This is because of the lack of accountability and intense repercussions by the department of Education (DoE). To combat high unethical practices there is a need to improve principals and teachers' exposure to rules and regulations that guide the profession. This means that all stakeholders, thus SACE, DoE, and schools, assume responsibility of their respective positions to ensure that teachers and principals are fully knowledgeable with the rules and consequences of contravening them. In addition, ethical leadership, accountability, and trust should be promoted through workshops, and other developmental programs that can be organised by stakeholders.

Keywords: Accountability, ethical leadership, trust, school leadership

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

This introductory chapter starts by focusing on the background of the study, followed by discussing the problem statement, purpose, and rationale. The chapter ends with a presentation of the objectives and research questions.

1.2. Background and rationale of the study

Ethical leadership, accountability and trust are three significant concepts that are required to successfully administer any organisation. Van den Akker et al. (2009) argues that trust is a key component of a successful working relationship between leaders and followers because it enables cooperation. Brian (2005) adds that accountability is a key concept in the leadership of any organisation. By demonstrating ethical leadership, organisations promote integrity which in turn stimulates a sense of trustworthiness and encourages employees to accept and follow an organisation's vision. According to Van den Akker et al. (2009), when a leader acts in a manner that is deemed ethically appropriate by his followers, that leader will be trusted. Therefore, without trust, accountability, and ethical leadership, any organisation is bound to have continuous problems. Such an organisation will also be subject to collapse because these three concepts play a pivotal role in establishing a positive organisational culture.

Therefore, when applied to a school setting, ethical leadership in conjunction with trust, and accountability may transform a school from average to best. But South Africa (SA)'s education systems have a crisis of unethical leadership and lack of accountability. The 2019 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) shows that more than 50% of 180 countries that were scored are highly corrupt (Transparency Index [TI], 2019). This high rate of corruption suggests that less is done in addressing it. The report further exposed that the African region, including SA faces significant corruption challenges. Political leaders are constantly prosecuted for corruption, money laundering, and embezzlement of public funds with no accountability or consequences of wrongful acts (CPI, 2019).

Anderson (2005) emphasises that the profession of education is informed by the requirements of regulatory or compliance accountability system which is usually established on government statutes – This is also applicable in SA where the Department of Education is overseen by the government. To promote ethical leadership in schools, the South African Council of Teachers (SACE) (Act No. 31 of 2003) introduced the Code of Professional Ethics in 2003. The Code of Professional Ethics sets ethical standards and serves as a guideline for the ways that teachers and principals should conduct themselves within their profession. Section 7.2 of the Act states that teachers should behave in a way that enhances the dignity and status of the teaching profession and not bring the profession into disrepute. Furthermore, the Employment of Teachers Act (Act No 76 of 1998) Chapter (5) and (6) addresses ethical behavior and forms of misconduct prohibited for teachers and principals.

Of further significance in relation to teachers' conduct and my current study is Chapter 10 (Public Administration) of the South African Constitution which sets out the values and principles that govern public administration. The first principle (195 [1] [a]) reads: "A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained." Teachers and principals form part of the public administration since most of them are government employees. Therefore, they need to adhere to the South African Constitution by always engaging in rightful acts, that are appropriate for the teaching profession, to promote and maintain high standard of professional ethics.

Additionally, Mthiyane (2018) presents laws such as the Public Service Act No. 103 of 1994, the South African Constitution Act No.108 of 1996, Employment of Teachers Act No. 76 of 1998, The Public Finance Management Act No. 1 of 1999 as laws that aim to promote ethical conduct in the public sector. However, the significance and power of these laws has been undermined by the misconduct of some professionals. They do not abide by their required behaviour, which shows lack of rightful leadership due to unethical practices. This brings questions of the thoroughness and adequacy of teachers' awareness of what is expected of them or if the laws that guide them were instilled in them during their teaching training.

If professionals blatantly ignore laws that guide their practice, then those laws are of no use. This alone is a problem because there are set rules, but people choose to purposefully act against and take advantage of state resources. But those who engage in misconduct must be severely dealt

with. However, in SA there is a widespread perception that all tiers of government are not held accountable for how they use the state's resources (Spaull, 2015).

The lack of accountability has also spread to smaller organisations and institutions such as schools, which are administered by the government. School principals and teachers have a mandate to use allocated school finances and resources to provide free basic education to learners. However, owing to poor administration and corruption, the delivery of free education by the government administered schools is not of its outmost best for recipients. Spaull (2015) further emphasises that there is a cycle of poor service delivery, poor accountability, and low expectations. Spaull (2015) asserts that for the status of education to improve in SA, there needs to be a reinforcement of accountability throughout the system.

Northouse (2012) argues that ethics is concerned with the types of values and morals that an individual or society attributes to. Thus, ethical theory presents a system of rules or principles as a guide in making decisions regarding what can be deemed right or wrong in a particular situation (Northouse, 2012). Ethics, stemming from ethical leadership, sets out the way individuals are expected to behave. Therefore, ethics are the moral principles that guide the behaviour of a person and could either be good or bad depending on the leader's character. Mthiyane (2018) adds that ethics become means of converting values into actions, an individual behaves according to his/her values or those of the organisation that controls his/her profession. Brown (2005) (in Van den Akker et al., 2009) defined ethical leadership as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships. This includes the promotion of good conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making.

However, principals and teachers do not reciprocate what is prescribed by the laws and regulations which guide them because they continuously engage in unethical conduct due to poor-to-lack of accountability. Spaull (2015) defines accountability as the state of being answerable for something to someone. Thus, being accountable for one's performances and the consequences for non-performance.

Unethical practices and lack of accountability within schools yields a lack of trust among principals, teachers, school governing bodies, and other stakeholders. Unethical practices and lack of accountability benefits a few stakeholders, which leaves the rest in a state of ignorance. There

is no proof provided for the usage of school funds and resources whilst these benefit certain individuals at personal levels. This results in a domino effect, because it affects the way teachers serve the school and learners. Van den Akker et al. (2009) asserts that trust is a key component of a successful working relationship between leaders and followers. When there is trust, there is cooperation, management of differences, and transparency which increases openness, and mutual acceptance.

Having ethical leaders, who are accountable and trustworthy is associated with the Batho Pele Principles which is an initiative by the state to improve and transform public service. Batho Pele Principles' ethos emphasise prioritising the care of people; hence its name refers to, 'People First' and its slogan is, 'We belong, we care, we serve'. School administrators, thus, principals, teachers and SGB's, need to prioritise service delivery of education, and associated needs, to learners. Some of the principles that are significant to education are courtesy, transparency, and value for money. The principle of courtesy means school administrators must always remember that their task is to assist learners and provide them with access to education. The principle of transparency means that school administration costs should be easily accessible upon request. Leaders must account for their decisions and involve other stakeholders in decision-making. The value for money principle means that finances must be used efficiently and solely for school purposes. The administration of schools should be guided by the Batho Pele Principles because they enforce being accountable, which improves the level of trust within organisations (Spaull, 2015). Against the above background, my current study explored the conceptualisations of the participant's role as ethical leaders in developing and promoting, accountability and trust within their schools.

1.3. Problem statement

Over the years, South African schools and the teaching profession at large have been continuously tarnished by teachers and principals' unethical behavior. This has been seen and heard on social media, newspapers, and radio. In February 2019, Corruption Watch released its report that showed that schools are among the highest contributors to corruption in SA (Corruption Watch, 2019). The Corruption Watch (2019) showed that among the top school's corruption trends were maladministration, misappropriation of resources, and employment irregularities.

SA schools were reported to experience mismanagement, deliberate delays, and bundling up of legal and official processes. Both, within the education department and schools there is a buildup of cases that are not instantly dealt with to hold culprits accountable. This varies from cases of sexual assault, mismanagement of funds, and bribes for job vacancies. SA schools also face misappropriation of resources, including theft, misuse, abuse, and wasteful spending on state vehicles, equipment, time, and funds. This is evident within schools, where one of the most recent allegations was that the Gauteng Department of Education spent R431.274.959 on decontaminating schools for COVID-19 in September 2020 (Maverick Citizen). Although the departmental spokesperson, Steve Mabona justified the expenses, they were still seen as wasteful, irregular, dangerous, and corrupt.

The embezzlement of money seems to be a famous trend within South African schools. More cases constantly surface, for example, the case of the corrupt School Governing Body (SGB) at Glenvista High school that pocketed R8 million from school funds. Another school in Queenstown district was reported for theft and corruption in the administration of the school nutrition program. The Corruption Watch (2017) also shows that teachers solicit sexual favors from learners in return for high marks. Additionally, the Daily News (2019) reported a teacher who engaged in sexual misconduct with boys at one of the elite private schools in SA.

Concerning employment irregularities, the Corruption Watch report shows that school principals manipulate job vacancies for applicants. Thus, securing a job in SA schools has been turned to corrupt processes where posts are sold, or sexual favors are demanded in exchange for a job offer (Times Live, 2017). Times Live's (2017) reporter, Prega Govender, stated that "…socioeconomic challenges are forcing young women in Gauteng's education department into sexual relationships with senior officials."

The build-up of numerous reports and allegations of unethical behavior as mentioned by Mthiyane (2018) includes relationships (sexual) with learners, theft of school funds and many other inappropriate conducts professionals engage in. Therefore, there is a problem that needs to be addressed because professionals are not adhering to their prescribed expectations. This has negatively affected the education system at large and is continuously destroying the success of learners. But the reported problems in schools do not seem to attract any corrective consequences

– there are no measures taken in resolving them. Thus, there is a lack of ethical leadership within schools, yielding poor service delivery.

The lack of accountability in school premises may be a result of individuals being ignorant, having accepted misconduct as a norm, feeling threatened about reporting without any protection, or feeling that it is a futile encounter. Although there are cases of principals embezzling school funds for personal use, and teachers having love affairs with learners, there is rather no harsh reparations of accountability by the perpetrator. The lack of accountability therefore enables perpetrators to continue engaging in such ill-disciplined acts. Hence, fighting corruption and improving service delivery has been seen as failing.

Unethical behavior can be defined as the misuse of authority and power in public offices by government officials either for personal or political gain (Manyaka & Nkuna, 2014). However, the focal point of the current study was on the school's context. Naidoo (2015) argues that unethical behavior in schools can be on the part of the learners, governing bodies, teachers, principals, department officials, and educational leaders. The current study focused mainly on unethical practices by school principals and infused that of teachers to generate more data. There are laws such as the South African Council of Teachers (SACE) Act (Act No. 31 of 2003), the Employment of Teachers Act (Act No 76 of 1998) and the principles such as the Batho Pele which vividly layout the rules and expected standards of the teaching profession. However, professionals continue to engage in unethical conduct, which is against these prescribed standards of the teaching profession.

Contrary to the Batho Pele Principles, and the transparency and openness principles, unethical leadership in some schools has resulted in them being administered as closed books. Employees do not have the opportunity to contribute their inputs, they are not aware of how funds are distributed and spent, and the procedure of certain promotions is not transparent. Yet, to achieve high-quality service delivery, transparency and accountability need to be the daily order of a school's administration.

Furthermore, the Batho Pele Principles are related to the principles of courtesy and access. These refer to intolerance towards insensitive treatment and the expectation is that public servants need to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of the service that is paid by the government. In addition, the principles suggest extending the availability of a service not only to those capable but

also those that are disadvantaged in any manner. With the high rise in unethical conduct by teachers and principals in schools, learners, parents, and communities at large are deprived of what is rightfully theirs – that is free access to quality education. Public servants, principals, and teachers satisfy their personal desires at the expense of learners.

Another principle related to the Batho Pele Principles is the value for money. This is directed to the contributions made by citizens through paying tax to ensure the efficient delivery of public goods and services including the provision of education. Lack of ethical leadership, and accountability for misconduct is injustice to the citizens that pay tax. They are cheated of their money meant to assist the public by employed individuals and this should be regarded as a criminal offence. Furthermore, the high rise in unethical conduct threatens the safety of learners in the hands of the teachers and principals daily.

Unethical leadership in SA's schools has led to distrust among employees such as the management and teachers, with high likeliness of the schools later being dysfunctional. Some teachers serve learners without trust and are likely to poorly perform their duties to their best abilities, and beyond their expectations. The current study serves to explore some of the school misconducts, their causes, and possible solutions.

1.4. Professional and personal motivation

The high rise of unethical conduct within schools, and a lack of accountability of such behavior is concerning. Therefore, it is important that the current study on the mannerism of teachers and principals is conducted. Some principals and teachers' ignorance of the laws and regulations that guide their practice is a criminal offense. It also signifies a lack of urgency within the Department of Education and the country's justice system. Perpetrators of unlawful conduct are not brought to justice. This leads to more unlawful acts conducted due to the lack of accountability, corruption, and easy manipulation of the justice system.

I was born and raised in a family whose primary profession is teaching. Most of my family members are teachers, and this has greatly influenced me to choose a career as a teacher. Coming from such a family has exposed me to many positive and negative occurrences within the system in SA. However, it is concerning that in my exposure, the negative encounters surpass the positive. Furthermore, all the negative occurrences were due to leadership problems related to individuals'

greed and lack of professionalism. In my[1] and my mother's[2] experience, I have heard and witnessed numerous encounters of corruption and unethical behavior of various principals, and teachers. In the school that I am currently teaching, there is a persistent lack of, or problems with, the school equipment such as the sound system – speakers and microphones, which often disappear. Such is alarming because certain individuals know who is responsible for the theft of the equipment, but no action has been taken to resolve and reprimand this misconduct.

There are also funds that are generated using the school's resources such as the renting out of the Network Tower that was donated by Telkom[3] to the school. However, there is a lack of transparency regarding the usage of the generated funds, while there is always a shortage of money for the school's emergences. In the school there is also problematic habit of love affairs between staff, which promotes, mostly, male teachers engaging in sexual relationships with female learners. These teacher-learner sexual relationships have led to the suspension of one of the male teachers who was accused of raping a female learner at a school function in 2016. Although the accused teacher attended court cases, at the end he was let free and assumed his teaching duties in 2019. Although the school principal is aware of the teacher-learner sexual relationships, there are no actions that have been taken to resolve the misconducts. The school has also received complaints about the way individuals are appointed to certain job posts. The principal tended to hire people from his ethnic group (Venda). He did this for the sole purpose of having full control over the governance of the school without being questioned.

Furthermore, in surrounding schools, principals have been accused of mismanaging school funds by inflating the prices of their stationery and school equipment suppliers (Corruption Watch, 2015). This is done with the purpose of acquiring an extra lump sum from the supplier, these extra funds are diverted for personal use by the school principal. The existence of such activities is well known by most pupils in these schools. However, when principals embezzle schools' funds, they make it difficult to prove because they deal with suppliers who make it seem as if they are charged appropriate prices.

[1] As a teacher for one full year.
[2] As a teacher and subject head within SA's education system.
[3] One of the main SA's information and communications technology (ICT) services provider – https://www.telkom.co.za/

Corruption Watch (2015) expanded the evidence of the above by showing that in most cases, principals succeed with theft of the school funds by replacing signatories on the school bank account with personally chosen individuals. Principals may also make their signatories sign blank cheques, leading to expenditure of funds being void (Corruption Watch, 2015). Furthermore, financial mismanagement ranges from lack of adequate financial accounts, disregard for processes and lack of financial reporting to parents and members of the SGB. Other forms of corruption acts are in relation to tenders, employment, and the schools' goods.

School principals often manage to continue with corruption because there are no consequences for their actions. Corruption Watch (2015) exposes well-known cases such as that of Mr. Lebo Mashuga, a former school principal of Senaoane School in Soweto. The school principal was suspended for mismanaging school funds. During his suspension he continued to gain access and embezzle the school funds. The principal was found guilty, and the repercussion was that he was placed in a different school. Another school principal, Norris from Lyttleton Primary School in Pretoria siphoned R2 million from the school's funds and engaged in nepotism. She was reinstated after 90 days when her suspension had lapsed and there were no further repercussions despite several witnesses attesting to the misconduct.

Such cases vividly portray the lack of ethical leadership in schools. Due to lack of accountability for their ill-discipline, there is no trust within the schooling environments. This lack of trust yields various other problems and directly or indirectly deprives learners of their rights to education (Global Corruption Report, Education, 2013). An ethical leader should possess trust, which stems from his/her acceptance of being held accountable, whether right or wrong. "Without trust from subordinates it is challenging to exercise authority" Johnson (2015, p. 2). If a leader wishes to lead a successful organisation, be efficient, effective, and excellent then they need to be trusted by those under his influence (Ghanem & Castell, 2019; Illes & Mathews, 2015). The above depicts a problem that needs attention within school leadership. Based on numerous reports, school principals lack ethical leadership which has affected the efficient running of schools.

1.5. Purpose of the study

There is more research required regarding ethical leadership and accountability within the teaching profession. There is also a need for action to develop and improve the teaching profession to

enhance knowledge and capacity of school principals, and teachers for the change in SA's education system to prevail. The current study serves this purpose, it offers solutions rather than just identifying problems within the teaching profession. All individuals that work within the schooling environment, such as post level one teachers, head of departments, deputy principal, and principals, need support. Thus, in the current study, a comparison of these mentioned stakeholders' comprehension of ethical leadership was conducted to identify gaps. The current study adds awareness and suggests possible collaborations in executing workshops, and materials that can support teachers and principals to promote ethical leadership, accountability, and trust within schools.

