Successful leadership practices of School Management Team members: A multiple case study of selected rural secondary schools

By

Desmond Monde Gogo

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UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Durban, South Africa

Supervisor: Prof TT Bhengu
Co-Supervisor: Dr BNCK Mkhize

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I, Desmond Monde Gogo declare that:

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ii.   This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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STATEMENT BY SUPERVISORS

This thesis has been submitted with/ ~~without~~ our approval.

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Supervisor: Prof TT Bhengu   **DATE**

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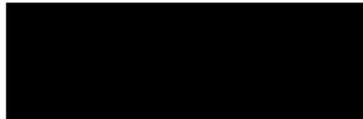
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21 March 2021

Mr Desmond Monde Gogo (215079576)
School Of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Gogo,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002551/2021
Project title: Successful leadership practices of School Management Team members: A Multiple case study of selected rural secondary schools
Degree: PhD

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 01 March 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 21 March 2022.
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 **Email:** hssrec@ukzn.ac.za **Website:** http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics

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INSPIRING GREATNESS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to God, the Almighty for His unwavering love, support, and protection. To Him all the glory goes. I cannot leave behind my ancestors for protecting me and giving courage yhrouout the study.

This thesis is also dedicated to my late mother, Mis Sophlina Nomachule Bandezi; my late grand mother, Mrs Rosinha Yaluza Bandezi (uMakhayise); the sisters to my grand mother Mrs Nomfundo Gladys Tshayingca and Mrs Thembeka Mtshengu who assisted me to obtain formal education from Grade one previously known as Sub-A. I also extend my gratitude to my great grand mother Mrs Polinha Mantsengeni Swana. I salute all my children and my family at large, precisely my three children, Manyano, Bayolise and Yolokazi Gogo, for encouraging me to complete this study and giving me support when I needed it most. I cannot forget my Ant Miss Nontuthuzelo Swana, my cousin Solomzi Qumba and his wife. Without their support and love, I would never have climbed this mountain.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine successful leadership practices and how these practices are locally enacted by SMT members in rural secondary schools in the O. R. Tambo Coastal District in the Eastern Cape. Moreover, the study seeks to understand how these successful leadership practices are 'practicalised' in different contexts and how negative environmental challenges that hinder success are mitigated thereof. Furthermore, this study seeks to understand the complexities and intricacies surrounding leadership practices in trying school contexts. The study was qualitative and interpretive in nature and employed semi-structured interviews to generate data. The study was focused on four research sites which were purposively sampled from rural secondary schools. Interpretive data analysis was used in this study which emphasised the need for the researcher to stay close to the data so as to interpret it from a position of thorough understanding of the School Management Team members' leadership practices. This study is framed on Instructional Leadership Theory Model by Hallinger (2011) and Adaptive Leadership Theory. The study found out that leadership practices in rural secondary schools laid emphasis on school-community integration and maintained close relationship with the traditional leaders. Also, the study found that School Management Team members describe and explain successful leadership practices among other things as a way whereby the newly appointed Principals physically go to Traditional leaders as to introduce themselves as additional members to the communities where Traditional leaders are residing. Among other things, this study reveals the importance of the enhanced collaboration between the schools and various stakeholders and accountability. This study also found that, in enhancing collaboration between the school and various stakeholders, the schools among other things initiated a strategy of accounting to Traditional leaders quarterly for learner results in terms of learner academic performance. As a result, learner academic performance improved in the participating schools.

ABBREVIATIONS

ATPs	Annual Teaching Plans
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CPFs	Community Policing Forums
DBE	Department of Basic Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HOD	Provincial Head of Department
DHs	Departmental Heads
LTSM	Learner and Teaching Support Material
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MT	Monitoring Tool
NSC	National Senior Certificate
ORTCD	Oliver Tambo Coastal District
RCLs	Representative Council of Learners
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SASA	South African Schools Act
SDC	School Development Committee
SGBs	School Governing Bodies
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMTs	School Management Team members
TLO	Teacher Liaison Officer
TL	Traditional leadership

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<div align="center">**CHAPTER ONE**</div>

<div align="center">**ORIENTATION AND INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY**</div>

1.1 Introduction

The study reported in this thesis is about successful leadership practices of School Management Team (SMT) members in four secondary schools in a rural district of the Eastern Cape, known as O.R Tambo District. Education in rural areas generally and other similar contexts in South Africa, face multiple factors that militate against effective and efficient curriculum delivery. Most of the factors that undermine the quality of education delivery include social ills such as high levels of unemployment, poverty and high levels of illiteracy amongst the parent population. In addition to these factors, schools in these areas have a bad reputation for producing poor results in the National Senior Certificate (NCS) examinations. However, as Chikoko (2018) observes, there is evidence to suggest that some schools are resilient, and have performed quite well despite these conditions of deprivations.

This is the first of seven chapter that constitutes this thesis. The chapter introduces the study and the introduction sets the scene of the study by providing the background to the problem, making the statement of the problem, the rationale and purpose of the study. Other elements such as the significance of the study, research objectives and research questions, the clarification of key concepts and the outline of the thesis follow.

1.2 Background to the study

The notion of successful leadership practices is not a new phenomenon in South Africa and internationally (Marimandi, 2015). The role that is played by school principals in ensuring effective teaching and learning is well documented (Nzimande, 2019; Mhlanga, 2019). Similarly, the idea of collective leadership in the form of School Management Teams (SMTs) has become dominant in the South African context since the country became a democracy in 1994. In fact, that is one of the reasons this thesis explored leadership practices of SMT members rather than just exploring school principals' successful leadership practices. While collective leadership in the form of the SMTs can play a prominent role in the schools' success, it has been acknowledged by scholars in South Africa that some schools do not perform well as anticipated (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015).

Because of what these scholars say, South Africa has had a bad reputation of poor learner academic achievement (Spaul, 2015), particularly among learners in schools located in rural areas (Mkhize & Bhengu, 2013). However, recently, studies have shown that there are some pockets of excellence amongst schools in rural contexts (Chikoko, 2018). Moreover, many schools in rural areas continuously experience a variety of challenges that hinder their academic performance (Bhengu, 2019; Gogo, 2016; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005). These challenges include a lack of resources of various types, poverty, lack of parental involvement, Post Provision Norms to mention a few. In addition, literature reveals that narratives used to describe schools in rural settings of South Africa have been largely dominated by negativities such as the lack of infrastructure, poverty, low rate of employment opportunities for the youth and poor learner academic achievement (Bhengu, 2019).

Furthermore, literature has persistently revealed that poor learner academic achievement can be directly associated with the environmental conditions in which schools are positioned (Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018). Combined, these factors exert negative effects on the accomplishment of their organisational goals. Consequently, such challenges are linked to learner enrolment decline and learner migration prevalent in rural schools (Aldana, 2016; Gogo, 2016; Mafora, 2013). Owing to these and other challenges, the work of the school principal and school management team members in such a context has been depicted as demanding and challenging as compared to their counterparts somewhere else in the country (Bhengu, 2019). For example, school principals and their management teams in those rural settings often struggle to recruit and retain qualified teachers, yet properly qualified teaching corps are crucial for quality teaching and learning in schools (Mafuwane, 2011). Nevertheless, despite these challenges, there are still schools that achieve good results in terms of the provincial benchmarks. However, the literature reveals that sound leadership can provide effective interventions that can lessen negative environmental challenges (Bhengu, 2019). This study examines successful leadership practices in the context of rural settings. As highlighted in the introduction, the study sought to understand the leadership practices of SMT members that contributed to the schools' successes in the context of rurality. These contexts have their own complexities which need to be understood (Chikoko, 2018; Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2013).

1.3 Statement of the problem

The system of education in South Africa comprises a mixture of first and the third world institutions (Chikoko et al., 2015; Maringe & Singh, 2015). These scholars argue that on one

hand, there are schools that are known to be performing well in many respects, including in the National Senior Certificate (NCS) examinations results. These schools happen to be previously well-resourced as well. On the other hand, we have those schools that were previously disadvantaged in various ways, including under-resourcing, non-availability of basic infrastructure and equipment, as well as prevalence of poor academic learner achievement in the NSC examinations (Chikoko et al., 2015; Maringe & Singh, 2015). Furthermore, various contributors to the dysfunctionality of the schools is ineffective leadership in the education system on various levels of management (Pretorius, 2014). Moreover, these schools experience challenges that include the lack of resources and prevalence of poverty to mention a few (Aldana, 2016). Therefore, some parents withdraw their children from such schools (Chiororo, 2014; Gogo, 2016). The latter category of schools is similar to those that form part of this study. However, some of these schools have demonstrated some resilience and have continued to perform well despite the challenges posed by the environment. Therefore, the main question is, how do these schools succeed where others fail? This thesis attempted to obtain answers to the broad question about successful leadership of SMT members in rural secondary schools in the O.R. Tambo Coastal District.

Preliminary review of literature suggests some of the ways in which successful leaders enact leadership. For example, Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2020) reveal some successful leadership practices that contribute towards the betterment of the schools. These practices include setting the direction, developing people, managing teaching and learning, and redesigning the organisation as leadership activities that play a vital role in achieving success in an organisation. Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2020) further contend that successful school leaders set directions by building a shared vision, by creating high- performance expectations, to mention a few. Furthermore, Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2020) argue that successful school leaders develop people by stimulating growth in the professional capacity of staff, by building trusting relationships with and among staff, students and parents to mention a few but not limited to, so as to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance. Additionally, scholars such as Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2020) avow that successful leaders develop the school to support desired practices by building collaborative culture and distributive leadership by allocating resources in support of the school's vision and goals as to make the school to thrive. Moreover, the findings reveal that successful school leaders improve the instructional programmes by providing instructional support, monitoring student learning and

school improvement goals to mention a few. All these activities are consistent with what other scholars call effective leadership (Bhengu & Mthembu, 2014).

The notion of effective leadership as a catalyst for school success is well documented (See, Mthiyane, Bhengu & Bayeni, 2014; Bhengu & Mthembu, 2014; Cole & Southworth, 2003; Townsend, 2011). In that regard, scholars such as Townsend (2011), Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2020) all highlight the important role that leadership in schools plays in improving learner academic outcomes. Therefore, strong leadership or lack thereof is regarded as a determinant of the direction that the school takes (Mthiyane, Bhengu & Bayeni, 2014). As a result, successful leaders are advised to set the direction as to thrive in terms of achieving high learner academic performance (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2020; Thaba-Nkadimene, Modiba & Molotja, 2019).

Kemmis, Wilkinson, Hardy, Grootenboer and Bristol (2014) argue for practitioners and researchers to account, not only for actions and discourses, but also for 'relatings' and the ways these three dimensions of practice simultaneously shape and are shaped by one another and the practice architectures that enable and constrain interaction. Green (2009) further argues that what practices entail, and what enables and constrains their enactment is sometimes lost. The current literature is more prescriptive, focusing more on 'what' successful leadership practices entail. Little is known about 'how' these successful leadership practices are 'practicalised' in different contexts and the mediating factors thereof. The complexities and intricacies surrounding leadership practices in trying school contexts are not fully understood (Chikoko, 2018; Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2013). Little is known, for example, about 'doings in practices' and 'relatings' and the ways these dimensions of practice simultaneously shape and are shaped by one another and the practice architectures that enable and constrain them (Kemmis et al., 2014) in, for example, the context of the rural setting in the Eastern Cape. Therefore, what we do not know is about how School Management Team members practice successful leadership practices in O.R. Tambo Coastal District. Subsequently, this study aimed at examining successful leadership practices and how these practices are locally enacted by school management team members in rural secondary schools in Eastern Cape to gain a holistic and a local understanding of the phenomenon.

1.4 Purpose and Rationale for the study

South Africa has had a bad reputation of poor learner academic achievement (Spaul, 2015), particularly among learners in schools located in rural areas (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013). However, recently, studies have shown that there are some pockets of excellence amongst schools in rural contexts (Chikoko, 2018). It is therefore, important that we draw lessons from those school leaders whose schools have been known to be successful. That is where this study is positioned.

As a person who grew up in deep rural areas, I have noted that many schools in my area continuously experience a variety of challenges that hinder their academic performance. These challenges include a lack of resources of various types, poverty, lack of parental involvement, Post Provision Norms, to mention a few. Combined, these factors exert negative effects on the accomplishment of their organisational goals. Consequently, such challenges are associated with learner enrolment decline and learner migration prevalent in rural schools (Aldana, 2016; Gogo, 2016; Mafora, 2013). Nevertheless, despite these challenges, there are still schools that achieve good results in terms of the NSC examination results as judged against provincial benchmarks. These schools are amongst the few schools of more than 100 secondary schools in O.R. Tambo Coastal District that are known to be achieving good results despite the challenges I have highlighted above. Anecdotes suggest that these schools encounter similar contextual challenges with others, but have tended to perform academically better than their counterparts irrespective of all the challenges they face.

High academic achievement is closely associated with effective and successful leadership that prevails in the schools (Bhengu, 2019). Therefore, the phenomenon of high academic achievement has sparked interest in me to want to understand how leadership is enacted in these schools. I believe that, considering that many rural schools are associated with poor academic achievement, researchers and educational leadership practitioners stand to benefit from leadership practices that I call successful in this study.

At a professional level, as a school principal, I have noticed that too many schools experience challenges mentioned in the paragraph above. Furthermore, my colleagues have noticed and shared similar sentiments with me when we meet in certain gatherings such as workshops about challenges faced by schools. Also, even different stakeholders in the community such as

political leaders, religious leaders and the members of the community at large echo similar views. It is intriguing to note that we, as school principals, claim to be doing almost similar leadership activities and share similar challenges. However, some schools prosper in terms of demonstrating operational efficiency and high levels of learner academic performance than others. This has triggered an interest in me to explore possible causes for this, and to better understand their leadership practices that may have led to the successes achieved in terms of learner academic outcomes.

Furthermore, through engagement with the literature that is within the context of South Africa, six dominant characteristics of successful leaders were identified. Firstly, they are emotionally intelligent in the sense that they are aware of their own emotions and they do not allow them to cloud their judgement (Akinola & Bhengu, 2019). Secondly, they think and act outside the box. This entails finding alternative ways and appropriate solutions to challenges instead of relying on policies that do not adequately address problems at hand (Makhasane, Simamane & Chikoko, 2018). Thirdly, they establish effective school-community partnership that brings together a multiplicity of stakeholders to deal with educational challenges (Myende, 2018). Fourthly, they are prepared to lead and serve people in terms of supporting, assisting, and caring about the well-being of others (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2018). Fifthly, they mobilise and manage resources effectively by organising their followers or resources efficiently and effectively for a particular task (Khuzwayo, 2018). Sixthly, they redesign the organisation in terms of aligning roles and responsibilities to enhance teaching and learning (Marimandi, 2015; Mukeshimana, 2016; Ramatseba, 2012).

Internationally, Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2020) revisited the 7 strong claims about successful leadership practices. Their analysis suggests that these are important leadership practices that create an environment for success in the schools. The review of literature has already begun to identify those elements of leadership that shift the focus away from the mere descriptions of what successful leaders do to the descriptions of how they do it. These ideas are useful in terms of influencing the direction of my own study. Little is known about different and distinctive ways people, discourses, activities, relationships and circumstances are intertwined in 'doing of a practice' (Bourdieu, 1990; Ingold, 2011; Kemmis et al., 2014; Schatzki, 2010). This motivates me to examine 'how the SMT members do it'. Therefore, this thesis aimed to uncover those leadership practices that SMT members enacted in order to bring about school improvement and success.

The purpose of this study was to examine successful leadership practices and how these practices are locally enacted by the selected SMT members in the rural secondary schools in Eastern Cape. Moreover, the study sought to understand how the negative environmental factors that hindered success are mitigated through leadership practices. Furthermore, this study sought to understand the complexities and intricacies surrounding leadership practices in trying school contexts. In other words, the study sought to understand more about the 'doings in practices' and 'relatings' and the ways in which these dimensions of practice simultaneously shape and are shaped by one another and the practice architectures that enable and constrain them in, for example, the context of the rural setting.

1.5 Significance of the study

There are many ways in which a study can contribute to knowledge. There are studies that have been conducted in rural areas as I have highlighted in the previous sections. However, none has been conducted in the O.R. Tambo Coastal District that described the type of leadership that prevails in the schools. This study contributes to the understandings of successful leadership practices of SMT members in the context of rurality and deprivations of various kinds. The dimensions of this study's significance lie in the collective nature of leadership as enacted by school principals, and other members of the SMT. Scholars such as Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2019), as well as Leithwood and Sun (2018) highlight the importance of collective leadership as exercised by school principals, teachers and learners. In the context of this study, teachers and learners did not form part of the study focus. Nonetheless, this study addressed what Leithwood et al. (2019) describe as addressing both what successful leaders do, as well as how they do it. Also, its significance lies in the fact that insights generated may increase our understandings and sensitivities towards many issues that may have been taken for granted. Without claiming any generalisation, the study may extend current knowledge obtained from previous work by scholars and to contribute to how the enactment of the generally successful leadership practices can be skilfully adapted by school management team members in a rural context in order to have their expected outcomes. Overall, the study stands to benefit both the scholars and the practitioners in terms of shedding light on how effective leadership can bring about sustainable school success despite the prevalence of an unfriendly environment. Lastly, rural communities in South Africa present unique realities that are not easily found in many rural communities, especially in the developed world. Rural communities have traditional leaders

who potentially, can become a resource that can be tapped in an effort to bring improvement in the schools (Mkhize, Myende & Bhengu, 2022).

1.6 Objectives of the study

- To explore how the School Management Team members in the selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape describe and explain their successful leadership practices.
- To explore some of the key factors that underpin successful leadership practices of the Management Team members in the secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape.
- To document the key lessons about why the School Management Team members in the selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape enact leadership the way they do.

1.7 Research questions

- How do the School Management Team members in selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape describe and explain their successful leadership practices?
- What are the key factors that underpin successful leadership practices of the School Management Team members in the selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape?
- Why do the School Management Team members in the selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Cape enact leadership the way they do?

1.8 Denition of Key Terms

This section presents clarification of key concepts that underpin this study and require to be contextualised. There are six concepts that are clarified and these are (a) Leadership (b) Management (c) The relationship between management and leadership (d) Successful leadership practices (e) Rurality (f) Rural schools. This section briefly describes these six concepts below, particularly in relation to their application in this study.

