



Edited by
**Leentjie van Jaarsveld,
Kobus Mentz & Charl C. Wolhuter**

A wide-angle, low-perspective photograph of a long, straight asphalt road stretching from the foreground into the distance. The road is flanked by a dry, brownish landscape with sparse vegetation. In the far distance, a range of blue mountains is visible under a vast sky filled with soft, white and yellowish clouds, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is one of vastness and forward movement.

**Leadership Approaches
to Negotiate Challenges in a
Changing Education Landscape**

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to Negotiate Challenges in a
Changing Education Landscape



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Leadership Approaches to Negotiate Challenges in a Changing Education Landscape

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Research Justification

The argumentative point of departure of this scholarly book is the common conviction of specialists in the field of education in South Africa that the national education system is not at a satisfactory level, in both the academic and public discourses. Such allegations are made, and, frequently, stronger adjectives than 'non-satisfactory' are used. Results of international test series in which South Africa has participated, such as the 2015 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) tests, confirm the negative verdicts found in the (public and scholarly) discourse. This book aims to argue that although the lack of performance could be attributed to a multiplicity of factors, one factor that can make a difference in the achievement levels obtained by learners in schools is leadership. The book demonstrates that a particular problem of both the scholarly and the public discourse on education in South Africa is an overtone of defeatism or resignation, blaming all ills in the education system and educational institutions on historical legacies and/or contextual factors (such as socio-economic deprivation in the catchment areas of schools) or poor resources and infrastructure. This collected work was inspired by a recently published spate of articles on top-performing schools (including top-performing schools in rural/townships), in which it was demonstrated that good leadership can overcome such contextual and other challenges. The book discusses the issue of leadership in South African schools from a number of perspectives, thus contributing to the development of the scholarly discourse on Educational Leadership in South Africa. The target audience of the book comprises scholars of Educational Leadership. The research reported in this book draws on a wide range of methodologies, including empirical (survey) research (questionnaires and interviews), critical literature surveys and the comparative method. The chapters constitute original research not published elsewhere. The chapters were put through iThenticate analysis and contain no plagiarism. The contents of the document reflect the views of the author(s) of each chapter, who is or are responsible for the facts and accuracy of the information.

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Contents

Abbreviations, Figures and Tables Appearing in the Text	xix
List of Abbreviations	xix
List of Figures	xx
List of Tables	xx
Notes on Contributors	xxi
Preface	xxiii

Chapter 1: Leadership as an instrument to address the challenges faced by South African schools **1**

Charl C. Wolhuter

Abstract	1
Introduction	2
Critical factors in South African education that have an impact on learner performance	5
Debilitating context	5
Moral vacuum	6
Organisational climate of schools	7
Turning around poorly performing schools	8
Testing the relationship between leadership, organisational climate and learner performance statistically	8
Changing times	9
Induction of deputy principals	10
Training for curriculum leadership	10
Leadership in an age of technology: The information and communication technology revolution	11
School governing bodies and leadership	12

Chapter 2: Contextual factors and leadership at underperforming schools	15
<i>Charl C. Wolhuter, Leentjie van Jaarsveld & Branwen H. Challens</i>	
Abstract	16
Introduction	16
Aim of the research	20
Theoretical framework	20
Education quality	21
The education system	23
Societal context	25
Context of the South African education system	26
South African education and schools: Societal context	29
Geography	29
Demography	30
Economy	30
Socio-cultural situation	30
Political system	31
Religion and life and world philosophy	32
The leveraging power of leadership and contextual factors or impediments facing South African schools	33
Research method	36
Findings	38
Geography	38
Demography	39
Socio-cultural situation	40
Economy	40
Political forces: Local government	41
Religion	42
Role of teacher trade unions	42
Effect of the school governing body	43
Effect of the National Education Policy and the Provincial Policy	43
Conclusion	44

Chapter 3: Moral leadership: An imperative for principals in underperforming schools 45

Branwen H. Challens, Charl C. Wolhuter & Leentjie van Jaarsveld

Abstract	46
Introduction	46
Aim of the research	48
Poor academic performance	48
Moral leadership	50
Leadership as a moral activity	52
Moral imperative	53
Theoretical framework	55
Research method	57
Findings	59
Relationships within the schools	59
Support and caring in the school	61
Respect and trust	63
Strengthening of moral values	65
A comparison of the findings with those of high-performing schools	66
Relationships	66
Support and caring	67
Respect and trust	68
Strengthening of moral values	69
Discussion	70
Conclusion	73

Chapter 4: Influence of school principal's leadership on the school climate in underperforming schools 75

Leentjie van Jaarsveld, Branwen H. Challens & Charl C. Wolhuter

Abstract	76
Introduction	77
Overview of school principal leadership and school climate	78
School effectiveness	78

Poorly performing schools	80
Principal leadership	83
Management by the principal	84
The school climate	85
Statement of the problem	87
Research methodology	88
Purpose and objectives of the study	88
Research design, paradigm and method	88
Participants	89
Results and analysis	89
School principal leadership	90
Leadership and the climate	91
School principal management	91
School climate	93
Principals	93
Teachers	94
Learner performance	95
Socio-economic issues and parents	95
Teachers	96
Infrastructure and resources	97
Summary	97
Discussion	98
Conclusion	101
Recommendations	102
Limitations	102

Chapter 5: The principal's leading role during change in schools towards sustainable improvement in disadvantaged settings **103**

Arrie van Wyk

Abstract	103
Introduction	104
Background and statement of the problem	105
Conceptual and theoretical framework	109

Concept clarification	109
Change	109
Leadership	110
Theoretical framework	110
Unfreezing phase	110
Implementation phase	112
Refreezing phase	112
Empirical investigation	113
Aim of the investigation	113
Research orientation and design	113
Study population and sampling	113
Background	113
Purposive sampling	114
Selection criteria	114
Ethical issues	115
Validity and reliability	115
Data collection and analysis	116
Background of and responses from the participants	116
School A	116
School B	118
School C	120
School D	122
School E	123
Analysis, interpretation and discussion	125
Unfreezing phase	125
Implementation phase	125
Curriculum leadership	126
Analysis of results and accountability sessions	126
Extra classes and study camps	126
Monitoring and controlling systems and measuring tools	126
Contract with parents	127
Caring, support and feedback	127
Exemplary leadership	128
Feedback from the community	128

Intergovernmental cooperation	129
Communication	129
External motivators	129
Internal motivators	129
Incentives and celebration of results	130
Empowering leadership	130
Trust and support	130
Refreezing phase	130
Summary	131
Recommendations	132
Conclusion	133

Chapter 6: School leadership, school climate and academic performance: Results of a study in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa **135**

Leentjie van Jaarsveld & Kobus Mentz

Abstract	136
Introduction	136
The problem of academic performance	137
Conceptual and theoretical framework	139
School leadership and styles	140
Leadership	140
Leadership styles	142
School climate	147
Learner performance	149
Social interdependence theory	150
Empirical research	153
Purpose of the research	153
Research design	153
Population and sample	153
Data collection	153
Viability, reliability and ethical issues	154
Data analysis	155

Results	155
A principal's supportive behaviour	156
A principal's prescriptive behaviour	157
Involved behaviour of teachers	157
A principal's transforming leadership style	157
A principal's passive-avoidant leadership style	158
Discussion	160
Limitations	163
Conclusion	163
Chapter 7: School principal leadership in the 21st century	165
<i>Leentjie van Jaarsveld</i>	
Abstract	165
Introduction and background	166
Leadership and management: An overview	167
Leadership	167
Management	169
Women's leadership	170
Successful school principals	173
Research methodology and sample	177
Ethical considerations	180
Results	181
Challenges	181
Administrative issues	181
Community issues	182
Issues regarding human capital	182
Issues specifically experienced by women principals	183
Successes	184
Leadership and management	184
Staff	185
Words of advice from principals	185
What principals should realise, keep in mind and apply	185

Women school principals	187
Discussion	187
Conclusion	192
Summary	193
Chapter 8: A model for the induction of deputy principals in diverse school contexts	195
<i>Jan B. Khumalo</i>	
Abstract	195
Introduction	196
Problem statement	198
Conceptual-theoretical framework	202
Methodology	210
Empirical investigation	210
Methods	210
Data collection instrument	210
Sampling	211
Ethical aspects	212
Validity and reliability of the questionnaire	212
Content validity	212
Face validity	212
Construct validity	213
Reliability	213
Data collection procedures	213
Data analysis	214
The Deputy Principal Induction Model	215
Phases of the model	216
Pre-service phase	216
Induction	217
Continuing professional development	219
Discussion	220
Recommendations	222
Conclusion	223

Chapter 9: The need for curriculum leadership training programmes for members of school management teams	225
<i>Tshepo T. Tapala</i>	
Abstract	225
Introduction	226
Statement of the problem	230
Responsibilities of heads of departments	231
Teaching	232
Extra- and co-curricular	232
Personnel	232
Administrative	233
Communication	233
Responsibilities of deputy principals	234
General or administrative	234
Teaching	235
Extra- and co-curricular	235
Personnel	235
Interaction with stakeholders	236
Communication	236
Responsibilities of principals	236
General or administrative duties	237
Personnel management	238
Teaching	239
Interaction with stakeholders	239
Communication	239
Theoretical framework	240
Research methodology	242
Purpose	242
Main research question	242
Sub-research question	242
Research aims	242
Research design	243
Sampling	243
Data collection	244

Data analysis and interpretation	245
Ethical considerations	245
Results and analysis of the curriculum leadership barriers experienced by school management teams	246
A lack of preparation, training and development	246
Workload, conflicting priorities and a lack of time	247
A lack of resources	248
Negative school culture	249
Poor learner discipline	249
Changes in education policy and curriculum	250
Socio-economic challenges	251
Ambiguity of roles	252
Poor communication	253
Recommendations	254
Conclusion	255

Chapter 10: Managing schools with the use of information and communications technology: Needs of rural and township school principals **257**

C.P. van der Vyver & Annadene C. Malan

Abstract	258
Introduction	258
Background and problem statement	260
Conceptual-theoretical framework	262
Concept clarifications	262
Applying the management task-area theory in the use of information communication technologies in school management	264
Administration management	266
Human resource management (staff and learners)	268
Management of physical resources	268
Financial management	269
Curriculum management	270
School-community relations	271
Communication as management sub-task	271

Research paradigm	272
Research design and methodology	273
Discussion of results	275
Contextual factors	275
Attitude towards information communication technologies	275
General information communication technology skills and knowledge	278
Use of information communication technologies in management areas	279
Using information communication technologies in communication	281
Use of information and communications technology software (programs)	282
Summary of findings	283
Conclusion	283

Chapter 11: The influence of local school governance structures on creating an opportunity for establishing a positive school climate **285**

Deon Vos

Abstract	285
Introduction	287
Problem statement and problem question	288
Research objective	289
Conceptual grounding	289
School climate	289
Nature of governance structures in schools in the South African context	292
Influence of the school governing body on the school climate	297
Research methodology	298
Research design	298
Purpose of the empirical investigation	299
Case study	299
Pilot study	300

Study population	300
Ethical aspects and administrative procedures	301
Analytical techniques	302
Interpreting the data	302
Findings and discussion	302
Generic question	303
Key area 1: Policies	303
Key area 2: Meetings	304
Key area 3: Assets	305
Key area 4: Finances	305
Key area 5: Curriculum	306
Key area 6: Leadership	308
Key area 7: Safety and discipline	309
Key area 8: Parents and community	311
Key area 9: Basic functionality	312
Open question	312
Recommendations	313
Conclusion	313
Chapter 12: Leadership and the challenges faced by South African schools in a changing world	315
<i>Charl C. Wolhuter</i>	
Abstract	315
Introduction	317
Insights from empirical research comparing poorly performing South African schools with well-performing South African schools	317
Conclusion	323
References	327
Index	369

Abbreviations, Figures and Tables Appearing in the Text

List of Abbreviations

ANA	Annual National Assessment
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
DP	Deputy Principal
DPIM	Deputy Principal Induction Model
FET	Further Education and Training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HoD	Head of Department
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
MLQ	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
PDNAQ	Professional Development Needs Analysis Questionnaire
PIRLS	Progress in Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SA-SAMS	South African Schools Administration System
SAFTU	South African Federation of Trade Unions
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies

List of Figures

Figure 8.1: The Deputy Principal Induction Model. 215
Figure 10.1: Management task-area model. 265
Figure 11.1: School climate. 291

List of Tables

Table 5.1: Sample selection. 114
Table 5.2: Pass rates of sample schools prior to and after 2011. 131
Table 6.1: The summary of transformational, transactional and passive-avoidant leadership styles. 143
Table 6.2: Interdependence theory: Explained. 152
Table 6.3: Principals' and teachers' perceptions with regard to leadership styles and school climate. 156
Table 6.4: Results regarding the perceptions in low- and high-performing schools with regard to the school climate and leadership style. 159
Table 7.1: Details of the participants. 179
Table 7.2: The principals' words of advice. 186
Table 8.1: Distribution of questionnaires. 214
Table 9.1: Sample representation and categorisation. 244

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Preface

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This volume was inspired by research on leadership in top-performing schools conducted by a research team in which two of the volume editors were involved. That research was in three articles published in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal in 2018. The common conclusion amongst the three articles was that leadership in South African schools can go a long way to address a large number of challenges faced by South African schools. On the other hand, Education Leadership is a young field of study, particularly in South Africa. With new policy directives and developments in education faculties across the country, it is set to have a stronger presence in graduate education programmes. However, as a young – but promising – field, there is a dearth of published research on Education Leadership, specifically in the South African context. Hence, this volume explores leadership in South African schools from a number of perspectives

With the mission of contributing towards opening the scholarly field of Education Leadership in South Africa, this volume presents reports on research exploring Education Leadership from a number of perspectives. These include leadership (or the lack thereof) in poorly performing schools, curriculum leadership,

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leadership and information and communications technology, the situation of female principals, leadership and change, the position of deputy principals (DPs) and the role of school governing bodies. The authors are optimistic that the research published in this volume will stimulate follow-up research, which, together with this research, will form the basis of inspirational education and training of education leaders. Such pre-service (but especially in-service) education and training, followed by these leaders' reflection of their own practice, should inform ever better and precise theory of Education Leadership.

Leadership as an instrument to address the challenges faced by South African schools

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■ Abstract

With education in South Africa viewed as an instrument to create the desired society, and it being in dire straits, *leadership* in education appears to be the one factor that can help pull education out of its poor state. This volume contains chapters in which critical issues in South African education, and the (potential) role of leadership in addressing these issues, are the

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subject of investigation. These issues include the debilitating conditions faced by South African schools, the moral vacuum of the South African society as a particularly problematic aspect of this context, the changing context with which schools have to contend, the situation of female principals at South African schools, both the possibilities and the problems information and communication technology presents to school leaders, the management of the never-ending cycles of curriculum change and the role of DPs and school governing bodies as part of the leadership cadre of schools. This chapter serves as an introductory chapter to the volume and provides an overview of the entire book. From this overview, the scope and purposes of the book will transpire.

Keywords: Educational leadership; School governing bodies; School climate; South Africa; South African education.

■ Introduction

For at least the past 75 years, since the conclusion of the Second World War, education has come to be seen as a most potent instrument to both increase the quality of life of individuals and to create an ideal society. This contention is, once again, formulated, very lucidly, in the recent publication of Wolfgang Lutz and Reiner Klingholz (2017), *Education First! From Martin Luther to Sustainable Development*, in which they plead for using education to bring about global order, as visualised by the international community in the Sustainable Developmental Goals – the international community’s Vision for the World of 2030. Substantiating this belief, they cite numerous empirical studies. The following three examples will suffice. In Germany, people from the lowest income group (i.e. those earning less than €980 per month) live about 10 years less than those earning more than €2450 (the highest income group) (Lutz & Klingholz 2017:146). Secondly, the so-called Easterlin effect, that is the effect of education on the happiness of people, has been demonstrated based on research from all over the world. A clear

pattern has emerged from these empirical researches from all over the world: the more educated segments of the population describe themselves as 'very happy' or 'happy' to a much higher degree than the less educated. In the age group 35 - 45 years, 90% of people with tertiary education qualifications classify themselves into one of the two categories of 'very happy' or 'happy', whilst 85% of people with a medium level of education do so and 78% of people with a lower level of education do so (Lutz & Klingholz 2017:152). The third example involves detailed, extensive household surveys conducted by the Indonesian government just months before the 2004 tsunami struck as well as 10 months later, making possible the calculation of correlates of survival from the tsunami. It was found that the level of education of citizens could be correlated strongly to people's resilience, that is people getting back to their normal lives and finding re-employment (Lutz & Klingholz 2017:156).

South Africa is no exception to this international pattern of placing uncapped faith in education. In fact, in the post-1994 socio-political reconstruction of the country, education has been assigned a pivotal role. In policy documents (and echoed in the political and public discourse in education too), a wide range of societal objectives of education can be detected. These objectives include the following: economic objectives: stamping out poverty and being instrumental in the country's economic productivity and development; social objectives: bringing about a society where there is no racial, gender-based or other forms of discrimination, establishing a society that is socially mobile and dismantling artificial hierarchies and abstractions standing in the way of progress. Cultural goals include empowering people so that they can participate in the process of cultural expression; political goals include equipping citizens to take part in the processes of a democratic society and nation building - building a communal value system for a society that will be characterised by democracy, equality, freedom, peace, justice, tolerance and stability (cf. Wolhuter 2021). An oft-quoted line by previous South African President Nelson Mandela states that 'education is the most

powerful weapon for changing the world' (USAID 2019), whilst in his most 2019 State of the Nation Address, current South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said (Kiley 2019):

If we are to break the cycle of poverty, we need to educate the children of the poor ... Early grade reading is possibly the single most important factor in overcoming poverty, unemployment and inequality. (p. 35)

There is, however, one major problem in the above line of thinking. For South African education with regard to aggregate figures, and for a large percentage of schools, outcomes of education are at such a level that it casts a serious doubt on the possibility of a positive dividend of education (i.e. outcomes measured based on all three ways of declaring matriculation results, the annual assessment tests ran until a few years ago and the results of international test series). The shocking statistics obtained from all three of these assessment exercises are given and discussed in Chapter 2 of this volume. Trade union movement SAFTU (South African Federation of Trade Unions) has commented on the release of the 2018 matriculation results stating that the South African education system adds no value to the economy (Pedro 2019).

Whilst the causal factors explaining these are manifold, this book reveals that leadership as one. A panoramic overview of these factors is given in Chapter 2; the theme of this chapter is that *leadership* is one factor that can help overcome many of the debilitating factors hampering the good performance of learners. The research reported in the chapters of this volume is connected with (and emanated logically from) research that investigated the leveraging effect of leadership in well-performing schools in South Africa (see Challens, Van Jaarsveld & Wolhuter 2018; Van Jaarsveld, Challens & Wolhuter 2018; Wolhuter, Van Jaarsveld & Challens 2018). The chapters in this volume will focus on some particularly critical factors that hamper attaining good performance levels (and/or which have the potential to have a positive effect on performance levels of learners). These factors

include the debilitating societal context in which South African schools operate, the moral vacuum in South African society, the organisational climate of schools, the curriculum, information and communication technology (ICT) in education, school government structures and how leadership or the absence thereof plays (or can play) the role of an intervening factor. In this volume, these issues and how they affect performance levels will be the subject of investigation. This chapter serves as an introductory chapter to the volume, giving an overview of the book. From this overview, the scope and purposes of the book will also transpire.

■ **Critical factors in South African education that have an impact on learner performance**

■ **Debilitating context**

Chapter 2 highlights education as being instrumental in creating the desired South African society, and this would be entailing an ambitious host of economic, political and social objectives. This is by no means unprecedented in world history, as the decades after the Second World War, culminating in the 1960s, constitute a time when there was uncapped belief in the world for the societal ameliorative power of education (see Wolhuter 2015). This was a time when structural-functionalism and modernisation theories – which formed a theoretical base for such beliefs – were much in vogue (Wolhuter 2015). Yet in the ensuing decade of the 1970s, there was a reversal of trends. Pessimism prevailed in the scholarly community and even seeped through to the public discourse with regard to the societal elevating power of education. Social-structuralism and the modernisation theory were replaced by reproduction theories as the avant-garde of social theories on education. *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reforms and Contradictions in Economic Life* by Sam Bowles and Harry Gintis (1976) was a trendsetter in this field. However, this sparked

off a Copernican revolution regarding education–society interrelations – rather than shaping society, education is the hapless victim of societal structures. This book by Bowles and Gintis initiated a new paradigm on thinking about education–society interrelations (see Wolhuter 2007). A recent addition is the book by the well-known scholar of education Michael Apple, *Can education change society?* (2013), in which the author maintains that education is impotent in changing society; first the society has to change before education can have an effect. In Chapter 2, it is noted that a large part of the scholarly literature on education in South Africa likewise is based on the tacit premise that context is deterministic. It is also noted that empirical evidence refuting this belief exists; this can also be seen in research recently conducted on the role of leadership in negotiating contextual impediments in top-performing schools in South Africa. Chapter 2 reports on research following up on this research, this time investigating leadership in negotiating context at poorly performing South African schools.

■ Moral vacuum

One very seriously debilitating part of the societal context in which South African schools operate is the moral vacuum existing in the country. The lack of a common hierarchy of values to which the majority of citizens subscribe, in word and especially in deed, is evident in abhorrently high incidences of crime and rampant corruption in which perpetrators engage shamelessly and with impunity. To illustrate the first – levels of crime – the number of murders per year in the country has risen from 15 554 in 2011–2012 to 21 022 in 2018–2019, translating into 58 murders per day (BBC 2019). The number of murders per year per unit population is the fifth highest in the world (after Belize, Honduras, Jamaica and El Salvador) (BBC 2019). Regarding the second, state capture during the second Zuma administration cost the country R1.5 trillion, a third of the R4.9 trillion gross domestic product (GDP) of the period (Merten 2019).

At the intersection of the moral vacuum existing in South Africa and the work of schools and school leaders, a number of issues are salient. Since the establishment of the current political dispensation in 1994 in South Africa, schools are being looked upon for the inculcation of values and thus for the restoration of a moral compass for the country (Department of Education 2001; Solomons & Fataar 2011). Secondly, a school cannot function without a common moral code to which the school community (principal, teachers, learners and parents) subscribes. Thirdly, because of the school being an extension of the community or society, the absence of a moral compass in society compounds the imperative (as well as the difficulty of the task) of the school to establish a moral order. All this adds to the increased importance of the moral leadership facet of the principal in South African schools. In Chapter 3, the moral leadership of principals in poorly performing schools in South Africa comes under the spotlight.

■ **Organisational climate of schools**

Since 1980 scholars have become intensely interested in the organisational culture of schools (see Van der Westhuizen, Oosthuizen & Wolhuter 2008). Researchers tend to define organisational culture in terms of cultural manifestations that are shared by the majority of the members of a particular organisation, that is those that characterise a particular organisation (Martin 2002:91). Swanepoel (2003) analysed the concept of organisational culture and enumerated its tangible and intangible foundations and manifestations. The intangible foundations pertain to the common beliefs, philosophy, mission, vision, goals and objectives, suppositions, ethos, values and norms of an organisation. The tangible manifestations of organisational culture are verbal manifestations (such as events, story-telling, heroes and heroines in the history of the organisation), behavioural manifestations and visual manifestations. That organisational culture has a powerful effect on the members of an organisation

has been demonstrated in, for example, empirical research conducted by Van der Westhuizen et al. (2008) on how organisational culture can be harnessed to create good learner discipline in a school. Organisational climate refers to the lived experience of the members of an organisation who belong to a particular organisational culture (Madhukar 2017). In Chapter 3, Van Jaarsveld, Challens and Wolhuter survey literature related to the relation between school leadership, school organisational climate and performance levels of learners, and investigate these three aspects and their interrelationships in a sample comprising poorly performing South African schools.

■ **Turning around poorly performing schools**

After the focus laid by Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 on poorly performing schools in contrast to well-performing schools, the focus in Chapter 5 shifts to the actual turning around of poorly performing schools by means of leadership. The author used Lewin's three-phase model of change (unfreezing phase, implementation phase and refreezing phase) to investigate how the appointment of new principals in five previously underperforming schools turned these schools into well-performing schools.

■ **Testing the relationship between leadership, organisational climate and learner performance statistically**

In the discussion so far it has frequently been stated that there is a correlation between leadership and the organisational climate of schools, and between these two factors and learner achievement levels. Virtually all these chapters are significantly based on this premise, and authors marshal empirical evidence of published research to substantiate their claims. In Chapter 6, these relationships are tested in the South African context, using an extensive data set acquired from 72 schools in KwaZulu-Natal. Matriculation Mathematics was used, as along with data from two

questionnaires completed by principals and teachers of the schools in the sample. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (36-item, 5-point Likert scale) was used to investigate the transformational, transactional and passive-avoidant leadership styles based on statements (Oberfield 2012) and the Organisational Climate Description Questionnaire – Rutgers Secondary (OCDQ-RS) (34-item, 4-point Likert scale) were used to investigate the climate of the schools.

■ Changing times

The 21st century is a time of momentous and constant, ever-increasing changes. The world of the 21st century looks much different from the world of the 20th century. Some of the key changes shaping a new world today, and detectable in all parts of the globe, are the following: the ecological crisis and the imperative for sustainable development; demographic changes (the population explosion at an aggregate level in the Global South, and population stabilisation and even shrinkage in parts of the Global North; increased population mobility; changing age profiles – an ageing profile in the countries of the Global North and a more mature age pyramid amongst the nations of the Global South; and urbanisation, especially pronounced in the Global South); simultaneously increased economic affluence and growing inequality; a nascent knowledge economy; the changing nature of work and employment; a rising informal economic sector in the nations of the Global South; changing social patterns – a decrease in the importance of the primary (family) and the secondary (workplace) social grouping; the rising prominence of tertiary social groupings (i.e. functional interest groups); the rise of more egalitarian societies; the rise of more diverse, multicultural societies; a proceeding technological revolution; the ICT revolution being particularly salient; political trends – democratisation and the demise of the once omnipotent nation-state, ceding control in two directions, to supra-national and international structures on the one hand, and on the other, to

sub-national and local structures and religion-philosophical trends, which include the persistent but changed presence of religion in society, and the rise of the Creed of Human Rights as the new global moral order (see Steyn & Wolhuter 2020). This new context in which schools operate obviously presents new challenges to school leadership. In Chapter 7, the author reports on her research in which she interviewed 14 principals from a variety of schools all over South Africa with regard to their experience and handling of this changing context. Special attention was given to the situation and experience of women principals (a generation ago, apart from girls-only schools, women principals in schools did not exist).

■ Induction of deputy principals

In the discussion of school leadership, one part that is often overlooked is the recruiting and preparation field of principals, namely the deputy principalship. In Chapter 8, the author reports on research from which he has developed a model for the induction of DPs.

■ Training for curriculum leadership

A pivotal part of any school and any education programme is the curriculum. This is set to change in line with socio-political contextual changes and in step with scientific, technological and education progress. From this, it can rightfully be concluded that the curriculum in South African schools underwent major changes in the past 25 years. Not only that, but it was the terrain of a series of changes. There have been at least three major waves of change. The first was Curriculum 2005 in 1997–1998, which brought about the much-hailed outcomes-based education in South African education programmes. That was followed by the National Curriculum Statement and later its re-contextualised version – the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. A curriculum is much more than merely a statement related to content to be taught in schools. In a landmark

publication, Stephen Radenbusch (2008), economist at the University of Chicago, treats the issue with the input-output of education or school effectiveness or education policy research as being far too simplistic to encapsulate the essentials of the operation of educational institutions and programmes. Radenbusch argues that 40 years of research using the input-output model, that is, where a simple, linear $x \rightarrow y$ relation between an input variable (such as funding, resources, policy interventions or textbooks, for example) and learning outcomes was assumed, has no successful track record of improvement of education. The reason is that this model is incomplete. Whilst input factors such as resources are certainly important, what is actually driving improved learning is the improved instruction factor – that which takes place within the classroom. A concept helpful here is that of the instruction core, as clarified by David Cohen, Stephen Radenbusch and Deborah Ball's (2003:122) frequently used definition, 'instruction consists of interaction amongst teachers and students around content, in environments'. In a recent volume, renowned South African Education scholar Brahm Fleisch (2018) uses this instructional triad, of teachers, learners and content forming the three angles and instruction placed in the centre of the triangle, as the kernel of where the work should be done to turn around the South African education system, particularly related to the poor learning outcomes therein.

In Chapter 9, the author turns the spotlight on curriculum leadership for school leaders (principals, DPs and heads of departments [HoDs]) and investigates, by means of semi-structured interviews, the training needs of principals, DPs and HoDs with regard to curriculum leadership.

■ Leadership in an age of technology: The information and communication technology revolution

In the discussion of Chapter 7, it is stated the current age is one of change; school leaders today are finding themselves in a world

radically different from the world even one generation ago. One of the key features of the 21st-century world is that technological progress is surging ahead. One very salient facet of the technological revolution is the information, communications and transport technology revolution. At present, an instant 24-h planetary information network is rapidly taking shape, because of free access to and widespread use of the personal computer, the Internet, the fax machine and the mobile telephone. Currently, more than 200 billion emails are sent across the world each day (Dijkstra 2017:62).

The ICT revolution has radical implications for knowledge. For the purposes of this chapter, information refers to data that have been grouped into categories, classes or other patterns. Knowledge refers to information that has been further refined into general patterns and interpreted within a framework or structure of other existing knowledge. The stock of knowledge is multiplying at an ever-increasing rate. Furthermore, knowledge has become democratised, as everyone has access to knowledge with the help of electronic media and sources. In addition, ICT has opened up a new world and new vistas for school leadership. In Chapter 10, research regarding ICT and school leaders at South African schools is discussed. The author surveys the challenges and especially the possibilities brought about by ICT with respect to school leadership. These pertain to effective management and administration, information systems, human resources (both staff and learners) management, management of physical resources, financial management, curriculum management, school-community relations management and communication. He then investigates the ICT training needs of 10 principals of rural and township schools.

■ School governing bodies and leadership

As was indicated in the discussion in Chapter 7, the current world is ever-changing and an already changed world (from the one known even in the most recent past), and one of the forceful trends in the world today is that of democratisation. The empowerment of the individual, the loss of control by the state and the current wave of economic liberalisation in the world

have also spawned a process of democratisation, which (in the 1990s) swept dramatically first through the countries of the erstwhile Eastern Bloc, followed by the countries of the Global South. The ICT revolution too has played its role in democratising the world and in democratising the influence of the individual.

In the domain of school governance, this democratisation movement in society has become manifest in decentralised governance (devolving decision-making powers from the central government to sub-national and local levels) and the school autonomy movement, whilst the trend of the privatisation of education, though having strong roots in neo-liberal economic trends, similarly can be traced back to the democratisation trend in society. These trends are visible in well-known reform initiatives from the Chicago School Reform Programme of the late 1980s (see Walberg & Niemiec 1994) and the Kentucky Initiative in the 1990s (see Lindle 1996) in the United States of America, the 1977 Taylor Report in England (Department of Education and Science 1977), changed legislation in state after state in Australia, creating more decentralised and local government structures for schools (see Gamage 1994; Gamage, Sipple & Partridge 1996; Sharpe 1994), the recommendations of the Picot Committee in New Zealand (see Williams et al. 1997) and the ensuing 1989 *New Zealand Education Act* (Wylie 1995:54), the school voucher systems in Sweden (see Vamstad 2014) and Chile (see Carnoy 1998) to the *Minban* schools in the People's Republic of China, not known for democracy, but where the *Minban* community-based private schools now account for more than 20% of all schools (Ryan 2019:142-143). Keddie (2016:250) writes that the concept of school autonomy has been 'adopted around the world with remarkable speed and consistency'. Since 1990, private schools have risen in prominence in many countries (see Walford 2005). What comes to mind, being a part of this worldwide movement, is the rise of Charter Schools in the United States of America, after the State of Minnesota passed the first Charter School Law in 1991. By 2011, there were already 5600 Charter Schools in the United States of America with a total enrolment of more than 2 million (Zinsmeister 2014).

As part of the post-1994 restructuring of education in South Africa, in tune with the embracement of the principles of democracy and as a response to one of the main criticisms raised against the pre-1994 education system as being authoritarian, the government has – commendably – laid down decentralisation as one of the founding principles of the post-1994 education dispensation (see Wolhuter 1999). However regrettable the current plans to curtail the autonomy of schools (part of a very ominous trend of undermining the autonomy of civil society), the author of the final chapter in this volume lists nine domains where School Governing Bodies in South Africa have decision-making powers: policies, meetings, assets, finances, curriculum, leadership, safety and discipline, parents and the community and, lastly, the basic functionality of the school. Clearly then, an envisaged integral part of the team in the leadership cockpit of South African schools, school governing bodies (SGBs) should form part of any discussion on leadership. In the last chapter of the volume, the author reports on his research on the functioning of SGBs in top-performing schools in two provinces in South Africa.

The discourse of leadership in schools, in particular in South African schools, encompasses a very wide terrain, indeed very much further than the walls of the principal's office – a shortcoming in the conceptualisation of school leadership pointed out in the first chapter of this volume. The selection of chapters in the book then, in turn, focuses on aspects of this very wide terrain, as a contribution to the scholarly discourse on school leadership in South Africa.

Education leadership is a fairly new field of scholarship and interest, particularly in the South African context, and with an aura of greater inspiration and befitting the 21st century and the professional status of teachers much better than the field of Education Management – which it seems to supersede – this scholarly field is clearly in need of mapping and identifying roads of potential fruitful scholarly investigation. These imperatives, as well as the desire to give guidance for praxis, are the purposes this volume is pursuing.

Contextual factors and leadership at underperforming schools

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■ Abstract

Poor achievement has been identified as one of the most pressing challenges facing South African schools. Whilst learner achievement levels vary considerably amongst South African schools, there is a block of schools that can be identified as severely underperforming schools. The root causes of such poor performance are manifold, but as research conducted amongst well-performing schools has indicated, leadership-negotiating (education system and societal) contextual constraints and opportunities are the one factor that can make a difference. The aim of this research was to investigate leadership-negotiating contextual factors in a sample comprising two underperforming schools in two provinces. The principals and four teachers in each school were interviewed. The findings were contrasted with the results of a similar exercise that had been conducted in the previous year in a sample comprising top-achieving schools. The respondents in these poorly performing schools were often oblivious of contextual factors that had an impact on their schools, or in cases where they were aware of these, perceived them as singularly negative and themselves as powerless victims. Innovative responses to contextual impediments, much less creatively turning these into positive forces – characteristic features of top-performing schools – are absent in the poorly achieving schools. The authors can make one suggestion in rectifying this sorry state of affairs. Recent retirees of top-performing schools should be contracted as consultants to poorly performing schools in order to develop and to drive, with the school leaders themselves, a turnaround strategy.

Keywords: Contextual factors; Education policy; Leadership; Poorly achieving schools; South African education policy; South African schools.

■ Introduction

It has become a truism – in the public discourse and scholarly literature alike – to state that the education system of South

Africa is performing woefully below expectations. This statement is corroborated by, *inter alia*, citing achievement levels in all three areas of matriculation results, internal assessment exercises and international test series. In the most recent matriculation examination (at the time of writing), conducted in 2018, the aggregate pass rate was 78.2%; this indicated that 140 770 of the 790 843 learners who sat for the examinations failed (Times Live 2019). An even more alarming picture emanates from the Annual National Assessment (ANA) tests that the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) has been running in recent years. For example, in the 2014 assessment exercise, only 11%, 48% and 34% of Grade 9 learners demonstrated the competency level required in Mathematics, Home Language and First Additional Language, respectively (DoBE 2014:41-42). Most alarming, however, are results from international test series such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) and Progress in Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) tests. Seventy-five countries participated in the 2015 TIMSS test series. Learners from South Africa came second from the last in the Mathematics test; their average mark was 618 (the mid-point of the test was 500) (Mullis et al. 2017b). In the 2016 PIRLS reading test, learners from South Africa ended last from amongst the 51 participating countries, with 320 marks, compared to Russia and Singapore, who came out first and second with 581 and 576 marks, respectively (Mullis et al. 2017a). This low assessment of South Africa's education system and schools found in scholarly publications is repeated in the public discourse (see *Businessstech* 2019). One university rector, who happened to be an outspoken commentator on education in the media, declared that he was ashamed of the country's schools (Steyn 2013).

The causes for such poor performance can be searched for in many places, and are certainly manifold. In this chapter, in the section on the theoretical framework these causes or possible contributory causes will be surveyed, but what needs to be highlighted at this stage, as these are the motivation for the study, are two trends. The first is a reductionist and fatalistic tendency to ascribe poor performance (education system and

societal) to contextual factors, in particular poor endowment stemming from schools and education structures segregated in the past (see Mlachila & Moeletsi 2019:5; Spaul 2013; Wilkinson 2017). In this regard, the discourse chimes in with a long-standing feature detectable in the scholarly literature as well as political discussion on education in South Africa, namely to ascribe every ill and problem to past segregation policies and to the historically unequally developed panorama of schools (see Steyn & Van der Westhuizen 1992; Wolhuter 1999). This discourse also resonates with conflict paradigms in the international literature on education systems. Such paradigms, such as socio-economic reproduction, cultural reproduction, the dependency theory and world systems analysis, have proven to be very fashionable in recent years and decades (see Wolhuter 2008). However, empirical research on schools has demonstrated that the deterministic claims of these paradigms – portraying learners as powerless victims in the grips of socio-economic and political systems with ‘unequal power relations’ (to use the favourite term of advocates of these paradigms) – do not stand up to closer scrutiny (see Gladwell 2013).

This last point brings the discussion to the second feature regarding the scholarly and public discourse on education and the poor performance of learners in South African schools that needs to be pointed out: the negation of the role leadership can play in securing good performance, in particular in negotiating and overcoming (education system and societal) contextual obstacles. This despite the fact that research has shown that leadership or the management style constitutes a factor that can have an impact on the outcomes (learning achievement or otherwise) of schools (see Hallinger & Heck 2011; Leithwood et al. 2004, 2006). In an extensive review of the literature pertaining to the relation between leadership and learner achievement commissioned by the Wallace Foundation and conducted by scholars from the University of Minnesota and the University of Toronto, it was found that after teaching, leadership is the most powerful factor in schools that determines the performance levels of learners (Leithwood et al. 2004). Here three problems

need to be pointed out though. The first is that despite evidence on the strong bearing of leadership on performance levels of learners, research and schema on learner achievement tend to eschew the factor of leadership. For example, in what is probably the most extensive survey and synthesis of research conducted on the determinants of learner achievement, Johan Hattie's (2009) survey and synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to learner achievement, leadership does not appear in the host of determinants focussed upon. The second problem is the tendency to limit the conceptualisation of the domain of school leadership to that which is confined within the perimeter of the fence of the school premises, if not to the walls of the office of the school principal or the person of the school principal. A striking illustration of this feature is the title of the classic book on school leadership – Harry Wolcott's *The Man in the Principal's Office* (Wolcott 1973). This overly concentrating on the person of the principal may be related to the 'big person' theory of leadership, which long held sway but has recently been challenged by alternative theories on leadership (see Wolhuter, Van Jaarsveld & Challens 2018). Yet, as Wolhuter, Van der Walt and Steyn (2016) argue, the work and activities and accomplishments extend to and are determined by much more than what takes place within the school premises, in particular the education system and societal or community contextual forces and the way the principal deals with these.

In South African schools, in particular, it has also been shown that leadership can make a significant difference to South African schools, also in the face of adverse (contextual) circumstances (cf. Bush & Glover 2014; Naicker, Grant & Pillay 2016; Singh & Manser 2002). Bush and Glover (2014) and Naicker et al. (2016) identified research on how leadership at South African schools negotiates and obviates contextual challenges as one of the lacunae in research on leadership at South African schools. The research reported in this chapter was spurred by preceding research conducted in a sample comprising well-performing schools, where the role of leadership was investigated and found

to be instrumental in negotiating contextual challenges (of both an education system and a societal contextual kind) and placing schools on the road to top performance (Wolhuter et al. 2018).

■ Aim of the research

This research intends to fill the lacuna regarding the negation of the leadership factor in learner achievement and the neglect of the role of the principal in negotiating the education system and societal contextual factors. The aim of the research reported in this chapter was to investigate leadership (or the lack of up-to-standard leadership) in a sample comprising poorly performing South African schools. In this exercise, recently published research on commendable leadership playing its part in securing levels of good achievement in well-performing schools (Wolhuter et al. 2018) will be used as a mirror image to highlight areas of inadequate leadership in schools plagued by low achievement levels. This is done in the belief that leadership presents one area of intervention that can make a difference in resolving the woes of poorly performing schools in South Africa, a belief that can be substantiated by the literature cited above (Singh & Manser 2002).

The chapter commences with an explanation of the theoretical framework used in the study. The context of South African schools is then surveyed. Subsequently, the research method is explained and the results are presented and discussed.

■ Theoretical framework

This section will place the research discussed in the chapter in a larger theoretical framework. As is evident from the title of the chapter, the research reported in this chapter deals with an education project (which can be a single educational institution, i.e. a school or a national education system) and entails one dependent variable – performance (measured by academic achievement of learners) – and two independent variables,

namely context (which includes both the education system context and the societal context) and leadership. Performance is seen as the culmination or outcome of education quality. The theoretical framework, therefore, is about education quality and the components or determinants thereof, with context and leadership then portrayed as two pivotal components or determinants.

■ Education quality

Commendably, the global community has in its 2030 Vision for the World – the 17 Sustainable Development Goals – the goal of Ensuring Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promoting Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All (Goal 4 of the 17 Goals) (UNDP 2019). ‘Quality education’ is a keyword in this ideal. However, the concept of ‘quality’ in education is conceptually very difficult to define and is susceptible to many interpretations (see Lepeley 2019). Rather than attempting to arrive at a one-line definition of the concept, it may be a more meaningful exercise to enumerate the components of education quality (Wolhuter & Van der Walt 2018). Based on a modification of Bergmann’s (1996) model, Wolhuter (2014) distinguishes between the following components of education quality:

- input quality
- process quality
- outcome quality
- product quality.

Input quality refers to the state of the financial resources allocated and the physical infrastructure of a school or education system. The measurement of input quality is relatively easy. There are many indicators of input quality, and with respect to many of these, data are readily available. An example, at the level of a national education system, is the per learner public expenditure on education on each of the levels of primary education, secondary education and higher education (see Wolhuter 1997, 2011).

Process quality refers to the quality of teaching and learning taking place within the education project (be it a school or an education system). The following sub-components of process quality can be distinguished: the administrative substructure, the curriculum, the school environment, the teacher factor, the parental and family factor and learner input. The teacher factor, in turn, can be divided into the following sub-factors: the level of training or education of the teacher, the experience of the teacher, teacher input and teaching methods. Pertaining to teaching methods or teaching in the broadest sense of the word, the aspect of the language of learning and teaching should be mentioned, as this is a pressing problem in South African education as well. In large parts of the world, especially in the Global South, the language of learning and teaching is not the first language of the learner. This state of affairs has several disadvantages, a full discussion of which falls outside the scope of this chapter but is summarised in a World Bank (2005) report on this issue. What is important for this chapter is the school-related factors (or the school environment) in the equation of education quality equation. School-related factors include leadership, the organisation culture and the school climate. Leadership is a complex concept and has been defined in different ways by various scholars (Bush & Glover 2014). For the purposes of this chapter, the definition given by Leithwood and Riehl (2008) will be used, namely that leadership in the education context refers to the role played by school principals and governing bodies in the realisation of the vision of the school.

Outcome quality refers to the outcome of the teaching and learning process or activity, that is the achievement levels of learners at the end of a school or education programme. Whilst in South Africa the matriculation results have attained the maximum publicity, the ANA tests and international test series mentioned above are all indicators of outcome quality as well.

Product quality refers to the effect, dividend or impact of education supplied or received. This includes both the effect of education on the lives of individual learners (e.g. in increasing the

individual's earning power he or she can command in the labour market) and on the well-being of society (e.g. the force of education in establishing a particular hierarchy of values or in entrenching a culture of democracy).

The focus of this chapter (as is clearly suggested in the title) is on outcomes and leadership as one of the processes controlling outcomes in education. In the field of Comparative and International Education, it is a basic theorem that education systems are shaped by societal contextual forces. It was also explained above that the school principal as a leader finds him- or herself in a context located outside the perimeters of the school fence, and in exercising his or her leadership role, a twofold context is negotiated. These are the education system context and the societal context. The next two sections will explain the theoretical framework of the education system and the societal context, respectively.

■ The education system

A school is part of a more extensive education system or, rather, a nested hierarchy of systems (e.g. in South Africa, a school is, firstly, part of a provincial education system, which in turn, is part of a national system of education). It is the operation of this system that appoints the principal and the teachers, that pays the principal and the teachers, that determines the curriculum which will be taught in the school, that sets the limits of the principal's authority and so forth.

An education system can be described as a structure or framework for education, to fulfil the educational needs of a target group. The first keyword in this definition is 'structure'. This concept refers to a set of components organised into a whole. The education system consists of four basic components (Mugo & Wolhuter 2013):

- education system policy
- education system administration

- the structure of teaching and learning
- support services. (pp. 75–93)

Each of these components consists of a number of elements, which will now be unpacked.

The education system policy can be described as a statement of intent of the way in which the identified needs of a target group are to be supplied. The education system policy component consists of the following four elements:

- The mission of the particular education system: The mission describes that which the education system should achieve.
- The vision: A concise statement of what the ideal education system looks like.
- Aims and objectives: The aims of the education system specify the expected ideals to be realised in the long term (5–10 years). The objectives, on the other hand, are short-term (1–5 years) milestones to be reached in order to achieve the aims of the education system.
- Format of the education system policy: The education system policy can be presented in various formats, such as acts, ordinances, government notices, white papers, regulations and rules.

In order to realise the policy, the other three components are set in place.

The education system administration component refers to the maintenance and management of the education system, providing respectively a substructure and a superstructure so that the education system policy can be implemented by the structure for teaching and learning.

The structure of teaching and learning component comprises the structural combination of all educational institutions at the different educational levels, for example the pre-primary, primary, secondary, post-secondary and higher education levels, as well as the possibilities of student movement within and amongst the

various educational institutions according to the differentiated needs of students (cf. Mochwanaesi 2001). The structure for teaching and learning consists of the following elements: education levels, educational institutions, education programmes, the learners, the educators, curricula, methods of teaching, methods of learning, the language of learning and teaching, assessment and physical infrastructure.

The education system component support services can be described as the specialised non-educational services needed to improve the quality, efficiency and effectivity of the educational activities. The following elements can be identified: support services to the educator, support services to the learners and support services to the teaching activities and structures.

■ Societal context

As has been stated above, neither an education system nor the educational institutions in such a system come into existence in an incidental or haphazard way, but are shaped by the societal context in which the education system or educational institutions are embedded. It is customary in the scholarly field of Comparative and International Education to distinguish between the following aspects of this societal context: geography, demography, science and technology, social system, economy, politics, and religion and life and world philosophy (see Steyn & Wolhuter 2020).

Features of geography that have an impact on an education system or institution are location, size (e.g. in the case of a national education system, the size of the country or in the case of a school, the extent of the catchment area of the school), shape (e.g. in the case of a national education system, the shape of the country), topography, climate and biota. Demography refers to population features and dynamics. Aspects of demography that have a bearing on education systems include the size of the population, the population density, the population growth rate and age profile.

The level of technological development of a country or community will affect the nature of not only its education system but also what is possible in that system. Features of the social system that influence education include the system of social stratification, the existence of social capital and social pathologies and the cultural and language patterns extant in the society or community.

Aspects of the economy that have a bearing on education include the level of economic development and the structure of economic activities (the numbers of the population engaged in various kinds of economic activities, such as agriculture, industry, services, etc.). The percentages of a country's workforce occupied in different kinds of economic activities will impact on the education system, particularly to the extent an education system equips learners for their prospective careers.

The political system of a country constitutes another shaping factor of education systems. The policy of the ruling party determines not only the type of education system that will be chosen but also the educational goals and curricula in schools. The type of political system in a country affects the education set-up in the country. Lastly, religion and the life and world philosophy in a community or society shape the supply of education. The life and world view of people in a society will inform, for example, the hierarchy of values that are inculcated in learners in schools.

To bring everything together, viewed from the vantage point of the topic of this chapter, leadership presents the one factor in the equation of learner achievement that has the power to mediate, even obviate, many of the contextual factors (including the debilitating factors of the education system and the societal context).

■ **Context of the South African education system**

Over the past decades, a number of publications have placed the South African education system within the international spectrum

of the development of education systems (see Wolhuter 1998, 2011, 2014; Wolhuter & Van der Walt 2018). On aggregate level, South African education compares well (see Wolhuter 1998, 2011, 2014). However, when zooming in on the components of quality, a big discrepancy is noticeable between input and output quality (see Wolhuter 2014; Wolhuter & Van der Walt 2018), pointing to a major inefficiency. For example, 6.06% of the GDP that South Africa spends on education places the country, as far as this indicator is concerned, 37th amongst the 186 countries worldwide (Indexmundi 2017). The per learner expenditure on primary, secondary and higher education levels in South Africa compares very favourably with other upper middle-income countries (such as Malaysia and Mexico) and even with some high-income countries (such as Greece, Portugal and Hong Kong) (Wolhuter 2011, 2014). Yet on the output side, such as in the PIRLS and the TIMSS international test series, South African learners end at the tail end, as has been pointed out above, in the Introduction.

When conducting an intra-national spectroscopy of South African schools, grave disparities become noticeable. This statement can be substantiated by, for example, focussing on the results of the annual matriculation examination. In the 2018 round of examinations, some 500 schools countrywide obtained a 100% pass rate, and a fifth of these schools had had 100% pass rates in the past 5 years (Parker 2019). At the other end, 12 schools had a zero pass rate, and 85 had a pass rate of under 40% (Xala 2019). Roughly, but still, very glaringly so, the main divide runs between the historically white and the historically black schools (cf. Wolhuter 2015).

After this inter- and intra-national spectroscopy of South African education was conducted, the second striking feature of South African education and schools that needs to be pointed out is that education and schools in South Africa are at once the terrain of momentous changes and being looked up to as the instrument for equally ambitious changes to be brought about in society. Regarding the first, as part of the socio-political reconstruction of the country since 1994, the education system

has been overhauled. The principles of post-1994 education policy can be summarised in the words 'desegregation', 'democratisation', 'decentralisation' and 'multiculturalism' (see Wolhuter 1999). As these represent, in many aspects, the diametrical opposite of the pre-1994 education dispensation, it spelt changes of seismic intensity.

At the same time, education in South Africa is seen (by the government and by society at large) to be an instrument for accomplishing an ambitious societal reconstruction project. Education is, namely, harnessed to pursue the following goals pertaining to societal reconstruction: economic objectives: eradicating poverty and promoting economic growth; social goals: establishing a society free from racial, gender and other kinds of unfair discrimination, creating a socially mobile society and the breaking down of artificial structures in the way of progress; cultural goals: empowering people so that everyone can take part in the process of cultural expression and political goals: enabling citizens to participate in the process of cultural expression, empowering citizens to take part in the processes of a democratic society and nation building – building a communal value system for a society with the key features being democracy, equality, freedom, peace, justice, tolerance and stability.

As one corollary of the maelstrom of changes outlined in the preceding two paragraphs, the third conspicuous feature of South African schools and education is the rising managerialism at least three levels of national governance, provincial governance and school governance. This ominous trend runs counter to the proclaimed policy principles of democratisation and decentralisation and is part of a general pernicious, even lethal, trend of governance, namely the stifling of the autonomy of civil society. The effect of all this is the decimation of all professional autonomy of the teacher and the relegation of the teacher to a civil servant performing tasks in the most prescriptive, mechanical and menial way (see De Clercq 2013; Du Plessis 2017).

One final debilitating feature of the South African education context that needs to be pointed out is the inefficiency of the entire South African civil service which has affected the national and provincial education ministries too. For example, of the 59 schools that had been intended to be built in the year 2016 - 2017, only 16 were built, and of the 620 schools destined to receive electricity, none received it (South Africa 2017).

Besides the above very debilitating education system factors, South African school leaders have to negotiate equally challenging societal contextual factors. It is the societal context of the South African education and schools to which the chapter will now turn.

■ South African education and schools: Societal context

■ Geography

South Africa is located in the temperate latitudes, meaning that overall, the country has a temperate climate with mild temperatures. Whilst temperature extremes are just not large enough for buildings (in affluent communities) to have central heating during winter months and not warm enough to make air conditioning essential (although air conditioning is abundantly available in affluent communities), mid-summer temperatures, especially when accompanied by high levels of humidity, can result in much discomfort, whilst short cold spells in mid-winter, with temperatures dropping beneath zero, can also be uncongenial. Torrential rains, especially (but by no means limited to) afternoons can also bring their share of inconvenience, especially where buildings and roads are not well-maintained. All of these are not conducive to optimal teaching and learning, especially for learners walking from home to school and back, and more so if they walk long distances.

■ Demography

At the day of writing, 24 October 2019, the United Nations gives the South African population as 58 793 206 (Worldometers 2019). The population density is high, not only in cities but, for historical and political-economic reasons, also in large tracts of rural South Africa (the ex-homelands). The population growth rate has been and still is high: it peaked at 3% per year in the early 1980s, after which it went on a slow decline, standing at present just below 1.5% per year (Worldometers 2019). Even a growth rate of 1.5% per year translates into a doubling of the population every 48 years. The growth rate places much strain on the education system, already suffering from a massive backlog and an equally debilitating administrative machine, as explained above.

■ Economy

Whilst South Africa is classified as an upper middle-income country (by the World Bank; classification based upon per capita income), inequality is high; in fact, the Gini index, standing at 63.0%, is the highest in the world (World Population Review 2019). This dubious status of the country as being the most unequal in the world was recently graphically illustrated in a main article in the international journal *Time* (2019). A related and concern-raising (if not more concern-raising) factor is the alarming - and rising - level of unemployment in South Africa. The latest available statistics at the time of writing (18 August 2019) put the unemployment rate in South Africa as having reached an unprecedented high of 29% (South Africa 2019). Needless to say, such high levels of unemployment make for a high incidence of poverty, with debilitating effects on the education of children being affected by such poverty.

■ Socio-cultural situation

Two features of the socio-cultural situation in South Africa are very conspicuous. One is diversity. This diversity can be illustrated

by referring to the linguistic set-up. There is no language spoken by a majority as first language. The most prevalent language in terms of the number of first-language speakers, isiZulu, is the first language of 22.7% of the population (South Africa 2018). The corresponding percentages of other languages are as follows: isiXhosa: 16.0%; Afrikaans: 13.5%; English: 9.6%; Sepedi: 9.1%; Setswana: 8.0%; Sesotho: 7.6%; Xitsonga: 4.5%; Siswati: 2.6%; Tshivenda: 2.4 and isiNdebele: 2.1% (South Africa 2018). The large number of both legal and illegal immigrants in South Africa is compounding the diversity. South Africa is home to some 2.2 million legal foreign nationals (Sokuto 2018). The best estimates of the number of illegal immigrants in South Africa is in the region of 5 million (Wilkinson 2018).

The second conspicuous feature of South African society is the extant lack of social capital. The current (2019, also regularly before that date) spate of xenophobic attacks and the friction amongst members of different population groups, which regularly bursts out in social media, in the news media and in court cases, testify to a lack of desired social cohesion. Lawlessness seems to be spiralling out of control in South Africa. A survey found that 75% of South Africans pay bribes when asked for a bribe by officialdom (Ethics Institute of South Africa 2020). Another feature of the social situation in South Africa, pointing to the lack of social capital, is the large-scale breakdown of family life. A minority of 34.9% of children in South Africa live with both their parents, 40.6% of children live in a house with a mother only and 3.7% in a house with a father only (South African Institute of Race Relations 2017). A frightening 85 500 households are headed by a child (South African Institute of Race Relations 2017). In more than six out of 10 births registered in South Africa, the father is 'unknown' (Gous 2018).

■ Political system

In the discussion above of the South African education system context, with which school leaders in the country have to contend,

mention has been made of the rising bureaucratisation and widespread inefficiency in the civil service or political administration of the country. To this should be added the political context of policy uncertainty and threatening, destabilising populism, all of which create a very debilitating context for school leaders to fulfil their roles. Further to this should be added the lack of a responsible and accountable government (as no one is held accountable for even the gravest of aberrations), widespread corruption, nepotism, cronyism and patronage politics (see Johnson 2019; Olivier 2017; Pauw 2017). The lack of a good example on the part of top leaders makes the creation of a culture of work dedication amongst teachers and discipline amongst learners difficult.

■ Religion and life and world philosophy

Whilst 81.2% of South Africans regard themselves as Christians (Pew Research Center 2016), this statement needs to be qualified. Firstly, these Christians are divided amongst a myriad of denominations. Then, many black South Africans practise a kind of syncretic religion with elements from both the Christian religion and traditional African religions (such as ancestral worship). Thirdly, the Constitution, the education authorities' interpretation of the Constitution and court rulings place iron-cast restrictions on the practising of religion in schools and the inclusion of religion in the mission and organisation culture of a school (Louw 2014). All these impede the harnessing of religion in creating social capital and a common value system in the school as a micro-society.

On the secular life and world philosophy dimension, the South African population is also affected by the global trends of materialism, individualism and consumerism. In addition, there are constant calls and the pressure for decolonisation and indigenous value systems. These are not only ill-defined (see Wolhuter & Van der Walt in press), but as far as they could be

concretely defined and pointed out, patently at odds and irreconcilable with materialism, individualism and consumerism.

The overall impression of the above is that the education system and societal context are severely problematic and confront schools and school leaders with very high demands.

■ **The leveraging power of leadership and contextual factors or impediments facing South African schools**

As was explained above, leadership presents the one factor in the equation of learner achievement that has the potential to alleviate contextual factors (including the negative factors of the education system and societal context).

Empirical evidence of the above can be found in the publication by Wolhuter et al. (2018). This publication presents qualitative research, reporting on how a sample of top-performing schools in two provinces in South Africa has, by means of innovative, exemplary leadership, managed in obviating contextual obstacles so as to supply quality education. In the publication, the definition of educational leadership preferred by educational leadership scholar Neil Dempster (2009) (Griffith University, Australia) was taken as a working definition of school leadership:

School leaders, understanding and accommodating the contexts in which they operate, mobilise and work with others to articulate and achieve shared intentions to enhance learning and the lives of learners. (p. 22)

The research was based on two schools in the Western Cape and two schools in Gauteng. These schools were drawn as a random sample of all top-performing schools in the two provinces. Schools having had a 100% matric pass rate for at least five years prior to the date of the study were considered to

be top-performing schools. Regrettably this requirement resulted in only historically white (or ex-model-C) schools being included in the study. Within each school, separate interviews were then conducted with the principal and three teachers. Interviews revolved around how schools responded to the following aspects of the societal context in which they find themselves:

- physical climate (temperature, humidity, atmospheric circulation, cold winters and summers with a high temperature-humidity index)
- population density
- how far the learners have to travel to school each day
- cultural diversity
- the financial situation of the parents
- the efficacy of the local political authority
- religious convictions of families (parents and learners)
- the national education policy and administration
- the provincial education policy and administration.