1.6. Significance of the study

This study is of significance because it has identified the rise in unethical conduct by teachers and principals within the education system. This rise has exposed the lack of accountability within schools and the Department of Education. Unethical conduct has also exposed the cracks of trustworthiness within schools. One aspect that has greatly influenced this study is the teachers and principals' ignorance of existing legislations that are against unethical leadership and misconduct in schools. Therefore, it is important that these legislations are reinforced if not re-formulated. It is also important that research is conducted on ethical leadership, the way leaders should conduct themselves within their respective positions and what role and impact their form of leadership has on those that they lead.

This study explores ethical leadership and its interrelation with accountability and trusts in the administration of schools. It is pertinent that these three facets are addressed, to serve as an awareness of the crucial role that teachers and principals play in leading schools. The current study also exposes the importance of adopting ethical leadership as a leading style. The study also highlights the way that ethical leadership, trust, and accountability influences how leaders administer schools' resources on behalf of learners and stakeholders.

It is important that leaders are exposed to the correct way that they are supposed to conduct themselves, and this study contributes to that. A leader being exposed to concepts such as accountability will not only influence their mindset to engage in what is right, it will also eliminate the time and effort that is spent on distracting activities and unproductive behaviors. This research

shows the importance of exposing leaders to the rightful actions that they are supposed to partake in. This is by encouraging them to be accountable which inevitably creates a trustworthy environment within schools. This includes the Department of Education also continuously playing an active role by supporting schools. They should enforce accountability in a positive manner by continuously being supportive to schools, principals, and teachers instead of only harsh interventions by ill-disciplining the professionals.

When people are supported and held accountable for their actions, they are encouraged to value their work. If they are held accountable, simultaneously to being supported may lead to an increase in the principal and teacher's efforts and confidence to appropriate conduct. It is without a doubt that when people are held accountable for their actions, it leads to the development of trust. De Clercq (2008) posits that such monitoring focuses on inputs and processes to ensure equity and standardisation in schools. It also monitors teachers' work processes, such as lesson planning and preparation, curriculum coverage and delivery, and teacher compliance with departmental rules, regulations and procedures that include punctuality, attendance, class registers, and assessment.

The current study is of significance because it directly impacts the quality of education that is being offered to learners. Teachers and principals as public administrators must effectively enforce and implement the purpose of the government through quality service delivery, and this will positively enrich learners. If there is ethical leadership within schools, resources such as funding for the sole purpose of enhancing education will not be misused but will serve the purpose they are meant to – providing quality education to learners.

Currently, there is research that exists on ethical leadership. However, these studies use a top-down approach to understand the aspect of ethical leadership. This is by focusing on governmental structures then applied to smaller structures such as school institutions. The current study identifies some misconduct and unethical practices, and what causes them, which previous research has not reported. Furthermore, two concepts of accountability and trust need to be infused into the daily operation of schools. The current influences this by analysing the way principals and teachers resolve their daily conflicts, and the extent of transparency from the school's management team. After identifying the problems, this study also provides possible solutions that the Department of Education may implement. Furthermore, this study adds to the existing literature, the influence for

participants to adopt ethical leadership style within the education system. This would reduce the number of unethical practices by principals and teachers in schools.

1.7. Objectives of the study

This study is guided by the following research objectives

- To explore the participants' conceptualisations of their role as ethical leaders in developing and promoting accountability and trust in their schools.
- To find out what the research participants believe are the causes of lack of accountability and trust in schools.
- To ascertain from the participants, why accountability and trust are important in school leadership.
- To ascertain what could be impediments or enabling factors (if any) in developing and ethical promoting accountability and trust in the researched schools.
- To find out how research participants are developing and promoting accountability and trust in the researched schools.

1.8. Critical research questions

This study is guided by following critical research questions

- How do principals and teachers in selected schools understand ethical leadership?
- What role, according to principals and teachers, is played by ethical leadership in developing accountability and trust in schools?
- What, according to principals and teachers perceptions, are the causes of unethical behaviors in schools?
- How do principals and teachers in selected schools perceive behaviors in school leadership?

1.9. Definition of key concepts

1.9.1. Ethics

Northouse (2012) states that ethics is concerned with the types of values and morals that an individual or society attributes to. Furthermore, ethical theory presents a system of rules or principles as a guide in making decisions regarding what can be deemed right or wrong in a particular situation. Therefore, ethics are the moral principles that guide the behavior of a person and could either be good or bad depending on the person's character (Northouse, 2012). Education is a professional industry that is composed of different types of schools that provide knowledge through instruction on a broad range of subjects. Therefore, it is an industry guided by policies, regulations and acts which layout; how schools should be administered, and how teachers, and learners should conduct themselves. By being in a professional industry, schools must operate on accepted standards and expectations of one's conduct, and levels of competence within schools as they are to abide by the statutes established by the government (Anderson, 2005).

1.9.2. Leadership

Cuban (1998, cited in Bush, 2003) explains that leadership is defined in terms of traits, behaviors, influence, interaction patterns, role, and occupation of an administrative position. Furthermore, leadership as a process of influence leads to the attainment of a desired purpose.

1.9.3. Ethical leadership

Bush (2003) posits that ethical leadership focuses on values and ethics of leaders themselves. Noteworthy, there is a distinction between authority and influence which feeds into the conceptions of what is deemed as right or wrong. Northouse (2012) supports this, and states that ethics is a concept that is concerned with the types of values and morals that an individual or society attributes to and may be used as a system of rules or principles in decision-making.

1.9.4. Accountability

Accountability can be defined as the state of being answerable for something to someone (Anderson, 2005). It refers to having to account for one's outcomes or performance and to accept responsibility for those outcomes. It also implies that there are consequences for non-performance (Spaull, 2015). Within schools, leaders have the legal and moral obligation of the school in relation

to the environment and context within which it operates. Furthermore, the teachers are accountable to the school principal, and both parties are accountable to the Department of Education, Department of Labour, and their respective labour unions. These stakeholders govern schools, and operate using laws, regulations, and policies which principals and teachers need to adhere to.

1.9.5. Trust

Trust is a firm belief in the reliability, truth or ability of someone or something (Robbins, 2016). Robbins (2016) further posits that trust is a cognitive process embedded in trustworthiness. Mineo (2014) also posits that trust is the bond between a leader and a follower, if utilised correctly, it is the vehicle for a leader's success.

1.10. Delimitations of the study

Delimitations refer to the way a study has been reduced by size or time considering the boundaries that it has focused on (Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2009). The purpose of this study is exploring the conceptualisations, experiences and practices of school principals, and teachers regarding ethical leadership in developing, and promoting accountability and trust within schools.

For this study, two secondary schools from one district were chosen. The participants for the study were two principals, two Head of Department teachers, and six teachers. The study compared different views that participants had regarding promoting accountability and trust in ethical leadership. The six teachers that were chosen had been teaching for at least three years, and four individuals in management were selected because they had been in the teaching field for some time. Therefore, all the participants had knowledge about their and surrounding schools regarding ethical leadership, accountability, and trust.

Another delimitation for this study was the period within which it was conducted. The period of the study was June-October 2022, a time more than this could have improved the amount of data yielded from the study. If there was more time, the study could also be expanded to numerous districts, and schools including private schools. Despite the current study makes an impact by providing focused findings.

1.11. Dissertation layout

Chapter one of this dissertation introduces the study by highlighting national and professional legislations that guide professionals, principals, and teachers, within the education system. The chapter emphasised the dire need for ethical leadership, accountability, and trust. The chapter further provides the study's problem statement, purpose, rationale, and significance of the study. The chapter ends by providing the study's objectives, critical questions, definition of key concepts, and the delimitations. Chapter two provides a literature review that shows the negative impact of lacking ethical leadership, accountability, and trust in school administration. The chapter also provides a discussion of the used theoretical framework. Chapter three describes the methodologies and ethical considerations for this study. Chapter four presents and discusses this study's findings. Lastly, Chapter five presents the study summary, conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1. Introduction

This chapter serves to discuss literature on ethical leadership, accountability, trust, and their implications towards school leadership. The chapter starts by discussing leadership in South African schools, followed by individually understanding, reviewing, and analysing each main concept of this study.

2.1.1. The legal framework advocating for ethical leadership in SA

To ensure that employees behave ethically and in a way that promotes accountability in SA's public sector, the government developed numerous laws and policies. One of the first laws was the Public Service Act (Act No. 103 of 1994). The Public Service Act (103 of 1994) outlays important principles for public service workers. Some of the principles are disciplinary procedures, the Batho Pele Principles of consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, openness, transparency, redress, and value for money (Buthelezi et al., 2018; Mthiyane,). Teachers and principals form part of the public sector, therefore, they need to abide by the above-mentioned principles in their work. The principles promote honesty and truthfulness in the serving of the public sector. The South African Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996, Chapter 10 Section 195[1]) also implies that teachers need to be guarded by democratic values and high standards of professional ethics.

Furthermore, the South African Council of Teachers (SACE), Act (Act No. 31 of 2003) is directly aimed at teachers and school principals. Section 2.5 of the Act explained that teachers are required to conduct themselves in a manner that does not degrade and bring the teaching profession into disrepute. Section 3 further explains that teachers should not abuse the position that they hold for personal, financial, or political gains. In addition, teachers should refrain from sexual harassment or relationships with learners. Of further importance is the Employment of Teachers Act (Act No 76 of 1998) which addresses unethical behavior and forms of misconduct that teachers and principals must not engage in. The Employment of Teachers Act (Act No 76 of 1998) established standards that guide and mandate teachers' and principals' actions. Chapter 5 (17) states that a teacher must be dismissed if he/she is found guilty of (a) theft, bribery, fraud; (b) committing of sexual assault on a learner or other employee, and (c) having a sexual relationship(s) with learners

of the school where he or she is employed.

While the above legal framework exists in SA, there are still numerous cases reported about alleged unethical practices in schools, including sexual assault, and misappropriation of school funds (Buthelezi et al., 2018; Corruption Watch, 2015). This raises concerns about the lack of impact that these laws have on the teaching profession. Furthermore, these laws do not seem to be sufficiently taught to teachers while in training. For example, during my whole four years of studying education, I have never been taught any of these laws. This further gave me questions if qualified teachers are aware of the laws. Nonetheless, the above policies have been highlighted because they form part of the unethical practices that teachers and principals must partake in.

2.1.2. The role of ethical leadership in schools

There is currently an influx in research on ethical leadership within school systems. However, most focus is on the negative impact associated with the continuous rise in unethical conduct in SA. Several studies have reported on explicit unethical practices that take place in schools despite the existence of the legal framework that seeks to enhance ethical conduct (Buthelezi et al., 2018). This raises concerns about the ethical character of teachers and principals whose practices seem to be in direct contrast with the expectations while within the schooling system these are leaders at different levels.

Conversely few studies focus on good practices that advocate for ethical leadership in the teaching profession. This provides a hint on teachers and principals' behaviors in South African schools. It is also the research gap that the current study seeks to contribute towards filling. Ciulla (2014) defines ethical leadership as ethical challenges that are acquired in- and show certain results in leadership practice. Ciulla (2014) argues that ethics should be at the heart of leadership, thus, teachers and principals should show good morals and values that breed good ethical decisions and practices. The current study explored ethical leadership among school principals and teachers.

Engelbrecht and Mahembe (2015) also posit that leadership that is ethical must be interrelated with ethical values that include integrity. Fields (2007) defines integrity as adherence to moral principles – thus, doing what is right. Therefore, teachers and principals must, at minimum, enact their professional duties with integrity and honesty. This is achieved by trustworthiness and responsibility. Spaull (2015) asserts that many generic accountability problems are prevalent in the

South African context. SA's public school system has high levels of inefficiency and corruption (Taylor, 2002). Many studies in SA schools have reported on three key problems, teacher absenteeism, low curriculum coverage owing to inefficient time use, and insufficient information for accountability.

2.1.3. Understanding accountability

Teachers and principals must be accountable for their performance and non-performance. But in most South African schools, they do not perform in accordance with their binding professional laws due to lack of accountability. Perpetrators of misconduct are not dealt with in due time, they are investigated over a long period of time, usually with no tangible results (Spaull, 2015). Darling-Hammond and Ascher (1991, cited in Spaull, 2015) argue that an accountability system is a set of commitments, policies, and practices that are designed to: 1) heighten the probability that students will be exposed to good instructional practices in a supportive learning environment; 2) reduce the likelihood that harmful practices will be employed; and 3) provide internal self-correctives in the system to identify, diagnose, and change causes of action that are harmful and ineffective.

Accountability is sub-divided into categories, and the education system is categorised into two, bureaucratic and professional accountability. But of most importance for this study is professional accountability, which refers to "promulgating laws and regulations that specify norms and standards of exactly what agents must do" (Spaull, 2015, p. 119). It ensures accountability of processes, procedures, and protocols that need to be observed in administrating schools.

2.1.4. Accountability as a precedent to ethical leadership

In schools, accountability should not be solely directed to subordinates, leaders must also be accountable. Leaders' self-accountability creates an environment that has fairness, honesty, and trustworthiness (Ghanem & Castelli, 2019; Neubert et al., 2013). Such an environment encourages subordinates to engage in ethical behavior. They feel obligated to return beneficial behaviors when they believe that leaders have been fair to them and created a working environment that offers equity treatment regardless of schools' structural hierarchy. Therefore, accountability has a potential to forge sustainable ethical and personal development within organisations (Ghanem & Castelli, 2019).

Ethical leaders also encourage their subordinates to practice ethical conduct by ensuring that they are held accountable for their behaviors (Ghanem & Castelli, 2019). It is significant that leaders do not disregard any unethical behavior, regardless of its extent, from their subordinates, it should be accounted for. If subordinates are aware of consequential measures, they will likely engage in vigilant assessment of their behaviors through self-criticism and effortful thinking. This reduces thoughts or acts of unethical conduct within organisations.

2.1.5. Understanding trust

Illes and Mathews (2015) state that trust is found in the heart of values, beliefs, and organisational culture. Good organisational values influence growth and development. They also encourage the creation of the future that is desired by an organisation because values inform one's thoughts and actions. Values and beliefs are interrelated, they both guide action and affect the quality of one's work. An organisation grounded on good values also yields trust between the employees. Trust is an important component of leadership because it has a positive impact on the organisation's performance (Illes & Mathews, 2015). This is because it promotes good cooperation between employees and an effective problem-solving environment. In SA, this is evident in schools that retain trust compared to those whose environment has no trust.

Trust in organisations needs to be felt in face-to-face communication about good or bad, and this can be obtained from mutual respect between employees (Illes & Mathews, 2015). Leaders of organisations that retain trust need to be seen, and consistently interact with their employees. Communication with employees is important, it should be intentional and enacted in a bespoke manner. Additionally, leaders should work collaboratively with employees to induce the notion of trust. In working collaboratively with their subordinates, leaders will be engaging in consistent action and behavior that demonstrates good intent. If leaders demonstrate these good intentions, employees will willingly be a part of an organisation's culture.

2.1.6. Trust as a precedent to ethical leadership

Ille and Matthews (2015) state that trust is a key component in everyday human life, it shows consistent behavior to demonstrate good intent. Conversely, in organisations it should be reciprocal. The leader and subordinates should trust each other, and this can be achieved when both parties constantly behave with good intentions for each other. When the parties succeed in

building the reciprocal trust, it becomes, "…the glue which binds the leader to her/his followers and provides the capacity for organisational and leadership success" (Mineo, 2014, p. 01). In a school context, when leaders and teachers create an environment of trust the schools become healthy environments for all.

Van den Akker et al. (2009) argues that subordinates make behavioural choices by observing their leaders. If leaders create an environment that is based on trustworthiness and honesty, subordinates will contribute to the same. This can be seen in schools where the leadership style chosen by a school principal affects the behavior of teachers and the rest of the school staff and learners. When there is no trust, there is also no assumption that people will willingly act truthfully, honestly, reliable, and predictable. Such an environment creates a self-serving organisation where employees are focused on individual survival than contributing to work that would yield positive results for the school.

Trust is a prerequisite for creativity in an effective organisation. For teachers to fully utilize their knowledge and skills, there must be trust. Employees need to feel protected and cared for. Burchell and Robin (2011) states that trust can be achieved when the leaders and those they lead take actions that demonstrate a genuine concern for others, willingness to acknowledge areas of weakness, and compensating by sharing or delegating responsibility. Resultantly, both the leader and subordinates will have a strong professional relationship which would be a vehicle to the school's success (Mineo, 2014).

2.1.7. Importance of accountability and trust as facets of ethical leadership

Good school leadership is the foundation for thriving schools, and this is a lack in South African schools (Ikemoto et al., 2012). Therefore, it is important that schools are guided by rules and regulations that may be in the form of a schools' code of conduct – a legal framework that guides the education profession. School leaders, teachers, and learners are all guided by these rules and regulations. The rules and regulations focus on guiding them on how to conduct themselves as respective stakeholders in schools.