Leadership

Different scholars have tended to emphasise different aspects of leadership, but they converge on the notion of leadership as an influence that leaders exert on the followers towards achieving organisational goals (Ladkin, 2020). Other theorists who emphasise the point of influence includes scholars such as Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010), Northouse (2013), Supovitz, Sirinides and May (2009), Yukl (2013), to name but a few. Emphasising the idea of influence as being the core of leadership conceptualisation, Northouse (2013, p.5) argues that influence is the "*sin qua non"* of leadership as it is a process whereby an individual person influences the activities of a collective of people towards achieving organisational goals. Therefore, the task of defining leadership is not easy and is varied.

While leadership can be described as a process of influencing the subordinates towards achieving organisational goals (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010), it is important to highlight that its conception has been shifting over the past few decades. For instance, early scholars of leadership regarded it as an attribute of certain people who possessed certain traits. Such a conception of leadership constituted early theories that some scholars call great man theory, and many refer to it as trait theory (Hoy & Miskel, 1973). Such a conception puts more emphasis on an individual.

Later on, there was a shift away from viewing it as an individual activity to looking at it combining a person and the environment where leadership happens. Many scholars call this notion of leadership as constituting situational theories. Without sounding to be exhaustive in the descriptions of leadership and shifts, I can mention that a significant shift in my view was when leadership was viewed as a collective effort of many people in organisations (Male & Palaiologou, 2015). Amongst those scholars who argue for the importance of the group of people are Supovitz, Sirinides and May (2009) who emphasise that the practice of leadership is not and should not be necessarily linked to a position that a person occupies. In the context of my study, part of this conception features only in so far as the collective is concerned. The thesis focused on school principals, deputy principals and departmental heads. All these participants occupied formal positions in their respective schools. Nevertheless, the notion of collective leadership is retained. In the various shifts of leadership conceptualisations, the main components identifiable in these conceptualisations is that leadership as a process that involves influencing individuals and groups, as well as, the fact that leadership occurs within an organisational setup.

Werner (2011, p. 353) for instance denotes:

> Leadership is generally defined as the social process of influencing people to work voluntarily, enthusiastically and persistently towards a purposeful group or organisational goal. Leadership is not restricted to the acts of a formal position or formal authority; anyone can exert influence over others.

The concept of influence as a cornerstone of leadership has the other side as well, which may not be positive at all. Viewed this way, it is evident that some leaders may exert negative influence on the people. This lends itself to abuse by certain individuals who may not hold formal positions within a school, and thus, may not be accountable to the principal, but may have influence on some people. Such people may mobilise a group of people who resist change (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). In this regard, Hallett (2007) proffers a scenario where there are veterans who oppose change and fight for the *status quo*, using their influence to push back on what the current leadership may be proposing. All this is indicative that leadership is complex and difficult to define and conceptualise. Therefore, the convergence among scholars that leadership is a process of influencing individuals' behaviours or groups' attitudes towards the achievement of organisational goals is well documented (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hawkins & James, 2017; James, Conolly & Hawkins, 2019; Kaparou & Bush, 2015; Northouse, 2018). Therefore, I use the term leadership in this study to refer to a process whereby the school management team members influence the behaviours of individuals towards the achievement of school goals. The second concept to clarify is management, which many scholars refer to as the other side of the same coin (Bush 2008).

Management

Management has been used interchangeably with leadership in some instances due to their close relationship, and the fact that some scholars regard leadership as an aspect of management. Nevertheless, scholars like Clarke (2007) make a distinction between thee concept, saying "Leadership is about giving direction and purpose, while management is about efficiency and effectiveness "(Clarke, 2007, p. 1). Others say that while leadership is about innovation and creativity management is about maintenance (Grant, 2009). This scholar makes the distinction clear by stating that "Leadership is the process which works towards movement and change in an organisation while its complementary term 'management' refers to the process which works towards the stability, preservation and maintenance of the organisation" (Grant, 2009, p. 46). The word 'manage' came into English usage directly from Italian 'maneggiare', meaning 'to

handle and train horses" (Bratton et al., 2005, p. 7). According to this author, the word underwent further change during the 16th century when it developed to include the notion of taking over control. Scholars such as Koontz and Weihrich (1988, p. 4) define management as "…the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals, working together in groups, accomplish efficiently selected aims." Furthermore, for Barker (1997, p. 349) "Management can be conceptualised as a skill or set of behaviours; the ability to allocate and control resources to achieve specific, planned objectives". In addition, Van der Westhuizen (1999) affirms that the main managerial tasks are planning, organising, leading, guiding and controlling. In the context of this study, the implementation of vision and innovations regarding successful leadership practices depends on good planning, organising, leading, guiding and controlling. Planning has become one of the key functions of management. Therefore, effectively, management entails the management tasks which involves the concepts of planning, organising leading , guiding and controlling that Burke (2004), Koontz and Weihrich (1988), and Polka (2007) speak about. However, for purposes of this study, the discussion of the management tasks falls outside the focus.

The relationship between management and leadership

There is a need to talk about the relationship between these two terms (management and leadership) before talking about what various scholars say about them, on the basis that they must go hand in hand (Nedumaran & Rani, 2020). As a result, scholars such as Nedumaran and Rani (2020) further suggest that any effort to separate them is likely to cause more problems than to give solutions. Furthermore, I find it necessary to talk about relationship between the two terms because they are transposable, particularly in portraying performance effectiveness within organisations (Azad, Anderson, Brooks, Garza, O'Neil, Stutz & Sobotka, 2017).

According to Bolman and Deal (cited in Summary Report, 2003), leading and managing are dissimilar, but both are vital. Institutions, which are over controlled but under directed at the end, lose any sense of spirit or purpose. Therefore, according to Bolman and Deal (2003), an institution that is poorly controlled but has strong magnetic leaders who keeps it closer together may rise for a while but will ultimately collapse in not in the distant future. The argument being advanced here is that both qualities of good management such as objectivity and strengths of strong leadership are all important and they should be kept at a healthy equilibrium for a sustainable growth of an organisation. Similarly, scholar such as Zaleznik (1977), Azad et al.

(2017) argue that these two terms are inseparable. Nevertheless, my view is simple, that while these two concepts are closely related, they are not the same for the same reasons advanced by scholars like Bush et al. (2010), Clarke (2007), Grant (2009), that the exercise of influence is at the centre of leadership while efficiency is at the core of management. Liphadzi, Aigbavboa and Thwala (2017) advance the same argument about the importance of leadership compared to management. Jannah, Sukarno and Hakin (2021) suggest an important ingredient in enhancing leadership and management. They argue that leadership style cannot be divorced from management ethics in the sense that if the Leadership Style is good, it will affect the Management Ethics so that it will apply positive values in carrying out functions and obligations of the organisation (Sodiq, 2018).

It may be suggested that school management team members should take cognisance of the vitality of management and leadership in exploring successful leadership practices, although they are distinct. In short, the message I am sharing here is the close relationship between management and leadership. Drawing from the scholars cited above, leadership has to do with maintenance aspects of organisations and focus on controlling and implementing decisions made. Leadership on the other hand focuses on vision creation and influencing people to do what a leader wants them to do (Clarke, 2007). That is why both of them are vital and heavy reliance on any one of them at the expense of the other is detrimental. I find it important for this study to talk about this relationship so as to understand the *pros* and *cons* of both management and leadership and also to understand their similarities and differences. Finally, this would assist me to understand the roles and responsibilities of SMT members as both leaders and managers in their respective schools.

Successful leadership practices

Successful leadership practices refer to leadership activities such as setting the direction, developing people, managing teaching and learning, and redesigning the organisation. Firstly, in setting the direction, successful leaders tend to establish a determination for the organisation by setting clear goals and direction, that will improve the functioning of the organisation system (Cheung, Keung, Kwan & Cheung, 2008; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006). Secondly, in managing teaching and learning, successful leaders supervise teaching and learning by walking around the school, confirming to see that all classrooms are occupied. Sometimes they do find a classroom without a teacher. They find that easy to solve since learners do have

a structured timetable (Blose & Naicker, 2018; Thaba-Nkadimene, Modiba & Molotja, 2019). Thirdly, regarding redesigning the organisation, these leaders nurture and sustain a healthy relationship within their schools as well as in the external environment by devising means of how to work with the community as the key component (Maringe & Sing, 2019). Lastly, in developing people, successful leaders develop staff and learners continuously. This development is promoted through in-service training, networking, peer support and even encouraging teachers for further learning (Harris & Chapman, 2002; Jacob, Hill & Corey, 2017; Ramdhany, 2018; Sedov, Sedlacek & Svaricek, 2016).

In a school setting, these leaders focus on developing people, redesigning the organisation and managing the instructional programme (Klar & Brewer, 2013; Marimandi, 2015; Mdalinska-Michalak, 2014; Mukeshimana, 2016; Norman, Hashim & Abdullah, 2018; Parag, 2014; Ramatseba, 2012). Furthermore, empirical studies have constantly shown that poor learner academic achievement can be directly linked to the environmental conditions in which schools are located (Cassen & Kingdom, 2007; Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018; Muijs, 2018). It is in that regard that I use the term successful leadership practices in this study to uncover how school management team members enact successful leadership to mitigate negative environmental factors in rural settings.

Rurality

I use the term rurality since this study will be conducted in those areas that fall within the authority of traditional leadership in terms of Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, No. 41 of 2003 (Republic of South Africa, 2003). As a result, all schools that are located in the land which is under the authority of traditional leaders, are regarded as rural.

Rurality is a multifaceted and complex concept to define. Therefore, the term rural and rurality has many definitions as there is no one conception about what constitutes rural. For instance, according to Hlalele (2014), rurality implies a lifestyle, a perspective and culture which rotate around land and animals. Provincial ranges incorporate all traditional collective zones, farmland, peri-urban zones, casual settlements, and little provincial towns where individuals have various potential outcomes to live from the land. Balfour (2008) provides a broader conception of rurality which includes space, land and socio-economic condition of the area. This scholar further states that rurality has to do with "… space, confinement, group, destitution, illness,

disregard, backwardness, minimisation, elimination, conservatism, tribalism, prejudice, resettlement, defilement, entropy, and prohibition" (Balfour et al., 2008, p.101).

The issue of population density and socio-economic conditions of the area is highlighted by other scholars and sociologists such as Sorokini and Zimmerman (1929). According to these scholars, rurality is characterised by relatively "low population density, isolation, and economic dependence on agricultural or other extractive industries, associated with low degree of role differentiation, the presence of a traditional and holy nominative order" (Sorokini & Zimmerman, cited in Tahery & Willies, 1975, p.251).

Furthermore, it may be worth noting that the conception of rurality has not changed too much from 1920s as depicted from the work of the two sociologists above to the 21st century. For instance, writing in the 1960s, Bealer, Willits, and Kuvlesky (1965) viewed the term rurality to refer to "areas of low population density, small absolute size, and relative isolation, where the major economic base is agricultural production and where the way of life of the people is reasonably homogenous and differentiated from that of other sectors of society." Similarly, Christiaens (2015) suggests that the term rurality suggests "bucolic landscapes, unique demographics, isolation, low population density, and distinct sociocultural patterns. In the same vein, Franks and Goswami (2010) also suggest low population density as one of the characteristics of rurality. It is therefore evident that although there is no agreement about what constitutes rurality, there are commonalities in terms of defining the term rurality. Depicting from the definitions presented in the above paragraphs, the common words emphasised are low population density and isolation. Whilst these conceptions form an integral part of my own conception of rurality, this term is used in this study to refer to those areas that fall within the authority of traditional leadership in terms of Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, No. 41 of 2003 (Republic of South Africa, 2003). Therefore, all schools that are located in the land which is under the authority of traditional leaders, are regarded as rural, and this is the notion that foregrounds my application of this term in this study.

Rural schools

In the previous section I have given an operational definition of rurality and I have indicated that there is multiplicity of conceptions and thus definitions of this term. Similarly, rural schools do not have just one definition. Nevertheless, I use the term rural schools to refer to those schools

that are located in areas under the authority of traditional leaders as defined in the Traditional Leadership Framework Act, No. 41 of 2003 (RSA, 2003).

1.9 Demarcation of the study

The demarcation of the study, also known as the delimitation of the study entails the creation of boundaries of the study by the researcher (Horberg, 1999). In the context of this study, the research was limited to the four secondary schools within O.R. Tambo District. In other words, schools that did not belong to this district were excluded from the sample. Similarly, primary schools were also excluded from the study, irrespective of whether they belonged to this district or not.

1.10 Outline of the study

This thesis consists of seven chapters and these are briefly outlined below.

1.10.1 Chapter One

This is the first chapter which introduces the study by highlighting various key elements of the study such as the background to the problem, giving the rationale and the purpose of the study. The chapter also gives the research objectives and the research questions. The significance of the study and the clarification key concepts underpinning the study is also presented.

1.10.2 Chapter Two

This chapter presents the review of literature on successful leadership practices. Such literature captures discussions and debates from both local and international perspectives, in relation to rural contexts and how such contexts intersect to present a challenge to school leaders and managers.

1.10.3 Chapter Three

This chapter gives a detailed discussion about the theoretical framework that underpin the study. This framework comprises two theories, namely, Instructional Leadership Theory Model by Hallinger (2011) and Adaptive Leadership Theory as advanced by Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009).

1.10.4 Chapter Four

This chapter presents a detailed and comprehensive discussion of issues of design and methodology, as well as, the methods used in the generation of qualitative data that would address the research questions.

1.10.5 Chapter Five

This chapter is the first of the two chapters that are dedicated to the analysis and discussion of qualitative data generated. This chapter presents a detailed discussion about what emerged from the initial analysis of the interview transcripts, and therefore, it is largely descriptive in nature and it does not include literature as a way of enhancing the quality of the discussion. This is done in the next chapter that engages in a more theoretical aspect of the analysis.

1.10.6 Chapter Six

This chapter is the second analysis chapter that focuses more on theoretical aspects of analysis. It begins by showing some similarities and differences in the themes discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, some emerging patterns in the data are demonstrated. Also, this chapter demonstrates some kind of new models/thinking/understanding about the phenomenon under study. Literature that was discussed in Chapter Two is injected to enhance the quality of the analysis.

1.10.7 Chapter Seven

This is the final chapter and as such, it presents the findings of the study. Its discussion integrates the contents of both Chapter Five and Chapter Six. It begins with a synthesis of the whole thesis, and towards the end, it proposes a model of instructional leadership in rural communities that may be similar to where this study was conducted.

1.11 Conclusion

The chapter has introduced the whole thesis, indicating what the key elements constituting the research problem are. As part of the introduction, the background to the problem, the rationale, the research objectives and research questions were presented, and so was the significance of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEWING LITERATURE ON SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

2.1 Introduction

This is the second chapter of the thesis and it presents a review of literature of successful leadership practices. Literature review is described by many writers differently. For instance, Wisker (2011) defines it as a vehicle for identifying key readings, and enables authors and researchers to begin to make use of others' arguments, and the work of key theorists whose theories and interpretations will guide the focus and analysis of the students own research and arguments. Ebeling and Gibbs (2011, p. 66) define literature review as "a piece of writing that is systematics, critical evaluation and synthesis of existing scholarly works, studies, theories and current thinking on a given research subject or area". Hoftess (2006) on the other hand, highlights its significance by arguing that literature review is important in that it indicates what other scholars have done on the subject or topic. This then helps even in identifying the gaps that may exist on the topic.

I undertook the task of reviewing literature with these understandings about it. In reviewing literature, I searched for pieces of literature that focused on the research questions. In other words, the research questions served as a guide that directed my search of relevant sources before engaging is rigorous examination of the literature. The review of the literature addresses critical issues that speak directly to the research questions. These issues then, formed themes under which I discuss the literature. The review of literature is organised into two main themes, namely, how principals and School Management Team members describe successful leadership practices; and factors underpinning the School Management Teams members' leadership practices. Under the first theme, there are five sub-themes, namely, giving direction, effective management of teaching and learning, developing people, redesigning the organisation and understanding the context. Under the second theme, 'Factors underpinning School Management Team members' leadership practices, there are eight sub-themes. These sub-themes are, the conception of leadership; Parental involvement; Focusing on instructional leadership; Adopting adaptive leadership as a key factor underpinning School Management Team members' leadership; Staff motivation as a factor underpinning SMT members' leadership; Providing mentorship; Supervision of teaching and learning; Consulting with traditional leaders as a way of soliciting their support.

2.2 How some principals and School Management Team members describe successful leadership practices

The discussion of literature is directly linked to the research questions and it is divided into two broad themes as I have indicated in the previous sections. The first as is reflected in the heading above, and focuses on leadership practices that principals and School Management Teams globally and locally consider to be the main constituents of successful leadership. Scholars I have drawn from do not only limit their research on any specific context, but express their views on successful leadership practices across different contexts, including deprived, rural and urban contexts. I believed that such a broad, inclusive perspective would assist me during interpretation and analysis of data that would be generated from interviews in the rural context of the Eastern Cape. This review of literature suggests that there are five main leadership practices. The five successful leadership practices are, giving the direction, providing effective managing teaching and learning, developing people and redesigning the organisation and understanding the context, and are discussed next. The second part of the review briefly outlines some key factors or principles that underpin SMTs' leadership practices and these are presented immediately after the five successful leadership practices.

2.2.1 Setting the direction

The literature is unequivocal on the view that setting the direction is fundamental for the leader as for the school to thrive (Ramatseba, 2012; Uleanya, Khumalo, Momah & Ndlovu, 2019). It is within this perspective that the school leaders develop clear school goals and purposes, and direct the work of educators, creating motivation for effectiveness, which enables the minimisation of distractions (Bhengu, 2019; Robinson, 2011). Establishing such aspects as goals, purpose, and expectations concertedly facilitates deeper comprehension and collective ownership (Hallinger, 2011, Wahlstrom, Leithwood & Anderson, 2010). Moreover, a well-defined vision provides direction for the educators' improvement efforts, and enables school principals to assess their instructional leadership reforms. Giving direction and establishing vision statement entails leaders in school to be able to assess the extent of their implementation of instructional programmes (Mkhize, 2017). Collaborative vision creation and setting school vision promotes trust, common vision, ownership and what Mkhize (2017) calls conversational centres that focus on best practices that bring about improvement of learners' academic

achievements. Additionally, shared vision creation invites all staff to define their work spaces that will be favourable to their work, and fosters collective responsibilities (Carreau, 2008; Gruenert, 2005; Kaiser, Fahrenbach & Martizez, 2021).