It was found that these best-performing schools too had to contend with weather extremes (uncomfortably cold spells in mid-winter cold spells and likewise hot and humid spells in mid-winter), even if these are of short duration. It also became evident from interviews that diligent, proper and regular maintenance of school and classroom buildings minimises any adverse effect which extreme weather conditions may have. The schools in the sample had a minority (although these still represented a significant number) of learners residing further than walking distance from the school. This challenge was overcome by parents organising lift clubs, the school arranging a school bus and the supply of school hostels. The schools also had to handle the multicultural make-up of the learners. There was consensus amongst interviewees that the intercultural group relations amongst learners in their schools were sound. Regarding diversity the interviewees believed that the value placed on respect,

tolerance, listening to all, equal opportunities for all and accommodation explained the good intercultural relations in their schools. One of the schools in the sample implemented the Harvard Thinking in Teaching Programme (also known as Project Zero). Another school harnessed the school concert, capitalising on the cultural music heritage of all cultures found in the learner corps as a resource to cultivate an appreciation of other cultures amongst the learners.

Two of the schools in the sample had small but still significant numbers of parents who were in financial need. In response, the schools (principal, teachers and parents) responded to this by mobilising their own resources as well as resources from community to provide financial assistance to learners from these families and to offer support for families in financial distress.

Typically of ex-model C schools (with the historical background of these schools), all four schools in the sample quite openly fulfilled their education role from a Christian ground motive. The interviewees were of the view that Christianity gave the school a common moral compass and had entrenched a particular hierarchy of values. However, none of the schools compelled learners in any way to convert to Christianity.

Turning to relations with local political authorities, the Western Cape schools and the Gauteng schools in the sample displayed a stark difference. The interviewees in the Western Province believed that their local political authorities were responsive to the needs of the school and played a supportive role in relation to their schools. On the other hand, the interviewees from the latter province believed their local authorities played no role (be it positive or negative) in relation to their schools. Regarding relations with the national education policy and administration, the comments of the interviewees from the schools in both provinces were singularly negative. Negative comments referred to a lack of sensitivity to teachers and schools, too much

bureaucracy, a surfeit of change and a lack of respect for and professional treatment of teachers.

The conclusions that the authors drew from this research by the authors were, firstly, that schools that are widely described as ‘privileged schools’ also have to contend with their share of the (often debilitating) contextual realities of the South African education and society. In coming to terms to these facts, leadership (i.e. leadership by principals, parents, teachers and learners) takes steps and puts strategies and policies in place. In handling and surmounting these contextual restraints, it is especially parental involvement and the mobilising of own resources that can be singled out (cf. Wolhuter et al. 2018). Furthermore, these schools draw on diversity and utilise religion in order to create a social capital (of which there is such a serious shortage in the South African society) and thus strengthen moral stability.

Secondly, the salience of the role of the parents and the need for placing the role of the parents supporting schools in their education task on the research agenda of education research in South Africa strongly emerged from this research. The research also pronounces a negative verdict on the wisdom of current attempts and proposals to cut down on school autonomy in South Africa.

The authors of the publication finally made some recommendations for further research that emanated from their research. One of these was the need for research on the role of context and leadership in schools performing not well, that is schools at the lower end of the performance spectrum in poor socio-economic residential areas (roughly those schools in former homelands and historically black urban residential areas) and on the exact shaping force of context in such schools.

■ Research method

The research reported on presently followed the recommendation made at the end of the publication discussed in the

previous section. In order to investigate how context and leadership have an impact on poorly achieving schools, two provinces (Mpumalanga and North West) were selected. Within the group of poorly achieving schools (defined as schools with a matric pass rate below 50%), one school in Mpumalanga and two schools in North West Province were randomly selected. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the heads of the two provincial education departments, and ethical clearance was secured from the university to which the researchers are attached. The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their identity and the identity of their schools would not be disclosed. Interviews were then conducted with the principals and three teachers of each of the schools. The same interview schedule used by Wolhuter et al. (2018) outlined above, was used.

The decision to use interviews rather than questionnaires was taken as interviews make possible the probing of personal lived experiences. This is qualitative research. Qualitative research is naturalistic in that it takes place in the real world; that is it is non-manipulative and non-controlling. As this research investigates school principals' handling of contextual forces in their full complexity, the decision fell in favour of a qualitative research design. Qualitative research designs typically select information-rich data subjects (Nye, Mendelez-Torres & Borell 2016). In this research, school principals and teachers of poorly performing schools were regarded as information-rich subjects regarding the handling of contextual forces by their schools. Qualitative research does not aim at generalisations, much less at universal laws, and thus was regarded as appropriate for this research as the focus fell on the principals' and the schools' particular, even unique, response to contextual forces. The decision fell in favour of the interview as the method of data collection, as this method lends particular flexibility to both the interviewer and interviewee - it gives the interviewer adequate space to clarify any uncertainties regarding responses of interviewees by means of follow-up questions and probe for more information if answers are too short (Dakwa 2015:301). Furthermore, the authentic

voices of participants result in a stock of rich and interesting data for the researcher to analyse (Morgan et al. 2016).

■ Findings

The Mpumalanga schools were some 30 years old. For two years, the buildings had already been decrepit; there were broken windows, notices on walls had not been removed after shelf life and there was no running water despite having a water tank and a borehole (apparently defective). The staff room was chaotic and the safe in the principal's office stood wide open, even when the principal was not in her office. Half an hour after break time ended, learners were still playing on the school ground. Whilst there was a fence around the school, the gate stood wide open and there was no guard. All these indicate leadership not paying attention to infrastructure, not being meticulous regarding time and not taking care of their own belongings.

The impression of the three North West Province schools was no better.

■ Geography

The researcher visited the Mpumalanga school on a winter morning. Despite it being perceivably cold, one respondent responded to the question: 'what is the effect of the physical climate (temperature, humidity, atmospheric circulation, cold winters and summers with a high temperature-humidity index) on your school with a one-word answer?' with the answer 'nothing' (Male teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018). Another respondent (Female teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018) reported that on cold winter days, the cold temperatures resulted in some learners being late for school and a third respondent (Female teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018) complained that the school had no heaters. Another interviewee stated that those who lived the farthest from the school tended to arrive late for the school day.

The respondents from the schools in the North West Province reported that summers were hot, which made the learners tired and not very willing to participate in activities (Two principals, one male and one female, and six teachers, three males and three females, dates of interviews at the two schools 21 May 2018 and 28 May 2018). The cold winters, on the other hand, cause some learners to arrive late for school. They also complained that the school had no heaters or air conditioning. Furthermore, weather extremes result in the school not being able to enforce rules for a proper school uniform. Some learners do not have warm clothes. Drainage in the catchment area of the school is a problem; because of flooding after heavy rains, some children do not come to school after such heavy rains. Leadership initiative in doing something to alleviate the effect of extremes in weather was lacking.

■ Demography

At the Mpumalanga school, all of the learners lived in a radius of 4 km to 5 km from school. Whilst one interviewee (Female teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018) was of the opinion that this had no effect on learner attendance or learner achievement levels, another interviewee said that it did constitute a problem, as the distance some had to walk or travel to school meant they could not stay for extra lessons in the afternoons or come to school for extra lessons on Saturdays (Male teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018).

Interviewees from the two North West Province schools reported (Six teachers, three males and three females, dates of interviews at the two schools 21 May 2018 and 28 May 2018) that most of the learners lived within walking distance from the school, whilst others, in the case of one of the schools, lived up to some kilometres from school and used taxis or buses to travel to school. Both modes bring their own share of problems; at times, learners oversleep and arrive late for the school day, whilst buses and taxis sometimes do not run on schedule or face breakdowns. Once again, there was no indication of leadership responding to these challenges with any initiatives.

■ Socio-cultural situation

Responding to a question about what the effect of the cultural diversity of the learners on the school was, one of the respondents at the Mpumalanga school (Male teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018) stated that the learners could take part in diverse activities such as dancing or singing. Another respondent (Female teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018) answered, 'not much, we treat all the same; some learners are not goal-oriented'.

The principal (Male teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018) of the school maintained that the school was monocultural.

One of the respondents of the first North West Province schools (Female teacher, date of interview: 21 May 2018) stated that 60% of the learners were Setswana first-language speakers and 20% Sesotho, and as these two languages were mutually intelligible, there was no friction between the two language groups. School gangs, however, were largely based on language.

In the case of the second school, the respondents (One male and three female teachers, date of interview: 28 May 2018) stated that the school had substantial numbers of learners from Lesotho and Mozambique whose parents worked at the mines. At times, these learners and those whose first language is Venda pose problems, as they tend to return to schools late from holidays and they speak a language not understood by the majority of the learners and teachers at the school. Orphans and child-headed families pose another problem, as especially learners from the latter type tend to cause discipline problems at schools. Leadership was once again lacking, in that no plans had ever been made to address these challenges.

■ Economy

The school in Mpumalanga was very obviously in a very poor or poverty-stricken area. To the question as to the effect of the economic or financial position of the parents on the school, one

respondent (Male teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018) said that it had no effect, whilst two others (Female teachers, date of interview: 14 May 2018) were not sure. The principal (Male, Date of interview: 14 May 2018) stated, 'poor parents do not pay school fees ... not willing, reluctant to pay'.

In the case of the first school in North West Province, the respondents felt that this was a major problem:

'Parents do not work ... it is impossible to do school trips for example'.

'Seriously ... fundraising is not possible, parents cannot give ... give rise to a shortage of books and learning resources ... has an effect on attendance ... Grade 12s cannot go to camps'. (One male teacher and three female teachers, date of interview: 21 May 2018)

The respondents at the second school in the North West Province (One male and three female teachers, date of interview: 21 May 2018) also complained about the effect of the poor financial position of parents and stated that the learners had to rely on the school for what they could get in terms of resources; many did not have a school uniform and some came to school hungry. Leadership did not conceive of any plans to raise funds to assist indigent parents and learners.

■ Political forces: Local government

As to the effect of the local government authorities on the school, one of the respondents at the Mpumalanga school (Male teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018) mentioned that local government authorities visited the school, asked questions and gave advice, but no action followed. However, the other three respondents (Two male and one female teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018) stated that those authorities were supportive representatives of the school and the traditional leaders came to school and gave advice to the learners. The respondents at one North West Province school (One male and three female teachers, date of interview: 21 May 2018) stated that local authorities played no role and councillors were not involved in the school. Leaders appear

to be ignorant of the value of harnessing the powers of the local government to pursue the goals of schools.

■ Religion

Three of the interviewees at the Mpumalanga school (Three male and one female teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018) said that religion had no effect on the activities and the lives of the learners at the school, whilst one felt that different beliefs and believing in witchcraft had a negative influence and made learners suspicious of one another. This opinion was echoed by some respondents of the first school in North West (One male and one female teacher, date of interview: 21 May 2018), who said that magic and evil forces were blamed for misfortunes, such as epileptic attacks. Other respondents (Two female teachers, date of interview: 21 May 2018) said that as the school was largely monoreligious, most of the learners being Christian, religion had no serious effect on the school. The respondents at the second school in the North West Province (Two male and two female teachers, date of interview: 28 May 2018) too were not very excited about religion, stating that they had a voluntary assembly, where the attendance was about 50%, and the parents had no problem if they called on pastors to give motivational talks to the learners. Apart from this, there was little evidence of any realisation of the potential of religion to strengthen the educational endeavours of schools.

■ Role of teacher trade unions

The respondents from the Mpumalanga school were divided as to the role of teacher trade unions at the school. One respondent was negative, two respondents (Two male teachers, date of interview: 14 May 2018) said that the trade unions played no role and the fourth was positive (Female teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018), stating that they played a big role, encouraging teachers and learners, uniting teachers and learners and reminding them what was right and what was wrong.

At the first North West Province school, the respondents felt that teacher trade unions played no role, whilst the respondents from the second school were divided: some felt teacher trade unions played no role, whilst others had a negative view and said that the unions tended to disturb matters at the school (One male and one female teacher, date of interview: 28 May 2018).

■ Effect of the school governing body

The interviewees of the Mpumalanga school (Principal, three male and one female teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018) were positive about the role of the SGB, stating that it united all stakeholders, although the parent component was not involved. The respondents at the first North West Province school, however, felt that the SGB was too rigid and an obstruction to change. They also believed that the members of the SGB did not know what their role was and that they imposed their will on the school. The views at the second school in the province were also negative. The respondents (Principal, two male and two female teachers, date of interview: 28 May 2018) reported that once parents were elected, they disappeared and were never available.

■ Effect of the National Education Policy and the Provincial Policy

Unlike the case of some of the top-achieving schools, the respondents in the study at the poorly performing schools held the same views as to the effect of the national and the provincial education policies. The respondents at the Mpumalanga school (Principal, three male and one female teacher, date of interview: 14 May 2018) stated either that they did not know what the effect of national education policy on their school was or that it played a big role as it told them what to do. The respondents at the first North West Province school (Principal, two male and two female teachers, date of interview: 28 May 2018) cast a negative verdict: ‘... hinders everything ... culture of policing policies are

oppressive to learners ... hampers their development and creates a dependency mentality’.

The respondents also stated that the policy directives were difficult to implement and the Department provided them with no guidelines regarding how to maintain discipline and was too prescriptive, narrow and performance-orientated.

■ Conclusion

The overall picture emanating from this research in poorly achieving schools is that teachers and principals are often oblivious as to the force of contextual factors impinging on their schools. This was obvious right from the first question, when some of the respondents could not appreciate the adverse effect of the cold weather on the learners. When the respondents from the Mpumalanga school were probed about the reasons for their poor matric results, they responded with answers around obviously irrelevant matters, such as that many learners were over-aged, up to 25 years of age.

Further to that, the respondents tended to see themselves as victims and a mind-set of defeatism, despondence and the syndrome described by Martin Seligman (1972) as self-helplessness was evident. In as far as the respondents were conscious of contextual factors impinging on the school, they had a rather singularly negative view of those and portrayed themselves in a passive role. They did not accept responsibility and, unlike the leaders at top-performing schools, did not respond innovatively in dealing with contextual impediments, much less turning these creatively into a force of strength.

The authors can make one suggestion in rectifying this sorry state of affairs: recent retirees of top-performing schools should be contracted as consultants to poorly performing schools in order to develop and to drive, with the school leaders themselves, a turnaround strategy.

Moral leadership: An imperative for principals in underperforming schools

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■ Abstract

School principals are under enormous strain to perform academically at set standards. Whilst most of the former advantaged schools perform well at the Grade 12 level, huge numbers of formerly disadvantaged schools still underperform. Principals have to create and maintain a positive climate within their schools, and sound relationships amongst people are the central point of the work of school leaders. As such, school leadership must be a moral activity in its nature and focus. Effective school leadership is seen as a key factor to improve school effectiveness. The exercising of authority and power always involves ethical challenges, and this internal system of moral values in every individual necessitates the inclusion of morality in any leadership concept that presupposes a dual relationship between leaders and followers. Leadership is a moral task, and school leaders and staff create caring and respectful behaviour. The school principal is the main role player in a school; the school environment is created by the principal and is the moral feeling that is derived from the values the principal professes and brings into being. The aim of this research was to determine the contribution of the school principal in establishing moral values to promote a positive school climate in underperforming schools in two provinces. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted involving four principals and three teachers from four participating schools. The results were compared to a similar investigation that was conducted in top-achieving schools, and the comparison presented guidelines for leadership to promote a positive school climate in their schools.

Keywords: Moral leadership; Moral imperative; Underperforming schools; Values; School leaders.

■ Introduction

Parents, the government and the society in general all have high expectations that children who start their formal schooling will

receive a good education and will turn out to be well-rounded citizens who will contribute positively to the labour market and the country as a whole. However, South Africa, like many other countries with economic disparities, has been struggling unsuccessfully for decades to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. The delivery of quality education to all learners in South African schools has been a priority for more than two decades, but many schools are not winning the battle in overcoming their poor academic performance despite the huge amount of public spending being directed towards education. South Africa spends over 6% on average of its GDP on education; nonetheless, a substantial number of sub-Saharan African countries that spend far less than South Africa per learner produce superior education outcomes (Mlachila & Moeletsi 2019:4). Not only do South African learners perform dismally in international rankings, but nearly half of these learners drop out of school before finishing their secondary school education and about a quarter of those learners who do write the final examinations fail.

To a great extent, the South African education departments are preoccupied with standardised testing and international comparisons, which threaten the larger moral, social and democratic purposes of education. The enforced goals set for schools and the pressure of school leader accountability have created a climate in which school leaders are headed to concentrate on academic achievement. Sergiovanni (1992:31) believes that leaders should generate responsibility within their followers instead of exerting some outward force that presents rewards to followers whose performance are at or above par and punishments to those who underperform. People follow leaders with various motives, and moral leadership suggests a reaction to an emotional link with an organisation and its core values and shared beliefs (Fech 2009:4). Belcher (2017:60) stresses that 'educational leaders have an expert obligation to look for a moral purpose past the assessment results'. This will necessitate the moral confidence of school leaders to chase after what they believe to be right for their learners and the context in which

they work. Cranston and Ehrich (2006:13) argue that although learning is the primary reason for schools' existence, 'educational leadership should be a deliberate qualities driven, ethical and moral action'. The research reported on in this chapter was prompted by previous research on moral leadership that had been conducted on well-performing high schools that purposefully established moral values that contributed positively to the climate of these schools (Challens, Van Jaarsveld & Wolhuter 2018).

■ Aim of the research

Effective school leadership is seen as a key factor to help improve school effectiveness. The practising of power and authority consistently includes ethical difficulties, and this inner arrangement of moral values in each individual requires the consideration of morality in any leadership idea that surmises a double connection amongst leaders and followers. Leadership is a moral undertaking, and school leaders and staff ought to generate mindful and respectful conduct. The school principal is the foremost role player in a school; the school environment is driven by the leader, and the school environment is the moral inclination that is obtained from the qualities the principal proclaims and creates. The aim of this research was to ascertain the commitment of the school principal in establishing moral values to advance a positive school climate in underperforming schools in two provinces.

■ Poor academic performance

The literature suggests that disadvantaged learners perform more poorly as compared to their more affluent peers (Banerjee 2016:2). The economic problems faced by a school community have been cited as an important predictor of learner performance in Mathematics (Banerjee 2016:4). Some of the reasons that have been mentioned include the lack of role models in these areas, the quality of teachers, the lack of resources and high-risk behaviour, such as drug and alcohol abuse, gangsterism and theft.

An often-cited argument for this kind of behaviour is the efforts of learners to fit in amongst other children in the neighbourhood, as it is easier to act like the majority than to be uniquely principled (Banerjee 2016:4). Some of the other factors that have been proven to have an influence on learner performance are parental involvement in their children's education, quality teaching, learners' perceptions of their teachers, the attitudes of teachers, learner discipline, teacher discipline, the contextual factors of schools, school climate, school culture and school leadership (Banerjee 2016:4-7).

Two and a half decades since South Africa became a fully democratic government in 1994, the academic performance of learners in our schools can still be viewed as 'a tale of two schools' (Spaull 2013:444), the one being functional, affluent and performing well and the other impoverished, dysfunctional and underperforming. Naicker, Chikoko and Mthiyane (2013) describe the schooling system as a continuum:

[O]n the one end [*of the continuum*] there are first class schools, which can compare with the best in first world countries. On the other extreme [*of the continuum*] we have dysfunctional schools, where a culture of teaching and learning is barely existent. In the middle of the continuum there are numerous disadvantaged schools, which, despite the socio-economic challenges they face, display a great degree of resilience and perform at levels comparable to first class schools. (p. 138)

Although there have been significant improvements regarding the access of learners to education, the quality of the education they are receiving is questionable (Mlachila & Moeletsi 2019:5). The reasons for the (poor) quality of education in South African schools are multifaceted and complicated. Though inadequate funding is not cited as the main cause of poor performance, the supply of resources to these schools may be challenging. Historical factors in South Africa, however, clarify a substantial part of the current situation in our schools. This fact is apparent in that the most disadvantaged population groups of the former apartheid regime are the very same population groups that

perform the poorest today in terms of academic outcomes. The most deprived (75% – 80%) of learners, who are dependent on dysfunctional public schooling deliver poor academic results, whilst the most affluent (20% – 25%) of the learners who are enrolled in functional public schools and private schools achieve better academic results (Mlachila & Moeletsi 2019:5–6). A staggering 80% of the dysfunctional schools of South Africa are located in townships and rural areas. The literature (e.g. Mlachila & Moeletsi 2019:6) suggests that the management in these dysfunctional schools has a limited capacity; a further matter of concern is the notion that in these schools, the teachers have a poorer subject content knowledge and there is a lack of accountability measures. These schools are also shelled by the political influence that teacher unions have in the education setting (Mlachila & Moeletsi 2019:6).

Heystek (2015:2) argues that even in distraught settings, school leaders ought not to ‘capitulate to the weight of the difficulties’ in their various settings, as it is the assignment of school leaders to ‘look for arrangements instead of reasons’. Drawn from the literature (e.g. Naicker, Grant & Pillay 2016:1) that connects high-quality school leadership to positive academic performance and the principle that a school cannot improve its academic achievement and ‘its student accomplishment ... without capable leadership’ (Louis et al. 2010:9), as well as the premise that moral leadership is fundamental to effective leadership (Belcher 2017:61), the study examined the influence of the school principal as a moral agent on the academic performance of learners in impoverished schools.

■ Moral leadership

School leadership is fundamentally a moral action, as schools are educating the children of the broader public, with the school authorities deciding what learners should learn, in which way and to what end, as a moral rumination (Belcher 2017:60). This is in support of Greenfield’s (2004:174) claim that ‘school leadership

is, by its nature and focus, a moral activity'. Likewise, Sergiovanni (2007) highlights the notion that values and morals are fundamental to school leadership. Early on, Fullan (2003) also suggested that leadership and school teaching are moral endeavours, which advocate that schools have to prioritise moral settings for learners in order to achieve a good education. These moral settings 'include the development of personal, social, vocational, and academic attributes, as well as equity, fairness, care and civil interpersonal relationships' (Chavez 2016:3). It is the school leaders' responsibility to ensure that this moral imperative is achieved in their schools to present all their learners with the opportunity and right to succeed (Fullan 2003). The awareness of moral purpose is seen as a strong motivational potency for school leaders and teachers but is not necessarily dominant in the political agenda of a country. Moral leadership is most generally connected with a pledge to values, for example trust, correspondence or honesty, inside an organisation (Bush & Glover 2003; Ehrich et al. 2015). Moral leadership is fundamental to effective leadership and being an educational leader (Belcher 2017:61), but it cannot just be based on individual moral commitments as 'the authority of felt obligations and duties derived from widely shared professional and community values, ideas and ideals' (Sergiovanni 1992:40). Chavez (2016:14) ascribes the following three related ideas to moral leadership:

- The relationship between a leader and followers is a direct result of a genuine sharing of mutual needs, aspirations and values.
- Those being led have informed choices to make as to whom to follow and why.
- A moral leader's goal is to address the wants, needs, values and aspirations of his or her followers.

A moral purpose is central to leading (Sergiovanni 1992) and school leaders, therefore, need to focus on both what is good and well, and what is effective. Belcher (2017:61) stated that a values-driven approach has improved outcomes and

academic performance. School leaders in better-performing schools are effective in improving learner results through what their identity is – their values, virtues, dispositions, attributes and abilities. Research shows significant empirical and strong qualitative associations between the school leaders' educational values, qualities and their strategic activities and enhancements in the school environment that lead to improvement in learner outcomes (Day et al. 2009:1). This may suggest that poorly performing schools lack moral leadership. Such a view, however, may be too simplistic. School leaders who are judged to be achieving based on accountability measures may have more freedom and confidence to oppose centralist interruption into their operations. But all school leaders face pressure choosing between the moral imperative and the accountability imperative; those in the most challenging settings, normally serving in the most upsetting contexts, are likely going to feel the strains more severely (Belcher 2017:61).

Moral leadership can be considered as a social, relational practice that is described by dynamic and ensuing actions, which are attentive to the moral purpose of education (Ehrich et al. 2015). At the point when a school principal is unequivocally dedicated to clarifying and unambiguously conveying the school vision, aim and values, this will have a huge beneficial effect on the teachers' logic of decision-making influence (Paulsen, Hjertø & Tihveräinen 2015:765). Moral leadership can be described as the exemplary way in which a leader (moral agent) uses his or her authority to promote shared moral values and exhibits these in his or her actions to benefit all the stakeholders and to achieve the common goal (vision) of the organisation (Challens et al. 2018:5).

■ Leadership as a moral activity

One of the issues facing school leaders in countries such as England and South Africa is the systemic lack of equity (Nicholas & West-Burnham 2018:61). Whilst every child has the right to

education, not every child attends a good school (i.e. a moral issue). A combination of equity, excellence and effectiveness is generally seen as the moral foundation of education (Nicholas & West-Burnham 2018:69). These three E's are also fundamental to the idea that school leadership is principally about attaining social justice. Nicholas and West-Burnham (2018:70) describe these three concepts as they relate to social justice as:

- Equity: It is not sufficient to guarantee that each child goes to school; they have the right to go to a good school where they have access to the most suitable teaching and learning.
- Excellence: There must be a pledge to ensure that the school system works to obtain the ideal results for each learner, and there should be an unmistakable comprehension of the idea of excellent results and techniques to ensure that all may access them.
- Effectiveness: Approaches and human and physical resources are overseen so as to expand their effect on the accomplishment of equity and excellence.

Social justice must be unprejudiced; thus it ought to be embedded in fairness. In order to validate social justice, it might be important to discriminate in some people's favour for particular actions (Nicholas & West-Burnham 2018:70). Waghid (2004:535) remarks that with the internalisation of the values of social justice, equality and Ubuntu, learners would achieve a worthwhile moral outcome that would help them to deal with issues of accountability, democracy and reconciliation.

■ Moral imperative

In various studies (e.g. Bottery, Wright & James 2012; Duignan 2014; Møller 2012), a sturdy moral imperative is a striking element of school principals' leadership direction, driven by moral purpose and displayed in their concern to guarantee equitable learning conditions for all learners. Paulsen et al. (2015:765) identified three fundamental elements of the moral imperative of

principal leadership. Firstly, it deals with communicating, disclosing and demonstrating commitment to the moral purpose of education, school vision and education values. Secondly, morally authentic practices are exhibited through patterns of dealings with learners. Thirdly, respect and fairness are displayed through the equal treatment of the staff, and the needs of all the staff members are considered.

Personal moral judgements of people are a matter of balancing a range of imperatives and perceptions. Green (2013:258) sketches a scenario to explain a moral imperative. The scenario displays a man with an expensive suit encountering a child who was drowning, and argues that it will be morally monstrous to allow a child to drown in order to save the expensive suit. Green then poses the question: why is it morally acceptable to spend a huge sum of money on an expensive suit instead of using the money to save a child's life by making a donation to an aid organisation? Green continues by asking: if saving the drowning child is a moral imperative, then why is saving the starving child morally optional? Even though other issues, such as immediacy and proximity, need to be considered, the problem is real and has vital implications for effective school leadership, as it challenges leadership into recognition of a wider moral responsibility.

Nicholas and West-Burnham (2018:74) are of the view that all leadership decision-making processes have moral consequences. Leadership can never be morally neutral, as Bennis and Nanus (cited in Nicholas & West-Burnham 2018:74) contend that leadership is about 'doing the right things'. This suggests that leadership ought to be embedded in an unequivocal ethical framework with steady values that advise personal and professional conduct. This would propose that there is a connection between an explicit, consensually based moral code and organisational achievement (Nicholas & West-Burnham 2018:74).

Moral integrity is about making the right decision to benefit others naturally and reliably without either impetus or sanction. Individuals frequently attempt to clarify moral conduct by alluding to an individual advantage; for example, the nice feelings

one experience when one acts morally (Branson 2014:263). In a differing and riotous world, moral honesty must be at the very heart of authority. In the midst of disorder, individuals anticipate that pioneers should carry assurance and application to their reality. Whilst pioneers cannot offer command over the apparently confused outside world that is influencing their association, they can fill their adherents' need for steadiness by displaying moral honesty. A pioneer's ethical uprightness enables individuals to feel that there is a union in their association with others. It gives a sort of interior appeal to any event when there is no outer appeal. This is the reason there is such a great amount of worrying over the ethical honesty of pioneers in varying backgrounds. We need to know and confide in our pioneers to have moral honesty. Consequently, it is basic that we can improve a pioneer's ethical uprightness (Branson 2014:274).

■ Theoretical framework

In this study, both the moral leadership model and the moral leadership framework were used to try to make sense of the phenomenon under discussion. Leadership is constantly linked to values, as it is expected from leaders to ground their behaviour in clear personal and professional values (Bush & Glover 2014). Bush (2008) indicates that the dominant values that can be laid upon leaders are those of the government. The moral leadership model reasons that the critical focus of leadership should be on the values, convictions and ethics of leaders (Bush 2007; Bush & Glover 2014). Authority and influence can be deducted from defensible concepts of what is right and good (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach 1999). Excellent schools comprise central zones that are established out of values and norms with holy or cultural characteristics (Sergiovanni 1984).

The moral leadership model differs from the transformational approach, as the emphasis thereof is on integrity. There are other different concepts that are used to describe value-based leadership, such as ethical leadership, authentic leadership and spiritual leadership (Bush & Glover 2014). Moral and authentic

leadership are both strongly supported by the values of the leader. These models accept the fact that leaders act with integrity, which they draw from strongly rooted personal and professional values and serve to announce the vision and mission of the school and to support decision-making (Bush & Glover 2014). The moral leadership model can be summarised as follows: the reactions of the leader are rooted in his or her personal and professional values. The direction (vision and mission) shown by the leader is based on his or her professional values (principles) and personal (spiritual) values. The critical focus of this model is that the values of the leader (professional and personal) have an influence on how activities are conducted in the school (how people interact with one another). One could thus conclude that the values of the leader can have an impact on the climate of the school or organisation because the professional values (moral trust) could over time lead to consistent behaviour or actions.

The moral leadership model is closely linked with the moral leadership framework of Anello (Vinkhuyzen & Vinkhuyzen 2013), which comprises six elements. The first element consists of the leadership styles: it has to be a consistent orientation of service for mutual benefit. True servant leaders are not motivated by a quest for personal benefit, but by love – love for the community or the people they are serving, love for humanity, love for delivering the best work results and the unselfish love found in mothers. The second element of this framework is the connection between the purpose of leadership and the promotion of individual and collective change. The third element is the fulfilment of moral responsibility in the search for truth and to implement all aspects of a person's life. The reference here is not to absolute truth, but rather a relative truth. The ideal truth is normative and based on principles, and the framework wants to change the conditional truth (how things currently are) to a way where there is harmony with the ideal truth based on principles (Vinkhuyzen & Vinkhuyzen 2013). The fourth element is the attainment of excellence through vision. Excellence here refers to the ability to free oneself from the present reality and to associate

with those values and principles that an individual believes have everlasting worth and form part of their vision. The fifth element is based on the faith in noble existence and the inherent goodness of humans. The supporters of this framework are in support of the view that human beings are inherently noble, similar to mines that are wealthy in gems, which should be developed, refined and polished. The sixth element is the development of a number of abilities. These abilities help people to add to the collective advantage by acting as moral leaders in a range of collective fields and, in this way, add to social change (Vinkhuyzen & Vinkhuyzen 2013).

■ Research method

The study was conducted using the interpretivist approach. Interpretivism attempts to explain human behaviour by means of subjectively interpreting social behaviour (Creswell 2014; Maree & Pietersen 2008; McMillan 2008). A case study design was adopted because case studies allow for a multipurpose-perspective analysis, where the researcher not only examines the perspective of one or two participants in a situation but also that of other relevant groups and the interaction amongst them. From an interpretive perspective, the typical characteristic of a case study is the pursuit of a holistic understanding of how participants interact with one another in a specific situation and how they gain an understanding of a phenomenon (Maree 2010). A qualitative research method was used to gain insight regarding the contribution of the principal in the promotion of moral values in underperforming schools. The qualitative approach allowed the researchers to interpret the real world from the participants' perspectives (Mouton & Marais 1996). A qualitative approach is inductive and allows the researcher to describe and understand specific situations, experiences and meaning of people or groups (Frankel & Devers 2000).

Purposive sampling was used to select four underperforming high schools in two provinces, namely the North West and Mpumalanga.

The schools were selected from a list of schools that showed a pass rate of below 50% in the Grade 12 final examinations since 2011. The leadership styles of the participating principals were not measured beforehand, as it did not form part of the selection criteria. The researchers wanted to determine the moral leadership contribution of principals in underperforming schools. The school principals and three randomly selected teachers of each school participated in the semi-structured interviews. Of the four principals, only one was female. The results of these schools were then compared with the results of a similar study that was conducted at three high-performing schools in two provinces (Gauteng and Western Cape).

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the 16 participants. This approach supported the researchers in asking follow-up questions for clarity and depth (Creswell 2014). The interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants, who had been assured that the data would be handled confidentially. The purpose of the research was explained to the participants and they were put at ease before the interviews commenced. The recorded interviews were transcribed, and the researchers listened to them again to verify the correctness of the transcripts. The inductive data analysis method was used. The data were decoded, and themes were identified. The researchers analysed the data by searching for patterns, associations, similarities, inconsistencies, concepts and explanations of the data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007; Maree 2010). The themes were linked to the research purpose and discussed in relation to the relevant literature. The results were then compared with those of high-performing high schools.

The research was conducted in accordance with the guidelines set by the Ethics Committee of the North-West University that approved the application. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the DoBE in the two provinces. Permission was also obtained from the school principals, who had been provided with the relevant documentation pertaining to

confidentiality, voluntary participation, privacy and the right to withdraw from the research at any stage.

Greater reliability had been assured by allowing the participants to read through the data and independently determine the codes and themes. In addition, the findings were discussed by the researchers to try to eliminate preconceptions. The limited scope of the sample has the disadvantage that no generalisations can be made and deductions and discussions are limited to these schools. However, the research design presents the advantage of gaining deeper insight into moral leadership, which could lead to the generalisation of the findings.

■ Findings

The four underperforming schools are all situated in poor socio-economic areas. The four themes that were identified are the relationships within the schools, support and caring in the school, respect and trust and the strengthening of moral values.

■ Relationships within the schools

In School A (Mpumalanga), the female principal (P 1) of a disadvantaged school saw the relationship between the learners and the teachers as good, but in the same voice complained about the fact that most of the learners in the school were over-aged. She also viewed the relationships amongst the teachers as good and indicated that they 'don't have a problem with cliques or demarcations or staff groupings. We don't have that; we work as a team; there's teamwork' (P1, principal, female). This notion of good relationships was refuted by the teachers who claimed that the 'relationship is just there because we are teaching', whilst others said it was 'not good' (Teachers, gender unspecified, date unknown). The one male teacher also mentioned that the relationships amongst the teachers were not good, whilst the other two female teachers claimed that the teachers

'don't have a problem' with one another. However, all of the teachers mentioned that there were relational problems between the teachers and the principal. They claimed that 'the problem is the head, you cannot describe what type of a person she is' (Teachers, gender unspecified, date unknown). A male teacher described it by saying that the 'relationship is toxic'.

At School B, the male principal (P 2) of a disadvantaged school described the relationships amongst the learners as 'mostly good', whilst the relationships amongst the teachers were not good at all, as 'there are some cliques who [sic] hinder progress' (P2, principal, male). The principal indicated that there were teachers at the school who still had not accepted him as principal after more than three years and, according to him, they 'always have a problem in moving in a different direction' (P2, principal, male). The teachers (all female) see the relationship between the learners and the teachers as 'not so bad', but teacher-teacher relations are not what they should be as 'there are cliques and teachers talk behind each other's backs' (Teachers, female, date unknown). The teachers claim that the principal tries to get along with everyone, 'but not all get along with him'.

At School C, the male principal (P 3) of the disadvantaged school is of the view that the relationship between the teachers and the learners is 'adequate' as the learners can speak to the teachers regarding their problems. He sees the relationships amongst the teachers as 'open' and that they 'can depend on each other', and there is a good 'working relationship' between the teachers and the principal. The one male and two female teachers see the relationship between them and the learners as 'good relationships, except for those learners who are mothers and fathers and behave that way'. Other teachers see it as 'not good, as the learners are rude and disobedient'. The teachers do not see the relationships amongst themselves as very healthy, as they describe it as 'very tense', 'there are those that cannot be trusted' and there is 'some politics involved'. They saw the principal as being on good terms with the teachers, but mentioned that a substantial number of teachers 'don't respect him' even if he was 'very lenient'.

In School D, the male principal (P 4) of a disadvantaged school sees the relationship between the learners and the teachers as good, but the teachers lack teamwork amongst themselves and support for one another. The principal sees his relationship with the staff as 'good and harmonious'. One teacher (all female) described their relationship with the learners as 'good and professional', whilst the other teachers saw it as 'poor', as the learners lack respect and discard authority. All of the teachers agreed that they 'don't get along', the relationships 'are rocky' and they 'don't tolerate each other'. They described their relationship with the principal as good but mentioned that he was 'too soft' and the teachers took 'advantage of him'.

■ Support and caring in the school

All of the participants in School A indicated that they supported the learners emotionally and with their personal and academic problems. They, however, indicated that the learners did not share much of their social problems, and when they did open up, the school did not get support from their parents in addressing the problems. The teachers indicated that they advised the learners on how to deal with difficult situations and encouraged the learners during weekly assemblies. At times they use money from their own pockets to help learners. One of the teachers indicated that they lacked a wellness policy, which would be helpful to support the learners. One teacher indicated that many learners dropped out because of high levels of poverty, where some of the learners received their only meal at school. There are no social workers or school psychologists who support the learners and the school, but one of the teachers mentioned that they as teachers were actually the ones who should invite social workers to come to assist the learners. Teachers will also support one another when they are in need of support. The staff indicated that they cared for the learners, to the extent that at times, they would use their own money to help the learners. The principal (P 1) mentioned that she had 'a problem with the quality of education and the quality of teachers at the school'.

In School B, all of the participants agreed that they gave emotional support to the learners who had barriers to overcome and who came from poverty-stricken families. The school also has a committee that assists with food hampers and other needs. They also call on social workers to come and assist specific learners. One of the teachers, however, indicated that they did not always support the learners. According to this participant, the teachers do not 'often' get support and 'they don't treat everyone the same; some will get and others not'.

The participants were somewhat divided on the issue of being a caring school. Whilst the female DP claimed that it was a caring school because 'they help and support each other ... a lot of learners are struggling and we do a lot', another female teacher stated that 'the school is not a caring school at all ... they don't care enough for the learners'. The male participant (P 2) of the disadvantaged school mentioned that:

[T]he level of discipline causes it to collapse ... teachers are also emotional beings ... at times they come to the stage where they feel they are done talking to the learners ... for other learners who do what the school wants, there's a lot of care'. (P2, principal, male)

The female DP of the disadvantaged school felt that the school was not a caring school and argued that 'if teachers care, they will do justice to them; if they don't go to class, they don't do justice to them'.

Again at School C, the participants indicated that they gave the learners support - emotionally and academically. They have a care and support committee that supports the learners emotionally and calls on the social worker for additional support. The school also provides extra classes and career guidance. The staff members support one another if help is requested.

Half of the participants (P 3 and one female teacher) felt that the school was caring as they 'are providing meals to the learners on a daily basis through the [National School Nutritional Programme]', whilst the other half (one male and one female

teacher) felt that the school was not a caring school, as ‘everyone is doing as they like’.

In School D, most of the participants (P 4, one male teacher and one female teacher) indicated that the learners are getting support – emotionally and academically. Extra classes are offered, and learners who need additional support are referred to a social worker. One female teacher noted that ‘very little support is granted ... learners are reluctant to disclose emotional barriers due to a lack of trust’. The teachers mentioned that they received selective support from those close to them. Whilst another female teacher mentioned that ‘the principal is always willing to understand and assist when needed’, another female teacher declared that there was ‘no support ... teachers are left to fend for themselves ... urgent matters discussed with the principal or school management team (SMT) are never dealt with’.

Three of the participants (P 4, one male and one female teacher) felt that the school was caring, as the learners are cared for and measures are in place to assist the learners. One of the female teachers was of a different view and argued that she ‘felt a lot of injustices are being made in the teaching and learning process; learners are not being taught effectively’.

■ Respect and trust

The principal and the teachers of School A indicated that the learners respected one another, but did not trust one another. The female principal (P 1) claimed that the learners and the teachers trusted her, but ‘the teachers don’t really trust each other’. All of the participants claimed that the teachers did not trust the learners, as the learners cheated and stole behind the teachers’ backs. Two of the female participants claimed that the learners respected the teachers ‘only during the handing out of food’ and that the learners ‘don’t listen [to] or respect us’; the principal and the other participant said that the ‘learners don’t have respect, they don’t respect us ... learners use vulgar words

in front of teachers and me as principal, which show that there's no respect'. Two of the female participants also indicated that there was trust and respect amongst the teachers, but 'the problem lies with the head only ... there's not trust and respect'.

All of the participants of School B were in agreement that there was neither trust nor respect between the learners. The learners come from different extensions in the area and some of the boys are active members of gangs; 'as a result, the area is more territorial especially among boys' and 'they steal from each other'. In general, the teachers respect the learners, but they do not trust them, as 'they gave reason' not to be trusted. On the other hand, the level of respect that the learners have towards the teachers is also low. There is some measure of respect amongst the teachers, as 'some do respect, while others don't ... you can even see it in the way they are speaking to each other'. In addition, the teachers do not trust one another, the female DP stated: '... myself, I don't trust the teachers. They don't do their work, and I have to account. I love them but I don't trust them'.

In School C, the level of trust and respect amongst the learners is low, as 'learners who have friends have respect and trust, but are sceptical of outsiders' and 'sometimes there's racial conflict'. The trust and respect of the learners towards the teachers are moderate, with the teachers stating that they respect the learners but do not trust them. There is also professional respect amongst the teachers, but they do not 'really trust' one another. The staff also lost the trust and respect that they had for the principal and the SGB, as 'promises has [*sic*] been made, and there has [*sic*] been no results, so trust has been affected'.

The trust and respect amongst the learners at School D are very poor, as 'learners steal from each other'. The learners show a good measure of trust and respect towards the teachers, as they 'confide their personal stuff to some of the teachers and seek help'. The teachers respect the learners, but do not 'trust them very much'. The teachers respect one another to a great extent but have trust issues with one another. The level of trust and respect towards the principal and SGB is low.

■ Strengthening of moral values

School A does not have any type of initiative or programme to strengthen the moral values at the school. It does, however, have a weekly assembly where the learners are encouraged and the school called *'the community one day to come and address the learners, even the traditional leaders'*. As far as their own morals, values and integrity are concerned, the principal mentioned that they 'differ when it comes to character and the level of commitment. I may be committed, but you will find the others are not'. Two of the female teachers claimed that the teachers had 'morals and integrity but the principal not'.

School B mostly uses assemblies to speak to the learners about morals, values and character and also invites pastors to speak to the learners. During staff briefings, 'teachers are allowed to share motivational and moral stories'. The male principal (P 2) of the disadvantaged school said:

'70% of the teachers will do what is right, but some will do things to spite others. Some teachers will keep quiet when they see the wrong things without challenging it'. (P2, principal, male)

The female DP's assessment of the situation was in line with that of the principal (P 2), as she observed that she saw herself 'as a person with integrity, but [in] 70% of the staff' she did not see integrity. She reiterated that the principal was 'nice and sweet and people are taking advantage' and the 'teachers are discussing colleagues with the learners'. Another female participant mentioned that the teachers 'will agree in the meetings but don't implement it in the classes, and teachers are gossiping with the learners'.

At School C, pastors, role models from the North-West University and local celebrities are invited to address the learners on moral issues and to motivate them. One participant, however, raised a concern about the occasional talks because 'the learners are not really listening'. Regarding the morals and integrity of the teachers, the participants mentioned that they had good intentions but 'even if you have morals and integrity, you will lose hope' at the school. One female participant raised a concern

about the teachers, as ‘most are guilty of absenteeism, late-coming, bunking of classes, not submitting marks on time, non-compliance and leaving early’.

At School D, various people are invited to motivate the learners and speak to them about morals and values. In addition, the subject ‘Life Orientation’ is used as a tool to improve the character of the learners, and the school has a Radically Different Species club, which is a peer support group. Regarding the character, morals and integrity of the teachers, one female participant of the disadvantaged school mentioned that:

‘[S]ome do their work and some not, some can’t tolerate each other’ and that ‘the majority of the staff have good morals, character and integrity ... but there is one teacher in the school who is the master of destruction and chaos; this teacher does not know what peace is’. (Unspecified participant, position undisclosed, female)

■ A comparison of the findings with those of high-performing schools

The findings of these four underperforming schools will be compared with the results from a similar study conducted by the same researchers on high-performing schools in two different provinces (Gauteng and the Western Cape). Conclusions will, firstly, be drawn from these underperforming schools and, secondly, be compared to those of the high-performing schools.

□ Relationships

The relationship between the teachers and the learners in all these schools is generally seen as ‘mostly good’; however, there are claims that it is ‘not so good’, as the learners are rude and disobedient. All of the participants, except for the principal and two teachers of School A, indicated that the relationships amongst the teachers are not good. This is the same principal about whom all the other participants in that school complained, as they all felt that the principal was the problem in the school,

with one participant describing it as a 'toxic relationship'. Again in School B, the relationship between the principal and the teachers is not good, as after three years at the helm, coming from another school, all of the teachers have not accepted him. The relationship between the principal and the teachers at School C is good, but the principal is seen as being too lenient. The relationship between the principal and the teachers at School D is also described as good, although the principal is described as being 'too soft' and the teachers take advantage of him.

The findings from the *high-performing schools* show that the relationship between the teachers and the learners is good (Challens et al. 2018:18). The relationship is open, respectful, liberating, easy, friendly, safe, encouraging and professional. The relationships amongst the teachers are also very good – positive, healthy, encouraging, supportive and trustworthy. The relationship between the principal and the teachers at those schools is very good as well. The relationship is described as very open, with the principals being approachable, promoting dialogue, being good listeners, maintaining an open-door policy, working hard to gain and keep the trust of the teachers and clearly communicating the direction that needs to be followed.

□ Support and caring

The participants at these schools indicated that they gave the learners emotional and academic support; however, the support at these schools is linked to issues such as providing food, uniforms, career guidance and extra classes and, occasionally, calling on social workers for assistance. None of these schools have regular access to a social worker, a school psychologist or a counsellor.

Not all of the participants agreed that their schools were caring schools. The 'caring' referred to is also limited to issues of providing food and the teachers, at times, using their own money to assist the learners. However, at two of the schools, two

participants indicated that their schools were not caring schools – ‘if teachers care, they will do justice to them; if they don’t go to class, they don’t do justice to them’. Another participant felt that ‘a lot of injustices are being made in the teaching and learning process; learners are not being taught effectively’. One principal also mentioned that she had ‘a problem with the quality of education, and the quality of teachers at the school’.

Findings from the *high-performing schools* (Challens et al. 2018:19) indicate that the principal and teachers give very good support to their learners and a caring environment exists in these schools. One male principal (P 5) participant of an advantaged school described the support that they gave to their learners as the ‘greatest movement’, whilst a female DP of the same advantaged school described it as the ‘best in the country’. High emphasis is placed on pastoral care and encouraging the learners. These schools have good support structures in place, such as peer-teacher systems, school psychologists, educational psychologists, social workers, remedial support, career counsellors, peer-mentoring systems and spiritual counsellors. The teachers receive good support from their principals and colleagues. In addition, these teachers have access to the support staff available to the learners. There is a culture of support amongst the teachers, and they work well together. It is this culture of support that keeps these teachers in the profession and leads to the high teacher retention in these schools.

These schools can be seen as caring schools. The principals of these schools attempt to create a happy environment, which makes quality education possible. The staff members make a special effort to create a good learning experience, show interest in the learners, try to treat all the learners the same and focus on the holistic development of the learners.

□ Respect and trust

The level of respect amongst the learners is very low, and they do not trust one another. The learners in these schools constantly

have to be on the look-out for their goods, as the learners steal from one another. There is a good measure of respect towards the teachers; however, the occurrence of some incidents questions the level of respect. Learners use vulgar words in front of the teachers and do not listen when teachers talk to them. The teachers claim to respect the learners, but they do not trust the learners as some of them steal or cheat in tests and examinations. The level of trust and respect amongst the teachers is low as well; whilst they do show a measure of respect, they do not trust one another very much.

Findings from the *high-performing schools* (Challens et al. 2018:20) illustrate that the respect and trust amongst the learners are generally very good. There are purposeful attempts at these schools to establish respect and trust. At one of these schools, the Life Orientation syllabus has been adjusted to continuously empower the learners by spending more time on aspects such as respect, trust, relationships and handling conflict. At another school, a purposeful attempt is made to get new learners incorporated in new friendship groups as soon as possible. There is, in general, a high level of respect and trust between the learners and the teachers at these schools. Any disrespectful behaviour towards the teachers is dealt with immediately. The level of trust and respect amongst the teachers, and between the teachers and the principal at these schools, is generally very high. At two of these schools, signs of mistrust occurred when they went through a process of change. Differences are handled professionally; the staff does not use public forums to raise their dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the principals reprimand in the privacy of their office but praise in public. One of the participants ascribed the respect and trust they have for one another to the Christian values with which they had grown up.

□ Strengthening of moral values

The measures used by these schools are limited to the Life Orientation class and weekly assembly where pastors can preach

to them and occasional speakers can motivate them and speak on moral issues. However, one of the participants mentioned that ‘the learners are not really listening’ to these. Disturbingly, the teachers claimed that the level of character, morals and integrity amongst the teachers is not very high, with a huge percentage of teachers guilty of ill-discipline.

Findings from the *high-performing schools* (Challens et al. 2018:20) illustrate that their faith formed the foundation of their school life. Two of these schools have religious studies and weekly religious assemblies. In the Life Orientation class at these schools, there is a purposeful attempt to focus on moral values, whilst one of these schools has adjusted its syllabus to give more attention to specific moral values. Moral values are also purposefully incorporated into the other school subjects. These schools organise regular talks to prepare the learners morally in important life skills. Prayer also makes up an important part of the school life, as the school day starts and ends with prayers.

Furthermore, the staff of these schools see themselves as good role models and people with integrity, good character and high moral values. Although they do not see themselves as perfect, they hold one another to high moral actions. Differences that may occur amongst the staff are handled immediately to clear the air and get them out of the way.

■ Discussion

The comparison of the findings of the underperforming and the high-performing schools displays a huge contrast in terms of the levels of relationships, support and caring, respect and trust and the strengthening of moral values. The relationships amongst the different role players in the underperforming schools are worrying, as neither the relationships between the learners and the teachers nor those amongst the teachers are good, whilst the relationship between the teachers and the principal ranges from toxic, to not good, and good. Where the relationship between the teachers and the principal is good, the principal is described

as too lenient and another too soft. This creates a situation where the teachers take advantage of the principal. The findings of the high-performing schools displayed very good relationships amongst all the stakeholders. Viewed through the lens of the moral leadership framework, there is a clear disharmony between the ideal behaviour and what is currently at play in the underperforming schools, and it is the responsibility of moral leaders to work diligently to restore the disharmony. Good personal and professional relationships are also proof of a school with an open organisational climate, which is conducive to positive academic performance (Gülşen & Gülenay 2014).

Whilst all the schools give support to learners, the levels and types of support differ between the underperforming and the high-performing schools. The support at the underperforming schools is limited to factors such as providing food, uniforms, career guidance and extra classes and, occasionally, calling on social workers for assistance. On the other hand, in the high-performing schools, the support goes much further to include things such as encouraging learners and providing pastoral care, peer-teacher systems, school psychologists, educational psychologists, social workers, remedial support, career counselling, peer-mentoring systems and spiritual counselling. Viewed through the lens of the moral leadership model, the leaders should be committed to the advancement of individual and collective change. The school leaders in these underperforming schools should drive and promote the support of all stakeholders for the collective change and benefit of all.

The underperforming schools do not do well in terms of being caring schools either. Their caring is limited to the provision of food and the teachers, at times, using their own money to help the learners. However, the provision of food is not a school initiative but is part of the National School Nutrition Programme. Furthermore, the schools are not caring in the sense that some of the teachers stay away from class, resulting in their not teaching effectively (lack of quality teaching). This is an injustice towards not only the learners but also society. The high-performing

schools, on the other hand, are seen as caring schools. They create happy environments, make a special effort to create a good learning experience, show interest in the learners, treat everyone the same and focus on the holistic development of the learners. Viewed from the moral leadership framework, harmony needs to be restored between how things are currently being done (conditional truth) and the expected behaviour (ideal truth). The teachers currently do not experience their school climate as one that is compatible with the ideal.

The level of respect between the learners and the teachers is very low, whilst the teachers have a good level of respect for one another. The teachers trust neither the learners nor their fellow teachers. At the high-performing schools, the level of respect and trust amongst all the stakeholders is generally very good. Purposeful attempts are made in these schools to establish respect and trust.

A climate of trust and respect is important for any human interaction (Carr 2007), but sadly it is not evident in the underperforming schools. Viewed from the moral leadership framework, there is a visible detachment from a commitment to values and principles of eternal value that forms part of the vision of schools, in acceptance of a current truth (behaviour).

The measures used in the underperforming schools to strengthen moral values are limited to the Life Orientation class, weekly assembly and occasional visits by pastors and motivational speakers. The concern with regard to these attempts is that the learners do not always listen. Also, the level of character, morals and integrity amongst the teachers in these schools is not very high, with a vast percentage of teachers making themselves guilty of ill-discipline. The high-performing schools purposefully attempt to strengthen moral values by adjusting the Life Orientation syllabus, incorporating morals and values into the other school subjects, having regular talks to prepare the learners morally for important life skills and regular prayers. In addition, the staff at these schools consists of good role models, people with integrity, good character and high moral values. They hold

one another to high moral actions and try to handle differences immediately to clear the air and get them out of the way.

According to the moral leadership model, the leaders will indicate the direction (vision), which is normally based on their personal (spiritual) values and professional values (principles). The moral leadership framework concurs that the values and principles bear eternal value and form part of the vision of the leader. The direction the leader gives to promote moral values will determine to what extent the teachers will promote these values further and how they will interact with the learners (Challens et al. 2018:21). In the underperforming schools, there is a lack of good role models, as the perception of integrity, character and morals they have of one another and the rest of the staff is very low. Research also cites a lack of good role models as a possible cause for poor academic performance in schools (cf. Banerjee 2016:4). Although the moral leadership framework sees mankind as essentially noble and rich in potential, which has to be extracted, this potential and the drive amongst the staff to excel to higher moral values are absent.

■ Conclusion

The findings of this research paint a bleak picture of the moral position amongst the principals and teachers in these underperforming schools. The relationships amongst the different role players are poor and the levels of respect are low, they do not trust one other, the staff do not support the learners enough, they do not support one another enough, the level of care is low and they do not do enough to strengthen moral values in their schools. The findings in these schools are almost in direct contrast to the findings made at high-performing high schools. These findings are also in line with the historical situation of the country, where the most disadvantaged population groups perform the worst academically. One can argue that the location of these schools has an impact on the results of these schools, as Banerjee (2016:7) notes that ‘the more rural a school the poorer

the performance compared to an urban and suburban school'. In the same way as many other reasons, such as the lack of role models in these areas, the quality of teachers, the lack of resources and indulging in high-risk behaviour could be cited. However, the study compared the moral leadership in underperforming and high-performing high schools and found exactly opposite results in the two. This seems to be in line with empirical research that shows a strong qualitative association between the school leaders' educational values, qualities and strategic activities and the enhancements in the school environment that lead to improvement in learner outcomes.

This research makes a call for moral leadership as an imperative for principal leadership in underperforming schools. By weighing both the underperforming schools and the high-performing schools based on the three fundamental elements of the moral imperative of principal leadership set by Paulsen et al. (2015:765), one would argue that the underperforming schools were found wanting. These elements, firstly, deal with communicating, disclosing and demonstrating commitment to the moral purpose for education, the school vision and education values. Secondly, morally authentic practices are exhibited through patterns of dealings with learners. Thirdly, respect and fairness are displayed through the equal treatment of the staff and considering the needs of all the staff members. The authors suggest thoughtfully considering moral leadership as an imperative for principal leadership in South African schools.

Influence of school principal's leadership on the school climate in underperforming schools

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■ Abstract

The reason why some schools outperform others remains under discussion. There are several reasons why some schools do not perform well. Poor infrastructure, a lack of resources, poor socio-economic conditions, poverty and a lack of discipline, amongst other things, are stated as reasons. However, many schools do perform well even under unfavourable conditions. This raises the question: to what extent does the school principal's leadership play a role in the performance of a school. In addition, school climate is mentioned and is often associated with achievement. Whether the leadership of the school principal plays a role in creating an environment in the school that is conducive to learning and performance is also under discussion. It is well-known that learners perform better in a healthy learning environment, where effective teaching and learning take place. When leadership, school climate and learner performance are mentioned together, a well-performing school seems to be associated with a strong leadership from the principal, a combination of leadership styles and a healthy school climate. On the other hand, it seems that a lack of leadership and the use of particular leadership styles contribute to poor relationships between the school principal and the staff, and result in the underperformance of the school. This study looked into the relationship between strong school leadership, a healthy school climate and learner achievement. A qualitative approach, embedded in the interpretivist paradigm, was followed in the study. Four principals and 15 teachers from underperforming schools in two provinces were interviewed. The results showed that there was a lack of strong leadership in these schools. In addition, the teachers and the principals were not in agreement regarding the leadership style of the principal, which resulted in mistrusting the behaviour of the principals. The principals and teachers agreed that the principal of a school played an important role in the creation of a school climate that was conducive to learning. The principals and teachers also agreed that the principals' leadership style could influence the performance of

the school. However, a combination of strong leadership and a positive school climate where relationships are based on trust, transparency and support contributes to the academic performance of learners.

Keywords: Leadership style; Learner performance; Mistrust; Poor management; Preparation programmes; School climate; School effectiveness; School principal leadership; Underperforming schools.