For ethical leadership to be realised within an organisation, there is a need for some form of accountability because individuals are not always ethical. Dive (2008) suggests that accountability can afford a school greater freedom for leadership or deny and constrain individual's ability to

perform effectively. If utilised appropriately, accountability may move a schooling organisation to success. Thus, if individuals within the schools understand that being held accountable is not an attack but a reflection of events followed by solutions for improvement. This will generate trust and awareness that an organisation has the best interests of all its stakeholders. Leaders' accountability creates an environment where employees are comfortable that they are led by ethical leaders. This is because such leaders provide an optimal setting for employees through inspiration, development, and an establishment of a culture of respect and trust.

2.2. Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework refers to the conceptual model, which is synthesised to capture all the ideas regarding a phenomenon under investigation (de Vos et al., 2008). The current study is informed by one main theoretical framework, that is formed through various theories. These are: Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2001) Multiple Ethical Paradigms, Theories on Accountability and Theories on Trust – discussed below.

2.2.1. Multiple ethical paradigm

The Multiple Ethical Paradigm is constructed by four components, namely the ethic of: justice, critique, care, and profession. By making use of this Multiple Ethical Paradigm, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) believe that decision-making should be better handled. Thus, issues should be better addressed without any bias. The Multiple Ethical Paradigm can be efficiently utilised as a decisive instrument within schools to alleviate unethical practices. This would be useful in building accountability, and an environment that promotes trust. Furthermore, the Multiple Ethical Paradigm may be utilised to emphasise how the behavior of school principals and teachers should be rooted in the principles of justice, doing right, and abiding by the law in their process of teaching and being leaders within schools (Mthiyane, 2018).

Each of the components of the Multiple Ethical Paradigm is important in developing accountability and trust in school principals and teachers' leadership. As shown in Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001), the leadership and democratic processes that people ought to follow include fairness in decision-making and consideration of the kind of effects, potential harm, and benefits that these decisions will have on them. Therefore, teachers and principals need to advocate for ethical leadership by

not making themselves sole beneficiaries of school resources and provisions but priorities learners' educational interest (Mthiyane, 2018).

The ethic of critique which stems from critical theory is meant to prescribe what a society should be made of, and how individuals should behave (Basit, 2010). The ethic of critique promotes ethical behavior and views it as central for society's practice. It is also helpful in raising difficult questions and addressing inequalities faced by society (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001). This component refuses societal mere acceptance of all existing situations and promotes normalisation of seeking possible alternatives to challenge the status quo. School principals and teachers can adopt this to challenge some of the existing practices in schools that isolate some students while glorifying some because of their differences.

Furthermore, along similar lines, as above, the ethic of care suggests that teachers and principals must view caring as the bedrock of successful education (Nodding, 1992; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001). Thus, educational practitioners need to care about learners, because their jobs are not only to impart knowledge but also to act as their caregivers. If they care, learners will realise that their caregivers have interest in their success (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001). Therefore, learners will perform to their best abilities and achieve better because, in that way teachers will have a lifetime impact on their learners. The ethic of care also applies to the care exerted by principals towards staff in the school. Leaders should be kind, compassionate, selfless, and should try to minimise hardships but assist staff whenever possible.

Lastly, the ethic of profession requires collaboration of a personal code ethic and a professional code ethic which can be used as an ethical toolkit and further utilised to benefit learners (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001). This component requires teachers and principals to adopt what they have experienced and overcome and use it to their professional advantage. They can do this by linking it to their professional code of ethic, which guides their behaviour within schools, and refrain from engaging in any unwanted unethical practices.

Another theoretical framework that best fits this study is the ecological perspective (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015). Using the ecological perspective, Kutsyuruba and Walker (2015), argue that schools are living systems that should be understood using a holistic interpretation of their social systems which are created by people within. When applied in this study, it can be argued that the

ecology of most schools in SA is crumbling. This is due to the dysfunction of the schools' ecological system resultant from corruption, mismanagement of funds, and lack of accountability. Even though these do not directly negatively affect a school, they are an impairment to the functions of persons within.

2.2.2. Theories of accountability

There are two significant dimensions of accountability that all individuals should possess and utilise within their respective leadership positions. These dimensions are self-accountability and organisational accountability, and these are crucial for the progress of organisations. Ghanem and Castelli (2019) argue that self-accountability concerns a leader being able to hold themselves accountable to those that they lead. Self-accountability is a trait not easily acquired – thus, not all individuals possess the intelligence and mental ability to honestly hold themselves accountable. Furthermore, self-accountability speaks to ethical leadership and trustworthiness because it requires one to be honest with themselves and engage in rightful acts. Brimhall (2019) states that self-accountability enhances confidence and strengthens one's character.

Another important theoretical component is organisational accountability, which Ghanem and Castell (2019) argue, it involves developing a relationship of accountability with other people within an organisation. This means that individuals have an obligation to be accountable through explaining and justifying their conduct to other people. Being able to account to other people is significant because it stimulates leaders and subordinates to adhere to ethical behavior, and self-accountability practice. Therefore, to accumulate organisational accountability, individuals need to possess self-accountability. This will better position them to accept organisational accountability without feeling embarrassed but with understanding that such is a part of a successful schooling environment.

2.2.3. Theories of trust

For this study, trust is understood using Burchell and Robin's (2011) dimensions of a great workplace model. Burchell and Robin (2011) argue that a great workplace lies on a foundation created by organisational credibility, respect, and fairness which form the foundation of trust. The dimensions of a great workplace model constitute credibility, respect, and fairness. Credibility concerns open and accessible communications and organisational competence in coordinating

human and material resources (Burchell & Robin, 2011). It encourages integrity in carrying out the vision of the organisation with consistency. Brimhall (2019) adds to the understanding of credibility by saying it is a critical personal and professional trait that enables one to have the power to inspire belief.

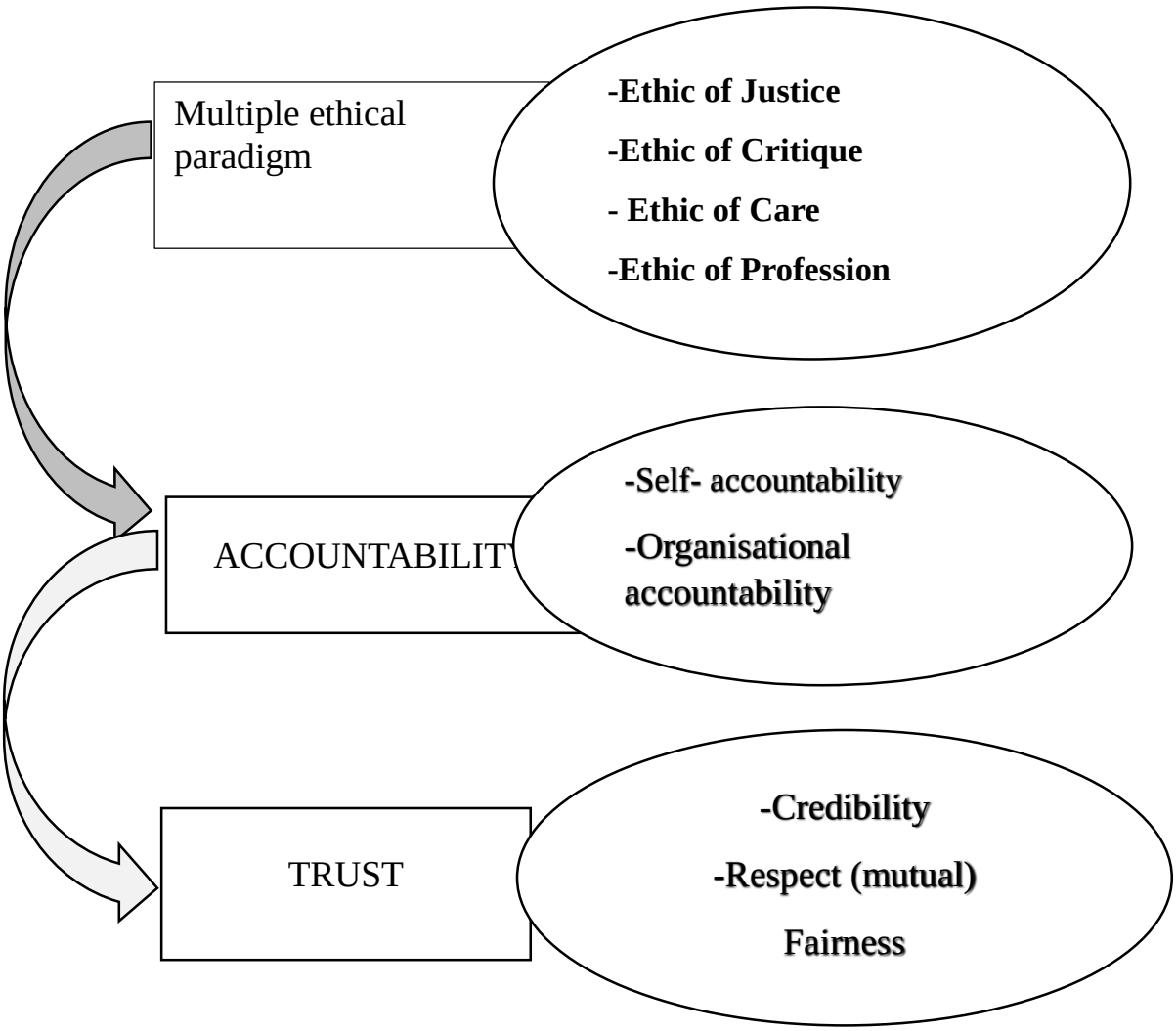
Although it is the leader's responsibility to initiate working relationships with the rest of the staff in their organisation, credibility must be reciprocal (Burchell & Robin, 2011). Therefore, it is significant for individuals within an organisation to possess credibility because they serve as role models. Leaders that possess credibility soothe their subordinates' sense of trust that may influence their patterns, behaviors, and thoughts. "Leaders strengthen credibility by demonstrating that they are not there for themselves; instead, they have the interest of the institutions and departments at heart" Kouzes and Posner (1995, p. 82). If a school leader operates using this trait, teachers and other stakeholders are bound to believe and have faith in that school. This will also cultivate trust and respect that make it easy to reciprocate for both leaders and their subordinates.

In the dimensions of a great work model, respect can be shown by treating or perceiving others in ways that include listening to affirm other peoples' opinion, disagreeing respectfully complimenting achievements, and pointing out unethical behavior (Spagnoletti & Arnold, 2007). This includes leaders supporting professional development, showing appreciation, collaborating with employees in relevant decisions, and caring for employees as individuals with personal lives. If leaders desire respect from their employees, they should themselves be willing to respect their employees for employees to exert back and reciprocate what is bestowed by the leader. Burchell and Robin (2011) argue that leaders should remove barriers that they may impose on their subordinates which affect their success. Instead, leaders should work with staff through empowering them. They should demonstrate trust in their staff, and they will return this trust in various ways such as openness and admission of mistakes when they occur.

Another element in the dimensions of a great work model is fairness. Burchell and Robin (2011) state that there needs to be balanced treatment for all regarding rewards of good performance, absenteeism from workplace, favoritism amongst employees and in the process of hiring and promotions. Fairness is an important element of ethical leadership. However, leaders tend to turn a blind eye to this element without realising the magnitude this has on employees. Fairness will either reel a schooling organisation into succession or dysfunctionality. Fairness also refers to

measures of accountability for misconduct where all individuals should be held accountable for any unethical conduct that they may have committed. Thus, no individual should be favored, protected, or exempted from accountability without being held liable (Bullough, 2011).

Synthetically, credibility, respect, and fairness are the foundation of trust within an organisation. If these three elements are enacted within a schooling environment, a great working environment may be achieved and all individuals within the organisation will be satisfied. “The trust that leaders place in those they lead allows both the leader and his/her followers to excel, it is not a momentary event but a series of investments over time that truly allow success” (Mineo, 2014, p. 04). Although, a great workplace cannot be achieved over a short period, leaders, like their followers will encounter mistakes. However, an honest and caring approach will allow those mistakes to be overcome.



2.3.4 Figure. 1. Integrated Framework of the Study

The above integrated framework describes the ideal schooling environment within the education fraternity. The three concepts; ethics, accountability, and trust become more powerful when interlinked for successful leadership in schools. Ethical leadership requires accountability and trustworthiness by individuals in leadership positions. For teachers and principals to critically comprehend ethical leadership they need to understand the notions of trust and accountability. They also need to recognise that they are the enablers of a unified ecology (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015). This could be achieved if teachers and principals possess professionalism, care, critique, and fairness as suggested by Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2001) through the Multiple Ethical Paradigm. Furthermore, to eliminate unethical behaviors within schools, perpetrators need to be held accountable. Accountability commences when one can introspect. Ghanem and Castelli

(2019) refer to this as self-accountability. Organisations should create an environment that makes it easy for teachers and principals to feel comfortable with being held accountable for their actions (Ghanem & Castelli, 2019).

2.3. Conclusion

This chapter discussed significant elements of ethical leadership, accountability, and trust as is in literature. The chapter reviewed school leadership and its legal frameworks in SA. Furthermore, a discussion of accountability and trust was linked to ethical leadership. This chapter concludes with different theories that formulate a theoretical framework used in understanding the three main concepts of this study – ethics, accountability, and trust.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodologies used for this study. It focuses on interpretivism – the research paradigm to which the study is located, the study's research design, sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Furthermore, the chapter discusses ethical considerations, limitations and trustworthiness that influenced the research process and concludes with a summary.

3.2. Research paradigm

Barker (2003) describes a research paradigm as models, perspectives or patterns that carry a set of legitimate assumptions and a design that is used to collect and interpret data. It is a model or pattern that scientists use to view their research objects within a particular discipline (Kuhn, 2016; Orman, 2016). In addition, for Bassey (1999) a paradigm is a network of ideas about the nature of the world and is used by researchers as a foundation for their research actions. There are various research paradigms, and these include positivism, constructivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism, each of these may be categorised by examining their ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Orman, 2016).

The current study is located within the interpretivism paradigm. The interpretivism paradigm focuses on the in-depth analysis of the perception and behaviour of humans (Basit, 2010). The central purpose of the interpretivism paradigm is to make meaning of the subjective world of human experiences (Cohen et al., 2011). It is characterised by the ontology dimension, which Zalta et al. (2020) describes as the branch of metaphysis that deals with the nature of being. The ontological perspective views the social world as a hard reality in which data on the attitudes and behaviors may be conveyed by participants (Basit, 2010).

Furthermore, Krauss (2005) and Lee (2012) describe ontology as being made up beliefs, attitudes, thoughts, and notions of reality. With reference to interpretivism ontology, social reality is constructed by an individual's mind based on one's subjective interpretation of the world. This is further supported by Cohen et al. (2011) who argue that ontology is viewed from an interpretive approach and subjectively relies on the experiences and interpretation of humans. Thus, reality is

influenced by the experiences, ideas, and beliefs that are possessed by an individual. Fouche and Shurink (2008) also agree that the real world can be perceived by means of an interactive methodological approach through the experiences of human beings.

Interpretivism is suitable for this study because of the experiences that establish the realities of different school principals and teachers, their knowledge of ethics within the school system. In addition, the study acknowledges the interpretation of unethical conduct and ethical leadership as presented by different participants. Realities of participants were different but served the same purpose of increasing awareness regarding unethical leadership within South African schools. Such realities were influenced by everyone's belief systems, value systems, attitudes, and my experiences as a researcher.

According to Zalta et al. (2020), epistemology is a theory of knowledge and understanding. Tuli (2010) further states that it concerns ways that people formulate their reality which is considered knowledge. Cohen et al. (2011) attests that epistemology is the relationship between knowledge and the one that possesses knowledge. The current study focused on the knowledge about ethical leadership that school principals and teachers possessed. The study was also interested in participants' accountability and trust within their working environment, and how they were able to utilise that knowledge to benefit their work. This required linking knowledge with principals and teachers' experiences as the relationship of knowledge and the one that possess it. Thus, interpretive paradigm, which views the notion of knowledge as being distinct and subjective (Wahyuni, 2012). Knowledge is subjective because it focuses on subjective experiences, formulation of meaning based on events and occurrences (Krauss, 2005). Knowledge is also dependent on any context of a situation and the interaction of the researcher and participants of a study (Sale et al., 2002; Lee, 2012).

Therefore, using interpretivism, for the researcher to best retain the integrity of the subjective phenomena that they are exploring, they need to understand participants from within their perspective. Owing to this, the researcher works directly with experience and understanding of their participant. Therefore, interpretivism paradigm is relevant to this study which explored the understandings, experiences, practices and possible interventions or alleviation strategies that may reduce unethical behavior within schools and create awareness of having accountable leaders that promote trustworthiness and harmony within schools. In the current study, interpretivism was

relevant in data by supporting the researcher in generating critical understanding, comprehension, and experiences of participants. This assisted in making meaning from the data that was collected based on the experiences of principals and teachers from two secondary schools in Johannesburg Central district.