The findings reveal that setting the direction carries the bulk of the effort to motivate leaders' colleagues. It is about the establishment of shared purpose as a basic stimulant for one's work as enhanced by leadership as the collective pursuit of delivering on purpose (By, 2021). The specific practices in this category are about building a shared vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals and demonstrating high-performance expectations (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2020). Scholars such as Kaiser, Fahrenbach and Martizez (2021) define shared vision as "awareness of employees to the organisation's strategic objectives and future aspirations or as a common mental model of the future state of a team or its tasks that provides the basis for action within the team" (Kaiser, Fahrenbach & Martizez, 2021, p.2). Also, Leithwood et al. (2020) argue that building a shared vision, is a leadership practice generally useful and effective in most contexts, including rural context. As a result, research findings reveal that in enacting this practice in schools serving mostly low income, diverse families and students, for example, may require greater communication and engagement with parents (Goodall, 2017, 2018). On the other hand, the researchers, such as Leithwood et al. (2020) argue that building a shared vision in schools serving largely middle and upper–income families typically may not have the exact same communication and engagement challenges.

Kaiser, Fahrenbach and Martizez (2021) further argue that shared visions have been perceived as the learning point of reference of an organisation and a joint engagement in organisations. Nevertheless, to a large extent, literature written on shared visions in organisations treats them as being developed by a leader and communicated in a top-down manner to the followers (Kaiser et al., 2021). Furthermore, literature reveals that shared vision is largely separated in a "top-down" and a "bottom-up" camp (Kaiser et al., 2021). While on one hand, the top-down camp argues that a leader's vision is shared through communicating the vision top-down, the bottom-up camp on the other hand argues that a vision should be developed or created bottom-up through sharing several personal visions in group or organisation (Kaiser et al., 2021). Therefore, successful leaders employ either top-down or bottom-up approach in sharing their vision by means of communication (Eldour, 2018; Eldour, 2020; Kaiser et al., 2021). As a result, during the process of building a shared vision, knowledge about needs, values, resources and desires is created and shared in the organisation (Kaiser et al., 2021). Also, it is advisable that

school leaders should be accessible in sharing the vision since Leithwood et al. (2020) argue that the most successful leaders are ready to learn from others and are open-minded. Furthermore, Leithwood et al. (2020) further contend that successful leaders are also accommodating rather than rigid in their thinking within a system of core values, persistent, for example in pursuit of high expectations of staff motivation, commitment, and achievement for all.

It is worth mentioning that leaders must consistently engage in activities that seek to ensure the fulfilment of the school's vision (Hitt & Player, cited in Ngidi, 2019, p. 31). Also, Jones (2021) contends that a shared organisational vision is the vision of the whole organisation, which guides the action of the organisation for the future and provides necessary direction for making strategies and decisions in the organisation. Therefore, Jones (2021) further argues that necessary direction for making strategies to improve student outcomes among other things are provided through shared vision. As a result, Lewis and Boswell (2020) further argue that these strategies that are provided by shared vision, also assist successful leaders to know how to interact and get along with a lot of different people so as to solve their problems. Furthermore, scholars such as Khanyi and Naidoo (2020) contend that shared vision further assists in leadership development capacity such as personal capacity, interpersonal capacity and organisational capacity.

Scrutinising the three areas for leadership development capacity, the scholars cited in the paragraph above argue that personal capacity includes values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, assumptions and perceptions that teachers carry within the teaching profession, whilst interpersonal capacity relates to group relations, collegial relations and collective practice among staff within the school (Khanyi & Naidoo, 2020). Lastly, organisational capacity begins with an awareness of organisational structures that can open doors for teachers to enter school management positions, which is achieved by removing the wall that sometimes persists between management teams and teachers. There seems to be agreement among various scholars that no school improvement that addresses learners' academic achievement is feasible without effective leadership being provided by the principal or school heads (Bhengu, 2019; Khanyi & Naidoo, 2020).

A study conducted by Mkhize (2017) on instructional leadership practices of principals in deprived contexts of South Africa also revealed the importance of setting the direction by school

leaders. Similarly, these leaders adopted strategies that encouraged collaborative creation of school vision and mission statements. The importance of collaboration and collective efforts have been emphasised by many educational leadership researchers such as Kaiser et al., (2021), Mkhize (2017) and Grant et al. (2018). It has also emerged that there are school principals that conceptualise the school vision alone before presenting it in the stakeholder meetings and that results in the initial conception to be crushed in these meetings (Grant, Naicker & Pillay, 2018; Mkhize, 2017). Two critical points emerge from such findings. First, it is that there are still some principals who take liberty to go against policy provisions as long as they are confident that their actions will assist the school to continue its operations and realise its goals (Bhengu, 2005; Zulu, Bhengu & Mkhize, 2019). Secondly, such findings suggest that staff detest leadership practices that do not include them in decision-making processes and other important issues affecting them. The current literature is more prescriptive, focusing more on 'what' setting the direction as one of the successful leadership practices entails. Little is known about 'how' setting the direction is 'practicalised' in different contexts and the mediating factors thereof. The complexities and intricacies surrounding setting direction as the successful leadership practice in challenging school contexts require further exploration and insights (Chikoko, 2018; Naicker, Chikoko & Mthiyane, 2013).

The literature above highlights that setting direction refers to the school leaders' practices of providing guidelines to staff, individually and collectively that will propel the school towards achieving its goals (Naicker et al. 2015). One way of ensuring that everybody pulls in the same direction, is to invite them in crafting the vision and mission statement, and thus, ensuring transparency in terms of performance expectations. This also speaks to the importance of engagements with every staff member in the creation of a common vision and school goals. Therefore, collaborative work in every facet of the school is crucial, and is consistent with the notion of collective leadership as enshrined in various education policy frameworks. Also, it advocates that school leaders must engage actively in the formulation of clear common school goals and purpose. Furthermore, the value of involving other stakeholders is said to be essential for the development of effective teaching and learning as stakeholders own the process and commit themselves to the achievement of stated goals. Also, the above literature denotes that school leaders through communication, direct the work of educators, thus, creating effective motivation. As a result, effective motivation of educators minimises destructions that might hinder school success. Therefore, it is important in this study to understand how School Management Team members set the direction in lessening challenges exposed in a rural context.

2.2.2 Effective management of teaching and learning

The literature reveals that setting the direction and managing teaching and learning are successful leadership practices that are complementary (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2020). Furthermore, the literature shows that managing teaching and learning is to manage how well teachers teach and how much students learn (Maringe & Sing, 2019). Therefore, by managing teaching and learning, principals as instructional leaders find ways of improving the processes of teaching and learning that are appropriate for the purpose if necessary, as to achieve success (Victor & Emeratom, 2017). The discussion about principals' effective leadership practices, which include collaboration among different stakeholders in schools is relevant for this study because the notion of SMT members is collaborative in its essence.

The literature further shows that in schools facing multiple deprivations diversity of strategies are employed to guarantee effective teaching and learning (Grant, Naicker & Pillay, 2018; Maringe & Singh, 2019). Such strategies include incentivising and promoting activities and processes which are more learner time on task (Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018), promoting and developing teacher competences and across a wide range of teacher action zone (Grant, Naicker & Pillay, 2018). Maringe and Sing (2019), Uleanya, Khumalo, Momah and Ndlovu (2019) argue that in enhancing the management of teaching and learning, school leaders promote school community-partnership by devising means of how to work with the community as the key component. Therefore, community-partnership is vital in rural setting in promoting effective teaching and learning to flatten the curve of dysfunctionality in most dysfunctional schools in rural settings (Chikoko, 2018; Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2015).

Furthermore, studies conducted in rural settings reveal some fundamentals in managing teaching and learning that include but not limited to, the regulation of time, the monitoring and support for planning and delivery about curriculum coverage, the procurement and management of books and stationery, the quality assurances of tests and the monitoring of the results are fundamentals in managing teaching and learning (Maringe & Singh, 2019). Proper management of these fundamentals promotes productive teaching and learning (Maringe & Singh, 2019). Seemingly, the schools that are not performing well in terms of learner academic performance miss the appropriate implementation of fundamentals in managing teaching and teaching. Scholars such as Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008), Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2020),

Newton and Jarrett (2020) reveal that specific practices like staffing, the teaching programme, providing teaching support, monitoring school activity and buffering staff against distractions from their work are key practices in managing the teaching and learning programme. As a result, Ramatseba (2012) argues that school leaders are to be involved in all curriculum issues of their school, including assessment, mentoring, modelling and monitoring. Similarly, Newton and Jarrett (2020) further contend that school leaders are to be involved in providing teaching support, monitoring school activities and in cushioning staff against distractions that may hinder the management of teaching and learning. Therefore, it is on that notion Obi (2020) maintains that through effective classroom organisation and management, the expectations and objectives of formal education are accomplished. As a result, Setiawan, Hanim, Komariyah and Salim (2020) affirm that school leaders should excel in functioning optimally, efficiently, effectively and to carry out good management in teaching and learning, they should be empowered in management. Furthermore, scholars further argue that, this can be achieved by empowering them, starting from the planning stage to the final step in the management function, namely controlling (Narindro, Hardyanto, Raharjo & Utomo, 2020; Sudaryono, Rahardja & Lutfiani, 2020).

Furthermore, regular management of teaching and learning of schools does not only inform parents and others about schools' achievement, but it allows success and inadequacy to be identified (Akram & Khan, 2020; Harris, 2019; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins 2020; Newton & Jarrett, 2020). Therefore, this allows school leaders to redirect their focus on delivering alternative learning methods to those students who do not have similar opportunities to achieve success in terms of academic performance (Reimers, Schleicher, Saavedra & Tuominen, 2020). The literature above advocates that managing teaching and learning is to manage how well teachers teach and how much students learn. It indicates that in schools facing multiple deprivations, successful school leaders manage teaching and learning by employing different strategies. As a result, those strategies might guarantee effective teaching and learning. Such strategies consist of incentivising and advancing activities and processes which are more learner on task and promoting and developing teacher competences. The above literature further indicates that successful school leaders manage teaching and learning through promoting school community-partnership by devising means of how to work with the community as the key component. Also, the above literature shows that successful school leaders should take cognisance of different contexts in managing teaching and learning that might hinder or promote success. Therefore, I find it proper to include managing teaching and learning as one of

successful leadership practices in this study as to expose its relevance in assisting School Management Team members in achieving success, precisely in schools in a rural context.

2.2.3 Developing people

Setting the direction, managing teaching and learning and redeveloping people may be viewed as birds of the same feathers that flock together, in the sense that they are all fall under one banner of core successful leadership practices (Leithwood et al., 2020). Therefore, developing people means continuous development of staff and learners. Furthermore, developing people entails stimulating growth in the professional staff, providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members, model school's values and practices, build trusting relationships with and among staff to mention a few (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2020).

Scholars (e.g. Reimers, Schleicher, Saavedra &Tuominen, 2020) suggest the use of resources of high quality in stimulating growth in the professional staff, in providing support and in consideration for individual staff members, especially in supporting the continuation of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic. These include lessons, videos, interactive learning modules and any other resources that directly support students in acquiring knowledge and skills. Other resources that are employed in developing people entails Professional Development Resources which can support teachers or parents in supporting learners, guiding them on content, as developing their skills to teach remotely, or more generally augmenting their capacity to support learners now learning more independently and at home, rather than at school. Furthermore, tools that can be used to develop people include tools that can help manage teaching and learning, such as communication tools, learning management systems or other tools that teachers, parents or students can use to create or access educational content. Similarly, scholars (e.g. Owen, White, Palekahelu, Sumakul & Sekiyono, 2020) contend that many strategies such as technology are used to develop people precisely in rural areas so as to improve student learning outcomes. Also, Davies and Halsey (2020) further argue that in developing countries, precisely in rural contexts developing people is so important that school leaders are developed as to raise student achievement at all stages and all levels, promoting excellence and equity and sustaining and creating conditions under which quality teaching and learning succeed. As a result, Khanyi and Naidoo (2020) contend that in the South African context, the importance of developing people in schools is so important that school principals play an essential role, remarkably different, in drawing up of plans of opportunities for leadership

development in the teachers. The opportunities start from the formation of committees, which offer exposure to early leadership practices, mentoring and coaching prospects and the availability of leadership training and development resulting from the outcomes of the Integrated Quality Management System appraisal system mandated by the Department of Education. Furthermore, Konuk and Posner (2021) further argue that leadership development programmes need learning activities that are relevant to real-life situations and their focus is on augmenting students' self-confidence as leaders. As a result, their self-confidence can mitigate the barriers that hinder them from achieving their success in terms of academic achievement (Slocum, Weekley & Sherfinski, 2020).

Scholars (e.g. Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008, 2019; Meichen et al., 2017) argue that there is a need to develop people and invest in them. Their research findings about developing people revealed a number of important factors that have to be considered when developing people's capacities. What their study revealed is that it is not sufficient to train staff such that they just acquire skills and knowledge that will enable the organisation to realise its goals. However, it is similarly important to build people's capacities in developing commitment to the organisation's success, and resilience to apply the skills and knowledge acquired. One aspect that supports this achievement is the focus on individualised support, consideration and also to foster intellectual stimulation. All these attributes are constituencies of transformational leadership that focuses on issues of inspiration of the subordinates (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2019).

The literature above highlights that developing people necessitates stimulating growth in the professional staff. It indicates that successful leaders develop people by providing support and building relations with staff and other people involved in the accomplishment of organisational goals. It further advocates that successful leaders employ resources of high quality in stimulating growth for the purpose of achieving organisational goals optimally. Also, it shows that developing people plays a vital role for successful leaders, precisely in terms of supporting the continuation of teaching and learning, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Therefore, in this study, I regard the notion of developing people and investing in them as important in improving student learning outcomes and augmenting students' self-confidence among other things, particularly, in rural areas.

2.2.4 Redesigning the organisation

Redesigning the organisation as one of successful leadership practices means building collaborative cultures, modifying organisational structures to nurture collaboration, building productive relations with families and communities and connecting the school to wider community (Day & Sammons, 2016; Klar & Brewer, 2013). In building productive relations, school management team members nurture and sustain a healthy relationship within their schools as well as in the external environment by devising means of working with the community as the key component (Maringe & Singh, 2019). The SMT members would, in varying degrees as key elements in redesigning schools, build collaborative cultures (Maringe & Singh, 2019), modify organisational structures to nurture collaboration (Foskett & Lumby, 2008), build productive relations with families and communities and connecting the school to wider community (Grant, Naicker & Pillay, 2018). This is confirmed by Chikoko (2019) when he asserts that school leaders and their communities can work together to transform their respective schools into functioning institutions. When the organisational redesign of a school matches its strategic intentions, people within the school are primed to execute and deliver them. As a result, the school structures, processes, and people would support the most important outcomes and channel the school's efforts into achieving them.

Moreover, building collaborative cultures in redesigning the organisation is so vital in the sense that there are significant relationships between leader's leadership styles and the school culture (Kalkan, Aksal, Gazi, Atasoy & Dağlı, 2020). Therefore, relationships predict school culture which significantly predicts organisational image (Kalkan et al., 2020). Moreover, scholars (e.g. Kalkan, et al., 2020) further argue that school culture has a mediator effect on both leader's leadership styles and the organisational image that school leaders should be aware of in redesigning the organisation. It is on that perspective that a school culture can be conceived as "a set of norms that define which knowledge to be taught and the behaviour to be inculcated, and a set of practices that allow the transmission of this knowledge and the incorporation of these behaviours" (Julia, 2001, p. 10 cited by Vieire & Barbosa, 2020, p. 26). Similarly, Nasori (2020) further argues that the common set of beliefs, values, and practices held by members of the school community about "the way things are done" in a given school may be described as the school culture. Consequently, in redesigning the organisation, the culture of a school is shaped by peoples' unconscious assumptions or taken-for-granted beliefs about school vision, curriculum, instruction, evaluation and organisational structure. Furthermore, Nasori (2020)

also argues that in building collaborative cultures, people integrate their comprehensions of these cultural elements to create meaning and consistency for themselves. Since culture comprise a "deep patterns of values, beliefs and traditions that have formed over the course of the school's history,"(Peterson & Deal, 2011), it serves as the cornerstone for school improvement (Nasori, 2020).

Abdulahi (2020) further argues that in redesigning the organisation, school leaders should be aware that there is association between teachers' job satisfaction and school culture, specifically with teachers' professional development and collaborative leadership practices. Therefore, school culture and teachers' levels of qualification are predictors of job satisfaction in the schools. As a result, in order to augment job satisfaction of teachers, the school leaders should strengthen and improve the existing continuous professional development programmes and collaborative leadership practices in the schools as to achieve success (Abdulahi, 2020). Oyo and Ayona (2020) further argue that building collaborative cultures plays an important role in redesigning the organisation since positive school culture has a strong bearing on the performance of public secondary schools. As a result, school ceremonies such as academic days, parent's day to mention a few, are some of the school culture elements which many scholars have found to influence students' academic achievement (Oyo & Ayona, 2020). Also, a study by Sumbwanyambe (2017) demonstrated that school events such as Prize-Giving Day (PGD) ceremonies meant to reward teachers and student often motivate them to work harder, leading to improved academic performance. Similarly, the findings by Jelagat (2014) was more convoluted when she confirmed that beyond prize giving day ceremonies, closing day, academic day, also influenced students' performance in rural and developing countries.

The concept of restructuring has been characterised very precisely by many authors. For example, Borowiecki (2014) defines restructuring as a systemic reconstruction, modernisation and adjustment of the structure and operating rules of an enterprise, an organisation or other objects of economic research. According to this scholar, it is a process which seeks to diversify an organisation's activity, modernise its production structure, implement new production technologies, improve quality, drive sales and so forth (Borowiecki, 2014). The aim of restructuring is to ensure a better strategic position of a given company in the market and consequently its better performance (Borowiecki, 2014, pp. 17-18). Furthermore, Szuster (2020) argues that restructuring is based on an organisation's existing resources and does not seek to create new skills or resources. Also, Szuster (2020) further highlights different types of

restructuring that are involved in redesigning the organisation that include creative restructuring, anticipatory restructuring, adjustive restructuring. Szuster (2020) refers to creative restructuring as the restructuring which is implemented independently, regardless of current or anticipated changes in an organisation's environment. Its aim is to, for example, drive the implementation of appropriate changes in a company's environment. Anticipatory restructuring is implemented by the top management in anticipation of significant changes that are about to occur in an organisation's environment (Szuster, 2020). With accurate forecasts and appropriate responses to said forecasts, a company may be the first to adapt to external changes and thus gain a competitive advantage in the market. Adjustive restructuring (or adaptive restructuring), involves a set of modifications implemented swiftly and effectively as a reaction to changes in the environment. Therefore, taking quick action and responding accurately may prove crucial in preventing a company's position in the market from deteriorating.(Szuster, 2020). As a result, Szuster (2020) further argues that for restructuring to be efficient and effective all stakeholders, environment and other related factors must be first analysed and thoroughly studied before one can move on to implementing the respective restructuring measures so as to enhance redesigning the organisation.