■ Introduction

The purpose of any educational institution is to provide quality teaching and learning. However, various challenges prevent this goal from being achieved. Challenges such as a lack of infrastructure and resources, underqualified teachers and an unfavourable school climate contribute to poor teaching and inadequate learning (Ahumada, Galdames & Clarke 2016; Liu & Bellibas 2018; Masci, De Witte & Agasisti 2018). Whether a school performs well or poorly can be attributed to effective or poor leadership. It all boils down to the capability and competency of the school principal (Badenhorst & Koalepe 2014; Miller 2013; Sun & Ni 2016). Questions are asked about how successful school principals lead and manage, how transparent their decision-making process is, whether they appoint the best teachers, how strong their relationships with the learners, the teachers and the community are and whether their leadership style has an impact on the school climate. Leadership in the previous century differed from leadership in 2019. Earlier, leadership was, in some cases, characterised by an autocratic and a bureaucratic leadership approach. Strict guidelines about how, when and where to lead and manage were provided. Although the foundation of leadership stays the same, external factors force principals to look at leadership through a different lens. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, millennial teachers, human rights and demands for better education urged principals to adapt their leadership and leadership styles. It seems, however, as if some principals have

not deviated from the age-old approach to leadership and management. In some cases, principals are uncomfortable in taking an initiative. The training and appointment of principals are also questioned. How well are principals prepared for the task they need to perform? Is the designated school principal appointed in a given context? Botha (2013:308) argues that principals have to lead in creative ways, as challenges, expectations and demands increase every year. The purpose of this chapter is to provide greater insight into the extent to which school principal leadership style could establish a favourable school climate in underperforming schools with a view to enhancing the performance.

■ **Overview of school principal leadership and school climate**

■ **School effectiveness**

Much has been said about school effectiveness and success. Ng and Pun (2013:54) postulate that a school's success lies within a clear vision executed by school principals and teachers. However, the execution of policies, decision-making processes and responsibilities are, according to them, a contributing factor towards success. Ng and Pun (2013:57) argue that various practices are of importance. For example, charismatic leadership is needed for teachers' team-building activities. In addition, for school principals, leading curriculum reform, working as a role model, a strong ability to observe and analyse societal trends, understanding the intent of their superiors, being sensitive to the orientation and problem teachers have, knowing what their teachers, learners and parents want and a professional belief or passion that makes other people follow them are of utmost importance. Karataş (2019:590) explains that effective principal leadership refers to the seven principles for sustainable leadership compiled by Hargreaves and Fink. They suggest that in order for school principals to be successful, they should (Karataş 2019):

[P]rovide and preserve sustainable learning, ensure success, share leadership with others, put social justice at the centre, do not consume human and other resources, but develops them, develop environmental diversity ad capacity and take the role of an activist in the protection of the environment. (p. 590)

Models and theories were established in order to enhance school effectiveness. These models include the Four Path Leadership Model of Leithwood et al. (2010), the seven strong claims about successful school leadership (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins 2020) and the Pashiardis–Braukmann Holistic Leadership Framework (Braukmann & Pashiardis 2010). According to Kamper (2008):

[E]ffective school leaders attend to both structure and culture, continuity and change; they are both managers and leaders; they are both transactional and transformational. No single leadership model adequately describes the expectations and reality for contemporary school leaders. (p. 4)

Kamper (2008) further argues that:

[T]he four basic grounds of invitational leadership are optimism (constituted in the belief that people have untapped potential for growth and development); respect (manifested in courtesy and caring); trust (the cornerstone of ‘civil society within a school’); and intentional care (intentional provision of growth opportunities). (p. 4)

In another study, successful schools have been found to be based on a sense of belonging amongst learners, teachers and families (Riley, Montecinos & Ahumada 2017:847). Riley et al. (2017:847) further argue that other factors contributing to successful schools include school safety, the visibility of the school principal and showing love and compassion for learners. In yet another study, Joshi (2018:112) claims that distributed and transformational leadership contributes to establishing an effective school.

Reynolds et al. (2001) refer to schools that succeed ‘against the odds’ in improving despite the difficult circumstances. In their view, the following characteristics are found in these schools:

- a leadership attitude that represents (in its leadership team) and builds a team approach
- a vision of success for improved and sustainable academic performance judiciously targeting improvement of the physical environment
- common expectations with regard to behaviour and success
- investment in good relations with parents and the community.

In an in-depth study on school effectiveness, Skiba (2017:32) revealed that school-wide behavioural planning and improved classroom management must be addressed to ensure a sustainable effective school. In addition, social and emotional learning, parental and community involvement, early screening for mental health issues, establishing a school and district-wide data system and effective and ongoing collaboration are of importance.

■ Poorly performing schools

Nussbaum (2003:33) refers to the term 'capability', which describes people who are 'able to do and to be'; in other words, in the context of the study, school principals who are capable to lead and manage a school, whatever the circumstances. Leadership in challenging contexts in low-income areas and poor socio-economic conditions is more difficult to be demonstrated than in better circumstances. School principals are often sent to poorly performing schools because of different reasons. Unfortunately, some school principals lacking the necessary qualifications, skills and experience are sometimes sent to poorly performing schools.

Numerous studies (e.g. Leiva et al. 2017; Mahlangu 2014; Spull 2013; Wills 2016) have been conducted on poorly performing schools, especially in South Africa. Taking into consideration international tests, South Africa performs poorly compared to the rest of the world. Mestry (2017:258) argues that principals can make a difference when the teaching and learning environment

is relevant. Principals can change the learning environment to a conducive environment by taking the curriculum management into consideration. In addition, Sun and Ni (2016:178) postulate that principal turnover must be scrutinised, the leadership skill and qualities of principals should be questioned and incompetent and underqualified teachers should be dismissed. In yet another case, Bandaranayake (2016:601) reveals in a report that low socio-economic status is likely to guarantee poor performance in schools. Insufficient funding contributes to schools performing poorly. Gyasi, Xi and Owusu-Ampomah (2016:16) focus on leadership styles and conclude that the leadership style followed by principals may have an influence on the performance of the school. Subsequently, Jones et al. (2015:362) argue that distributed leadership could be a solution for poorly performing schools. In addition, leadership development training programmes may enhance school performance. When school climate is discussed, Dutta and Sahney (2015:951) are of the opinion that teachers' job satisfaction, the school climate, leadership practices and learner performance cannot be separated. It appears that school principals reach learners through teachers, which results in improved learner performance. A supportive attitude towards learners and a congenial environment influence the performance of learners. It is evident that a positive relationship between the principal and teachers is essential for sustainable school success.

Bayat, Louw and Rena (2014) address particular factors that contribute to schools performing poorly if not in place:

[/]nappropriate policy, poor quality of education, leadership and organisational systems, SMT, school governing bodies, absenteeism, class skipping and late-coming by teachers and learners, language of learning and teaching, overcrowding of classrooms and teacher to learner ratio's, safety and security of the school ecology, teacher experience and socio-economic factors. (p. 47)

These factors cover a wide spectrum. Taking these factors into consideration, it is evident that school principals should possess leadership and management skills to prevent schools from performing poorly. This raises the question of whether principals

are well prepared for principalship and whether a lack of training could be the reason for schools performing poorly.

In South Africa, no specific qualification requirements have been established. Principals have to have an 'appropriate' academic qualification and a specific number of years of experience in the service of the Department of Education (DoE). In some instances, teachers become school principals by 'jumping' the ranks, especially in rural schools. In addition, they do not have the necessary leadership and management skills, do not have the necessary knowledge about legal issues and are unsure of what they are supposed to do as school principals (Bush 2011:31). School principals are appointed on the basis of a successful record as teachers. Taking in to account the poor academic results of South African schools - for example, the number of schools in South Africa that obtained a 0% pass rate in the National Senior Certificate Examinations - it is no surprise that Bush argues that the role of the principal has drastically changed. According to him (Bush 2011), the reasons for this are as follows:

- The expansion of the role of school principal; in decentralised systems, the scope of leadership has increased.
- The increasing complexity of school contexts; principals have to engage with their communities to lead and manage effectively.
- Recognition that preparation is a moral obligation; it is unfair to appoint new principals without providing an effective induction.
- Recognition that effective preparation and development make a difference; principals are better leaders following specific training.

The Advanced Certificate in Education programme was developed to improve educational standards. The primary purpose was to apply theory into practice. However, Webber et al. (2014:514) suggest that 'new forms of leadership development should be considered by principals themselves and by those charged with

teaching and supporting their development as change agents'. Subsequently, cf. Van Jaarsveld, Mentz and Challens (2015:95) emphasise that it is important to offer novice principals support (formal and informal) before appointment as principals by providing guided mentorship programmes or sustainable – mentorship. There is a need for mentorship in order to enhance the efficiency of school principal leadership and to promote learner achievement.

■ Principal leadership

In a new era of school principal leadership, Botha (2013:312) claims that the traditional leadership approaches, such as the autocratic and bureaucratic approaches, need to be revised and adjusted to a more modern approach where the school principal is in service of the learners, the teachers and the community. In addition, school principals (Botha 2013):

[M]ust possess the skills and abilities to transform the school into a high-performing organisation focussed on improving teaching and learning outcomes to prepare learners for the challenges of the 21st century. (p. 313)

For this reason, school principals should have positioned themselves in a new era of school principal leadership. School principalship has indeed become complex (Sebastian, Camburn & Spillane 2018:48).

Stynes, Mcnamara and O'Hara (2018:100) reveal that the role of the school principal includes addressing administrative issues, dealing with the unexpected, interacting with staff and community and dealing with out-of-hours demands. In their study, Stynes et al. (2018:105) point out that the role of the principal leads to frustration, exhaustion and stress. According to Stynes et al. (2018):

[P]rincipals understand the nature of the role and are deeply committed to it but policy makers and education authorities must be careful about the ever-increasing expectations and burdens placed on the shoulders of school leaders. (p. 105)

It is well-known that school leadership ranks second only to teaching as a school-related factor influencing learner academic performance (Stone-Johnson 2014:647). The focus is on how responsible school principals act. According to Stone-Johnson (2014:668), responsible leadership entails healthy relationships with learners, teachers and the community. As a result, a conducive school climate emerges, which influences the performance of both teachers and learners. In addition, the school principal as an instructional leader is of importance.

A question often asked is whether a school principal is a leader or not when it comes to the academic achievement of learners. In this regard, Okutan (2014) postulates that a school principal must also be a:

[7]alented and knowledgeable educational leader, besides being a manager exhibiting model behaviours which will emphasise the importance of continuous learning by participating to educational activities for their occupational developments, offering opportunities to teachers for their personal developments after accepting their mistakes. (p. 94)

A good balance between human and task orientation is, therefore, of essence.

■ Management by the principal

The other side of the coin focuses on school management and the role the school principal plays in this regard. Tavares (2015:2) argues that the term 'management' could be linked to leadership and the charisma of leaders. However, the term 'processes' is often used in the same sentence as 'management'. Management entails monitoring, goal setting and incentives. When these three concepts are not executed properly, it often results in poor performance. Although principals are associated with teaching-orientated learning, management is just as important in the daily execution of the principal's tasks (Tavares 2015:2). In the school context, management is associated with education outcomes. However, managerial training is of importance when the aim is the improvement of productivity and educational achievement.

Management and leadership cannot be separated in the field of education (Kelley & Peterson 2002):

As managers, principals ensure that basic roles, rules, responsibilities, structures, and processes of the school are functioning effectively. As leaders, they help foster an engaging, meaningful, vision and mission for the school, shape the culture, and provide motivation, high expectations, support, and encouragement. (p. 261)

Rodall and Salazar (2018:315) add that management entails decision-making under 'conditions of bounded rationality and look for support through rules'. In addition, management practices involve degrees of delegated and coordinated actions.

Vaisben (2018:103) reveals that 44% of the weekly work executed by the principal is directed towards managerial tasks. It is therefore evident that principals must have the necessary managerial skills to manage the school in an effective manner. Vaisben (2018:101) suggests that principals should have the necessary skills to manage change, human resources and the development of a vision. An important contribution of Vaisben is in dealing with the issue of training principals in management skills through training programmes. Often, only leadership skills are addressed in training programmes, whilst management skills are not part of these programmes.

■ The school climate

The conversations around the school climate go back as far as 1900 when Perry first referred to the influence of school climate on teaching and learning in schools (Amedome 2018:3). According to Hoy and Miskel (2008:185), school climate is a compilation of internal characteristics that distinguish one school from another. It will also affect the behaviour of the people involved in the school. The school climate is therefore an integral component of the school process with a view to bring about improvement. Zehetmeier et al. (2015:168) believe that the sole purpose of schools is to achieve learning despite challenges experienced within the school environment. The atmosphere, the characteristics of the school and the teachers' experience of the environment in

which they work are key elements in determining the climate of the school. The actions of the principal and the teachers influence the climate of the school. Barkley (2013:11) argues that climate is synonymous with an environment where teaching and learning take place and is viewed as a set of norms and expectations that prevail in a school. The school climate determines the quality of school life and is based on the experiences of learners, parents and teachers. This is reflected in school goals, values, relationships, teaching and learning practices and structures.

Much research has been conducted with regard to teachers' job satisfaction. However, it appears that less research has been conducted on the topic of the job satisfaction of principals. Liu and Bellibas (2018:1) claim that principals play a crucial role in leading the school to success, yet little emphasis is laid on the psychological conditions of principals. Taking into account the fact that the leadership of a principal is the link between a positive school climate and a conducive learning environment, the well-being of the principal demands attention. 'A school's organisational learning of maintaining effectiveness or transforming from failure to success needs consistent focus and continuous effort guided by school leaders' (Liu & Bellibas 2018:1). Liu and Bellibas reveal that the job of the principal has become too complicated. As a result, the turnover of principals and teachers increases, influencing the performance of learners. For this reason, the well-being of teachers and principals, as well as a conducive school climate, should be regarded as a priority. It is evident that a positive school climate, especially a cooperative and respectful relationship amongst teachers and learners, contributes to effective teaching and learning (Liu & Bellibas 2018:15). Once school principals understand their role, job satisfaction follows and a positive school climate is created.

Individuals have different perceptions of their environment within an organisation. How they experience and perceive it, differ from individual to individual, and the norms and values of the individuals play a role in how they experience the climate.

How individuals perceive the environment within the organisation will also determine their attitudes towards one another and towards the leader of the organisation. When these attitudes are positive, the relationships will be positive, which will give rise to a positive climate in which they work. Positive attitudes and relationships will create a healthy environment in the organisation. This has a direct impact on the success of the organisation. Relationships can affect the school climate positively or negatively. The emotional judgement of the school principal, how he or she acts as a leader and the principal's leadership style are key factors for establishing a positively conducive school climate. At the same time, teachers' relationships and involvement play an important role in creating the school climate. Also, the school environment contributes to the school climate as well as to the achievement of the learners.

■ Statement of the problem

Various determinants have been identified that lead to a positive school climate, including interpersonal relationships, support and opportunities (Hayes 2013:18). According to Day and Antonakis (2012:9), the principal's leadership can have an influence on the interaction of teachers and learners within the school that can influence job satisfaction. The leadership style followed by the principal may also contribute positively to a culture of teaching and learning. Carmon (2009:150) and Lydia and Nasongo (2009:84, 91) state that principals attribute the success achieved by learners in their academics to good teachers, whilst teachers attribute this to the principal's leadership style. On the one hand, principals claim that learner performance depends on teachers, whilst teachers claim that it depends on the principal's leadership style. Studies conducted by Hallinger and Heck (2010:107) point out that only one school leadership style can lead to the advancement of learner achievement because effective school leadership styles must be seen in the context of the school. The principal is responsible for establishing a positive organisational

climate in the school through effective leadership (Black 2010). Black points out that effective leadership of the principal is critical to the school climate, as his or her choices influence learner performance. The climate of a school can be improved through interventions such as improving parental and community engagement, the implementation of character education or the promotion of fundamental moral values in children, the prevention of violence and providing a safe environment for learners and teachers (Van der Westhuizen 2013).

Against the background of the problem statement, a study of the principal's leadership style and the influence on school climate was first conducted in performing and then underperforming schools. The aim of the project was to determine to what extent the most appropriate leadership style contributes to establishing a favourable school climate.

■ Research methodology

■ Purpose and objectives of the study

The aim of the project was to determine the extent to which school principal leadership could establish a favourable school climate in underperforming schools with a view to enhancing the performance. The objective was to determine how teachers experienced the leadership of school principals, especially with regard to the establishment of a school climate conducive to learning.

■ Research design, paradigm and method

The qualitative research design was the appropriate research design, as the behaviour of the principals and the teachers was studied in their natural setting. Furthermore, the complexity of the leadership practices (with regard to the style) and the influence thereof on the school climate were studied to gain new insight into these practices and how they contribute to a school

climate conducive to learning. An interpretivist paradigm allowed the researchers not only to describe the social context, conventions, norms and standards of the particular school principals and teachers but also to reflect on the crucial elements in assessing and understanding the behaviour of the school principals and teachers (cf. Maree 2010:21). A phenomenological method was followed in an attempt to understand the perceptions of the school principals and teachers regarding the leadership of the school principal and the influence it had on the school climate.

■ Participants

Four principals, one female and three male, were purposefully sampled in this research project. The schools included were secondary schools, located in the poor socio-economic areas of the Limpopo and North West Provinces. In addition, 15 teachers, both male and female, participated. The teachers' teaching experience ranged from limited to extensive. The data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews during the phenomenological study allowed the principals and the teachers to express their views freely in their own language (De et al. 2009:296, 297). The questions posed in the interviews focussed mainly on the importance of school principal leadership in underperforming schools and how the leadership influenced the school climate. The same questions were asked during the interviews with the participants in the performing schools. The analysis was conducted by first transcribing the audio recordings and then coding them to form themes.

■ Results and analysis

The schools were purposefully selected as the purpose of the study was to determine the influence of school principal leadership on the school climate. All of the schools achieved less than a 56% pass rate in the National Senior Certificate. Two of the

schools achieved less than a 40% pass rate. The accessibility of the schools was notable. In all instances, set appointments had to change two or three times. In addition, there were no telephone lines and the researchers were dependent on cell phone conversations, which were often problematic. Reaching the schools was an additional challenge, as satellite coordinates were not available for three of the four schools and no clear directions to the schools could be given. In one case, different directions were given by residents.

Four themes emerged from the results which are discussed in the 'School principal leadership' section.

■ School principal leadership

It is evident in the research that the teachers want and need a good leader to guide and support them; one who will understand their challenges and frustrations. Leadership in schools matters, whether a school performs well or is an underperforming school. There are always two sides to a coin; therefore, the opinions of the principals are compared to those of the teachers. All four principals indicated that they were 'good' leaders. However, the teachers of three of the schools indicated that the principals were not good leaders. The teacher of only one school indicated that the principal tried to make a difference. All the principals stated that they were democratic leaders. Most of the teachers agreed to that. However, in the school with the lowest pass rate, the teachers pointed out that the school principal was autocratic. One of the teachers (T2, female, underperforming schools) revealed that the principal 'works on her own, tells us to do this and to do that. She never informs us when she leaves the school'. In contrast, the principal (P2) mentioned that she was a democratic leader, for if she did not include the teachers in the decision-making process, they would 'sabotage' her. Principal (P1) pointed out that when a principal is autocratic, the teachers will do what they are *supposed* to do and not what they *want* to do. Then the teachers will not make a special effort because they

will feel that they are forced to do things. Principal (P3, male, underperforming school) added that there are some things teachers 'don't want to do because they don't like it'. He then has to be autocratic and act accordingly: 'in this case ... this is how it is going to happen ... it ends there'. The teachers felt that all the principals but one were autocratic. According to one of the teachers, the principal did not need any answers from them.

□ Leadership and the climate

With regard to the leadership of the school principal, most of the teachers felt that the principal's leadership influences the relationship between the principal and the teachers. When the relationships are healthy, the teachers experience job satisfaction and a willingness to make a special effort with the learners. As most of the participants indicated that a positive school climate starts with the principal, the management team and the teachers themselves, this results in a team effort, which determines the climate of the school. The principals agreed they could have an influence but it was everyone's responsibility. However, when teachers do not support one another and do not share, the school climate deteriorates. For this reason, the principals often are democratic leaders in order to create opportunities where teachers may share their opinions, feelings and support.

All the principals felt that their leadership had an influence on learner performance. According to one of the teachers (T6, male, underperforming school), the 'leadership of the school principal is critical for performance'.

■ School principal management

School management was one of the issues mentioned during the interviews. It was apparent that the principals in the underperforming schools struggled with management because of various reasons. One of the reasons seemed to be the issue of 'transparency'. The principals managed areas or issues in a

manner they thought was best for the school. However, the teachers experienced the management in a different way. One principal (P2, female, underperforming school) pointed out that, at the end of the day, she was the 'accountable officer', for example for the feeding programme. The teachers, on the other hand, 'want access to each and everything' (P2, female underperforming school). This results in negativity. According to Principal (P1), poor relationships have an effect on management. In addition, learners feel the lack of management. In one of the schools, the poor management was viewed as because of the lack of management from the principal. Teacher 5 indicated that there was a lack of management in their school. There was uncertainty with regard to policies, who should handle discipline and the management team not taking the necessary steps. According to a teacher (T4, male, underperforming school), the principal's response, to remarks from the teachers towards the lack of management of the SMT, was usually 'noted'. It was clear that the principal did not act when comments were made but only took note of the comments. In addition, the management team takes management 'for themselves' (T6, male, underperforming school). The management team did not want to share the management with the staff but wanted only its control alone.

Delegation, as a management task, plays an important role in the management of an organisation. However, the teachers of three of the schools felt that the principals did not delegate. One of the teachers (T2, female, underperforming school) stated: 'no, I don't think she delegates. She comes and says, "Do that". She'll give this and this and that without saying this isn't right. She step-side [*sic*] everything'. It is clear that when a positive relationship between the school principal, the management team and the teachers is wanting, a lack of communication, transparency and good management is the result.

In contrast with the above statements, one of the principals (P3, male, underperforming school) revealed that he was a

well-organised leader who believed in 'planning, regular briefings in the morning, plans for the day, if anything it's going to happen, they are planned'. The SMT helps with the planning and delegation in general. In addition, the school principal has a policy of interacting with the teachers, and they share ideas.

■ School climate

A sense of belonging is often a key factor when a positive school climate is mentioned. However, one of the schools has a huge problem with regard to the accommodation of staff members. One of the schools has no joint staff room that can accommodate all the staff members at the same time. Different rooms are used, which immediately results in cliques being formed. The school principal emphasised the need to have a sense of togetherness, where everyone shares, especially in the morning before school starts. Notably, the other schools that performed poorly did not have a positive school climate, for which several reasons were mentioned. Two main reasons mentioned in the interviews involved the principal and the teachers.

□ Principals

Principals who are placed at schools because no other school wanted them is a recipe for a negative school climate. One of the teachers referred to a 'toxic' climate. However, the principal, as the leader of the school, is responsible for creating a positive environment, but he or she cannot take responsibility for everything the teachers do. In a school where there is no cooperation, a lack of job satisfaction occurs and often results in a *laissez-faire* attitude. As one of the teachers (T4, female, underperforming school) mentioned, 'if you want to survive you must do what all the others do - nothing'.

On the other hand, one of the principals seemed to follow her own way. Teacher 2 stated:

'She's just doing things on her own. She doesn't even inform us when she goes somewhere. She doesn't even say bye-bye ... at times she says when she goes somewhere, "I don't say to you I'm going out and I'll meet you somewhere". I'll hear it from the Inspector who's my senior. She's undermining people. She's trying to undermine people. She's against everything that the teachers want to do'. (T2, female, underperforming school)

It was clear that the teacher was frustrated, which was a matter of concern, as she was young and energetic and full of ideas for teaching. These kinds of actions of principals cause teachers to leave schools. The result is that learners have to cope without a good teacher.

□ Teachers

A positive attitude from the principal influences the teachers and, in turn, they influence the learners. However, one of the teachers (Teacher 6) mentioned that she had a 100% pass rate in her subject but experienced a negative feeling from the principal's side. According to her, the principal did not appreciate teachers and did not reward them. Also, the issue of hierarchy came to the fore. At some of the schools, the principal and the SMT were perceived as looking down on the teachers. 'Clerks may do anything but teachers are lower than clerks' (T6, male, underperforming school). In addition, teachers who reached the peak of their career and had nothing else to do, 'when they see people with passion, they find a way to bring you down, especially younger people' (T2, female, underperforming school). This raises the question of professionalism. When teachers are downgraded, they often leave the profession and seek for work in other fields.

Poor leadership can be attributed to various reasons. For example, one of the principals admitted that he was reluctant to

take action against teachers, as they have accused him of witchcraft. These kinds of comments force principals to take a step back. It causes a cycle to arise because the teachers, in return, may say that the principal is not leading but is pushed by management members.

■ Learner performance

Poor performance is attributed to different challenges. The challenges are categorised into three main aspects, namely socio-economic issues and parents, teachers and infrastructure. These challenges result in a negative school climate.

□ Socio-economic issues and parents

One of the issues mentioned by the principals is the 'above-age' issue. Some of the learners are between 21 and 24 years old and are still in school. When over-aged learners and younger learners are put together in one class, 'the discipline collapses' (P2, female, underperforming school). Over-aged learners can visit places where alcohol is freely available. They are in contact with people of their own age, may visit places where only adults are allowed and may come into contact with drugs. In most cases, these learners are in classes with learners as young as 15 years. This is a huge problem, as they influence the younger learners not to do homework, to disrespect teachers and to use drugs. In addition, the school principal cannot call their parents, as these learners are sometimes living on their own as adults.

Most of the schools visited are located in mining areas. The majority of the learners come from far-away places. When fathers are laid off from work, they move to other mining areas and leave their children and wives behind. In some cases, the wives move away with the fathers and the children are forced to stay with grandparents, who are often illiterate and do not have the courage to discipline the learners to go to school or do homework. The lack of discipline at home results in a lack of self-discipline in

the classroom. In both scenarios, the parents fail to visit the school if they are summoned to the school. It becomes a vicious circle: learners fail to do homework and then fail their grade; the teachers and the principal call in the parents; the parents do not react; the teachers become frustrated and the school climate deteriorates.

□ Teachers

It is well known that teachers play an important role in the academic achievement of learners. The school climate influences the job satisfaction of teachers; the more the teachers enjoy their work, the more they will contribute to the success of the learners. However, in the poorly performing schools under study, some issues with regard to teachers came to the fore. At most of the schools, the teachers were not qualified for the subject they taught, especially Mathematics and Sciences. In addition, some teachers refused to teach other subjects: 'they will not teach other subject[s], only what they [have] know[n] for years' (T5, female, underperforming school). Teachers enter a comfort zone and refuse to change. This leads to positive teachers becoming negative because the negative teachers influence them. At the same time, culture plays a role. When teachers' cultures differ too much from one another, there is no cohesion. Thus, diversity is not always desirable.

One of the main problems experienced by the principals and teachers with regard to teacher issues is the negligence of teachers leaving the school. In most cases, teachers leave the school without leaving the files, teacher preparations and other school property behind. As a result, the new teacher has to start all over again, compiling files, lessons and resources. In addition, they often enter classrooms without the necessary textbooks as the previous teacher has not bothered to obtain textbooks. As a result, teachers get discouraged and the morale deteriorates.

▣ Infrastructure and resources

Most of the schools in the study are Quintile 2 schools. School governing bodies are supposed to raise money by means of fundraising. However, the principals experienced a lack of commitment from the governing bodies and had to rely on the minimum resources available. In addition, the schools experienced burglary and vandalism. Another challenge was that one of the schools was located at a distance from the nearest town and was only accessible by gravel road. A lack of water and sanitation added to frustration amongst the teachers as well as the learners. According to the principal and the teachers, the lack of infrastructure and resources contributed to the poor performance of the learners and the negative school climate.

■ Summary

Notable in the study was the fact that three of the principals made excuses for themselves with regard to the poor academic performance and the negative school climate. They blamed the teachers, the community, the DoBE and, in one case, witchcraft. At face value, based on the researcher's observation, the schools were not well kept and the reception and treatment by staff poor. This raised the question regarding the extent to which the principals showed leadership skills by setting an example and acting effectively on basic issues, such as cleanliness and accessibility. There is no excuse for a school being littered with papers. In addition, proper management skills with regard to the four management tasks will ensure good planning (e.g. enough textbooks), leading (e.g. leading with a purposeful vision and mission), organising (e.g. fundraising opportunities) and control (e.g. task- and human resource-orientated issues). It was clear from the study that the three principals were not prepared for the role of school principal. They failed to adhere to the eight key interdependence areas, which constitute the core purpose of the principal in South African schools. The eight keys, stipulated by DoBE (2014), are:

[L]eading teaching and learning in the school; shaping the direction and development of the school; managing quality and securing accountability; developing and empowering self and others; managing the school as an organisation; working with and for the community; managing human resources (staff) in the school; and managing and advocating extramural activities. (n.p.)

These keys were clearly not part of the principals' practices.

The five basic leadership attributes to ensure leading teaching and learning were lacking as well. Strategic, executive, instructional, cultural and organisational leadership is of the essence to ensure sustainable academic performance and a conducive school climate. However, one of the principals, in the midst of difficult circumstances, made an effort to change the school from a trap school to a school where the pass rate of the Grade 12 learners had increased within a year. Noteworthy of this school principal was the fact that he had a positive outlook on life and was motivated and transparent. He was described by the teachers as someone who took the lead, made joint decisions and cared deeply for the teachers. It was, therefore, no surprise that the teachers felt the school had a positive school climate, although it experienced challenges. The issue of attitude plays a role in this instance. When the attitude of all stakeholders is turned positively, change can take place and so-called 'things out of our control' are pushed aside. A positive school climate leads to better academic performance. It all boils down to the principal who, as the head of the school, has to take the lead and take control of the management.

■ Discussion

In the study, it was clear that there was a lack of good leadership in most of the schools under study. Leadership should be seen as a collection of attributes, skills, attitudes and training. First of all, leaders possess particular characteristics that distinguish them from followers. One of the seven strong claims about successful school leadership refers to the characteristics of the leader. Taking into account only three of the characteristics

(conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness), these characteristics distinguish the leader from the followers. However, when these characteristics are lacking, followers often despise the leader. The leader becomes a weak person in the eyes of the followers. It is, therefore, important that school principals should be scrutinised for outstanding leadership characteristics before they are appointed, especially at poorly performing schools. A lack of good leadership characteristics is often associated with attitude. When the necessary characteristics are lacking, the attitude of the leader towards the followers often changes. Most leaders follow the same basic leadership practices. However, when the attitudes of principals change, they follow their own way in an effort to survive. There is no longer a sense of leading the team but rather a sense of 'do it my way'. Add to this the lack of the necessary skills to lead, principals often alienate themselves from the teachers and become the sole governor of the school. This leads to disrespect for the principal; the teachers group together and the principal becomes the enemy. The result is a vicious cycle: the principal becomes the enemy; the teachers experience a negative climate at school and the learners suffer as the academic performance deteriorates. Leithwood et al. (2020:6) state that 'school leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, ability and working condition'.

The discussion leads to the next point of importance, namely leadership styles. According to Braukmann and Pashiardis (2011:13), 'the nexus of all those behaviours and practices that school principals use in order to influence the behaviour of others'. By doing so, principals follow the instructional (e.g. setting high expectations), structuring (e.g. dividing tasks or responsibilities amongst staff), participative (e.g. fostering staff cooperation), entrepreneurial (e.g. building coalition) and personnel development (e.g. enhancing self-efficacy) styles. However, when principals do not have the necessary knowledge regarding leadership styles, they follow their own judgement. This leads to decision-making and problem solving being done either unilaterally or not at all. Although they act autocratically

and with *laissez-faire*, it is not with insight into the style but merely arbitrary. With the necessary knowledge regarding the theory of leadership styles, it can be used to the advantage of achieving success in schools. For this reason, principals should familiarise themselves with the different leadership styles in order to use the best style in their situation and context. For example, if a principal finds him- or herself in a context where change is needed, he or she should follow a transformational leadership style.

Leadership and leadership styles should not be detached from the context within which leadership is performed. It is important that the context is understood and analysed that the principal makes sure of the composition of the community and that he adopts it and adjusts his or her leadership accordingly. For that reason, principals should be thoroughly prepared and informed exactly of the context within which the school is located before applying for a position in a given context. School climate differs from context to context, and where a principal has been successful in one context, it is not necessarily the case in another context. A specific leadership style that has led to a conducive school climate in one school may not be the obvious choice in another context. As a positive school climate leads to improved relationships between the teachers and the principal, it is essential to keep in mind the choice of a leadership style. However, situations lead to the need to change the 'choice' of a leadership style. It is therefore, once again, important that the principal understands the theory of leadership styles. As a positive school climate leads to positive relationships, it spills over to the learners. Academic progress can only happen in a positive climate, which is often missing in underperforming schools as the many challenges and inadequate teaching and learning are often the rule rather than the exception.

With regard to school climate, it is important that the relationships within the school must be positive to ensure a common goal, namely academic achievement. In this regard, the principal's leadership plays an important role. When the principal's

relationship with the staff is of such a nature that there is good communication, cooperation and a sense of unity, the learners benefit. However, strengthening relationships begins at the head. Strong leadership strengthens relationships, trust and respect. When relationships break down, the relationship of trust deteriorates and a sense of disrespect prevails amongst the staff. This is often the case at underperforming schools. Principals should, therefore, see a positive school climate as a priority. The principal's leadership style, especially the autocratic leadership style, often causes relationships to break up, and little or no cohesion is experienced. As the principals' attention at underperforming schools is mostly focussed on making learners succeed and maintaining discipline in the schools, the importance of a positive school climate is often neglected. It is thus clear that the principal's leadership and leadership style, the school climate and learner performance cannot be separated.

When the principal radiates strong leadership and follows designated leadership styles, it leads to a positive school climate. Learners thrive in a positive learning environment where positive teaching and learning take place. The school climate, together with the principal's leadership, determines the academic performance at the school. For this reason, it is important that underperforming schools pay attention to effective leadership, apply a combination of leadership styles and foster a positive school climate for the school to transform it into a well-performing school.

■ Conclusion

Much can still be said about schools that perform poorly and how the principal's leadership influences the school climate. However, the preparation and training of principals are the crux of effective principal leadership. By appointing the right principal in the right position, a turnaround in poorly performing schools can take place. Effective training, fostering managerial and leadership skills and defining the role of the principal pave the way for effective

learning and teaching. Thorough knowledge of people and personalities can lead to better relationships between principals and teachers. A good relationship between the principal and the teachers can lead to a good relationship between the teachers and the learners. It will foster a positive learning culture amongst the learners and a positive school climate. Principals should familiarise themselves with what school leadership entails, regardless of the circumstances or community in which the school is located. Only through deliberate ways of thinking about excellent school leadership can improved education emerge in South Africa.

■ Recommendations

- Principals should apply for the job and be appointed as principal for the right reasons.
- Principals must receive sufficient training and preparation so that they can understand and perform the role of a principal perfectly.
- Principals must realise that they have a responsibility to the teachers, the learners and the community to establish a safe school where effective teaching and learning are promoted.
- Principals must listen to the voice of the teachers, the learners and the community and act accordingly.
- Teachers should provide the necessary support, respect the principal and commit themselves to being the principal's followers to the best of their abilities.
- The community needs to strengthen the position of teachers and principals so that learners can progress academically.

■ Limitations

The sample of the study was small. A bigger sample could have given better insight into the daily practices of the principals.

A mixed-method methodology could have extended the knowledge about the challenges, leadership practices and management skills of the principals.

The principal's leading role during change in schools towards sustainable improvement in disadvantaged settings

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■ Abstract

Major changes have taken place in the schooling sector in South Africa after 1994 to help rectify unequal practices of the past. Since then, some schools in poverty-stricken communities have improved in terms of performance, whilst others are

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still underperforming. A factor that has consistently been identified in the literature as being critical for managing change and mitigating the underperformance of learners is effective leadership. The research question was to determine how principals can lead change in schools towards sustainable improvement in disadvantaged settings. A qualitative research design, combined with an interpretative orientation, was followed to interview five principals of schools situated in poor communities individually and to conduct focus group interviews at their respective schools. Some of these schools had underperformed in the past, whereas others that had been underperforming in the past were already in a performing state at the time of the visits for the interviews. It seems that because of the complex nature of leading the schools of the 21st century, multifaceted leadership lenses are required. Hence the different approaches employed in this research: Lewin's (1951) change theory; Hersey and Blanchard's situational theory (1982) and Chin and Benne's (1969) normative-re-educative, power-coercive and empirical-rational strategies. As only five schools participated in the research, the conclusions can only be applied to schools with similar settings for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. This chapter highlights the fact that principals can employ several approaches to elevate their schools from their underperforming status.

Keywords: Change; Schools; Leadership; Improvement; Sustainability; Teachers; Principals; Teachers.

■ Introduction

Many changes have occurred in the South African education system since 1994. Change is a worldwide phenomenon, and a common assumption is that schools must change and adapt to prosper in a changing social and political landscape (Benoliel, Berkovich & Israel 2017; Van Wyk 2012). However, it seems that the changes in the school system do not have the desired effect on the majority of schools in South Africa. Most schools still need to change in order to provide quality education for all children, as

South Africa is not performing well in academic assessment exercises, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessment exercise (Spaull 2013). It is maintained that when schools fail to provide quality education to its learners, one should probably look at the leadership practices that are at play at these schools. Leadership matters, as the application thereof will determine the success or failure of a school (Salim, Al-Harhi & Al-Mahdy 2017).

■ Background and statement of the problem

South Africa has the highest budget spending as a percentage of the GDP on education in Africa (Gaza 2012; Modisaotsile 2012; Motsai 2015; Shay 2017). Regardless of this investment in the South African education system, it seems that the changes that have taken place pose additional challenges to the problems that existed prior to 1994. Research indicates that some schools do not have the basic amenities to help them function well as a school (Equal Education 2015; Legal Resource Centre 2013; Moyo 2013; Prew 2010). Data from the World Bank indicate that from all the learners who start school, only half of them complete their Grade 12 school-leaving examinations (Chetty 2014). Clearly, the aforementioned facts are indicative of schools that underperform.

Research related to underperforming and ineffective schools reveals that it is all related to leadership that is invisible around the school and in classrooms (Bush & Glover 2012). Furthermore, it is also about leadership that does not interact with external society, teachers and learners. The latter has a negative effect of a lack of a deliberate effort to engage in the instructional domain (Elmore & City 2007). Bush and Glover (2012) are of the view that underperforming schools are also characterised by high levels of absenteeism, inadequate control and disorder. In addition, Harris and Chapman (2002) indicate that when schools underperform, one should also look at how the instructional domain (teaching and learning) is operationalised.

It has been mentioned that a generalised view of a poor instructional trajectory is that there are no accepted operating practices for classroom practice, no examples of good teaching to uphold practice, little or no support to teachers to advance instruction and no instructional leadership team for the school (Elmore & City 2007). With regard to this, Stiggins (2005) mentions that the aforementioned way of doing things has the effect that there is a weak focus on assessment, especially assessment for learning. Furthermore, it results in a lack of a strategy for interrogating and analysing the performance of learners. The absence of a strategy to measure the performance of learners gives rise to the disadvantage that improvement plans cannot be drawn up, resulting in fragile or no support for school advancement and improvement (Harris & Chapman 2002). As has already been indicated, weak parental and community involvement and engagement in school matters and poor parental support for learning at home are additional factors that contribute to the poor performance of learners (Fleisch 2018; Msila 2012).

Ngcobo and Tikly (2010) and Van Wyk and Van der Westhuizen (2015) attribute the reasons for the above-mentioned situation to, amongst others, the legacy of apartheid, the presence of trade unions, post-apartheid policies and an innate resistance to change. However, some schools have benefitted from and improved as a result of the changes in education in South Africa. Mawdsley, Bipath and Mawdsley (2014) are of the view that functional schools are those that have strong leadership, high expectations for learners' success and an orderly atmosphere conducive to learning. They also put emphasis on basic skills attainment and frequent monitoring of learner progress that can be used as feedback. Functional schools are further characterised as having zero discipline problems amongst the teachers, the learners and the school support staff, quality involvement in the co-curricular school activities, a clean and cheerful school environment and active involvement and a valuable contribution by members of the school in community work (Mawdsley et al. 2014).

Efficient management of school finances and dedication amongst the management, teachers and support staff are further characteristics of successful schools (Mawdsley et al. 2014).

According to Pashiardis, Brauckmann and Kafa (2018), the success stories of schools arise out of a profound understanding of the local environment in which schools function, which inspires people to solve their problems using knowledge that may be more generally available in the international world. One success story is that of London schools that continue to represent an exceptional success story (Pashiardis et al. 2018). It is indicated that the government school system in London helps attain extremely good results compared to the rest of England, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds do particularly well in the system (Pashiardis et al. 2018). Whilst in many other countries, urban schools and students from immigrant backgrounds underperform, the multi-ethnic population of London schools outperforms students in the rest of England. According to Pashiardis et al. (2018), the credit for this should be given to the students as well as to the education professionals who provide an environment where students can succeed. The explanatory factors for London's continuing success that were identified include success in recruiting and retaining excellent teachers, highly effective school leadership and the impact of well-designed school improvement interventions.

An aspect that has always been identified in the global literature as being crucial for managing change and augmenting the achievement of learners is effective leadership (Liu 2016; Ngcobo & Tikly 2010). Education is the pillar of excellence, of which educational leadership forms the basis (Alhosani, Singh & Al-Nahyan 2017). This view concurs with most of the literature on leadership and thus also has relevance for South Africa. Van der Westhuizen (2015) expresses the opinion that management, as part of leadership, involves a specific type of work in education and that a leader should possess a specific field of expertise that

supports constructive education. Moreover, besides the challenges that are faced by school principals because of the constantly changing political, community and financial circumstances and the competitive needs of the market, specific knowledge of the context in which the school operates, plays an important role in the successful execution of school leadership (Pashiaridis et al. 2018).

Therefore, an important aspect in relation to the exercising of school leadership is related to with the macro-, meso- and micro-contexts in which school principals work and lead their schools. Only a few models have strived towards giving an integrated, overarching account of the potential factors that have an impact on leadership actions in schools (Pashiaridis et al. 2018). Based on the notion that school leadership is the biggest equaliser in deprived settings, communities and the DoBE hold principals increasingly responsible for fashioning and improving the conditions at their schools (Benoliel & Schechter 2017). Van Wyk, Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2014) maintain that the position of principalship is so fundamental in the improvement of schools that other international countries, amongst others, Germany, Singapore and the United States of America expect their principals to take part in a compulsory training programme or obtain a certificate to be appointed as a principal.

According to Bush, Kiggundu and Moorosi (2011), school leadership differs from classroom teaching in that it requires a different set of skills, and the practice in South Africa of appointing successful teachers to the post of principal is not in the best interest of the schools. In addition, they mention that change initiatives in education might render some principals ineffective in leading their schools. Salehzadeh (2017) declares that leadership is all about the interaction between the leaders and the followers to influence the latter to effectiveness. The development of principals, by providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills, becomes increasingly important in the education system (Mestry & Singh 2007).

The question addressed in the research reported in this chapter was: what does the principal's leading role during change in schools towards sustainable improvement in disadvantaged settings entail?

■ **Conceptual and theoretical framework**

This section covers the theoretical framework on which the empirical research about the way leaders lead change in schools towards sustainable improvement was based. The concepts that make up the theme of this research will be discussed first and after that, the leadership styles that can be used during change.

■ **Concept clarification**

□ **Change**

Change is a phenomenon that occurs in all organisations as well as in nature as the seasons pass by. The importance and benefits of change cannot be sufficiently emphasised, as it brings renewal to organisations and imparts a new life to human beings and living species (Theron 2014). The benefits of change do not come naturally, as resistance is always present when change is being introduced (Theron 2014). To counteract the effect of resistance in education, the caring and nurturing role of leaders is necessary to uphold the improvement of the academic performance of learners (Lopez-Yanez & Sanchez-Moreno 2013). Sustainability has recently been suggested as one of the key concepts of educational innovation and change in that new knowledge is continuously shared, created and applied over time (Lopez-Yanez & Sanchez-Moreno 2013). The commitment, involvement and regular communication of leadership are thus crucial to stimulate and support teachers to keep sustainability afloat. Leadership will thus be discussed in the next paragraph.

□ Leadership

A special type of leadership approach is necessary to effect sustainable improvement in organisations. According to Gangmei, Gowramma and Kumar (2019), leadership is an important factor in the effective implementation of the educational objectives in a school. However, both principal leadership and teacher leadership are important for school improvement. Schools are improved by neither teachers nor principals alone, but by teachers and principals working together. Research on leadership approaches shows that effective school leadership is the degree of influence between teachers and principals around the instructional domain. Principals have a key role to play in setting the direction and creating a positive school culture, which includes supporting and enhancing staff motivation and the commitment required to foster improvement and promote success for schools under challenging circumstances (Gangmei et al. 2019).

■ Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework, consisting of a discussion of different leadership approaches, forms the backdrop against which the discussion of the empirical research, leading change towards sustainability, will be conducted. The research problem was approached from the vantage point of Lewin's (1951) change theory. Hersey and Blanchard's situational theory (1982) and Chin and Benne's (1969) theories, namely the empirical-rational strategy and the power-coercive and the normative-re-educative approaches, will be applied in the three phases of Lewin's theory. According to Aldhaferi (2017), the rapid and frequent speed of change organisations face today necessitates the need for flexible and adaptive leadership. Multiple leadership approaches will therefore be discussed in this framework.

■ Unfreezing phase

The unfreezing phase in Lewin's theory entails the disturbance of existing practices in schools and may be a source of anxiety for

staff members, which could result in people wanting to maintain the status quo in their work environment (Nonceba, Ntuta & Schurink 2010; Van Wyk & Van der Westhuizen 2015). The construction of a different work environment requires the leader to increase the driving forces for change and to decrease the opposing forces against change. Employing the empirical-rational strategy could be beneficial for change, as it has been suggested by Chin and Benne (1969) that people are normally self-interested individuals and if it is in their self-interest, change could happen by just telling teachers about it. This approach is a prompt and easy way to disrupt the status quo but does not contribute to long-lasting solutions and sustainability. Applying only this approach may bear fruit in the short term but may not have long-lasting influence in the end and might eventually fail. The same applies to the power-coercive approach, which is characterised by the use of force, threats, withholding promotion and the dismissal or transfer of staff (Nickols 2016; Van der Westhuizen & Theron 2014). It too is only effective in the short term to get people out of their comfort zones. Teachers will probably only comply with the rules and regulations of the school in the presence of monitoring measures and will revert to old habits when the threat has gone away.

These two approaches are similar to the directions that leaders, in Hersey and Blanchard's (1982) situational approach, give to followers, especially when followers are too immature to do the job. Giving directions and telling followers what needs to be done are swift actions from leaders that disempower followers, as the leader is always present to give instructions. This approach, similar to the aforementioned approaches, is only effective to some extent and not when sustainable improvement, creativity and long-term solutions are required. The directive approach is normally used during policy changes and when organisations perform very poorly (Theron 2014; Van der Westhuizen & Theron 2014). The actions of the principals during the unfreezing phase might have long-term negative consequences for their relationships with, trust in and commitment to colleagues to the detriment of deep change and sustainable improvement. It thus

implies that principals cannot apply the mentioned approach only but have to use other approaches to mitigate the negative effects that the unfreezing phase may bring about.

The following phase is about the implementation of the new order after the existing order has been disbanded.

■ **Implementation phase**

The implementation phase in Lewin's theory (1951) requires principals to change the culture of their schools. A normative-educative approach is being introduced, which regards teachers as social beings who will follow the social norms and principles that fulfil their basic views of reality in their schools (Chin & Benne 1969). Teachers do not only undergo sound information processing but reassess and embrace new habits, values, norms, roles and relationships (Quinn & Sonenshein 2008). In so doing, teachers change from engaging in a less acceptable to a more acceptable set of behaviours. Principals, using the participative approach, engage in enabling activities with their colleagues, such as communication, participation, support, facilitation, negotiation and persuasion, to develop a common vision and a commitment to the change in the school (Hersey & Blanchard 1982; Hossan 2015; Kouali 2017; Van der Westhuizen & Theron 2014). Teachers are more mature in this phase to effect change, which results in leaders becoming less involved with task-orientated activities and more with building relationships with their colleagues.

■ **Refreezing phase**

The last phase entails the refreezing and consolidation of the change into a new state of equilibrium by stabilising both the driving and the restraining forces (Kritsonis 2005; Lewin 1951). New paradigms are officially incorporated into the policies and procedures of the organisation (Kritsonis 2005). Principals, using the delegating approach, interfere less, as teachers are mature

enough to execute a task themselves (Hersey & Blanchard 1982). Leaders allow followers to make decisions and encourage them to accept responsibility for their actions (Golmoradia & Ardabilia 2016). The role of the leader is to give feedback, encourage, recognise and reward teachers (Stichler 2011).

An empirical investigation was launched, based on this conceptual and theoretical framework, which is outlined in the following section(s).

■ Empirical investigation

■ Aim of the investigation

The aim of the research was to determine the principal's leading role during change in schools towards sustainable improvement in disadvantaged settings.

■ Research orientation and design

A qualitative research design, together with an interpretative orientation, was followed (cf. Nieuwenhuis 2014). The details of the underperformance of schools could only be determined by talking directly to the teachers and principals of such schools. By doing so, an interpretation was made as to what the problems were and how the underperformance of the schools was being addressed.

■ Study population and sampling

□ Background

The research was conducted individually with principals at their schools. In addition, interviews were held with focus groups, consisting of teachers and HoDs at each of the five rural secondary schools. Two of the principals (Schools A and B) with whom the interviews were conducted, had succeeded previous principals since 2011 as a result of their schools performing poorly in the

Grade 12 school-leaving examinations and interventions being made by the DoBE. The principals of the three remaining schools, of which two had previously underperformed (Schools C and D) and one (School E) had never underperformed, had not been replaced. The schools are situated in rural areas, some distance away from large cities.

□ Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling was used to obtain applicable and rich information from the participants (cf. Creswell 2009). The criteria to select the participants were, amongst other things, gender, experience, persons who attended all the meetings and developmental opportunities and persons who had a variety of perspectives on different matters in education. Table 5.1 shows who was part of the sample and how the focus group members were selected.

□ Selection criteria

The benchmark set by the DoBE before 2011 for performing schools was 70%. The criteria for the selection of the sample schools were similar contexts and locations. Furthermore, their performing status prior to 2011 and how underperforming schools

TABLE 5.1: Sample selection.

School	Participants			Sample size	Selection criteria of focus groups
	Principals	Focus groups			
		HoDs	Teachers		
A-E	5	4 per school = 20	4 per school = 20	45	Seniority (HoD) (two males and two female) Two senior teachers (one male and one female) Two novice teachers (one male and one female)

HoD, head of department.

had been performing after 2011 were part of the criteria. Some schools that had never underperformed at all were included too, as they served as examples of how principals should lead their schools. At the time of the research, Schools A to D that had underperformed prior to 2011 were already performing above the benchmark of 70%. School E, which had never underperformed, was selected because of its good results in the Grade 12 school-leaving examinations.

□ Ethical issues

The normal ethical process was followed, including obtaining ethical clearance from the university under the auspices of which the research was conducted, as well as from the provincial education department. Other ethical considerations attended to were, amongst other things, obtaining letters of consent from the principals and the individual members of the focus groups. In these letters, the participants were assured of confidentiality, privacy, no harm-doing and voluntary participation. Lastly, it was clearly stated that the participants and the members of the focus groups could withdraw from the interviews at any time (cf. Maree & Van der Westhuizen 2014).

□ Validity and reliability

As the officials of the DoBE worked with schools, they were in a good position to give advice related to the performance of schools. In so doing, the researcher was able to select appropriate schools, which resulted in value being added to the data of the research. Furthermore, field notes, member and stakeholder checking and the verification of the raw data were used to ensure that the data were valid and reliable (cf. Nieuwenhuis 2014). The raw data were returned to the participants for them to check for correctness.

■ Data collection and analysis

As has already been indicated, the data were collected through semi-structured interviews that were tape recorded. These recordings were transcribed, after which the data in the transcripts were analysed and interpreted by identifying and listing the categories. After that, these were reduced into themes, as data analysis involves breaking up data into manageable themes, trends and relationships (cf. Creswell 2009). The data were coded, categorised and interpreted to provide explanations of the phenomenon of interest.

■ Background of and responses from the participants

The data employed emerged from the interviews that were conducted with the principals and the focus groups of the five schools. For purposes of anonymity, the schools are referred to as Schools A to E. The responses of the participants will be presented first, after which an analysis, interpretation and discussion of the data will take place. Thereafter, recommendations and the conclusion of the research will be made.

■ School A

The principal was not available at the school; however, the DP agreed to participate in an interview with us. The school had previously been identified as a 'trapped school'; however, its results had improved from a 36% pass rate in 2014 to 73% in 2015. It seems that the improvement was a result of the DoBE intervening. The principal was replaced by a new principal in 2015.

According to the teachers of School A, the principal plays a pivotal role in the school. The DP mentioned that the previous principal had upheld a *laissez-faire* approach, which later changed

to an autocratic leadership style. He stated that the previous principal had not shared information and 'treated him like a level 1 teacher' (Deputy Principal, male, a rural school). Moreover, the teachers mentioned that they thought 'one of the contributing factor[s] for results to drop was conflict in leadership because there was conflict between the head of department and the principal' (Deputy Principal, male, a rural school). They mentioned that the state of affairs made the teaching programme vulnerable to exploitation by the teachers, resulting in the principal being transferred. However, both the principal and the HoD were transferred.

Furthermore, the teachers stated that there was 'no proper communication' between the previous principal and the community, and they saw it as one of the reasons why the results of the learners 'went down'. They indicated that, comparing the present principal to the previous one, at least they now knew what 'their roles' were. In this regard, the DP indicated that before the new principal had been appointed, he (the DP) did not know what his actual role was:

'Most of the time I was working like a post level 1 educator ... even the policies of the school, I did not know much about them; we did not have meetings, SMT meetings and so forth'. (Deputy Principal, male, a rural school)

The DP indicated that 'at least now this principal is more accommodating and consultative', referring to the new principal. He further mentioned that 'most of the teachers [were] now doing their work' without being pushed. Reasons for this could be the new principal being 'very much concentrated, democratic and accommodative' and the fact that he knew 'the area of management'. In addition, the DoBE intervened by telling the principal and teachers about 'time management' and teachers who were 'dodging classes'. The leadership (principal, DP and the HoDs) of the rural school had also been complaining about the 'monitoring, moderation, lesson planning, planning for the

class and planning in general', which had not been done correctly or in time.

According to the teachers of the rural school, they were doing 'things differently' at the time of the research and were also trying to do away with staffroom politics. They had been advised to 'spend much of their time in teaching and learning' and had been reminded of their responsibility. The DP indicated that the teachers had been made aware of the recent educational policies; 'half of our staff are new; from time to time we have to workshop them on policies', because policies are clear on what educators should and should not do.

■ School B

According to the participants (male and female teachers), the previous male principal and two male HoDs of another rural school had left School B. Some of the reasons for their leaving were because of interventions being made by the DoBE. In addition, they could not take the pressure that was put on them anymore. The new male principal indicated that when he had been appointed and arrived at the school, the learners were 'dragging their legs and not responding'. He further mentioned that he had been 'very shocked' when he found that the educators were sitting around 'in the staff room without going to classes'. Another response from the principal was that he experienced the school as corrupt, as the teachers and some of the HoDs were 'conniving' against him. The HoDs were friends with the educators, with the result that it was not easy for the HoDs to approach the teachers and tell them to attend to their classes.

Apart from not going to their classes, the teachers were often absent from school or would be under the influence of alcohol at school. The effect of this is that 'after break, you won't find any learners here' and the 'educators did not worry' whether the learners had left or not. This state of affairs compelled the new principal to discuss the problems with the circuit management.

He, in collaboration with the male circuit manager, talked to teachers and ‘even charge[d] them’. He further mentioned that he had been keeping a ‘charge book’ in which he documented all of the transgressions and the instructions he had given to the teachers. These teachers and two of the three male HoDs were not at School B anymore at the time of the research, as they ‘couldn’t take the pressure’ that was put on them to perform. According to the principal, he had charged the HoD of Science and Mathematics who arrived drunk at the school and the other HoD for failing to carry out his duties properly. The teachers who had been neglecting their teaching duties were voluntarily transferred.

Furthermore, the principal of School B shared that he knew that he had to work very hard to get the support of parents. He mentioned that when he had been appointed as principal, the parents had not been much involved in school matters. As a result, he talked to the parents about the culture of the school and put measures in place to rectify the discipline of the learners. He declared that since then, the learners have been responding very well and the parents have been assisting the school equally well. He stated that they no longer called all the parents for meetings but held meetings for different grades at a time so that the staff could accommodate everyone, as parents normally arrived in very high numbers. Information about what has been happening at school was given on a continuous basis to the parents. Regular communication with parents is a necessity to improve the results of learners.

The teachers of School B were of the view that their principal was very efficient in disciplining the learners. They mentioned that since the new principal had been appointed, it was very easy to teach as he linked the learners with the parents. He involved the parents when there were any discipline problems with learners. During the registration of learners at School B, it was expected from the parents to sign a contract that involved learner behaviour and conduct as well as their schoolwork.

Parents, as the primary caregivers of learners, serve as an important resource for teachers to consult when school improvement is sought. The teachers mentioned that their principal was very good at what he did and that they had been following his example, stating it as 'our bodies are good as our head, the new male principal is very good', in reference to the principal. They added that their principal always praised them for any good work they had done.

The principal declared that there always was the 'fear of complacency', in that the teachers knew that they had been obtaining a 90% pass rate before. It is important to maintain consistency, so he encouraged them to work harder. In achieving the aforementioned goal, he stated that a principal should always tell teachers when 'they are not on par' in the way they had been working the previous year. The principal also mentioned that he had been monitoring the progress that the teachers had made with the various syllabi. According to him, it was important that teachers should have done three quarters of the year's work by June so that they would be able to finish the entire syllabus in July. A measuring tool is important in that it serves as a yardstick for teachers to measure their progress with the learners.

■ School C

The male principal of rural School C was not available for the interview, so the interview was conducted with the male DP. He mentioned many school-related problems, such as that the SGB 'did not support the school' as it had no communication with the parents about their children. Furthermore, he complained about the DoBE, as it did not 'top up' learner support material and teacher appointment. According to the male and female teachers, the 'appointment of teachers takes too long', as does paying temporary teachers. Other issues that were raised during the interviews revolved around the progression of learners who failed from one grade to another, the intake of 'LSEN learners' – learners who need special attention – and learners being hungry, so that

sometimes the school has to release learners to go home for meals. The issues mentioned contribute to learners who 'dodge and bunk classes ... [and] don't return after break'.

According to the DP, teachers do not want to change because of a 'lack of knowledge'. However, he mentioned that 'as soon as you give them information, then there's a change', which could be seen in the improvement of the learners' results. He added that the school realised that the class attendance of learners should be monitored by the teachers and teachers should always be in class so that the learners could come to the teachers. According to the DP, this measure made it easy to monitor learners skipping class.