3.3. Research methodology

Research methodology refers to the choice of methodology that a researcher opts to use in generating the desired outcomes of the study. This is a qualitative based on the presumption that the social world differs from the natural world, and reality is subjective. Furthermore, the social world is influenced by the views, perceptions, and behaviors of individuals (Basit, 2010). The study aimed to explore the perceptions of school principals and teachers regarding ethical leadership based on their experiences and practices. Klenke (2016) states that qualitative methodology seeks in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon based on people's experiences while they construct meaning in daily activities. Therefore, this study used qualitative methodology because its purpose entailed obtaining in-depth understanding of developing accountability and trust in ethical leadership by school principals, and teachers through their experiences.

3.4. Research design

The study used case study design. Research design refers to the planning and decisions that a researcher takes regarding their study (Fouche & Shurink, 2008). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) describe a research design as a wide, general plan that covers all the steps, details, and methods of data generation to appropriately answer the research question. Basit (2010) views a case study as rich descriptions and details of the lived experience of individuals or cases. Case studies provide a thorough understanding of people's perceptions on phenomena. Basit (2010) further perceived a case study as a unique portrayal of real people living in real situations and their expression of vivid accounts of perception, events, and feelings. Mthiyane (2018) concurs that a case study enables a rich description of the perspectives of a phenomenon from participants.

The case study research design best suited conducing this which benefited from gaining access to the participants' environment through going into their schools and seeking their conceptualisations, practices, and experiences regarding ethical leadership, accountability, and

trust. Furthermore Shutlleworth (2008) states that foundation of a case study is the subject and its relevance. Therefore, a case study deliberately tries to isolate a small group, one individual case or one population to address the case. In the current study the case of interest was the problematic ethical leadership in SA schools. Crowe et al. (2011) argue that a case study approach allows in-depth, multifaceted explorations of complex issues in their real-life setting. This approach was suitable and utilised which allowed a detailed description of teachers' experiences of school principals as their leaders in relation to the ethical leadership case.

Basit (2010) adds that that there are different types of case studies that have been identified by researchers, and these include explanatory, descriptive, and instrumental. This study is an interpretive case study, that seeks to develop conceptual categories to explore assumptions (Basit, 2010). The current study was designed to understand and develop solutions for the rising unethical conduct among teachers and principals within schools. The current study also benefitted from the flexibility that a case study allows (Shuttleworth, 2008). A case study might introduce new and unexpected results during its course and lead to research taking a different direction. This worked well with the current study because the case study approach allowed the researcher to gather information in a more explanatory manner and offered additional insights into what gaps exist.

3.5. Research population, sampling, and sample

A research population is all people who may benefit from the research outcomes. It is chosen according to its relevance to the studied topic. For my current study, the research population is teachers, principals, learners, and stakeholders in SA schools. The population is comprised of teachers and school principals with varying years of experience in the field of education. However, for in-depth and effectiveness of the study the population was narrowed down to a sample from two schools that each provided seven participants. The sample comprised of two school principals, one from each school and six teachers from each school, they were a mix of post level-one teachers and HOD's. For rich data, the current study included teachers who had been teaching for a minimum of three years and principals who also had been in the teaching profession for not less than two years. I chose teachers and principals because my study focused on developing accountability and trust in ethical leadership within schools.

3.6. Data generation method

This study utilised semi-structured interviews for data collection, and an interview schedule to guide the discussion. An interview schedule is a set of questions that will be asked during the interview. However, flexibility in how a schedule is used depends on the type of interview that a researcher uses (Basit, 2010). For a semi-structured interview that I used, I formulated various questions that captured the main themes and key factors of my study. Researchers that use semi-structured interviews are fully aware of the important aspects that need to be covered during an interview (Basit, 2010). However, the interview does not only depend on those questions. Therefore, in my interviews the questions that I asked were meant to provoke and channel a relatively guided discussion that paid close attention to the participants' responses. These responses worked as a guidance for my probing and continued engagement with the participants (Basit, 2010). Semi-structured interviews were useful in my data collection to capture in-depth responses from the participants around the researched phenomenon.

However, using semi-structured interviews posed some challenges in my current study. It was easy for the participants to divert from the main questions to elaborating some topics that were less relevant. But I had to constantly guide participants back to the question initially asked. Another challenge that I encountered is that individuals occasionally felt uneasy and would furiously react to some questions as they may have raised issues of great concern towards them. In reaction to this, I tried calming the participants by shifting their focus back to the interview.

Upon the consent of participants, the interviews were recorded using an audiotape, this was solely for the purpose of having a verbatim record of the interview sessions for later transcribing without distorting any information. Having the interviews recorded was also helpful in smoothly conducting the interview because I did not have to hand write notes during the sessions. This ensured better concentration on the interview process. Therefore, I actively listened and engaged efficiently by asking relevant probing questions at the appropriate time (Basit, 2010). Recording interviews was also useful in my current study during data analysis and choosing the best quotations for writing up their research report (Bell, 2010).

3.7. Data management

Before engaging in data analysis, it is important to prepare the data, and decide on the ways to manage it (Boeijie, 2010; Wahyuni, 2012). The management of data in my current study involved data storage. For this, I stored all the data that I generated from research sites including recorded audiotapes of interviews, hardcopies of answered questionnaires in a locked cupboard at home, and for electronic version data, in my personal password-protected computer.

3.8. Data analysis

In this study I used thematic data analysis for analysing my data. Lacey and Luff (2009) refer to thematic data analysis as the generation of a theme when similar notions and perceptions expressed by participants within a qualitative study are brought together by a researcher into one category or group. A theme may be identified using a name or a phrase extracted directly from the data or one that is generated by the researcher as it best characterises what is being discussed. Furthermore, Lacey and Luff (2009) state that the process of data analysis involves coding or categorising it. This means making sense of large amounts of volume of raw data collected, by reducing it into smaller information and identifying meaningful patterns. Therefore, thematic data analysis is best utilised in conjunction with coding (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Wahyuni (2012) defined coding as a allocation of codes or labels to different fragments of data that represent a comparable or complementary notion.

Utilising the steps of data analysis that are suggested by Wahyuni (2012). Firstly, I organised the data by classifying it into two groups according to different schools. I then transcribed the audio recordings of each set, after completing all the interviews, I checked each transcript against the recordings of the interviews to verify the accuracy of the transcriptions. The second was cleaning the data. Upon acceptance to participate in the study, there was an agreement of anonymity with authorities of the research sites and the research participants. To honour this agreement, cleaning up data involved removing the original names of research sites and that of research participants. Each research site was provided with a pseudonym to replace each school's original name and that of each participant. A secure recording that links pseudonyms to original participants was kept separately.

After cleaning the data, I conducted coding to generate themes – that I discuss in chapter four of this dissertation. Fragments of data complementary to established themes were then appointed to corresponding codes for easy placement to differentiated themes. The differentiated themes nurtured by different codes enabled me to identify patterns within the study, these were further utilised as microscopical stance regarding ethical leadership within South African schools.

In addition, I conducted an elementary analysis of all data (Wahyuni, 2012). This is a step that requires the overall analysis of data generated once raw data has been cleaned. The purpose was to obtain a general overview of the findings (Creswell, 2009; Wahyuni 2012). During the process of elementary analysis, I reflected and compared what was voiced by the different participants. During this process I managed to identify general and recurring ideas and made note of them. Lastly, as recommended by Wahyuni (2012) my data analysis entailed interpretation and describing of data from interview transcriptions.

3.9. Issues of trustworthiness

For a study to be considered trustworthy, it requires trustworthiness. Wellington (2002) argues that trustworthiness is constructed by components such as credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability. My research abided by these features as findings presented are truthful and have been presented as they are without any false information or distortion to ensure credibility. Therefore, the validity of this study was achieved due to the correlation of its credibility and transferability. Wahyuni (2012) states that the validity of a qualitative study is examined using these two features. From the initial stage of the study, the relevant research methodology, design, paradigm, data generation tools and sampling were selected.

In addition, the credibility of the study was further influenced using two data generation tools, namely interviews and questionnaires, which were both reviewed. This is known as triangulation as it consists of using two or more data generation methods (Cohen et al., 2011). Due to other similar topics having been researched, the dependability of this study was also influenced by triangulation; this provided the findings with extensive data collected. Therefore, it was easy to generate the study's own findings from the rich information provided by participants. As a result, no findings were copied from other research which is what Petty et al. (2012) says about dependability; the extent to which a study may be copied and repeated. To ensure conformability

and not allowing my views distort those of the participants. The participants (teachers and principals) were provided with an opportunity to read my transcriptions for assurance, there was one participant that felt like she was misinterpreted and that was addressed. I believe these features of trustworthiness were dealt with effectively.

3.10. Ethical issues

This research was guided by the ethical guidelines below to ensure that participants were respected and provided with a safe free platform for the research. Firstly, ethical clearance was granted from the University of the Witwatersrand as attached in (Appendix A), this was to ensure that I abide by all the necessary ethical guidelines. As Cohen et al. (2011) states that the researcher may not proceed without permission being granted from authorities that form a part of the research. Following this, this study asked for permission for the two secondary schools that participated from the Department of Education (Appendix C) and the schools specifically (Appendix D). Furthermore, upon request to conduct research in these schools, the principal was presented with a detailed information sheet about the research and a consent letter granting permission. In addition, after the schools granted permission and access to using the schools as research sites. Permission was also asked from identified individuals (teachers and principals). Each of the individuals were also provided with a detailed information sheet (Appendix D; F) which was thoroughly explained.

During the informative sessions with the individuals, they were reassured of confidentiality and anonymity of their profile and participants in the research. Participants were informed that their real names were not going to be used in the study but would be replaced with pseudonyms. This included the replacement of the school names for the purpose of the research.

3.11. Limitations to the study

Limitations refer to possible problems that a researcher might encounter during the process of his/her research, these problems are a threat to the study as they might constrain the researcher with conducting his/her research, Fouche and Delport (2008). It is significant to take into consideration that problems can never be non-existent in a study. Therefore, Fouche and Delport (2008) advise that researchers must find ways to navigate and limit the problems from occurring.

This is what I have done, every challenge I encountered during this study was overcome by a solution to enable progress.

The limitations of this study included teachers refusing to partake in the study and therefore confining information that could have been made available; I constantly had to explain the importance of the study to some of my participants. This eventually helped as they saw it fruitful and condoned more studies of such being carried out. Furthermore, my study involved audiotaping my interviews and therefore required me to purchase a voice recorder, which was difficult as I was not financially stable then, due to unemployment. In addition to my financial constraint was the need for transport money to maneuver from one school to another for numerous days for my data generation. To overcome these limitations, I used some of the little saving I had to purchase the voice recorder.

3.12. Conclusion

This chapter's main aim was to analyse the research design and methodology that were utilized in the study and further advocate why they were chosen and are therefore perfectly relevant for this study. In addition, the chapter thoroughly analyses the interpretivism paradigm, qualitative approach, and case study design in conjunction with their relevancy to the study. Furthermore, this chapter assessed the utilized data-generation methods of semi- structured interviews, questionnaires and how these methods ensured that significant data was generated. In the next chapter, I present, discuss, and analyse the findings that emerged from the data of the study.

CHAPTER: FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

Supported by the quotations from the interview transcripts, in this chapter I thematically present the findings of my current study. The findings discuss conceptualisations, practices, views, and possible ways to enhance ethical leadership, accountability, and trust by school principals, and teachers. I present the findings in the following respective main themes: conceptualisations of ethics and ethical leadership, causes of lack of ethical leadership and lack of accountability, factors impeding ethical leadership, and promoting ethical leadership.

4.1.1. Conceptualisations of ethics and ethical leadership

Below is how Miss Leopard, the principal of Safari Secondary School, understood ethics and ethical leadership:

> *Leadership that is done within the confines of policy, leadership that operates within a certain policy framework, this therefore determines the actions and behavior of teachers and us as principals in schools which should be what is accepted by policy. This kind of leadership, I believe also speaks to what ethics constitute.*

In similar sentiments as Miss Leopard, above, Mr WhatsApp from Social Media a principal at Secondary School explained his understanding of ethics, and ethical leadership as follows:

> *Ethical leadership is the kind of leadership that seeks to acknowledge the laws in the education field which ensure that in doing our job we obey them, this includes acting accordingly and obviously not against the rules, and also in dealing with teachers you don't bully them but treat them accordingly as the laws and policy prescribe.*

As exemplified in Miss Leopard Mr WhatsApp above, a few more participants of this study understood ethical leadership as confined by laws, rules, and policies. Thus, it was seen as a leadership style that relies on prescribed regulations that influence an individual to decide whether something is right or wrong. Individuals that possessed an in-depth understanding of ethical

leadership interpreted it as leadership highly influenced by morals, values that are socially accepted and deemed right by society.

These participants perceptions confirmed literature's views that leadership in education must be guided by regulations, laws, and policies that thoroughly describe what is expected from the education sector at large, schools, principals, and teachers (Manyaka & Selebola, 2013). In addition, Northouse (2012) argues that ethics is a concept that is concerned with the types of values and morals that an individual or society attributes to. It may be used as a system of rules or principles in decision-making. In the context of schooling, teachers and principals should be ethical. They should show good morals and values that will breed good ethical decisions and practices.

My findings suggested that principals and deputy principals had more in-depth understanding of the concepts; ethics, and ethical leadership within schools – they were able to vividly articulate these concepts. However, only a few teachers could demonstrate a clear understanding of the concepts. Most of the teachers had a vague idea of what the concepts meant. They expressed this vague understanding by synonymising the concepts with other related terms such as 'right or wrong', order and discipline. Below is what Mr Elephant, the HoD of the Safari Secondary School had to say:

> *Right or wrong, because, ethical leadership is that isn't it? The right or wrong thing uumhhh in managing the school.*

Questionnaire responses from other teachers suggested different views regarding their School Management Team relative to implementing ethical principles and values. It seemed like teachers in one of the schools had a different type of work environment. Thus, the questionnaire data suggested that schools did not share similar notions on defining ethics and ethical leadership. As a result, as much as the principals clearly understood these concepts, it is questionable if they are truly practiced within their schools.

In an explicit case, Mrs. Twitter, from Social Media Secondary School expressed a total disregard of the concepts ethics and ethical leadership. She suggested that they were not practiced within her school, and strongly disagreed with the School Management Team (SMT) that claims that ethics and ethical leadership are "*Understanding the laws governing the basic education sector and*

implements them to the best of his/her abilities". Along similar lines, below Mrs. YouTube and Mrs. Zebra (both from Social Media Secondary School) added what they wished that the SMT should do regarding fair decision-making and human dignity:

> *Fair decision-making- key informant interviews with policy makers, teachers and academic experts to develop better understanding of decisions making tools and approaches used across a range of professional domains.*
>
> *Human dignity- all teachers should be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy at the workplace. They must be free from bullying harassment, discrimination and victimization and also to be valued for their skills and abilities.*

Mrs. Twitters' view on human dignity was contrary to Mrs. Zebras' beliefs on what ethical leadership should constitute, as she stated earlier that teachers need not be bullied but treated as prescribed by rules and regulation. In comparison, my data suggested that by comparison, in understanding ethics and ethical leadership, principals better comprehended the meaning of the concepts. However, some teachers seemed to be concerned about the lack of practical implementation of the concepts in schools.

For a better understanding of the concepts, in my further discussion I will single out ethics and relate to the principal's understandings. Ethics is concerned with the types of values, morals, society attributes, rules, and principles that individuals and society attribute to in everyday lives and decision-making (Northouse, 2012). Mrs. Twitter from Social media Secondary School and some teachers understood the ethics as, "*Leadership that is done within the confines of policy, leadership that operates within a certain policy framework"* (Mrs. Twitters). Here Mrs. Twitters showed her understanding of rules, principles, and values as guiding her working environment, character, and motives as a leader. Therefore, this defines what type of leader she intended to be.

As is described by Mrs. Twitters above, relevant, and acceptable leadership is expected to be guided by ethics to avoid what Ciulla (2014, p.5) describes as, "ethical problems and challenges that are distinctive to and inherent in the processes, practices, and outcomes of leading and following." Therefore, principals and teachers in schools should behave and lead in their respective positions in an ethical manner which is guided by a system of accepted beliefs, values, and morals. These can be found in policies and legislations that guide principals and teachers such as the South

African Council of Teachers (SACE) Act (Act No. 31 of 2003) and the Employment of Teachers Act (Act No 76 of 1998) that both clearly describe the way they must present themselves as professionals.

This also relates to the ethic of profession – a dimension of Multiple Ethical Paradigm – which focuses on professional codes that define the image and character of the principals and teachers (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001). In addition, individuals need to create their own personal codes to use simultaneously with the professional codes, in developing ethical practice. One's personal code may be integrated with the most important ethical values such as integrity which refers to the importance of the adherence to moral principles (Engelbrecht & Mahembe, 2015; Fields, 2007). Integrity is a forceful driver of ethical leadership which fosters leaders to abide by required rules and regulations as my participants claimed above.

4.1.1.1. I**nterrelationship**: **ethical leadership, accountability**, **and trust**

Findings suggest that teachers held similar sentiments that accountability and trust are two factors that are intertwined and may have a positive effect on ethical leadership within schools. To establish a culture of ethical practice an institution must promote accountability. As mentioned before, this begins with being honest and self-accountable. This may vary from the way one solves conflicts with colleagues, to acting right, and abiding by rules, and regulations of the profession without being told. Page and Wang (2000) supported this as they posit that self-accountability strengthens a bond of trust and cooperation between leaders and subordinates.