In contrast, research findings reveal that restructure is a stressor for workers, resulting in reduced organisational commitment, performance, engagement, satisfaction, and health (Finch, 2020). As a result, its consequences are delayering, streamlining, merging, consolidating, reorganising, realigning, and restructuring of the organisation. Similarly, Kattadiyl (2020) further argues that there are things that are in halt during restructuring as to allow restructuring process to move swiftly although on the other end of the continuum resulting in reduced organisational commitment, and performance to mention a few. In addition, building relations with parents and community plays a vital role in redesigning the organisation in the sense that it creates spaces for school leaders to engage with voices outside the school as an organisation through school-community partnership (Zuckerman, 2020). Therefore, these partnerships with communities create spaces precisely for rural school leaders to engage with people of different backgrounds with the aim of interacting with them in purposeful ways (Zuckerman, 2020). Furthermore, scholars for rural education have supported school community partnership as a means to generate educational and community renewal, reverse population loss and economic decline (Bauch, 2001; Casto, McGrath, Sipple & Todd, 2016; Cheshire, Esparcia & Shucksmith, 2015; Schafft, 2016). Also, Zuckerman (2020) further argues that building relations with parents and communities enhances social interactions and relationships that promote mutual trust within a

community. Therefore, in building productive relations, school management teams nurture and sustain a healthy relationship within their schools as well as in the external environment by devising means of how to work with the community as the key component (Maringe & Singh, 2019). This is confirmed by Chikoko (2019) when he asserts that school leaders and their communities can work together to transform their respective schools into functioning institutions despite suffering deprivation.

In emphasising the importance of building strong relationships with parents, Abdulaziz, Noman and Kaur (2020) argue that the involvement of parents in school activities results in the improvement of learner academic performance. For instance, parents may be involved in decisioning making in a variety of social activities such as raising funds for improving the infrastructure of the school (Abdulaziz, Noman & Kaur, 2020). Therefore, Abdulaziz, Noman and Kaur (2020) further contend that regular meetings with parents leads to the activation of social partnership' which helps the school to accomplish its goals. On the other hand, some people view parental involvement as a waste of time. As a result, they perceive it as a responsibility of the professionals and must be left as such (Matshe, 2014). Similarly, the research findings reveal some hindrances to parental involvement such as time poverty, lack of access, lack of financial resources and lack of awareness to mention few but not limited to (Leander & Fabella, 2017; Matshe, 2014; Torres, 2020). The hindrances mentioned here are applicable to the rural communities such as those where this study was conducted. Therefore, it is important that such hindrances are considered in understanding leadership practices of SMT members in rural setting of the Eastern Cape.

The research findings reveal that the specific practices included in this category are concerned with establishing work conditions which, for example, allow teachers to make the most of their motivations, commitments and capacities (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2020; Newton & Jarret, 2020). School leadership practices explain the significant variations in teachers' beliefs about and responses to their working conditions. Consequently, that assists school leaders in building collaborative cultures, restructuring and reculturing the organisation, building productive relations with the parents and the community, and connecting the school to its wider environment (Geijsel, Meijers & Wardekker, 2007) as to transform their respective schools into functioning institutions regardless of suffering deprivation (Chikoko, 2019).

The literature above shows that school leaders redesign the organisation by means of building collaborative cultures, modifying organisational structures to nurture collaboration. It indicates that they redesign the organisation by means of building relations with families and communities for the improvement of learner academic performance, specifically in rural schools. It further shows that in building productive relations, school management teams nurture and sustain a healthy relationship within their schools as well as in the external environment by devising the means of working with the community as the main constituency. This means that School Management Team members have to build collaborative cultures in their schools. They work to improve relations with parents and develop stronger connections with their wider communities. They develop teams of teachers who frequently work as a team to assist learners. They also incorporate teacher development in their schools programmes. In my view, the literature above advocates that setting the direction, managing teaching and learning, developing people and redesigning the organisation are critical to the schools' success. Successful school leaders set the direction by developing clear, common goals and purpose, and direct the work of educators, creating motivation for effectiveness, which minimises distractions. Also, it indicates that managing teaching and learning is to manage how well teachers teach and how much students learn. Moreover, it shows that developing people entails stimulating growth in the professional experiences of staff, providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members, model school's values and practices, build trusting relationships with and among staff to mention a few. Lastly, the above literature indicates that in redesigning the organisation, school leaders build relations with families and communities for the improvement of learner academic performance, specifically in rural schools.

2.2.5 Understanding the context

Studies conducted in rural contexts acknowledge that schools do not operate in a vacuum, but in the context of the community in which they are located. As such, schools cannot escape the influence of the community, and other organisational contexts as they all play a role in influencing what happens inside the schools (Clarke & Wildy, 2004; Diamond & Spillane, 2016; Jennings, 1999). Rurality and rural communities have been cited by many scholars (see, Bauch, 2001; Bhengu & Myende, 2016; Hallinger, 2011; Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018; Preston, Jakubiec & Kooymans, 2014; Tuters, 2015; Wieczorek & Manard, 2018) as requiring school principals in particular and school leadership in general, to do more than it is expected of school leaders in other contexts. Therefore, school leaders are expected to play multiple roles that will help their

schools to cope and survive the challenges brought by the rural context. Hence, the principals' work in rural schools is more complex than many people might think. Scholarship that emphasises the uniqueness of rural contexts, especially in South Africa, is emerging and developing in intensity.

Studies reveal that adaptive leadership is regarded as of great value in organisations faced with solving complex problems involving many stakeholders (Maringe & Singh, 2019; Nelson & Squires, 2017; Uleanya, Khumalo, Momah & Ndlovu, 2019). Adaptive leadership advocates different strategies to be employed depending on different contexts and environmental situations. The literature above shows that it is critical to understand how School Management Team members interpret and enact successful leadership practices to meet the varied needs of their rural community stakeholders. Therefore, some factors that underpin School Management Team members' leadership practices are discussed below.

2.3 Factors that underpin School Management Team members' successful leadership practices

This second part of the review briefly outlines some key factors or principles that underpin School Management Team members' leadership practices and these factors are presented below. There are eight sub-themes that organise the discussion of the factors, and these are; Conception of leadership; Parental involvement; Focusing on Instructional leadership; Adopting adaptive leadership as a key factor underpinning SMT members' leadership; Staff motivation as a factor underpinning SMT members' leadership; Providing mentorship; Supervision of teaching and learning; Consulting with traditional leaders as a way of soliciting their support in schools. Some key factors such as leadership, parental involvement, instructional leadership, adaptive leadership and motivation will be discussed in this section.

2.3.1 Conception of leadership

Literature reveals that the success of an organisation depends on leaders who are capable of determining not only the critical factors that lead to organisation success, but also apply leadership practices to sustain successful project practices (Cleveland & Cleveland, 2020). As a result, some of the existing literature suggests that one of the most critical issues contributing to the cause of organisation failures is the inability of executives to support organisational changes due to poor leadership competencies (Anazia, 2021; Gartzia, Patzelt, Wolfe & Shepherd, 2018;

Nixon, Harrington, & Parker, 2012). Furthermore, organisation success is further impacted by numerous critical internal and external environmental factors such as organisational structure, organisational culture, political environment, governmental regulations and so forth (Belout & Gauvreau, 2004). Therefore, organisation leaders need a varying set of leadership competencies to navigate such complexities in order to attain success. As a result, collaborative leadership is suggested by scholars such as Cleveland and Cleveland (2020) to be employed in mitigating negative factors that can hinder the success of an organisation, since collaborative leadership is defined as "the participation of employees in different levels in the organisation to identify problems, analyse situations and achieve solutions, so that they can assist their managers and headquarters in solving problems" (Arbabi & Mehdinezhad, 2015, p.125). Therefore, in this type of leadership, key objectives of leaders are to engage their followers in the decision-making process, thus gaining support for specific strategies and growing collaboration among the community (Bass & Avolio, 1990; Grant, Naicker & Pillay, 2018). As a result, such leaders value the input of others prior to making decisions for future actions (Uzohue, Yaya & Akintayo, 2016). Furthermore, the literature reviewed found that leadership competencies such as emotional resilience, communication, motivation, self-awareness, conscientiousness, and resource management are most effective in terms of mitigating complexities that may hinder the success of an organisation (Cleveland & Cleveland, 2020). Also, stakeholder engagement plays a critical role in the success of an organisation, especially if it is employed during the planning process (Heravi, Coffey &Trigunarsyah, 2015; Nasori, 2020; Zuckerman, 2020). Therefore, it is advised that leaders should engage stakeholders in the planning process of their projects as to achieve success (Cleveland & Cleveland, 2020). Also, the literature reveals that the work of educational leaders is always complex (Netolicky, 2020). Therefore, it is on that notion that scholars such as Cleveland and Cleveland (2020) argue that success of organisational projects does not only rely on leaders who have capacities of bringing about organisational success, but it relies on leaders who apply decisive leadership that bring sustainable success.

Moreso, studies reveal that there is convergence of views among scholars that leadership is a process of influencing individuals' behaviours or group's attitudes towards the achievement of organisational goals (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Sim, 2011). Therefore, it is evident that individuals influence the activities, behaviours and attitudes of other people towards the accomplishment of goals (Bush & Glover, 2003; Bush et al., 2010). Also, the literature shows that school leaders by virtue of their influential position, can make a difference, even if they are absent from school, in terms of daily instruction (Singh, 2019), since leadership signifies a

specific agency, which is to influence others (Western, 2019). For instance, school leaders influence other stakeholders and teachers' activities to accomplish desired goals that include high learner academic performance results (Leithwood, Sun & Schumacker, 2021; Mkhize, 2017: Uleanya, Khumalo, Momah & Ndlovu, 2019). Similarly, the literature shows that school leaders employ social influence seeking voluntary participation of their teachers with the aim to reach school goals (Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi & Shaikh, 2012; Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2019). Therefore, research positions leadership as one of the main ingredients for school success (Chikoko, 2018; Hallinger, 2011). As a result, no school can succeed with ineffective and inefficient leadership (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2015).

Moreover, the literature reveals that the education system in South African has fundamental contradictions which pits two previous systems together as one education system. The cohabitation of two systems in one system underscores the importance of leadership because it has emerged locally and internationally that leadership is a catalyst to remarkable change for the better in schools (Bhengu & Mthembu, 2014; Chikoko et al., 2015; Chikoko, 2018). The importance of effective leadership in schools has been highlighted by many scholars (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Bhengu, 2019; Bush et al., 2010; Chikoko, 2018; Sim, 2011) to mention a few of them. These scholars and others as well, argue that successful schools are inconceivable without effective leadership exercised by the school principals. In the context of South African education system, Chikoko et al. (2015) has highlighted that although we have one education system, in reality, the system is divided into one performing well, comparable to any in the world, while the other is not. The other part of the system consists of schools whose performance has been highly questionable, especially when it comes to learner academic outcomes. Similarly, the infrastructure and equipment differ between these sets of schools, with the one being characterised as disadvantaged and poor performance, while the other one is the opposite in all respects. What is noticeable is that leadership remains the only critical factor that separates poor performing and well performing schools irrespective of their contexts. That is why the issue of successful leadership is important in this thesis.

Scholars in the field of leadership and management assert that leadership is the, or at least one of the, major missing connections among the dysfunctional schools and similarly, leadership is the answer, or at least one of the key answers to why some schools in areas of rural settings perform well while others do not (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2015). Therefore, it cannot be disputed that without strong, effective leadership, organisation cannot weather crises or

reinvent itself to meet the changing demands of education (Lo, Allard, Anghelescu, Xin, Chiu, & Stark, 2020). As a result, leadership which is centred around a team approach within the school management team and which evidenced courage, empathy, adaptability and flexibility, commitment, preparedness to work with staff and other constituencies is encouraged (Maringe, Masinire & Nkambule, 2015). The literature above advocates that successful leaders are capable of determining not only the critical factors that lead to organisation success, but also apply leadership practices to sustain successful project practices. It further indicates that one of the most critical issues contributing to the cause of organisation failures is the inability of leaders to support organisational changes due to poor leadership competencies. Furthermore, the literature above advocates that the success of an organisation is impacted by various critical internal and external environmental factors such as organisational structure, organisational culture, political environment, and governmental regulations to mention a few.

Therefore, in my view successful leaders employ different sets of leadership competencies to lessen the impact of negative environmental factors on academic achievement of the learners. As a result, it is within this perspective that the literature above advocates that leadership is the major missing link among the dysfunctional schools that contributes to their under-performance. Therefore, leadership is the answer, or at least one of the key answers to why some schools in areas of rural settings perform well. Therefore, I have used the term leadership in this study to refer to a process whereby the School Management Team members are capable of influencing the behaviours of individuals towards achieving school goals. Also, I have used the term leadership in this study as one of the factors that underpin School Management Team members' leadership practices.

2.3.2 Parental Involvement

Literature on parental involvement suggests that parents constitute a major stakeholder that has a direct impact on the learning and performance of learners. For example, the review of literature suggests that where parents are not involved in the education of their children, their academic performance tended to be poor, and where they are involved, a different reality obtains (Myende & Nhlumayo, 2020; Leander & Fabel, 2020; Tan, Lyu & Peng, 2020). Acknowledging the important role that parents should play in education of their children, the South African government legislated through the South African School Act, 84 of 1996, that parents should be actively involved in the education of their children, especially in governance of schools (RSA,

1996, b). Leander and Fabel (2020) define parental involvement to entail the level of their involvement in the schooling activities of their children. As I indicated in the opening of this section, the benefits of parental involvement in education are enormous and are documented. For instance, Matshe (2014) argues that, given the constitutionality of their involvement in the education of their children, there is a need to embrace their participation. However, despite the documented evidence of the benefits of their involvement, research indicates that parental involvement in rural communities has been embraced adequately, and this is evidenced in poor parental attendance in parents' meetings (Matshe, 2014).

Research indicates that in rural communities, some parents do not realise the importance of their participation. They continue to regard formal education to be the province of the professionals and they have nothing to do with. In any case, they sent their children to the schools for the teachers to teach them; they do not understand why the same teachers would come back and seek their assistance as parents (Bhengu, 2005; Matshe, 2014). Interestingly, Akter (2020) argues that when teachers speak to the learners' mothers, such parents tend to become more positive and their involvement is positively associated with academic performance. Although there are different views pertaining to parental involvement, but there is a need for parents to work with schools and be involved in their children's learning (Tan, Lyu & Peng, 2020). In other words, parents should have a positive attitude towards the education of their children since the attitude which parents adopt and bring to their child's education has a large impact on their goals, and furthermore on their overall academic achievement (Western, 2020). Therefore, it is within this perspective that parental involvement is regarded as playing a significant role in children's emotional social, developmental, and academic school functioning (Berkowitz, Astor, Pineda, DePedro, Weiss & Benbenishty, 2021).

Emphasising the importance of parental involvement, Ugwuanyi, Okeke and Njeze (2020) further argue that parental support and parenting style play significant roles in learner performance, especially in critical subjects such as Physical Science. Furthermore, it has a great impact on early childhood education and also assists to enhance social relationships and advance a sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem (Gogoi, Borah & Gogoi, 2020). Therefore, adequate parental support should be provided to learners for academic achievement (Ugwuanyi et al., 2020). Furthermore, in illuminating the notion of parental involvement, the Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005) defines parental involvement as "a way of involving parents in the education of their children in order to make parents supportive of and informed about their children's

progress in school" (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005, p.119). It is clear that there is no just one way of describing parental involvement in education. Therefore, parental involvement means different things to different people. Dekker and Lemmer (1993) regard parental involvement as involving many varied activities that take place in schools. These include parental attendance at the functions that are conducted in the schools, and also includes their participation in school governance.

Ndlanzi (1999) views parental involvement as including their availability to perform governance duties together with the teachers and other stakeholders. Such activities of school governance are defined in the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b). Numerous researchers have studied parental involvement and how their involvement has impacted on the children's learning. These include proponents such as Durisic and Bunijevc (2017), Berger (2008), Davies (1996), Epstein (2001) as well as Henderson and Mapp (2002). These scholars maintain that parental involvement has to do with parents being engaged in various activities at home or at school that are aimed at supporting their children. Charamba (2016), Haynes (2012), as well as Tobias (2020) all view parental involvement as including all activities (home based or school based) that may be educational or not, as long as they are about their children's education. In addition, these scholars emphasise the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children. What is also coming through in the recent literature, is that whether the activities take place at home or at school, as long as parents have a positive attitude and positive influence on the education of their children, that is parental involvement. Furthermore, what is critically important, is that parents should take the education of their children seriously and not leave it to others. Epstein (2009) argues that parents are too important to leave the bulk of the work to the teachers. In any case, parents are primary educators of the children, and they spend more time with them compared to the teachers who spend limited time with them during school hours. Therefore, it makes sense to have them fully involved in the education of their children. Epstein (2009) also emphasises the importance of communication and collaboration between teachers and parents. Teachers need to give parents information about progress that the child is making at school. Teachers also need to know the home conditions so that they can support each other. All these activities have proven to assist the child perform better at school. However, having shared all these views, there seems to be barriers to communication between these two important stakeholders.

Various studies conducted in South Africa indicate that there are many barriers to parental involvement in their children's education. Epstein (2009) mentions various methods that schools use to communicate with the home, and these include flyers, notes that they give to the learners, school websites, and various messages they send to parents to invite them to parents' meetings or conferences. Communication plays an important role in the life of a school. When there are no clear communication lines, problems relating to the child crop up. Parents can provide support to the schools in many ways. Epstein (2009) has developed a framework that addresses various aspects of parental involvement, including the manner in which they can be involved in school activities. Besides playing a role in school governance through their participation in the School Governing Body (SGB), parents are expected to volunteer their services to the schools. In this regard, Epstein (2009) proposes three ways in which parents can volunteer their services. The first relates to parents playing a role in fund raising activities of the school or other school programmes that are aimed at enhancing school-home partnerships or collaboration. The second is about parents coming to the school or classroom and supporting teachers there as tutors or another role that they will agree upon. The third relates to parents making themselves available to the school when they have functions; parents could be part of the audience, attending the school's programmes.

Besides these three ways in which parents can volunteer their service, parents can support teaching and learning at home by assisting their children with homework. In that regard, both teachers and parents need to communicate the same message about how learners can be assisted in their school work. This kind of communication is not just communication between the school and home; here I am referring to specific communication between a teacher and a parent concerning how the child has to be supported in doing school work at home. What this means is that the school should make known to be parents how they should help support the learner and vice versa (Epstein, 2001). This may assist the parents to not shoot in the dark, not knowing what the teachers expect of them. Therefore, the other sharing of information between these two stakeholders is of critical importance.