Furthermore, after not performing the 'the law of 70% performance', the teachers reflected upon and posed the question, 'where did we go wrong?' After realising what the challenges might be, they put plans in place by introducing extra classes. Formally monitored camps at school were organised for the March, June and September holidays. Local businesses, alumni and other stakeholders were asked to assist with funding and food. The teachers mentioned that some of them 'donated themselves' to come and assist in terms of support with the preparation and serving of food. According to the DP and the teachers, their pass percentage might be lower than other schools, but the number of learners passing the university entrance has improved over the years. Also mentioned by the DP was the fact that the change and improvement of the results came about in a 'serious changing of staffing', whereby most teachers left and a new corps of teachers came in. The punctuality of teachers, the correct filing of documentation, record keeping and moderation plans all improved as well. According to the teachers, the fact that the majority of other people were changing and the learners were performing better, helped others to change for the better as well. In addition, the teachers were of the view that the attendance of workshops and the assistance of management contributed to the improvement of the results.

■ School D

The male principal of rural School D indicated that 'some learners just come to school for the sake of coming to school'. He and the teachers (male and female) were of the view that an important challenge was that parents were not involved in their children's lives and in school matters. Some of the reasons are that 'most of the parents are working somewhere' else, away from where the school is situated, resulting in some learners living alone and without support from their parents. The teachers indicated that sometimes when they met some of the parents, 'they wouldn't even greet' the teachers. They further mentioned that out of the 900 learners at the school, only about 100 parents attended parents' meetings.

Another challenge mentioned by the principal was that 'the work ... teachers [gave] to learners was not of quality' and did not prepare the learners to pass at the end of the year. According to the principal, the state of affairs 'can be blamed on the management of the school' and the way management did things had to change in order to address the underperforming status of the school. Furthermore, he was of the view that 'more involvement of management (male principal, male DP and male HoDs) in the teaching' (Principal, School D, date unknown) domain would motivate the teachers and inspire the learners to be committed to their education. According to the principal, 'accountability sessions' were not held in the past. Other challenges he mentioned involved 'temporary teachers that left the school as soon as they received a permanent opportunity' somewhere else and 'learners who progressed from one grade to another' because of either age or multiple repeating of a grade.

It was mentioned by the principal that the change and the improvement of the results were a gradual process. According to him, the DoBE assisted schools by holding 'accountability sessions' with the principals first, after which it was escalated down to the teachers. The teachers mentioned that they were called by the DoBE, with the teachers of other schools, to a

meeting where one ‘had to stand up and account in front of all those people’. They agreed with the principal that plans, including ‘moderation and monitoring plans’, should be implemented. In addition, a male ‘mentor’ was assigned to the school by the DoBE, to interact with the teachers and monitor and check how the teaching and learning process was being operationalised. Just like some of the other schools, School D also instituted camps during holidays and extra classes in the afternoon. The teachers indicated that they analysed the performance of the learners by investigating in which questions the learners performed either well or poorly, after which expert teachers were requested to teach learners those topics in which the learners performed poorly. The teachers mentioned that the school had introduced and adopted a Grade 12 learner plan that entailed that each teacher would take responsibility and act as a guardian for two to three Grade 12 learners. Furthermore, the teachers stated that ‘they and the learners slept at the school’ when the Grade 12 learners wrote the June and final examinations to make sure that they were studying and discussing their schoolwork. Because of the caring relationship the teachers have with the learners, the learners have started to perform better in their schoolwork.

■ School E

According to the female principal, rural School E was facing many socio-economic problems, such as ‘learners that are involved in drugs, a high rate of crime and a high rate of pregnancy’ for school girls. Furthermore, the principal and the teachers (male and female) mentioned that the school also faced ‘learners that are progressed’ from one grade to another. They indicated that they had changed their strategy somewhat by increasing their contact time with the learners to accommodate the learners. Only School E had not been subjected to study camps and the teachers of School E mentioned that if there was a problem with the results of the learners, the principal ‘called them together and then she asked them’ what needed to be done. The teachers mentioned that they themselves had chosen the days and the

times when they had extra lessons with the learners. Because of the performing nature and the good discipline of the school, the teachers also indicated that the only challenge they experienced was having enough classrooms as a result of the influx of learners. The teachers mentioned that not only the Grade 12 learners received extra classes but also the Grade 9 learners.

The principal stated that she was 'proud of the teachers' because every teacher protected his or her subject, which enabled them to sustain the results of the learners. She also indicated that there was competition amongst the teachers, which also helped to sustain the good results.

In addition, the principal indicated that they had regular group and individual meetings with the parents to inform them about the behaviour of their children and how committed they were. Parents attend these meetings very well as they are very positive towards the school. Motivational speakers are also invited 'at least once a term' to speak to the teachers and the learners. According to the principal, she works very well with the SGB (male and female), who attends every meeting. She also declared that she 'really enjoy[ed]' the SMT (male and female) of the school. She sets time aside to discuss aspects of the school with the SMT, and in these sessions, they 'can say whatever they want to say'. The principal remarked that the motto of the school was 'the sky's the limit', which she embraced to the extent that the school environment was filled with positivity, which also contributed to the collaboration of teachers.

According to the principal, the school has a budget for incentives for teachers. Presents are given to teachers on their birthdays. The results of the school are celebrated at the beginning of the year, after which a 'bosberaad' is held to plan for the coming year. The teachers, on the other hand, declared that both their principal and their colleagues were very supportive. They indicated that they were involved in the decision-making and that the communication at the school was very good. According to them, there is also a trusting relationship between them and

the SMT. They mentioned that whenever ‘a duty is assigned’ to someone, the SMT knew that the designated person would do it properly. They are also allowed to function autonomously, and there is no need to consult the SMT constantly.

■ Analysis, interpretation and discussion

■ Unfreezing phase

As has previously been indicated, four of the schools had underperformed below the benchmark of 70%, resulting in the DoBE (employer) having investigated the reasons for it. The DoBE had talked directly with the principals and the teachers, after which recommendations were made to the principals as to how to go about improving the results of the learners. The interventions that were made by the DoBE can be seen in the unfreezing of the status quo of the schools. It was confirmed by the teachers and the principals that the DoBE had taken ‘harsh’ action and told them what needed to be done. Some of the principals, HoDs and teachers were either transferred or removed from the schools.

The next section is about how principals and teachers had gone about to get their schools out of the underperforming domain.

■ Implementation phase

The leadership approach that the principals (four male and one female) adopted was characterised by a long-term investment in people that neutralised the negative effects of the harsh actions taken during the unfreezing phase. The aim was to adopt a leadership approach that has sustainable effects in the end and which is aligned with theories of sustainable improvement and testimony of the implementation phase of Lewin’s model.

■ Curriculum leadership

□ Analysis of results and accountability sessions

All five schools had analysed the results of their learners, after which accountability sessions were held by the DoBE, first with the principals and then with the teachers. For instance, they made use of item analysis to check whether a specific chapter was the problem that caused learners to fail. Strategies, especially for subjects in which learners had been underperforming, were developed to improve the results of those subjects. The principals (male and female), especially those of Schools B and E, reminded the teachers on a continuous basis about their teaching responsibility and that their work was being monitored regularly. Accountability sessions with the principals of Schools A to D (males, rural) had been held by the DoBE, after which they conducted their own meetings with the teachers of their schools.

□ Extra classes and study camps

The teachers of all five rural schools were subjected to implement extra classes, which had the positive effect of the learner performance being drastically improved. The learners of Schools A to D were taken to camps outside the school to teach extra classes to improve the results of the learners. School E (rural), which had not previously underperformed, held these classes at the school premises.

□ Monitoring and controlling systems and measuring tools

As monitoring systems were not in place in some of four rural schools, steps were taken to put measures in place to moderate the work of the teachers and the learners. Monitoring systems are necessary to help teachers to sustain the performance of learners. Monitoring systems should also include a tool that measures how far teachers have progressed with the curriculum and whether

learners perform at a satisfactory level. According to the principals of Schools B and E, it is important to maintain consistency and to encourage teachers to work harder. In achieving this goal, the principals stated that a principal should always be visible and, if needs be, tell teachers that 'they are not on par' with regard to how they had been working the previous year. Historical information, such as the results of previous years, can serve as a measuring tool and yardstick to measure progress with teaching and learning. For instance, the principal of rural School B uses previous progress reports (e.g. three quarters of the year's work should be finished by June), whilst the principal of rural School E uses previous results of each quarter to measure the performance. Controlling measures should be in place to measure the performance of schools throughout the year.

□ Contract with parents

The teachers of School B were of the view that their principal was very good at disciplining the learners. They mentioned that since the new principal had been appointed, it was very easy to teach, as he linked the learners with the parents. He involved the parents when disciplinary problems with learners occurred. During the registration of learners of Schools B and E, parents have to sign a contract with regard to the learners' behaviour and conduct as well as their schoolwork. Parents, as the primary caregivers of learners, serve as an important resource for teachers to consult when school improvement is sought.

□ Caring, support and feedback

The principal of School B shared that he knew that he had to work very hard to get the support of parents. He mentioned that when he had been appointed as principal, the parents had not been much involved in school matters. As a result, he talked to the parents about the culture of the school and put measures in place to rectify the learner discipline. He declared that since then,

the learners have been responding well and the parents have been assisting the school equally well. The principals of Schools B and E stated that they no longer called all the parents for meetings but held meetings for different grades at a time so that they could accommodate everyone, as the parents normally arrived in very high numbers for meetings. Information about what is happening at school is given on a continuous basis to parents. Regular communication with parents is a necessity to improve the results of learners.

□ Exemplary leadership

It is important that the leadership of a school should be an example for the rest of the staff. For instance, in the case of School B, some HoDs were friends with the staff and did all sorts of 'wrong things' with the teachers. One of the HoDs arrived drunk at the school, which is definitely not a sign of exemplary leadership. However, the teachers of School B had many good things to say about the new principal. The good results of School B are evidence of the trust they have in the principal. The same can be said about the principal of School E.

□ Feedback from the community

The teachers of School A were of the view that collaboration with the community came about, especially when the parents realised that their children were passing the Grade 12 school-leaving examinations. They mentioned that it was very motivational when parents came to the school to thank the teachers for the good job that they had done. The teachers of Schools B and C also accentuated the fact that most of the learners who went to university had been coming back to the school, stating Ma'am I have finished my degree'. The teachers believed that collaboration with the community and colleagues was motivational in that the teachers enjoyed their work and it was not necessary to push them to do their work.

□ Intergovernmental cooperation

The principal of School E and the teachers of School B mentioned that they have partnered with external institutions, such as social services, the Department of Health and the police. These departments are assisting learners with relationships and health and abuse issues, as some learners are parents themselves and many child-headed families exist because of the fact that parents are deceased or away from home because of working in the city. Occupational therapists and psychologists, in collaboration with teachers, assist learners with reading problems and relationship issues. It is thus clear that the principals use outside expertise to assist with sustaining the improvement in learner results.

□ Communication

In order to get everyone on board, it is imperative that proper communication exists amongst all role players in the school. For instance, the DP of School A indicated that the previous principal had not communicated with the staff well and had not held meetings properly. Communication is necessary to share information with and instil trust amongst everyone who has a stake in the affairs of the school.

□ External motivators

The principals of Schools B and E said that they normally invited motivational speakers from outside to talk to the teachers, and they believed that the teachers had benefitted from it a lot. For instance, persons like the researcher (male) who visited the school for the interviews or ‘the circuit manager’(male) would be requested to speak to the teachers ‘for five minutes’.

□ Internal motivators

The teachers of School B mentioned that the management of the school had been encouraging them in that it paid the transport

costs of teachers who lived far from the school and had to attend extra classes with learners.

□ Incentives and celebration of results

Parties are held to celebrate the good results of the learners and certificates are given to teachers and learners for any good work they have done. According to the principal of School E, the consistent performance and good discipline of their learners have the motivational spinoff that the members of the community want to enrol their children only at their school. She indicated that there always was a huge influx of learners during admission periods, although the school does not have enough classrooms to accommodate all learners. In order to keep the teachers motivated, incentives such as birthday presents for teachers are budgeted for and they celebrate their successes during a 'bosberaad', where certificates are given to teachers.

□ Empowering leadership

The teachers of Schools A to E mentioned that their principals gave them authority over things they should do and supplied sufficient plans and information to do it. Empowering them with the necessary information and resources motivated them to go along with the change.

□ Trust and support

The trust and support that the SGB and the SMT of some schools give to their principals and teachers are motivating factors for them to work even harder. It can be seen in the results of, for example, Schools B and E (Table 5.2).

■ Refreezing phase

The refreezing phase entails the establishment of a new order and the sustaining of the results of learners. It seems that the

TABLE 5.2: Pass rates of sample schools prior to and after 2011.

School	Percentage %	Performing status in 2011	Performing status in 2012	Performing status in 2013	Performing status in 2014	Performing status in 2015
A	Below 70	80.00	86.00	86.70	36.00	70.60
B	Below 70	80.00	96.00	86.00	90.00	92.00
C	Below 70	78.15	85.50	79.00	86.76	76.03
D	Below 70	32.90	41.10	63.00	77.00	74.00
E	Above 70	91.30	91.20	96.20	92.30	94.70

new order was already established in School B and E when one looks at the results of the learners for the past five years as there are minor deviations in the results (Table 5.2). The principals of these schools have regular meetings with teachers and parents. They have measuring and monitoring tools in place to control and monitor the progress of teaching and learning during the year. They also maintained good relationships with all stakeholders and provide incentives to teachers for good work done. Lastly, they support and have trust in the abilities of teachers.

■ Summary

It was evident from the information mentioned above that the unfreezing phase of Lewin's theory took place when the DoBE removed the principals and some of the teachers and HoDs who did not do their work of School A and B from their positions. Furthermore, the DoBE in the province intervened by having a frank talk with those principals and teachers whose learners performed poorly.

The implementation phase of the change theory happened when the principals took over from the DoBE after the status quo has been disbanded. The principals of Schools A to D changed the culture of their schools by introducing proper planning, monitoring and evaluation measures. They, together with the DoBE, encouraged the teachers to work harder by introducing

extra classes and study camps for their learners. Proper measures were also instituted to involve parents in school activities; for instance, the parents of Schools B and E had parents sign a contract with the school to work together for the benefit of the learners. Local businesses and former learners of the school were involved by School C to help with, for example, funds and assistance during extra classes at the school. The teachers of School D changed their attitude towards the learners by adopting a Grade 12 learner project that cares for learners whose parents are not present to help them. It was also indicated that the communication channels in the schools were improved and the teachers were becoming more involved in the running of the schools. School E adapted its teaching strategy by allowing more contact time with learners who progressed from one grade to another, whilst School A provided induction for newly appointed teachers. It can thus be said that the habits, values, roles and relationships of stakeholders changed for the better, testimony of the implementation phase of Lewin's model.

It was evident that the principal of School E had already refrozen the new order at the school. She empowered teachers by seeking advice from them, involving them in decision-making and trusting them with tasks assigned to them. Furthermore, she has healthy and working relationships with the teachers, the SGB and the SMT. The teachers of Schools A to D indicated that their involvement in teaching had improved and that change in the school happened because the majority of the teachers had changed for the better.

■ Recommendations

Principals are indirectly responsible for teaching and learning and should be in a position to sense whether or not the school programme is heading in the right direction. In this regard, it is essential that proper monitoring and evaluation systems are in place. Proper communication with the rest of the SMT and teachers for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation becomes

a priority. The involvement and suggestions of these role players on how to improve should be taken into account when decisions are being taken. Principals should be the persons who take steps against teachers who fail to do their work properly, whilst at the same time praising those who deserve it and motivating those who are still not properly on board. It is also the duty of principals to play a leading role in involving parents optimally, building healthy relationships with them, the SGB, external persons or institutions and the rest of the teaching staff.

■ Conclusion

Principals play a pivotal role in the delivery of quality teaching and learning in that they serve as facilitators, guides and supporters of quality instructional practices. They should share effective teaching practices for sustainable improvement with teachers. Current teaching and learning practices should be reviewed on an annual basis to determine whether teaching practices have had the desired effect on the results of the learners. The necessary monitoring and assessment measures should be in place to establish whether the teaching and learning practices have had a positive impact on learner achievement. Teachers need a lot of motivation and support from principals to effect sustainable improvement in teaching and learning.

School leadership, school climate and academic performance: Results of a study in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa

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■ Abstract

'Violence' and 'murder' are harsh words in any educational context but, sadly, a reality in South African schools. President Zuma pleaded for the end of violence in schools, as peaceful and productive schools are essential for effective learning and teaching. Practices such as threats, victimisation, attacks and harassment are obstacles in the way of effective education. Added to this are major disasters, such as the Vhembe incident in which 50 schools were vandalised in a protest demonstration and the school records were destroyed. The South African reality begs for a solution, and questions regarding leadership in schools, the school climate and the effect thereof on learner performance come to the fore. The aim of this quantitative research was to explore and understand the importance of school climate as an indicator of learner performance as well as the role of school leaders to ensure a positive school climate.

Keywords: School climate; Leadership; Academic performance; Questionnaires; Transformational leadership; Transactional leadership; *Laissez-faire*.

■ Introduction

Numerous attempts have been made to formulate reasons for poor academic performance at schools (Mbugua et al. 2012; Osonwa et al. 2013). There are multiple reasons for this. Observers such as Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) argue that the leadership of principals and classroom practice have the maximum impact on academic performance. Ash, Hodge and Connell (2013) support this view. In addition, Ibrahim and Al-Taneiji (2013) are of the opinion that a principal's behaviour has a direct influence on teachers' job satisfaction. Added to this, the relationship amongst fellow teachers and the principal's leadership style being strongly associated with teachers' actions have a direct impact on learners' academic performance.

A specific leadership style determines how principals perceive themselves and how colleagues in the same capacity perceive their performance whilst applying, for instance, a democratic, autocratic or visionary style. A specific leadership style is reflected in either a task or in an orientation of relationship (Pashiardis 2005). The principal, the teachers and the learners, as well as a specific situation, determine a particular leadership style. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the best style that would create an encouraging climate for academic performance. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that a particular leadership style will motivate followers, in this case teachers and learners (Aritz & Walker 2014). Keeping this in mind, the principal and the teachers should agree on a style that would enhance good relationships and a positive climate in order to ensure academic performance.

According to Aldridge and Ala'l (2013), the role of the principal is of great importance with regard to school climate. A positive climate is established by a strong and positive relationship amongst the principal, the teachers and the learners. Therefore, principals should be aware of their influence on the climate as it could affect the entire school. It is in light of this that the relationship between a principal's leadership style and the influence of the school climate on academic performance has been investigated. This study therefore focuses on teachers' and principals' perspectives of school leadership styles and the school climate.

■ The problem of academic performance

The worldwide goal of education systems is that school learners should perform. This matter has also been addressed in South African literature. A lack of principal leadership and management has been pointed out as one of the reasons for schools being

dysfunctional (Msila 2013). Worldwide tests, such as the PISA (science), the TIMSS (Mathematics) and the PIRLS (reading skills), are conducted to gain a perspective on academic performance (Botes & Mji 2010; Mbugua et al. 2012; Spaul 2013). The TIMSS results of 1995, 1999 and 2003 place South Africa last amongst 39 participating countries (Bansilal, James & Naidoo 2010). According to the PIRLS results, South African learners perform poorly compared to the rest of the world, with results lower than the average on the scale in the test (Mullis et al. 2012; Spaul 2013; Van Staden & Bosker 2014).

The National Senior Certificate is a level 4 qualification on the National Qualifications Framework, which is awarded to South African Grade 12 learners at the end of their school career (DoBE 2014). The Grade 12 Mathematics results in the National Senior Certificate for 2012 and 2013 revealed an average of just above 50%, which indicates that the academic performance in South African schools is not of the expected standard. This poor performance is because of various factors, such as diverse languages amongst other things. The language factor is a huge challenge as there are 11 official languages in South Africa, but only a few of these are used as the language of teaching and learning. In many cases, learners receive teaching and learning instruction in a language other than their mother tongue. Consequently, they are unfamiliar with the medium of instruction, which has a huge influence especially in the case of Mathematics terminology (Makgamatha et al. 2013).

Furthermore, the inability to read comprehensively affects learners' understanding of written instructions, which could be detrimental when they answer examination questions (Moodley 2013). Apart from the poor socio-economic background of many learners, a lack of resources contributes to a great extent to the low literacy level in South Africa (Siyepu 2013). A comprehensive report has shown that the cognitive performance of South African learners is much lower compared to countries abroad because of poor socio-economic conditions (Taylor, Van der Berg & Burger 2011).

In addition to this, change in professional development, curriculum and new legislation may not necessarily create a positive school culture to influence learners' academic performance favourably (Bipath & Adeyemo 2014). Based on the above, the following question arises: which factors with regard to the relationship between principals' leadership styles and school climate contribute to better learner academic performance? The remainder of the chapter consists of an outline of a conceptual and theoretical framework, empirical research, the results of the study and a discussion that attempts to answer this question.

■ Conceptual and theoretical framework

Schools consist of relations amongst and dependencies of the principal, the teachers and the learners. The way in which learning takes place is reflected in the relationship between the teacher and the learners, the learners' role in the learning process, the teacher's approach towards learning and the language of instruction. What is learnt is reflected in the outcomes (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) and how these outcomes are evaluated in examinations and tests (Caillods 2013). However, principals should apply their management skills in the teaching profession in order to support teachers to become effective (Braithwaite, Olujuwon & Keshinro 2014). Furthermore, principals are responsible for a positive learning environment, maintaining focus on the teaching and learning process, having high expectations of learners, continuous assessment and evaluation of learners and maintaining good cooperation between the school and the learners' homes. Two variables are of importance here, namely, the leadership style of the principal and the school climate. How these two variables relate to each other has an influence on learners' academic performance (Ibrahim & Al-Taneiji 2013; Mentz 2013). These two concepts will be discussed further in terms of the social interdependence theory.

■ School leadership and styles

□ Leadership

There are three important concepts with regard to leadership in general, namely the leader (who can be a supervisor or a principal), the followers (employees, teachers and learners) and the leadership style that is followed. Leaders such as Caesar, Napoleon, Gandhi and Mandela set an example for leaders who made a difference and took the responsibility to lead (Bass 1985). On the other hand, followers support their leaders in order to improve themselves. Therefore, there should be mutual trust between leaders and their followers (Kohles, Bligh & Carsten 2012).

According to Melnikova (2013:15), there are particular skills that principals must possess in order to be regarded as effective. To be effective, principals should be able to analyse themselves by identifying their own strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, principals should be able to communicate effectively in order for assignments to be executed effectively. When principals possess emotional judgement, they have the ability to show empathy and constructive interaction. The ability to manage includes the ability to manage teaching in such a way that it will lead to academic achievement, whilst effectively managing change in education and maintaining the effective functioning of the school. Ash et al. (2013:95, 96) add that effective principals have the ability to lead, direct, create a caring culture and encourage communication and collaboration. A principal will strengthen a school by creating a climate where order and safety are considered important in order to ensure a participatory teaching and learning process. According to Fahey (2013:66), principals must have the ability to think. They should be able to think like coaches, strategic planners and visionary leaders. Lingam and Lingam (2013:78) build on this by pointing out that principals must be able to lead and manage all aspects of the school effectively and, at the same time, be able to fulfil a wide range of responsibilities, even outside the school boundaries. Hsiao, Lee

and Tu (2012:422) and Kadji-Beltran, Zachariou and Stevenson (2013:304) voice their opinion, pointing out that the key to excellent school leadership is the ability to be creative. This means that principals create a culture of learning so that effective education can take place. By creating a vision that people understand, a school can be improved. Through the necessary motivation and influence of the teachers, high expectations can be pursued. Such characteristics explain why successful principals can be faced with challenging conditions and are often able to move forward when there is little reason to expect progress (Kadji-Beltran et al. 2013:306, 307). Principals must be aware of this and try to follow a 'golden middle path' so that the school can be managed successfully, which can lead to effective teaching. In an environment that strives for excellence, effective school leadership becomes increasingly important, precisely because it influences learner performance (Bengtson, Zepeda & Parylo 2013:143). Successful principal leadership can be based on the following (Marishane 2013:125):

- Successful principal leadership contributes to the improvement of the learners' performance.
- Successful principal leadership is determined by both principals and teachers.
- Successful principal leadership is not separate from the community.
- There is a set of basic practices that principals must follow within the context of their schools.
- Successful principal leadership also refers to how principals handle policies.
- Many successful principals support diverse learner populations that promote the promotion of school quality, equality and social justice.

Leadership styles are mainly concerned with relationships, controlled tasks and the leader's position, which refer to the available amount of power he or she has (cf. Van Jaarsveld, Mentz & Ellis 2017).

□ Leadership styles

The theory of leadership styles stems from contributions made in 1945 to the extent to which leadership behaviour plays a role within organisations (e.g. schools) (Puni, Ofei & Okoe 2014:178). According to Day and Antonakis (2012:9), leadership styles mainly deal with relationships, structured tasks and the position the leader holds, referring to the amount of power he or she possesses. The style followed by a leader in an organisation is important for a variety of reasons. The leadership style can influence the interaction amongst the followers within an organisation. It further influences the participation and contribution of the followers, whilst it can also affect their feelings and job satisfaction in the organisation. Hardman (2011) argues that principals have the potential to influence academic performance based on their leadership styles. Teachers are influenced positively or negatively by a specific style, the results of which are improved or impeded academic performance.

Clark (2016) notes that in an ever-changing leadership environment, principals' styles need to be evaluated. As school leaders deal with complex situations, examine options and defuse conflict on a daily basis, it is essential for them to have the required capacities, skills and competencies. Furthermore, because of a lack of involvement in teachers' classroom practices, support and encouragement, principals should consider a style that will equip them with sufficient pedagogical content to perform well as school leaders (Vanblaere & Devos 2016). In addition, the chosen style of a principal could have a positive and significant effect on teachers' self- and collective efficacy, which in turn could lead to better academic achievement (Çalik et al. 2012). Eldor and Shoshani (2016) add that the value of compassion amongst colleagues, as well as between the principal and the staff members, should not be ignored as it shapes teachers' self-efficacy and capability. As far as the environment in which educational activities take place is concerned, a favourable climate for academic performance is inevitable. Because of difficult circumstances in some South African schools, principals

are obliged to investigate the effectiveness of their leadership styles and the school climate, especially with regard to the influence thereof on academic performance.

A number of leadership styles are followed. The transformational, transactional and *laissez-faire* (passive-avoidant) leadership styles, which originated in the full-range leadership theory, have been used in several empirical studies to determine the results of a positive leadership style in an organisation (Luo, Wang & Marnburg 2013). The transformational, transactional and passive-avoidant leadership styles are summarised in Table 6.1.

TABLE 6.1: The summary of transformational, transactional and passive-avoidant leadership styles.

Leadership style	Factors	Meaning
Transformational	Idealised influence (attribute)	To influence followers as a role model in morals and values
	Idealised influence (behaviour)	To inspire followers to achieve goals by making a special effort
	Inspirational motivation	To communicate their vision and mission, to identify the right and important things and to find ways to achieve the goals
	Intellectual stimulation	To stimulate followers in order to query old problems, to challenge others, to think about problems in new ways and to make innovations on their own
Transactional	Individualised consideration	To meet associates' individual needs and develop them to their fullest potential
	Contingent reward	To set obligations, objectives and tasks for followers and to reward followers when contractual obligations are fulfilled
<i>Laissez-faire</i>	Management-by-exception (active) and (passive)	To check the standards of work
	Passive-avoidant	To avoid decision-making, not taking responsibility and not using authority

Source: Bass and Avolio (2004).

It is clear that the transformational leadership style focuses on a mission, vision and goals. This style is also characterised by followers' influence and support as well as the development of their potential to the fullest. With regard to the transactional leadership style, it is evident that it focuses on a transaction; tasks are assigned to followers, after which they are rewarded for their efforts. The *laissez-faire* leadership style is characterised by an 'absent' or passive leadership.

Other styles, such as the autocratic, democratic and visionary styles, are also important and are dealt with extensively in the literature. With regard to the autocratic style, the underlying philosophical assumption is that by nature all people are lazy, irresponsible and untrustworthy (Puni et al. 2014:178, 179). Therefore, planning, organising and control are left in the hands of the leader who makes all decisions from a position of power and does not involve the followers. Often, this leadership style is associated with the words 'unpleasant', 'frustration' and 'aggression' (Bhatti et al. 2012:193) because the leadership style is characterised by authority, control, power and manipulation to get the job done. Systems, structures and processes are clearly defined, and followers are forced to act within the rules. In the process, more emphasis is placed on performance and less emphasis on people. However, the autocratic style could be advantageous in businesses where control is important, especially with a view to profit, and where much pressure is applied to obtain the profit. In the school context, Jay (2014:50) reveals that some principals are naturally autocratic. They will give instructions to teachers regardless of whether the teachers have the skills to complete the assignment. Jay (2014:50) further argues that a principal who follows the autocratic leadership style does not heed teachers' opinions, especially during meetings. As a result, the autocratic principal tends not to maintain, but demotivate and discourage good communication, which impedes performance amongst teachers. Jay (2014:50) concludes that the autocratic leadership style is followed especially in

secondary schools. Following Jay's argument, Kiboss and Jemiryott (2014:498) state that the autocratic leadership style may lead to inertia, high teacher turnover, absenteeism of teachers and an ongoing low level of job satisfaction. Teachers under the autocratic leadership style become dissatisfied and are not as committed to their task as teachers. On the other hand, Wangithi (2014:66) argues that principals are sometimes forced to apply the autocratic leadership style because young teachers are over-ambitious and act more aggressively. In the process, more established teachers experience negative job satisfaction. This trend is experienced especially at primary schools. Principals should avoid this style, especially as teachers want to participate in the decision-making process and principals who follow the autocratic leadership style are not in favour of it.

In contrast to the autocratic leadership style is the democratic leadership style. According to Puni et al. (2014:179), the underlying philosophical assumption regarding the democratic leadership style is that all people are trustworthy, self-motivated and responsible, and high performance and satisfaction consequently prevail amongst the followers. Bass (1990:424) argues that democratic leaders regard it as important that there should be participation and willingness amongst the followers; through mutual respect and communication, the group dynamics will be positive. Castro (2013:136) shares the perception that the democratic leader creates a positive climate where followers can share their feelings, ideas and experiences and where they can value individuals' ideas. This leadership style is ideal where teamwork is important and where high-quality work is of greater importance than profit. Puni et al. (2014:179) point out that the democratic leadership style is characterised by clear, defined tasks and an open participatory work environment is the order of the day. The democratic leadership style focuses more on people, and there is better interaction within the group. The leader's functions are shared with the group; thus, the leader becomes part of the group.

When democratic leadership is discussed in the school context, Jay (2014:43) postulates that principals believe that teachers have creative and innovative ideas; therefore, principals who follow the democratic leadership style will first consult with teachers before making a final decision on an issue. It motivates teachers to perform to the best of their ability to achieve not only their own goals but also those of the school. Kiboss and Jemiryott (2014:498) argue that the democratic school leadership style is the style that can lead teachers to commit to their work at a high level, whilst at the same time experiencing job satisfaction. This leadership style means that teachers are enthusiastic and less likely to change schools. Principals who follow the democratic leadership style increase the job satisfaction of their teachers. This is in line with the opinion of Machumu and Kaitila (2014:56) that the democratic school leadership style can be used to increase teachers' job satisfaction because the style is characterised by involvement, care and value in the contribution that teachers make to maintain good performance.

With regard to the visionary leadership style, Greer et al. (2012:203) point out that the visionary leadership style promotes the followers' personal commitment to a common goal by setting a vision that the followers then pursue. The followers' confidence is enhanced and they are encouraged to reach the goal by intrinsically motivating the leaders. Du and Choi (2013:1573) believe that the visionary style that the leaders follow has a significant influence on the behaviour of the followers in that they hold a vision for the future with which the followers identify. The vision includes maintaining high-performance expectations, strengthening followers' belief in their ability to achieve the vision and helping followers see how they fit into the bigger picture. In a competitive, risky world, it is of utmost importance that the leader is competent to convey the vision to followers in such a way that they will believe in it (Anand et al. 2013:2). Greer et al. (2012:205), however, point out that the visionary leadership style, on the other hand, can be experienced negatively. It may happen that the vision aimed at is radical, irrational or simply not a

good vision. In addition, it happens that the vision does not fit with the vision of the followers because of personality or demographic characteristics. The great danger lies in the vision being influenced by the leader's own style or beliefs. It is for these reasons that the visionary leadership style is not always effective.

Taking into account the fact that principal leadership styles influence teachers and learners to achieve goals, teachers' self-discovery and growth are transformed. Consequently, the environment has to be conducive to teaching and learning. Therefore, the school climate is of great significance.

■ School climate

Organisational (also school) climate describes the quality of working conditions experienced by employees in the organisation (Gülşen & Gülenay 2014:94). It influences and determines how employees within the organisation behave and differentiates organisations from one another. Various factors can play a role in determining the climate of an organisation. In this regard, Mentz (2013:167) refers to, amongst other things, the management, social and other factors. Management factors refer to communication, relationships and leadership style. Social factors refer to the relationships amongst one another, and communication and involvement in group activities. Other factors include values and norms, expectations and opportunities for personal development.

School climate can be defined on different levels, including the relationship and organisational levels (Kohles et al. 2012). School climate focuses on four aspects: security; relationships between learners and teachers as well as teachers and parents; teaching and the school environment. Defining school climate as a multilevel concept, however, includes more than just learners' experience in a school environment. Because learners are part of a family, which forms part of a community, it will be included in the definition of school climate.

Bronfenbrenner's (1977:514) model describes four levels of ecology. The first level refers to the microsystem of an individual's personality and how his or her immediate environment is experienced. The second level, the mesosystem, refers to individuals in their different environments, such as families, friends and the school. The third level, the ecosystem, refers back to the meso-level where friends are committed to the community for example. The fourth level, the macrosystem, describes the culture, politics and economic status of a community and includes all three other levels. The systems can interact with one another. The four levels are also applicable to the school climate, especially the micro- and meso-levels with reference to principals and teachers in a changing school environment. The micro- and meso-levels refer to the influence of the school climate on the relationship between the principal and the teachers.

Hoy and Miskel (2008) argue that school climate contains internal characteristics that distinguish one school from another, which also influence the behaviour of people involved in the school. Furthermore, they claim that 'school climate' is a broad concept because of teachers' perceptions with regard to the working environment as well as the leadership of the school and in the community. Researchers argue that teachers' perceptions of the school climate may differ or match the perceptions of their colleagues. However, Robinson (2010) claims that teachers' perceptions develop from revealed behaviour that influences attitudes at the school, which in turn determines the school climate. Barkley (2013:11, 20) adds that climate is synonymous with an environment where teaching and learning take place and is regarded as a set of norms and expectations prevailing in a school. Climate is the quality and characteristics of school life and is based on the experiences of the learners, parents and teachers. This is reflected in the goals, values, relationships, teaching and learning practices and structures of the school.

School climate can be seen as a key component that has a considerable effect on academic performance and on the

educational system (Farahani et al. 2013). Principals, according to Duff (2013), usually have a more positive perception of their school climate compared to that of teachers. Therefore, it is important that communication channels between the principal and the teachers should be open. Others are of the opinion that close contact, good relationships and a task-orientated approach, all factors contributing to a positive climate, could lead to a higher degree of academic achievement (Gülşen & Gülenay 2014). Van der Vyver (2016) is of the opinion that school leadership and teachers' job satisfaction increase the performance and effectiveness in a teaching and learning situation. This, in turn, increases the effectiveness of a school as an organisation as well as learner performance. On the other hand, an incorrect leadership style and a negative school climate will lower learner performance. According to Morreale, Osborn and Pearson (2000), communication develops a person, improves function, bridges cultural differences and contributes to an individual's social and interpersonal relationships. Van Lange and Rusbult (2012) add that communication sets goals and values. It is for this reason that Mishra, Boynton and Mishra (2014) emphasise the importance of communication between employers (teachers and learners) and employees (principals). Furthermore, transparent communication strengthens trust and establishes relationships.

■ Learner performance

Several studies have already been conducted on factors that play a role in learner performance (Adeyemo 2011; Botes & Mji 2010). The factors include language, leadership, socio-economic background, parents and teachers. However, the success of a school (learner performance) is determined by principal leadership and willingness amongst teachers to persevere in the pursuit of the vision and to create and achieve goals. The competence of the principal plays a further important role in academic achievement, regardless of the context in which the school is placed. Roney and Coleman (2011:21) add that, through

the academic goals set by the principal, teachers and learners are encouraged to achieve higher heights within a safe learning environment so that academic performance can be maintained annually.

In other studies too, authors (e.g. Ibrahim & Al-Taneiji 2013; Pashiardis 2005) have shown that school leadership styles are cited as one of the methods that principals can use to influence learner performance. Based on the teaching leadership style, principals provide guidance and support to teachers, which is an important factor as teachers work directly with learners. On the other hand, Rowley (2012:162) believes that the transformational leadership style is the designated principal leadership style for learner achievement. With this style, principals promote the learning processes that lead to better teaching quality and learner performance. In yet another remark, the participatory school leadership style allows teachers to participate in decision-making, which can benefit learners (Florence 2012:113, 118).

Macneil, Prater and Busch (2009:73) argue that learners achieve high academic performance in healthy learning environments. Macneil et al. (2009:82) further argue that the principal's goal should be to prioritise a healthy school climate as well as support for teachers to promote learner achievement. According to Adeyemo (2011:80, 81), the classroom and learning environment plays a significant role in the academic performance of learners. When learners do not experience their environment as conducive to learning, teaching cannot be effective. Therefore, teachers should be aware of the role that a positive classroom and learning environment plays in encouraging learners.

■ Social interdependence theory

The foundation of human beings' social life is the focal point of the social interdependence theory (Van Lange & Rusbult 2012). Social interdependence exists when the outcomes of individuals' objectives are influenced by their own and others' actions. There is

also a difference between positive and negative interdependence. Positive interdependence is when individuals' performance is jointly encouraged, and negative interdependence involves those factors that prevent the achievement of a common goal (Johnson & Johnson 2005). Johnson and Johnson (2013) believe that interaction amongst individuals is important as it determines the outcome. According to these authors, positive interdependence means that an individual's goals correlate with those of a group. Individuals specifically seek outcomes that benefit all parties with whom they cooperatively connect.

Johnson and Johnson (2013) differentiate between positive interdependencies:

- Positive goal interdependence: individuals achieve their goal if, and only if all group members work towards that goal.
- Positive reward interdependence: a joint reward is offered if a group's goal is reached.
- Positive function interdependence: each individual has a function and responsibility in order to complete a joint task.
- Task interdependence: the workload and actions of one group member depend on other group members before a joint task can be completed.

The social interdependence theory can also be explained as stated (Johnson & Johnson 2013:91) in Table 6.2.

Johnson and Johnson (2013) also explain the social interdependence theory as follows:

- In an effort to perform, the group develops new ideas, solutions and strategies because they work together. This is not the case with competing individuals.
- To ensure quality relationships, communication is of paramount importance. Good communication ensures that the set target is reached and that members within the group accept one another. Thus there is unity.

TABLE 6.2: Interdependence theory: Explained.

Process	Co-operative	Competitive	Individualism
Interdependence	Positive	Negative	None
Interaction patterns	Conductive	Resistance	None
Effort to perform	Maximum effort to reach	Minimum effort to reach	Minimum effort to reach
Quality of relationship	Positive relationships	Negative relationships	No relationships
Psychological health	Psychologically healthy	Psychologically ill	Psychological-pathological

Source: Johnson and Johnson (2013).

- Psychological health is the ability to develop, maintain and adjust interdependent relationships, which enhances the chance to achieve a goal.

The social interdependence theory is applicable to individuals and groups who have their own goals because of the fact that they focus on how to reach their goals. Goals are communicated by interactions that develop into relationships, which can be negative or positive. The result of interactions and relationships is the psychological health of individuals or a group.

A principal’s leadership style depends on daily school activities. Furthermore, the school climate depends on a relationship between the principal, the teachers and the learners. It is likely that there will be good relationships, effective communication and better academic performance when a positive leadership style is followed.

Various studies have investigated principal leadership styles and school climate as variables for better academic performance. Theoretically, it seems as if a ‘relationship’ between the school leadership style and the school climate is responsible for academic performance. The interdependence amongst stakeholders of a school, good communication and relationships also contribute towards academic performance. Therefore, this factor should also be investigated.

■ Empirical research

■ Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research was to explore and understand the importance of school climate as an indicator of learner performance as well as the role of school leaders who have to ensure a positive school climate.

■ Research design

From a post positivistic paradigm, a quantitative approach was followed. According to Creswell (2012), knowledge gained through a post-positivist lens is based on the measurement of objective reality that focuses on the support of, and search for, valid and reliable evidence with regard to the phenomenon. This approach led to a numerical measurement of principals' and teachers' views with regard to a specific leadership style and the climate of a school.

■ Population and sample

Two databases were used to identify averages in the National Senior Certificate. One was the 2013 Mathematics results, and the other consisted of the number of secondary school learners in South Africa for the same year. KwaZulu-Natal showed the best results. A systematic random sample of 72 schools in KwaZulu-Natal established the relationship between school climate, leadership and academic achievement after questionnaires had been distributed in 2015.

■ Data collection

The MLQ (36-item, 5-point Likert scale) was used to investigate the transformational, transactional and passive-avoidant leadership styles, based on statements (Oberfield 2012). Furthermore, the Organisational Climate Description

Questionnaire – Rutgers Secondary (34-item, 4-point Likert scale) was used to study the climate of schools. Principals and teachers had the opportunity to give their opinion about the climate of their schools in these questionnaires. Taking into account the difficult circumstances under which the questionnaires were distributed and collected, the researcher was satisfied with the feedback of 56 questionnaires.

■ Viability, reliability and ethical issues

The MLQ is internationally valid and reliable with regard to the measurement of the nine components of the full-range leadership theory. The instrument also includes a respondent section for the teacher's opinion of the principal's leadership style. The validity of the questionnaire was based on the literature regarding principal leadership styles contained in the full-range leadership theory and the MLQ. The Organisational Climate Description Questionnaire – Rutgers Secondary has been used in numerous international and national studies. The Cronbach α coefficient is applied to the internal consistency of the items that contribute to constructs to determine reliability in the South African context. Reliability coefficients (the Cronbach α coefficient) were applied to the internal consistency of the items that had contributed to constructs in the MLQ to determine whether it corresponded with implementation in other contexts. Statistical significance (p -values) and effect size (d -values) were calculated using data aggregated to school level, to determine whether differences amongst groups in the study population would be regarded as practically significant. A factor analysis was conducted in order to determine the validity of the MLQ and Organisational Climate Description Questionnaire – Rutgers Secondary as measures of heads and staff members of the secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal and to confirm whether it matched implementation in other contexts.

Ethical approval was acquired from the university under whose supervision the research was conducted as well as from the DoBE in KwaZulu-Natal. The principals of the selected schools also granted permission. The researcher informed the participants regarding what the research entailed, assured them of their anonymity and informed them that they had the option to withdraw from the research at any time (cf. Creswell 2012; Leedy & Ormrod 2013; McMillan & Schumacher 2010). The identity of the participants was protected during the data analysis and also in the final report by not linking them to particular answers.

■ Data analysis

The data collection was conducted by using different statistical techniques, namely descriptive statistics (SPSS programme), calculation of averages, standard deviation frequencies and percentages of the responses indicated on the questionnaire. Dependent *t*-tests were used to test whether the principals' and teachers' responses were statistically significantly different, where the data of the teachers had been aggregated to the school level. Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2011) *d*-values were determined, where values of approximately 0.5 were considered to indicate an important difference in practice. Statistical significance was evaluated on a 5% level.

■ Results

The investigation yielded two main results. Table 6.3 provides the results of the dependent *t*-test for comparing the perceptions of the school principals and the teachers with regard to leadership style and school climate.

It seems that there have been statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between the views of the teachers and the principals for a number of reasons, which are discussed below.

TABLE 6.3: Principals' and teachers' perceptions with regard to leadership styles and school climate.

Environment and leadership style	Average	N	Standard deviation	p	Effect size
Supportive (teachers)	2.91	51	0.419		
Supportive (principals)	3.24	51	0.645	0.001	0.50
Directive (teachers)	2.19	51	0.365		
Directive (principals)	1.98	51	0.479	0.007	0.44
Engaged (teachers)	2.73	51	0.347		
Engaged (principals)	2.93	51	0.519	0.007	0.38
Frustrated (teachers)	1.91	51	0.360		
Frustrated (principals)	2.00	51	0.577	0.291	0.15
Intimate (teachers)	2.25	50	0.314		
Intimate (principals)	2.36	50	0.663	0.269	0.16
Transformational (teachers)	2.83	51	0.374		
Transformational (principals)	3.15	51	0.457	0.000	0.69
Transactional (teachers)	2.56	51	0.354		
Transactional (principals)	2.48	51	0.662	0.424	0.11
Passive-avoidant (teachers)	1.15	51	0.618		
Passive-avoidant (principals)	0.542	51	0.679	0.000	0.89

■ A principal's supportive behaviour

The effect size ($d = 0.50$) indicates a medium difference between the teachers' and the principals' perceptions with regard to support. According to the average scores, the principals believe that their support is very good (average = 3.24), whilst the teachers do not necessarily agree with the statement (average = 2.91).

Item 29 is an example of an average score of 2.81 for the teachers related to principals' constructive criticism. The same item shows an average score of 3.17 for the principals' opinions.

■ A principal's prescriptive behaviour

The effect size ($d = 0.44$) indicates a medium difference between the teachers and the principals about prescriptive behaviour. The average scores make it clear that the teachers think their principals are prescriptive (average = 2.19), whilst the principals do not necessarily agree (average = 1.98).

Item 7 shows an average score of 2.34 on the question of whether principals dominated meetings. The same item shows an average score of 1.96 for the principals' opinions. Thus, the teachers are of the opinion that the principals dominate meetings, whilst the principals disagree on this matter.

■ Involved behaviour of teachers

The effect size ($d = 0.38$) indicates a small difference between the teachers and the principals with regard to the teachers' behaviour. According to the average scores, the principals are of the opinion that the teachers are concerned or involved (average = 2.93), whilst the teachers do not necessarily agree (average = 2.73).

Item 4 shows an average score of 3.04 for the question of whether the teachers are proud of their school. The same item shows an average score of 3.42 for the principals' opinions. The principals are therefore of the opinion that the teachers are proud of their school, whilst the teachers disagree.

■ A principal's transforming leadership style

The effect size ($d = 0.69$) indicates a medium difference between the teachers and the principals about the transformational leadership style. According to the average scores, the principals are of the opinion that they follow the transformational leadership

style (average = 3.15), whilst the teachers (average = 2.83) disagree.

Item 31 shows an average score of 3.08 for the question of whether the principals develop the teachers' strengths. An average score of 3.46 is shown by the same item for the principals' opinions. The principals are therefore of the opinion that their transformational style develops teachers, whilst the teachers disagree.

■ A principal's passive-avoidant leadership style

The effect size ($d = 0.89$) indicates a large difference between the teachers and the principals about the passive-avoidant leadership style. According to the average scores, the teachers believe that the principals follow a passive-avoidant leadership style (average = 1.15), although the principals do not think so (average = 0.542).

Item 33 shows an average score of 1.28 for the question of whether the principals respond to urgent questions. An average score of 0.66 is shown by the same item for the principals' opinions. The teachers are of the opinion that the principals fail to respond to urgent questions, whilst the principals disagree.

After this, the schools were categorised as high-, average or low-performing schools with regard to their tertile scores in academic performance. To examine the relationship of school climate and leadership with academic performance, the first and third tertile schools were compared with an independent t -test. Table 6.4 provides results regarding the perceptions in low- and high-performing schools with regard to the leadership style and the school climate. Well-performing schools are schools where 68% or more of the learners scored 30% or more for Mathematics in the National Senior Certificate in 2013. Poorly performing schools are schools where 40% or less of the

TABLE 6.4: Results regarding the perceptions in low- and high-performing schools with regard to the school climate and leadership style.

Climate and leadership style	Performing schools	Average	Standard deviation	<i>p</i>	Effect size
Supportive	Low	2.84	0.42	0.546	0.18
	High	2.92	0.38		
Directive	Low	2.23	0.36	0.772	0.09
	High	2.35	0.31		
Engaged	Low	2.80	0.28	0.636	0.15
	High	2.76	0.29		
Frustrated	Low	2.09	0.31	0.303	0.31
	High	1.93	0.26		
Intimate	Low	2.37	0.31	0.073	0.56
	High	2.16	0.38		
Transformational	Low	2.83	0.37	0.586	0.17
	High	2.76	0.41		
Transactional	Low	2.61	0.36	0.654	0.14
	High	2.55	0.41		
Passive-avoidant	Low	1.30	0.62	0.196	0.41
	High	1.04	0.55		

learners achieved 30% or more for Mathematics in the National Senior Certificate in 2013.

No factor in principal leadership style or organisational climate showed statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between high- and low-performing schools. However, it seemed that there was, in practice, less personal interaction amongst the teachers in the high-performing schools than in the low-performing schools. This could be interpreted as when teachers focussed more on the learners than on socialising with one another, the learners performed better ($d = 0.56$). Also, the principals in the high-performing schools were perceived as being less passive-avoidant in practice ($d = 0.41$) compared to those in the low-performing schools.

■ Discussion

According to Burns (1978), the transformational leadership style is ideal to ensure good results. The style also has a significant impact on teachers' commitment and job satisfaction (Reed 2013). The study made it clear that both the teachers and the principals indeed experienced the transformational leadership style as the best for their schools. In the South African context, the transformational leadership style is appropriate for mainly two reasons. The first is that academic transformation is needed to put the country in a better position compared to other countries in terms of performance. It is well known that there have been several experiments regarding this philosophy that should guide teaching in South Africa. The failure of, for example, outcomes-based education is well-documented. Attempts at academic transformation seem to be politically motivated and, in the process, school principals are put under pressure. Academic performance is expected from them without the necessary support from the authorities. The second reason why the transformational leadership style is needed is because school principals are seen as those who should facilitate social coherence in a divided country through education. Generally speaking, the transactional leadership style is also experienced positively. However, according to the study, South African teachers perceive particular transactional actions by their principal as transformational. Nevertheless, Burns (1978) regards the transformational and transactional leadership styles as two opposite ends of the continuum, whilst Bass (1985) sees the two styles as related to each other. Therefore, in a South African context, both leadership styles may have positive results in schools.

The principal, teachers and learners depend on one another in order to establish good relationships and constructive interaction (Johnson & Johnson 2013; Van Lange & Rusbult 2012). A school is a group of people considered to be interdependent and where relationships take shape. The principal, teachers and learners

influence one another, individual goals and those affected by these goals. Interaction determines which goals should be set individually or by a group and how they should be achieved. In the study, the teachers indicated that their principals were hard-working individuals and that they as teachers received recognition for their work. This supports the interdependence theory according to which good relationships are inevitable, also as far as principals and teachers are concerned.

Good communication strengthens interaction and interpersonal relationships and encourages effective leadership. However, according to the results of this research, the perceptions of principals and teachers about an appropriate leadership style differ in some instances. The fact that principals and teachers disagree about particular leadership styles is rather upsetting, as the question arises whether they communicate sufficiently.

The results of a favourable school climate are strengthened relationships, better interaction, social interdependence and better performance. These relationships and interactions are established based on the principal's and the teachers' behaviour. The strong connection between a principal's support and the engagement of teachers gives the impression that the learners benefit from such behaviour and the school climate. Yet perceptions with regard to principals' support in order to get teachers more involved differed. The different participants' indications varied in terms of how supportive the principals and how involved the teachers were. It seemed as if there were a lack of mutual communication and an unhealthy environment in which learners could not excel. It is well-known that education in South Africa is highly unionised. This could put a strain on the relationship amongst principals, who are seen as the representatives of the educational authorities, and teachers. It is reasonable to say that this has a negative impact on learner performance.

Transformation and support go hand in hand. It seems as if, especially in South Africa where transformation is constantly encouraged, principals follow a transformational leadership style

in order to transform their schools. As far as this research is concerned, there is a definite link between the transformational leadership style and principals' supporting behaviour - an aspect not generally agreed upon by both of the participating parties. Furthermore, there is a relationship between the transformative leadership style and the intimate behaviour of teachers. The principals and the teachers agreed that trust and commitment were results of the transformational leadership style. However, it is important that South African teachers become involved and trust one another more, especially with regard to academic performance, which is constantly under discussion. At the same time, a positive school climate contributes a great deal towards a healthy learning culture. According to the study, the strong connection between principals' support to staff members and the involvement of teachers gives the impression that both the learners and the school climate will benefit from it in the end. The irony is that the relationship between principals and teachers seem to be quite positive, and the school climate is, in most instance, conducive to learning; however, learners still underperform. This issue needs to be addressed further. This might be the result of consecutive educational philosophies aimed more at social cohesion than academic excellence.

A final finding of the study is that teachers in well-performing schools are not intimate or do not socialise much with one another. This may seem like a contradictory finding at first, but it can, in fact, be explained. Learners perform better whenever teachers primarily focus on teaching and learning in the classroom. The findings show that, instead of socialising with one another, these teachers primarily show interest in the learners. Teachers refraining from socialising with one another is a tendency in South African schools but has the positive result of more attention being given to the learners.

As the social interdependence theory mainly has to do with teachers' and learners' dependence on their principal, good relationships and interaction are inevitable. Furthermore, a favourable school climate sustains an interdependent relationship

between the principal, the teachers and the learners. However, according to this research, the social interdependence theory has only been applied partially as the teachers, as one of the groups at the school, have not depended much on one another. It seems as if they were more interested in the learners' performance than in one another. As the study mainly focussed on one province in South Africa, further research is recommended in order to gain more insight into the theory of social interdependence and how it is applied in other provinces as well as other educational institutions in foreign countries.

■ Limitations

The limitations of the study necessitate further research into the discursive construction of leadership in context. Future research could more extensively explore the views of the learners, how they experience the leadership style of the school principal and the school climate. Secondly, a larger sample, in different provinces of South Africa, could provide a better insight with regard to the importance of the principal's leadership style and the influence thereof on the school climate and academic performance. Thirdly, the participation of other stakeholders, such as parents or caregivers and policymakers, could also be considered in order to deal with the notion of social interdependence more effectively. Related to context, the importance of social interdependence is of essence. However, another theory could shed light on the coherence amongst the three variables, namely school principal leadership, school climate and academic performance.

■ Conclusion

The study has focussed on the relationship between principals' leadership styles and the school climate in order to enhance academic performance. Engaged and effective teachers as well as quality teaching and learning are the results of an appropriate

leadership style and a healthy school climate. This leads to the achievement of individual and collective objectives, namely sustainable or improved academic performance. When applying a specific leadership style, school principals try to lead the school in the best possible way. In some circumstances, a chosen style is not often the appropriate style in given circumstances. Furthermore, teachers and learners often do not understand the leadership style and are therefore not pleased with the way the principal leads the school.

Schools should be aware of the latest trends in the world. Therefore, principals should apply the transformational leadership style to keep up with the changed world, especially in South African schools. South Africa is currently experiencing numerous challenges with regard to education. Improved leadership styles are crucial for better management as well as greater interdependence amongst all stakeholders and could possibly lead to a more positive school climate. By attending to this matter at schools and by encouraging good communication amongst all stakeholders, it is likely that the promotion of sustainable relationships and interaction amongst all parties involved will change education in South Africa for the better.

School principal leadership in the 21st century

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■ Abstract

When schools are discussed, the role of the principal is often scrutinised. The role of principals has changed significantly over time. The principal's role is not only that of a planner, organiser, leader and person in control, but has also expanded to keep up with entrepreneurship, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the management of millennial teachers. Furthermore, principals have to deal with violence in and around the school. The principal of today requires exceptional qualities to handle many issues, whilst still executing the routine day-to-day tasks. The emphasis falls on effective leadership in schools. The purpose of this research was

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to determine how principals still succeed in effective and successful leadership despite the intricate issues experienced at present. Interviews were conducted with 10 principals in seven provinces. The schools included mixed-gender as well as single-gender schools. The findings revealed that leadership was important for the participants. A transparent visualisation for the school is of the essence; democratic and autocratic leadership styles guide the school in the right direction; and knowledge about the law, entrepreneurial thinking and preparation for the changing world shifts the emphasis from ordinary principals to extraordinary principals. To address the limitations of the research, it would be advisable to seek the views of teachers in future studies.

Keywords: Challenges; Human capital; Leadership; Management; School principal leadership; Staff; Success; Women leadership.

■ Introduction and background

The purpose of this chapter was to report on successful school leadership in secondary schools. Attention will be paid to the perspectives, experiences and thoughts of school principals who have been part of a countrywide research project with regard to successful school principalship. South Africa is in urgent need of effective and successful school principal leadership. The experiences of such principals may benefit school principals who have not performed well.

Numerous studies have been conducted on school principal leadership (e.g. Drysdale, Gurr & Goode 2016; Hancock et al. 2019; Moral et al. 2017; Ponomareva 2015). Authors have different views on what constitutes good or poor school principal leadership and on schools performing successfully or unsuccessfully. In other research, the issue of the leadership and management of the principal is examined and discussed. Either way, the emphasis falls on the principal as the principal of a school. It is the task and function of the principal to manage and lead the school to the

best of his or her abilities and to create and maintain a climate conducive for learning and teaching.

As management and leadership are closely linked, this chapter focusses on the leadership of the principal. The principal of the school is often placed under the magnifying glass, especially when a school is performing poorly. It is well known that the principal is regarded as the key figure in the school (Brownlee et al. 2019; Day, Gu & Sammons 2016; Liu & Bellibas 2016; Noman, Hashim & Abdullah 2017). For this reason, the actions of principals are closely scrutinised, and opinions are raised as to how a principal is supposed to act and what he or she should keep in mind when dealing with the learners, the staff and the community. Matters such as the preparatory training the principal has undergone on his or her way to principalship, his or her leadership style and the principal's role in creating a school climate that is conducive to teaching and learning are also often mentioned.

The chapter commences with some aspects regarding school principal leadership which emerged from research projects.

■ Leadership and management: An overview

■ Leadership

The significance and the skill of school principals as leaders are crucial for effective leadership (Grobler, Bisschof & Beeka 2012:40), yet the answer to school effectiveness lies in 'sustainable leadership'. According to Cox and Hassard (2018:536), leadership is the procedures by which social request is developed and changed. Sims, Waniganayake and Hadley (2018:961) add that leadership can be displayed in a variety of forms. In recent literature, it has been positioned as instructional, pedagogical leadership for learning and an activity that is in conflict with the need for management. Thus, leadership is complex. Although leadership can be described or defined, it is also important to

add context. Leadership in different contexts necessitates an understanding of the context in question. In general, shared settings allude to highlights of the more extensive hierarchical and natural setting within which the school and the principal are found (Hallinger 2018:7). Furthermore, district context alludes to highlights of the school region association (e.g. objectives, size, structure, multifaceted nature, rules, guidelines, etc.). It is clear that a context consists of different components that should be taken into account when leadership is discussed.