My findings suggest that if all teachers and principals were to enforce self-accountability, misconduct and wrongful acts would be minimised. Leadership and subordinates do not need to be impelled towards acting right, it must be a personal responsibility. From this, trust will inevitably be established because everyone knows how to conduct themselves. In addition, establishing a positive ethical culture can lead to improvements in the entire culture of an organisation (Brown et al., 2005). A good ecological perspective is further established when people are dedicated to developing a healthy and conducive working environment. Furthermore, in such an environment, the four aspects of the multiple ethical paradigm framework – professionalism, care, critique, and justice – will be realised. This is also shown by my findings, as Miss Giraffe (Safari Secondary School) stated:

Promote respect of ethical beliefs and values of the profession by each member of the team. Promote integrity whereby each member is expected to do right thing even if it hurts. Establish c*ommon grounds amongst workers. Promote communication and transparency amongst the group.*

My findings show ethical leadership may be understood in some schools. However, there seems to be a conflict of interest between principals and teachers in other schools. In such schools, principals have established an unhealthy ecology for their staff members. In addition, my findings show that the impact of trade unions also plays a certain role in affecting teacher accountability in some schools. For example, teacher A from school X said that *"…we hold back-to-back meetings with the unions to an extent that this affects the amount of teaching time we have at school".* This finding is in line with Spaull's (2012), that explains that learners' academic achievements are usually negatively affected by the lost teaching time because of the time spent by teachers in their trade union involvements. In essence, it makes it difficult for principals to hold teachers accountable for their work at school. Therefore, a school can have a good ethical leader, but his job can be affected by external factors that make things difficult because some teachers tend to use this as a shield for not meeting targets, which also has a strong negative impact on trust between the teachers and principals.

While my findings suggest that ethical leadership may never exist singularly, in the context of this study, accountability and trust had immense influence on the establishment of ethical leadership. Accountability is significant as it stimulates both leaders and teachers to adhere to ethical behaviour which will propel everyone to develop trust in others. This shows the importance of using ecological perspective to view the practice of ethical leadership in schools (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015). There are living systems which may be understood through a holistic interpretation of the school's social systems which are created by all stakeholders.

4.1.2. Causes of lack of ethical leadership and lack of accountability

Accountability is used as a tool to ensure that individuals operate under the laws and regulations of a particular organisation – school for my current study. Each school member needs to account to their authorities for their operations. Accountability entails transparency, competency, and honesty within the schooling environment. Thus, all individuals have a role to play, because

everyone is a leader and must be a role model in their respective positions. Contrary a lack of true accountability may cost the organisation and lead to dissatisfaction for those it serves (Dive, 2008).

In one of the schools in my current study, teachers complained to had struggled with learners who could easily observe that the staff did not work in collaboration. In addition, a lack of accountability and regular teacher absenteeism was an unethical conduct that learners were reported to adopt. Teachers' absenteeism affords learners time to loiter around without supervision. Thus, a lack of accountability, trust, and honesty proliferated unethical conduct in schools. If leaders are unethical, their actions directly or indirectly affect those in the receiving end. That is, a lack of cooperation between staff members in schools usually has a negative impact on learners' behavior. Van den Akker et al. (2009) described this as that subordinates learn behaviours by observing and imitating their leaders.

A further analysis of teaching and learning in such school environments was undertaken. Findings show that, when the principals fail to hold teachers accountable for their teaching work, teachers may fail to complete teaching the syllabus. This usually happens in lower grades where teachers would not appropriately complete all topics as per expected in a term/year. This shows the dishonesty of some teachers, which deprives learners of learning, and yields problematic failures in SA's education system. Moreover, this should be viewed as unethical conduct resulting from principals' lack of good leadership skills.

In my current study, principals, deputy principals, HoDs, and teachers used numerous examples to report high unethical conduct that some of them engaged in. One of the key unethical conducts that was reported was misuse of funds by school principals. My participants dwell on how principals purposefully used deceit to allocate large funds, more than required for acquiring resources that the school would have needed. The extra funds were then diverted to some of these principals' personal gain. This involved principals purposefully selecting suppliers that were willing to partake in these criminal activities by invoicing higher costs, so that they may share the surplus. Miss Leopard (Safari Secondary School) reported this by stating that in her school there was high rate of absenteeism by both teachers and learners:

There is a teacher who is always absent, learners use his classroom as a hiding place from subjects they decide to bunk, and you would find learners from different classes and grades just relaxing in his classroom.

It is such unethical practices that make the school dysfunctional. School principals not being able to act against a teacher for wrongful acts exempts such teachers from being held accountable, this also indicates incompetency from the leadership of the school which may result in failure of effectively administering school responsibilities. This shows how there is a lack of trust in the management structure of this school and the level of favoritism, which could create tension between staff members. Mr. WhatsApp, the principal of Social Media Secondary shared some experiences that he has heard of:

Principals are using their positions as a quick path to their riches, money theft has to be the most prevalent unethical conduct in the field. I know of a principal that successfully stole over half a million (+R500 00) in his period of being a principal. The sad part about this is that it brings every single principal's reputation into disrepute as we are all perceived as thieves stealing the department's money.

Miss TikTok (Safari Secondary School) also added that:

There's many, especially with the senior positions, principals and deputy principal posts are politically driven posts, we have SADTU which is the majority right, so what they do when there are available posts, they elect their own candidates sometimes you see in worst cases a very 'dumb' principal, I'm sorry to use the term but they are being pushed by politics into these positions that they can't even manage.

Another unethical conduct was the way some principals had been appointed to their positions. Participants claimed that some of the principal appointments were associated with political favors than them earning their position because they could occupy the vacant posts. At times, the appointed principals did not follow protocol or appropriate procedures in appointing other candidates for posts within schools. Some principals randomly appointed teachers in the schools, without the School Management Team or School Governing Body's knowledge or following any appropriate formal procedure and protocol.

In other cases, for posts such as post-level two posts principals and unions conducted interviews to merely observe protocol, yet the post was already specially designed for certain favorable individuals, who will eventually be appointed. In addition, principals in my current study showed favoritism amongst their staff. This suggested unequal treatment and possibly creating havoc between staff within schools. Thus, there would be a loss of trust, respect, and uncertainty amongst staff. This was also raised earlier by one teacher that complained that novice and veteran teachers were treated differently.

It is not only principals that engage in unethical practices, but teachers also engage in activities that conflict with rules and regulations that guide them. In as much as teachers view some of their unethical conducts as minor compared to what principals engage in, they are still unethical. Some of these include using school resources (computers, printers, and photocopiers) for their personal use and stealing stationery for their children. One major unethical conduct that seems to be dominating in schools is intimate relationships amongst teachers and learners, some teachers are married to former students at the schools they teach in whom they once taught. In some cases, teachers force students either for sexual intercourse or an intimate relationship beyond their teacher role.

Mrs Zebra (Safari Secondary School) expressed great concern in her response on the questionnaire about 'encouraging staff, learners, and parents to be loyal to the school:

> *The SMT face problems because there is a lot going on within the school between teachers themselves and learners in some cases, male teachers pursue learners. Parents on the other side are not actively involved as they leave everything to us teachers, it is difficult to try create loyalty when there are so many things going on that shouldn't and could also be avoided.*

Mrs. YouTube (Social Media Secondary School) also shared an incident that happened at his school last year:

> *One of our teachers was suspended last year because of entering the female learner's bathroom while the girls were showering as they prepared for the matric dance evening at the lodge. Apparently, there was a girl he had been persuading for a long time.*

From the above findings, SA's education system seems to be in a prolonged crisis of Rosa (2007) also advises principals to remember that school equipment is school property, this also applies to teachers and includes school funds belonging to the school, for school purposes and nothing else. Secondly, is to avoid inappropriate relationships with students and make sure that teachers avoid being alone with students. These are some of the few unethical activities that both principals and teachers engage in, as some have been explained above. Such advice should be provided more frequently as the unlawful acts by principals and teachers seem to be constantly increasing.

These unethical practices by principals and teachers reflect the character of the individuals, Northouse (2016) clearly expresses how leadership has to do with who leaders are and what they do. Furthermore, leadership draws attention to the nature of a leader's behavior and their virtuousness. Teachers and principals should be leaders of rightful conduct in their respective positions, they should advocate and promote honesty, trustworthiness, and integrity in any decision-making.

In addition, the kind of choices a leader makes and the reaction or response to a particular situation as this is directed and influenced by their ethics. This is in correlation to the *Ethic of Profession* (developing of personal codes) under the Multiple Ethical Paradigm by Shapiro Stefkovich (2001), by personal codes, they refer to the infusion of past experiences and personal triumph which should be correlated with professional rules and ethics. Through this correlation, leaders can lead purposefully and ethically during this period which Gross and Shapiro (2013) refer to as turbulent times, such times are characterised by conflict, disorder and uncertainty which consequently place leaders in more difficult decision-making situations.

Shapiro and Gross (2013) further infuse the Ethic of Care which requires compassion, empathy, and moral decision-making, this requires leaders to take into consideration who their decisions affect and how they do so. Equally important is the notion of ubuntu by Khoza (2012), from this, leaders may adopt the emphasised importance of not prioritising themselves but the pupil that they serve. In addition is humanness, which allows one to zone into being human. This requires self-introspection, subsequently one's personal codes should direct them into doing what is deemed right.

4.1.2.1. Promoting an ethical culture: Trustworthiness, integrity, and honesty

For an organisation to function properly as a whole, there needs to be trust between its members and the lack of such a significant factor raises questions as to how the school is managed. This forms the basis of ethical leadership, trust, and accountability in the schooling environment. Teachers from the different schools have acknowledged and do realise that there needs to be trust amongst staff members to create a healthy and conducive working environment which propels individuals towards a common goal of making sure that the purpose of education and its objectives are fulfilled. However, at the same time teachers do complain about the lack of honesty within schools by teachers themselves and their leaders, this further speaks to the lack of integrity by individuals and the establishment of an environment that is rather destructive due to lack of trustworthiness.

One of the theoretical frameworks in the study by Kutsyuruba and Walker (2015) speak of schools from an 'ecological perspective' as they are living systems which may be understood through a holistic interpretation of the school's social systems which are created by the people within. The ecology of majority of schools in SA is on the verge of death, this is due to the dysfunction of these ecological environments where there is corruption, mismanagement of funds and therefore lack of accountability. Even though these do not directly destroy a school, they impair the functions of people within, which slowly leads to a dysfunctional school.

For a school to have an ethical culture then trustworthiness, integrity and honesty should form part of the many influential pillars that solidify the structure of a schooling environment. The mentioned concepts cultivate an environment of ethical leadership by management and subordinates amongst one another, trust is established which further cultivates a platform that willingly exercises accountability without any negative connotations attached.

Schools are institutions operated by different individuals, depending on the character and mannerism of these individuals, a school will possess a functional or dysfunctional ecology. Research conducted from schools has shown that school institutions may sought-after the same objective of educating a learner, but these institutions are operated completely differently by their leaders, these different approaches have proven to create both positive and negative environments. A typical scenario narrated by Mr. Elephant from Safari Secondary School, is cited below:

> *Our school recently appointed a new principal who has divided staff members due to her preferred leadership style. She has her favorites, least favorite and uncategorized group. She runs the school with her favorites, sets disciplinary examples with her least favorites by charging those teachers and embarrassing them. This has created an unpleasant working environment consumed by gossip, sabotage and unnecessary competition between teachers something we have never experienced in our school.*

The above scenario presents a school environment without ethical leadership as the mentioned school principal is not ethical by sub-dividing her staff members according to preferential treatment. Furthermore, the mentioned school leader and head presents a lack of integrity as such an act shows weak moral principles. This leader is against one of the components of this study's theoretical framework (The Multiple Ethical Paradigm), ethic of justice as stated in Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) as she demonstrates unfairness and is further creating a hostile working environment that benefits the minority. Another teacher from the same school stated that if the principal (Safari Secondary School) wants an ethical culture, it starts with her and further stated that she should, *"Encourage members to behave ethically, respect rules and regulations of the profession, and promote respect, communication and transparency."*

Principals have expressed how the social ills of society negatively affect learners that attend at their schools, it is therefore their responsibility to ensure that learners see schools as an environment that assists them to turn away from what they experience in their societies. To promote an ethical culture, both principals have expressed how they enforce discipline within their schools and punctuality for school times as these are minor aspects that cause disruptions. Even though learners are from impoverished backgrounds, principals expressed how the schools strived to provide them with opportunities accessible to learners from well-established backgrounds and communities which is access to university. Both principals also attested to creating an environment that is conducive for their staff, this is by involving staff in decision-making processes and creating an atmosphere of unity.

Mr. WhatsApp (Social Media School) stated that:

> *My staff is proactive and always willing to assist, they are active team players. I don't struggle when it comes to delegation of tasks, I am well informed of their strengths and*

weaknesses which makes it easy for me to assign those tasks accordingly. I believe having them involved and engaged in the running of the school makes them feel significant as they do more than merely teaching.

This was supported by Mrs Twitter (Social Media Secondary School), who further added that:

My school principal has done well in trying to promote an ethical culture, he leads by example as he respects, communicates with the staff and is transparent about matters that arise or need to be resolved. This encourages us as staff to return the respect he gives us and acknowledge rules and regulations of the profession as he does to as the leader of the school.

Mr. WhatsApp is very good at unifying us as his staff, any organisation will encounter challenges but the important thing is to move together whilst trying to resolve any issue that presents itself and that's exactly how he operates. I believe that is how an ethical culture should be.

Based on research findings, it is evident that indeed school leaders operate their schools differently, and this raises concern how the Department of education prepares principals for the transition leading them into their leadership positions. The above quotations from teachers denote how their school principals operate their schools and expose us to the kind of leadership styles they utilise.

It is evident that the principal from Social Media Secondary school operates utilising the democratic leadership style. Kendra (2021) from Lewin's study of leadership styles states that democratic leaders offer guidance to their subordinates, they participate in work done and allow input from other group members. Through interactions democratic leaders encourage subordinates to participate but retain the final say in the decision-making process. It is therefore evident that such leaders regard their subordinates as important and make them feel like a part of the team which helps foster commitment and encourages them achieve the objectives of the organisation.

This is how teachers from Social Media Secondary described their leader and from further research, such leadership style is good and breeds trust by teachers for their principal, this positively impacts the school and learners at large. The school principal for this institution has

demonstrated that he trusts his staff and that an organisation that embodies trust creates rich communities that offer safe working spaces and opportunities (Illes & Mathews, 2015). Furthermore, Illes and Mathews (2015) state that trust emerges in response to consistent action and behavior demonstrating good intent, therefore if leaders demonstrate good intentions, employees will willingly be a part of an organisation's culture.

On the contrary, Safari Secondary School exposes the study to distinct findings, even though the school principal stated that his school operates transparently, and teachers are involved in daily operation, the views of teachers are opposed to his claims. This contradiction between the views by the school principal and teachers already signify a lack of honesty, trustworthiness, and integrity, furthermore the ecological perspective of this school seems to be influenced by numerous negative factors that are demotivating the staff as they compare the current state of the school to one, they had been used to from their former management.

As mentioned earlier, a culture of transparency and support, trust demands to be felt from face-to-face communication within an organisation, this could be obtained from mutual respect amongst employees, communication regarding good and bad encounters (Illes & Mathews, 2015). It is evident from the views of the staff from Safari Secondary School that this is what they wanted to transpire in their school. The views of teachers portray the school principal as an authoritarian leader, Kendra (2021) posit that this type of leader operates by providing clear expectations for what needs to be done, when and how it should be done. This is a commanding approach and subordinates usually respond negatively to it as they are not made to feel significant as there is a clear division between the leader and staff and the leader makes decisions independently, with little or no input from everyone else.

According to the South African Council of Teachers (SACE) code of professional ethics section 6.2 (p. 5), "…a teacher respects the various responsibilities assigned to colleagues and the authority that arises there from, to ensure the smooth running of the educational institution". Therefore, issues like teachers refraining from reporting or rather not raising their concerns about matters that impact on how the school is run, are not in line with this code. It is also worth mentioning that teachers from various interviewed schools raised an issue that during all that is happening in their schools are afraid to report to school governing bodies because they fear being ill-treated at their working places. It is evident how the rights of teachers are being violated, this is against one's

freedom of expression as stated in the Bill of Rights of SA section (16.1b) that "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom of press and other media".

Such actions are putting teachers on the wrong as well because they themselves are not operating according to the SACE code of Professional Ethics. For example, in section 9.3 and 9.5 (p7) it is clearly stated that "a teacher discloses all relevant information to the council" and "a teacher co-operates with the council to the best of his or her ability", respectively. Therefore, teachers not reporting school matters to the council work against them because staff create unnecessary tension within the school environment. The approach of silence taken by teachers is debatable, it is unquestionable that they are quiet about the wrongful acts within their school because they do not want to be in bad terms with the school principal. On the contrary, this raises questions about teachers' moral principles that require them to do what is right by reporting any foul activities taking place within their school.