Epstein (2009) goes a step further to advocate for a more robust engagement with parents whereby parents form part of decision-making processes in the schools. The question is how can this happen? There are various dimensions that parents' involvement in decision-making can occur, including forming or participating in teacher-parent associations. In the context of South Africa, there used to be parent-teacher association prior to the country became a democracy.

Subsequently, the SGBs were established in 1997, but that is a formal structure where parents are already forming part of decision-making processes on issues of school governance. Nonetheless, Epstein (2009) envisages a situation where other informal associations can be established where both parties meet informally and discuss issues that could relate to how their children's education can be enhanced. Ensuring that parents form part of decision-making regarding their children may encourage them to be actively involved, which ultimately, may lead to effective support for the children's learning. Finally, Epstein (2003) raises an important issue that parents may be helpful in identifying additional resources that may be found in the community and which could help support learners learn.

There are many lessons that we can learn from the discussion presented. Some of them is that parental involvement in education is critical for effective teaching and learning that may result in improved learner academic performance. Secondly, the importance of mobilising parents for active participation can never be overemphasised. Many scholars have indicated that soliciting parental involvement in education in rural communities is extremely difficult (Bhengu, 2005; 2007; 2013; Myende, 2012; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005). Therefore, to get parents involved in education in rural contexts is a challenge that may require effective leadership to overcome. To this end, it could be interesting to note if the SMT members in the O.R. Tambo District are succeeding in mobilising parents to be involved. It would also be interesting to find out if parents contribute anything to support education efforts of the schools, and ultimately, in supporting the education of their children.

One of the critical issues raised by Henderson and Bela (1994) is that parents develop a positive attitude towards the teachers, the school and self-confidence if they are part and parcel of the school. More importantly, this scholar argues that they can play a role in improving the work of the school if their attitudes towards the teachers are positive. Improving the work of the school is quite comprehensive and include the quality of teaching and learning inputs, as well as outputs in in the form of learner academic achievement. Scholars such as Clarke (2007), Leander and Fabella (2007), and others, all highlight the importance of parental involvement, arguing that it contributes to the schools' overall performance. The idea of parents developing positive attitudes and self-confidence when they have been integrated into the school life has another dimension to it. Contrary to the idea held by many that parents do not have the interest of their children's education at heart, Leander and Fabella (2017), indicate that, in fact, parents have aspirations for their children's future. These authors go on to argue that such parents with positive

aspirations for their children tend to be more supportive of efforts that are meant to support their educators. This view is also shared by Bandura (1997) who says "beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). A number of scholars who have written about the concept of self-efficacy of parents emphasise the point raised by Bandura (1997) and Leander and Fabella (2017). These include Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), Matshe (2014), Torres (2020), William and Sanchez (2011). Having explained the efficacy of parental involvement, these scholars also argue that there are barriers that prevent parents from involving themselves in school activities. In fact, Williams and Sanchez (2011) identify four barriers to parental involvement.

Williams and Sanchez (2011) mention four barriers to parental involvement and these are time poverty, lack of access, lack of financial resources and the lack of awareness. The issue of time poverty and lack of access are tied up to the reality of unemployment and poverty that exists in communities and keeps parents away. These factors also relate to feelings of inadequacy which contribute to reluctance on the side of the parents to get involved. They do not have time to be involved because the time they have is to search for job opportunities. This clearly shows that social capital of families has a huge influence on the academic achievement of learners including their graduation rates, and expectations of success at universities (Diko & Singh, 2002; Lee & Bowan, 2002). Therefore, issues of financial resources constitute a barrier, and so do the issues of the lack of awareness which are also linked to access to education and feelings of inadequacy. It is a vicious cycle. In this regard, Johnson (1994) asserts that "feelings of inadequacy, limited school background, or preoccupation with basic necessities may prevent parents from communicating with schools" (p. 46). Access to the schools is also negatively affected by parents' education levels. Where parents feel inadequate, they do not want to get closer to the schools and their levels of education become a barrier. This is more prevalent in rural areas (du Plessis & Mestry, 2020).

The issue of creating strong and sustainable partnership between schools and parents is important. To that end, Durisic and Bunijvac (2017) maintain that comprehensive and integrated approach requires that a strong partnership be established. It is during such engagements that the importance of parental involvement and its implications unfold. It is also during such engagements that mutual respect, mutual understanding and common vision and efforts towards increased learner achievement develop through partnerships (Sheldon, 2009). All these efforts combined, provide support for the children's improved performance. The literature above

indicates some hindrances or barriers such as time, poverty, the lack of access, the lack of financial resources to mention a few, that successful school leaders should be aware of and devise means to quell them. Similarly, the above literature advocates that some parents feel that parental involvement is a waste of time and educational issues is the prerogative of professionals and must be left as such, whilst others feel it is their democratic right to know what is happening in the school environment. Therefore, successful school leaders are able to devise diverse strategies as reconcile varied views from diverse thinking of different parents. Consequently, successful school leaders having reconciled different views, are able to accomplish goals such as success in terms of learner academic achievement. Therefore, it is on that notion that I use the term parental involvement in this study as the factor that underpins School Management Team members' leadership to succeed in rural contexts.

2.3.3 Focusing on Instructional leadership

I have indicated earlier that leadership that focuses on effective curriculum delivery stands a better chance of impacting on learning academic performance. Therefore, it is important that I deal a little bit more about what various scholars say regarding instructional leadership and its role in supporting learner academic achievement. Instructional leadership can be defined in different ways, but what all scholars converge on is the view of the kind of leadership that focuses on curriculum delivery and other discussions on teaching and learning (Sim, 2011). Fatonash (2021, p. 131) defines instructional leadership as "the principal's efforts to influence student achievement indirectly by creating instructional organisations in their schools through participatory actions and by building a school climate and culture characterized by clearly communicated goals and high expectations of academic achievement" (Fatonash, 2021, p. 131). As a result, through instructional leadership, school leaders are able to create new forms and procedures that would assist in generating cooperation towards achieving school goals (Fatonash, 2021). Furthermore, Blue (2020) argues that instructional leadership offers school leaders with guidelines that advance student learning and cultivating advancements in delivering instructions in miscellaneous communities. As a result, literature reveals that affording students an opportunity to experience cultural and academic activities outside of school and outside of their communities provides exposure and develop their critical thinking (Blue, 2020). Therefore, being exposed to diverse perspectives is helping them in developing academically (Blue, 2020).

Bush (2013) acknowledges the fact that instructional leadership is not a new concept as it has been in academic circles for some decades now. Bush (2013), like other scholars like Mkhize (2017), Blasé and Blasé (2000), are in agreement that instructional leadership is a kind of leadership that directly impacts on what happens in the classroom. These scholars emphasise that whether one uses the term curriculum leadership, pedagogical leadership or leadership for learning, the common understanding is that it is leadership that guides teachers' behaviours in the classroom for improved teaching and learning. It has to do with giving positive influence on the teachers in the classroom such that learner performance improves. The other important points\ is that school leaders are responsible for everything that happens there. The Norwegian Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education (2016) states that, "By definition, a school leader is responsible for everything that happens within the school" (p. 3), and "The principal is responsible for the pupils' learning outcomes and learning environment and for ensuring good learning processes in the school" (p. 6). This means that school leaders are accountable for everything that take place in school environment (Skaalvik, 2020). Therefore, by using instructional leadership practice, school principals are able to positively increase their teachers' efficacy belief and, indirectly, increase their classroom instructions; and their students' academic achievements (Ismail, Don, Husin & Khalid, 2018).

Studies conducted in rural contexts, acknowledge that broader community, school, and organisational contexts can impact on and determine how principals enact leadership in schools (Clarke & Wildy, 2004; Diamond & Spillane, 2016; Jennings, 1999). As a result, how principals work in the context of rural schools is crucial in providing insights about how principals interpret, understand and enact instructional leadership in such a way that it meets the diversity of the needs of the local community members (Bauch, 2001; Hallinger, 2011, Preston, Jakubiec & Kooymans, 2014; Tuters, 2015). The work environment of principals working in rural communities is complex and they have to face multiple challenges that affect their operations (Wieczorek & Manard, 2018). Subsequently, there are schools that continue to perform well despite the deprived conditions that persist in those communities, and such successes are attributed to the kind of leadership that prevails (Bhengu, 2019, Chikoko, 2018, Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2019). These schools have become sustainably resilient because their leaders perform instructional leadership as a skill that involves the ability to define and clearly communicate a school vision, successfully manage the instructional programme, facilitate growth by providing sufficient professional opportunities for educators and enhance a positive

school climate (Ndambuki, 2020). Also, Ndambuki (2020) further argues that these schools provide the instructional leadership that teachers need to help all their students thrive in school.

Furthermore, in order to initiate constructive change engagements, instructional leaders consult with all relevant stakeholders as to accept new ideas, and encourage teamwork through motivation (Maponya, 2020). Furthermore, findings from the study conducted in rural areas of Limpompo province in South Africa, reveal some elements that instructional leadership have on learner academic achievement that include improvement of learner academic achievement, motivation and positive influence, instructional management, creation of a positive teaching and learning culture, learner support, parental involvement, and interchangeable usage of leadership styles (Maponya, 2020). As a result, instructional leadership enables instructional leaders to improve learner academic performance by means of motivating learners, creating a positive teaching and learning culture, enhancing parental involvement and by providing learner support in diverse ways (Maponya, 2020). Therefore, it is in terms of this perspective that scholars (e.g. Ismail, Muhammad, Omar & Raman, 2020) emphatically argue that school leaders through instructional leadership can influence teachers towards improving school excellence together to face educational challenges since they are regarded by scholars as having an essential role in improving the educational opportunities offered to learners (Wright-Odusogar, 2020).

Therefore, the literature above suggests that instructional leadership is defined in different ways. However, it all talks to the focus on teaching and learning, with some favouring learning more than teaching and views it as leadership that is directly focused on guiding teachers on curriculum and pedagogy. It indicates that school leaders through instructional leadership can influence teachers towards improving school excellence together to face educational challenges. It further highlights that one of the motives for instructional leadership practice is to increase classroom instructions by giving positive influence towards teachers' behaviour, as to achieve success. Also, the literature above shows that through instructional leadership, instructional leaders are able to improve learner academic performance by means of motivating learners and by creating a positive teaching and learning culture which is conducive to teaching and learning irrespective of the contexts. Therefore, drawing from the above, I can argue that, by using instructional leadership practice, School Management Team members as instructional leaders are able to positively increase their teachers' self-efficacy and indirectly, their students' academic achievements. Therefore, I use the term instructional leadership in this study, as one

of the key factors that underpin School Management Team members' leadership practices to succeed in rural settings.

2. 3.4 Adopting adaptive leadership as the key factor underpinning School Management Team members' leadership

Adaptive leadership has unique attributes that enable leaders to respond to the challenging contexts of the area (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). That is why it is important that school principals consider adopting this type of leadership. In this section, I share some ideas about what different scholars say about it. However, a detailed discussion is provided in the next chapter where I discuss theoretical framework. Adaptive leadership is more relevant for schools, especially those in challenging contexts because it involves changing human behaviour and adopting new ones deemed to be relevant for the situation on the ground (Yukl & Mashud, 2010). As a result, that brings order to the uncertain environment and fruitful organisational outcomes since there is potential to initiate discussions that lead to a revision of current practices and the consideration of new knowledge, new strategies and revised problem definitions (Benzie, Pryce & Smith, 2017). In addition to the latter, Khan (2017) confirms that manoeuvring such complexity and change requires a strategy that is flexible and supportive such as conversant to adaptive leadership. Also, adaptive leadership played a crucial role in times of COVID-19 as a crisis globally by assisting leaders by devising diverse strategies for tackling this wide spread pandemic (James, 2020). Therefore, it is on that note that scholars like Bandali, Style, Thiam, Omar, Sabino and Hukin (2021) suggest the prevalence of adaptive programming that assists in improving responses to diverse problems by identifying which solutions bring change in order to achieve success in varied contexts. Similarly, Bond (2016), ODI (2016), Ramalingam (2013) share similar views when they further contend that adaptive programming is effectively responding well even to complex global development challenges where solutions are not fully comprehended or there is uncertainty in terms of how most excellent to mitigate the problem. In addition, adaptive programming is fundamental in terms of value for money in the sense that school leaders can make sensible decisions about how to allocate resources to such work with a legitimate understanding of the jeopardy and opportunities of working in this way (Laws & Valters, 2021).

Lastly, adaptive leadership is regarded as of great value in organisations faced with solving complex problems involving many stakeholders (Nelson & Squires, 2017), since it enables

successful school leaders to adapt to the new situation and develop new learning goals (Trist, 2021). Therefore, scholars (e.g. Balazs, Vasarhelyi & Vicsek, 2020) argue that adaptive leadership assists successful school leaders to be persistent in mitigating the negative contextual factors that may hinder success. As a result, that may improve effectiveness and vivacity of school leaders in achieving success, in schools faced with multiple deprivations and rural dynamics (Potchana, Sanrattana & Suwanna, 2020). The literature above highlights adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilising people to tackle tough challenges through debates and creative thinking, identifying opportunities. Therefore, successful leaders mobilise stakeholders to attend to tough challenges through robust debates and creative thinking, spotting opportunities that may lead to the school to thrive. It indicates that adaptive leadership gives a framework by which organisations can address increasingly multifaceted and competitive operating environments. Seemingly, it acts as a guide for School Management Team members to work upon as to tackle tough challenges that may hinder success. The literature indicates that, adaptive leadership assists school leaders in bringing order to the uncertain environment and fruitful organisational outcomes such as success. This means that it prepares School Management Team members with diverse strategies in order to quell challenges that may hamper success. Furthermore, the literature indicates adaptive programming that responds effectively well in diverse and in complex international development hindrances.

Finally, I view adaptive leadership as one of the most important approaches in solving complex problems involving many organisations. Thus, adaptive leadership responds to questions such as why there are some schools which despite operating in areas of multiple deprivations, have become sustainably resilient and perform at levels to first class schools, particularly in terms of high learner academic achievement (Bhengu, 2019; Chikoko, 2018; Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2019). Subsequently, I have used the term adaptive leadership in this study, as one of the key factors that underpin School Management Team members' leadership practices to succeed in rural contexts.

2.3.5 Staff motivation as the factor underpinning School Management Team members' leadership

There is a plethora of definitions of motivations formulated by the experts. Brown (2000) notes the definitions of motivation from different perspectives. The behaviourists perceive motivation as "quite simply the anticipation of reward" (p. 160). Meanwhile, the cognitivists see the term

motivation as being more related to the learner's decisions as Keller (1983, p. 389), quoted by Brown (p. 160), stated, "the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they exert in that respect". However, the constructivists place motivation as "further emphasis on social contexts as well as the individual's decisions" (p. 160). Besides to those definitions, Makewa and Nggusa (2015) additionally, define motivation as driving influences from internal or external forces that give students power to learn effectively. More in their book, they affirm that teachers are the best source of motivation in teaching-learning interaction. Similarly, Huitt (2011) labels motivation as a need, a desire, or a want that encourages someone's behaviour and give him/her direction. Motivation is a term that varies depending on the field of research such as psychology, pedagogy, language learning education (Risness, 2020). Motivation has generally been defined as "to be moved to do something", a direction towards actions. This also indicates that people are "energised or activated toward an end" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 54, cited in Risness, 2020, p. 7). Therefore, motivation plays a vital role in moderating the resilience between parenting which is problematic and adolescent externalising behaviours (Hamdam, 2020).

Furthermore, Ne'matullayevich (2020) argues that communication plays an important role in motivating learners. As a result, the more teachers encourage their learners to communicate, the more motivated they will be (Ne'matullayevich, 2020). Moreover, this scholar suggests that intrinsic motivation is preferable in motivating learners as compared to extrinsic motivation, on the basis that learners will perform better when teachers focus on motivating them intrinsically rather than extrinsically. In contrast, extrinsic motivation is discouraged on the basis that it can actually hinder learners' learning on the basis that you will be tempting them to learn with external rewards rather than encouraging their already present desire to learn. In addition, Ne'matullayevich (2020) further argues that one way to encourage learners' intrinsic motivation is to make class communicative. Therefore, through communication they can successfully translate their thoughts into words and get their points across. This means that the more the teachers encourage their students to communicate, the more motivated they will be. Through motivation, scholars (e.g. Lindqvist, Thornberg & Lindqvist, 2020) argue that among other things, teachers will be able to improve teaching and learning as to achieve success for example, in varied contexts, to better meet the needs of learners, to increase the career opportunities for learners.

The above literature suggests that motivation drives influences from internal or external forces that give students power to learn effectively (Makewa & Nggusa, 2015). This means that school leaders motivate learners to learn effectively as to achieve success in varied contexts. It indicates that motivation is a need, a desire, or a want that encourages someone's behaviour and give him/her direction (Hutt, 2011). As a result, through motivation, learners are encouraged to take direction that leads to success. The above literature indicates that motivation may be intrinsic or extrinsic. It further suggests that intrinsic motivation is preferable in motivating learners as compared with extrinsic motivation, on the basis that learners will perform better when school leaders focus on motivating them intrinsically rather than extrinsically (Ne'matullayevich, 2020). On the other side of the coin, the above literature highlights that extrinsic motivation is discouraged on the basis that it can actually hinder learners' learning on the basis that one will be tempting them to learn with external rewards rather than encouraging their already present desire to learn. Moreover, through motivation, learners are energised and activated by school leaders to lessen the negative environmental factors in order to thrive (Risness, 2020). Furthermore, it can also enable successful leaders to improve teaching and learning, to better meet the needs of learners, to increase the career opportunities for learners. Therefore, it is eithin this perspective that I use the term motivation in this study, as one of the factors that underpin School Management Team members' leadership practices. It is clear that motivating the learners have a role to play in enabling them to improve their academic achievements.

Therefore, drawing from the above scholars, I regard leadership, parental involvement, instructional leadership and motivation as some of the factors that underpin School Management Team members' successful leadership practices on the basis that combined, these factors can improve the learners' academic performance. For instance, the School Management Team members as instructional leaders are able to influence teachers, parents and other stakeholders through leadership in achieving success in varied contexts. Also, through adaptive leadership they can mobilise and motivate stakeholders to tackle tough challenges through robust debates and creative thinking, identifying opportunities to succeed in diverse contexts. Therefore, it is on that understanding that I use the terms leadership, parental involvement, instructional leadership, adaptive leadership and motivation as some of the factors that underpin School Management Team members' leadership practices.