The influential position played by the school principal is basic (Lane 2017:12). Principals perform various roles. In this regard, numerous attributes are linked to principalship. Successful principals provide a mutual vision of what excellent instruction resembles, support teachers with the assistance and assets they need to be effective in their classrooms and monitor the performance of teachers and learners, all the whilst consistently keeping the general objective in mind - to create a school atmosphere or conditions in which all learners can achieve their true abilities (Lane 2017:12). Furthermore, the role of the school principal has developed in recent years to incorporate an astounding range of accountabilities. School leaders are required to be instructive visionaries, instructional leaders, assessment specialists, disciplinarians, community creators, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programmes administrators and guardians of numerous legal, contractual and policy mandates and initiatives (Lane 2017:13). Piggot-Irvine, Howse and Richard (2013:58) argue that the majority of the principals in South Africa are not coping with these responsibilities and do not have the expertise, skills and attitude to manage their schools properly, in spite of efforts to develop school principals. Add to this the fact that school principals in South Africa daily face numerous challenges, such as poor socio-economic circumstances, inadequate resources and difficult conditions. Leadership in schools involves a combination of variables and determines the leadership practices of the principal.

In another study, Brownlee et al. (2019) refer to seven characteristics of highly effective leaders. These characteristics are identified as (1) energy, (2) self-confidence, (3) skill mastery, (4) vision, (5) personal commitment, (6) a genuine concern for people and (7) staying fit. They state that leaders must have energy; when leaders radiate energy, it influences their followers. Energy refers to being 'one step ahead of the rest that follow', ubiquitous dynamic and action. Sometimes the notion of 'I can' surrounds the leader, which goes hand in hand with the confidence he or she radiates. This feature is found when the leader is very effective and successful. Remarkable of effective leaders, according to Brownlee et al. (2019), is the fact that they make a specific skill their own. They read about the skill, gain all the information about the skill and become experts in the field of this skill. These effective leaders are visionary leaders. They are leaders who are capable of setting goals, establishing objectives and bringing in a team that can identify tasks and different activities to meet goals, and then step back and monitor the accomplishment of these activities. When it comes to commitment, these leaders are fully committed, and committed to all stakeholders. The most outstanding feature of these leaders is their sincere caring for people. They see people as human beings. They are concerned about people in terms of their own personal welfare. Another important characteristic of an effective leader refers to fitness – fitness with regard to the body as well as the mind. To effective leaders, a healthy body is a healthy spirit.

■ Management

Management involves, according to Van der Westhuizen (2013:354), personal attitudes and convictions towards other people and points specifically to the managers in the management process. Van der Westhuizen (2013) adds that:

[M]anagement is a specific kind of work in education which comprises those regulative tasks or actions executed by a person or body in a

position of authority in a specific field or area of regulation, so as to allow formative education to take place. (p. 55)

Van der Westhuizen (2013:45) elaborates on management and refers to the different managerial tasks, namely planning, organising, leading and controlling. In schools, principals are responsible for executing these tasks to ensure school effectiveness. Masci, De Witte and Agasisti (2018:54) refer to particular management practices associated with management. Such practices manage various angles, from the manner in which the principal administers the school, contemplates about his or her role, cooperates with learners and teachers, deals with the systems (e.g. with other principals or with the school board), influences the academic programme, constitutes classes, recognises objectives and attempts to accomplish these and makes decisions. Bohoris and Voirra (2007:2) postulate that managers are people who carry out managerial tasks and achieve goals through planning and budgeting, organising employees, troubleshooting and controlling. Leaders are there to guide, motivate and encourage employees and provide them with guidelines. However, school principals have to fulfil both roles in their daily activities.

■ Women's leadership

Research on women principals has mainly focussed on their careers (e.g. Bridges 2010; Chan, Ngai & Choi 2016; Lumby 2015; Moorosi 2010), leadership (e.g. Davids 2018) and challenges they face (e.g. Brinia 2011; Choge 2015; Naidoo & Perumal 2014; Poirel & Yvon 2014). The literature on women principals, their careers and challenges creates a broader picture of the leadership of women principal of schools.

For centuries, women have experienced discrimination, lower social status and limited leadership roles, often because of the stereotypes associated with being female (Coleman & Hong 2008:49). In many cases, self-stereotyping played a considerable

role, and women disregarded themselves with regard to leadership roles. Following this, Sanderson and Whitehead (2016) determined that women had a lack of confidence when they were promoted to the position of school principal. Yet Chan et al. (2016) note that a sense of guilt amongst women is often the reason why women do not consider leadership positions and retire prematurely. In addition, Chan et al. (2016:208) suggest that women should be encouraged and given the necessary support, especially from senior staff, to seize opportunities for promotion. Furthermore, Mattar et al. (2018:84) point to the importance of personal and professional development opportunities to support women's leadership. Khalil and DeCuir (2018:106) argue that historical and modern feminist goals of fairness and justice should be reconciled. They emphasise affirmative action.

Current studies on women principals include those of Steyn and Heystek (2018), in which they focus on the success of a female principal in difficult circumstances. The study emphasises the fact that female principals should possess particular characteristics. Botha's (2018) investigation into female principals focusses on transformation and how schools could transform with the assistance of the community. The female principals who have been investigated in the study, through their leadership, influence the school culture and thus have achieved success. In another study, Davids (2018) sheds more light on how female principals understand and perceive their identity, values and social or cultural contexts and how that influences their leadership. Netshitangani (2018) disagrees with Sanderson and Whitehead (2016) and supports the issue of gender preference with regard to the appointment of principals but states that context plays an important role. The study also suggests that women are competent and confident in leadership roles, as opposed to usual stereotypes. However, little research focusses on how women experience stereotyping by the community and how they can maintain themselves in mixed schools.

At the point when gender standards in the public arena endorse unique – and often inferior – roles to women, these do not only shape their direction of vocation but also the manner in which schools are organised and the social view of leadership. Sexism will, in general, win when the school management or school committee is overwhelmed by men who are bound to enlist, and accordingly, advance men who look, think and act the same as them. In addition, solid and able school principals are generally expected to be goal-orientated, instrumental, competitive, decisive and completely dedicated to their work – all generalisations that support men and manliness devalue characteristics related to womanliness and underestimate individuals who have family duties (Chan et al. 2016:195). However, a closer examination of the standards, qualities and practices of school organisations demonstrates that hindrances are not an issue intrinsic to females, but can be institutional, authoritative and desultory. Women in leadership are confronted daily by barriers related to gender and work (Bridges 2010:20), for example intangible, informal barriers that require an aspirant to be accepted by those already at the apex of an organisation such as a school. Women are often categorised as not being task-orientated enough, too dependent on the reactions and evaluation of others and lacking independence. In addition, discrimination against women, family responsibilities and mobility problems have been identified as barriers in the literature. Moorosi (2010:556) adds that a noteworthy number of female principals experience defiance from their male and female associates, who might not acknowledge their position. Family and domestic responsibilities and a lack of professional and institutional support, as well as personal factors such as a lack of self-confidence, form part of the barriers female principals experience. Although the need for instructional leaders is evident and those most experienced with instruction are women, they are disregarded in being considered for the position of principal (Bridges 2010:20). Yet, the moral responsibilities of female principals, in which social liberation, sympathy and care for the

children in the community are solidly established, are at the focal point of their leadership style (Mogadime et al. 2010:797).

■ Successful school principals

It is not an easy task to pinpoint what constitutes a successful school principal. However, it is evident that principals assume a wide range of roles in the leadership of a school (Francom 2013:69). A principal has a strong influence on the school climate and culture, which is necessary for a successful character education initiative to work. In addition, Day et al. (2016) postulate that learners' academic progress and attainment are key factors in recognising school effectiveness. Various authors have tried to estimate the importance of school leaders' influence, using different variables (Day et al. 2016), and have come to the fore with factors that have an influence on the success of school principals. In this regard, Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2019) introduced seven claims for successful school principals. According to them, successful school principal leadership is based on the following:

- Claim 1: Apart from teachers, the principal has the most influence on learners' learning.
- Claim 2: Practically all effective principals draw on a similar collection of fundamental initiative practices.
- Claim 3: The manner by which principals apply these fundamental organisational rehearses – not simply the practices – shows responsiveness to, as opposed to transcription by, the settings wherein they work.
- Claim 4: Principals increase teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on teachers' inspiration, aptitude and working conditions.
- Claim 5: School leadership has a greater influence on schools and learners when it is widely dispersed.
- Claim 6: Some arrangements of spreading are more effective than others.

- Claim 7: The variation in leadership effectiveness is related to a handful of personal qualities.

It is clear that principals follow fundamental principles and practices to make the difference in school through motivation.

Along the same line, Lynch et al. (2016) claim that the context of schooling will have an impact on attributes that add to viability in schools. These attributes include leadership, high expectations, ongoing evaluation, achieving goals and giving direction and security and organisation. To be an effective principal, he or she must be visible, convey the goals and vision of the school, collaborate with teachers to upgrade their aptitudes and be associated with the identification of, and solutions to, issues. With regard to high expectations, Lynch et al. (2016) argue that high expectations equal good academic performance of learners. High-quality teaching and learning enhance excellent academic performance. Ongoing evaluation sheds light on the performance of learners. It also identifies possible risks with regard to poor performance. With a specific goal and direction in mind, the principal gives direction in a way that will provide the opportunity for all stakeholders to participate. Once a school is secured and organised, the learners will perform better. In this regard, the school principal is responsible to invest in security possibilities and maintain order and discipline.

Despite numerous attempts to define and describe successful school leadership, no definite conclusion with regard to successful school leadership could be made. However, authors often focus on two concepts, namely practices and characteristics.

The study of Noman et al. (2017) reveals leadership practices that contribute to successful schools. In the same line as Lynch et al. (2016), they refer to the importance of providing vision and specific goals for the school. In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that a vision is not only set for the school but also for each individual. Together with a clear vision, improving curricular and co-curricular activities is of importance. By creating a holistic

approach, schools strive to be successful. With regard to principals, Noman et al. (2017:480) reveal that a principal must be friendly and approachable, as he or she needs to deal with staff members, learners and parents. The development of teachers is one of the most important factors in creating a successful school. Once a teacher realises his or her potential and develops it, his or her self-confidence grows and teamwork follows. This results in a positive working environment. A positive school condition stimulates teachers' self-viability, competence and occupation fulfilment, which are instrumental in enhancing performance. As a school does not function in a vacuum, it is necessary to collaborate with the parents and the community. This is an enormous task resting on the shoulders of the principal, as the school is part of the greater community and should serve the community. According to Noman et al. (2017), discipline is key to being a successful school. Order and behavioural expectations set the discipline in a school under the guidance of a capable principal.

In another study on successful schools, Singh and Allison (2017) provide a list of five practices to enhance successful schools. Principals should develop plans of action to pursue goals focussed on improving learner achievement. In addition, principals should enhance a highly productive culture in their schools. This leads to positive relationships based on trust, professional respect and ethical behaviour. Principals should be proactive in mobilising and managing resources to overcome constraints imposed by underfunding by the government. Singh and Allison (2017) elaborate on practices for successful schools by referring to the importance of strong teamwork and collaboration amongst teachers. In addition, the factor of commitment is made pertinent. Once the principal is committed to achieving success, the teachers follow in his or her steps. It is thus clear that principals play a vital role in successful schools.

In their study, Pashiardis et al. (2011:550) refer to domains of practice for successful school leadership. Four domains

are identified. In the first place, Pashiardis et al. (2011) refer to people-centred leadership. In this domain, interpersonal relationships, individual consideration, collaboration and support are of the essence. The second domain refers to values and vision. Aspects such as high expectations, passion and commitment, democracy and participation, building a clear vision and the communication of the vision come to the fore. In the third domain, the promotion of learning and aspects such as further development of the principal, the professional growth of the teachers and the learners' learning are mentioned. In the fourth place, networked leadership, parental involvement, external actors and acquired resources play a role.

Drysdale et al. (2016) determine particular domains of importance, especially when leadership in a changing environment is discussed. They identify these domains as understanding the broader context; setting direction; developing the organisation; developing people; leading teaching and learning; leading self; and influencing others. In a nutshell, Drysdale et al. (2016) argue that context does matter in terms of educational success. Looking at the diverse contexts in South Africa, it is inevitable that principals have to adapt and adjust to these. Being a principal of some rural and township schools can be harsh. As Du Plessis (2017:8) postulates, rural schools face many challenges that are not experienced in urban areas, such as geographic isolation, poor working conditions of teachers, a lack of resources and poor community involvement. Principals of such schools are responsible for addressing these challenges. With regard to the domain of setting direction, Drysdale et al. (2016) distinguish between strategic risk taking, having a moral compass and planning scenarios. Being a principal in a changing environment means taking risks, but keeping danger in mind, direction needs to be followed and thorough planning is required. The third domain addresses developing the organisation. In this regard, policies, structures, processes, programmes and practices should be reviewed, adjusted and implemented. Developing people is important for growth in an organisation. Furthermore, the development of people creates new leaders with new ideas. The

four management tasks (planning, organising, leading and controlling), as proposed by Van der Westhuizen (2013), are of the essence when it comes to improving teaching and learning. In addition, the Fourth Industrial Revolution should be kept in mind as new technology requires new skills, and teachers and principals have to keep up with these changes. Drysdale et al. (2016) continue their discussion about the domains and refer to influencing as one of these. It is evident that leaders influence their followers to reach the goals set by the organisation. Therefore, Drysdale et al. (2016) argue that to influence followers, the leader must be heard and seen and interaction should take place. The last domain, leading self, refers to leadership in oneself. By opening oneself to development, reframing, new possibilities and questioning, assumptions will follow.

Not only are the characteristics of leaders of the essence, but Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) argue that the most important areas on which school principals are supposed to focus are:

- setting direction by building up an accord around vision, objectives and direction
- supporting teachers through provision, demonstration and supervision
- reshaping the organisation to adoptive partnership and involving families and the community
- managing the organisation by tactically assigning assets and support.

It is clear that authors have different opinions about the key elements of successful schools and principals. However, characteristics and practices are linked and could be the combination of successful leadership in schools.

■ Research methodology and sample

The study was employed in the interpretivist paradigm, as interpretivism foregrounds the meaning that individuals assign to their perceptions. As behaviour is constituted by social

conventions, interpretations are required; the facts do not speak for themselves (Maree 2010:21). Interpretivism allowed the researcher not only to describe the social context, conventions, norms and standards of the school principals but also to reflect on the crucial elements in assessing and understanding the behaviour of the school principals. As the study aimed to explore the perceptions of school principals, especially their leadership and management, a qualitative approach was used to understand the central phenomenon shared by the school principals. The nuances and complexities of the particular situation in which the school principals were executing their daily duties had been examined. Qualitative research seeks to probe deeply into the research settings to obtain an in-depth understanding of the way things are, why they are that way and how the participants in the context perceive them (Leedy & Ormrod 2013:95). To achieve such a detailed understanding, a sustained, in-depth, in-context research that allowed the researcher to uncover subtle, less overt, personal understandings was conducted. A phenomenological design was followed to gather in-depth data from the principals for the purpose of learning more about the unknown aspects regarding their leadership and management. As the purpose of a phenomenological study was to describe and interpret the perceptions of participants regarding a particular event to understand the participants' meaning ascribed to that event, the phenomenological design was applicable. The essence of the experience as perceived by the participants was captured. In addition, the voice of the participants was heard.

The rationale behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question (Creswell 2014; McMillan & Schumacher 2010). For this reason, semi-structured interviews were conducted to generate data from the principals. These interviews involved general, open-ended questions intended to elicit the participants' views and opinions. This approach helped the researcher to ask follow-up questions

for clarity and depth. Questions were on the challenges the principals experienced, why they were successful and what they had learnt about themselves and about being a school principal.

Using purposive sampling to gain a perspective on the perceptions of the school principals, 14 principals were selected. The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question (Creswell 2014). As Table 7.1 indicates, the participants were male and female principals selected from diverse socio-economic environments. The reason for adding the socio-economic status of the schools

TABLE 7.1: Details of the participants.

School	Principal	Socio-economic conditions in which schools are located
School A	Female	High: Suburban affluent parents
School B	Male	Middle: Suburban middle-class parents
School C	Female	High: Suburban affluent parents
School D	Male	High: Countryside affluent parents
School E	Male	Low: Rural poor parents
School F	Female	High: Suburban affluent parents
School G	Female	High: Suburban affluent parents
School H	Female	High: Suburban affluent parents
School I	Female	Low: Suburban poor parents
School J	Male	High: Suburban affluent parents
School K	Female	Low: Rural poor parents
School L	Male	Low: Suburban poor parents
School M	Male	High: Suburban affluent parents
School N	Male	High: Suburban affluent parents

is to refer to successful school principal leadership in different contexts and circumstances. The principals represented Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, Free State, Northern Cape, Limpopo and North West provinces. All of the participants were 50 years or older. Their years of experience as school principals differed, but most of them had been a school principal for more than 5 years. All of them went through the ranks to attaining this position, that is, HoD, DP and principal. Most of the principals had not thought that one day they would be a principal, and in most cases, the position of principal unexpectedly crossed their path. Except for one principal, they loved to be principal and leadership came naturally to them.

All of the schools had achieved a 100% pass rate in the National Senior Certificate examination for more than 10 years.

The researcher transcribed the interviews. She read the transcriptions to gain an overall sense of the data (cf. Creswell 2014). An inductive data analysis process was used to analyse the data. The data were decoded and sub-themed. The researcher grouped the data under the sub-themes to get an overall picture of the school principals. The sub-themes that emerged were placed into categories, and then the coded data were grouped into the appropriate categories. After that, the researcher analysed the data by searching for emerging patterns, associations, similarities, contradictions, concepts and explanations of the data. The categories, patterns and emerging themes were linked to the research objective and discussed in relation to the relevant literature.

■ Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were adhered to according to Creswell's (2014) guidelines. Prior to conducting the interviews, the necessary permission had been obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the researcher's institution of employment. The required legal authorisation was

granted by the DoBE and the principals. The researcher informed the participants that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the research at any time, without giving a reason for doing so. They were assured that withdrawing from the project would not be held against them (cf. Creswell 2014:93). In the semi-structured interviews, the questions posed concerned the perceptions of the school principals on their lived experiences of their day-to-day obligations. The researcher assured the participants that what they said in the interview would be treated as confidential. Privacy was maintained throughout the study.

■ Results

The purpose of the study was to gain more insight into the day-to-day duties of the school principals, especially into their challenges and successes. In addition, the researcher wanted to explore the advice given by the principals.

■ Challenges

The challenges the principals experienced were divided into four categories, namely administrative issues, community issues, issues regarding human capital and issues specifically experienced by women principals.

■ Administrative issues

It is well known that school principals experience administrative issues as one of the factors influencing their daily work. They receive numerous memos and forms from the DoBE. Most of the administrative circulars need to be attended to quickly. In the study, it was clear that the principals were frustrated with the unprofessional manner in which they had to adhere to circulars, policies and memos. However, according to Principal D, to address the administrative issues, one needs to employ innovative thinking to be able to rise to the occasion – ‘you have to be one step ahead of time’.

■ Community issues

The school context is determined by the community. The character of a school is determined by the needs of the community and the particular school context thereof. What works for one school does not necessarily work for another. However, because of learners coming from everywhere, schools often do not experience a closed community. Principal E explained that his school consisted of learners from as far as Botswana, Zimbabwe and even the Congo. For this reason, it was difficult to create relationships with the parents and establish a perception of 'our' school. In addition, the socio-economic status of the community plays a role. Some of the principals declared that the socio-economic status of their communities was very poor, even 'desperate'. Yet, the parents in those communities still have expectations for their children. This makes it difficult for school principals to satisfy the needs of the community whilst at the same time minimising the contribution of the community for school fees and other funding. Subsequently, more pressure is placed on the teachers. Principal M commented:

'We are sitting with a generation of parents who were actually a different generation from us; another generation than ours was. They and the children communicate different(ly); their discipline at home is different'. (PM, male, high suburban school)

■ Issues regarding human capital

Working with people is not an easy task. One of the principals (PB, male, middle suburban school) explained this as 'different levels with different people who think differently are grouped together in a school'. In addition to this statement, the challenge of having to accommodate learners who come from the best background alongside other learners who come from the worst circumstances was mentioned. For a principal, this is an enormous task. Principal D argued that the biggest challenge for him was

managing people's complexity because everything was questioned with accompanying emotions. Included in this is the issue of culture. Cultural differences amongst the staff make it difficult for principals to manage the staff. For example, some cultures do not understand the problems created by using a particular voice tone or sarcasm.

One of the issues regarding staff concerns the generation gap between the staff members and the school principal. One of the principals revealed that he had been raised under an autocratic style, but in his position as the principal, he had to apply a democratic style at the school. It brought out inner conflict to which he constantly had to pay attention. In another comment, Principal G referred to the fact that she found it difficult to understand why people did not do things the way she thought they should be done. In yet another comment, the principals referred to the 'older' staff members. Older people find it more difficult to accept change (Principal D), whereas younger teachers will not attempt anything if a task does not make sense to them (Principal H). Bringing the two poles together and keeping them motivated are huge challenges, according to Principal L. For this reason, principals sometimes find it difficult to control their stress levels and personal well-being.

■ Issues specifically experienced by women principals

It was a revelation that the women principals came up with their own unique challenges. Apart from the stereotyping and hidden discrimination against them as female principals, one of the women principals noted that when talking to a male colleague, she had to speak with a very definite purpose in mind (Principal C). She needed to strongly express her point of view and show that she was the leader. In addition, principal E added that men did not always comprehend what was important to women.

■ Successes

The successes of the principals can be attributed to their leadership and management and how they manage their staff.

■ Leadership and management

One of the very first remarks made by the principals regarding leadership was to lead by example: 'lead by example and trust – don't wait for someone to do it' (PD, male, high countryside school). 'Everybody prepared to work hard and then because they're working hard and they see the other people working hard, they're prepared to share expertise' (PN, male, high suburban school). Principals should be value-driven and ethical, and their energy must be sustainable. Consistency is the keyword, according to all of the principals – consistency in the way they treat the staff members, the learners and the community and consistency in decision-making processes. A principal (PF, female, high suburban school) expressed himself strongly about decision-making: 'whether you make a poor or good decision – make a decision!' Similarly, another principal added that principals should not be prepared to lower their standards. School principals should not negotiate because then they are not achieving the best for the school. The question was posed as to why principals are successful. According to the principals, it starts with good research that needs to be conducted before making decisions. 'If you want to be exceptional, be prepared to learn' (PI, female, low suburban school). In addition, one has to think 'out of the box'. When the foundation is solid, a well-structured system is in place. If the principal is competent, the reasons for specific decisions will be clear, changes will be understandable and the staff will buy in. The community and the parents often do not have all the information, especially regarding policies. Therefore, information should be transmitted correctly and 'softly' (PD, male, high

countryside). By acting thus, parents get to know their responsibilities towards their children and towards the school.

■ Staff

One of the reasons for schools being successful is the fact that there is no 'us' and 'you' in reference to older and younger staff members (Principal F). To the contrary, principals need to put more emphasis on young staff because they bring energy, life and new ideas to a school. Teamwork is important and good work ethics are essential. Management that is in place leads schools to be successful. One of the principals emphasised that principals should invest in their staff (Principal M). It is important that the potential of all teachers is recognised so that they could develop. A good leader will see a potential leader in his or her followers and inspire and elevate that person to be a leader.

■ Words of advice from principals

This part of the results mirrored the success of the school principals. However, these words of advice were personal.

■ What principals should realise, keep in mind and apply

For a realistic point of view, a principal (PC, female, high suburban school) postulated that 'a principal is not a school – a school extends beyond a single individual'. For this reason, a principal should carefully consider the responsibilities of the position before becoming a principal, especially if the individual is not a natural leader. 'If you want to take the job, then you've got to take the knocks that come with it' (PJ, male, high suburban school). It is difficult to test oneself at a higher (principal) level when one is a deputy because when a person is a principal, the decisions he

or she has to make are different from the decisions that have to be made as a deputy. It completely changes the picture (Principal E). When an individual has made the decision to become a principal, he or she should keep in mind that when he or she leaves the school one day, the school will still be the same. Therefore, a principal has to reflect on what legacy he or she would like to leave behind for the school to remember him or her (Principal G). Thus, one should take from the past that has worked and take it forward (Principal H). On the other hand, Principal G felt her salvation was that she did things completely differently from the previous principal.

In Table 7.2, the words of advice given by the principals are presented as personalisation.

TABLE 7.2: The principals' words of advice.

Principal	Words of advice
A	Empower yourself
A	Get knowledge; you need to be emotionally strong and resilient, especially in the current educational environment
A	Surround yourself with a structure of people you can fall back on in your private world
A	See your staff as human beings; when they are tired, lift them up
B	Believe in yourself
B	Stay true to your character; you cannot be anything else (than what) you are born to be
C	Be critical under whose guidance you enter school management
C	Further studies keep you informed and give [the] self-confidence to know what you are talking about, especially with regard to legal issues
D	Innovative thinking is needed to stand out - you have to be one step ahead of time, especially with regard to policies
D	Never deviate from set times
D	As a person and (with regard to) your personality, you should not be ashamed of who you are and of your shortcomings; you must strengthen yourself in your shortcomings
F	See other people's talents so that vision can rationalise
H	Do it; don't say it's too hard
I	Nothing can take away your experience and humanity - you will be the same person in any school
K	To get parents involved in the school, you need to contact them. Only involve small groups first, and in doing so, expand their involvement into larger groups
M	Misery is a choice

■ Women school principals

Although the study consisted of male and female principals, the women principals exposed their experiences in a noteworthy way. The leadership of the women and the men seemed to be slightly different. Unlike the men, the women principals relied heavily on their intuition. However, they made it clear that it was not the dominant factor in their decision-making process. With regard to the stereotyping of 'it's a man's world', the women principals emphasised how important it was to establish authority in a male environment. As women principal, they found that the learners' fathers sometimes would not recognise them as principals. It was a challenge to convince these fathers that a women principal was just as efficient as a male principal. 'Don't stand back, keep your head high, make confident decisions, know what you're talking about or people won't take you seriously' (PI, female, low suburban school). When asked how the leadership of men differed from that of women, the women principals pointed out that men were focussed on a matter. They interpreted the case and then made a decision. Women principal, on the other hand, would consider the human aspect as well. Men more easily delegated, whereas women took more control. In a further comment, Principal C pointed out that women examined matters in more detail and could address more cases simultaneously. Men think 'in boxes', whereas women could see the bigger picture. However, women are harder on themselves because they have to prove themselves in a man's world.

■ Discussion

In this section, leadership is discussed as the empirical part relating to the literature. With regard to challenges, it is clear that, although some schools are successful, challenges are still a factor. To deal with challenges, it is important that principals act proactively. It is also important that processes, systems and management are in place. Good leadership is of the essence. It

cannot be expected that the DoE or anyone else will solve challenges. The principal and the management team should handle a challenge immediately. For this reason, it is important that principals surround themselves with strong support systems, namely fellow school principals, management teams, the community and appropriate knowledge. A disciplined, goal-orientated principal is of the essence. Subsequently, principals should keep abreast of policies, legislation and the latest trends in education. Further studies could be of importance as every principal should know that theory and practice must be brought together. However, leadership is the foundation of any strong organisation. Leadership, in some cases, emerges, although in other cases, leadership is a consequence of the circumstances. However, it seems as if principals with natural leadership qualities are more successful than those who, because of circumstances, have to hold such positions. When integrity and credibility are reflected in leadership, followers would want to be leaders as well and follow suit. A good leader will create opportunities to empower the people under him or her. When leadership comes from one's heart and being, one is a convincing leader. If one touches the hearts of followers, then one is a truly inspiring leader. This is the type of leadership that principals should reveal. Important to remember is that the definition of a leader has changed because the people one has to lead, ask questions. In this regard, Lane (2017) points out that principals should be aware of all areas of the school; in fact, they must be experts in virtually every area. The day when school principals start questioning their own abilities, they can no longer be in a leadership position because then they have entered a comfort zone and under the impression that all is going well and they are achieving their goals; it may not be the case. The difference between an ordinary leader and an exceptional leader lies in the fact that the ordinary leader is satisfied with doing what is expected of him or her, whereas the exceptional leader is aware that he or she should be willing to grow and learn. Leadership is the same everywhere; it requires commitment to persevere in

doing what needs to be done. In all circumstances, a leader is needed in the top position.

Much can be said about leadership in schools. It should be borne in mind that school leadership is not aimed at the individual, but learners, teachers and the community should be taken into account. The most important fact is that a person should want to become a principal for the right reasons. If a person wants to become a principal for rank and prestige, he or she will not be successful. If a person likes to have things in good shape, and everything should be in place and in order, then he or she should not be a principal. But if a person wants to get to know people, contribute and are willing to make a fool of oneself, trust people and want to see someone grow, that person can be a (good) principal. When it comes to the appointment of school principals, it is important to keep in mind that when the committee is looking for the same type of school principal as the previous school principals of the school, a specific candidate may not be the appropriate choice. However, when a school principal is needed in the current political climate to prepare the school for what is happening, then a different type of school principal will not disappoint the learners, teachers or the community. Principals who have a passion for learners, teachers and the community and who believe they can make a difference in education always achieve success.

It seems as if going through the ranks and gaining expertise play an important role in terms of being a successful school principal. Leadership skills, management skills, team management and knowledge with regard to the four management tasks (planning, leading, organising and controlling) are taught in each phase, whether as a subject specialist or a management specialist, preparing the principal to learn and understand each phase (subject head, HoD and DP). Nevertheless, principals who have not gone through the ranks can eventually become good principals as well. Principalship is a process of growth, a lifelong learning process, a process where something is learnt every day.

Looking at the impact that school principals have on schools, there is much to be said. They need to keep everything together and generate energy. Emotional stability affects people's work. For this reason, principals should control their emotions; yet they should not overlook the human factor. Often the learners, teachers and community see the school principal as the solution to all their problems. However, the role of the school principal is to let them see the wider spectrum. With regard to staff members, it is necessary to discuss, give input and then stand back so that they can proceed. By applying this method, the principal draws the teachers to the top. In the process, the principal, as a leader, still learns from the people at the bottom. Day et al. (2016) postulate that different variables contribute to the success of a school. Thus, a school can succeed in spite of a school principal not being up to standard. The school still is more than just the school principal.

Context is of importance when leadership is being discussed. Hallinger (2018) states that the understanding of a specific context is important. In this regard, humanity remains important. Being human cannot change, even if one is a principal in a rural or urban setting. Yet, there are many factors that influence the way one manages one's leadership. For this reason, the socio-economic status of a community cannot be ignored. Diversity gives learners a real picture of what is happening outside of their own life world; it gives them context. The challenge, however, is to bring socio-economic challenges and diversity together. Strong leadership is, therefore, of the essence. As Grobler et al. (2012) have made clear, competency is crucial for effective and successful leadership.

Obviously, there still is a difference between the leadership of men and women. It also appears that leadership differs in single- and mixed-gender schools. In general, women prefer to be leaders at girls' schools, but indicate that they could achieve the same success in mixed schools. Their approach, structures,

systems and outcomes might differ, but their leadership as such would remain the same. On the other hand, men are more comfortable in any school where they perform the leadership role. Either way, it requires strong leadership to stay in the current education environment. It is also important to keep personalities in mind. A school principal in a particular school and in a particular context may not achieve the same success if he or she is in another school in a different context. For this reason, it is important for prospective principals to familiarise themselves with the context and the community before applying for a principal post. On the other hand, a principal may adapt to the context and draw closer to the community so that there is a better connection between the school and the school community. Getting the parents on board at a school where a new principal is appointed requires perseverance. The natural leader stands a better chance of achieving success in that regard. To make schools successful, the seven claims of Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2019) can be kept in mind. Although Leithwood et al. (2006) maintain that principals generally follow the same repertoire or basic leadership practices, successful principals shape and reshape their own identity according to the school. In this regard, thinking 'outside the box' is encouraged, especially in the changing technological world. To succeed, the latest trends should be followed, but at the same time, it should be kept in mind that the main reason for the existence of any school is effective teaching and learning.

When it comes to the point where prospective school principals follow the road to being principal, it is important that they sell themselves. First of all, principals must apply for the post of principal. If they do not apply, they will not be compared with others and then they will not be on an equal footing.

Once the decision is made to become a principal, a huge responsibility comes with it – responsibility towards the learners, the teachers and the community to provide the best leadership.

■ Conclusion

Leadership is complex. Authors look at leadership from different angles. In the study, it can be deduced that leadership is a compilation of factors. First of all, the leader's personality must be kept in mind. An individual's personality will determine if he or she will be the best principal in a particular context. Associated with personality are the innate and conceived characteristics of a leader. The innate features may possibly lead the leader to be a successful leader in various contexts. Regarding the innate characteristics, it may be a learning process to be successful as a leader in a particular context. Leadership and personality in themselves are not detached. People and human relations contribute to leadership. In this regard, the learners, teachers and community play an important role in the principal's leadership. The learners contribute to school principals having to exercise their leadership in such a way that learners can learn from it. By maintaining good relationships with the learners, they are drawn closer and the leader-follower relationship is strengthened.

The leadership of the principal causes him or her to see the potential in individual teachers and then lift them up so that they can become leaders in their own right. As far as the community is concerned, the leadership of the principal establishes the confidence that the principal puts the school first; the learner comes first and everything is done in the interest of the learner. Regarding the principal's leadership and management team, an attitude of cohesion is cultivated - a common goal to be achieved and a vision that is followed. The leadership of the principal can be regarded as a dual purpose. On the one hand are the principal's personality, leadership qualities, passion and training as principal. On the other hand, the role players who influence his or her leadership are the learners, teachers and community. Collectively, the components work together to achieve one main goal: effective teaching and learning. All the components around the principal's leadership determine to what extent the principal will be successful or unsuccessful. It can be said, however, that other

determinants, such as the main support network, the relationship with the DoE, socio-economic conditions, diversity, infrastructure steering and others, also play a role, and the determinants influence the principal's leadership. Yet, the basic duality can be restored again as mentioned above. Much has already been said about leadership and much will be said about it in future. The crux of the matter is that leadership matters.

■ Summary

Leadership in schools will always be important. There will always be an effort to create the best leadership models in schools. In the study, men and women principals were questioned to reflect on their experiences. Regardless of whether the principal is a man or a woman, it should always be borne in mind that education is a calling and that the primary priority of principals and teachers is to make the foundation of education the best according to their ability.

A model for the induction of deputy principals in diverse school contexts

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■ Abstract

The objective of this chapter was to develop a model that can be utilised for inducting DPs in diverse South African schools. There is a notable paucity of empirical research focussing specifically on the induction of DPs. So far, very little attention has been paid to the role of induction in the socialisation of DPs. This chapter is based on a quantitative survey design study that sought to identify the induction needs of DPs, namely problems experienced and skills needed, to recommend a model for their induction.

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The chapter will be viewed through the lens of the human capital theory. Data for the study were collected by using a survey of DPs in one province of South Africa and analysed by means of descriptive statistics. Based on the induction needs that were identified, an induction model is suggested to address the needs and to develop DPs professionally. This chapter provides new insights into the professional development and socialisation of DPs by developing a model for their induction. The study on which this chapter is based was unable to encompass the whole country and was conducted only in one province of South Africa.

Keywords: Continuing professional development; Deputy principals; Induction; Mentoring; Model; Pre-service; Quantitative.

■ Introduction

The DoBE has often expressed concern about the quality of management and leadership in South African schools. This concern arises from the fact that school leadership is regarded as one of the main causes of the ‘dysfunctionality and underperformance’ of schools (DoBE 2017:4). The type of leadership provided by school leaders such as DPs is regarded as a priority for the DoBE because one of the key areas of the vision of the National Development Plan and the DoBE about school leadership is the development of the human capacity of school leaders. In fact, ‘school management has been highlighted as one of the crucial aspects that can improve the performance of schools by the National Development Plan’ (DoBE 2017:3).

The DoBE (2017:2) notes that ‘the demands on school management have changed, with emphasis growing on managing learning, safe, diverse, integrated, and challenging school environments appropriate to a 21st century progressive African country’. In this vein, principals alone cannot be expected to turn schools around to meet this expectation. Moreover, there is a realisation that ‘many South African schools are struggling to

meet their own, community and Departmental criteria for success' (DoBE 2017:4). Thus, SMTs, including DPs, should work collaboratively to improve what the DoBE (2017:4) describes as 'poor school management and leadership'. In a school environment such as the one just described, a properly inducted and professionally developed DP can play a crucial role.

Regarding DPs, 'the transition into deputy principalship is often fraught with problems due to the kind of preparation and training that teachers receive prior to their appointment to the position' (Khumalo et al. 2017:1). Accordingly, DPs need to be prepared for their role prior to and immediately upon assumption of their role. The induction of DPs is a matter that does not receive adequate attention in the body of knowledge on school leadership development, broadly, or on the deputy principalship specifically. Numerous reasons can be advanced for this gap in the literature. The most obvious one is that the focus on developing the human capacity of school leaders places the accent on the principal because he or she seems to be seen as the main or even only source of leadership in schools.

There is a growing body of literature that recognises the importance of the induction and professional development of DPs across all South African school contexts (Khumalo et al. 2017:2, 2018:190). If properly conducted, the induction of DPs will enable them to be socialised into this role and to understand their duties and responsibilities. Studies conducted on the deputy principalship have revealed that DPs need 'appropriate knowledge and skills that will enable them to contribute to effective management and leadership and school improvement' (Allen & Weaver 2014:17; McDaniel 2017:3; Oliver 2005:90). Accordingly, it is necessary to induct DPs into their management and leadership role and ensure that they adapt sooner rather than later upon appointment and strengthen the capacity of the SMT. To respond to the need to induct DPs, this chapter focusses on a model for the induction of DPs in diverse contexts.

■ Problem statement

One of the main obstacles in the induction of DPs is a lack of clarity of their induction needs. The identification of problems and skills for DPs is fundamental to their induction and continuing professional development. An in-depth analysis of the literature on the induction and overall development of the deputy principalship in South Africa reveals a dearth of studies in this field. Existing research recognises the critical role played by induction and professional development on the adaptation of new DPs to their role and the subsequent effective performance of their duties (McDaniel 2017:3; Oliver 2005:90). Accordingly, the induction of DPs in diverse South African contexts is a matter that still warrants further research, and this chapter makes a contribution to the scholarship in this field.

The induction of newly appointed DPs is imperative because the purpose of induction is to help newcomers, such as newly appointed DPs, to have a clear understanding of the ethos, values and practices at the school and how the newcomer fits into the school. Deputy principals can effectively share instructional leadership roles with the principals if properly inducted because school leadership is changing continuously, and there is not enough time for one person to meet the expectations of school effectiveness successfully (Arar 2014; Cranston, Tromans & Reugebrink 2004; Kaplan & Owings 1999; Kwan 2009). Induction into the role of the DP will assist the newly appointed DP to be productive and to strive towards reaching the goals of the school.

Induction builds the confidence of newly appointed DPs and aids their motivation and attitudes towards their work performance, which in turn influences school effectiveness (Makanya 2004:7). The benefits of induction for newly appointed employees are emphasised by Looock, Grobler and Mestry (2009:38), adding that 'the first few days in a new job are of vital importance for both the school community and the new educator'. The perception that DPs seem to be forgotten leaders attests to

the need for the effective induction and subsequent professional development of these school leaders. Middlewood and Abbott's (2017:74) argument that the purpose of induction is to give new educators the 'best possible start', especially if they lack management knowledge and skills, accentuates the argument in favour of the induction of newly appointed DPs.

The recruitment and subsequent selection of DPs constitute the beginning of the induction process. If the organisation does not attract and select the right staff, 'induction cannot perform any magic to change them into super employees' (Kitavi 1995:51; Makanya 2004:11). The school should examine its staff policies to ensure that it attracts, recruits, selects and appoints the right DPs, who would be retained through proper induction and professional development activities. Induction can only really be effective when building on good personnel policies, recruitment and selection practices.

Employees who do not undergo an effective induction programme may feel insecure with regard to what is expected of them and how their task should be performed (Makanya 2004:11). One of the ways in which many organisations attempt to make induction effective is by using mentors. Mentoring is about learning, and effective learning improves performance at work. It also improves the skills and morale of newly appointed employees and develops new, more productive, supportive and people-centred relationships. Wong (2005:42) corroborates the view that mentoring is one of the components of induction and should be used with other components of the induction process. If effectively used, mentoring will help newly appointed DPs to understand what is expected of them in their new role.

The absence of a targeted induction programme can have far-reaching negative implications for staff development at a school. Makanya (2004:12) cautions that it is 'dangerous to provide no proper induction to a new employee and that the newcomer may continue in the new job without confidence and enthusiasm'.

Reports of stress experienced by newly appointed DPs during the transition period come to mind, hence the need for their orientation and thorough induction into the post. Induction provides the structure and support needed to maximise the effectiveness of new leaders as they confront the many challenges facing schools (Makanya 2004:12). Induction may also ease the stress that is often experienced by newly appointed DPs.

The ultimate objective of induction is to 'promote quality education for children' (Rebore 2012:96). The employee who is able to adjust to a new position in a reasonable period of time helps to accomplish this purpose. Makanya (2004:12) reinforces the idea that induction helps to inspire the employee towards excellence in performance. The importance of leadership development for school effectiveness suggests ongoing professional development for newly appointed school leaders so that they can assume a significant role in school operations. When a principal works with a deputy who has been thoroughly inducted, there is a developmental payoff because the deputy will be in a better position to contribute to the educational purposes of the school (Goodman & Berry 2013:xv). Newly appointed DPs who have been inducted and professionally developed contribute to school effectiveness.

The importance of the induction of school leaders has been recognised for many years. For example, in the early and mid-1990s, Kitavi (1995) and Legotlo (1994) stated the rationale for induction in their work on new principals in both Kenya and the former homeland of Bophuthatswana. Although their studies focussed on new principals, and not on deputies, and were published more than a decade ago, it can be argued that modern scholars maintain, along the same line, that newly appointed DPs need professional support in their early years because of 'the absence of targeted professional training and leadership development' for DPs (Cranston et al. 2004:225; Daresh & Playko 1994:35; Harris, Muijs & Crawford 2003:2; Lashway 2003:3), which often makes the transition to the deputy principalship difficult.

According to Kitavi (1995), starting a new job is considered by psychologists to be one of the most stressful life experiences for many people. Induction therefore benefits newly appointed DPs by helping them learn about their job and the schools in which they work as soon as possible so that they can settle in their job. Legotlo (1994:26) concurs that a new school leader needs support from 'the day of his effective appointment until he becomes a self-motivated, self-directed and fully effective member of the organisation'. Conversely, the absence of 'proper induction practices may lead to voluntary resignations during the probationary period' (Legotlo 1994:26; Makanya 2004:12). The induction of newly appointed DPs will probably contribute towards easing the tension that is often experienced by new school leaders and help to improve retention rates at schools.

DPs should be better trained and properly inducted to become effective leaders who could assume more prominent roles as instructional leaders. In modern-day schools, DPs are expected to maintain a supervisory presence within classrooms and to possess a thorough knowledge of the curriculum (Cole-Henderson 2000; Grissom & Loeb 2009; Horng, Klasik & Loeb 2009). Scoggins and Bishop (1993) found that the practices and work of DPs are rarely addressed in detail, despite the fact that they are expected to provide a supporting role to the principal. The leadership potential of newly appointed DPs is not being fully exploited if they are not being developed in the role. Arar (2014) and Kwan (2009) concur that the competence of DPs is of prime concern because in many school systems, they are often appointed to the position of school principal, and they have to be prepared for this role.

The induction and ongoing professional development of newly appointed DPs are also necessitated by the lack of clarity about the role of the deputy principalship. The role and leadership competence of DPs have received little scholarly attention in the literature on school leadership development. Empirical evidence from several studies reveals that there is a vague role definition

for DPs and that deputies need better role-related training and supervision that considers the requirements of the school settings and culture (Arar 2014:96; Cranston 2007:109; Cranston et al. 2004:225; Oplatka & Tamir 2009:216). The role and work of DPs seem to be 'ill-defined and contain contradictions, leaving the practitioner vulnerable to criticism when being assessed' (Harvey & Sheridan 1995:69).

Along this line, this study sought to develop a model for the induction of DPs in diverse South African contexts. The model was developed from the results of the literature review and the empirical investigation.

■ Conceptual-theoretical framework

The central thesis of the argument presented in this chapter is that there is a need for a model that can serve as a prototype for the induction of DPs. To conceptualise and describe such a model in vivid detail, it is necessary first to clarify the concept of induction and similarly to lay a solid basis for a conceptual and theoretical framework that underpins this chapter. Accordingly, the concept of induction is clarified first, and thereafter, the human capital theory is described as the theoretical framework that underpins the study reported in this chapter.

Induction is the process of inducting 'a new employee into the new social setting of his work' (Joshi 2015:34). Actually, the new employee is introduced to the 'job situation' and trained on aspects of the job such as 'rules, working conditions, privileges, activities and other particulars pertaining to the organisation' (Joshi 2015:34). In the context of a school, DPs are introduced to the vision, mission and strategic plans of their new schools, as well as the roles they are expected to play there. Induction also helps to provide opportunities for development to support DPs and equip them with the necessary 'knowledge, skills and dispositions' to enable them to become capable school leaders (Huber 2010:235).

Another construction of induction reveals that its purpose is to help new employees to adjust to ‘the work they must do, the environment in which they are to work, and the colleagues they have to work with’ (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2012:23). In the same vein, Loock et al. (2009:38) emphasise the importance of induction and argue that ‘the first few days at a new institution are crucial to both the individual and the institution’. Another argument in favour of induction is made by Middlewood and Abbott (2017):

[7]here is evidence that the quality of the induction into a new job that someone has affects the quality of their performance in the job, and even how long they are likely to stay in it. (p. 103)

Because of the fact that new staff in institutions may be diverse, it is necessary to identify their needs to develop an induction programme that will address their specific needs in that particular context.

To sum up, the various definitions provided in the preceding paragraphs, induction is a ‘process of providing newly appointed DPs with learning experiences, knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to improve their competence and to optimise their performance to raise learning outcomes’ (Khumalo 2016:21). In addition, Steyn and Van Niekerk (2012:27) point out that ‘new staff members should receive help in the form of a planned induction programme’. If properly implemented, an induction programme should consist of development opportunities that will address the skills development of DPs.

Several goals of an induction programme in an educational context are reported in the literature (Hewitt 2009:12), including the following: improving teaching performance, increasing the retention of potentially good teachers, ‘enhancing the personal and professional welfare of beginner educators’ and transmitting the school culture to beginner educators. Middlewood and Abbott (2017:105) reveal two main reasons why induction is necessary. The first is to ‘enable the new staff member to achieve

a good level of performance as quickly as possible'; secondly, the purpose is to 'enable the school to be able to retain them as long as possible and desirable to both the person and the school'. Moreover, there are links between a new educator having received a poor induction and the desire to leave a school or even the education profession (Middlewood & Abbott 2017:105). Effective induction is necessary in an environment where there are staff shortages and the employer does everything in his or her power to retain the current staff of the school. Mecer, Barker and Bird (2010:113) concur that 'teaching is not the only profession to maintain a traditional rite of passage', and that the traditional rite of passage or induction is an ideal feature of effective professions and a contributor to staff efficiency and productivity.

The induction of DPs is expected to follow seven steps, which Middlewood and Abbott (2017:74) have listed in chronological order. The steps constitute the phases of a holistic induction process, which actually starts from the recruitment of DPs and, where applicable, runs up to the time when they leave the employ of the organisation. The steps are described in the paragraphs that follow and are related to the induction of DPs in diverse South African schools. The seven steps are:

- Recruitment and selection. Recruitment and selection entail 'finding and getting the best people' (Middlewood & Abbott 2017:74). The recruitment of DPs is intimately linked with other activities such as 'the advertisement, selection, placement and development of educators' (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2012:9). Staff recruitment is a crucial aspect of induction because it is a 'vital task which must be performed on an ongoing basis and according to plan in order to meet' the staffing needs of the DoBE (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2012:9). In practice, the recruitment of DPs is performed every time when a vacancy for a post as DP exists in a provincial education department. Actually, provincial education departments often recruit serving DPs internally through a 'promotion policy that serves as

a reward system' (Loock et al. 2009:11). Middlewood and Abbott (2017:75) conclude that if recruitment and selection are done properly, fewer problems will arise later.

- Induction. This step is understood by Middlewood and Abbott (2017:74) as giving employees 'the best possible start'. Induction is regarded as 'the means to enable educators to become fully effective as quickly as possible' (Loock et al. 2009:38). The purpose of induction for DPs is to enable them to feel they are part of the school and to adjust to the new environment in the shortest time possible. In some schools, the principal is expected to assist the DP to be assimilated into the school culture and function as part of the team. The importance of adjusting to the new environment is also accentuated by Steyn and Van Niekerk (2012:23): 'one cannot expect them (new educators) to produce their best work and achieve the objectives of the institution until they have completely adjusted to the work they must do, the environment in which they are to work, and the colleagues they have to work with'.
- Managing people performance. This step entails monitoring the performance of staff to ensure that they do what they were employed to do (Middlewood & Abbott 2017:74). The management of people performance or staff appraisal, as it is known in South Africa, is of great importance because 'its main objective is to improve individual educators' performance and ultimately learner performance' (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2012:72). Loock et al. (2009:61) point out that there are questions that need to be answered before designing any performance evaluation system, namely:
 - What method of performance will be used?
 - How will one design the performance evaluation system?
 - What variables will be used to determine educator effectiveness?
 - What criteria will be used to judge the quality of work performance?

The answers to these questions will enable the development of a sound people performance management system for DPs.

- **Assessing performance.** The fourth step involves determining whether the employees perform according to expectations and if not, intervening accordingly (Middlewood & Abbott 2017:74). The issue of the assessment of educators is a contentious one, not only in South Africa but in other parts of the world as well (Middlewood & Abbott 2017:80). There are several difficulties in developing an effective and objective way of assessing performance (Middlewood & Abbott 2017:81), including 'difficulty in measuring outcomes, issue of attribution, differences in contexts and focussing on outcomes only'. These difficulties need to be negotiated to assess the performance of DPs objectively to enhance their professional development and job satisfaction.
- **Developing people.** The development of people is often undertaken through learning and training (Middlewood & Abbott 2017:74). One way in which educators such as DPs can be developed is by means of professional development. Professional development refers to 'an ongoing process to acquire knowledge, skills and abilities that make DPs lifelong learners and that enable them to provide management and leadership that enables quality teaching and learning in order to improve learning outcomes' (Khumalo 2016:8).
- **Retention.** The retention of employees means 'keeping the best people as far as is reasonable' (Middlewood & Abbott 2017:74). There is a suggestion that 'it is necessary to investigate 'what makes some people so unhappy that they leave' (Mecer et al. 2010:116). This need arises from the realisation that the retention of educators in some school contexts is a problem that affects mostly new educators. An understanding of what normally causes educators' job dissatisfaction is crucial to plan for the retention of DPs.
- **Staff departure.** This last step entails managing the departure of staff if there are staff members who are dissatisfied and want to leave the organisation (Middlewood & Abbott 2017:74). There is an argument that 'not everyone who resigns is

dissatisfied with teaching' (Mecer et al. 2010:116). It is, therefore, important to first find out what causes educators to leave the profession. Such information is crucial to be taken into account during the induction of DPs.

The theoretical framework that underpins the study reported in this chapter is the human capital theory. The concept 'human capital' means 'knowledge, attitudes and skills' that are developed and valued primarily for their economically productive potential' (Baptiste 2001:185). Bell and Stevenson (cited by Mecer, Barker & Bird 2010:5) further explain that 'human capital is produced when people acquire desired skills and/or knowledge'.

The human capital theory is based on the assumption that there is 'a relationship between education and economic development' (Lauder 2015:491). The focus on the human capital theory in the context of the study is in relation to its contribution to skills development. The human capital theory teaches us that the 'economic prosperity and functioning of a nation depends on its physical and human capital stock' (Olaniyan & Okemakinde 2008:479). Similarly, the success of the education system depends on whether there are skilled, knowledgeable, competent and productive employees who will ensure the achievement of the goals of the education system.

Another perspective from which the human capital theory could be viewed 'is the belief that "peoples" learning capacities are of comparable value to other resources involved in the production of goods and services' (Lucas, cited by Nafukho, Hairston & Brooks 2004:545). In fact, 'contemporary economies depend crucially on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of their workers or on human capital' (Nafukho et al. 2004:545), and this dependence justifies the need for the induction and concomitant professional development of DPs.

One of the advantages of understanding the induction of DPs through the human capital theory is that 'if a person is better educated, he or she will be more productive and earn a higher income' (Lauder 2015:491). Although earning a higher salary is

not necessarily a reason to have better educated DPs, the inherent benefit of the induction and ongoing professional development of DPs is that it would lead to more productive employees who would be able to perform their duties and responsibilities effectively. In addition, Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008:479) posit that the 'development of skills is an important factor in production activities'. Accordingly, it is imperative to invest in education to develop the skills of DPs to enable them to become productive school managers and leaders.

The emphasis of the (Olaniyan & Okemakinde 2008):

[H]uman capital theory is on how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human capability which is a product of innate abilities and investment in human beings. (p. 479)

For workers such as DPs to be productive, their abilities and skills need to be developed. Newly appointed DPs need to be productive as soon as possible and therefore need an induction programme to adjust to their new working environment. Bondesio and De Witt (2009:252) caution that new staff members do not have 'homogeneous needs', and their induction will not be the same. Therefore, the DoBE needs to invest in a specific, tailor-made induction programme to address their unique needs. In fact, some human capital theorists postulate that an investment in human capital is more worthwhile than an investment in physical capital (Olaniyan & Okemakinde 2008:479).

Human resources make up the bulk of the basis of the wealth of nations and should therefore be developed. In the context of education, deliberate investments are made to prepare the 'labour force and increase productivity of individuals and organizations, as well as encouraging growth and development at the international level' (Nafukho et al. 2004:545). A holistic view of the development of human resources that has an impact on productivity suggests that there will be no wastage on the part of the DoBE if DPs perform the duties for which they are appointed and remunerated, whereby they are contributing to

the growth of the economy. The essence of the human capital theory is that the development of employees is inextricably linked to economic growth, and this assumption applies to the development of DPs as well.

There are three arguments about why human capital is important for organisations and why there should be more investment in it (Nafukho et al. 2004:549):

- There are inherent benefits for human resource development if there is an understanding of how the investment of the DoBE in education and training could be quantified. In this way, the value of the development of human resources could be demonstrated to both organisations and society.
- The criticism of how human resource development contributes to the well-being of organisations, communities and societies needs to be dealt with. It is necessary to educate stakeholders on the 'meaning of social responsibility and its relationship to corporate performance' as well as dealing effectively with multiple needs and stakeholder interests.
- It is often not easy to recognise the 'importance of intangible assets' such as employees and 'their impact on productivity and growth'. An 'investment in people through skills development has a direct and an indirect impact' on the DoBE, the provincial education departments, district and circuit offices and schools.

Human capital and education are necessary not only for economic prosperity but also for the proper functioning of a democratic society. The National Development Plan 2030 (National Planning Commission 2011:263) envisions a human resources dispensation wherein employees are competent and perform their duties effectively and according to expectations. It can be argued that for a democratic society to function effectively, it needs empowered and professionally developed employees. This rationale necessitates the construction of the skills development of DPs through the human capital theory.

The potential benefits of investing in people are highlighted at the individual, organisational and societal levels. Human capital theorists (Nafukho et al. 2004) argue that:

[7]he main outcome from investment in people is the change that is manifested at the individual level in the form of improved performance, and at the organisational level in the form of improved productivity and profitability or at societal level in the form of returns that benefit the entire society. (p. 549)

Similarly, the induction of DPs will not benefit them as individuals only. Other beneficiaries of the service provided by competent and productive DPs include the school, the DoBE and society at large. The public is generally concerned about the investment that the government makes in critical services, such as education, and would therefore welcome any additional investment in the human capital that should ensure the success of the education system.

■ Methodology

■ Empirical investigation

For this study, the problems experienced by DPs and the skills they need were used to determine their induction needs. Finally, a model was constructed for inducting DPs in diverse South African contexts.

■ Methods

■ Data collection instrument

The data collection instrument used in this research was the Professional Development Needs Analysis Questionnaire (PDNAQ) for DPs, which was developed by Khumalo et al. (2017). The questionnaire was developed in a similar fashion to the one developed by Legotlo (1994) for newly appointed principals.

Most of the items on Legotlo's (1994) questionnaire were still relevant for the management and leadership roles that DPs are expected to perform. To adapt the questionnaire to the context of the research, theoretical constructs from the literature review were infused into the questionnaire. Moreover, the items on the questionnaire were compared with the duties and responsibilities of DPs that are described in the policy documents of the DoBE.

The questionnaire comprised 85 items in four sections: Section A (biographical factors), Section B (demographic factors), Section C (problems) and Section D (skills). Section A contained items 1 – 9; Section B, items 9 – 11; Section C, items 12 – 62 and Section D, items 63 – 85. The Likert scale that was used in the questionnaire consisted of four response categories, namely 'to almost no extent', 'to a small extent', 'to some extent' and 'to a large extent'. Before the questionnaire was administered to DPs, an exploratory study was conducted to validate it. The feedback from the exploratory study was taken into account in the final design of the questionnaire.

■ Sampling

The initial sampling strategy used in this research was census sampling, whereby all secondary school DPs ($N = 401$) in the North West Province were selected to participate in the study. Because of the poor return rate when this sampling strategy was used, the researcher decided to use convenience sampling. The researcher selected the sample 'from those to whom he had easy access' (cf. Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018:218). Permission was granted to conduct the research amongst DPs who were attending regional conferences organised by their teacher union in the province. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed and 157 were returned. Because of the limitations of using a convenience sample, the researcher does not desire to generalise the results of the study to a wider population but only to the population that participated in the study.

■ Ethical aspects

The researcher obtained permission to conduct this research from both the North West DoE and the union whose members participated in the study. Ethical clearance to conduct the research was also granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the university. The questionnaire contained a cover letter that explained the aims of the research to the respondents. The anonymity of the respondents was assured. All the respondents agreed to participate in the study. They were aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

■ Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

□ Content validity

To ensure that the questionnaire ‘measures what it intends, purports or claims to measure’ (Cohen et al. 2018:245), it was constructed from the theoretical constructs of DPs’ induction needs, namely problems and skills that were identified from the literature. In fact, content validity is ‘an assessment of a measure based on the appropriateness of its contents’ (Patten & Newhart 2018:126). To further ensure content validity, the questionnaire was given to experts in the field of education management and leadership for their critical feedback about its contents. In addition, during a pilot study, the respondents to the questionnaire also gave input with regard to the content, language and structure of the questionnaire. All feedback from both the experts and the pilot study was considered in finalising the questionnaire.