The above shows that some school leaders do not operate these organisations on strong moral principles whilst some are succeeding as strong moral principles is the vehicle of the institution. It goes without saying that leaders that lack integrity will undoubtedly display a character of low morals and consequently be unable to discern from what is right and wrong. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, an ethical leader is the one that can out of all mentioned traits, serve its people. However, leaders with low morals often possess traits of self-serving as opposed to being a servant to their people. The downfall of any school is having a leader that lacks integrity and honesty as they will undoubtingly fail to create an ethical culture. Conversely, certain schools have great leadership that aims to unite their school as a whole and move in harmony towards achieving objectives. Such leadership understands that encouragement towards staff is oxygen for an institution therefore such leaders develop and nurture their staff into leadership through encouragement and aiding them to breathe within the institution.

4.1.3. Factors impeding ethical leadership

Problems that are currently encountered by schools as mentioned above are mostly due to the negligence of the Department of Education failing to ensure that ethical conduct is maintained in schools. Leadership applies to everyone in their respective positions in an organisation. If ethical leadership is enacted within schools, this will breed trust and enforcement of accountability.

Consequently, everyone within an institution needs to be held accountable for their actions for the smooth running of the organisation.

The study has exposed that there is a lack of workshops by the Department in schools that are to constantly enforce and encourage good leadership practices. In addition, the Department of Education is failing to instill good conduct when teachers commence their career in the profession. In most cases you find that novice teachers are not exposed to thorough induction processes at the start of their employment, the last time they hear about policies and SACE documents is when they are still at the university. This is evident from an increase in several cases where teachers find themselves on the wrong side of the law and only realize their unethical conduct during the process of disciplinary hearings. It is even heinous because some veteran teachers, due to their experience, have such information that they can transfer to novice teachers, but you would find that it is them that do not encourage the young, newly appointed teachers. Teachers and principals should be ethical and therefore, should comprise good morals and values breed good ethical decisions and practices, ethics should be at the heart of leadership Ciulla (2014). Miss Giraffe (Safari Secondary School) supported the above as she stated that:

> *I only knew about SACE when I was only joining the council and heard about it for the second time when my ex-principal was disciplined for acting in contrary with the rules and regulations of the council, otherwise there is nothing formal in the form of a workshop that I have ever attended.*

Mrs Twitter (Social Media Secondary School) further added, *"No, I have never been invited to a training nor has ever heard of someone who was called to attend such a workshop."*

Due to lack of workshops, teachers do not take unethical conduct seriously in most schools because of the lack of pressure from the department of education in making sure that teachers are held accountable for their actions. Nonetheless, it is not easy for the Department of Education to punish a teacher for his/her wrongdoing when in the first place has failed to properly address the teacher upon employment and constantly host appropriate workshops to instill the dos and don'ts of this profession, and what is expected of a teacher. Such unlawful practices proliferate unethical conduct in the schooling environment and cause disruptions in the smooth running of the school. Simple actions of keeping schools afloat such as constant review of goals set, the management of

curriculum, checking of lesson plans and allocation of resources and evaluation of teacher performance will create an environment of accountability and form trust and ethical practices for principals and teachers (Christie, 2010).

Principals and teachers have expressed quite a few suggestions of what they believe are the causes of unethical practices by their peers in the field of education. They have raised a concern of professionals in the field undermining the rules and regulations that guide them as principals and teachers, they stated that this is due to the lack of consequences for some individuals, particularly those who are affiliated with unions. Furthermore, they also stated that the education system is controlled by politics which has also influenced the high rise of unethical practices. Below are the views of the participants. Mr. WhatsApp (The principal of Social Media School) attested to this as she said:

> *People just have no respect for the law and for policy, people have become lawless because they know there are no consequences really, people are still under the impression that if you are a union member then you are highly protected and I think unions at some point do protect people for wrong doings and for that reason people just feel they are a law to themselves and they just do as they please.*

Miss Giraffe (Safari Secondary School) further added that:

> *Principals steal the government's money because of temptation which is accompanied by greed as they did not earn their positions but were given them on a silver platter due to political agendas. Again, what causes unethical behaviour is that the government has abandoned the profession, they are not investing as much as they should in education, not just financially but also in terms of dedication to improving the state we're in. They take their time to respond to urgent matters within the field, education is politicized.*

Department of Education officials rarely visit schools where they are supposed to be and are in favor of some schools. Strong ethical leadership skills entail the ability of a leader being able to be neutral in all situations so that he/she can come up with solutions that accommodate everyone, therefore, to find that Department officials being in favor of certain schools is unethical. This is because in this case officials cannot apply necessary procedures in making sure that consequences

of unethical conduct are barred by those on the wrong side of the law. In addition, the teachers' unions are also not fully active in equipping teachers and principals as they are responsible for both parties. This speaks to what Spaull (2015) has identified as a cycle of poor service delivery, weak accountability, and low expectations, he asserts that for the status of education to improve in SA, there needs to be a reinforcement of accountability throughout the system.

From research findings, it was clear that teachers do not thoroughly understand the roles that are being displayed by the unions in this profession. The unions are failing to hold necessary workshops that inform teachers about the rules and regulations as far as education is concerned in the South African context. Moreover, you would find that during disciplinary hearings they form part of the committee that works together with the council in ensuring that necessary steps are being followed in ensuring fair consequences are being imposed to the teachers and principals.

These workshops by Education Department in SA should be aimed at promoting ethical leadership in schools, the South African Council of Teachers (SACE) (Act No. 31 of 2003) in connection with the Code of Professional Ethics (2003) should promote ethical standards that serve as a guideline for how teachers and principals should conduct themselves within their profession. In addition, these workshops should emphasise prohibitive rules which serve as a guideline to what is acceptable and what is not acceptable from teachers. Furthermore, this would promote the theory of ethic of profession which collaborate the personal code ethic and a professional code ethic and can be used as an ethical toolkit of determining what is right and wrong.

On the contrary, unions are misusing their power to appoint principals in schools that are not best equipped to lead schools. In doing so, they are working together with the Department of Education which then means that unethical misconduct will inevitably happen, they will automatically fail to hold that principal accountable when in the first place they were the ones that caused it to happen by employing a principal that lacks leadership skills. Instead of dismissing that principal for misconduct, he/she is relocated to a different school which in essence does not solve the problem but transfers it to another schooling environment.

Furthermore, this shows how the Department's derelict behavior towards encouraging ethical leadership has a knock-on effect on the dilapidation of the school leadership. Several schools are failing due to poor leadership, which could be avoided if schools were properly equipped. Burchell

and Robin (2011) state that the foundation of a great organisation is created by credibility, respect and fairness which form the foundation of trust. If ethical leadership is promoted and made fashionable, stakeholders within schools will possess both self-accountability and organisational accountability (Ghanem & Castell, 2019).

There is a lack of instilling rules, regulations, and policy requirements because there are quite numerous policies that guide the profession and clearly stipulate how employees should conduct themselves. However, we still have a high figure of unethical practices within the field. This raises concern about whether the department and schools are doing enough to ensure that their teachers are always at par with the rules and regulations that guide them or it's a once off encounter with policies. It is significant that the Department actively supports leaders in schools for teachers to trust school leaders. Van den Akker et al. (2009) state that leaders' function as significant role models and guides for their subordinates as they learn what they do and what not to do from their leaders. If leaders are well-equipped and continuously trained the operation of schools becomes easier.

Teachers from both schools rated their School Management Teams neutral and some strongly disagreed with the SMT ensuring that teachers are familiar with contents of SACE Code of Professional Ethics and reminding them about it regularly. Despite having a legal framework that is in place to promote ethical leadership, accountability and trust within schools still seems to be a problem. The lack of positive impact these laws have on the education profession shows that even though legislation and laws are there, but they are not presented and enacted thoroughly and treated significantly as they should.

4.1.3.1. SACE's inadequacies towards induction of the Code of Professional Ethics for teachers

The purpose of the SACE Code of Professional Ethics, amongst others, is the management of professional development and inculcation of the Code of Ethics for all teachers. It is therefore the duty of the council to make sure that all teachers are well informed about their profession and what is expected of them to keep the dignity of the profession.

The research findings in this study show that there is a misalignment between the council and teachers in most schools. Teachers from various schools complain that the members of the council fail to conduct proper induction processes for novice teachers and to even those that have been in

the system for several years in terms of reinforcement. A need for workshops was identified as many teachers felt that they need to be constantly reminded and reinforced regarding what is expected of them in this profession. Some teachers also pointed out that they find it pointless to have this council because they do not understand what the monthly payments are for if they go for years without any visits or any form of workshop from the council, it is therefore clear in this case that members of the council are not thoroughly doing their job as the people they serve are not happy about their approach in serving them.

Findings from the interview transcriptions further show that most of the participants are not satisfied with the role played or rather lack of role played by SACE and the Department of Education. Participants have raised a concern of how SACE deducts money from them monthly but their services towards them being poor, they have expressed that the organisation does not organise developmental workshops that aim to promote and remind teachers of the Code of Professional Ethics Regarding the Department of Education, participants have acknowledged the department conducting workshops. However, these were not related to developing the Code of Professional Ethics and the quality of the workshops was also said to be poor and not adding any value to them but rather demotivating.

4.1.4. Promotion of ethical leadership

Findings from the study suggest that teachers tend to not feel entitled to how the school is running because they feel that it is the principals' responsibility. This finding speaks to how unethical conduct happens in some schools, especially when the principal himself is not strong in his leadership. In one of the schools in the study it was found that learners skip classes and at times leave school before time. According to some teachers this happens because the principal is not always around and sometimes also leaves before time as well. This unethical conduct clearly depicts the tragedy of not equally exposing both the teachers and the principal to ethical leadership.

On the contrary, the other school possessed a very strong ethical leadership culture, from the principal all the way down to the learners. In such schools, the principals are working cooperatively with their teachers to make sure that unethical conduct does not happen. This was evident from the way both their learners and teachers were disciplined and positive about management. Such institutions portray their leadership as the epitome of excellence, Van den Akker et al. (2009) posit

that such leaders function as significant roles models and explicitly demonstrate ethical behavior to their followers. Through this, teachers and learners are positively influenced which makes the functioning of the school an easy process. Mrs Twitter (Social Media Secondary School) supported the above view as she stated:

> *It is very important for principals to be exposed to ethical leadership development, because as decision makers in their institutions, it assists them to make morally informed decisions thus strengthening organisational commitment and development of social values such honesty. Integrity and respect.*

Mrs Zebra (Safari Secondary School) further added:

> *I believe both teachers and principals should be exposed to ethical leadership, particularly teachers. I say this because, principals are teachers before they become principals. If they are groomed at their lowest level in the profession it becomes easier when they are later appointed as school principals because leadership is not something new to them. Also, great skills such as honesty, credibility, respect, fairness, etc. are acquired.*

It is therefore significant to expose teachers and principals to ethical leadership as this positively impacts the environment of a school, this speaks to one of the studies theoretical frameworks of schools being viewed from an 'ecological perspective.' Kutsyuruba and Walker (2015) stated that schools are living systems which may be understood through a holistic interpretation of the school's social systems which are created by the people within. If a school principal, teachers, and learners have a good relationship the school will without a doubt function efficiently. Furthermore, exposing school principals and teachers to leadership will assist them develop the four mentioned aspects of the multiple ethical paradigms by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001). These include ethics of care, ethic of justice, ethic of professionalism and ethic of critique. Furthermore, early exposure to such would breed ethical leadership, accountability, and trust.

As mentioned before, every member of an organisation is a leader in their respective positions. A leader is not just a leader because he/she is appointed in a vacant higher hierarchical position in an organisation, a leader is a person that possesses characteristics of being a leader. Therefore, teachers should also be treated as significant stakeholders and not only school principals as leaders

in the school. Consequently, there needs to be correlation amongst these two stakeholders for schools to thrive. Such a correlation may be achieved if there is trust within an organisation. Illes and Mathew (2015) support this as they state that benefits of a high trusting environment include better cooperation amongst individuals.

4.1.4.1. Role by SACE and the Department of Education for the development of the Code of Professional Ethics for principals.

Principals have shown that SACE has not been actively involved in developing them and exposing them to the Code of Professional Ethics as leaders of schools, on the other hand, the Department of Education has played an infinite role by hosting developmental workshops from time to time which have been beneficial for them. However, principals expressed that more could be done by the department as well. Below is what the principals (Mr. WhatsApp, principal from Social Media Secondary School) stated:

> *Yes, we are one of the luckiest groups. We have gone through intensive workshops, one was done by the district to introduce and induct us into our roles and responsibilities and were we fit into the whole organogram of the district and what we are supposed to do. The other one was the MEC's project which required us doing four modules very intense and was on different things, financial management, leadership and mentoring, about policies.*

Miss Leopard (principal, Safari Secondary School) added:

> *Well SACE only once and again it wasn't really about the Code of Professional Ethics, the focus was on development, it was on that continuous professional teacher CTB, as for ethical behavior, no nothing. SACE has not done any initiative.*

In as much as certain schools have been fortunate to have the council workshop them, it was interesting to find that some teachers have an idea of what SACE is but cannot exactly explain the importance that it plays in their profession and the schooling environment at large. Some novice teachers also pointed out that the only time they encountered the SACE document was when they were still at the University in one of their modules. In addition, it was to some extent surprising to find that the council only surface when there is a teacher that needs to go for a disciplinary hearing.

Teachers have raised concern regarding SACE and the department being very quick to apply disciplinary procedures as per the Code of Professional Ethics that they themselves fail to instill in teachers through various workshops that they could possibly host for the development and awareness of teachers about the profession. Teachers rather feel they are thrown in the deep end when entering the profession as there is no support, but the council is waiting for them to make mistakes and is active to penalise them for wrongful acts which then creates a confusion if the council is for or against them. Hence this finding goes back to the misalignment that the council and the teachers have in the education system of SA.

Numerous teachers have expressed that no workshops concerning the promotion and development of Professional Code of Ethics were conducted by SACE, including the Department, their workshops have not been particularly for ethics. Those that have been organized by the department have rather been of poor quality, showing no preparation, undermining, and wasting teachers teaching time as at times teachers are summoned to the district for a workshop only to be told the facilitator is not around therefore the date has been changed. Another factor identified in the study is that teachers are not fully aware which workshops does SACE or the Department organise; they assume that it is the department because workshops organised are facilitated through the district, which is a representative of the Department of Education.

Findings from teachers that filled in questionnaires also showed lack of dedication by the schools (SMT) in installing the SACE Code of Professional Ethics as teachers ranged from being neutral to disagreeing about the matter. It is not only the department and SACE's responsibility but also the school's responsibility in ensuring that its staff abide by the laws and regulations of the profession, for this to happen the school also must be responsible. Below Miss Tiktok (Social Media Secondary School) said, *"I am not sure which ones does the department organize or SACE, either way as far as I know, they do not talk to professional ethics, it is just developments for classrooms."* Similarly, Mrs. Zebra (Safari Secondary School) added:

> *I have attended some workshops, but not from SACE. However, it doesn't matter who it's from, all that matters is the relevance of information we garner from the workshops and regarding what you said, professional ethics lacks, most of the workshops I have attended do not address that but other things.*

Mrs YouTube (Social Media Secondary School) also showed great concern and a dire need for development when he said:

> *Yeah of course, we should be developed. I felt like what they are doing for development is useless, the subject advisors waffle, you also feel like you can do better than them. Teachers get into issues at time because they don't know rules thoroughly, even the learners should be exposed.*

It is evident that all three stakeholders (SACE, the department, and schools) are not taking responsibility of ensuring that teachers and principals are fully knowledgeable of the rules and regulations of the profession and thereof constantly re-instilling them so that teachers and principals are never complacent in their positions. As mentioned earlier, SACE's Code of Professional Ethics sets standards and provides a guideline for how teachers and principals should conduct themselves and provides prohibitive rules which serve as a guideline to what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, the introduction of this Act does not mean their job is finished, they need to constantly revisit and re-instill the rules to both novice and veteran teachers in the field.

In addition, because the Employment of Teachers Act (Act No 76 of 1998) clearly addresses ethical behavior and forms of misconduct which teachers and principals are not to engage in, the prescribed rules should be constantly revised, and this is something that the school may ultimately engage in without waiting and shifting blame on the department or SACE. The Department of Education and SACE also have a responsibility of ensuring schools operate as conducive environments of teaching and learning, this speaks to viewing schools from an 'ecological perspective' (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015). The Department of Education and SACE may influence the actions of teachers and principals positively if they thoroughly instill the significance of ethical leadership.

4.1.4.2. Unethical conduct should be accompanied by harsh repercussions for all stakeholders

Due to the high rise of unethical conduct by principals and teachers in the education field, both participants (principals and teachers) have provided numerous varied solutions as to how the issue of unethical practices or behaviour by principals and teachers can be dealt with. Findings from the study show that teachers have proposed that the department is excessively harsh on teachers as the consequence of most cases usually involves immediate dismissal of teachers from the field whilst

they do not show the same effort in ensuring that they abide the rules. Furthermore, this is because of how the department and SACE only resurface when an incident has occurred. In addition, findings from questionnaires also show that teachers were neutral, and some disagreed of the SMT ensuring that teachers are familiar with SACE content whereas the schools should also be accountable and actively involved in familiarising their teachers with such content regularly to minimise misconduct.