2.3.6 Providing monitoring

Within social development, monitoring can be defined as the "systematic and continuous collecting and analysing of information about the progress of a piece of work over time" (Gosling & Edwards, 2003, p. 12). Similarly, INTRAC (2017) defines monitoring as the systematic and continuous collection and analysis of information about the progress of a development intervention. Monitoring is one of the tools for managing teaching and learning (Mhlanga, 2019). SMT members monitor classes, period registers for both the teachers and the learners, do class visits for staff development and checking the pace of progress (Mhlanga, 2019). The SMT members not only monitor teaching and learning in class, they also monitor administrative part of teaching and learning. Monitoring and evaluation processes and results can illuminate and they can inform and they can make sense of a complex contextual environment but they also have the potential to obfuscate, to complicate and or to over-simply complex situations and practices (Abrahams, 2019). In addition, the purpose of doing monitoring is to ensure that all the people in the institution who need to know about an intervention are informed properly, so that decisions can be taken in a timely manner (INTRAC, 2017). Similarly, this is in line with scholars such as Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) when they contend that if one wants to address the adaptive challenge one has to observe it. By the time one observes it, one gives oneself a chance of interpreting different hypotheses impartially, so as to get a variety of strategies for effective intervention. Similarly, this is consistent with the views expressed by Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) when they contend that if you want to address the adaptive challenge you have to observe it. Departmental officials are advised not to lack support on monitoring in professional development for teachers (Nawab, 2020). Furthermore, monitoring played an important role in the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic and social effects on households. That assisted in creating an urgent need for timely data to help monitor and mitigate the social and economic impacts of the crisis and protect the welfare of the least well-off in Ethiopian society (Wieser, Ambel, Bundervoet & Haile, 2020).

In terms of mentoring as described by various scholars in the above paragraph, school principals together with other SMT members are expected to have clear curriculum management plans, which articulates the processes, which have to be followed in order to strengthen curriculum delivery and ensure that it is effectively managed and monitored. They are expected to also have tools to monitor the implementation of the curriculum processes at their schools. Principals working as a collective with the SMT members are responsible for curriculum management

instead of the practice of assigning curriculum management to one and administrative duties to the other. There is a belief that if the principal only assigned the one deputy principal the administrative duties only, that is going to affect her /him in future when she/he is promoted and then expected to manage the curriculum (Nzimande, 2019).

In the literature, it is stated that according to the Collective Agreement No. 1 of 2008, educational leaders are mandated to facilitate curriculum delivery in various ways (Education Labour Relations Council, 2008). Furthermore, as part of the fulfilment of this responsibility, educational leaders are mandated to support quality education delivery and teaching and learning in educational sites, for purposes of both accountability and improved learner achievement (Education Labour Relations Council, 2008) (see Section 2.5). The study conducted by Ncwane (2019) has also found that circuit managers used planning and ensuring that schools have tools to monitor curriculum delivery and school visits, as a way of supporting curriculum delivery and a system. This means that monitoring of the curriculum involved a wide range of activities that required a hands-on approach to management by both the principal and the SMT members. On the other hand, curriculum management involved the process of monitoring how the teachers conduct their professional work including the implementation of the curriculum. The monitoring process is also based on checking how far teachers were covering the subject content in their Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs). This shows the importance of monitoring in the success of schools in terms of learner academic performance. Furthermore, this may mean that monitoring may sustain good school performance if it is implemented effectively.

2.3.7 Supervising teaching and learning

The literature reveals that there is a lack of common definition for supervision (Galletti, Moscara, Mattei, Balducci, Sacchetti, Venturi, Visentini, Verrari & Galeazzi, 2021). According to these scholars, in the psychoanalytic context, supervision is described as the opportunity to observe, all at the same time, a group of simultaneous interactions; the interaction between patient and therapist, between the therapist and the supervisor and finally the subtle effect of the organisational relationship to the institute. Additionally, scholars such as Chasek, Doyle, Jones-Hazledine, Wilson and Grenna (2021) define supervision clinically as an intense interpersonally focused one-to-one relationship in which one person is designated to promote the development of therapeutic competence in the other person. Besides, scholars such as Alam, Haque and Banu

(2021) define supervision as a school scheme that indicates the procedure of ensuring that policies, philosophies, regulations and approaches of teaching recommended are efficiently carried out.

According to Galletti, Moscara, Mattei, Balducci, Sacchetti, Venturi, Visentini, Verrari and Galeazzi (2021), supervision in psychiatric terms is considered as an instrument which activates an analytical way of functioning, particularly useful in the situation where, in treatment relationship with patients difficult to reach, there is a block of thought in the patient-therapist relationship. According to cognitivists (Butera & Zaratti, 2002), the supervision relationship represents an interactive process, characterised by a number of emotional experiences, the fundamental parts of which are: the therapist, the supervisor, and the relationship between them. Therefore, this means that there are divergent ways of defining supervision in different contexts.

Furthermore, scholars such as Nurhasym, Arafat and Wardiah (2021) contend that the competence of principals in supervision and teacher motivation has an impact on teacher performance. This is in line with the study conducted by House, Kenayathulla, Subramaniam and Islam (2020) which found that there was a relationship between supervision and teachers' performance in schools. Similarly, scholars such as Alam, Haque and Banu, (2021) assert that competent supervision improves the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, the competence of both the principals' supervision and the teachers' motivation may make schools in rural settings thrive in terms of learner academic performance. In addition, in my view this affirms that the relationship between supervision and teachers' performance are the ingredients of quality education precisely in rural secondary schools.

Furthermore, the literature reveals that it is the principal's duty as a supervisor to help teachers in improving their teaching abilities and capabilities (Usaman & Habsy, 2021). These scholars, Usaman and Habsy (2021) further contend that some principals neglect supervision as one of their roles. Similarly, scholars such as Munawarah, Suherman, Warta and Sauri (2021) in emphasising the role of the principals in academic supervision, they contend that academic supervision is the duty and the responsibility of academic supervisors, which the principal can also carry out. They further, contend that this responsibility can be delegated to more senior teachers who are concerned as coaches, so they are supervisors in carrying out their duties. These scholars are more emphatic that the person concerned must still report the results of academic supervision activities to the principal. This means that the principal is the key person in making

sure that academic supervision is undertaken in the institution in order to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance. This discussion should not imply that because the principal is key to the supervision processes, he or she does this alone. In the context of this thesis, collective leadership is foregrounded. Hence, the focus on SMT members rather than the principal as an individual.

Therefore, the lack of supervision by the school principal results in the low performance of teachers because supervision aims to guide and foster teachers to become professional teachers. As a result, principals and their team members in the SMT should provide guidance and supervision in improving teacher discipline and performance. They should provide supervision in terms of coaching teacher performance, supervision of performance in the form of class visits every week and once a month, disciplinary fostering of educational personnel by directly monitoring teacher attendance, providing motivation and awarding teachers in the form of awards given at each annual event (Faizal, Ahyani & Kesumawati, 2021). Therefore, school principals as supervisors have a responsibility to play a leading role in improving both teachers 'and learners' performance.

On the other hand, the literature reveals some negative factors that may impede supervision such as the lack of resources for teaching and learning, limited teaching staff, inexperienced teachers and improper attitudes by teachers and learners to mention a few (U-Sayee & Adamako, 2021). Therefore, in mitigating these negative factors, among other things, there is a need for supervisory assessment of staff as to get the help they need to excel, evaluate and consider the benefits and demerits of different educational approaches and strategies to ensure quality learner success in schools (Ngole & Mkulu, 2021; Whetton, 2009). Furthermore, scholars such as Rikichi, Bature and Yakubu (2021) reveal the impact of instructional supervision on academic achievement of secondary school learners. These scholars argue that regular instructional supervision using robust supervision strategies like checking of learners' notebooks, classroom visitation by school supervisors, checking teachers' lesson plans and inspection of teachers record keeping have significant correlation with teachers' performance and academic achievement of learners in secondary schools. This can be achieved through the proper alignment of government policies with educational needs of the society, provision of adequate and relevant instructional materials for teaching and learning process, regular in-service training for teachers' capacity development, politicisation of the free education programmes to mention a few (Rikichi, Bature & Yakubu, 2021). Therefore, in my view, this means that although there

are challenges that impede supervision, there are strategies that can be put in place in order to mitigate them, like proper alignment of government policies with educational needs of the society, provision of adequate and relevant instructional materials for teaching and learning process, regular in-service training for teachers' capacity development.

Besides these, Alam, Haque and Banu (2021) reveal another type of supervision which they call academic supervision for improving quality education. These scholars argue that numerous problems such as lack of effective academic supervision, low support and morale, inspection rather than academic supervision, lack of dedication and professionalism resist and hamper the process of attaining quality education. Therefore, in mitigating these problems the supervisors should assist in executing a number of roles and functionalities which will progress the teaching-learning situation in the input process to improve quality education. Therefore, despite several challenges of supervising, proper, positive, and dedicated academic supervision impacts the teaching-learning process to improve student achievement which helps to establish an effective school and an effective school that can ensure quality education. Therefore, supervisors are advised to instil proper, positive, and academic supervision that shows dedication that will impact positively in teaching-learning process in order to improve learner achievement in terms of leaner academic performance in rural setting of the Eastern Cape Province.

Farooq and Sultana (2021) propose another type of supervision which they refer to as abusive supervision. The purpose of their study was to analyse the relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding. The study also examined the mediating role of distrust in the relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding. Farooq and Sultana (2021) define abusive supervision as subordinate perception about the extent to which their supervisors engage in rude or hostile behaviour. In addition, other scholars such as Rice, Taylor and Forrester (2020) define abusive supervision as salient form of mistreatment and is status-degrading. On the other hand, Connelly, Cerne, Dysvik and Škerlavaj (2019) define knowledge hiding as a negative behaviour that involves conscious withholding of knowledge that has been demanded by another individual. People hide knowledge because among other things, they are afraid of losing power or the status that is achieved through knowing unique information (Jiang, 2019). Other reasons include identifying knowledge as their property, worrying that they will be judged based on what they know or disliking or distrusting those who ask them (Farooq & Sultana, 2021).

Abusive supervisors are rude and hostile to their subordinates and make the subordinates not produce fruitful results for the institution (Farooq & Sultana, 2021). "The negative impact of abusive supervisors and the sizeable numbers of workers who report being subjected to abuse raises the question of why organisations tolerate abusive supervision" (Ambrose & Ganegoda, 2020, p.737). Some of these behaviours include the use of derogatory names to address subordinates by a supervisor, yelling or screaming at a subordinate in front of others, giving the silent treatment, threatening subordinate with suspension or job loss or giving an aggressive eye contact (Farooq & Sultana, 2021). Among other important role of supervision is to prevent burnout among professionals working with people in difficulty (Iosim, Runcan, Dan, Nadolu, Runcan & Petrescu, 2021). Therefore, it is relevant for school leaders to be conversant of various types of supervision as to understand how, why and when to apply them in different contexts in order to thrive in terms of learner academic performance. Furthermore, in comprehending them would assist the supervisors to improve their abilities in managing teaching and learning precisely in rural settings.

2.3.8 Consulting with traditional leaders as a way of soliciting their support in schools

The role of traditional leaders in education in South Africa is fairly new. In fact, a study conducted by Mbokazi and Bhengu (2008) is one of the earliest to focus not just on traditional leadership, but on how traditional leaders are involved in education. Traditional leaders have been associated with backwardness and non-interest in education issues (Mngomezulu, 2020). However, it is becoming evident that traditional leaders play a critical role in the education of the children in rural communities. The importance of consulting traditional leaders on what is going on in the school is important in many respects. Traditional leaders are the custodians of customary culture and the lives of the people who live in rural communities revolve around traditional leadership as a structure. There are many strategies that are employed by school principals as the eminent members of the SMTs in schools. For instance, Mngomezulu (2020) mentions that school principals go to the traditional councils courts every new year to introduce new teachers to the traditional leadership structure. Later on, schools brief them (traditional leaders) about progress that their schools make. This has tended to incentivise traditional leaders to come to the schools and see for themselves what schools are doing, and in that process, principals get the opportunity to express their needs which take various forms. Therefore, the strategy of going out to the traditional councils' court is paying dividends.

The collaboration between schools and traditional leaders is not an easy one, and it has to be nurtured where schools value the participation of these leaders in the affairs of their schools. Some schools do not go out to the traditional leaders, to the detriment of the schools concerned. Amakhosi (Chiefs) or senior traditional leaders according to the Traditional Leadership Framework Act of 2003, do not like to visit schools where they feel that they are not welcome (Mbokazi, 2016). They certainly, do not want to impose themselves on the schools although the schools are built on their land. Nonetheless, in instances where schools have ventured out to the traditional leaders, there are clear benefits for them. Mbokazi (2016) and Mngomezulu (2020) highlight a number of benefits for the schools. These include a remarkable reduction in vandalism and theft of school property. Therefore, traditional leaders guarantee safety and security in the schools, not just of property, but also that of the children and the teaching staff. These scholars cite a number of instances where the schools were attacked by burglars, and when the matter was reported to the traditional leaders, community members were mobilised and the thieves were tracked down and caught. A threat of banishment looms large for people who misbehave and fail to respect the rules governing the lives of the people in the communities. Such threats assist in preventing thugs and vandals from causing damages to the school property (Mbokazi & Bhengu, 2008).

The other benefit highlighted in the literature is that of conflict resolution in the schools and also in cases where members of the public, thugs and robbers involve the schools (Mngomezulu, 2020). The involvement of traditional leaders has addressed many challenges in rural schools, including in school activities made learners to be disciplined in school. As a result, the attendance of extra-classes improved drastically. Similar views on learner discipline involving traditional leaders are expressed by scholars (e.g. Mbokazi, 2016; Mngomezulu, 2020). This includes instances where serious cases of misconduct have happened in the schools. For instances, there are cases where violent learners in the schools had threatened some teachers. Such cases are referred to the traditional court to handle. Traditional leaders summon the culprit and their parents to the traditional court. Very few young people want to go to traditional courts as such appearances might damage their reputation at school and in the community. Because of that, knowing that if they conduct themselves badly in the schools, there is a possibility of being sent to the traditional court, serves as a deterrent. Therefore, teachers feel safe at school knowing that they will not be threatened in anyway (Mngomezulu, 2020). Therefore, consulting with traditional leaders has helped to strengthen the ties between the schools and the traditional leaders specifically and also with the community generally.

The other important aspect in which traditional leaders have been helpful to the schools is that of assisting with mobilising parents to get involved in the affairs of the schools. When there is poor parental attendance at the parents' meetings and yet, there are important issues that require parents' intervention, some principals invite Inkosi (Chief) to come to the schools and offer support. When parents know that the Chief has invited them to the school, they come in big numbers, and usually, the challenges facing the schools are resolved, especially when the schools and the traditional leaders act collaboratively. Besides, the literature I reviewed illustrates that traditional leaders are invited by schools as agents of development (Carlson & Seim, 2018) and for the purpose of sharing the vision of the school (Makhasane, Simamane & Chikoko, 2018). Furthermore, they play an important role in delivering social policies to poor people (Bender, Kinuthia, Schuring, Ikua & Pouw, 2021). Therefore, traditional leadership is regarded as a central component of African thought (Bhuda, Marumo & Motswaledi, 2021). As a result, it is in terms of this perspective that traditional leaders are advised to stay in development of their societies and stay out of politics (Logan & Katenda, 2021).

2.4 Gaps discovered in related literature

This study differs from other studies since this theme has something to do with going beyond rhetoric leadership. This means that this theme will be looking beyond rhetoric leadership at walking the talk. This means that going beyond rhetoric leadership you practice what you preach rather than being persuasive but using insincere language. This theme shows that SMT members are not rhetorical but they go beyond rhetoric leadership because they practice what they preach or they put words into action in leading in these four participating schools. In the literature, I identified a tendency whereby, principals visited traditional leaders to introduce themselves after they have been appointed as principals has not been articulated. Similarly, in the literature I reviewed there are no schools that consult with traditional leaders quarterly for learner academic performance. Quarterly accountability in terms of learner academic performance is done within the hierarchy of the Department. When principals introduced themselves to Traditional Leaders after they have been employed as new principals in those schools and their strategy of accounting to traditional leaders quarterly in terms of learner academic performance was a way of thinking and acting outside the box because that is not stipulated in school regulations.

What was interesting in analysing the data, it is noted that the participant principals took a conscious decision to use class observations (direct supervision), as another layer of monitoring to verify what the DHs have submitted on paper is actually what they do in practice in the classroom. The Principal or Deputy Principal will physically visit the class having the tools that have been submitted by the DH for close monitoring. The Principal or Deputy Principal will be looking at the tool previously submitted by the DH to verify if what he or she is doing in monitoring teaching and learning is really what is written on the monitoring tool he or she submitted. In other words, physical visits were used to verify paper-based monitoring systems. The literature I reviewed does not address all the four aspects I have spoken about here. It addresses two aspects which is setting the direction and closely monitoring of DHs' supervision.

2.5 Conclusion

Chapter Two has presented a detailed discussion of literature on successful leadership practices of School Management Team members. In this chapter, I examined research that informs successful leadership practices. Furthermore, the discussion of literature was directly linked to the research questions and was divided into two broad themes. The first as it is reflected in the heading above focuses on leadership practices that principals and School Management Teams globally and locally consider to be the main constituents of successful leadership. Scholars I have drawn from do not only limit their research on any specific context, but express their views on successful leadership practices across different contexts, including deprived, rural and urban contexts. I believed that such a broad, inclusive perspective will assist me during interpretation and analysis of data which will have been generated from a rural context. The review of literature suggested that there were five main leadership practices. The five successful leadership practices were, setting the direction, managing teaching and learning, developing people and redesigning the organisation and understanding the context. The second part of the review briefly outlined some key factors or principles that underpin SMTs' leadership practices. The next chapter discusses the theories that form the framework of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

CHOOSING AND POSITIONING THE STUDY INTO THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature on successful leadership practices. This chapter presents and gives a detailed discussion about the two theories that provide a framework for the study. However, before I discuss the two theories, I provide a brief motivation about choosing and positioning this study within the two theories framing the study. For instance, Miles and Huberman (1994) mention that researchers need to identify and adopt the most relevant theory for their studies. Imenda (2014) goes on to argue that without finding a relevant theory to underpin the analysis of the data, it will be impossible to make sense of the data and the findings. Flowing from the insights provided by these scholars, I briefly outline why I chose the theories I have chosen to underpin this study.