□ Face validity

Face validity ‘judges whether a measure appears to be valid on the face of it’ (Patten & Newhart 2018:127). The face validity of the questionnaire was established by asking experts for their opinions on how the questionnaire was perceived. During the

pilot study, the respondents were asked to comment on the format, items and the language used in the questionnaire. Their critical comments were taken into account during the design of the questionnaire.

□ Construct validity

Patten and Newhart (2018:133) clarify that construct validity is a type of validity that 'relies on subjective judgements and empirical data'. Moreover, construct validity 'concerns the extent to which a particular measure or instrument for data collection conforms to the theoretical context in which it is located' (Cohen et al. 2018:188). To ensure that the researcher's construction of problems and skills for DPs agreed with other constructions of these problems and skills, both confirmatory and exploratory factor analyses were conducted. The factor analysis confirmed that the constructs were associated in a meaningful way.

■ Reliability

A reliable measure is one that yields consistent results (Patten & Newhart 2018:136). To establish the reliability of the PDNAQ, Cronbach's α values were calculated. The Cronbach α internal consistency reliability coefficient of the PDNAQ was calculated at 0.90%. The Cronbach's α value confirmed that the PDNAQ was a reliable questionnaire that could be used to measure the induction needs of DPs.

■ Data collection procedures

There was a poor return rate of the questionnaires that were initially sent to schools via Area Project Offices. Out of a total of 400 questionnaires, only 35 (8.75%) were received back. After numerous attempts to make follow-ups on the questionnaires, an alternative measure was considered to get a credible return rate.

Permission to distribute questionnaires was sought from the Provincial Secretary of the majority teachers’ union in the North West Province. The response to the request to conduct research also included a schedule of Regional Biennial General Meetings of the union, where the researcher would be allowed to administer questionnaires to the DPs of secondary schools who were delegates to the conference. The respondents were given time on the programme (30 min) to complete the questionnaires and return them to the researcher, who waited for the questionnaires. The total number of questionnaires distributed and the return rate are indicated in Table 8.1. The data shown reflect a satisfactory return rate of the questionnaires that were distributed. The districts or regions that participated in the study are identified as A, B, C and D, respectively, to protect their identity.

■ Data analysis

The data for the research were analysed by means of descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and percentages. The data analysis revealed both problems that DPs experienced and skills that they needed upon assumption of duty. Only those problems and skills with mean scores of 2.5 and higher were considered to be the induction needs of DPs. The induction needs served as the empirical evidence for the validity of the Deputy Principal Induction Model (DPIM) that is postulated in this chapter. The DPIM is described below.

TABLE 8.1: Distribution of questionnaires.

District/region	Number of secondary schools	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires received back	Percentage of questionnaires received back
District A	53	30	25	83%
District B	136	70	50	71%
District C	106	50	40	80%
District D	106	50	42	84%
Total	401	200	157	78%

□ The Deputy Principal Induction Model

On the basis of the induction needs of DPs determined in this research, the DPIM was developed. The induction needs were uncovered from the results of the literature review and the empirical investigation. In other words, the evidence for the empirical validity of the model emerged from the results of a study of 157 DPs who participated in a survey on the problems experienced and skills needed by DPs. The problems and skills of DPs were consequently regarded as their induction needs and were used to develop the model for their induction, which is reported in this chapter. The DPIM consists of three main phases, namely the pre-service, induction and continuing professional development phases. The DPIM is illustrated in Figure 8.1.

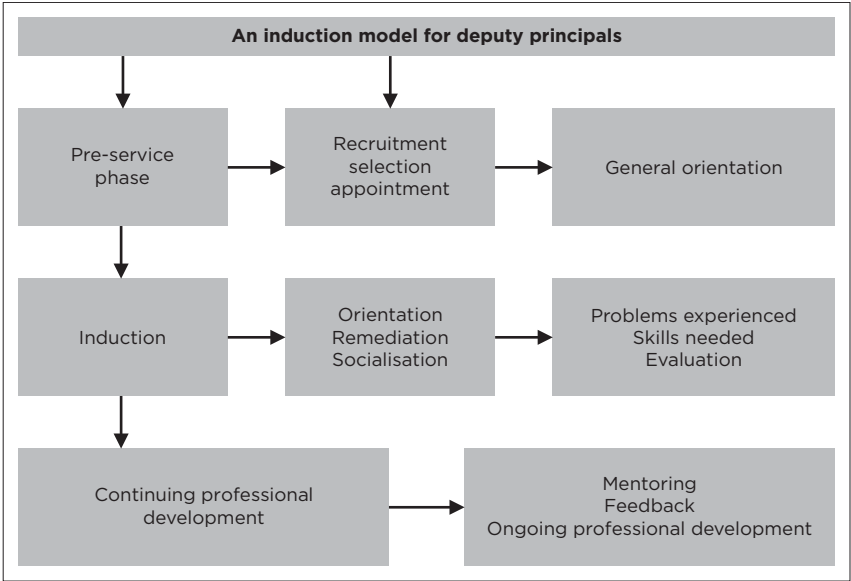


FIGURE 8.1: The Deputy Principal Induction Model.

□ Phases of the model

Each of the three main phases, namely pre-service, induction and continuing professional development, consists of several sub-phases. It is argued in the literature that the induction of DPs is expected to follow each of these phases and sub-phases, in order for it to be implemented effectively. In the paragraphs that follow, each of the phases and sub-phases of the model is clarified.

□ Pre-service phase

The sub-phases that make up the pre-service phase include the recruitment, selection and appointment of the newly appointed DP. Recruitment means 'searching for and obtaining potential candidates in sufficient numbers for the school to select the most appropriate staff to fill the vacant posts' (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2012:9). The notion of selecting the most appropriate staff denotes that the educator who is appointed as a DP will be fit and proper for the position. The importance of proper staff recruitment is accentuated by Steyn and Van Niekerk (2012:9), who remark that 'staff recruitment is a vital task which must be performed on an ongoing basis and according to plan in order to meet the teaching needs of a particular school'. The purpose of recruitment in the context of this chapter is to search for DPs who have the required knowledge and skills. Deputy principals who are suitably qualified are those with previous management experience or a qualification in educational management. The recruitment of DPs is required to adhere to departmental policies and regulations to ensure that the right person for the job is appointed. Recruitment is an important phase because if the right candidates are recruited, their induction can be conducted as soon as possible and with minimal disruption of the operations of the school.

The aim of selection should be to appoint a DP who is a 'whole person who will fit well into a specific school' (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2012:12). The selection of DPs seeks to separate DPs who qualify for appointment from those who do not qualify.

The selection process entails the sifting of applicants, shortlisting of candidates and determining criteria that are used for selection (Prinsloo 2016:256). The selection process culminates in the appointment of an interview panel to select the top three candidates and to make a recommendation to the DoBE. The selection process endeavours to sift and shortlist only candidates who qualify for the post. If the process is handled properly, the appointment will be made from a pool of DPs who qualify for the post.

Appointment is the last activity of the pre-service phase and it entails fitting the DP to the right job. Garner (2015:48) describes appointment as the last phase, when the employer ‘makes the final decision’ and ‘the process comes full circle’. When an appointment is made, the employer must be satisfied that the appointment is in compliance with all applicable legislation and policies of employment (Prinsloo 2016:258; Steyn & Van Niekerk 2012:22). During this activity, a DP is provided with a letter of appointment that outlines the conditions of service and serves as a contract between the newly appointed DP and the DoBE as the employer. Once the DP is appointed, it is necessary that he or she should be provided with a general orientation regarding the post of DP and the school operations. Moreover, the DP should be provided with all the information needed to succeed in the post. The general orientation phase is a crucial forerunner to the management orientation step during the induction phase.

□ Induction

The induction phase is a crucial phase of the induction model for DPs. The concept of induction originates from the Latin word *inducer*, which means ‘to guide into’ (Prinsloo 2016:261). The aim of induction is to ensure that the employee’s potential is ‘maximised at all stages of the employment relationship and their own development’ (Bush & Middlewood 2013:135). The induction of DPs seeks to ensure that they become productive as soon as possible so that the goals of the school can be reached. When implemented, induction endeavours to achieve the goals of the

orientation, remediation and socialisation of newly appointed DPs. Achieving these goals of induction will help to address the induction needs of DPs.

The newly appointed DP needs management orientation to be familiar with the core duties and responsibilities of the job. Nel et al. (2009:261) state that orientation is the process of informing new employees about what is expected of them in the job and helping them cope with the stress of transition. During orientation, DPs should be provided with information about the policies, practices and processes of their new school. Orientation should actually be about winning the hearts and minds of newly appointed DPs so that they can be satisfied with working for their new school.

Remediation aims to address deficiencies that could manifest themselves as a result of a lack of management training or experience on the side of the newly appointed DPs. Such deficiencies are evidenced by the problems that newly appointed DPs have to contend with and the skills they need to perform effectively. Remediation by means of compensatory training for newly appointed DPs can contribute towards developing their skills and minimising their problems. New DPs may demonstrate skills that are expected of newcomers. If they fail to show skills upon appointment, remediation is required.

The socialisation step of induction entails anticipatory, professional and organisational socialisation. During anticipatory socialisation, potential DPs learn about the deputy principalship from a distance and, in the process, anticipate what the post entails. This is an important aspect of preparation for the position, which also relates to how DPs are prepared for their future role during the pre-service phase. Professional socialisation refers to how DPs are socialised into the deputy principalship and how they are learning about the professional dimensions of the position. It also includes learning about the core duties and responsibilities of the deputy principalship. During professional socialisation, the DP is expected to familiarise himself or herself with the expectations of stakeholders regarding performance in

the position. Organisational socialisation relates to how the DP is expected to function within the context of the school as an organisation. It includes learning about the norms and culture of the school. The DP should also understand the different levels in the hierarchy of the DoBE, accountability and reporting lines.

□ Continuing professional development

The third phase in the development of an induction model for DPs is continuing professional development. One of the most effective ways in which the continuing professional development of newly appointed DPs can take place is by means of mentoring. Mentoring can benefit newly appointed DPs if they are exposed to different leadership experiences by their mentors. Joyce and Calhoun (2010:42) concur that mentors are regarded as 'protective companions who reduce the poor treatment of novices where it occurs and help to socialise them into the organisation'. The use of mentoring can help newly appointed DPs to learn the ropes as soon as possible and to adapt to the culture of their new school. Clayton, Sanzo and Myran (2013:7) conclude that mentoring relationships play an important role in the leadership development of school leaders in educational settings. Along the same line, mentoring is viewed as a critical component of the continuing professional development of DPs.

Feedback is a crucial component of continuing professional development because it allows for reflection during the process. It enables the role players, during the process of professional development, to reflect on progress made regarding the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2012:62) admonish that 'it is necessary to pinpoint areas for development instead of making generalities when you provide feedback'. Some of the problems experienced by newly appointed DPs and the skills they need require more time to be addressed, and subsequently, there is a need for continuous and specific feedback. In addition, there is a need to measure progress and to identify problems that still need to be addressed and skills that still need to be developed. Without feedback, it is difficult to

ensure an environment that fosters development and growth. Moreover, it is difficult to fathom whether professional development is achieving its goals if there is no reflection along the way. Feedback during continuing professional development is crucial to determine if the goals that had been set have been achieved.

Professional development should not be a one-off event, but an ongoing process. Constant changes in the DoBE necessitate professional development, which takes place every time when changes occur. In addition to that, DPs are expected to be engaged in self-improvement and self-development, which are continuous activities. Therefore, continuing professional development as the third phase of the induction model for DPs recognises the need for DPs to participate in professional learning that is continuous. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2012:45) add that professional development 'covers a variety of activities, all of which are designed to enhance the growth and professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of staff members'. Deputy principals may not acquire all the skills at once, and the acquisition of skills should be an ongoing process.

■ Discussion

The induction model that is unpacked in this chapter postulates that the induction of new DPs should be thought about even before DPs are appointed. If the employer appoints suitably qualified, experienced and competent DPs, the induction process will undoubtedly proceed in a relatively smooth way. To justify the claims that the researcher makes about the ideal induction model described here and the phases that it should contain, each of the phases of the DPIM merits scrutiny.

The argument that the pre-service phase is part of induction stems from the fact that DPs are recruited, selected and eventually appointed during this phase. This is a crucial phase that lays the foundation for all subsequent induction activities. The recruitment of DPs presupposes the eventual appointment of an incumbent

who is fit and proper to be appointed as a DP. The selection exercise also takes into account legislative and policy requirements, and therefore the selection panel should follow the guidelines and select the candidates properly. When the selection panel eventually recommends their preferred candidate to be appointed by the DoE, it should be sure that the correct procedures were followed and a deserving candidate will be appointed. Therefore, the appointment of a suitable DP contributes to the success or failure of induction. If the candidate who is appointed was not supposed to be appointed in the first place, the induction process will be negatively affected.

The actual induction of the DP is a crucial phase of the induction model. The first activity during induction is orientation, which may sometimes be confused with induction. It is necessary to provide the DP with general and management orientation upon the assumption of duty. The purpose of orientation is to introduce the deputy to the new school environment and the culture and climate of the school. This step should be taken to ensure that the DP understands where he or she fits in the school structure. Orientation will also help the DP to find his or her way in the school. The next step during induction is remediation. Remediation helps to remedy the mistakes that might have occurred during the appointment of the DP. Some of the mistakes may include a lack of training in school leadership and management. If the school has appointed a DP with such deficiencies, measures should be put in place to help the DP adapt to the role. The last leg of the induction phase is socialisation. Socialisation enables the DP to function as part of the school and learn the norms, values, traditions and culture of the school. The DP is also enabled to learn how other experienced school leaders, such as principals, conduct themselves whilst on duty and meet the expectations of the employer.

The last phase of induction, namely continuing professional development, determines whether the DP will grow and succeed as a school manager and leader, or fail and eventually leave the profession. It allows the DP to engage in lifelong learning to sharpen his or her knowledge and skills. From time to time, there

are new developments in education, so DPs are expected to keep abreast of these developments. In fact, advances in technology and revised and relevant school leadership approaches necessitate continuous professional development for DPs. The importance of mentoring as a form of continuing professional development cannot be overemphasised. The implementation of an effective mentoring programme should be accompanied by feedback of how the mentee is performing so that there can be interventions if the performance is below standard. In addition to measures adopted by the DoBE to develop DPs, the DP should be determined to grow and develop as a professional.

■ Recommendations

It is recommended that further studies should be undertaken on the effects of the model and how it can be improved. If the model is not tested in practice, it will be difficult to discover if it can work effectively. Future research that may be undertaken could include both quantitative and qualitative studies. Quantitative studies may be conducted with larger samples to test the efficiency of the model. Using a larger random sample of DPs would enable the researcher to generalise the results of the study to a wider population. Such studies may also focus on DPs of both primary and secondary schools separately.

Another approach to conducting more research on the model could be through qualitative studies. Research may focus on either a phenomenological study or a case study focussing either on primary or secondary school DPs. If qualitative studies are conducted, the researcher will obtain rich data and be able to hear the voices of the DPs on their induction needs. Apart from finding the induction needs of DPs in the literature, the researcher could get primary data from DPs themselves about what their induction needs are.

Another option for future research could be a longitudinal study of the effectiveness of the model over a particular period.

Such a study could include a pre-test of the induction needs of DPs before induction and a post-test of the induction process. The purpose of the former is to determine the skills that DPs have before induction, whereas the post-test will determine whether the model has made any significant contribution to the performance of DPs. The research may also be conducted in other provinces to determine if indeed the model can work across different contexts.

■ Conclusion

The induction of DPs is a matter that is neglected in the scholarship on school leadership development. The development of the model reported in this chapter endeavours to make a contribution to the corpus on the induction and overall professional development of DPs. The researcher argues that decision-makers should 'do the right thing' during the pre-service phase to ensure that fewer problems are experienced with induction.

The induction of DPs is aimed at ensuring the provision of high-quality educational experiences. This is necessary in the context of the market-driven nature of the education system in which DPs function. The DPIM was developed against the backdrop of the need to develop human capacity as a strategic goal of both the DoBE and the government of the Republic of South Africa. This goal is clarified further in the National Development Plan, the goals of which should be achieved by 2030. The developers of the National Development Plan were mindful of the current state of the global economy, which affects how education is provided in the country, including the type of school leadership that is envisaged. In the light of these developments, the education system needs school leaders and DPs who can meet the challenges of the 21st century. To acquire such DPs, an investment should be made in the human capital of the DoBE. The author posits that the DPIM can be effective as a blueprint for the induction of DPs if it is properly implemented.

The need for curriculum leadership training programmes for members of school management teams

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■ Abstract

Heads of departments, DPs and principals are part of the SMT that forms the core of school leadership. They lead and oversee curriculum support and delivery in schools. SMTs influence a number of areas, including the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. Their influence can only be realised if they understand what their roles are and how to go about executing

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these. The literature review reveals that there is a great need for SMTs to be trained in what they are doing and in leading their schools for successful curriculum implementation. It is with this in mind that this research undertook to explore the need for curriculum leadership training programmes for SMTs. During the research, a qualitative, phenomenological approach, underpinned by an interpretative paradigm, was followed. Sampling was done purposefully, where participants were selected because of their proximity and their knowledge and understanding of the researched phenomenon. The research used semi-structured, open-ended questions for data collection. The participants were members of the SMTs (principals, DPs and HoDs) of sampled schools. Data were also collected through field notes and audio-recording devices. The data were later transcribed into text and coded. Themes were formed out of texts with similar topics for the researcher to conclude on the findings and make recommendations for the research.

Keywords: Principal; Deputy principal; Head of department; Curriculum leadership; Training; Development; Programme.

■ Introduction

Heads of department are part of the SMT and school leadership tasked with curriculum leadership. They are responsible for effective teaching and learning (Ogina 2016). The position of HoD is also said to have hybrid responsibilities, as they are neither full-time leaders nor full-time classroom teachers but perform both tasks (Gurr & Drysdale 2012). The position is rather ambiguous, as the principal and the DPs, who according to Cranston, Tromans & Reugebrink (2004:225), occupy the second most senior position in schools, are regarded as middle managers in terms of the education system but regarded as the top management of the school, and the HoD is regarded as middle management in the school's

leadership position (Gurr & Drysdale 2012). Heads of department are referred to as middle leaders in some literature, whereas in others, DPs and assistant principals are seen as middle management or leaders (Tapala 2019). Heads of department, department chairs, administrators, curriculum coordinators, subject coordinators, subject leaders, student well-being coordinators, syndicate teachers, development leaders, team leaders, directors of teaching and learning and pastoral leaders are some additional concepts mentioned when referring to middle managers (Jaca 2013). The many concepts used for middle managers is a demonstration that it is not easy to define who they are (Gurr & Drysdale 2012). It is somewhat complicated to explain or pin down who middle managers are, as the line between the SMT and middle management is fairly blurred (Cardno 2012; Cranston 2007). By middle leadership, it is literally meant that HoDs lead from the middle, as they are situated between the principal and his or her management team and the teaching staff (Grootenboer, Edwards-Groves & Rönnerman 2014). Heads of department have been acknowledged as part of a team of people who are key agents in teaching and learning. Their training and development have received less attention though (Bennett et al. 2007; Thorpe & Bennet-Powell 2014). It is only recently that the contribution and potential of HoDs have been researched and explored with more vigour (Ogina 2017; Seobi & Wood 2016), although their preparation, training and development are still lagging.

In the South African context, the HoD is a formal position provided for in-school leadership and management structures such as the SMT (Ghavifekr & Mohammed 2014), as guided by the *Employment of Teachers Act (76 of 1998)*. The Act sets out stipulations with regard to remuneration, roles and responsibilities and locus of operation of the HoD, which is the subject, learning area or phase in a school (South Africa 1998). Their roles will be discussed further in the succeeding sections. For the purpose of this research, the concept of HoD is adopted and used instead of middle manager.

The DP is also known as the second position in the school (Cranston, Tromans & Reugebrink 2004:225). In Britain, they are called deputy heads; in Australia and the United States of America, they are known as assistant principals (Rantoul & Bishop 2019:15). In South Africa, they are referred to as DP; therefore, this research has adopted this concept. *The Employment of Teachers Act (76 of 1998)* states a number of responsibilities that the DP has to perform (South Africa 1998). Amongst these are that the DP has to do general administrative duties, teach a subject or subjects, oversee and perform extra- and co-curricular activities, oversee personnel or human resource management and interact with stakeholders (South Africa 1998:C67). These roles will be extrapolated upon in the section on the roles and responsibilities of SMT members.

The history of the origins of the DP tells us that the position was born out of the growth in schools and the increased responsibilities bestowed on the school principal (Cranston et al. 2004:225). It was then necessary to create a position that would assist the principal with his or her administrative burden (Rantoul & Bishop 2019:16). Initially, the position of DP was not formal. Principals would select amongst their staff members to assist them on an ad hoc basis or when there was a need for assistance. Later on, the responsibilities of DPs were extended and they were given duties such as overseeing the school buildings, the grading of learners, supplying and overseeing materials and resources such as textbooks and keeping the school keys. As the role became more formal, DPs were also required to manage conflict amongst teachers, deal with learner discipline and see to the general curriculum management of the school. Their roles are seen as those of assisting or deputising the principal. As the roles of DPs grew and became more complex and sophisticated, the stress levels associated with this position increased (Barnett, Shosho & Oleszweuski 2012:101-104). Deputy principals therefore need preparation, training and development for them to perform their work efficiently (Rantoul & Bishop 2019:17). The issue of preparation, training and development of DPs will further be expressed in the succeeding sections.

Over time, research has demonstrated that principals are important and can make a difference in learners' lives through localised decision-making authority given to them, although there are huge gaps between countries pertaining to research knowledge production about school leadership and principalship (Brien 2017:1-9). The research on educational leadership and management is a relatively new and growing area in many developing countries such as South Africa (Bush & Glover 2014:1).

School principals are subject to more and more public scrutiny and held to be more closely accountable by governments for the academic attainment and equity of learning opportunities for all their students. Principals are focussed on learners' results and how they conduct their school business in terms of general management and leadership.

This research identified the barriers faced by principals in responding to their curriculum leadership and the type of preparation, training and development they require to mitigate these challenges. In many countries such as South Africa and Denmark, principals are seen as site managers who oversee the daily activities happening at their site of leadership and management (Ärlestig et al. 2016:1-9). Commensurate with the school size, the supply of personnel and the availability of resources, some principals have to perform administrative duties that should be performed by administrators or secretaries (Ärlestig et al. 2016:1-9). Principals serve learners, teachers and parents, whilst overseeing the implementation and smooth running of the curriculum. It becomes a burden when principals have to teach because of a lack of personnel or because of operational requirements such as those in South Africa (South Africa 1998). *The Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998)* describes the roles of the principal as performing general administration, managing teachers, teaching, performing extramural duties, maintaining contact with interested parties and handling communication. Countries internationally differ in relation to how principals are prepared and are provided with in-service training and continuous development (Ärlestig et al.

2016:1–9). Countries such as South Africa do not have mandatory qualifications to practise as principal (Ärlestig et al. 2016:1–9).

The research will demonstrate the need for coherent curriculum leadership training programmes for SMTs. To have a better understating of the need for curriculum leadership training programmes for SMTs, a thorough literature review on training for school leadership was carried out.

■ Statement of the problem

School management team members are engaged in a plethora of roles, as stated in *the Employment of Teachers Act (76 of 1998)*, some of which are challenging and confusing to them, depending on the level of preparedness for the position and the roles they have to play. Generally speaking, in addition to being curriculum managers and developers, the SMT members are also the overseers and implementers thereof (Milondzo & Seema 2015:5–6). They also perform roles of being *in loco parentis*, meaning they are acting on behalf of parents when learners are in their care, a role that is sometimes overwhelming owing to societal challenges which schools find themselves facing. School management team members are also financial officers and human resource officers, managing, amongst other things, personnel and their concerns (Tapala 2019:62).

The SMT has to make available sufficient resources to make it possible for teaching efficiency (Milondzo & Seema 2015:5–6). In South Africa, many schools previously designated as black lack resources like classrooms and as a consequence experience overflowing classrooms, creating an extra burden to the SMT. In addition, the SMT also has the following duties: managing extra- and co-curricular activities to keep learners actively involved at schools (Tapala 2019:64); developing them in totality, as suggested by Chen and Chang (2006), recommending the Whole Teacher Approach to the Early Childhood Professional Development approach to learning and development; and helping to reduce dropout numbers, escalate the general result output of

schools and decrease undesirable behaviour of learners (Milondzo & Seema 2015:5–6). The SMT is responsible for maintaining acceptable schooling environment levels that are beneficial to effective schooling (Ogina 2017:225).

The SMT is also responsible to make sure that all subjects offered at the school are given equal prominence in the school for the schooling community members to realise that all learning areas play a critical part in the curriculum well-being of schools. The SMT is also responsible for effective learner–teacher support materials management in having to acquire, equitably distribute, manage, retrieve and store materials (Tapala 2019:23). As if those are not enough, the SMT has to develop and implement educational policy. The team should oversee the implementation thereof, evaluate whether it is appropriately executed and look for areas of weakness and improvement (Tapala 2019:65). The SMT members have to do class visits and provide guidance and support to their subordinates (Tapala 2019:67). It is a real need for the members of the SMT to be developed themselves as they are expected to develop others who are beneath them in the school organogram. In their line of work, SMT members are also required to interact and communicate with internal and external stakeholders, a skill that requires a great deal of development to be mastered. The SMT is also burdened with the evaluation and appraisal of fellow teachers and providing feedback on their performance, which require a lot of training to be able to carry out these duties with poise.

Although the above is a general depiction of the roles of SMT members, the section below briefly zooms in on each level of members as contained in the *Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998)* in the South African context.

■ Responsibilities of heads of departments

According to the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document (South Africa 2016), South African HoDs have the following responsibilities and duties.

□ Teaching

Heads of departments are not only required to oversee curriculum implementation and to ensure that learner performance is at the required standard, but they are also supposed to be teaching a subject as per school requirements and sharing workload (Ogina 2016; Seobi & Wood 2016). Furthermore, they are supposed to be class teachers, if so required, and to assess and record learner attainment (Tapala 2019).

□ Extra- and co-curricular

There is a host of extra- and co-curricular activities that the HoD must perform according to the prescripts of the PAM (South Africa 2016:A28–A29), including but not limited to subject learning and together with others developing departmental policy. Heads of Department ‘must be knowledgeable in the subject or phase they head’ (Tapala 2019). As supervisors of subjects or phases, they must coordinate evaluation or assessment, homework and the written assignments in their department. Because of their position, HoDs must provide the staff with the latest ideas on approaches, new subject knowledge, methods, teaching aids and techniques and evaluation about the subject. They should also provide guidance on school work to be covered by learners and so forth, to the beginner teachers. Furthermore, HoDs should check the work of the teachers and the learners in their department for quality and submit findings to the SMT. Accordingly, HoDs have to make sure that mark record, tests papers and their memoranda are compiled according to the required standards and are responsible for extramural activities at the school (Ogina 2016:224–230).

□ Personnel

Because of the fact that the principal cannot be everywhere in the school, the HoD has to assist the principal on the allocation of work to teachers in his or her division (South Africa 2016: A28–A29). Accordingly, the HoD has to oversee and participate

in the educator appraisal processes of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) to review the professional practice of teachers. The IQMS is a system that is used to evaluate educators' work over a cycle of 1 year to ascertain whether they comply with the teaching and learning standards (Mercer, Barker & Bird 2010). The IQMS is also used to monitor the overall effectiveness of an institution, to evaluate educators' performance (Mercer et al. 2010:114), to identify specific needs of educators for support and development, to promote accountability amongst educators and to prepare the environment for educator development (Education Labour Relations Council) (South Africa 2003), for which the HoD is directly responsible. The HoD has direct supervision over educators (Ghavifekr & Ibrahim 2014; Ogina 2017). One can draw the conclusion from the literature that HoDs can manage personnel by organising, managing and leading their teams. However, they need training to do so.

□ Administrative

Heads of department have to perform administrative duties such as keeping records of the school stock, textbooks and equipment for the department (Ghavifekr & Ibrahim 2014). They should also draw up the budget for their departments and collect fees and other moneys from learners. In addition, they are requested to distribute and monitor subject work schemes (Seobi 2016). Their administrative duties are extended to being the secretary at staff meetings and to engage in fire drills and first-aid procedures (Ogina 2016). One major administrative work HoDs do is to assist in the drafting of the general school timetable. If a school does not qualify for a DP, the HoD deputise the principal if he or she is unavailable or when delegated to do so. This again suggests that HoDs should be well prepared and trained for their position.

□ Communication

In terms of PAM (South Africa 2016:A28–A29), HoDs are required to co-operate with their colleagues to foster administrative efficiency within their department and the school in general.

They do work in partnership with teachers from adjacent schools to nurturing their divisions and to conducting extramural commitments (South Africa 2016:A28-A29). As part of communication, HoDs have to meet with parents and discuss learners' progress and conduct. They must participate in professional bodies and seminars to contribute to and update their professional views (South Africa 2016:A28-A29). Furthermore, PAM states that they are required to have contact with the public on behalf of the principal.

■ Responsibilities of deputy principals

The responsibilities outlined below are as per the prescripts of the *Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998)* (South Africa 1998:C65-C66) and as practised in the South African school set-up.

□ General or administrative

As applied internationally, the DP is expected to be the assistant to the principal and to be aware of the organisational processes across the school activities and functions (South Africa 1998:C65). Deputy principals are expected to act on behalf of the principal in his or her absence to organise the school roster, to arrange for cover for absent teachers, to be responsible for learner assessment and general curriculum activities, to make sure admission runs smoothly and to ensure that school subject streaming is aligned properly (Shore & Walshaw 2018:317). Furthermore, the DP is also intricately involved in the management of school finances and the maintenance of the school infrastructure. Deputy principals should also make sure that there is acquisition of resources, equitable allocation thereof and proper maintenance and storage of resources such as textbooks, specialised classrooms and other materials in the school (South Africa 1998:C65). Deputy principals are the second-in-command in the general administration of the school, although they are not full-fledged administrators compared with the school principal (Elfers & Plecki 2019).

□ Teaching

Although DPs have a demanding schedule, they are also required to teach dependant on the availability of personnel and the workload in the school (South Africa 1998:C65). This teaching requirement would differ from school to school or country to country (Cohen & Schechter 2016:100-101). Furthermore, DPs should make sure that they are at the forefront of curriculum leadership by ensuring that learner assessment, attainment and progression happen without hindrance (Cohen & Schechter 2016:101).

□ Extra- and co-curricular

Deputy principals have extra responsibilities that go beyond their office and the classroom, as stated in the PAM. As published in the Government Gazette No. 39684 of 12 February 2016, these include:

To be responsible for school curriculum and pedagogy e.g. choice of textbooks, coordinating the work of subject committees and groups, timetabling, 'INSET' and developmental programmes, and arranging teaching practice. To assist the principal in overseeing learner counselling and guidance, careers, discipline, compulsory attendance and the general welfare of all learners. To assist the principal to play an active role in promoting extra and co-curricular activities in school and in the participation in sports and cultural activities organised by community bodies. To participate in departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and/or update one's professional views/standards. (pp. A31-A32)

It is clear that these are extra responsibilities that require the attention of the DP, who needs to be prepared for these, hence the need for training and development in leading the curriculum.

□ Personnel

Deputy principals have to mentor and oversee the work of staff and share and write reports on the performance of teachers

(Abrahamsen 2018:337), by using the IQMS, which is an appraisal system used in all schools in South Africa (Tapala 2019:6). The DP has to participate in school and educator appraisal processes (Khumalo et al. 2018:193).

□ Interaction with stakeholders

In their line of duty, DPs also interact with internal and external stakeholders. The DP does not only interact with the Representative Council of Learners as per Government Gazette No. 39684 of 12 February 2016, but he or she is also in constant contact with the parents, community bodies, visitors to schools and the general public, whether as a representative of the principal or in his or her official capacity (Khumalo et al. 2018:193).

□ Communication

The PAM (South Africa 2016) states that the DP has to meet with carers and parents about pupils' advancement and behaviour and communicate with stakeholders such as government departments on behalf of the principal (South Africa 2016:A28–A29). In addition, the DP must be in contact with sporting and cultural bodies in the community (Khumalo et al. 2018:194). All these responsibilities require the DP to be well prepared for the role and developed to stay relevant and abreast of the developments surrounding the position.

■ Responsibilities of principals

The principal is the head of administration of the school (Cranston 2007:109). Principals actually represent the HoD or superintendent of the provincial education department. Their roles are immense and come with sacrifice and demand. Principals are also very much involved in making sure they lead and manage the curriculum at school level. This places a huge strain on the principal and means they should be well trained and developed to carry out these responsibilities. Although they have similar

responsibilities to those of the DP, theirs vary in intensity and priority, as seen in their ordering.

□ General or administrative duties

According to the PAM document (South Africa 2016), the principal has to perform the following administrative duties:

- Being accountable for the professional management of a school as envisaged in Section 16A (3) of the *South African Schools Act*.
- The operationalisation of all the schooling programmes and learning activities. The principal, as stated earlier, must make sure that the academic activities at school run smoothly and are carried out correctly to meet set objectives.
- The management of all human resources in the school.
- The management of the use of teaching and learning aids.
- Performing delegated duties in terms of the *South African Schools Act*.
- The protection of all school records.
- The application of policies and regulation such as sections of the *South African Schools Act*.
- Giving guidance in drawing the general school timetable and the admission and allocation of learners to classrooms and grades.
- Keeping and managing proper school bank account and financial records and using school money for the benefit of the pupils. They should do these in consultation with other school structures.

In a study carried out in Australia, Cranston (2007:115) found that principals were engaged in the following activities, which mostly compare with those of principals in South Africa:

- curriculum leadership
- strategic leadership of the school
- management and administration

- learner issues
- parent or community issues
- staffing issues
- operational matters.

In the same study, Cranston (2007:116) also mentions that the work of the principal is more concentrated on curriculum leadership and less on management and administration, which the author believes may be delegated to other members of staff.

□ Personnel management

The principal also performs personnel management. Working with and through people whilst managing them is no small feat. Principals need lots of training and development to do so. As part of their personnel management, the PAM (South Africa 2016:A33) requires that principals should:

- Lead the school; be a mentor to all staff members and provide professional guidance to all staff (teaching and support).
- Ensure that work is shared equally amongst staff.
- In charge of staff training to reach all school-related objectives.
- Be part of teacher appraisal and professional improvement of teaching and learning and the management of the process.
- Assist the HoD in conducting teacher disciplinary matters and other staff as per *South African Schools Act* (Section 16A [2] [e]).

The principal's work is a high-pressure job, one on which many people outside and inside the school keep an eye (Kafka 2009:328). It is therefore crucial that the incumbent is someone who is sharp and up to date with what happens in education and can solve problems and overcome challenges of all kinds in the shortest time and in the most successful manner (Cranston 2007:323). Notwithstanding the already huge burden on principals, they are also expected to teach.

□ Teaching

Although some countries do not expect school principals to teach, in South Africa, principals are expected to teach depending on the level of their appointment (PL1-PL4) and personnel availability. They are also required to be class teachers, depending on the size of the school, and to assess and record the attainment of learners, where applicable, according to the PAM (South Africa 2016:A34). In reality, this is a real burden to the principal who, even those with the highest coping mechanisms, will suffer from fatigue and stress.

□ Interaction with stakeholders

The principal is exposed to a number of stakeholders who need their full attention at all times. One of the closest stakeholders with which the principal interacts is the SGB, a body in which he or she also serves as a member and represents the HoD of Education in the province, according to the PAM (South Africa 2016:A34-A35). Principals should also render the required assistance to the SGB, as per the prescripts of the *South African Schools Act* (South Africa 2016:A35). In addition, they should help the SGB to handle learner disciplinary matters. They should also inform the governing body about policy and legislation (Cranston 2007:115). Furthermore, they should assist the SGB in understanding policy and implementing it, inclusive of guiding on best candidates should a vacancy need to be filled.

□ Communication

The principal must be a good and skilled communicator to collaborate with the SGB to run the school smoothly (South Africa 2016). They must liaise with the DoE at circuit or regional level for supplies of materials, personnel finance queries and so forth. They should be able to communicate about the school curricula and curriculum development and share this information with parents concerning learners' progress and conduct in

meetings and other forms of communication. They should also liaise with other government departments when so required. Communication must also be extended to institutions of higher learning (Tapala 2019). There are many ways in which the principal can communicate with other stakeholders.

The 'Theoretical framework' section highlights the barriers that SMT members experience whilst carrying out their responsibilities.

■ Theoretical framework

The leadership theories that framed the study were the development and performance theories. These theories helped the researcher to understand and make predictions about leadership practices in all types of organisations (cf. Hernandez 2013; Miller 2009), including schools. Curriculum leadership is important for reforming and improving schools (Alig-Mielcarek & Hoy 2005; Mitchell & Castle 2005).

The research was based on Chen and Chang's (2006:1-19) whole teacher approach to professional development theory, which targets multiple dimensions of teacher development, and Zhao's (2010:168) school knowledge management framework and strategies - the new perspective on teacher professional development as an improvement strategy for the professional development of SMTs in order for them to become better curriculum leaders and managers. Chen and Chang's (2006:3-6) approach has 'multidimensional, domain-specific, integrated and developmental characteristics'. The multidimensional characteristic of the approach targets educator in totality, offers several means to learn and progress and accommodates different teacher requirements and motivation. The mentioned aspects are also applicable to the training needs of HoDs.

The approach as suggested by Chen and Chang (2006:3-6) is domain-specific, as the training goals are centred on content and

performance needs of specific professional advancement areas for SMT members. Chen and Chang (2006:1-19) use an integrated approach, where teaching approaches facilitate active interrelationships amongst attitudes, skills and practices. The approach engages the teacher in totality and does not limit the learning process to constricted, isolated objectives. The approach is also developmental, as it uses programmes that support teacher development from beginner to proficient levels, sponsoring constant progress of teachers in the workplace (Chen & Chang 2006:3-6). This can be very fruitful to SMT members.

According to Zhao (2010:168), the teacher professional development approach is fused with school knowledge management, putting the school at the centre of professional teacher development activities. The approach is divided into two levels, which are further subdivided (Zhao 2010:168). The first level is the school management, which is divided into leadership and administration. The SMT member requires a level of training in leadership and administration that would lead to a learning school, which can be realised through clear assessment mechanisms, a good learning culture, cooperation and sharing and information systems that function well, which are, in turn, the hallmarks of performance management. A training programme that is well developed will support the professional teacher development of the school, which would lead to a learning school. Thus, the SMT member requires a training programme that will develop knowledge management, which would support the learning school.

These theories were important for the study, as they helped in exploring and describing the need for a curriculum leadership training programme for SMTs by identifying the barriers SMT members faced in their roles as curriculum leaders, and they suggested a training programme that could be implemented to develop SMTs in effective curriculum leadership.

In the Introduction, the definition of the SMT has been provided. The preceding section deals with the theoretical basis

for the research, and the next section will now commence with the research methodology employed for the study.

■ Research methodology

The following research methodologies were employed to navigate and assist the researcher to answer the research question and to achieve the aims of the research.

■ Purpose

This study wanted to explore the need for curriculum leadership training for SMTs by identifying the barriers SMTs face whilst carrying out their responsibilities as curriculum leaders and to determine what training programme could be implemented to develop the curriculum leadership of SMTs.

■ Main research question

The main research question was the following: what are the current curriculum leadership training programmes for SMTs?

■ Sub-research question

The research sought to answer the following sub-research question: What are the barriers experienced by SMT members in performing their role as curriculum leaders?

■ Research aims

The research aimed:

- to explore the current curriculum leadership training programme of SMTs
- to explore the barriers SMTs face in their role as curriculum leaders.

■ Research design

The research followed a qualitative design and a phenomenological model of inquiry (cf. Merriam 1998; Merriam & Tisdell 2016). The research was exploratory and descriptive in nature, as it explored, documented and described the curriculum leadership of SMTs in schools (cf. O'Reilly & Kiyimba 2015). The justification for a phenomenological study was to understand SMT members' insights, viewpoints and understanding of the researched phenomenon (cf. Merriam & Tisdell 2016; Thomas 2017). The researcher approached the phenomenon with a fresh perspective through the eyes of the participants who had direct, immediate experience with it (cf. Hays & Singh 2012; Thomas 2017).

■ Sampling

Purposive sampling was preferred for this research. It was employed because the SMT participants had intimate knowledge and understanding of the researched phenomenon (cf. Etikan, Musa & Alkassim 2016). The sampled members met the following practical criteria to be included in the study (cf. Etikan et al. 2016; Merriam & Tisdell 2016; Robinson 2014):

- easy accessibility
- geographical proximity, as it was easy for the researcher to travel to schools from his abode
- availability at a given time, particularly during times when appointments were agreed upon
- willingness to participate in the research.

Table 9.1 shows a schematic representation of the sampled participants in the study. The SMT members were chosen from all sampled schools, where the principal, the DP and two HoDs were selected for the purpose of the research. The sample was distributed over two sub-districts of the Bojanala Education District, as discussed in the section under research methods.

TABLE 9.1: Sample representation and categorisation.

Bojanala Education District							
Area office A				Area office B			
Education official A		Education official A		Education official B		Education official B	
School 1 Principal 1	Urban Quintile 4 Fee- paying	DP1	HoD1	School 4 Principal 4	Rural Quintile 3 No-fee school	DP4	HoD7
School 2 Principal 2	Rural Quintile 3 No-fee school	DP2	HoD3	School 5 Principal 5	Rural Quintile 1 No-fee school	DP5	HoD9
School 3 Principal 3	Rural Quintile 3 No-fee school	DP3	HoD5	School 6 Principal 6	Urban Quintile 4 Fee- paying	DP6	HoD11
			HoD2				HoD8
			HoD4				HoD10
			HoD6				HoD12

DP, deputy principal; HoD, head of department.

The next step for the researcher was to gain access to the participants and the research sites.

■ Data collection

The researcher collected data through interviews, soliciting responses from the participants. The responses were recorded and later transcribed (cf. Kelly 2010; Merriam & Tisdell 2016; Thomas 2017). The interviews were aligned with the research aims and questions (cf. Kelly 2010). Field notes were also used to contextualise the collected information (cf. Phillippi & Lauderdale 2018). The field notes were essential during the analysis of the collected data. Electronic tape recordings were employed to capture the voices of the participants verbatim and to make sure that the meaning was not lost. The recordings were later transcribed to be presented during data analysis and discussions (cf. Thomas 2017).

■ Data analysis and interpretation

All the data collected through the field notes and audio recordings of interviews were transcribed into text (cf. Merriam & Tisdell 2016; Thomas 2017). The researcher was able to organise, categorise, synthesise and analyse the data accurately (cf. Creswell 2014). Patterns and consistencies started to emerge from the analysed data (cf. Denscombe 2010). The data analysis started as soon as the data were collected to avoid forgetting or failing to notice emerging patterns (cf. Merriam & Tisdell 2016), which are important for drawing conclusions and formulating recommendations. For this research, thematic analysis and coding were performed.

■ Ethical considerations

Authorisation to conduct research in schools was obtained from the Directorate of Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of the DoE and Sports Development of the North West Province. In addition, the researcher sought and obtained ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education Sciences of the North-West University (Certificate No. NWU-00274-16-A1). Permission to conduct research and to enter the research sites was sought and received from area managers and the school principals and SGBs of the sampled secondary schools. Every time an office of a lower authority was approached for the purpose of seeking permission to conduct research, permission was provided by the upper office. The researcher sorted out issues pertaining to protection from harm, voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, permission to record the interviews, honesty and transparency (cf. Merriam & Tisdell 2016).

■ Results and analysis of the curriculum leadership barriers experienced by school management teams

The SMTs mentioned a myriad of barriers they experienced whilst executing their daily responsibilities. Most of these are experienced by all members of the SMT. This allowed for simultaneous analysis and discussion of all of these barriers to have a better sense of the combined SMT experiences. Similar items were discussed together to give more weight to the barriers, beginning with a lack of training.

■ A lack of preparation, training and development

Although there may seem to be an attempt to have training programmes for principals in most developed countries, such as England, developing countries, for example South Africa, are still lagging behind and fare worse in the training and development of DPs and HoDs (Khumalo 2016:77-78; Tapala 2019:262). Barriers that relate to the absence of a targeted training programme for SMTs seem to be experienced not only in South Africa but in other parts of the world as well, as attested to by Oplatka and Tamir (2009) and Cranston (2007) in the Australian context. Research shows there is a need for the preparation of SMTs to enable them to perform their duties effectively. Of course, these research outcomes apply to different contexts, but what applies to SMTs internationally can be of value to the South African context. Some SMT member put the problem as follows:

‘We lack development ... training. Since we had the induction first, we lack development’.

‘Lack of training is a barrier, yes!’. (HoD9, male, Q1)

Without proper preparation, orientation or induction, training and continuous in-house development, SMT members will

struggle to cope with the challenges their position may present. There is a need for an urgent, proper and well-coordinated induction programme for newly appointed SMT members, supported by a well-structured preparatory programme for SMT members occasioned by the absence of adequate preparation for aspirant DPs. Newly appointed SMT members experience a plethora of barriers if they are not prepared and trained for their roles. An empirical determination of how these barriers affect the curriculum leadership of SMTs is reported later under findings and discussions. School management team members also experience a significant work overload in their positions.

■ **Workload, conflicting priorities and a lack of time**

Too much administrative work, especially for HoDs and DPs who are actually oscillating between the classroom and curriculum leadership, renders them helpless. School management team members are clearly burdened by the huge amount of paperwork their position demands (Tapala 2019:249). They are required to scrutinise the work of both learners and teachers, write reports and give feedback on these issues. They have to be subject teachers and, in many cases, class teachers because of a lack of personnel (Khumalo 2016). School management team members are often torn between their official duties and the work they have to do to enhance learner and school performance. The participating SMT members mentioned the following:

[W]e go extra miles; sleepless nights and working over weekends'. (HoD6, female, Q3)

'The first barrier is the workload ... it's only the workload that is a barrier, yes. Some of the times, I submit late because of time and lots of work, yes'. (DP1, male, Q4)

Principals, in particular, spend most of their time answering phones, responding to emails and writing reports about school activities (Kafka 2009:328). In most cases, SMT members have to

take work home or work during the weekends and over the holidays, as they cannot fit the amount of work they have into their normal working days (Tapala 2019). The research concludes that a lack of time is a barrier that hinders employees such as SMT members to perform their work or curriculum leadership roles. Training should be accorded to SMT members before and after promotion in managing the distribution of work and personal and work-related time.

■ A lack of resources

Schools are dependable on the resources they have to carry out their obligations with regard to curriculum delivery. The SMT is at the forefront of, if not entirely responsible for, the sourcing, making available of and managing these resources. Without resources to help them carry out their duties, employees such as HoDs find it difficult to perform at their peak (McIntosh et al. 2014). Resources may range from personnel, classroom space, textbooks, specialised rooms and office space for personnel, telephones and computers for ease of communication (Tapala 2019). The SMT members put this to the researcher during the interviews:

‘A lack of resources, particularly textbooks’ and ‘because of the financial challenges around here, we improvise’. (HoD3, female, Q3)

Where there is a lack of teaching staff, the SMT is burdened with formulating plans on how to fill the existing vacancies, which are mostly controlled from outside the school. Furthermore, a lack of classroom space, caused by overcrowding, is problematic for the SMT, as extra classrooms must be sourced. Most, if not all, schools offer science subjects, which need experimenting and research (Milondzo & Seema 2015:6). These cannot be carried out if schools do not have science laboratories and libraries. Although the government of South Africa supplies textbooks to all public schools, the demographics of the country and migration of people make it impossible to have the correct numbers, leading to shortages at many schools. It is the SMT that must ensure that

problems with regard to textbook shortages are resolved. South Africa is a country with many challenges, including crime. In many parts of the country, copper theft leads to telephones not working, resulting in schools resorting to cellular phones for communication. In most rural areas, cellular network coverage is poor, making communication difficult. Again, the need for proper training and development of the SMT comes to the fore.

■ Negative school culture

Schools are a contested terrain with many interested parties. Cliques, with all manner of intentions, form. Groups of all sorts are developed, and membership to such is not paid for. Promotion to senior positions is a much-contested terrain as well, with individuals and groups having vested interests. Jealousy creeps in, and those who are in the SMT are seen as ‘them’ and not part of ‘us’. An SMT member summarised it as follows:

‘[/]t’s non-compliance and even ourselves as SMT ... it also leaves much to be desired, yes ...’. (HoD8, female, Q3)

An organisation that resists cultural changes or lacks peer commendation creates barriers to its personnel (Tapala 2019). Employees such as SMT members who possess a positive attitude and self-belief, and who could assist in the improvement of the work culture, would feel discouraged if the work milieu is not conducive. In addition, a lack of clear communication amongst colleagues is a gargantuan barrier, which leads to a negative school culture. School management teams need to be prepared to deal with these types of challenges. In addition, learner discipline is a serious barrier to the curriculum leadership of SMTs.

■ Poor learner discipline

South Africa is a country that faces many social challenges that spill over to schools. In the very recent past, many incidents of learners killing each other in the vicinity of schools have occurred.

Learners stab, rape and bully one another. These problems rest on the shoulders of SMTs, who must mitigate them although the problems do not necessarily emanate from within schools. Government laws also make it very difficult for SMTs and SGBs to implement disciplinary measures against ill-disciplined learners. Learner attitude impedes the work of SMTs, particularly where a culture of learning is lacking amongst the learners (Abeygunawardena & Vithanapathirana 2019:159). Learners seem to be regarding their presence at school as doing the teachers a favour. Poor learner behaviour and performance also include learners not doing their work and preparing poorly (or not at all) for examinations. At many schools, learners use drugs (Ofori et al. 2018:109), an ingredient for potential misbehaviour. The interviewed SMT members gave the following responses:

‘Discipline studying [*sic*] [*raising hands in the air*]. I don’t know; it’s more like they are not willing to come to school. It’s like they are forced; they don’t see a reason why they should be here [*at school*]. I’m surprised of [*sic*] the type of learners that I teach’. (HoD12, female, Q4)

‘And then drugs, to me it’s a general problem in all of the schools. There is no school that does not have learners who smoke and use drugs, who do this and that; it’s how to deal with those learners, yeah’. (P6, male, Q4)

SMTs are neither trained to be policemen, security officers or social workers, nor are schools detention or rehabilitation centres. School management team members need proper and thorough training and development in dealing with these serious social matters. In most cases, SMT members, both as individuals and groups, are not ready to face these kinds of challenges. In addition, changes are constantly happening in schools.

■ Changes in education policy and curriculum

South Africa has seen a fair change in education policy and curriculum since the advent of democracy in 1994, which is well

documented (e.g. Schmidt & Mestry 2019; Tapala 2019). Curriculum changes range from Curriculum 2005 to the National Curriculum Statement, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements and so forth (Tapala 2019). Ever since 1994, a new curriculum has evolved almost every 5 years (Kumar 2019). It is important for SMTs to keep up with these changes and implement them. The question arises whether SMTs are trained and prepared enough or ready for these changes or whether they struggle to implement these immense changes as curriculum leaders. The interviewed SMT members made it clear that they received minimal or no training on the changes taking place:

‘Not yet ... and sometimes you even monitor subjects that you are not trained for and because now there are limited numbers of HoDs for the number of subjects and classes...’. (HOD1, male, Q4)

‘Yeah, personally, because there are changes in the system, I need constant training’. (DP1, female, Q4)

The training of teachers and SMT members is a public matter that does not need any introduction (Tapala 2019). There needs to be development for SMTs if they are to do their work effectively and efficiently.

■ Socio-economic challenges

The socio-economic environment is matched to the school, the learners and the community or a family’s locus in a hierarchy according to access to wealth, power and social status (Gustafssonab, Nilsen & Hansen 2018:16). In South Africa, schools are categorised according to quintiles (Table 9.1), namely Quintile 1 to Quintile 4. Schools that fall under Quintiles 1–3 are those that are mostly found in rural areas and have families with a low income. Such schools are no-fee schools or Section 21 schools, meaning that the parents do not pay school fees, the school receives a full subsidy from the provincial education department and the SGB can manage their own financial affairs. Schools under Section 21 receive a lump sum, which is calculated according to the number of learners in the school. The transfers are

according to the social standing of the school, where better-off schools receive less than poor schools South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 (South Africa 1996:B-53). Quintile 4 schools are found in well-to-do areas with higher levels of income per family. They are mostly found in urban areas. The parents of Quintile 4 schools pay school fees, and the schools receive less financial support and a smaller subsidy from the provincial education department compared with Quintile 1 – 3 schools. In most Quintile 1 – 3 schools, learners come from poor backgrounds or even child-headed families:

‘There are lots of learners here that don’t have parents, yeah; they stay alone, so such learners need assistance.... We make sure that each and every day they take food from the kitchen’. (P3, female, Q3)

In the greater scheme of things, such learners may not cope with the challenges of the school day, as their minds are preoccupied by other matters beyond the schoolyard. Naturally, the SMTs must make a greater effort to accommodate such learners and see to it that they too succeed in their studies. It is a burden and a challenge for which SMTs need thorough preparation.

■ Ambiguity of roles

The literature review indicates that the role of the principal is somehow more clearly defined compared with that of the DP and the HoD. The latter two positions lack clarity regarding their role (Harris, Busher & Wise 2001; Khumalo 2016; Petrides, Jimes & Karaglani 2014). Khumalo (2016:57) further argues that there are indications in several research reports that point to the lack of a real leadership role for DPs and HoDs. According to Cranston et al. (2004), the clarification of the role of the DP is described in a traditional way based on what they are expected to do. Harvey and Sheridan (1995:7) critically point out that the role of the DP has been one of a misused asset or resource. Khumalo (2016:57) contends that the role of the DP is focussed on a number of managerial roles that assist in the organisational stabilisation of

the school, and DPs have not fully taken up the roles of leadership in curriculum implementation. When asked whether she had received training on their roles and responsibilities, one SMT member retorted:

'I don't think the Department is doing enough. What I know is that you only hear the Department calling the newly appointed SMTs, but with the ones that were appointed in the past, I never hear them calling for such workshops ... we cannot expect that because someone has been appointed at a particular level, then the person must be knowledgeable'. (P5, male, Q1)

This could be compared with the role of the HoD, who is, in most instances, oscillating between the SMT and the classroom with no real knowledge of what he or she is doing. Tapala (2019) argues that HoDs are rubber stamps of the principal's decisions and conduits of information between the SMT or principal and the staff, with no critical input. The roles of DP and HoD therefore become extremely complex because they are not clearly defined (Abrahamsen 2018). It is with this in mind that the research suggests that there is a need for a curriculum leadership training programme for SMTs. Poor communication also hinders the work of SMT members.

■ Poor communication

Communication is a crucial means for the realisation of the aims and vision of organisations such as schools (Aravena 2019). Where there is poor communication, there are problems emanating. It is therefore very important that SMT members are engaged in positive and active communication with one other and with other stakeholders. Poor communication leads to an information bottleneck (Ghavifekr & Ibrahim 2014). If the SMT members do not share information or do not receive the relevant information, it may lead to the school not performing well and not meeting internal and external deadlines. Strict protocol of how information should flow is good, but it may also be a hindrance to colleagues interacting freely. Information flow and

communication are a challenge in many schools. In the interviews, the following responses were given:

‘From the level of a teacher, she must go to the HoD, the HoD must go to the deputy, the deputy must go to the principal; but sometimes you’ll find that the teacher won’t tell you anything and you hear it from the principal, yes. The barrier, the communication line, the protocol, the protocol, yes ... And this affects the planning of the SMT ...’. (HoD2, male, Q4)

When there is no control on how information flows, this might lead to leaking crucial and confidential information by overstepping the protocol to share information with the appropriate persons. School management team members therefore need to be trained to handle information and to communicate well.

Having revealed some of the barriers experienced by SMTs, the study developed some recommendations.

■ Recommendations

The research recommends that the following be instituted to enhance the curriculum leadership capabilities of the SMT members and to assist them in overcoming the barriers they experience during the execution of their responsibilities:

- There must be a coherent and deliberate training and development programme for aspiring members of SMTs.
- Incumbent SMT members should receive constant and coherent curriculum leadership training and development, which are managed from a central point.
- The curriculum leadership training and development of incumbent SMT members should be based on a needs analysis of all SMT members.
- Internally, principals of schools should be at the centre of developing SMT members for lifelong learning because they understand the context of the working environment of the SMT. For principals, dedicated personnel from the Human Resource Management and Development Division at district and provincial

level should induct, train and develop aspirant and incumbent principals for the same purpose.

- There should be continuous evaluation of the training programme to check whether it serves its intended purpose.

■ Conclusion

SMT members are the drivers of curriculum delivery in schools and the entire schooling system. Their importance cannot be underestimated. They can make or break learners' performance. For them to be able to carry out their work effectively and efficiently, they need to be trained and developed. Aspirant SMT members must receive the necessary preparation for this daunting task. For the incumbents, continuous opportunities for development should be provided.

It is, however, important to note that in most countries SMT members are not well trained to perform the curriculum leadership roles they are expected to fulfil. This research therefore explored the need for curriculum leadership training programmes for SMTs in schools with the aim of preparing and improving the curriculum leadership roles of the SMT. The roles played by the SMT were discussed, and the barriers they experience were explored. A discussion and analysis of these barriers ensued, and as an outcome, recommendations of what should happen to fill the lacuna in the training of SMTs were suggested.

Managing schools with the use of information and communications technology: Needs of rural and township school principals

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■ Abstract

Schools, just as other organisations, have experienced many changes with regard to the use and availability of technology. The introduction of ICTs in schools has had a significant impact on the roles and responsibilities of school leaders. School leaders should keep abreast of new technologies and use these technologies to their advantage in the management of the school. It is not known whether school leaders are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to apply ICTs in the management of schools. This research therefore aimed to find out what needs rural and township school principals have with regard to training in the use and implementation of ICTs in the management of their schools. Looking at the use of ICTs in the management of schools, the management task-area model was used as theoretical framework. The research was located in the interpretive paradigm with a phenomenological design. Interviews were conducted with 10 primary school principals of rural and township schools. The findings of the research indicate that these principals, in general, have a positive attitude towards incorporating ICTs in the management of their schools, using ICTs in different management areas, specifically in administration, finances and communication. They, however, indicated needs for further training in the use of ICTs, ranging from having basic general skills to the use of specific software programs. It is recommended that training opportunities for these principals in the use and application of ICTs in school management should be part of their continuous professional development.

Keywords: Educational management; Information communication technology; Professional development; Principal; Rural schools; School leadership; Technology; Township schools; Training.