There has been a proposal by the department rather than grooming teachers during their teaching period of becoming proposed teachers suitable for their schools, this involves nurturing and constantly developing teachers through workshops or programs that constantly re-enforce the rules and regulations as a way of not only emphasising but also as a reminder, so these are prioritised and not taken for granted. Mr. Elephant (Safari Secondary School) proposed that:

> *The department and schools should utilise a demerit system, each time a teacher engages in wrongful conduct points are subtracted which builds-up one case(s) to processes of disciplinary hearings before we think of immediate expulsion, there must be corrective measures taken. There must be a follow-up of how to assist a teacher before expulsion, support strategies, to build a person as a chance to reform and also grow in their space.*

Similarly, Mrs. Zebra (Safari Secondary School) added:

> *Unethical behaviour teachers, I think they should be trained, this will reduce bad practices, then can suspend on that basis, just to add, to wipe out unethical leadership, and education should be wiped out from politics. Unions that represent the education fraternity should not be aligned with politics/political parties. Education now is now just politics, pushing agendas.*

Furthermore, there has been an outcry of planned favors and deliberate unethical practices by bodies such as unions, principals, and teachers. There has been a proposition of stricter measures being implemented towards guilty individuals, laws should be enforced as they are, and irrespective of who needs to be punished. Misconduct should be dealt with without a doubt followed by harsh repercussions if the individual is found guilty. Miss Leopard (Safari Secondary School) stated that:

I think if there's a policy that clearly outlines what the reparations are of contravening policy then it should be implemented without fear or favor, irrespective of what position you have, how many people you know in higher places. Firstly, we need to develop policies and follow them, policies shouldn't just exist on paper, they should actually be implemented and depending on the severity of the matter then it should follow that.

With the above being proposed, literature also proves how the education profession has been neglected and how the field does not show priority towards uplifting its laws and regulation which plays a huge role towards how the professionals perceive and behave within the field's profession. Mthiyane in Buthelezi et al. (2018) posits how professions such as law, medicine and business demand aspiring professionals must do a course(s) specifically on ethics before they graduate and become professionals. From this, it is evident that even during being trained to become a teacher not much emphasis is applied on infusing ethics of the profession and the value they come with for professionals to value them, hence the high rate of unethical conduct within the education field.

Repercussions being enacted for any form of misconduct will enforce the theoretical framework on accountability by Ghanem and Castelli (2019) that encourage teachers and principals to be ethical leaders as who are self-accountable, where one is able to hold themselves accountable. This will also encourage organisational accountability, which involves developing a relationship of accountability with other people within an organisation. Furthermore, this means that individuals have an obligation of accounting through explaining and justifying their conduct to other people as opposed to solely themselves. Furthermore, the Department of Education and SACE holding teachers and principals accountable will also enforce Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2001) Multiple Ethical Paradigm. The ethic of critique speaks to what a society should be made of, and the way individuals should behave, this separates what is considered right and wrong. The ethic of justice which focuses on leadership and the democratic process which people ought to follow, this includes fairness in decision making. Furthermore, in the ethic of profession, this dimension promotes ethical, trustworthy behaviour which ids deemed good conduct within the working space.

4.2. Conclusion

This chapter was a presentation and analysis of the findings of the study. Findings suggest that there is a high rise of unethical leadership due to numerous misconducts within the profession.

Furthermore, there is a lack of accountability and trust as misconduct is not dealt with thoroughly. The findings further suggest that causes of misconducts stem from issues within school institutions. To try and curb such issues and misconducts the study proposes informative techniques. The proposed techniques are in relation to the problems encountered within school institutions and the education field at large. The following chapter presents the reflective summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations, and implications for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTIVE STUDY SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I conclude the dissertation by presenting the study's summary, conclusion, recommendations, and implications for further research.

5.2. Reflective study summary

This study explored the conceptualisations, experiences, and practices of ethical leadership within South African schools. The study highlighted the implications for overall school leadership based on the perceptions of the teachers and principals. Chapter One introduced the study; in the chapter I also discussed my motivations for undertaking the study. Thus, broadening the knowledge of, and exposing numerous forms of unethical conduct in schools and finding possible solutions. Chapter One ends by explaining the significance, objectives, critical questions, delimitations, and dissertation outline. Chapter Two reviews literature by focusing on various laws and regulations that promote ethical leadership. The chapter also addresses misconducts currently common in schools, and possible solutions suggested by literature. The chapter ends with an outline of the theoretical frameworks and a conceptual framework used for the study.

Chapter Three discussed the methodology of the study. The study was formulated based on the interpretive paradigm and adopted a qualitative research approach. The research design that was utilised is a case study undertaken in two secondary schools that are based in Johannesburg Central. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, document reviews, and questionnaires. This chapter also discussed ethical considerations, trustworthiness, and limitations for this study. Chapter Four analysed and discussed the findings of the study. The overall understanding that emerges from the findings is that there is a challenge of unethical leadership in South African schools, despite some teachers and principals being aware of ethical leadership, ethics in general and the laws and legislations that guide the profession. Participants were in consensus of the need to establish solutions to try and curb high unethical conduct in schools.

5.3. Conclusion

In this conclusion I focus on the key areas from the findings, and I present these in form of five main topics, which are: (1) conceptualisations of ethics and ethical leadership, (2) causes of lack of ethical leadership and lack of accountability, (3) trustworthiness, integrity, and honesty, (4) factors impeding ethical leadership, and (5) promotion of ethical leadership.

5.3.1. Conceptualisations of ethics and ethical leadership

My findings suggest that principals and some teachers possess important conceptualisations of the concepts, ethic and ethical leadership. In my study they could confidently and vividly articulate the concepts' meaning. In their explanation of ethic and ethical leadership, they also integrated importantly related terms such as integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness. However, other teachers did not understand and explain the meaning of the two concepts. Their limited knowledge of the concepts was only demonstrated through synonymising them with other words. Some teachers were impressed by the enactment of ethical leadership by their principals. However, there was also a big number of teachers that suggested that their principals did not sufficiently enact ethical leadership in their daily work at schools.

5.3.1.1. Interrelationship: ethical leadership, accountability, and trust

This study also explored how participants understood or infused the concepts accountability and trust with ethical leadership. The findings in relation to this suggest that teachers were well informed about accountability and trust. They were also well informed about the expectations of their leaders' conduct in relation to the concepts, accountability and trust. Findings suggest that teachers from one school had experienced an environment that was influenced by accountability and trust. The school principal easily made staff a part of the process of operating the school through involving them in decision-making, delegating them certain responsibilities, and extending empathy where needed. Such an environment made teachers enjoy their work at school, minimised numerous misconducts, and positively impacted the school's reputation through its excellent academic performance.

On the contrary, in the other school principals failed to maintain accountability and trust because they were involved in misconduct themselves. Teachers stated that their school principal was not an accountable leader. He had failed to establish an environment of trust, teachers did not trust him

because of his unethical leadership approach. Furthermore, some teachers had taken advantage of the situation and conducted themselves unethically.

5.3.2. Causes of lack of ethical leadership and lack of accountability

My findings suggested that the schools that were operating under unethical leadership did not seem to have clear goals and were subject to collapse. These schools opened a leeway for numerous misconducts such as learners being rapped, school principals embezzling school finances, and teacher high absenteeism. Such misconduct indirectly had negative effects on academic performance of these schools. Furthermore, learners are deprived of their right to proper quality education because such environments do not priorities them.

5.3.3. Trustworthiness, integrity, and honesty

My findings showed that one school was influenced by the traits of trustworthiness, integrity, and honesty while the other was not, due to lack of ethical leadership, accountability, and trust. Findings further suggested that in a school that had ethical leadership, accountability and trust it also retained trustworthiness between leadership, teachers, and learners. These trustworthy environments promoted collective action where individuals relied on each other. Contrary to such an environment there were turbulent environments that were driven by ill-discipline from learners and school leadership. Some schools in SA have turbulent environments where there is no trustworthiness, integrity, and honesty. Stakeholders within these schools solely rely on uninformed decisions that are perpetuated by personal agendas, not those of the school institution and education department. These are the schools that are in dire need of intervention by SACE and the Department of Education.

5.3.4. Factors impeding ethical leadership

My findings suggested that there was corruption in one of the schools. Partly, this was due to a lack of attention, planning and investment in ethical leadership in schools. The Department of Education and SACE, school leadership are gradually losing their integrity due to numerous unpunished misconducts by school principals and teachers. Accountability within the profession is not taken seriously and several teachers or schools principals have managed to ransack their schools and the Department of Education's resources that were meant to benefit school learners. Such teachers or principals usually remain employed within the department because their unions

advocate for them, merely for the unions to fulfill their political agenda at the expense of the reputation of the profession and learners.

5.3.5. Promotion of ethical leadership

My findings suggested that school principals have been exposed to some workshops that were organised by SACE for training on ethical leadership. However, this was an only once off workshop which did not seem effective. Participants would appreciate that such workshops happen regularly because they equip them with necessary information that they would utilise in their positions of leadership. On the hand, teachers from another school were furious upon the question asked regarding SACE and the department. For them, SACE had never conducted any workshop to develop their Code of Professional Ethics. Their school was also not actively involved in the reiteration of the Code of Professional Ethics. The only workshops that this school's teachers reported on were those hosted by the department of education, although they were considered of poor standard and were never about the development of the Code of Professional Ethics but classroom development and other aspects.

5.3.5.1. Immense significance of exposing teachers and principals to ethical leadership

My findings suggested that it is crucial to expose both teachers and principals to ethical leadership. If teachers are exposed to being ethical in their rightful positions, they will become ethical leaders now, and in the future if they become school principals, deputy principals or head of department**s.** Early exposure to ethical leadership will assist in establishing an attitude of being ethical leaders that encompasses willingness to continuously learn, improve, be empathetic, and encourage others. Findings suggest that school principals and teachers tend to find themselves engaging in wrongful acts such as embezzlement of school funds, and sexual relationships with learners because there is no enforcement of laws and regulations that uphold the profession. This may be avoided if teachers and school principals are instilled with ethics and had constant workshops on how they should conduct themselves.

5.3.5.2. Unethical conduct should be accompanied by harsh repercussions

Teachers expressed that, repercussions from the Department of Education regarding misconducts is already harsh. But they had a problem with the lack of support and training to be better teachers who are constantly reminded and encouraged of the mannerism expected in the profession. The

Department of Education, SACE, should invest in nurturing teachers and principals, continuously train them, and keep them updated with the change of times and how that affects them and operating the schools. Furthermore, the education profession should be treated as other professions, thus, highly instilling, and upholding ethics, and strong regulations within its employees. This will promote good mannerism, and the Department of Education and SACE may hold offenders accountable and pass down harsh judgments.

5.4. Recommendations

Given numerous suggestions that were provided by the participants of this study, it is important that action is taken towards reducing unethical conduct of principals and teachers. The recommendations may be utilised by the Department of Education to assist schools and their professionals to curb unethical conduct. These may also be utilised by secondary schools since they were the focus of this study.

5.4.1. Recommendation one

Although participants in this study showed an understanding of the concepts, ethics and ethical leadership, their understanding can be more in-depth to be better ethical leaders. The Education Districts should establish continuous workshops. This could commence at the beginning of every year were principals and teachers are educated about ethics and how this relates to their profession. They should also be educated and reminded of the leadership roles that they are expected to execute during the year and beyond. If professionals are fully knowledgeable about such and have been frequently equipped with the value that these terms hold, it would make a difference.

5.4.2. Recommendation two

To combat unethical practices by principals, the Minister of Education needs to establish an intense grip of governance on educational policies, regulations, and systems. Firstly, school principals should not be granted full responsibility of handling large amounts of money for the schools. There should at least be an account that verifies school accounts and approves transactions of large amounts such as purchase of stationery and furniture. The department could also take responsibility for finding suppliers for school resources. The department will have to liaise directly with the suppliers and transfer funds themselves instead of leaving that responsibility to the principals. Schools should only submit orders to their District offices who will then process them.

Furthermore, the Minister of Education should enforce strict compliance and governance. Violation must be penalized to set an example for others to maintain a high standard of ethics and compliance. Secondary schools, assisted by the circuit offices need to host workshops and educational programs where they instill principals, teachers, and learners with their expected objectives to fulfil within the school.

5.4.3. Recommendation three

I am in consensus with Mthiyane in Buthelezi et al. (2018) when they argue for decentralising SACE and bringing it closer to all professionals. SACE is too detached from schools, hence their lack of involvement as reported in the findings. It is important that SACE is easily accessible and involved in the operation of teachers in schools. Country-wide, SACE should create branches of offices and programs that further educate teachers about the profession's Code of Ethics. These must be followed by regular reviews at specific periods.

The Minister of Education, through circuit offices, should also assist in the development of the Professional Codes of Ethics. They could collaborate with School Management Teams and provide them with material to send out or present to staff. Additionally, there should be an entry pack into the profession, when teachers collect their SACE certificates this must be provided to them. This pack should include all necessary policies, laws, legislation of the profession and a management plan for the year, which dates all workshops that will be hosted. Workshop attendance should be compulsory. SACE should also develop a point system like QMS, where after a demarcated period points are redeemed after a period and can be converted to cash if no ill-conduct is detected.

5.4.4. Recommendation four

I agree with the need for the Premier and Minister of Education to enforce stricter policies and abide by them regardless of who is at fault as suggested by my findings. The education system in SA must be detached from the national political affiliations. Furthermore, teachers and principals lack value and knowledge about the rules and regulations of the field. As mentioned before, they should be equipped with this knowledge by engagements hosted by the Minster of Education and SACE to reduce unethical practices in the field. Lastly, teachers lack motivation because there are complaints about the small salaries paid to teachers. Perhaps the Premier and Minister of Education should reconsider this salary scale or engage teachers in programs that allow them to earn

commission because they are faced with a large responsibility. Furthermore, the Minister should establish the hosting of board exams that test individuals of the knowledge of the profession. Perhaps laws may be respected and considered significant.

5.5. Implications for further research

Lack of exposure to ethical leadership, accountability, and trust of school principals and teachers has negatively affected the operations of the researched schools due to high unethical conduct which promotes corruption. But extensive research needs to be conducted on how to best expose school principals, teachers, school governing bodies, and other prominent stakeholders within schools to ethical leadership. Such research must focus on the significance of each stakeholder's role in promoting ethical leadership within schools. It must also expose them to content that will equip them with full knowledge regarding ethical leadership, accountability, and trust in schools. This could be done by formulation of policy that speaks to these three concepts, it should form part of teacher curricular and regularly presented to already existing school principals and teachers.

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Appendix A: Ethics Clearance Certificate from the University

WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2019ECE033M**
PROJECT TITLE	Exploring the role of ethical leadership in developing accountability and trust in two schools in Johannesburg Central District: A multiple case study
INVESTIGATOR	Mellissa Mkhwane
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DATE CONSIDERED	11 November 2019
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	Date of submission of the project report

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 18 November 2019 **CHAIRPERSON** (Dr. Paul Goldschagg)

cc: Supervisor: Dr. Siphiwe Mthiyane

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** emailed to the Ethics Office: Matsie.Mabeta@wits.ac.za .