3.2 Choosing and positioning the study into the theoretical framework

Many scholars share a common view regarding the importance of identifying the most relevant theory or concepts that will facilitate the analysis of the data. Therefore, it is the theories that researchers choose that will enable them to interpret what the participants may have said, for instance, during the interviews (Imenda, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the context of this study, it was imperative that I found a theory that described leadership that is effective and that is likely to contribute towards improved academic outcomes of the learners. Imenda (2014) goes on to emphasise the importance of the context in the enactment of leadership. In other words, the type of leadership that a leader or leaders adopt has to consider the context where the organisation is located. This scholar argues that leadership does not occur in a vacuum, but that it occurs within a context of an interplay between various stakeholders and also within a network of people with various skills and capabilities (Imenda, 2014). These stakeholders may operate at different levels and could be involved in some form of leadership, and thus, may have a role to play in improving the lives of the learners in schools.

There is another aspect that Imenda (2014) highlights; that is, the view that all leaders have the attainment of organisational goals at heart. In this process, there are interactions between those who provide leadership and those that are usually referred to as followers. Nevertheless, all of them want

to achieve the same organisational goals. In the context of a school, their main goal is the achievement of the learners' academic performance (Hallinger, 2011; Imenda, 2014). That is why I have chosen a synthesised instructional leadership model as advanced by Hallinger (2011), to guide the analysis of SMT members' leadership practices. In addition to this model, I have also chosen Adaptive Leadership Theory as espoused by Heifetz, Grashow and Linksy (2009) as a second theory to analyse how the SMT members adapt their leadership to the prevailing environments. Used in combination, these theories provide a balanced framework about successful leadership practices. I say that because these two give a balanced perspective of leadership practices that combine an analysis of leadership and an understanding of an environment where interactions between the people and the environment occur.

3.3 Hallinger's (2011) synthesised leadership for learning model

This study focuses on successful leadership practices of School Management Team members (SMTs) within the context of rural a setting. I adopted Hallinger's (2011) Synthesised Leadership for Learning model due to its appropriateness for the study. This study has a special focus on teaching and learning and how leaders prepare the environment for that purpose of supporting effective teaching and learning. Values are believed to play a critical role in shaping leadership practices (Hallinger, 2011). This author places values at the core of teaching and learning because he believes that values focus on both the end and the means to achieve them (Hallinger, 2011). Bath (1990) argues that the behaviours of the SMT members are influenced by values as they engage in their daily activities. Obviously, values are invisible, therefore, it does not matter whether teachers and/or SMT members are aware of the influence of the values on their leadership practices, their influence is felt through the manner in which they conduct themselves (Hallinger, 2011). Therefore, values are critically important in shaping the thinking and actions of leaders as they supervise teaching and learning and attempt to improve learner outcomes.

Scholars who define leadership highlight that it takes place within organisational setup, and that it influences the achievement of organisational goals (Akinola & Bhengu, 2019; Clarke, 2007; Maxwell, 1993; Mullins, 1989; Onen, 2019; Sergiovanni & Starrat, 1983; Telford, 1996). Similarly, the Synthesised Leadership for Learning model acknowledges the same idea that leadership occurs within an organisational and environmental setup (Hallinger, 2011). In addition to this, Mulford and Silins (2009) argue that schools and school leaders and managers (SMT members in this study), work in an open system. This open system works in an integrated

manner and it comprises community, institutional systems, as well as societal cultures (Dretzke & Wahlstrom, 2010). The implications of this important element of this model is that a leader or a team leader as it is the case with the SMT members, should have acute awareness of this open system within which his or her school operates. This means that, as leaders, they should be aware of the community and its values, the other institutional systems such as the Department of Basic Education, as well as the societal cultures because in combination, these will affect the school, either positively or negatively.

The other element that this model emphasises is that the manner in which leadership unfolds is highly dependent on the individual leader's personality (Hallinger, 2011). In terms of this model, it is the leaders' beliefs, values, experiences, knowledge and the whole host of other attributes and personal characteristics that shape his or her leadership. In other words, the work of the SMT members will be affected by the leaders' values, beliefs, personal characteristics and experiences. All those are likely to influence the work of the SMT members and the extent to which they are able to work with others in a harmonious way or not. In that way, leaders and followers are intricately linked and thus have to work collaboratively as a well-oiled machine if organisational goals are to be achieved (Fleishman et al., 1991). Similarly, the external environment or the context within which the school operates can encroach into the school environment, and negatively affect it (Zacharo, Gilbert, Thor & Mumford, 1991). That is why leaders have to be aware of the environmental factors as they lead and manage the schools. Figure 1 below summarises the Synthesised Leadership for Learning model as advocated by Hallinger(2011).
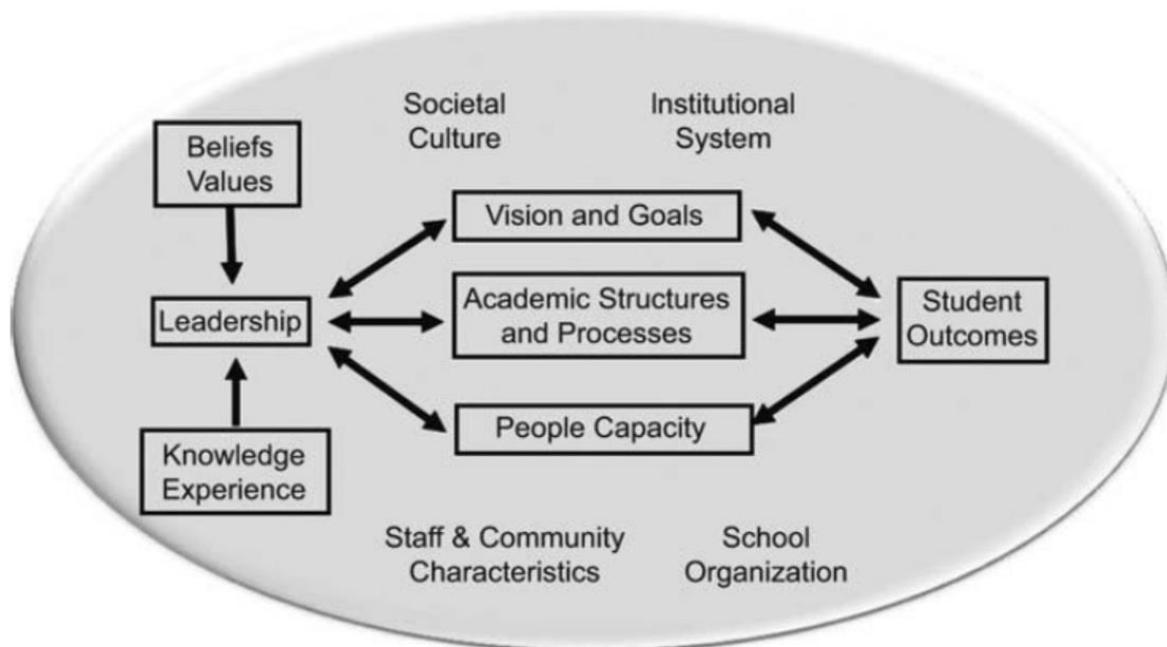
Figure 1: A Synthesised model of Leadership for Learning (Hallinger, 2011, p.127)

Figure 1 above provides a summary of Hallinger's (2011) model. Drawing from the discussion made regarding this model, it is clear that when leaders decide on the approach to adopt when giving support to the students or the learners, it is important that they understand both the personnel and the context. Therefore, leadership that focuses on the learners' teaching and learning needs will be able to achieve their increased academic outcomes (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Therefore, leadership for learning is crucial for a leader whose focus is on learners' learning opportunities and all efforts will be directed at this (Hallinger, 2010). The Synthesised Leadership for Learning model focuses on the beliefs, values of the leader, as well as knowledge and experiences as inputs into supporting teaching and learning processes for the learners. As the leaders supports teaching and learning, they consider societal cultures, institutional system, staff and community characteristics, the school organisation as they design the school vision, mission and goals, academic activities and human resources available. It is the combination of all these interrelated factors that will determine successful functioning of the school or lack thereof. That is why it is critical that leadership that stands a chance of success should be able to keep these factors in harmony as they move towards attaining improved learner academic outcomes. Finally, drawing from Figure 1, it is clear that leader behaviour does not have a direct impact on learner outcomes unless all these factors are considered and that they do not clash with one another, but act in harmony as they affect one another.

3.4 Adaptive Leadership Theory

The second theory I choose is Adaptive Leadership Theory as advanced by Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). These scholars developed this theory as an attempt to comprehend the mechanisms of successful leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009). Heifetz et al. (2009, p. 14), define adaptive leadership as "the practice of mobilising people to tackle tough challenges through debates and creative thinking, identifying opportunities to thrive." Their conception of adaptive leadership is that leaders should not make their organisations to just survive the conditions which may be highly unfavourable, but that they should also thrive and succeed. In short, the term adapt should not be understood to mean survive, but to thrive despite adversities brought about by the environment that is usually outside the organisation. Viewed this way, it is implied that adaptive leadership is not just about change,

but that it is about change that enables stakeholders to prosper (Heifetz et al., 2009). In other words, for every change to be sustainable, the kind of leadership that is available needs to be grounded on and invest in competencies, as well as strategies that will ensure that the organisation can survive and thrive. The organisational culture needs to be the one that relies on capacities of all stakeholders and not just senior leadership. The organisation must be in a position to adapt to the prevailing conditions. To do that, leaders need to understand the environment well so that they can draw from the existing expertise that may lie outside the organisation (Heifetz et al., 2009). Therefore, the prevailing leadership should be able to meet the existing challenges.

The views expressed above suggest that leadership is not just a competency of an individual, but that it is a process that involves people and it should focus on existing challenges. Such challenges need to provide a platform for learning, and to do things differently from the way they were done in the past (Heifetz, Kanir & Kramer, 2004). It is clear that adaptive leaders are progressively learning from their own practices and experiences through engagements with others. In other words, adaptive leaders are involved in a continuous dialogue that engenders strong collaboration in finding collective solutions to institutional problems (Heifetz et al., 2004). This view is in line with the conceptualisation of this study which focuses on the SMT members and not just the principals as individuals.

Heifetz and Linsky (2002) categorise challenges into two types, namely, technical challenges and adaptive challenges. The former type of challenges can be defined as quite easily achievable; hence, they are called technical challenges. According to these scholars, technical challenges can be resolved by anyone with knowledge and organisational resources. However, adaptive challenges or problems are those problems that are difficult to define. There is a discrepancy between aspirations that people have and their capacity available (Heifetz et al., 2009). Adaptive challenges are deep and systemic and thus, require creativity and innovation as there are no ready-made answers. Therefore, an adaptive leader has to go deeper and work on the mindset of the people such that they can begin to change their attitudes and behaviours. Without such fundamental changes it is unthinkable that they can change the organisation to such an extent that it can adjust and thrive in the new environment (Heifetz et al., 2009).

As highlighted earlier, change is the main focus in adaptive leadership. Therefore, for change to be sustainable, the organisation must be endowed with people who internalise change itself.

Table 1 below gives a summary of the two types of challenges, the technical and adaptive challenges. However, the table captures the real situation where challenges are not always strictly technical or adaptive, but they would show some features of technical and adaptive challenges as well. Hence, these are set in the middle of the table, and are categorised as technical adaptive challenges. These types of challenges come in between the two types of challenges.

Kind of challenge	Problem definition	Solution	Locus of work
Technical	Clear	Clear	Authority
Technical and adaptive	Clear	Requires learning	Authority and stakeholders
Adaptive	Requires learning	Requires learning	Stakeholders

Table 1: Distinguishing technical challenges and adaptive challenges (adapted from Hefetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009).

Table 1, adapted from Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) shows the distinction between technical and adaptive challenges. It also indicates that between these two types of challenges there is another layer. For instance, we note that while the problem definition of technical challenges is 'clear', but that of adaptive challenges requires learning in order to understand it. However, the problem definition of a technical and adaptive challenge is also 'clear'. Therefore, implied here is that when it comes to problem definition, the technical and technical adaptive challenges are closer to each other compared to the technical and adaptive challenges. In other words, while the problem definition of technical and adaptive lean towards the technical problems, the solution of the same challenge (technical and adaptive) leans towards that of adaptive challenges. Both require learning. This is indicative of the fact that the middle type of challenges has features of both types of challenges (technical and adaptive challenges).

Characteristics of adaptive challenge

Adaptive challenges are important for adaptive leaders. They are the ones that show the extent to which a leader is adaptive or not. Adaptive challenges are non-linear; they are iterative, and require a forward and backward movement. They are the opposite of their counterparts, the technical challenges. For adaptive challenges, there is no one way input-

output process. In other words, there is no moment that a leader can read and be able to successfully deal with all the challenges that come his or her way. The SMT member in the study face numerous challenges that may not have been encountered previously. This indicates that adaptable challenges are complex.

The first component of the characteristics has shown that challenges are not linear, and thus, do not require ready-made solutions. The second component notes that formal authority may not work; what works are skills and experiences in bringing together different people with different skills (Heifetz et al., 2009). This is not always possible in all organisations as people have different personal interests and wants, and they may always want what others want. Subjective models advocated by Bush (1986) are an example of this.

Another characteristic of adaptive challenge is that previously highly successful protocols seem antiquated (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). Therefore, in terms of adaptive challenges, previous success is not a guarantee in the challenges encountered. One lesson to draw from this statement is that previous successes or techniques that proved to be successful in yester years may not work today. There is no time for complacency or laxity in dealing with adaptive challenges due to their complexity. It calls for alertness to the environment and think forward and backward. This characteristic is closely related to the first one in terms of them not being linear. There are three processes that are always involved in handling complex, adaptive challenges, that is, observations, interpretation and intervention. In the next section, I briefly outline these three approaches to dealing with adaptive challenges.

(a) Observing events and patterns

Figure 2 presented as part of the discussion below illustrates this adaptive leadership process. Each activity of the process is briefly discussed below. In dealing with adaptive challenges, each person as a leader has to observe the whole situation in order to obtain a better perspective of the extent of the challenge. This process of observations acknowledges the fact that observations of events are personal and subjective as no two people perceive what they see in the same way (Heifetz et al., 2009). Therefore, it is important that each person has the skills to bracket his or her own biases when reflecting on what they see. Therefore, it is the understanding that an individual will have developed that will assist in

clearly identifying the problem before developing any intervention. What happens is that after observations, interpretation will elicit insights that crystallise the problem so that intervention strategies can be devised. Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2017) contend that leaders should go to the balcony in order for them to observe the patterns in the dancing floor so as to make informed decisions in solving the adaptive challenges for that particular organisation. According to these scholars, this skill is called "getting off the dance floor and going to the balcony."
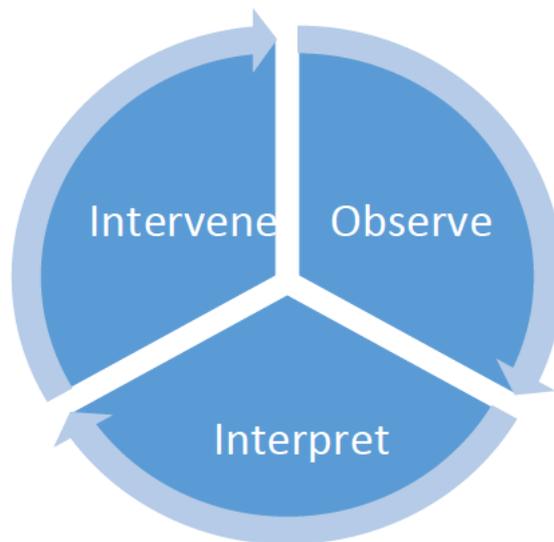
Figure 2. Adaptive leadership process adapted from Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009)

(b) Interpreting observations

The second step of the three processes involves interpretation of the observed situation. This is a much tougher exercise than observations (Heifetz et al., 2009) because this entails the leader making meaning of what she or he has seen. I have highlighted the point that no two people can see the same thing even when observing the same phenomenon. Therefore, it may help if there is more than one person involved in the observation of the problematic situation. Thereafter, a number of hypotheses need to be developed so that there are various options about what the next course of action can be. Once, a number of options have been viewed and considered, prioritisation will have to follow. Once this has been done, the next step is that of intervention.

(c) Designing interventions

The last step is that of designing interventions to address the challenge. These are based on observations of patterns in the context and then the reflections and interpretations that follow. It is the second step that crystallises the situation before interventions can be instituted. Figure 3 summarises this three steps process of handling adaptive challenges. Also, there seems to be agreement among protagonists that successful adaptation requires innovative and new strategies rather than referring to predetermined plans (Yukl & Mashud, 2010). Therefore, adaptive leadership appeals to us to mobilise people to meet their unpredicted challenges (Heifetz & Linsky, 2011) and to beseech the support of others within the organisation. The content of ideas improves when we take the different viewpoints of others into consideration, especially when incorporating the views of those who disagree. Moreover, adaptive leadership is relevant for schools, especially those in the challenging contexts because it involves changing human behaviours and adopting new ones that are deemed to be appropriate for the situation on the ground (Yukl & Mashud, 2010). This theory may provide insights about how leadership in a school can respond to the negative environmental factors that impact negatively and undermine their operational effectiveness. Figure 3 below indicates how the SMT members can draw from the two theories, Hallinger's (2011) Synthesised Leadership of Learning model.
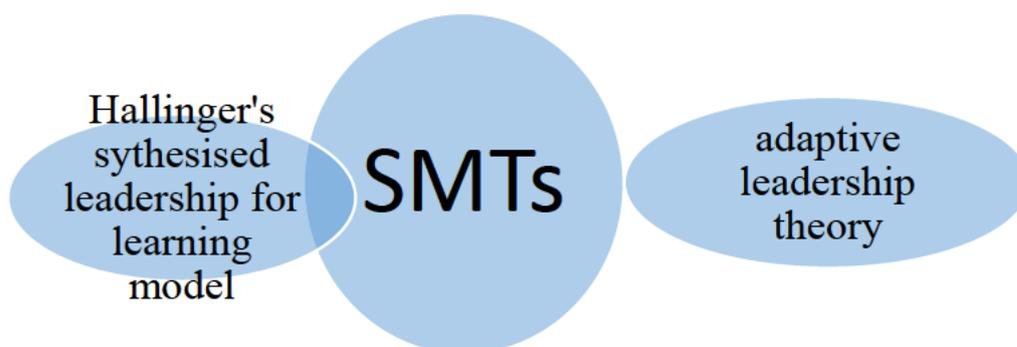
Figure. 3: How SMT members can learn from Hallinger's (2011) Model Adaptive Leadership theory

Figure 3 above indicates the position of the SMT members in relation to their learning from both theories that constitute a theoretical framework for the study. In the next section, I show through a comprehensive model that clearly shows the integration of the two theories. In this section, I simply indicate the position of the SMT members in relation to these theories, and that they draw lessons from both of them.