■ Introduction

Change, renewal and growth are all important aspects in the development of an organisation (Theron 2013:182). Changes in

knowledge and information happen so rapidly that changes in learning processes and the management of schools are necessitated. One of the forms of change in education, as identified by Theron (2013:188), is technocratic change, which requires educational adaptations as a result of change and improvement in technology. Development and the introduction of new and innovative technological applications have an impact not only on teaching and learning but also on the management of schools (Oyedemi 2015:1). The implication of technocratic change is that school principals need to adapt to these changes in the management of their schools, as school principals are seen as key actors in the change and reform processes in the school. Information and communication technologies play an important role in education and are essential for change and school improvement, including effective and efficient management and administration in education (Adu & Olatundun 2013:11; Mingaine 2013:32). Leadership in schools, more specifically the principal, is seen as a key factor in the use and integration of ICTs in schools (Celep & Tülübaş 2014:248; Schiller 2003:172). Ahmed (2015:2) sees school leaders as change agents leading the efforts of schools towards the use of ICTs, which could reform the ways in which schools operate. For school leaders to be able to lead, influence and motivate their followers to integrate ICTs, they should use ICTs themselves in the management of their schools (Hoque, Razak & Zohora 2012:22; Van Niekerk 2009:7).

The introduction of ICTs in schools has had a significant impact on the roles and responsibilities of school leaders. Africa, Brazil and other countries with emerging economies experience challenges in the implementation of ICTs, which continues to broaden the digital and knowledge divides (Kinuthia 2009:14; Mingaine 2013:32; Trucano 2011). Some of the challenges in the effective implementation and use of ICTs in schools in developing countries include the knowledge and willingness of management to adopt ICTs, a lack of training, a lack of technical support, a lack of resources and infrastructure, inadequate funds and unreliable electricity supply (Mingaine 2013:34; Olouch 2016:378;

Shah 2014:2802). In the light of these challenges, there is an inevitable barrier towards the development of technology skills. Several school leaders have not been equipped for their roles as ICT leaders and, for that reason, resist developing both the human and technical resources required in the use of ICTs in the management of their schools (Ku Ahmad 2012:4).

■ Background and problem statement

In 2004, the White Paper on e-Education stated that '[e]very South African learner in the general and further education and training bands will be ICT capable by 2013' (DoE 2004:17). This statement by the DoE firstly applied to educators, specifically education leaders. The question arises as to whether this has been achieved as yet. According to the annual performance plan of the DoBE (2018–2019), it seems not to be the case, as stated in its report: 'To match the needs of the changing world still remains a challenge with very few schools being supplied with the ICT resources' (DoBE 2018–2019:16). With the mentioned challenge in mind, the DoBE (2018–2019:43) still regards the training of educators in the use of ICT as a target for 2021, which is an indication that the targets set in the 2004 White Paper have not yet been met. School leaders play a fundamental role with regard to the integration of ICTs in school management – Schiller (2003:172) acknowledges that principals need to accept responsibility for initiating and implementing school changes through the use of ICTs in management and initiate complex decisions to integrate ICTs in school administration. School leaders are usually regarded as role models to provide support and encouragement in the use of ICTs in schools (Ghavifekr et al. 2013:1346). The school principal should act as change agent and model and lead efforts to reform the way in which the school works with regard to ICT use (Ahmed 2015:2). According to Petersen (2014:304), to be able to organise school activities, the principal should have ICT knowledge. If school

leaders use ICTs themselves, it could have a positive effect on their staff in their pursuit of ICT competencies.

The DoBE also regards the use of, and competence in the use of, ICTs by school leadership as important in its strategic planning to focus on 'ICT professional development for principals and teachers on how to integrate a Learning Management System into education' (DoBE 2018–2019:22). Afshari et al. (2012:281) emphasise that the use of ICT by school leaders can improve the efficiency of management in the school. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015:12) indicates, in the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, that school leaders should 'promote the effective use of technology in the service of teaching and learning'. The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders further states that school principals should 'employ technology to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management and develop and maintain data and communication systems to deliver actionable information for classroom and school improvement' (National Policy Board for Educational Administration 2015:17).

According to Ghavifekr et al. (2013:1346) and Mingaine (2013:33), it is imperative for school principals to have basic skills and knowledge in using ICTs in management and daily administration in the school. Little is known about the use of ICTs by school leaders, their perceived competence in ICTs and their preferred means of acquiring these skills and understandings (Schiller 2003:172). As acknowledged by Mingaine (2013:37), not much research has been conducted on the capabilities and technological skills needed by principals for the use and implementation of ICTs in schools. Bialobrzeska and Cohen (2005:6) are of the opinion that school leaders ought to have the expertise and suitable training to utilise the knowledge of ICT and to understand it. Hoque et al. (2012:22) claim that most school principals in Malaysia show a lack of technical skills and knowledge utilising ICTs in management of schools. The same might be true for

many South African school principals. As acknowledged by Meyer and Gent (2016):

[W]hile strategy and policy exists, implementation is slow and capacity is limited ... access to technology is limited and unequal across provinces and quintiles ... change management needs to be prioritised, and ICT-enabled assessment, needs consideration. (p. 1)

Training in the use of ICTs in school management by principals, specifically in township and rural schools, should be investigated. The main research question that crystallised from the above argument was: What training needs do principals of rural and township primary schools have with regard to the use of ICTs in the management of these schools? This main question is supported by the following sub-questions: What is the attitude of rural and township primary school principals with regard to the use of ICTs in the management of their schools? How do principals incorporate ICT in the management of primary rural and township schools?

■ Conceptual-theoretical framework

■ Concept clarifications

Throughout this chapter, key concepts are used that should be clarified in order to increase understanding of the use of these concepts. One of the main foci of the study is 'ICT'. Before the term 'ICT' was used, it was preceded by other concepts. By the end of the 1980s, the term 'computers' was replaced by 'information technology (IT)', which was again replaced by 'ICT' in the early 1990s when email was introduced (Adu & Olatundun 2013:11). Information and communications technology is a concept used for all forms of computer, communication and information hardware, as well as programs (software) and Internet networks, 'used to create, store, transmit, interpret and manipulate information' (Hoque et al. 2012:17; Lepičnik-Vodopivec & Samec 2012:54). Adu (2013:11) adds to these telecommunication equipment, media and broadcasting. Makewa et al. (2013:48) see ICTs as technologies that provide access to information, specifically computers, as well

as telecommunications. Many authors agree that ICT supports the ability of organisations to communicate, store, retrieve and manage information electronically and that it involves more than only computers, but also scanners, printers, Internet, telephone, telex, email, fax machines and so forth (Ahmed 2015:1; Olouch 2016:376; Oyedemi 2015:3). From the above, ICT can be understood as a sequence of hardware and software systems through which information can be searched for, sent and retrieved, which addresses the need to record, process, store and share information quickly and efficiently.

Secondly, the concepts of *township and rural schools* should be clarified. Townships are part of and rooted in South Africa's apartheid past (Mahajan 2014:3). Although there are no formal definitions for township, Pernegger and Godehart (2007:2) indicate that a township is an underdeveloped suburb, formerly officially designed for black occupation by apartheid legislation. These townships have been built at city outskirts. Before 1994, townships were racially segregated and isolated from society and the mainstream economy. After democracy was established, a number of initiatives were implemented by the government to transform these areas, with various levels of success (McCullough 2009:6). Although townships in the apartheid era were reserved for black South Africans, Businessstech (2016) indicates that in post-apartheid, the concept carries no racial connotations but is strictly a legal term. *Rural areas* can be seen as lightly populated (less than 100 persons per acre), underdeveloped areas in which people live, farm or depend on natural resources (Namakwa District Municipality 2017:28). These areas include villages and small towns. In view of the above information, and for the purposes of this research, a township school can be regarded as a school in an urban residential area, in many instances underdeveloped. A rural school can be regarded as a school in a lightly populated area in which people farm and depend on natural resources.

Thirdly, in this chapter, the use of ICT by school management, specifically the principal, is under the magnifying glass. The principal is seen as the educational manager of the school.

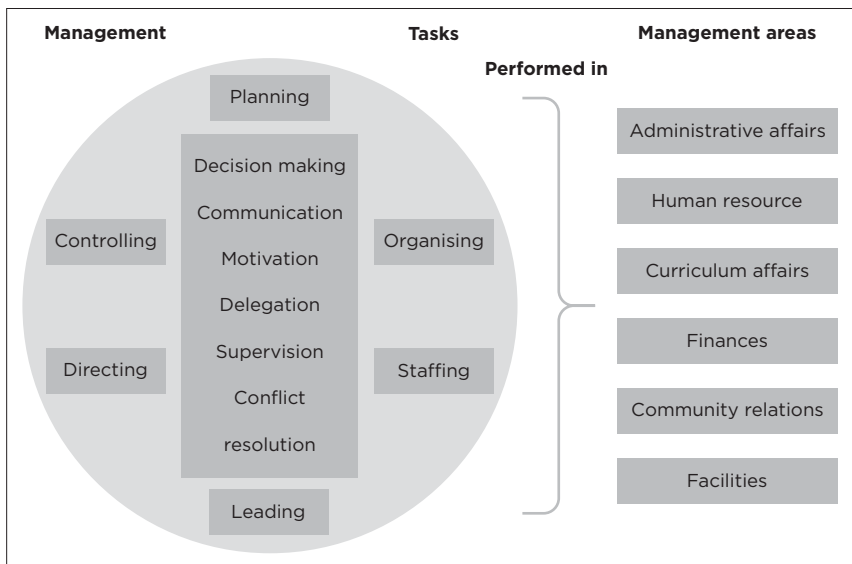
Van der Westhuizen (2011:55), along with Bisschoff and Mestry (2009:3), describes *education management* as the performance of management actions by an individual in a position of authority (the principal) in an educational institution. Van Deventer (2016:109–110) agrees with these authors by indicating that *education management* is the application of general management theory, principles and skills in the educational environment that comprise management tasks and sub-tasks or management activities. *Education management* is also seen as the internal operations in a school, which include dealing with structures, systems, the climate and the culture of the school, to ensure effective daily operation (Naidu et al. 2008:5). It can therefore be concluded that educational management could be seen as a model, theory, skills or process that is concerned with the accomplishment of the educational aims through the planning, directing, organising and controlling of activities and resources within an organisation. In this chapter, the school principal is regarded as the main educational manager and leader of the school.

■ **Applying the management task-area theory in the use of information communication technologies in school management**

In the previous section, it was indicated that educational management consists of specific management actions and management tasks. The use of ICTs in school management in this chapter is viewed through the management task-area theory (Van der Westhuizen 2011:41–49; Van Deventer 2016:121–127). Management focusses on the execution of main tasks or functions of management. Different researchers have classified different management tasks. Back in 1916, Henri Fayol identified five managerial functions, namely planning, organising, commanding, coordinating and controlling (Anupkumar 2005:3; Wren, Bedejan & Breeze 2002:916). These management functions

developed and changed through the years, and currently, the four most commonly accepted management tasks or functions are planning, organising, leading (or directing) and controlling (Ayangbekun, Olowookere & Abdulrazaq 2014:274; Kumar 2015:1092; Thorn 2012; Van der Westhuizen 2011:41-49; Van Deventer 2016:121-127), as shown in Figure 10.1. The management tasks also include sub-functions, which may include decision-making, communication, motivation, delegation, supervision and conflict resolution.

The importance of ICTs in performing these tasks is emphasised by Hoque et al. (2012:18) as '[t]he hierarchy in educational management from federal educational management to the school management requires the latest technological advancements in planning, organizing, leading and controlling educational organizations'. Apart from these management tasks indicated by the former authors, other



Source: Adapted from Van Deventer (2016:126).

FIGURE 10.1: Management task-area model.

authors also add management tasks such as staffing and directing (Van Deventer 2016:114). Management tasks are performed and integrated into specific management areas such as administrative affairs, the curriculum, human resources, finances, facility, school-community relations and strategic management (Heystek 2012:66; Van Deventer 2016:126).

In the following sections, the focus on the theoretical framework of the study is how ICT could be applied in different areas of school management.

□ Administration management

Information communication technology plays a vital role in streamlining the administration in a school and making it less burdensome (Shah 2014:2801). Information systems such as computers and other technologies provide school management with up-to-date information, which enables principals to make effective decisions in planning, directing and controlling the activities for which they are responsible (Karim 2011:461). Information is needed at all times and should be kept in the form of records that provide information on the past, present and future activities of the school organisation (Asiabaka 2008:11). At management level, ICT can be used to manage educators' information and work as well as learner information and progress (Hoque et al. 2012). Functions such as e-registration of attendance enable the principal to communicate to parents via text messages and email (Moses 2009:19). With ICT, accessing learners' records can be achieved faster and easier. Records kept manually in the past and that could be lost because of the filing process can be filed more conveniently through ICT (Mdlongwa 2012:5). Computers can be used to type, store and keep learners' records safe from unauthorised users by using a password (Moses 2009:36) and can group learners according to classes or hostels (Makhanu 2010:77). Information and communications technology can assist schools with the biographical data of learners and parents. Learners' records and reports managed by the administrative staff can be

performed by using ICTs such as MS Office software or open-source programs and other specialised programs like the South African Schools Administration System (SA-SAMS) (Gauteng DoE 2011:20). Condie et al. (2007:7) note that ICT also allows schools to interact and inform one another about how to improve learners' progress. Intranets have been developed to assist the staff in schools to manage administrative activities, such as establishing a learner database, attendance, assessment records, payment of school fees, recording behavioural problems, reporting to parents and sharing information amongst staff members (Condie et al. 2007:7; DoE 2008:53).

Management information systems have been incorporated and used in many schools to produce timely and accurate information and to help with administrative functions such as the management of various types of learner, educator, financial and resource information (DoE 2008:54; Shah 2014:2800). Using a management information system provides up-to-date information in a fast and efficient way, which supports the effective management of the school. School management information systems have a positive impact on the school because they increase the efficiency of school management through data-processing activities by increasing the availability of learners' personal information (Shah 2014:2800, 2801). Various authors agree, pointing out the possibilities of incorporating ICT and, specifically, management information systems, to manage administrative aspects in the school, including student enrolment data, developing school timetables, records of school fees, attendance data, preparing financial statements, processing examinations, keeping school personnel records, storing information for correspondence, calculating and paying teachers' salaries, storing data of accounts and sharing confidential information (Meyer & Gent 2016:5; Olouch 2016:377, 378; Shah 2014:2801). The current management information system used and promoted by the DoE in schools in South Africa is the SA-SAMS (DoE 2008:54). South African Schools Administration System is made available to all schools in South Africa free of charge.

□ Human resource management (staff and learners)

Human resource management, as an alternative for personnel management or staff management, refers to the process or system that deals with the use and integration of the workforce in an organisation to achieve organisational goals (Omebe 2014:26). Human resource management encompasses all the facets of the management of staff, including staff planning, recruitment, staffing, welfare, career management, maintenance, training and development, placement, promotion, staff performance, motivation, compensation or rewards, transferring and discipline of staff (Ayangbekun et al. 2014:275; Omebe 2014:26). Many of the aforementioned aspects can effectively be dealt with by incorporating ICTs in the management thereof. The recruitment of educators and the advertisement of posts can, for example, be posted on specific websites on the Internet for wider exposure (Celep & Tülübaş 2014:269). The use of ICT in human resource management activities can increase the effectiveness of the operation of the school as organisation (Ayangbekun et al. 2014:274). By using ICT, schools can be assisted in the administration of educators' information in the process of the administration of absenteeism, leave, appraisal and other human resource processes (DoE 2013). The intersection between human resource management and ICT could be the introduction of a human resource management system as a data-processing system in the school (Ayangbekun et al. 2014:276).

□ Management of physical resources

The proper management of existing physical resources is an important duty of a principal (Mentz, Challens & Kruger 2016:418). Management of physical resources can be simplified by using ICT. Exercising control over physical resources includes the maintenance and improvement of school property and buildings, as well as purchasing textbooks, educational material and school equipment (DoE 2008:14). Keeping inventories of all moveable assets on spreadsheets makes access to this information much easier. Asset

control, by using ICT, includes the recording of assets and generating electronic inventories and monthly and timely reports for the SGB (DoE 2008:55; Van der Vyver & Kruger 2016:425). The purchasing of textbooks and other educational equipment can be managed and made easier by using ICT through sending and receiving emails, catalogues and brochures. All these purchasing items and dates can be kept on a computer and printed or accessed whenever necessary. According to Bisschoff and Mestry (2009:183), a computerised stock and asset register should be kept. In this electronic register, resources such as stationery, learning support materials, cleaning materials and so forth should be kept up to date. By using the Internet, this information can also be sent to the district offices or other stakeholders whenever queries arise (Asiabaka 2008:13). Celep and Tülübaş (2014:268, 269) indicate that the use of a computerised school maintenance system could assist in maintenance and infrastructure planning. Such a school maintenance system could also be linked with the DoE to prioritise provincial-wide maintenance of schools.

□ Financial management

Financial management as management area involves the performance of management actions (tasks) such as planning, coordinating, organising, monitoring and controlling of financial resources to attain the set goals of the organisation (school) (Bisschoff & Mestry 2009:3; Heystek 2012:66; Naidu et al. 2008:164). Good financial management can be ensured through the use of ICT applications by keeping financial records (Ghavifekr et al. 2013:1346). According to Heystek (2012:66), a school budget is one of the focal points in school financial management. The budget of a school can be compiled through the use of computer programs such as MS Excel. Furthermore, storage, retrieval and the capabilities of the computers can ease the weight of routine tasks and speed up the budget process, so that that time can be used for other tasks (Bisschoff & Mestry 2009:181). Online payment of school fees by parents and online payments by the school provide a more convenient way of making payments and

save time (Du Plessis 2012:136). The use of ICT makes management easier by enabling principals to prepare and record school financial statements and employment contracts, to track online purchase requisitions and to ensure the best budget is followed (Meyer & Gent 2016:5). Bisschoff and Mestry (2009:181) mention that it is important for an educational organisation to equip its financial department with more modern information systems to increase the productivity of its employees. In doing so, ICT software and hardware used must be appropriate to the needs of the school as well as the needs of the staff using the computer system (Bisschoff & Mestry 2009:185, 186). A secure computer that allows entry into specific parts of the financial management system should only be used by authorised staff with the right password.

□ Curriculum management

Information communication technologies can also help school principals in the monitoring of academic affairs, specifically the area of curriculum and instruction (Hoque, Razak & Zohora 2012:18; Olouch 2016:377). As Meyer and Gent (2016:10) indicate, technology should support 'a progression of teaching and learning', by using appropriate technological applications in the right places. School principals should realise that one of the functions of ICT in schools is to enhance and manage teaching and learning, and as curriculum leaders, they have to play a major role in developing strategies for the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum aspect (Hoque et al. 2012:22). Through the use of ICT, school leadership can maintain accurate, updated information on the records of curriculum development material (Ghavifekr et al. 2013:1346). The role of the principal as pedagogical leader in the school is to develop an ICT vision and plan for teaching and learning, giving direction for pedagogical practices and assessment with ICT (Olouch 2016:377; Ottestad 2013:19). To be able to meet the aforementioned needs, principals have to undertake professional development that is ICT-related (Ottestad 2013:110).

Petersen (2014:302) goes further, indicating that principals, as pedagogical leaders, should also take responsibility for the professional development of teachers in using technology.

□ School-community relations

The school is an organisation that is established to meet the academic needs of a community and operates in a social and cultural context (Van der Westhuizen & Mentz 2013:69). A school-community relationship can be built and enhanced through the appropriate choice and use of communication media (radio, social media, the newspaper, etc.) (Hoque et al. 2012:18; Olouch 2016:377; Oyedemi 2015:2). By using ICT, communication with the community is made easy with the principal being able to inform not only the teachers and parents but also members of the SGB, donors, school district officers and other schools about school-related information. Information and communications technology further allows the school community to access information regarding the school culture and history through a school's website (Makhanu 2010:77). Technologies such as mobile phones, emails, school communicator software and school websites provide schools with new ways of communicating with parents to keep them informed about their children's progress and new development that would help in improving their children's progress (Rogers & Wright 2008:36). The use of ICT and social media has brought about a new concept in the form of a virtual school community, the impact of which cannot be ignored by schools and should be managed (Conley & Van Deventer 2016:377). Using social media could be to the advantage of the school in the management of this virtual community (Conley & Van Deventer 2016:377).

■ Communication as management sub-task

Although communication is not seen as a management area, but as a sub-task of the management task, leading, guiding or

directing it, it is, however, used in all management areas. Communication is directly implicated, as the 'C' in ICT represents communication. According to Prinsloo (2016:198), communication can be seen as the 'lifeblood' of the school, as both internal and external communication are regarded as important to ensure the smooth running and management of a school. Using ICT tools could solve the problem of poor communication in schools (Oyedemi 2015:1). Principals should have adequate skills to use technology in communicating with relevant stakeholders. To manage schools effectively, principals need fast and effective communication and access to information. Schools are now provided with technologically advanced means of communication because of the Internet (Makewa et al. 2013:52). By using emails and programs such as D6 School Communicator, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc., communication to parents and the larger school community may not only include text but also picture, video and sound files. Using the Internet as well as specific applications such as Zoom, Video and Adobe Connect enables teachers to collaborate with colleagues in other schools and people in external communities through discussion boards and e-meetings (DoE 2008:54; Makewa et al. 2013:52). Another way of communicating is through social media, such as Facebook, where principals can communicate with parents and relevant stakeholders regarding important events and meetings.

The principal as the school leader does not necessarily work with technology on a daily basis in all of the above-mentioned areas. In most instances, it is the work of an administrative person, financial person or even educator. However, it is stated that the principal should have the necessary skills to know how, where, when and in what capacity to apply ICT in the management of his or her school.

■ Research paradigm

This research was conducted within the interpretive paradigm, which deals with the theoretical and practical understanding of

interpretation, rooted in hermeneutics (cf. Nieuwenhuis 2019a:66). The interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from experiences of individuals (Kivunja & Kuyini 2017:33), in this case, the experience of school leaders regarding the use of ICT in the management of schools. The interpretive approach aims to explain the reasons and meaning that lie behind social actions (Du Plooy-Cilliers 2014:28); therefore, the aim of this research was to determine the perceptions and experiences of school leaders concerning the use and training needs they have with regard to ICT in the management of primary rural and township schools.

■ Research design and methodology

The researchers selected qualitative research methodology within the interpretive paradigm. Qualitative research assisted the researchers in understanding and explaining the social phenomenon as viewed from the participants' perspective and experience (cf. Kivunja & Kuyini 2017:36). Through uncovering how school leaders use ICT to manage their schools, the researchers were able to gain a better understanding of what training needs principals experience with regard to the use of ICT in the management of primary rural and township schools. Within the qualitative research approach, a phenomenological design as strategy of inquiry was used. The researchers had aimed at gaining insight into the everyday life of participants to describe individuals' perceptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation (cf. Kivunja & Kuyini 2017:36; Nieuwenhuis 2019b:85). This research approach was best suitable as the participants were individuals (principals) who formed part of the educational process and had lived experiences concerning the school.

The population included school leaders of primary rural and township schools situated in the Matlosana area of the Kenneth Kaunda District of the North West provincial education department. Ten primary rural and township schools were purposively selected, and only school principals of these schools

were selected as participants. The research participants were selected according to the type of school (primary farm or township schools) and designation (school leaders). Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted as method of data collection, and the aim of these interviews was to gain an understanding of the use of ICT and what training needs principals have with regard to the use of ICT in the management of their schools. Questions were predetermined through the use of an interview schedule. To ensure consistency throughout the interviews, the researchers followed the interview schedule, which consisted of a topic and nine questions related to the main research question.

The researchers transcribed the conversations after each individual interview. Field notes taken during the interviews were also used in a thick description of the information. The transcripts were then analysed by the researchers and given to two independent individuals for scrutinising. Coding of individual interviews in Atlas.ti™ was done by the researchers and verified by the independent individuals. A content analysis followed, where the researchers coded the textual data into fewer content categories and themes (cf. Nieuwenhuis 2019c:126). Trustworthiness was ensured by obtaining an external audit (outside individual) to review and evaluate the report. The interviews were recorded in order to obtain a full record of the interviews. Thick description was used by describing the context in which the questions were posed. Codes generated from the data were cross-checked by two independent persons. Identified themes were returned to the participants for respondent validation.

Permission was obtained from all authorities involved to conduct this research. The research was also approved by the Ethics Committee of the university under whose auspices it was conducted. Permission was granted by the district director to conduct the research in rural and township primary schools located within the boundaries of the particular education district. The participants were informed about all relevant aspects of the research; they were also ensured of anonymity and confidentiality, and they signed a consent form.

■ Discussion of results

■ Contextual factors

The specific context of township and rural schools has an effect on the use of ICT in the management of these schools. As indicated by Chigona, Chigona, Kayongo and Kausa (2010:21), the challenges faced by schools in disadvantaged communities with regard to a lack of resources hamper the use of ICT. Specifically, in developing countries, a lack of infrastructure remains a serious hindrance to the use and implementation of ICT. From the interviews, it was clear that one of the main reasons for a lack of ICT use and capability by primary rural and township schools is the lack of infrastructure, as indicated by the following quotation: ‘We don’t have a landline telephone; we don’t even have telephone lines here’ (P5, female, rural school). Most schools have inadequate computer rooms and their buildings are neglected, which lead to the lack of infrastructure. Physical conditions such as the insufficient size of principals’ offices, inadequate electrical lightning and the unavailability of stable electricity are usually a major barrier to schools (Nonyane & Mlitwa 2008:10, 12). Financial constraints also play a major role in the implementation and use of ICT in these schools. Many of these schools are Quintile 1–3 schools (no-fee schools) (Ogbonnaya & Awauh 2019:106), and a lack of finances was indicated by some of the principals: ‘Children don’t pay school fees to fix everything’ and ‘We only have a cell phone, a laptop and one computer that don’t [*sic*] even work because we don’t have money to fix it’ (P5, female, rural school).

□ Attitude towards information communication technologies

In the research, it became clear that a positive as well as a negative attitude towards the use of ICT exists amongst these rural and township primary school principals. This concurs with other studies carried out in other countries concerning the attitude of school principals regarding ICT

(Papaioannou & Charalambous 2011:349). Some participants held a positive attitude towards the use of ICT, as indicated by the following:

‘It allows me to keep up with the new trends. It’s also that a person should be innovative and inquisitive, makes you to [*sic*] become more knowledgeable and that’s the only way how you can improve your knowledge of ICT’. (P2, male, township school)

A positive attitude was evident, as some principals even attended training courses on their own to improve their ICT skills. Even though some school principals had a positive attitude towards ICT, some of them neither had computer knowledge nor were computer-literate. This provides grounds for ICT not being used to its full potential in the management of township and rural schools, as indicated by the following:

‘Well, as a principal, I’m not that much savvy when it comes to ICT. As you can see, in my office I don’t have a computer, although I have a personal laptop, but I don’t use it that much, but it’s mainly used by the clerk for assistance as a way to communicate with the parents and other stakeholders for the benefit of the school’. (P7, male, township school)

A negative attitude of school leaders towards the use of ICT has implications for both education and the management of township and rural schools. Management tasks may either take a longer period to be completed or not be completed at all. School leaders should therefore take note and become aware of the value and benefits of ICT in the interest of the management of their schools. A negative attitude towards the use of ICT could be associated with factors such as age, which is a cause of fear of change, and resistance, which could lead to a fear of technology (Du Toit 2011:151, 321, 360; Felix et al. 2013:387; Papaioannou & Charalambous 2011:358). One of the older principals mentioned:

‘I’m not an expert concerning ICT. I’m very lazy concerning technology. I don’t use the ICT too much because it’s a lot of work ... I am old now, I only have five months to go; then I go on pension’. (P2, male township school)

The fear of technology and the fear of change contribute to the lack of training and the lack of skills, which ultimately lead to ICT incompetence and ICT not being used to its full potential in the management of township and rural schools. It is also possible that some older-generation principals struggle to adapt to the use of technology (Du Toit 2011:360). A lack of information regarding how technology can simplify their lives creates a fear of technology. This became evident where technology was available but not utilised, as stated by the principal mentioned earlier: 'Well, as a principal, I'm not that much savvy when it comes to ICT ...' (P7, male, township school).

The more experience or exposure one gains with ICT, the less visible the anxiety towards the use of ICT will be. Exposure to ICT creates a positive attitude towards the use of ICT in school management (Cavas et al. 2009:22). It is unlikely for school leaders, or any other leaders, to have a positive attitude towards ICT if they are not being exposed to these technologies. The more one uses technology, the more positive one will be towards its abilities and what ICT has to offer (Felix et al. 2013:387). Therefore, school leaders need to be educated regarding the advantages ICT has for school management.

Without proper education regarding ICT, the fear of technology will not be overcome (Du Toit 2011:454). Apart from a lack of training in the use of ICT in most countries with an emerging economy, such as Brazil and many African countries, other challenges in these emerging economies include a lack of resources, poor ICT infrastructure, unreliable electricity supply, high costs of bandwidth and so forth. Information and communications technology must be seen as a tool that can make their management tasks much easier, faster and more effective, and ICT can then be used to its full potential in the management of township and rural schools. Skills development and professional development are associated with ICT knowledge and empowerment, which are associated with ICT competency (Clayton, Elliott & Saravani 2009) and a positive attitude

towards ICT. School leaders with ICT skills and a positive attitude towards ICT will be able to use ICT to its full potential in managing the school more efficiently. Therefore, ICT training is a vital necessity that can improve school principals' attitude towards ICT and make them feel more comfortable to use ICT and not be afraid of technology (Papaioannou & Charalambous 2011:353, 358). Not knowing how to do something as a leader can be frustrating and time consuming for a school principal.

■ **General information communication technology skills and knowledge**

It is clear that the quality of managing a school could improve if a school leader would apply ICT (Ghavifekr et al. 2013:1348). During the interviews, it became clear that although most participants do possess some ICT skills and knowledge, some school principals still lacked basic skills and general knowledge concerning ICT. Learning about the use of technology for school management is an area in which professional development is needed, as demonstrated by the little knowledge some interviewees possess with regard to the use of technology. One principal mentioned: 'I don't use it frequently, because I'm not so much compliant. To be honest, I don't use it, frankly because I'm not computer-literate' (P2, male, township school). Computer skills contribute to empowerment, which ultimately also contributes to skills development and a positive attitude (UNDESA 2013:143, 150). Computer skills are associated with computer literacy, which causes one to be ICT-knowledgeable. Using ICT contributes positively to the personal development of school leaders and to utilising ICT to its full potential in school management. Frustration in not being able to use ICT effectively can negatively affect school leaders' management productivity and their interaction with the staff. Relying on an assistant to help use ICT does not guarantee the quality of management as much as when a leader makes use of ICT by himself or herself. On the other hand, making mistakes when using ICT and asking staff

members for assistance could be a bad example of a leader of an organisation. Being dependent on one's staff to assist one to do one's duty as a school principal (with the help of a less time-consuming tool such as ICT) can be an embarrassment. Some school principals depend too much on staff members to assist them in using ICT, as was confirmed and emphasised by one school leader: 'I entirely depend on staff members to assist me with ICT, entirely' (P7, male, township school). Professional development and formal training in the general use of ICT will increase not only principals' confidence but also their productivity in terms of school management (Papanastasiou & Angeli 2008:78). As gathered from the interviews, it is clear that not enough ICT training opportunities exist for principals in the use of ICT in general and in school management, as the following quotation indicates:

'Nothing. The Department didn't give us as principals training in ICT. I also didn't go for any training because we don't always have money to pay for these things and it's usually expensive'. (P5, female, rural school)

School leaders need training to be equipped with ICT skills through relevant ICT training programmes to become computer-literate and to use ICT frequently, as it would assist them to manage their school more effectively (Gronow 2007:4). By implementing ICT, school management can improve both the quality of deliverance and the quality of the management of the school. As technology leaders, school leaders must be trained to be ICT-knowledgeable and they should possess the necessary technological skills (Afshari et al. 2008:84; Ghavifekr 2013:147).

■ Use of information communication technologies in management areas

From the results, it became evident that some principals need training in the use of ICT in some of the different management areas. School management areas consist of learner and staff matters, financial affairs, community relations, administrative

affairs and physical facilities (Van Deventer 2016:126). This was emphasised by the following quotation: 'In all areas, to capture information, to type things, to use the Internet, to email things, to use a fax and copy machine and use all these functions' (P4, male, rural school). Not only was there a general need for training, but some specifically indicated a need for training in the use of ICT in two specific management areas, namely administration and financial management - 'I use it for managerial duties, communication and administration' (P6, male, rural school).

Using ICTs, including management information systems, the Internet and technological applications, acts as an enabler towards a better, faster and cheaper approach to operating administration and managing daily tasks such as searching for, storing, retrieving and sending information (Lepičnik-Vodopivec & Samec 2012:54; Shah 2014:2800). Despite the availability of some technology at schools, it is mostly used by the administrative assistants, and not much by the school leaders, because of a lack of training - 'I don't use it. Only our secretary uses it for the administration work of our school' (P3, male, township school). ICT can be used in administration for setting a timetable and making use of a year plan, whereas staff and learner matters are managed through SA-SAMS. Learner matters can also be managed through teaching and learning as well as record keeping as stated in the following quotation: 'Our secretary uses the laptop, but only for administrative purposes to get information from the SAMS system ... but only for administrative purposes' (P3, male, township school). Using ICT can assist school leaders in recording financial documents, such as audit reports and stock keeping. Being a manager and an accountable officer, the school principal remains responsible for the school finances (Bisschoff & Mestry 2009:74). Some principals indicated that they used ICT in finances - 'Finance, budgeting, to draft your budget, year plan, administration, departmental laptop for educators information, allocation of subjects, timetabling' (P6, male, rural school). Despite these advantages to using ICT in management, some school leaders still do everything manually and leave some

financial tasks to the assistant, as indicated by a participant – ‘I don’t use ICT, I do everything manually. The only person who does this on the system is the clerk, because she also handles finances’ (P6, male, rural school). Performing some management tasks manually, without the use of ICT, is very time consuming, as has been mentioned above.

■ Using information communication technologies in communication

From the analysis it became clear that the principals placed much emphasis on the use of ICT in communication as management task, as indicated by the following quotations: ‘Communicating with the stakeholders, sending emails when necessary, phoning the AOs, and sending correspondence through that’, ‘Cell phone for communication, laptop for curriculum purposes, mainly SAMS’ and ‘For administration, LTSM and for communication with other schools and the area and district office’ (P1, female, rural school).

To communicate with the area office, ICT can be considered to be an effective enabler to create access to and store, transmit and manipulate different types of communication information in audio and visual form. Information and communications technology can also be used to prepare school announcements and reports, to communicate agendas and minutes of meetings with parents and so forth (DoE 2008:54; Meyer & Gent 2016:11). Currently, some school leaders only make use of telephone calls to communicate – ‘I do use ICT to communicate. I don’t use emails. I use only the cell phone for communication’ (P5, female, rural school). One school leader mentioned the need for training in areas such as sending emails and the use of the Internet when asked about their training needs in the use of ICT for the management of their schools – ‘In all areas, to capture information, to type things, to use the Internet, to email things, to use a fax and copy machine and use all these functions’ (P4, male, rural school).

■ Use of information and communications technology software (programs)

The use of ICTs in school management implies the use of different software programs. School leaders can improve their efficiency in managing their school if they are capable of using ICT (Afshari et al. 2012). Knowledge of ICT regarding software such as word processors, spreadsheets and presentations is important for principals to be able to access statistics to make decisions and for record keeping. Some school leaders lack this basic knowledge of ICT software, as stated by various participants, and they need training - 'I think I'll need ICT training in basic computing, MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, mainly those' (P7, male, township school).

Another form of software needed is Excel, which represents the use of spreadsheets for budgeting, drawing up timetables and schedules. One of the participants revealed, she needs training in Excel:

'I don't think I need training as such, but I could say, I would like training on Excel, but not so much because most of the things, I can do them'. (P1, female, rural school)

From the interviews conducted, it became clear that the main use of ICT by these primary school leaders was in word processing, sending and receiving emails and using the Internet. The uses of spreadsheets, databases and PowerPoint for presentations are areas in which most school leaders need training. These programs are not used by school leaders as they do not have the knowhow. This incompetency with regard to using ICT was confirmed by a school leader:

'The computers got sections like PowerPoint, Word and Excel. I would like training in it, storing information in it, to do the finances in it, teaching the children with it. There are a lot of things I will be able to do with'. (P3, male, township school)

In the interviews, the principals were asked whether they had received any training in SA-SAMS and in which areas they would like to receive ICT training. The responses were as follows: 'No, no

formal training, only our secretary received training to use the SA-SAMS system' and 'The area of SA-SAMS, to understand it 100%' (P3, male, township school). School leaders should be provided with formal one-on-one ICT training courses on both the software and the hardware of technology to improve their ICT capability.

■ Summary of findings

From the above discussion, the answers to the initially posted research questions become clear. With regard to the sub-question one, 'What is the attitude of rural and township schools principals with regard to the use of ICT in the management of their schools?' from the results, it is indicated that most of these principals display a positive attitude towards the use, implementation and benefits of ICT in school management. One or two principals who showed a negative attitude were older and closer to retirement. With regard to sub-question two, 'How do principals incorporate ICT in the management of primary rural and township schools?' the results show that the principals use ICT (not always themselves, but sometimes other individuals, e.g. administrative assistants) in mainly two areas, namely communication and administration. With regard to communication, the principals use telephones, cell phones, email, typing documents and so forth. With regard to administration, ICT is used in the administration of learner data and SA-SAMS.

With regard to the main research question, these principals of rural and township schools clearly indicated training needs with regard to the use of ICT in school management in different areas, ranging from training in basic computer literacy, the use of specific software programs, including SA-SAMS, and electronic communication.

■ Conclusion

In this research, it crystallised that the implementation process regarding utilising ICT in school management and the deliverance of the White Paper on e-Learning are taking place at a slower

pace than was initially intended. The effect of the lack of ICT use is that school leaders of rural and township schools become more and more technologically handicapped in the fast-changing world of technology. Not being ICT-literate can be frustrating to a school leader and can affect his or her management skills negatively, in the end also influencing the school negatively. As managers, school leaders are supposed to set an example regarding the use of ICT to show their competence and capability in their position as leaders. School leaders cannot expect teachers to use technology if they cannot use it themselves. This sends a clear message to the teacher that technology is not valued as an instrument of usage. School leaders should be afforded the opportunity of making sense and using technology for school management so that ICT can be used to its full potential in the management of township and rural schools.

The responsibility for this training lies at different levels. Firstly, training institutions and the national DoE could address these training needs in specific programmes designed for school leadership. This could include hands-on short courses that are aimed at developing ICT skills and knowledge. Formal programmes, such as the advanced diploma in school leadership, should address these needs as stipulated by the participants. At the provincial and district level, the DoBE could provide more compulsory training opportunities in the form of seminars and workshops. At the school level, principals have the responsibility of doing self-reflection and evaluating themselves to identify gaps in development to obtain appropriate training. This could be incorporated through professional development in their own professional development plan.

The influence of local school governance structures on creating an opportunity for establishing a positive school climate

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■ Abstract

School climate refers to the experience of the prevailing atmosphere in the school by the teachers and the learners. This school climate is influenced by various factors. Examples of these factors are the morale of the teachers, the management style of

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the principal and the influence of the SGB on the general control of the school to establish a positive school climate. Four performing schools were identified in Gauteng and the Western Cape to determine the involvement and effectiveness of the SGB in the overall governance of the school, with a view to establish a positive school climate. Nine key areas have been identified in departmental documents that outline the involvement, role and influence of the SGB on the overall governance of the school. These nine key areas are as follows: policies, meetings, assets, finances, curriculum, leadership, safety and discipline, parents and community and, lastly, the basic functionality of the school. The participants were also given the opportunity to highlight any other key area related to the functioning of the SGB in an open question. For the purpose of this research, a qualitative research method was used from an interpretivist approach. Structured interviews were conducted with the following participants in the study from each school: the principal, the chair of the SGB, one teacher who serves on the SGB and one who does not serve on the SGB. It was found that the SGB of the participating schools were very much involved in the overall functioning of the school and that they play a very supportive role. Mutual respect and trust, expertise and support, as well as a guard against unnecessary interference, are some of the strengths that emerged. No new key area was highlighted by the participants. From these findings, it was concluded that these SGB play a significant role in establishing a positive school climate. Furthermore, it can be argued that school performance and an effective and functional SGB, as well as a positive school climate, are closely related concepts. The following recommendation stems from the study: the training of new SGB is important to provide functional and performing schools with a positive school climate.

Keywords: Duties of school governing bodies; School governing body; School climate; Organisational climate; Organisational culture; School management team.

■ Introduction

This research reports on an investigation of one of four determining factors that influence a school climate. These factors include leadership styles, the school's value system, contextual factors and the SGB on the establishment of a positive school climate. This chapter focusses specifically on the influence of the SGB on establishing a positive school climate. The importance of this chapter is to determine what the influence of the governing body on a school's climate is. A positive climate in a school is very important for the general effectiveness and success of a school.

For the purpose of this chapter study, the terms 'school governing structure' and 'SGB' are used synonymously. The reason for this arrangement is because some electronic sources refer to school governing structures and others to SGBs.

School governing bodies play a very important role in the overall governance of schools. There are concerns amongst various education communities in South Africa that the responsibilities of governing structures are not being fulfilled (Barnes, Brynard & De Wet 2012; Duma 2014a, 2014b; Eberhard 2015; Heystek 2006; Mahlangu 2008; Mavuso & Duku 2014; Mafora 2013; Mnucube & Mafora 2013; Mnucube & Naido 2014; Xaba 2011). Not only does a dysfunctional school governance structure cause a school to become dysfunctional, but it can also have a negative impact on the school climate (Government Programmes and Policies 2017; Monki 2013). The purpose of this chapter was to determine the nature and function of SGBs in performing schools to provide best practices, examples and advice to underperforming schools. These best practices, examples and advice are available in the findings of the study. However, it is not a given fact that performing schools have functional SGBs; therefore, the degree of functionality of the SGB and the performance of the school will be linked.

In this chapter, attention is firstly paid to the formulation of the problem question and, secondly, to the formulation of the research objective. Thirdly, attention is paid to the conceptual grounding of the chapter by referring to specific concepts related to the school climate and the role of the school governance structures. Fourthly, attention is paid to the research methodology and, lastly, findings and recommendations arising from the study are presented. The study report concludes with a few concluding remarks.

■ Problem statement and problem question

As stated before, the governing body of a school plays a significant role in the overall functioning of the school. Various comments have been made by unions, the South African education department, principals, teachers and federations of SGBs regarding the concerns that prevail regarding the effectiveness and functionality of SGBs (Barnes et al. 2012; Eberhard 2015; Heystek 2006; Mahlangu 2008; Xaba 2011). Disagreements regarding the governing function of the SGB and the management function of the SMT may result in conflict in the school (Collingridge 2013; Duma 2014a, 2014b; Heystek 2006; Mafora 2013; Mavuso & Duku 2014; Mnucube & Mafora 2013; Mnucube & Naido 2014). These differences of opinion in schools in South Africa have a negative impact on the school climate. School climate refers to the experience of the prevailing climate in the school by learners and teachers (Mentz 2007). The purpose of this research was not to measure the prevailing school climate of the schools in the study population but to determine the extent to which the functioning of the governing body has an effect on establishing a positive school climate.

From the above, the following research question was formulated:

What is the influence of school governance structures on establishing a positive school climate?

■ Research objective

From the foregoing, the following objective of this research has been formulated:

To determine the influence of school governance structures on the establishment of a positive school climate in the study population.

■ Conceptual grounding

■ School climate

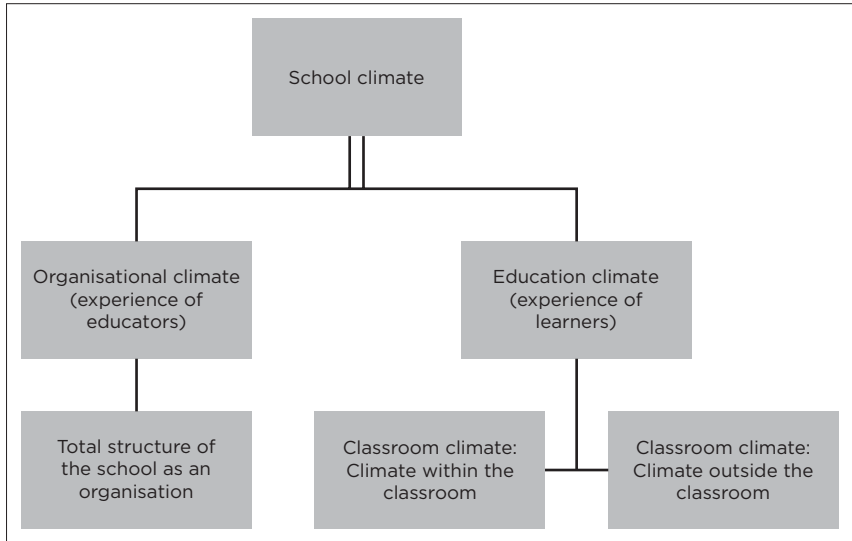
In a single sentence, Jeffery (2003:1) explains the importance of school climate by saying that the 'school climate is the reason for the school's existence'. Jeffrey's research also shows that school climate is constantly changing and brings about change in the lives of the people involved in the school. In the research of Pretorius and De Villiers (2009:33–52), school climate is described as the soul of the school, where management aspects are responsible for shaping the personality of the school. These researchers also point out that the general school health depends largely on the nature of the prevailing school climate. School health includes the following conceptual factors that have a direct influence on the general health of all role players of the school: the physical and emotional well-being of all role players; the physical health of the environment of the school; the standard of the facilities of the school; the general aesthetic standard of the school; the general morale of all role players; and the status of the relationships between all role players (American School Health Association 2019). Kieft (2005:62–63) and Holt and Smith (2006:52–60) point out that the quality of technology and infrastructure forms part of the school climate. These two aspects are, amongst other things, part of the responsibilities of the governing body of a school (DoBE 2015; North West DoE 2012, 2015). According to Mentz (2007), school climate consists mainly of two aspects, namely organisational climate and

educational climate. Organisational climate refers to teachers' experience of the atmosphere of the school and educational climate refers to the learners' experience of the atmosphere of the school. These experiences contribute to the prevailing school climate. Establishing a positive organisational and educational climate also forms part of the responsibilities of a school governance structure. Hoy and Miskel (2008:185) describe school climate as a combination of internal characteristics that distinguish one school from another and also influence the behaviour of people involved in the school.

The concepts 'school climate' and 'school culture' are sometimes confused with each another. School culture indicates the way in which the school functions or how the school functions, whereas school climate describes the experience of people (learners and teachers) with regard to the prevailing atmosphere (climate) in the school (Mentz 2007). Furthermore, it should be noted that organisational climate refers only to the experience of teachers with regard to the prevailing atmosphere in the school, whereas school climate refers to the experience of both teachers and learners of the prevailing atmosphere of the school (Mentz 2007). The two concepts are therefore not synonymous concepts.

From the above, it is concluded that school climate refers to the experience of educators of their work environment (organisational climate) and the experience of learners of their learning environment that prevails inside and outside the classroom (education climate) (Mentz 2007; Vos 2010:11), as shown in Figure 11.1.

A healthy organisation with a favourable school climate is especially affected by three needs in the organisation: task needs (goals of the organisation known to everyone within the organisation, favourable communication opportunities and effective distribution of power); needs to be supported (resource sharing, sense of commitment to the organisation and a favourable morale) and developmental needs (goal renewal, autonomous functioning, adaptability management and successful problem



Source: Adapted from Mentz (2007).

FIGURE 11.1: School climate.

solving) (Van der Westhuizen et al. 2007). These three needs (task, support and development) of the school are contained in the nine core areas of the responsibilities of the SGB and were addressed in the questions to the participants. From the latter, it is observed that governance structures play a significant role in establishing a favourable school climate, as these three needs are, amongst other things, a responsibility of the school's governance structure.

Van der Westhuizen et al. (2007) refer to three levels that must be effectively managed by the governance structure of a school to ensure a favourable school climate. Firstly, the governance structure of the school must ensure that successful teaching can take place, and that technical aspects or teaching aids within and outside the classroom meet the needs of educators. Secondly, reference is made to the management level of the school, where the control structure is responsible for available resources, the administration of the school and the

motivation of the teachers. Lastly, reference is made to the management level of the school, where the contact between the school and the school community must be effectively managed by the governance structure of the school.

From the above discussion and Figure 11.1, it is clear that school climate is a comprehensive aspect that describes the quality of the working life of an organisation (in this case, a school). Furthermore, it seems that the school governance structure has a significant role in and influence on the school climate. Considering this assumption, the situation regarding the role and influence of SGBs in establishing a positive school climate in South African schools was determined.

■ **Nature of governance structures in schools in the South African context**

After the 1994 elections and the establishment of the first democratic order in South Africa, one national education department was formed with nine provincial education departments. The South African education system can be described as a centralised education system, which delegates responsibilities to the various provincial education departments (Steyn & Wolhuter 2008; Steyn et al. 2017). The Minister of Basic Education holds the highest authority at national level for the implementation of the education policy (macro-level). At provincial level, the member of the executive council has the highest authority, followed by the relevant head of education of the province. The districts in the respective provinces are managed by a district director, and the areas within the districts by area managers. The areas are divided into circuits, which are managed by circuit managers (meso-level) (Steyn et al. 2017). There is a slight difference in the composition of these structures at meso-level, but their function is the same. The schools within these circuits are managed by the principal at management level, and the SGB governs the school at governance level (micro-level). The main distinction between the

management of the school (principal) and the governance of the school (SGB) is that the principal is responsible for the professional management of the school and must advise the SGB with regard to the manner in which policy and decision-making within the SGB should be implemented (Steyn & Wolhuter 2008; Steyn et al. 2017). In short, the principal is the professional manager of the school, and the SGB is a statutory body that exercises control over the school by doing the functions as contained in *the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996)* (DoBE 2015; North West DoE 2012, 2015).

The principal and the SGB have a joint responsibility to ensure that the prescribed curriculum is delivered effectively to the learners, even though their contributions are unique and different. The curriculum is delivered to learners within two links: firstly, General Education and Training (GET) for Grades R–9; and secondly, Further Education and Training (FET) for Grades 10–12 (Duma 2014a, 2014b; Mafora 2013; Mavuso & Duku 2014; Mestry & Khumalo 2012; Mnucube 2009; Mnucube & Mafora 2013; Mnucube & Naido 2014; Steyn & Wolhuter 2008; Steyn et al. 2017).

In the South African context, the local school governing structure is known as the ‘SGB’. The governing body of the school serves for a term of three years. The composition of the governing body is as follows: a majority parent component, an academic staff component, a support staff component, a learner component in the case of secondary schools and the principal serving as ex officio member of the governing body as well as serving as the representative of the head of the DoE (DoBE 2015; North West DoE 2012, 2015). Parents or guardians of enrolled learners from the specific school have the right to vote for the parent component. The academic staff component and the support staff component are elected by the staff of the specific school, and the learner component is elected by the representative council of learners of the specific school (*South African Schools Act 84 of 1996* Section 11). The number of members per component is determined by the number of learners enrolled in the school and

the nature of the school (primary, secondary, combined or special school) (North West DoE 2015).

In South Africa, the SGB plays a significant and valuable role as a local governing structure in schools, which is also emphasised by the DoBE and the various provincial education departments. The SGB must be competent to fulfil its role within the control of the school through subcommittees (Duma 2014a, 2014b; Mafora 2013; Mavuso & Duku 2014; Mestry & Khumalo 2012; Mnucube 2009; Mnucube & Mafora 2013; Mnucube & Naido 2014). There are nine key areas that form part of the role description of the SGB (Collingridge 2013; DoBE 2015; North West DoE 2012, 2015; Steyn & Wolhuter 2008).

The first important key area is to understand and implement legislation and policy. All policies applied in the school are subject to relevant education legislation and policy documents. The *South African Schools Act (84 of 1996)* is one of the most important acts that determines the implementation of all policies. The SGB must ensure that the school has all relevant policies and that these policies comply with relevant legislation. There are many policies and documents that must be compiled by the governing body of the school. Furthermore, the SGB must ensure that these policies are implemented and are regularly reviewed in accordance with legislative amendments. Amongst the most important policies and documents are the following: constitution of the governing body, code of conduct for the governing body, vision and mission of the school, asset register, admission policy, language policy, religious policy, code of conduct for learners and disciplinary procedures, financial policy, maintenance policy, HIV and AIDS policy, security and safety policy and recommendations to the DoE for teacher appointments. It is important that the SGB should not only assist in the compilation of policies but also take into account the influence thereof on the school climate.

Secondly, the SGB must be able to provide proof of all meetings held by the availability of agendas and minutes. The following meetings, amongst other things, are important: financial

committee meetings, executive committee meetings, general governing body meetings, meetings with parents, learners and staff and, lastly, meetings of the various committees of the governing body. It is important that the governing body regularly discusses and determines the prevailing school climate during the above meetings if there are factors in the school that may affect the school climate.

Thirdly, the SGB must control the property of the school (*South African Schools Act 84 of 1996*). The purchase, maintenance and control of inventory form an integral part of the role description of the SGB (DoBE 2015; North West DoE 2012, 2015). The maintenance and control of real and consumable property ensure that the school is functional and meets the needs of the school community. The degree of success with which the SGB performs this function can contribute to the establishment of a positive or negative school climate.

A fourth important role that must be fulfilled by the SGB is to take care of the financial interests of the school. The management of the school's budget, the administration and control of financial documentation, the raising of funds and the control of the school's income and expenses are functions that the SGB should perform. The way in which the SGB performs these functions can contribute to establishing a positive or negative school climate.

Fifthly, the SGB is expected to play a supportive role in ensuring the effective delivery of the curriculum and an effective liaison between the parent community and the school. Aspects of importance to the SGB are as follows: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, provision of workbooks and other study material, ANA, textbook management, literacy and numeracy strategies, preparation of an annual academic report, strategy to improve learner achievement, the setting of realistic goals, furniture availability, parental involvement, appointment and recommendations of suitable teachers and, lastly, the Grade R strategy (all primary schools must maintain a Grade R class or classes). It is important for the SGB to be aware that if the

curriculum is delivered effectively, it will also have a favourable influence on the school climate.

A sixth key area is the way in which leadership is handled at the school. The function and responsibility of the SGB are to handle the general control of the school as an organisation. The principal has a management function, which means that he or she also has a share in the management and governance of the school, but all professional aspects regarding the handling of the staff are managed by the principal and the management team of the school. When these two roles (the governance role by the governing body and the management role of the principal) are handled in a negative way by unnecessary interference, it will have negative consequences for the prevailing school climate.

The seventh important responsibility of the SGB is to ensure that the school is a safe institution for all involved on the premises. An effective safety plan must be implemented to ensure the safety of all involved on the school premises. Acceptable discipline of the learners is a requirement that cannot be separated from the safety of all those involved in the school. A safe school environment and acceptable discipline are the two factors that will have a positive impact on the school climate.

An eighth function to be performed by the SGB is to get the parents and the general school community involved in the school. Parental involvement and community involvement not only facilitate the management function of the principal and the governing body but also form a positive value system in all role players of the school and necessarily ensure a positive influence on the school climate.

The ninth and last function to be performed by the SGB is to ensure the basic functioning of the school. This basic functioning includes the availability of all records of the school, as well as policies, codes of conduct and other relevant documentation for which the governing body is responsible.

■ Influence of the school governing body on the school climate

The SGB has a significant influence on the school climate. Harmonious collaboration amongst members of the SGB, between the governing body and the rest of the staff, and between the governing body, the parent community and the learners of the school, is crucial for the establishment and maintenance of a positive school climate. The quality of the relationship that exists between the governing body and the other role players of the school plays a significant role in the nature of the prevailing climate in the school concerned (Duma 2014a, 2014b; Mafora 2013; Mavuso & Duku 2014; Mestry & Khumalo 2012; Mnucube 2009; Mnucube & Mafora 2013; Mnucube & Naido 2014; Steyn et al. 2017). Several studies further point out that if the SGB successfully performs its function and responsibilities, it creates a favourable starting point and opportunity for establishing a positive school climate (Barnes et al. 2012; Eberhard 2015; Heystek 2006; Mahlangu 2008; Xaba 2011). When the role players of the school community trust the work and functioning of the SGB and are of the opinion that the governing body is in control of what it is supposed to do, it creates a favourable area for the development of a positive school climate.

Another aspect where the governing body can positively influence the school climate is when the role of the principal or executive and the role of the governing body are clearly distinguished and there is no interference between the various roles and no role confusion (Collingridge 2013; Duma 2014a, 2014b; Mafora 2013; Mavuso & Duku 2014; Mestry & Khumalo 2012; Mnucube 2009; Mnucube & Mafora 2013; Mnucube & Naido 2014; Steyn et al. 2017). The SGB is responsible for the overall control of the school, and the principal is the professional manager of the school; both have a responsibility to support each other to ensure the effective functioning of the school. A conflict of interests of members of the SGB and abusive positions as members of the governing body will result in serious

damage to the trust of other school community stakeholders and have a negative impact on the school climate (Barnes et al. 2012; Eberhard 2015; Heystek 2006; Mahlangu 2008; Xaba 2011).

From the above literature, it is assumed that a functional SGB creates a favourable opportunity for establishing a positive school climate.

■ Research methodology

■ Research design

For the purpose of this research, a qualitative research method and an interpretivist approach were used. A case study is used as a research method in the study. In-depth understanding of the participants regarding the functioning of the SGB within the above nine key areas was obtained. The interpretivist approach in research is based on a hermeneutic background, which refers to the theory and method of interpreting human behaviour and underpins the qualitative research approach. The word 'hermeneutic' is derived from a Greek word meaning 'interpretation'. Hermes is the name of a Greek god who interpreted messages from the mediator of the Greek gods. The basic point of departure for interpretivism is to explain human behaviour by means of a subjective interpretation of that social behaviour (Creswell 2014:145-171; Maree & Pietersen 2008:47-153; McMillan 2008:33-50).

Seen from an ontological perspective, the interpretivist paradigm is described as a subjective interpretation of reality and human behaviour. According to the epistemological perspective, the interpretivist approach means that events or the actions of people are understood through a mental and emotive interpretation thereof. Also, according to the methodological perspective of the interpretivist approach, a qualitative method of research is used, where, for example, case studies or focus group discussions are interpreted and understood (Creswell 2014:145-171; Maree & Pietersen 2008:47-153; McMillan 2008:33-50).

The interpretivist paradigm also has specific implications for education. The first implication is that educational institutions are not worthless structures but institutions that must take into account the involvement, beliefs and experiences of all role players within the organisation – in this case, the SGB. These role players determine the meaning or right of existence of the organisation. These role players are also responsible, based on their beliefs and experiences, for the organisational culture of the school and for the school climate. Secondly, these stakeholders are considered as the formulation or designers of the value system, which is related to the school culture of the organisation. Lastly, the methods by which pedagogical principles are formulated are determined and defined. These methods and pedagogical principles are based on the experience of those involved and the quality of interpersonal relationships (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit 2004:30–31; Mouton 2002:55).