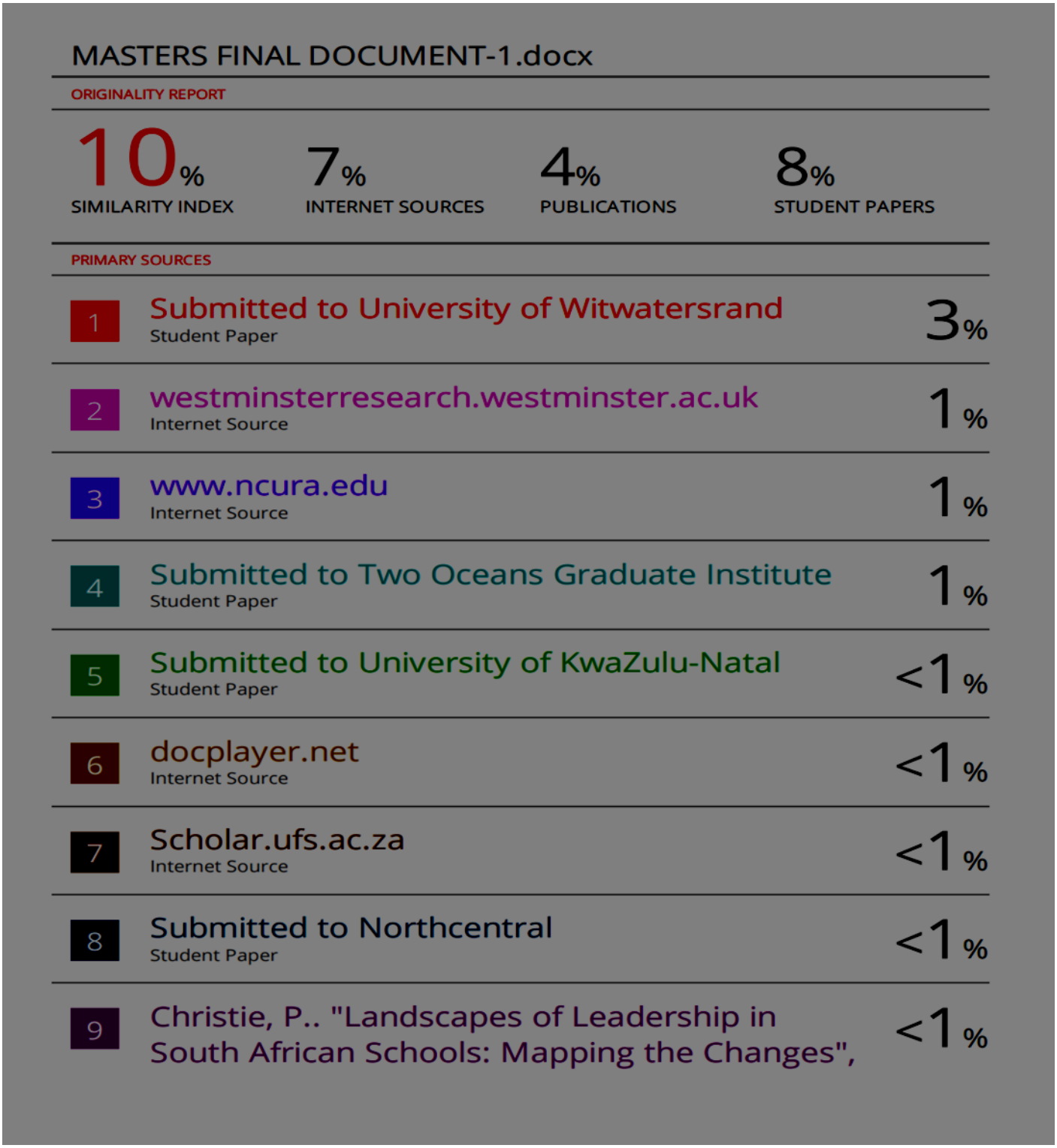
I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Signature

27/12/2019
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix B: Turn it in Certificate



MASTERS FINAL DOCUMENT-1.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

10%	7%	4%	8%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to University of Witwatersrand Student Paper	3%
2	westminsterresearch.westminster.ac.uk Internet Source	1%
3	www.ncura.edu Internet Source	1%
4	Submitted to Two Oceans Graduate Institute Student Paper	1%
5	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	<1%
6	docplayer.net Internet Source	<1%
7	Scholar.ufs.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
8	Submitted to Northcentral Student Paper	<1%
9	Christie, P.. "Landscapes of Leadership in South African Schools: Mapping the Changes",	<1%

Appendix C: Permission letter from the Department of Education

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**13 August 2019**
Validity of Research Approval:	**04 February 2019 – 30 September 2019** **2019/210**
Name of Researcher:	**Mkhwane M.M**
Address of Researcher:	**347 Gratitude Street, White City**
	Umzimkhulu
	3297
Telephone Number:	**078 991 4552**
Email address:	**792663@students.wits.ac.za**
Research Topic:	**Exploring the role of ethical leadership in developing accountability and trust in two schools in Johannesburg Central District: A multiple case study.**
Type of qualification	**BEd Masters**
Number and type of schools:	**Three Secondary Schools**
District/s/HO	**Johannesburg Central**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

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

13/08/2019

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

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

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

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

Kind regards

.....

Mrs Faith Tshabalala
Acting Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 13/08/2019

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

Appendix D: Permission letter to the School Principal

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL (REQUESTING TO USE SCHOOL AS RESEARCH SITE)

Dear: Principal

My name is Mellissa Mkhwane I am a B Ed Masters' student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on **Conseptualisations of Ethical leadership and causes of unethical behavior in schools: Perceptions of teachers and principals.** I have identified your school as one of my potential research sites.

My research seeks to find out the understandings, practices, experiences and possible causes of unethical leadership and what teachers perceive regarding promoting accountability and trust in promoting ethical leadership. The research involves the use of the qualitative (intensive) approach. I would like to interview you as the principal of the school, six post- level one teachers (three of which will be interviewed) and give out questionnaires to the other three post level one teachers, one HOD/ deputy principal, these should be individuals that have been in the teaching field for at least three years and have been teaching in your school for at least two years. The interviews I would like to conduct are semi-structured interviews with each of the participants, these will be audiotaped and the interviews will take place after school within the school premises and will be approximately thirty minutes each with at least two individuals each day. In addition, I have two sets of questionnaires to be issued out to post level one teachers, the principal/ deputy principal, these will be collected after a few days of being issued out and can therefore be completed on each individuals' spare time or at home.

I am kindly inviting your school to please participate in this research and provide input regarding ethical leadership, this is not to reflect on anyone at the school or the school itself but I am seeking general information of ethical leadership from the participants as individuals that have been in the field of education. I am therefore requesting for your approval that your school be a part of my research.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because of the rich culture and emphasis of the development of leadership in your mission statement, this has therefore motivated me to find out the views from individuals in your school regarding my research topic.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Participation in the study is totally voluntary, participants will not be forced to take part and they will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. In addition, the participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study, instead of using real names and the school name, codes and pseudonyms will be alternatively used to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. After transcribing data collected, participants will be provided with the transcriptions before the information is included in the study report, this is to ensure accuracy of interpretation.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as it is convenient.

Yours sincerely

Mellissa Mkhwane

53 Juta street, Broadway, Braamfontein

Johannesburg, 2000

Tsidi05@gmail.com

0789914552/ 0839793370

Appendix E: Interview schedules for principals and teachers

Interview Schedule for School Principals

Section A: Biographical Information

1. Gender: Male _____ Female _____
2. Experience (in years):
   As a Post Level 1 teacher: _____
   As an HoD (if applicable): _____
   As a Dep. Principal (if applicable): _____
   As a School Principal: _____
3. Teaching qualifications:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Section B: Interview questions

1. When you hear people talking about Ethical Leadership, accountability and trust in schools or in education, what comes to your mind? In other words: What is your **understanding** of ethics, ethical leadership, trust and accountability in schools? Please elaborate.
2. What ethical leadership, accountability and trust **practices do you try to promote** as you do your work (if any), as a school principal and an educational leader? Please elaborate.
3. Why do you think those ethical leadership, accountability and trust practices (you mentioned in 2 above) are important? Please elaborate.
4. Without giving names (of people), would you please share with me **experiences** that you have seen/heard/observed that you regard as unethical.
5. As a school principal serving a deprived community, what do you do to promote an ethical culture (**trustworthiness, accountability, integrity and honesty**) within the school, yourself and among teachers that you lead and manage? Please elaborate on your views.
6. In your view, what are **the causes** of unethical conduct in schools among both the school principals?

7. As a teacher/school principal, have you ever been invited to a workshop where you were inducted by the Department of Education (as your employer) as part of in-service training and development on professional ethics in schools/education?

8. Since you were appointed to the position of teacher/school principal, how regular have you been invited to workshops organised by SACE to be inducted into the Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers? Please elaborate.

9. How would you rate the quality of training (if any), that you receive from SACE to promote ethical conduct among teachers/school principals? Please elaborate.

10. Do you think it is necessary for teachers/school principals, as part of continuous leadership development, to be exposed to ethical leadership development? Please elaborate.

11. What are your views regarding what should be done to deal with unethical behaviour of some teachers/school principals in schools? Please elaborate.

12. In conclusion, is there any other issue related to this interview that I have not asked but you feel strongly that you would like to share with me? Thank you very much for taking part in this Interview.

Interview questions for post Level 1 Teachers
Section A: Biographical Information

1. Gender: Male _____ Female _____
2. Experience (in years):
   As a Post Level 1 teacher: _____

3. Teaching qualifications:
_____
_____
_____

Section B: Interview
1. As a Post Level 1 teacher, when you hear people talking about ethical leadership, accountability and trust in schools or in education, what comes to your mind? In other words: What is your **understanding** of ethics, ethical leadership, accountability and trust in schools? Please elaborate.

2. What are ethical leadership, accountability and trust **practices** (if any), that you have observed being promoted by your school principal as an educational leader? Please elaborate.

3. Why do you think those ethical leadership, accountability and trust practices (you mentioned in 2 above) are important? Please elaborate.

4. What are ethical, accountability and trustworthiness teaching **practices** (if any), that you try to promote as you go about with your teaching in your school? Please elaborate.

5. Why do you think those ethical, accountability and trustworthiness teaching practices (you mentioned in 4 above) are important? Please elaborate.

6. As a teacher serving a deprived community, what do you do to promote an ethical culture (**trustworthiness, accountability, integrity and honesty**) within yourself and among other teachers that you work with? Please elaborate on your views.

7. In your view, what are **the causes** of unethical conduct in schools among the school teachers?

8. In your opinion, is there any relationship between the teaching style adopted by the school teachers in multiple-deprived contexts and their ethical leadership, being accountable and trustworthy behaviour? Please elaborate.

9. When you were training to become a teacher, do you remember being exposed to education on ethical conduct? Please elaborate your answer.

10. As a school teacher, have you ever been invited to a workshop where you were inducted by the Department of Education or your school management (as your employer) as part of in-service training and development on professional ethics and accountability in schools?

11. Since you were appointed as a teacher, how regular have you been invited to workshops organised by SACE (if any), to be developed in the Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers? Please elaborate.

12. How would you rate the quality of training (if any), that you receive from SACE to promote ethical conduct among school teachers? Please elaborate.

13. Do you think it is necessary for school teachers, as part of continuous professional development, to be exposed to ethical leadership, accountability of their actions and teaching development? Please elaborate.

14. What are your views regarding what should be done to deal with unethical behaviour of some teachers in schools? Please elaborate.

15. In conclusion, is there any other question related to this interview that I have not asked but you feel strongly that you would like to share with me? If there is, now is the time to ask me, otherwise, thank you very much for taking part in this Interview.

Appendix F: The biographical information sheet

INFORMATION SHEET FOR MANAGEMENT

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Mellissa Mkhwane and I am a B Ed (Masters) student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on **Conseptualisations of Ethical leadership and causes of unethical behavior in schools: Perceptions of teachers and principals.** I have identified your school as one of my potential research sites.

My research seeks to find out the understandings, practices, experiences and possible causes of unethical leadership, your perceptions regarding promoting accountability and trust in developing ethical leadership. The study involves the use of the quantitative (extensive) approach. Teachers to be interviewed will take part in a semi-structured interview individually which will be audiotaped, this will assist me re-assess my data verbatim when analysing my data without distorting any information that you provide and therefore transcribe accurately. Interviews will take place after school within the school premises for approximately thirty minutes with each individual, the interviews will be conducted for at least week with at least two individual's each day. In addition, questionnaires will be issued out to teachers as well, these will be collected after a few days of being issued out and can therefore be completed on your spare time or at home.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because of the rich culture and emphasis of the development of leadership in your mission statement, this has therefore motivated me to find out the views regarding my research topic from individuals like you that have been teachers for quite some time.

I am aware that you form part of the School Management Team, technically, this makes you part of school leadership which is what my research is about. This serves to inform you of the nature of my research, I will be interviewing teachers, HOD's, the deputy principal and the school principal within the school about school leadership. They will therefore provide comments based on the leadership of the school, I however assure you that no names will be mentioned and this is not to reflect on anyone at the school or the school itself but research that seeks to find general information on ethical leadership from individuals that has been in the field of education for numerous years.

I am kindly inviting your school to please participate in this research and provide input regarding ethical leadership, this is not to reflect on anyone at the school or the school itself but I am seeking general information of ethical leadership from the participants as individuals that have been in the field of education. I am therefore requesting for your approval that your school be a part of my research.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study, instead of using real names and the school name, codes and pseudonyms will be alternatively used to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Your name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. Information shared during the interview/questionnaire is confidential and will therefore be kept safe and used solely for this research study. In addition, after transcribing the interviews, the transcriptions will be returned to you for conformation of accuracy before the information is included in my study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely

Mellissa Mkhwane

53 Juta street, Broadway, Braamfontein

Johannesburg, 2000

Tsidi05@gmail.com

0789914552/ 0839793370

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PRINCIPAL (AS RESEARCH PARTICIPANT)

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Mellissa Mkhwane and I am a B Ed Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on **Conseptualisations of Ethical leadership and causes of unethical behavior in schools: Perceptions of teachers and principals.** Considering that you are an individual in a leadership position within education, I have identified you as one of my potential research participants, therefore, this letter seeks to invite you to be a participant in my research.

My research seeks to find out the understandings, practices, experiences and possible causes of unethical leadership, your perceptions regarding promoting accountability and trust in developing ethical leadership. The study involves the use of the quantitative (extensive) approach. The principal and teachers to be interviewed will take part in semi-structured interviews individually

which will be audiotaped, this will assist me re-assess my data verbatim when analysing my data without distorting any information that you provide and therefore transcribe accurately. Interviews will take place after school within the school premises for approximately thirty minutes with each individual, the interviews will be conducted for at least week with at least two individual's each day. In addition, questionnaires will be issued out to other teachers as well, these will be collected after a few days of being issued out and can therefore be completed on your spare time or at home.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because of the rich culture and emphasis of the development of leadership in your mission statement, this has therefore motivated me to find out the views regarding my research topic from individuals like you that have been teachers for quite some time.

I am kindly inviting you to please participate in this research and provide input regarding ethical leadership; this is not to reflect on anyone at the school or the school itself but research that seeks to find general information on ethical leadership from you as an individual that has been in the field of education. I am therefore kindly requesting that you be a participant in my research.

I am fully aware that you might feel there are risks of leaking information divulged during the interview, including your personal information and participation in the research. However, your name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study; your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. Information shared during the interview/questionnaire is confidential and will therefore be kept safe and used solely for this research study.

In addition, after transcribing the interviews, the transcriptions will be returned to you for conformation of accuracy before the information is included in my study.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Your participation in this study is voluntary, so you can withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and you will not be paid for this study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely

Mellissa Mkhwane

53 Juta street, Broadway, Braamfontein

Johannesburg, 2000

Tsidi05@gmail.com

0789914552/ 0839793370

INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Mellissa Mkhwane and I am a B Ed Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on **Conseptualisations of Ethical leadership and causes of unethical behavior in schools: Perceptions of teachers and principals.** I have identified you as one of my potential research participants.

My research seeks to find out the understandings, practices, experiences and possible causes of unethical leadership, your perceptions regarding promoting accountability and trust in developing ethical leadership. The study involves the use of the quantitative (extensive) approach. Teachers to be interviewed will take part in a semi-structured interview individually which will be audiotaped, this will assist me re-assess my data verbatim when analysing my data without distorting any information that you provide and therefore transcribe accurately. Interviews will take place after school within the school premises for approximately thirty minutes with each individual, the interviews will be conducted for at least week with at least two individual's each day. In addition, questionnaires will be issued out to teachers as well, these will be collected after a few days of being issued out and can therefore be completed on your spare time or at home.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because of the rich culture and emphasis of the development of leadership in your mission statement, this has therefore motivated me to find out the views regarding my research topic from individuals like you that have been teachers for quite some time.

I am kindly inviting you to please participate in this research and provide input regarding ethical leadership; this is not to reflect on anyone at the school or the school itself but research that seeks to find general information on ethical leadership from you as an individual that has been in the field of education. I am therefore kindly requesting that you be a participant in my research.

Your name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. Information shared during the interview/questionnaire is confidential and will therefore be kept safe and used solely for this research study. In addition, after transcribing the interviews, the transcriptions will be returned to you for conformation of accuracy before the information is included in my study.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Your participation in this study is voluntary, so you can withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely

Mellissa Mkhwane

53 Juta street,Broadway, Braamfontein

Johannesburg, 2000

Tsidi05@gmail.com

0789914552/ 0839793370

Appendix G: The informed consent letters

PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

Research topic: Conseptualisations of Ethical leadership and causes of unethical behavior in schools: Perceptions of teachers and principals.

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

I, _____ give my consent to be a participant in the research project, I am fully aware that this is a voluntary study and I have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any prejudice. I am also aware that there will be no financial benefit from the study.

Permission to be interviewed

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

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

answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview. YES/NO

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

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped.
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

Research topic: Conseptualisations of Ethical leadership and causes of unethical behavior in schools: Perceptions of teachers and principals.

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

I, _____ give my consent to be a participant in the research project, I am fully aware that this is a voluntary study and I have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any prejudice. I am also aware that there will be no financial benefit from the study.

Permission for questionnaire

I agree to fill in a question. YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

TEACHER CONSENT FORM (three teachers' to be interviewed)

Research topic: Conseptualisations of Ethical leadership and causes of unethical behavior in schools: Perceptions of teachers and principals.

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

I, _____ give my consent to be a participant in the research project, I am fully aware that this is a voluntary study and I have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any prejudice. I am also aware that there will be no financial benefit from the study.

Permission to be interviewed

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

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

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview. YES/NO

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

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped.
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM CONSENT FORM

Research topic: Conseptualisations of Ethical leadership and causes of unethical behavior in schools: Perceptions of teachers and principals.

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

I, _____ as a member of the Schools' Management Team give my consent for the school to be used as research site for the above-mentioned research project, I am fully aware that this is a voluntary study and that the school has the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any prejudice. I am also aware that there will be no financial benefit for the school from the study.

Permission for research to be conducted on my position in leadership

Permission for the school to be a research site

I give consent for the school to be used as a research site for the above-mentioned research topic. YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- Participants will be provided with transcriptions for confirmation of accuracy of information before the information they provided is included in the research report.
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____