■ Purpose of the empirical investigation

The purpose of the empirical investigation was to collect data on the influence of SGBs on the school climate in South African high schools in Gauteng and the Western Cape.

■ Case study

Semi-structured questions were used in the case study interviews. The questions were posed in such a way as to relate to the influence of the SGB on the school climate. The questions were formulated from the point of departure of the above literature.

During the interviews with the role players, the above-mentioned nine core areas for the functioning of a governing body were explored: policies, meetings, assets, finances, curriculum, leadership, security and discipline, parents and community and, lastly, the basic functionality of the school (DoBE 2015; North West DoE 2012, 2015; Steyn & Wolhuter 2008).

During each interview, questions were asked about each of the nine key areas:

- Section A: Biographical information of the participants.
- Section B: The extent to which the governing body is involved in establishing a positive school climate in the nine key areas is determined in this section.
- Section C (open-ended question): Participants can discuss any other key areas that have not been discussed with regard to the involvement of the governing body in establishing a positive school climate.

■ Pilot study

One school in the North West Province was requested to participate in the pilot study. The reason for conducting a pilot study was to determine whether participants correctly understood and interpreted the questions. During the pilot study, the researcher was also given the opportunity to interview a school principal and to make changes to the formulation of the questions, if necessary.

The participants clearly understood the questions, answered them with ease and interpreted them correctly. No comments were received from participants to better formulate or explain the questions. An opportunity was given to the participants to respond to an open-ended question, and no questions or key areas were added by the participants.

From the above, it was concluded that the questions were clearly formulated and correctly interpreted and that the participants were able to answer them with ease.

■ Study population

Two schools from each of the two provinces (Western Cape and Gauteng) participated in the study. The four schools were all well-performing high schools. The reason for this selection was

to determine whether there is a correlation between performing schools and functional SGBs with a positive school climate (Barnes et al. 2012; Eberhard 2015; Heystek 2006; Mahlangu 2008; Xaba 2011). Schools that had a 100% matric pass rate for at least five years were considered as performing schools. The 2015 National Senior Certificate Examination Schools Performance Report from the DoBE was used to identify the schools in terms of their matric results.

The participants in the study consisted of the following role players in the school:

- The chairperson of the governing body or his or her delegate (Chair SGB).
- The school principal (P).
- One teacher serving in the governing body (Teacher SGB).
- One teacher not serving in the governing body (Teacher).

The reason for the distribution regarding the position held by the participants within the school was to put a broad view of all levels of role players in the school into perspective. Because of the availability of other role players, such as learners and other parents, the above composition of the participants was sufficient. The availability and willingness of schools to participate were the reason why these schools were selected in the above two commissions. The quintile and previous model in which the schools fit were not presented as criteria for the choice of schools.

■ Ethical aspects and administrative procedures

The research proposal was submitted to the Research Committee in the Faculty of Education Sciences at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) for approval. After obtaining approval, an application for ethical clearance was submitted to the Ethics Committee of the same faculty to obtain the necessary ethical clearance number. Authorisation was obtained from the various

education authorities of Gauteng and the Western Cape. The principals of the selected schools were notified in advance and the questions were also sent in advance to the participants concerned so that they were prepared for the interviews. The participants voluntarily participated in the study and assurance was given to them that the data would be kept confidential and their privacy would be respected (cf. Creswell 2014:93; Leedy & Ormrod 2005:102). The participants also gave written permission to participate in the study.

■ Analytical techniques

□ Interpreting the data

The following guidelines, provided by Creswell (2014), were followed for validity and credibility; by using an anecdotal method, the data were coded, analysed and described. From this description of the data, the findings, recommendations and a summary were formulated. The responses obtained from each school's participants were transcribed according to each question. During the analysis of the transcribed data, similarities were highlighted in the participants' responses. These highlighted agreements form the basis of the description of the role of the SGB and the influence of the SGB on establishing a positive school climate.

■ Findings and discussion

For the purpose of the findings, the similarities in the answers of the respondents will be focussed on because all of the respondents answered the questions in more or less the same way.

The following general findings were made when analysing the answers of the participants' questions in the four schools:

- Biographical data: gender, qualifications, experience, quintile and number of teachers.

- Profile of the participants: three of the four chairpersons of the SGBs were women; three of the four principals were men; all had graduated, and all had previous experience as members of an SGB. Teachers serving on the governing body consisted of three men and one woman. Everyone had also graduated in this case, and everyone had teaching experience. Teachers who did not serve on the governing body consisted of one man and three women; two were graduates and two had a teaching diploma. Everyone had teaching experience. The schools in the study population were Quintile 5 schools (richest of rich school communities) and had an average of 50 teachers per school.

■ Generic question

What do you understand by the concept of 'school climate'?

Finding: all participants agreed that school climate refers to the prevailing atmosphere of the school.

■ Key area 1: Policies

To what extent does the involvement of the SGB in the compilation of policies, as well as the nature of the policies, contribute to the establishment of a positive school climate?

Findings: The following similarities were found in the responses of the participants to the above question: members of the SGB are experts in the themes of the various policies of the school; experts are sometimes consulted before policies are compiled; policies are reviewed regularly; research on policies is done in advance by the school executive and then submitted to the SGB for ratification. The latter finding confirms the following quotation from the respondents: 'the school governing body leaves it first to the school governing body and then it is discussed and accept[ed]' (Chair SGB, male, date unknown). Moreover, the executive is fully trusted with this task; efforts are made to

eliminate risks in the formulation of policies; 'A climate study only takes place before policies are reviewed or formulated' (P, male, date unknown). The latter citation from respondents serves as confirmation of the involvement of the SGB in formulating and reviewing policies; and policies are not too rigid.

From the above findings, it was concluded that the SGB plays a significant role in the review, composition and formulation of school policies and that the influence of the SGB on the school climate, in carrying out this responsibility, receives considerable attention.

■ Key area 2: Meetings

To what extent do decisions taken at governing body meetings take into account the school climate?

Findings: The following similarities were found in the responses of the participants to the above question: the SGB listens to the suggestions and opinions of all stakeholders, and debates are sometimes allowed to take into account the school climate - 'the SGB certainly incorporates the school climate consider when making decisions' (Chair SGB, male, date unknown) - this quotation serves as confirmation of the extent to which the SGB takes the school climate into account when making decisions. Also, the SGB takes into account the prevailing morale of the role players when making decisions - 'Decisions are not made impulsively, but are preceded by thorough and meaningful discussions' (Teacher SGB, male, date unknown). This quotation serves as confirmation of the extent to which the SGB first considers matters before making decisions. Furthermore, the best interests of the school are taken into account; decisions are made that benefit the school and regular feedback on the school climate is provided to the governing body.

From the above finding, it was concluded that decisions made during the meetings of the SGB are guided by the prevailing school climate. This deduction was confirmed by the body

language, facial expressions and hand gestures of the participants, as observed by the researcher.

■ Key area 3: Assets

To what extent does the availability of assets and resources of the school contribute to the establishment of a positive school climate?

Findings: The following similarities were found in the responses of the participants to the above question: the staff has extremely good and functional resources; equitable distribution of resources is considered a priority; members of the governing body and principals confirm that regular inspections are carried out to monitor the quality and maintenance of resources; principals emphasise the fact that all role players at the school are proud of the tools and that ownership is accepted; the school has sufficient funds to purchase resources; the principal and the SGB are involved in the purchase of meaningful resources; and regular upgrading and replenishment of resources is performed. The following quotation from the respondents serves as confirmation of the involvement of the SGB in the provision of teaching resources: 'the SGB make sure the staff has the necessary resources' (Teacher SGB, male, date unknown). In addition, the following quotation from the respondents serves as confirmation of the caution of the SGB when purchasing teaching resources: 'the economic climate of the school and parents are also taken into account when purchasing aids' (P, male, date unknown).

From the above findings, it was concluded that the staff have adequate and functional resources and that it has a favourable influence on the school climate.

■ Key area 4: Finances

To what extent does the involvement of the governing body in the general handling of the school's finances contribute to the establishment of a positive school climate?

Findings: The following similarities were found in the responses of the participants to the above question: well-considered but quick decisions are made; thorough financial planning is made; priorities are set with regard to what is needed; transparency regarding the use of financial resources is emphasised by the governing body; principals believe that the financial resources of the school should be utilised for the benefit of the learners, and this view was also supported by the other participants; and principals and members of the SGB believe that teachers should not be unnecessarily bothered with fundraising projects. The following quotation from the respondents serves as evidence of the involvement and control of the SGB in raising funds for the school: 'different forms of fundraising projects are used to raise the school's finances, for example: own nursery school, bookstore and other businesses of the school' (Chair SGB, female, date unknown) Moreover, finances are available to ensure a positive school climate; the finance committee gives full feedback to the rest of the SGB; the school is run like a business; and trends and best practices at other schools are considered. The following quotation from the respondents serves as evidence of the involvement and control of the SGB in dealing with the finances: 'There is a financial committee that controls the finances of the school; the committee consists of financial experts and persons with extensive experience in financial management.' (P, male, date unknown)

From the above findings, it was concluded that a functional finance committee takes into account the school climate when managing the school's financial resources.

■ Key area 5: Curriculum

Question 5.1: To what extent does the governing body support the effective delivery of the school's curriculum to establish a positive school climate?

Findings: The following similarities were found in the responses of the participants to the above question: it is assumed that a

happy teacher will deliver the curriculum effectively; the SGB looks after the interests (emotionally and physically) of teachers; knowledgeable teachers are appointed; the SGB is proud of the school's results and give the necessary recognition to teachers; adequate resources are available; and teachers are trusted, as they have already proved themselves. The following quotation from the respondents serves as evidence of the involvement and control of the SGB in the effective delivery of the curriculum: 'teach well during school hours, not on weekends and school holidays' (Teacher SGB, female, date unknown).

From the above findings, it was concluded that the SGB makes a positive contribution to the school climate by being effectively involved in the delivery of the curriculum, especially with regard to the availability of teaching resources.

Question 5.2: To what extent is the governing body involved in strategic planning to improve learner performance?

Findings: The following similarities were found in the responses of the participants to the above question: the best teachers for the subject in question were appointed; there is a committee that monitors learner performance; extra help is needed to improve learner performance; finances are made available to ensure good learner performance; the management of the school is tasked with handling adequate teacher training and teachers are available for extra teaching time. The following quotation from the respondents serves as evidence of the involvement and control of the SGB in the appointment of teachers to ensure effective education: 'the best teachers are appointed' (Chair SGB, female, date unknown)

From the above, it was concluded that although the strategic planning with regard to learner performance is mainly left to the executive of the school, control is executed by the SGB.

Question 5.3: To what extent does the involvement of the governing body in the provision of staff development contribute to the establishment of a positive school climate?

Findings: The following similarities were found in the responses of the participants to the above question: the SGB ensures that there are sufficient funds and opportunities for teachers to be developed – ‘the SGB will make funds available to develop teachers’ (P, female, date unknown). The management of the school is mainly responsible for the professional development of all teachers: examples of development opportunities are social functions, expert speakers and attendance and presentation of seminars; remuneration is offered to staff members who are willing to develop further and opportunity for further study is made possible.

It is inferred from the above findings that although the executive is primarily responsible for the professional development of teachers, the SGB provides the necessary resources to enable development. This finding was confirmed by the reflection of gratitude on the faces of the respondents.

■ Key area 6: Leadership

Question 6.1: To what extent is there a distinction between the governing function of the governing body and the professional management function of the principal? Explain.

Findings: The following similarities were found in the participants’ responses to the above question: no interference from any of the parties occur; duties are clearly divided and described; each of the parties is an expert in his or her own field; the principal has the confidence and the expertise to make some decisions himself or herself, without consulting the SGB; common goals exist for both parties; the principal is trusted by the SGB to exercise his or her management function; regular communication takes place and the two parties work well together and the principal keeps the governing body informed of everything that happens in the school and does regular training with the SGB. The following quotation from the respondents serves as evidence of the distinction made between controlling and managing the school: ‘some decisions

with professional matters are taken by the principal without consulting the SGB' (Chair SGB, female, date unknown).

From the above findings, it was concluded that there is a clear distinction between the governance role of the SGB and the management role of the principal, and that this positive cooperation agreement has a positive effect on the school climate. This finding was confirmed by the hand gestures made by the participants regarding the distinction made between the two roles.

Question 6.2: To what extent is there a supporting role between the governing body and the principal? Explain.

Findings: The following similarities were found in the responses of the participants to the above question: social and informal interactions take place; a good relationship exists between the principal and the SGB; and mutual respect exists. The following quotation from the respondents serves as evidence of the supporting role played by the governing body and the principal: 'both parties support each other when needed, regular discussions take place and the chairperson of the SGB visits me regularly' (P, female, date unknown).

From the above, it was concluded that positive support takes place mutually, thus creating positive relationships and ensuring a valuable contribution to the school climate. This finding was confirmed by the reflection of gratitude on the faces of the principals and chairpersons of the SGBs.

■ Key area 7: Safety and discipline

Question 7.1: To what extent does the involvement of the governing body in establishing a safe school contribute to the establishment of a positive school climate?

Findings: The following similarities were found in the participants' responses to the above question: safety is considered

as a priority; camera networks are available, guarded entrances and guards are used; the safety committee monitors the safety of the school and is immediately informed by the principal if there are safety risks; the safety committee consists of knowledgeable people regarding general safety principles and risks; and it is important that all role players trust the security. The following quotation from the respondents serves as evidence of the seriousness of the SGB's safety regulations of the school: 'the SGB uses their own experiences at work to ensure the safety of the school' (Teacher SGB, female, date unknown).

From the above findings, it was concluded that the SGB regards the overall safety of the school as a very serious priority and that they are aware that the feeling of safety of all role players has a positive influence on the establishment of a positive school climate.

Question 7.2: To what extent does the involvement of the governing body in establishing acceptable discipline in the school contribute to the establishment of a positive school climate?

Findings: The following similarities were found in the responses of the participants to the above question: counselling is provided to learners who show disciplinary problems; parents and learners are regularly informed about the school's discipline; teachers are trusted to apply discipline fairly; discipline is applied firmly and consistently; the schools have disciplined learners, and relatively few incidents of disciplinary problems occur; the principle of no tolerance is applied; disciplinary hearings are held and action of suspension is initiated in serious cases. The SGB is involved in compiling the code of conduct for learners, and experts are used when formulating the code of conduct; the human dignity of the learners is protected; and the executive of the school deals with disciplinary matters first, and if necessary, it is then referred to the SGB. The following quotation from respondents serves as evidence of the confidence of the SGB in the sound judgement of teachers: 'teachers are trusted when dealing with disciplinary

matters'. The quotation 'home visits are made to learners who show disciplinary problems' (Chair SGB, female, date unknown) serves as evidence of the involvement and control of the SGB in dealing with disciplinary matters.

From the above findings, it was concluded that the SGB plays a significant role in establishing acceptable discipline at the school and that they are aware of and keep in mind that disciplined learners exert a favourable influence on the school climate.

■ Key area 8: Parents and community

To what extent does the involvement of the governing body in establishing a parent community involved in the school's activities contribute to the establishment of a positive school climate?

Findings: The following similarities were found in the participants' responses to the above question: regular parent meetings are offered and expert speakers perform during these parent meetings; information and social events are organised for parents and teachers; expert parenting networks are formed to support teachers; parents are sometimes not involved in all the activities of the school, but the SGB is always involved and thus sets a good example – 'the SGB is very involved in the school, but all the parents are not always involved' (P, female, date unknown); parents attend their children's activities; and parents who are experts and can make a positive contribution are contacted.

It is inferred from the above that the SGBs of the schools that participated in the investigation set an example for the parent community and that they make real efforts to get parents more involved in the school's activities. It would be ideal if all governing bodies could set such an example for the parent community. Such efforts produce good results and have a favourable influence on the school climate.

■ Key area 9: Basic functionality

To what extent does the involvement of the governing body in the basic functionality of the school contribute to the establishment of a positive school climate?

Findings: The following similarities in the participants' responses to the above question were found: no unnecessary interference; the SGB supports the principal and staff; act when approached; trust the principal and staff; the SGB provides the necessary resources; open discussions take place between the SGB and the staff; and the principal liaises well and regularly with the SGB. The following quotation from the respondents serves as evidence of the confidence the SGB places in the teachers: 'the teachers are trusted when they perform their duties' (Chair SGB, male, date unknown).

It is inferred from the foregoing that the general involvement, the expertise of the SGB and the clearly delineated boundaries of authority of the SGB, the staff and the executive management of the school have an extremely favourable impact on the school climate.

■ Open question

The participants were invited to add and discuss any other key areas regarding the involvement of the governing body in establishing a positive school climate that have not already been discussed.

No other or new key areas were added or highlighted by the participants. A possible reason for the participants not adding other key areas is that the questions posed to them largely addressed the involvement of the SGB in establishing a positive school climate.

■ Recommendations

The following recommendations related to the findings of the study may be considered:

Recommendation 1: A well-structured training programme or induction programme should be conducted with all SGBs to ensure that all SGBs have the same expertise and relevant information. The training programme must be structured according to the nine key areas described in the study. This training programme should be undertaken specifically with schools that are not performing or where it is suspected that the school climate is negative. This recommendation does not apply to the schools in the study population, but it applies to underperforming schools.

Recommendation 2: A strategy can be developed to assist principals and SGBs in especially underperforming schools in establishing a positive school climate.

■ Conclusion

From the findings, it was observed that all of these performing schools in the study population had extremely functional and effective SGBs. Mutual support, respect and trust between the SGB, the executive management and the rest of the staff were highlighted by the participants. The expertise and knowledge of the members of the SGB, amongst other things, were highlighted by the participants as positive qualities. The principle of a common goal to ensure the effective functioning of the school is found in all role players of the school. Transparency in all facets of control and management is ensured throughout, and a clear distinction is made between the control function of the SGB and the management function of the principal. The availability and

quality of teaching resources are further priorities ensured by the SGBs. Staff development is regarded as an important principle by the SGBs in the study, and funds are made available for this purpose. The safety of all those involved in the school and the discipline of the learners were also highlighted by the participants as an important factor in the effectiveness of the SGB to create a positive school climate. Finally, the involvement of the SGB in the school's activities and the example they set to the rest of the parent community are regarded as an important task of the governing body.

From this study, it has been observed that a functional and effective SGB has a significant influence on the establishment of a positive school climate.

Leadership and the challenges faced by South African schools in a changing world

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■ Abstract

This chapter summarises, synthesises and reflects on the chapters making up this book. It is clear from the selection of chapters comprising this book, firstly, that leadership in schools is significant, both in its own right and serving as a fulcrum to successfully negotiate many other challenges, such as debilitating contextual factors. Secondly, leadership is complex – the borders of educational leadership cannot be drawn at the walls of the principal’s office. Educational leadership entails and is affected

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by much more than what takes place in the office of the principal. At least the following should be provided for in any theoretical schema of educational leadership:

- the other members of the school management cadre (in the South African context, at least the DP, HoDs and the SGB)
- intra-school factors (learners, teachers, infrastructure and curriculum)
- parents
- education system context
- the community and societal context.

The above makes for a complex structure. Although typologies of many leadership styles exist (and have been described in the chapters of this volume), the constructions of such typologies are to be welcomed and leadership has statistically been demonstrated to affect learning outcomes and school effectiveness, an unqualified statement regarding the best leadership style (or even the exact qualities of good leadership), nor any $x \rightarrow y$ relation, that is, trying to impute linear relations to leadership style or qualities related to education outcomes, is a forlorn exercise. The situation is simply too complex, with too many intermediating or conflating or contaminating variables. Education scholarship cannot and should not try to supply practitioners (teachers or principals or education leaders) with a 'bag of tricks', fool-proof for any situation.

Without in any way advocating or resigning to nominalism, the recommendation that can be made at the end of this book is for Education Leadership scholarship to proceed with case studies, such as the studies presented in the chapters of this volume, and from there to attempt to progress to a finer-textured theory of Education Leadership, school, education system and societal context that is ecology-sensitive and inspirational for practitioners, rather than attempting to derive universally valid laws.

The third conclusion to be drawn from the chapters of this volume is the need for education and training of education

leaders, which is the common factor running through well-nigh all chapters. Research such as that published in this volume can simultaneously form the basis for inspirational education and training of education leaders, such that (pre-service, but especially) in-service education and training, followed by their reflection on their own practice, should inform ever better and precise theory of Education Leadership.

Keywords: Educational leadership; Education theory; School governing bodies; School climate; South Africa; South African education.

■ Introduction

South African schools, like their counterparts in the rest of the world, face unprecedented challenges early in the 21st century. These challenges are as exciting, opening new vistas for schools and for education, as they are frightening. One remarkably versatile tool in negotiating, and even capitalising on, these challenges is that of school leadership. Being pivotal in the process of meeting the challenges posed to schools, the chapters of this volume focussed on a selection of key issues in leadership in South African schools vis à vis the challenges South Africa faces in the current era.

■ Insights from empirical research comparing poorly performing South African schools with well-performing South African schools

The first three chapters following the introductory chapter reported on qualitative empirical research that compares or contrasts the situation of poorly performing South African schools with the results of similar research earlier conducted in well-performing schools. In Chapter 2, the focus was on the handling of contextual imperatives or challenges. These included

both societal or community contextual factors (pertaining to geography, demography, social system, economic situation, politics and religion and life- and world-philosophical beliefs) and education system contextual factors. It was found that school leaders (principals as well as teachers) of poorly performing schools are often oblivious of contextual imperatives or have a rather defeatist, external-locus-of-control attitude towards these, much less do they show any signs of ingeniously capitalising on these imperatives.

In Chapter 3, Chavez's (2016:14) three related ideas of moral leadership were used as a yardstick to investigate moral leadership in poorly performing schools:

- The relationship between a leader and followers is a direct result of a genuine sharing of mutual needs, aspirations and values.
- Those led have informed choices to make as to whom to follow and why.
- A moral leader's goal is to address the wants, needs, values and aspirations of his or her followers.

Sadly, when compared with well-performing schools, moral leadership was found wanting in the poorly performing schools investigated by the authors.

In Chapter 4, the organisational climate in a sample of poorly performed schools was surveyed by means of interviews with principals and teachers, and compared with the results of similar research conducted in well-performing schools. Although both categories – teachers and principals – realised the importance of leadership in creating a positive school climate and the importance of school climate, in turn, as factor in influencing the achievement levels of schools, the research noted a discrepancy between the principals' and the teachers' views of the leadership and school climate extant in the schools in the sample. The principals tended to have a positive assessment of both their leadership and the organisational climate in their schools. This was, however, not

shared by their teachers. When the authors noted from their observations made at the schools that there were few signs of a congenial school climate, they also pointed out in all honesty that learner performance was not only a function of leadership and school climate, but of a host of factors, of which they highlighted three: socio-economic status of parents; teacher-related factors (such as training levels of teachers); and poor or inadequate infrastructure and resources at schools.

The research reported in Chapter 5, which was a study of five schools where the appointment of new leadership, that is, new principals resulted in these schools progressing from poorly performing schools (in terms of learner achievement levels) to well-performing schools, is a demonstration of the potentially powerful impact leadership can have in schools. Leadership was clearly the factor effecting the change from poor performance to good performance in the five schools studied. Key aspects of the successful leadership included relations with teachers, learners, parents and the community, emphasis on teacher induction and in-service education for teachers, more contact teaching time and attention to SMTs and SGBs.

In Chapter 6, the inter-relationship between leadership, organisational climate of schools and learner performance were tested empirically. The MLQ (36-item, 5-point Likert scale) was used to investigate the transformational, transactional and passive-avoidant leadership styles, based on the descriptions by Oberfield (2012), and the Organisational Climate Description Questionnaire – Rutgers Secondary (34-item, 4-point Likert scale) – was used to investigate the climate of schools, whilst matriculation Mathematics results were used as indicator of learner performance. Principals and teachers at 72 schools in KwaZulu-Natal participated in this research. Quite honestly, and noteworthy, the authors remark at the outset of the chapter that, firstly, a principal's style of leadership is determined by principal-related factors (e.g. his or her personality and personal strengths and weaknesses), teacher-related factors, learner-related factors and school context-related factors, and

that, secondly, no style of leadership can guarantee success, as learners and teachers, on their own volition, have to buy into the vision that the principal is selling to them. In this frame, aggregate figures derived from empirical research should be interpreted. The first interesting finding from this research is that it corroborates the observations made in qualitative research reported in the preceding chapters, namely that principals themselves have a much more positive assessment of their leadership than their teachers. Although principals view their own leadership styles as supportive, transformative, involved and engaged, their teachers tend to experience their leadership as prescriptive or passive-avoidant. Secondly, when there is unanimity (amongst teachers and principals alike) that leadership is an important factor in determining school climate and that school climate, in turn, has a powerful effect on learner performance, no factor in principal leadership style or organisational climate showed statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between high- and low-performing schools.

In Chapter 7, the author found that despite official subscription to the Creed of Human Rights and the vision of an equalitarian society – free of gender and other forms of discrimination – female principals in South African schools still experience vestiges of a culture and system of values of patriarchy that impede them from fulfilling their roles as leaders. The chapter reports about research on leadership amidst changing circumstances, whereby 14 principals of performing schools in seven provinces were interviewed. Apart from the particular challenges faced by female principals, principals of schools experience strong challenges, which the author grouped under three rubrics: administration (they as principals are overburdened with administrative duties), community relations (maintaining sound relationships between school on the one hand and parents and communities on the other hand, the diverse nature of communities, in particular, being very challenging) and staff relations (managing and leading the teacher corps and other personnel). Echoing the previous

and other chapters in the volume, and despite offering an extensive literature survey of what top scholars in the field of Educational Leadership enumerate as the distinguishing features of exemplary or successful school leaders, the research could not produce a set of concrete distinguishing features of education leaders, holding in all schools.

In determining the induction needs of DPs, the author of Chapter 8 used the PDNAQ as data collection instrument, which he had developed in collaboration with three other scholars. The questionnaire comprised 85 items and contained Section A (biographical factors), Section B (demographic factors), Section C (problems) and Section D (skills). Section A consisted of items 1-9; Section B, items 9-11, Section C, items 12-62 and Section D, items 63-85. The Likert scale that was used on the questionnaire consisted of four response categories, namely 'to almost no extent', 'to a small extent', 'to some extent' and 'to a large extent'. A total of 157 DPs in the North West Province completed the questionnaire. On the basis of the induction needs of DPs, which were determined in this research, the DPIM was developed. The DPIM consists of three main phases, namely the pre-service, induction and continuing professional development phases. The pre-service phase includes the recruitment, selection and appointment of the newly appointed DP. The induction phase consists of management orientation, remediation aims (which seek to address deficiencies that could manifest themselves as a result of lack of management training or experience on the side of the newly appointed DPs) and socialisation. Mentoring and feedback are important moments of the last phase in the model, namely the continuing professional development phase.

The theme of curriculum leadership came under the spotlight in Chapter 9. In Chapter 1, the pivotal place of curriculum in South African schools was explained. The researcher reporting his research in Chapter 9 investigated curriculum leadership training of 6 principals, 6 DPs and 12 HoDs, by using interviews. In his

literature survey, he explained the demanding worksheet of SMT members (i.e. principals, DPs and HoDs). This includes teaching, engagement in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, personnel management, administration, communication and interaction with stakeholders. The findings of this research is quite disturbing: the respondents complained about a lack of training and development, a too heavy workload, conflicting priorities and a lack of time to avail themselves of whatever training and development opportunities may be available, a lack of resources, a negative school culture, poor learner discipline and a constant avalanche of changing policies and curricula from the side of education ministries – all factors working against the creation of a professional environment congenial to training in and development of curriculum leadership.

In Chapter 10, the author reports about research on how school leaders use ICT in performing their management or leadership roles. He found that especially Quintile 1–3 schools face severe challenges because of a lack of adequate resources and infrastructure. Some school principals have a positive and some have a negative attitude towards the use of ICT. However, even those who are positive about the use of ICT lack knowledge and also show fear regarding the use of ICT. The author identified a need for training of school leaders in the use of ICT as the most urgent need and main conclusion from his research.

In Chapter 11, the author reports about research on the functioning of SGBs at South African schools. Semi-structured interviews at four top-performing schools in two provinces were conducted with the following persons:

- the chairperson of the governing body or his or her delegate
- the school principal
- one teacher serving in the governing body
- one teacher not serving in the governing body.

It was found that the SGB plays a significant role in the review, composition and formulation of school policies, and that

positively influences the school organisational climate. Similarly, it was concluded that the SGB makes a positive contribution to the school climate by being effectively involved in the delivery of the curriculum, especially with regard to the availability of teaching resources. There is a clear distinction between the governance role of the SGB and the management role of the principal, and this positive cooperation agreement has a positive effect on the school climate. Trusting and positive relationships exist between SGBs and principals. The SGB plays a significant role in establishing acceptable learner discipline at the school and they are aware of and keep in mind that disciplined learners exert a favourable influence on the school climate. The SGBs of the schools that participated in the investigation set an example for the parent community and make real efforts to get parents more involved in the school activities.

■ Conclusion

It is clear from the selection of chapters comprising this book, firstly, that leadership in schools is significant, both in its own right and – as reports of empirical research in top-performing schools convincingly show – serving as a fulcrum to successfully negotiate many other challenges, such as debilitating contextual factors. Secondly, leadership is complex – the perimeter of educational leadership cannot be drawn at the walls of the principal’s office. Educational leadership comprises much more than what takes place in the office of the principal; at least the following should be provided for in any theoretical schema of educational leadership:

- the other members of the school management cadre (in the South African context, at least the DP, HoDs and the SGB)
- intra-school factors (learners, teachers, infrastructure and curriculum)
- parents
- education system context
- community and societal contexts.

The above makes for a complex edifice. Although typologies of many leadership styles exist (as have been described in the chapters of this volume), and the constructions of such typologies are to be welcomed and leadership has statistically been demonstrated to affect learning outcomes and school effectiveness, an unqualified statement regarding the best leadership style (or even the exact qualities of good leadership, or on any $x \rightarrow y$ relation), that is, trying to impute linear relations to leadership style or qualities related to education outcomes, is a forlorn exercise. The situation is simply too complex, with too many intermediating or conflating or contaminating variables. Education scholarship cannot and should not try to supply practitioners (teachers, principals and education) with a 'bag of tricks', fool-proof for any situation. The past decade and a half, Comparative Education scholar David Turner, in a series of books (2005, 2009, 2011), has argued that in any field of education, the complexity of the object of study rules out the finding of laws of a natural science kind; the apt metaphor captured in the title of his latest book is 'Using the Medical Model for Education' (Turner 2011).

Without in any way advocating or resigning to nominalism, the recommendation that can be made at the end of this book is for Education Leadership scholarship to proceed with case studies, such as the studies presented in the chapters of this volume, and from there to attempt to progress to a finer-textured theory of Education Leadership, school, education system and societal context that is ecology-sensitive and also inspirational for practitioners, rather than attempting to derive universally valid laws. What comes to mind here is a quotation by German author Bertolt Brecht: '*Ziel der Wissenschaft ist es nicht, die Tür zur unendlichen Weisheit zu öffnen, sondern dem unendlichen Irrtum eine Grenze zu setzen*' ['The aim of science is not to open the door to infinite wisdom, but to set a limit to infinite error'] (Anon. 2019).

The third conclusion to be drawn from the chapters of this volume is the need for education and training of education leaders, which is the common factor running through well-nigh all chapters. Research such as that published in this volume or the books on exemplary schools by Wrigley (2003, 2012) and Wrigley, Thomson and Lingard (2012) can simultaneously form the basis for inspirational education and training of education leaders, such that (pre-service, but especially) in-service education and training, followed by their reflection on their own practice, should inform ever better and precise theory of Education Leadership.

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Chapter 7

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Index

A

accept, 44, 56, 113, 151, 183, 260, 303
accessibility, 90, 97, 243
Africa, 1-4, 6-7, 10, 14-15, 17-18, 20,
22-23, 27-31, 33, 36, 45, 47,
49-50, 52, 75, 80, 82, 102-108,
135, 138, 153, 160-161, 163-166,
168, 176, 195-196, 198, 205-206,
223, 225, 227-239, 246,
248-252, 257, 259, 263, 267,
285, 287-288, 292, 294, 315, 317
African, 1-8, 10-12, 14, 16, 18-20, 22,
26-33, 36, 47, 49, 74, 82, 97,
104-105, 136-138, 142, 154, 160,
162, 164, 195-198, 202, 204, 210,
227, 231, 234, 237-239, 246,
252, 260, 262, 267, 277, 288,
292-295, 299, 315-318, 320-324
age, 3, 9, 11, 25, 44, 78, 95, 122, 276
attitude, 80-81, 93-94, 98-99, 132,
168, 192, 249-250, 258, 262,
275-278, 283, 318, 322

B

behaviour, 46, 48-49, 55-57, 69,
71-72, 74, 76, 80, 85, 88-89,
99, 119, 124, 127, 136, 142-143,
146, 148, 156-157, 161-162, 175,
177-178, 231, 236, 250, 290, 298

C

care, 38, 51, 62, 68, 71, 73, 79, 146, 172,
230, 295
challenges, 1-2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14-16,
19-20, 39-40, 45-46, 49, 54, 75,
77-78, 83, 85, 90, 95, 98, 100,
102-103, 105, 108, 121-122, 135,
164-166, 168, 170, 176, 179, 181,
183, 187-188, 190, 195, 200, 223,
225, 229-230, 238, 247-252,

257, 259-260, 275, 277, 285,
315-318, 320, 322-324
change, 2, 6, 8, 10-11, 36, 43, 56-57,
69, 71, 79, 81, 83, 85, 90, 96,
98-100, 103-104, 106-114,
116, 118, 120-122, 124, 126, 128,
130-132, 139-140, 146, 164, 183,
190, 199, 210, 250, 258-260,
262, 276-277, 289, 319
character, 65-66, 70, 72-73, 88, 173,
182, 186
characteristics, 55, 79, 85, 98-99, 107,
141, 147-148, 169, 171-172, 174,
177, 192, 240, 290
child, 31, 40, 52-54, 129, 252
children, 4, 30-31, 39, 46, 49-50, 88, 95,
104, 120, 122, 124, 128, 130, 173,
182, 185, 200, 271, 275, 282, 311
collaboration, 80, 119, 124, 128-129,
140, 175-176, 297, 321
community, 2, 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 35,
48, 51, 56, 65, 77, 80, 83-84, 88,
97-98, 100, 102, 106, 108, 117,
128, 130, 141, 147-148, 167-168,
171, 173, 175-177, 181-182, 184,
188-192, 197-198, 231, 235-236,
238, 251, 265-266, 271-272, 279,
286, 292, 295-299, 311, 314, 316,
318-320, 323
concept, 7, 11, 13, 21-23, 46, 109,
147-148, 202, 207, 217, 227-228,
262-263, 271, 303
context, 2, 5-6, 8, 10, 14, 20-23, 25-26,
29, 31-34, 36-37, 47, 78, 80, 84,
87, 89, 100, 108, 136, 141, 144, 146,
149, 154, 160, 163, 168, 171, 174,
176, 178, 182, 190-192, 202-203,
207-208, 211, 213, 216, 219, 223,
227, 231, 246, 254, 271, 274-275,
292-293, 316, 319, 323-324

- contextual factors, 15–16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28–30, 32–34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 49, 275, 287, 315, 318, 323
- contextual, 6, 10, 15–16, 18–20, 22–24, 26, 28–30, 32–34, 36–38, 40, 42, 44, 49, 275, 287, 315, 317–318, 323
- continuing professional development, 196, 198, 215–216, 219–222, 321
- create, 1–2, 8, 32, 36, 46, 68, 72, 87, 91, 137, 139–141, 149, 167–168, 182, 188, 193, 228, 262, 281, 314
- creating, 5, 13, 28, 32, 76, 87, 93, 110, 140–141, 167, 174–175, 230, 285, 309, 318
- culture, 7–8, 22–23, 32, 43, 49, 68, 79, 85, 87, 96, 102, 110, 112, 119, 127, 131, 139–141, 148, 162, 171, 173, 175, 183, 202–203, 205, 219, 221, 241, 249–250, 264, 271, 286, 290, 299, 320, 322
- curriculum leadership, 10–11, 126, 225–226, 228–230, 232, 234–238, 240–244, 246–250, 252–255, 321–322
- D**
- defined, 22, 32–33, 37, 144–145, 147, 167, 202, 252–253, 299
- democracy, 3, 13–14, 23, 28, 53, 176, 250, 263
- deputy principal, 117, 214–215, 226, 244
- deputy principals, 10, 195–196, 198, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212, 214–216, 218, 220, 222, 228, 234–235
- design, 37, 57, 59, 88, 104, 113, 153, 178, 195, 205, 211, 213, 243, 258, 273, 298
- develop, 16, 44, 79, 112, 143, 148, 152, 158, 168, 175, 185, 195–196, 202–203, 208, 215, 222–223, 231, 241–242, 255, 261, 270, 308
- developing, 98, 176, 196–197, 206, 218, 229–230, 232, 246, 254, 259–260, 267, 270, 275, 284
- development, 2–3, 9, 21, 26–27, 44, 51, 57, 68, 72, 79, 81–83, 85, 98–99, 108, 139, 144, 147, 171, 175–177, 196–204, 206–210, 215–217, 219–223, 226–231, 233, 235, 238–241, 245–246, 249–251, 254–255, 258–261, 268, 270–271, 277–279, 284, 291, 297, 307–308, 314, 321–322
- diversity, 30–31, 34, 36, 40, 79, 96, 190, 193
- E**
- economic, 3, 5, 9, 12–13, 18, 26, 28, 30, 36, 40, 47–49, 80–81, 89, 95, 123, 138, 148–149, 168, 179, 182, 190, 193, 207, 209, 251, 305, 318–319
- education policy, 11, 16, 28, 34–35, 43, 250, 292
- education, 1–7, 10–11, 13–37, 43, 45, 47, 49–54, 61, 68, 74–75, 77, 81–85, 88, 102–109, 114–115, 122, 135–137, 140–141, 160–161, 164–165, 169–170, 173, 180, 188–189, 191, 193, 195, 200, 204, 207–210, 212, 222–223, 225–226, 233, 236, 238–239, 243–245, 250–252, 257, 259–261, 264, 273–274, 276–277, 285, 287–288, 290–294, 299, 301–302, 307, 315–319, 321–325
- educational leadership, 2, 33, 48, 107, 229, 315–317, 321, 323
- educational management, 216, 258, 264–265
- environment, 22, 46, 48, 52, 68, 74, 76, 79–81, 85–88, 93, 101, 106–107, 111, 124, 139, 141–142, 145, 147–148, 150, 156, 161, 175–176, 186–187, 191, 197, 203–205, 208, 220–221, 231, 233, 251, 254, 264, 289–290, 296, 322
- ethical, 37, 46, 48, 54–55, 115, 154–155, 175, 180, 184, 212, 245, 301
- ethics, 31, 55, 58, 180, 185, 212, 245, 274, 301

F

families, 34–35, 40, 62, 79, 129, 148, 177, 251–252
 family, 9, 22, 31, 147, 172, 251–252
 fear, 120, 276–277, 322
 formulation, 288, 299–300, 304, 322

G

generation, 10, 12, 182–183, 277
 goods, 69, 207
 governance, 13, 28, 285–294, 296, 298, 300, 302, 304, 306, 308–310, 312, 314, 323
 government, 3, 5, 13–14, 24, 28, 32, 41–42, 46, 49, 55, 107, 175, 210, 223, 235–236, 240, 248, 250, 263, 287
 growth, 25, 28, 30, 79, 147, 176, 189, 208–209, 220, 228, 258

H

head of department, 114, 117, 226, 244
 holistic, 57, 68, 72, 79, 174, 204, 208
 human capital, 166, 181–182, 196, 202, 207–210, 223
 human rights, 10, 77, 320
 human, 10, 12, 53, 57, 72, 77, 79, 84–85, 97–98, 109, 150, 166, 169, 181–182, 186–187, 190, 192, 196–197, 202, 207–210, 223, 228, 230, 237, 254, 260, 265–266, 268, 298, 310, 320
 humanity, 56, 186, 190

I

identity, 37, 52, 155, 171, 191, 214
 implementation, 8, 88, 110, 112, 125, 131–132, 154, 222, 226, 229, 231–232, 253, 258–259, 261–262, 275, 283, 292, 294
 importance, 7, 9, 78, 80, 84, 89, 99, 101, 109, 136–137, 139, 145–146, 149, 151, 153, 163, 171, 173–176, 188, 190, 197–198, 200, 203, 205, 209, 216, 222, 255, 265, 287, 289, 295, 318

improvement, 11, 52, 74, 80, 84–85, 103–104, 106–111, 113, 116, 120–122, 125, 127, 129, 133, 141, 197, 220, 231, 238, 240, 249, 259, 261, 268
 inclusion, 32, 46
 inclusive, 21, 239
 induction, 10, 82, 132, 195–208, 210, 212–223, 246–247, 313, 319, 321
 inequality, 4, 9, 30
 influence, 13, 26, 42, 49–50, 52, 55–56, 75–76, 78, 80–82, 84–92, 94–96, 98–100, 102, 108, 110–111, 118, 136–139, 141–144, 146–148, 150, 161, 163, 171, 173, 177, 190, 192–193, 225, 259, 285–290, 292, 294, 296–300, 302, 304–306, 308, 310–312, 314, 323
 inside, 51, 238, 290
 instruction, 11, 106, 138–139, 168, 172, 270
 instructional, 11, 84, 98–99, 105–106, 110, 133, 167–168, 172, 198, 201
 integrity, 54–56, 65–66, 70, 72–73, 188
 interests, 209, 249, 295, 297, 304, 307
 interpret, 57, 178, 262
 interpretation, 32, 113, 116, 125, 245, 273, 298
 investigation, 2, 5, 14, 46, 113, 155, 171, 202, 210, 215, 273, 287, 299, 311, 323

J

justice, 3, 28, 53, 62, 68, 79, 141, 171

L

language, 17, 22, 25–26, 31, 40, 81, 89, 138–139, 149, 212–213, 294, 305
 laws, 37, 250, 316, 324
 leadership style, 76–78, 81, 87–88, 100–101, 117, 136–137, 139–140, 142–147, 149–150, 152–164, 167, 173, 316, 320, 324
 leadership, 1–2, 4–12, 14–16, 18–24, 26, 28, 30, 32–34, 36–42, 44–56, 58–60, 62, 64, 66, 68,

70-92, 94, 96-110, 117, 125-126, 128, 130, 135-150, 152-168, 170-178, 180, 182, 184, 186-193, 195-198, 200-201, 206, 211-212, 219, 221-223, 225-230, 232, 234-238, 240-244, 246-250, 252-255, 257-259, 261, 270, 284-287, 296, 299, 308, 315-325

learner performance, 5, 8, 48-49, 76-77, 81, 87-88, 91, 95, 101, 126, 136, 141, 149-150, 153, 161, 205, 232, 307, 319-320

legislation, 13, 139, 188, 217, 239, 263, 294

M

management, 2, 12, 14, 18, 24, 50, 63, 77-78, 80-82, 84-85, 91-92, 95, 97-98, 102, 107, 117-118, 121-122, 129, 137, 139, 143, 147, 164-167, 169-170, 172, 177-178, 184-189, 192, 196-197, 199, 205-206, 211-212, 216-218, 221, 225-231, 233-234, 237-238, 240-241, 246-247, 249-250, 254, 258-286, 288-293, 295-296, 306-309, 312-313, 316, 321-323

media, 12, 17, 31, 262, 271-272

mentoring, 68, 71, 196, 199, 215, 219, 222, 321

mission, 7, 24, 32, 56, 85, 97, 143-144, 202, 294

model, 8, 10-11, 21, 34-35, 55-56, 71, 73, 78-79, 84, 125, 132, 143, 148, 195-198, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212, 214-223, 243, 258, 260, 264-265, 301, 321, 324

moral imperative, 46, 51-54, 74

moral leadership, 7, 45-48, 50-52, 54-56, 58-60, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70-74, 318

moral, 2, 5-7, 10, 35-36, 45-48, 50-60, 62, 64-66, 68-74, 82, 88, 166, 172, 176, 318

motivation, 17, 85, 99, 110, 133, 141, 143, 174, 198, 240, 265, 268, 292

N

National Development Plan, 196, 209, 223

need, 4, 14, 19, 35-36, 51, 54-55, 61, 63, 78, 83, 90-91, 93, 100, 104, 110, 120, 125, 133, 142, 166-168, 172, 181, 185-186, 190, 197, 199-200, 202, 205-208, 210, 218-220, 223, 225-226, 228, 230-236, 238-242, 244, 246-255, 259-260, 263, 272, 277, 279-282, 316, 322, 325

needs, 11-12, 17-18, 23-25, 27, 29, 32, 35, 51, 54, 62, 67, 72, 74, 86, 102, 108, 111, 127, 143, 162, 175-176, 181-182, 184, 189, 195-196, 198, 201, 203-204, 208-210, 212-216, 218, 222-223, 233, 235, 240-241, 251, 254, 257-258, 260, 262, 270-271, 273-274, 281-284, 290-291, 295, 318, 321

network, 12, 193, 249

networks, 262, 310-311

O

objectives, 3, 5, 7, 24, 28, 88, 110, 143, 150, 164, 168-170, 177, 205, 237-238, 241

P

paradigm, 6, 76, 88-89, 153, 177, 226, 258, 272-273, 298-299

parent, 43, 238, 293, 295, 297, 311, 314, 323

parents, 7, 14, 31, 34-36, 40-43, 46, 61, 78, 80, 86, 95-96, 119-120, 122, 124, 127-129, 131-133, 147-149, 163, 175, 179, 182, 184-186, 191, 229-230, 234, 236, 239, 251-252, 266-267, 269, 271-272, 276, 281, 286, 293, 295-296, 299, 301, 305, 310-311, 316, 319-320, 323

participation, 37, 59, 112, 115, 142, 145, 163, 176, 181, 235, 245

peace, 3, 28, 66

- people, 2-3, 13, 26, 28, 46-47, 53-54, 56-57, 65-66, 70, 72, 78-80, 85, 94-95, 102, 107, 111, 121, 123, 125, 141, 144-145, 148, 160, 169-170, 176, 182-184, 186-190, 192, 201, 204-207, 209-210, 227, 238, 248, 263, 272, 289-290, 298, 310
- philosophy, 7, 25-26, 32, 160
- politics, 25, 60, 118, 148, 318
- poor management, 77, 92
- poor, 1, 4, 11, 16-18, 36, 40-41, 44, 47-50, 59, 61, 64, 73, 76-77, 80-82, 84, 89, 92, 94-95, 97, 104, 106, 136, 138, 166, 168, 174, 176, 179, 182, 184, 197, 204, 211, 213, 219, 249-250, 252-253, 272, 277, 319, 322
- poorly achieving schools, 16, 37, 44
- poverty, 3-4, 28, 30, 40, 61-62, 76, 103
- power, 5, 18, 23, 26, 33, 46, 48, 104, 110-111, 141-142, 144, 204, 251, 290
- pre-service, 196, 215-218, 220, 223, 317, 321, 325
- principal, 7, 14, 19-20, 23, 34-35, 38, 40-41, 43, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 57, 59-71, 74-104, 106, 108-110, 112-114, 116-120, 122-124, 126-130, 132, 136-137, 139-142, 144, 147-150, 152, 154, 156-168, 170-176, 178-193, 197, 200-201, 205, 214-215, 226-230, 232-240, 243-244, 252-254, 258-260, 263-264, 266, 268, 270-272, 276-280, 286, 292-293, 296-297, 300-301, 305, 308-310, 312-313, 315-316, 319-320, 322-323
- process, 3, 13, 21-22, 28, 63, 68-69, 77, 85, 90, 115, 122-123, 139-140, 144-145, 152, 160, 169, 180, 187, 189-190, 192, 199, 202-204, 206, 217-221, 223, 238, 241, 263-264, 266, 268-269, 273, 283, 317
- professional development, 139, 171, 196-201, 206-208, 210, 215-216, 219-223, 230, 240-241, 258, 261, 270-271, 277-279, 284, 308, 321
- programme, 10, 13, 22, 35, 62, 65, 71, 82, 92, 105, 108, 117, 132, 155, 170, 199, 203, 208, 214, 222, 226, 241-242, 246-247, 253-255, 313
- protection, 79, 237, 245
- purpose, 47, 51-54, 56, 58, 74, 77-78, 82, 85, 88-89, 97, 104, 153, 165-166, 178, 181, 183, 192, 198-200, 203-205, 216, 221, 223, 227, 242-243, 245, 255, 286-288, 298-299, 302, 314
- Q**
- quantitative, 136, 153, 195-196, 222
- questionnaires, 9, 37, 136, 153-154, 211, 213-214
- R**
- recognition, 54, 82, 161, 307
- relation, 8, 11, 18, 35, 58, 108, 180, 207, 229, 316, 324
- relationship, 8, 46, 51, 59-61, 66-67, 70, 76, 81, 86, 91-92, 101-102, 123-124, 129, 136-137, 139, 147-148, 152-153, 158, 161-163, 192-193, 207, 209, 217, 271, 297, 309, 318-319
- research, 1-2, 4, 6, 8, 10-12, 14-16, 18-20, 32-33, 36-37, 44-46, 48, 52, 57-59, 73-75, 86, 88-90, 103-105, 109-110, 113, 115-116, 118-119, 135-136, 139, 153, 155, 161-163, 165-167, 170-171, 177-181, 184, 195, 198, 210-212, 214-215, 222-223, 225-230, 240, 242-246, 248, 252-255, 257-258, 261-263, 272-275, 283, 285-289, 298, 301, 303, 315, 317-323, 325
- resources, 11-12, 21, 35-36, 41, 48-49, 53, 74, 76-77, 79, 85, 96-98, 130, 138, 168, 175-176,

- 207–209, 228–230, 234, 237,
248, 259–260, 263–264,
266, 268–269, 275, 277, 291,
305–308, 312, 314, 319, 322–323
- responsibilities, 78, 85, 99, 140, 168,
172, 185, 197, 208, 211, 218,
226–228, 231, 234–237, 240,
242, 246, 253–254, 258–259,
287, 289–292, 297
- responsibility, 44, 47, 51, 54, 56, 71, 91,
93, 102, 113, 118, 123, 126, 140,
143, 151, 191, 209, 260, 271, 284,
291, 293, 296–297, 304
- rights, 10, 77, 320
- risk, 48, 74, 176
- rural schools, 82, 126, 176, 258,
262–263, 275–277, 284
- S**
- school climate, 2, 22, 46, 48–49, 72,
75–78, 80–82, 84–98, 100–102,
135–140, 142–144, 146–150,
152–156, 158–164, 167, 173,
285–292, 294–307, 309–314,
317–320, 323
- school effectiveness, 11, 46, 48, 77–80,
167, 170, 173, 198, 200, 316, 324
- school governing bodies, 2, 12, 14, 81,
97, 286–287, 317
- school governing body, 43, 286,
297, 303
- school leaders, 2, 7, 11–12, 16, 29,
31–33, 44, 46–48, 50–52, 71,
74, 79, 83, 86, 99, 136, 142, 153,
168, 173, 196–197, 199–202, 219,
221, 223, 258–261, 273–274,
276–284, 318, 321–322
- school leadership, 8, 10, 12, 14, 19, 33,
46, 48–51, 53–54, 76, 79, 84, 87,
98, 102, 107–108, 110, 135–138,
140–142, 144, 146, 148–150,
152, 154, 156, 158, 160, 162, 164,
166, 173–175, 189, 196–198, 201,
221–223, 225–227, 229–230,
258, 261, 270, 284, 317
- school principal leadership, 77–78,
83, 88–90, 163, 165–168, 170,
172–174, 176, 178, 180, 182, 184,
186, 188, 190, 192
- school, 2, 5, 7–8, 10–14, 16, 19–23,
25, 28–29, 31–44, 46–54,
56, 58–102, 104–108, 110–112,
114–124, 126–132, 135–144,
146–150, 152–168, 170–192,
195–206, 208, 210–212, 214,
216–223, 225–241, 244–254,
257–314, 316–324
- schools, 1–2, 4–10, 12–20, 22, 24,
26–30, 32–40, 42–52, 54–60,
62, 64, 66–82, 85, 88–101,
103–110, 112–116, 118, 120–132,
136–139, 141–142, 145–146,
153–155, 158–160, 162, 164–166,
168, 170–177, 179–180, 182,
185, 187, 189–191, 193, 195–197,
200–202, 204–205, 209,
213–214, 222, 225–226, 228,
230–231, 234, 236–240, 243,
245, 248–255, 257–264,
266–278, 280–284, 286–288,
292–295, 299–303, 306,
310–311, 313, 315–325
- services, 24–26, 129, 207, 210
- societies, 9, 209
- society, 1–3, 5–7, 10, 13–14, 23, 26–28,
31–32, 36, 46, 71, 79, 105,
209–210, 263, 320
- socio-economic, 18, 36, 49, 80–81, 89,
95, 123, 138, 149, 168, 179, 182,
190, 193, 251, 319
- South Africa, 1–4, 6–7, 10, 14–15, 17–18,
20, 22–23, 27–31, 33, 36, 45, 47,
49–50, 52, 75, 80, 82, 102–108,
135, 138, 153, 160–161, 163–166,
168, 176, 195–196, 198, 205–206,
223, 225, 227–239, 246,
248–252, 257, 263, 267, 285,
287–288, 292, 294, 315, 317
- South African education, 1–2, 4–5,
10–11, 16, 22, 26–27, 29, 31, 36,
47, 104–105, 288, 292, 317
- South African schools, 1–2, 4–8, 10, 12,
14, 16, 18–20, 27–28, 33, 47, 49,
74, 82, 97, 136, 138, 142, 162, 164,

- 195–196, 204, 237–239, 252, 267,
292–295, 315–318, 320–322, 324
- space, 37, 248
- staff, 12, 38, 46, 48, 54, 59, 61–62,
64–66, 68–70, 72–74, 76, 83,
92–93, 97–99, 101, 106–107,
110–111, 118–119, 128–129, 133,
142, 154, 162, 166–167, 171, 175,
183–186, 190, 199, 203–206,
208, 216, 220, 227–228,
232–233, 235, 238, 248, 253,
261, 266–268, 270, 278–280,
293, 295–297, 305, 307–308,
312–314, 320
- status, 14, 30, 81, 104, 111, 114, 122, 125,
131, 148, 170, 179, 182, 190, 251,
289, 319
- success, 78–81, 86–87, 96, 100,
105–107, 110, 149, 166, 171, 173,
175–176, 185, 189–191, 197, 207,
210, 221, 263, 287, 295, 320
- supervision, 155, 177, 202, 233, 265
- sustainability, 104, 109–111
- T**
- teach, 96, 119, 123, 126–127, 228–229,
235, 238–239, 250, 307
- teachers, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 23, 32, 34–37,
39–44, 46, 48–52, 58–74, 76–79,
81–100, 102, 104–114, 116–133,
136–137, 139–142, 144–150,
152–166, 168, 170, 173–177,
182–183, 185, 189–193, 197, 203,
214, 226–235, 239, 241, 247,
250–251, 261, 267, 271–272,
284–285, 288, 290, 292, 295,
302–303, 306–308, 310–312,
316, 318–320, 323–324
- technology, 2, 5, 11–12, 25, 177, 222,
257–262, 264, 266, 268,
270–272, 274, 276–284, 289
- township schools, 12, 176, 258, 262,
273–275, 283–284
- training, 10–12, 22, 78, 81–82, 84–85,
98, 101–102, 108, 167, 192, 197,
200, 202, 206, 209, 218, 221,
225–236, 238, 240–242, 244,
246, 248–255, 258–262, 268,
273–274, 276–284, 286, 293,
307–308, 313, 316–317, 319,
321–322, 325
- transformation, 160–161, 171
- transparency, 77, 91–92, 245, 306, 313
- trust, 51, 56, 59, 63–64, 67–70, 72–73,
77, 79, 101, 111, 128–131, 140, 149,
162, 175, 184, 189, 286, 297–298,
310, 312–313
- U**
- underperforming schools, 8, 15–16, 18,
20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34,
36, 38, 40, 42, 44–46, 48, 50,
52, 54, 56–60, 62, 64, 66, 68,
70–78, 88–91, 100–101, 105, 114,
287, 313
- V**
- value, 3–4, 28, 32, 34, 42, 55, 72–73,
97, 115, 142, 145–146, 184, 207,
209, 213, 246, 276, 287, 296,
299
- values, 6–7, 23, 26, 35, 46–48, 51–57,
59, 65–66, 69–70, 72–74, 86,
88, 112, 132, 139, 143, 147–149,
154–155, 171, 176, 198, 213, 221,
318, 320
- violence, 88, 136, 165
- W**
- well-being, 23, 183, 209, 227, 231, 289
- workplace, 9, 241
- written, 138, 232, 302

The book is extremely important, as it unpacks leadership as one of the most crucial factors that result in overcoming the challenges that schools face. While scholarship in this field, for a long time, focused on management as the success factor in schools, performativity and control were emphasised and the importance of leadership was often underplayed. Chapter one sets the framework of leadership as instrumental to addressing the challenges that South African schools face, while chapter two discusses the contexts of South African schools. Various chapters follow, addressing relevant issues in the context of disadvantaged, and/or underperforming schools; moral leadership; school climate; the role of leadership in bringing about sustainable change; academic performance linked with leadership; and school climate. Pertinent issues, such as leadership in the 21st century, the importance of induction and succession, curriculum leadership, the use of ICT, and school governance are discussed. The final chapter provides a summary, synthesis and reflection on leadership in schools within the challenging, changing world. Specific claims are made: firstly, leadership is pivotal to successfully negotiate the many challenges that schools in different contexts face. Secondly, leadership is complex and layered, and cannot be limited to a 'checklist' or a set of strategies, nor be vested in the school principal only. Thirdly, it is critical that leadership training takes place at various levels and in various contexts, to motivate and inspire leadership in schools, and to bring about change. Although the context of the book is South African, I have no doubt that it will have relevance to other countries in the Global South. It is based on scholarly work of an excellent standard, and I will certainly refer to it in the years to come.

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The significance of effective leadership for the successful operation of schools has been increasingly acknowledged. The topic 'Leadership approaches to negotiate challenges in a changing education landscape' is clear, relevant and urgent, especially within the context in which the book is situated. Relevant and urgent in the sense that leadership in managing school improvement remains a critical issue in the South African education landscape. The book makes significant contributions to our understanding of how leaders and other stakeholders, through their leadership, can influence the behaviour of people to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the selected topics selected for the book. The book unpacks the issue of leadership in South African schools from a variety of perspectives, contributing to the guidance of improvement of praxis, as to the development of scholarly discourse on Educational Leadership in South Africa. The book has earned a place in terms of scholarly craft and the book contributes to understanding the challenges faced in changing education landscape in South Africa.

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