3.5 Applying the theoretical frameworks in the study

In the previous sections I have given a detailed discussion of each of the two theories that provide the framework of this study. In this section, I explain how I applied these theories in the analysis process. Philip Hallinger Synthesised Leadership for Learning model and called it a Synthesised Leadership for Learning model (Hallinger, 2011). Therefore, Hallinger (2011) has provided a lens through which I could analyse successful leadership practices of SMT members of four secondary schools in the O.R. Tambo Coastal Distrcit. This model has enabled me to assess the extent to which leadership practices of the SMT members in the study considered for example, societal cultures and institutional systems, staff community characteristics, as well as school organisational structures when processing their respective schools' teaching and learning activities. These issues form a critical component of the model that supports effective teaching and learning that can bring about increased learner academic outcomes.

The two theories (Hallinger's model and Adaptive leadership theory), complement each other. Adaptive leadership theory has two types of challenges (technical and adaptive challenges). Both theories have a special focus on the environment. With regards to Hallinger's model, the discussion has indicated that the leader is critical in making inputs that support teaching and learning and that the environment has and people in the environment have to be considered, including the systems in engaging in processes that shape the way teaching and learning can occur and envisaged outcomes can be reached. Awareness of the environment was emphasised and also the need to harness expertise that might exist in the environment around the schools. Adaptive leadership has also contributed in terms of assisting leaders understand that they have to endeavour to make their organisations to adapt to the demands of the environment and succeed. This theory has also focused on the environment and the need to understand people and how to work on their attitudes in such a way that fundamental change can take place. Therefore, both theories are relevant in bringing about fundamental changes. By using these theories, I am in a better position to draw meaning from what the participants say about their

leadership practices. That enables me to judge whether their leadership practices constitute successful leadership practices or not.
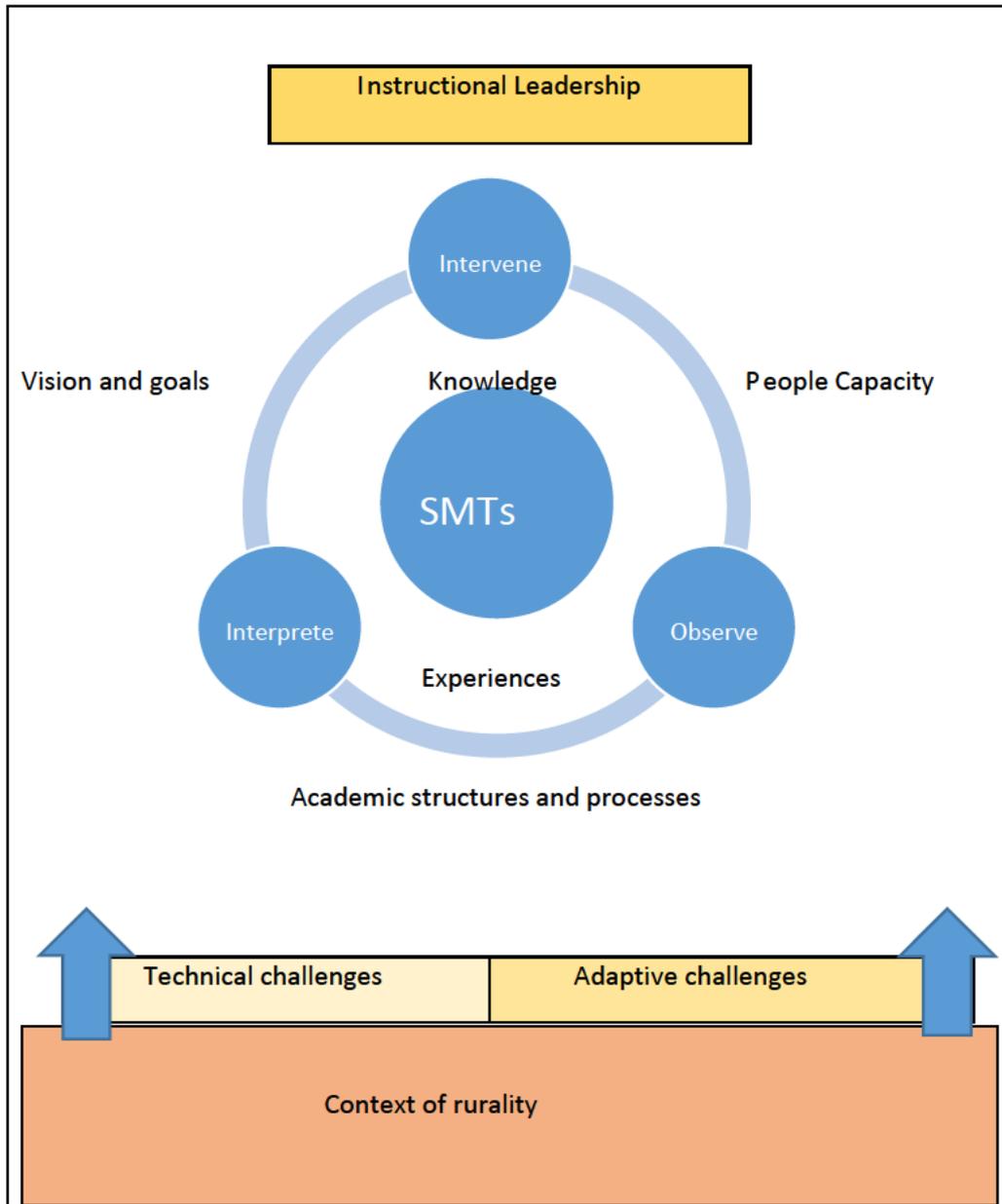
Figure 4: Representation of an integrated model used in this study

The discussion in the above sections have shown how the two models were applied in the study to enhance the analysis of the SMT members' successful leadership practices. I have also highlighted that when the two theories are used in combination, they give a clearer picture about how leadership that draws from all available expertise in or outside the schools can bring maximum effect in supporting teaching and learning environment. For instance, the context in O.R. Tambo Coastal District is rural and in rural communities traditional leaders form a very critical element in the lives of the people who live in those spaces. Therefore, in the modified

model the context is shown at the bottom and forms the basis for handling all other challenges. This model integrates both Hallinger's model and Heifetz and colleagues' Adaptive Leadership Theory.

It is also highlighted in the integrated model that instructional leadership of SMT members remains the cornerstone of leadership practices that impact on the learners' academic outcomes (Chell, 2011). This is the case as I highlighted elsewhere in this thesis. The SMT members are instructional leaders, and as such, their focus is always on findings ways of improving curriculum delivery. The importance of the various stakeholders for supporting teaching and learning is highlighted by many scholars (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2021). Because of that, it becomes imperative that successful leaders are able to mobilise all relevant stakeholders such as parents and others with expertise to support teaching and learning (Woolfolk & Hoy, 2009). In that regard, both technical and adaptive challenges have to be understood and utilised.

3.6 Conclusion

The chapter has presented a detailed discussion of the two theories that provide a theoretical framework for this study. As the discussion developed, I have also indicated how the two theories can provide a comprehensive picture about the data from the participants and how it can be analysed. In short, the two theories used in combination, provide a balanced view of the leadership practices. Toward the end of the chapter, I have a moderated and integrated model that combines both the Synthesised Leadership for Learning model and Adaptive Leadership Theory. The next chapter focuses on issues of design and methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Three has presented a detailed discussion about the two theories that provide a theoretical framework for this study. This is Chapter Four and it focuses on the discussion of the design and methodology that was used to elicit qualitative data for the study which explored successful leadership practices of School Management Team members in rural secondary schools. I begin the presentation by describing the research paradigm that was deemed appropriate for the study. This is followed by a discussion of the research design or approach, the methodology, sampling techniques, data generation methods or techniques, data analysis, trustworthiness issues, ethical considerations, as well as the limitations of the study. The conclusion brings the chapter to the end.

4.2 Research paradigm

Any research is conducted within the framework of underlying worldviews or belief systems, and this is generally known as research paradigms (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). A research paradigm is described by different scholars in many different ways. However, what is common in their depiction of a paradigm is that it is a set of beliefs that is fundamental to viewing the social world; a set of assumptions that we make, which serves as a benchmark that directs the research activities (Maree, 2007). This author goes on to mention that there are four basic paradigms that are used in social science research, and these are positivism, post-positivism, constructivist or interpretive and critical theory (Maree, 2007). In other words, constructivism and interpretivism are treated as the same belief system. Each of these paradigms differs from the other paradigm based on its basic beliefs about ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). This study is located within the interpretive paradigm, which views reality as subjective and that it is constructed based on the participants' personal life experiences and interactions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

In the context of this study, I chose interpretive research paradigm due to its relevance for studies such as this one where I sought to understand the meanings that the participants attached to their practices (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Rule & John, 2011). In my case, I sought to understand meanings that the School Management Team members attached to their leadership

practices that ultimately brought success in their respective schools. This is consistent with my basic assumptions that knowledge is socially created by those in the research process and it is my responsibility as a human science researcher to comprehend the complex experiences from the participants' point of view (Pitard, 2017). This paradigm acknowledges that each research participant within the four schools may have a different interpretation of their world of work. Similarly, the participants would have different meanings attached to how they understand leadership practices in secondary schools that are perceived to be performing well in a rural setting.

4.3 Research design

This section presents a discussion about the research design that was adopted for this study. There is no agreement amongst scholars about what constitutes a research design. For instance, scholars such as McMillan and Schumacher (2001) refer to a research design as techniques used in conducting research, while Babbie and Mouton (2005) define it as guidelines that are followed when conducting research. Others (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014), as well as Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Pointer (2006) highlight what research designs do, saying that they provide an overview of a research process. Bailey (2007) and other scholars such as McMillan and Schumacher (2001), as well as Niewenhuis (2007) emphasise that a research design is so broad that it guides everything that happens in the research process. This includes ensuring that there is an alignment between the research methods or techniques chosen and the research questions guiding the study, as well as the the kinds of sampling techniques that have been chosen to identify the participants.

The research design adopted for this study is a qualitative approach. Many researchers agree that qualitative research is predicated on using words that the participants use to describe their experiences or practices (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, they also agree that while quantitative inquiry analyses and arrives at the findings through the use of numbers and statistical means, qualitative inquiry uses words (Cohen et al., 2011; Rule & John, 2011). Scholars such as Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004) go a step further to argue that qualitative designs enable researchers to arrive at different interpretations of the same phenomenon that is studied. Cohen at al. (2018) bring in another dimension to qualitative design by highlighting the in-depth aspect of the analysis of textual data that the participants have produced through their interactions with the researcher. The other important

characteristic of qualitative design is that the findings are not easily generalisable to the whole population because their findings are always limited to the study participants and reflect their subjective realities and experiences (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2011). These findings resonate with what I sought to achieve in this qualitative study. I did not intend to generalise the findings to the whole province of the Eastern Cape or the O.R. Tambo District for that matter.

As I mentioned in the opening of this section, in this study, a qualitative approach was chosen because I believed that it would assist me to understand that the participants (SMT members) would present to me their own interpretations of what constitutes successful leadership practices based on their living experiences. It would provide an in-depth understanding of their leadership experiences from their naturalistic settings since qualitative approaches are renowned for providing in-depth, textual, holistic and naturalistic data (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research has orderly methods that are well-grounded, rich in descriptions and explanation of the course of action occurring within a confined context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, cited in Aspers & Corte, 2019). Furthermore, qualitative research enables the researcher to capture the lived experiences of the participants in their own words and from their own perspectives (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell, 2014). Also, qualitative research is dissimilar from quantitative research in the sense that the researcher does not manipulate the situation or variables for research purposes. Thus, the researcher studies the phenomenon in its natural setting where a researcher is in the middle as the main instrument (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Drawing from such positive elements of qualitative approaches, qualitative data generation methods were utilised in the study to provide opportunities for individual cases to emerge and to be analysed to give the meaning of successful leadership practices within a context of rural secondary schools (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017).

4.4 Research methodology

There is no one way of understanding about what a research methodology is. For example, McMillan and Schumacher (2001) describe a methodology as a design whereby a researcher chooses and adopts procedures that they will use to generate data, how they will analyse it up to a point where they assess the extent to which the data generated does address the research questions that drive the study. Nevertheless, scholars agree that a methodology is much bigger and all-embracing compared to methods or techniques that always have to be aligned to the methodology and its basic assumptions. For example, describing a research methodology,

Kothari (2004, p. 8) says, "research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem".

There are many research methodologies that are used in qualitative research. In this study, a multiple case study methodology was adopted. A case study can be described as a qualitative inquiry with its real-life context and has clear boundaries (McNabb, 2010). A case study can be portrayed as a research methodology in which the researcher explores one location or one subject or a single incident and gathers data by utilising different data generation methods during a persistent period (Harrison, 2017). It provides a unique opportunity of studying people in their real situations, and thus, it enables the readers to understand ideas more clearly than it would have had the information that had been presented to them using abstract theories or principles (Cohen et al., 2011). Moreover, Cohen et al. (2011) argue that case studies examine and report on the real-life, complex and dynamic interactions of actual events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance as contexts are always unique and dynamic. Adding to this debate, Picciano (2004) maintains that case studies are used to explore, describe and to explain phenomena. The views expressed by this scholar are shared by many other scholars such as Yin (2005) and Rule and John (2011). The last-mentioned scholars go on to emphasise that case studies are not the same, but they differ. They highlight three different types of case studies, and these are exploratory, explanatory and descriptive case studies (Rule & John, 2011).

In this research, I chose secondary schools that had been performing well for a number of years and they were located in the O.R. Tambo Coastal District. A case study places an emphasis on separate units; in this case, the school management team members working in four rural secondary schools. A case study is also appropriate because it meets the small-scale research requirement. This study focuses on four rural secondary schools in the O.R. Tambo District in the Eastern Cape Province. These four secondary schools constituted four different cases; hence, my choice of multiple sites case studies as I have indicated earlier.

4.5 Sampling methods

There are different techniques that can be used depending on whether a study is located within quantitative or qualitative design. Scholars agree that sampling is about the selection of a manageable number of participants from a particular population. This decision about the selection is always linked to decisions about what the study seeks to do (Durrheim, 2006).

Sampling methods can be compartmentalised into two broad sets called probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling methods are more suitable for quantitative research because they seek to arrive at one truth, and therefore, the results have to be generalised (Elfil & Negida, 2017). Under the non-probability sampling approach, there are various kinds of sampling techniques that can be used, and these include snowball, convenience, purposive and quota sampling, and these are suitable for qualitative research (Elfil & Negida, 2017). Since this research design is qualitative, I deemed it necessary to use non-probability sampling category. In this study, both purposive and convenience sampling methods were used. Through the use of purposive sampling technique, researchers are also able to detect, comprehend and acquire insights into the subject (Etikan, Abubakar & Alkassim, 2016). In purposive sampling, a researcher selects the participants or institutions based on their typicality (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). These author further state that purposive sampling entails researchers making choices about which individual persons or institutions to include in the sample (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). To elaborate on the point of choosing the participants, Cohen et al. (2011) maintain that purposive sampling entails a situation where researchers hand-pick the cases that will be included in the sample based on their judgement about the characteristics they are looking for, as well as their typicality. Therefore, study was conducted in four rural secondary schools because they had demonstrated certain features which other schools had not. For instance, the four schools were in the rural setting of Flagstaff in the O.R. Tambo District in the Eastern Cape province and these schools were among the few that had shown success in terms of academic performance.

The other element to the sampling technique is that of convenience. Convenience sampling has to do with the researcher making considerations about factors that will ensure easy access to the research site (Cohen et al., 2011). In the context of this study, some few rural secondary schools that showed success in terms of academic performance were chosen, but only those that were easily accessible to me were conveniently selected for participation. This study was not funded; therefore, to travel long distances to the participating schools would be difficult in terms of expenses involved. Therefore, it made sense for me to choose these schools that were within manageable distances. They needed to be not too far from Flagstaff where I lived and worked.

4.5.1 Sampling research participants

When choosing the participants, I selected school management team members that include the Principal, the Deputy Principal (DP) and the Departmental Heads (DHs) in those schools and

therefore, were considered to have in-depth knowledge about successful leadership practices in their schools. After getting permission from the principals of these selected schools, I contacted my participants telephonically, due to COVID-19 regulations. The Principal, the Deputy Principal and two Departmental Heads per school provided me with the relevant information and informative thoughts that would advance my comprehension of the successful leadership practices in four rural secondary schools in the O.R. Tambo Coastal District.

4.5.2 Profiling participants

Pseudonym	Mr Lala	Mr Lalyz	Mr Laqa	Mr Lang
Qualifications	S.T.D, B.A	S.T.D, BSC	B Tech in Education, S.T.D, BEd Hons, MEd	S.T.D, F.D. E, B.A
Age	44	35	40	51
Experience as an SMT member	4	6	7	8
Years in the school	10	8	12	14

Table 2: Participants' profile of Langaz Secondary School

Pseudonym	Mrs Patonela	Mrs Patoniza	Mr Pato	Mr Patyo
Qualifications	P.T.D, B.A	S.T.D, B.com	P.T.D, B Tech in Education, BEd	S.T.D, B.S.C, B.S.C Hons, BEd Hons
Age	44	485	40	51
Experience as an SMT member	8	5	11	13
Years in the school	7	15	10	5

Table 3: Participants' profile of Patoni Secondary School

Pseudonym	Mr Sisa	Mr Siwa	Mr Siwole	Mr Siwele
Qualifications	P.T.D; B.A; BEd Hons	S.T.D; F.D.E	P.T.D; B.A; F.D.E	S.T.D; BSc; BEd Hons
Age	43	30	45	4O
Experience as an SMT member	9	12	15	10
Years in the school	8	14	9	17

Table 4: Participants' profile of Siwo Secondary School

Pseudonym	Miss. Toleka	Mr. Toliza	Mr. Toliwe	Mrs. Tolo
Qualifications	S.T.D, B.A, Bed Hons	P.T. D, F.D. E, B.A	S.T.D, B.A, F.D.E	S.T.D, BSC, F.D.E
Age	44	51	41	46
Experience as an SMT member	5	7	11	16
Years in the school	10	13	6	4

Table 5: Participants' profile of Toliz Secondary School

4.5.3 Profiling schools

	Langaz S.S.	**Patoni S.S.**	**Siwo S.S.**	**Patoni S.S.**	
Location	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
School buildings	Condition	Adequate	Adequate	Good	Good
	Toilets	Poor	Poor	Good	Good
	Water	Poor	Yes	Poor	Poor
	Electricity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Fencing	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
Physical Resource	Library	No	No	No	No
	Laboratory	No	No	No	No
	Computer lab	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
	School lab	None	None	None	None
	Sports grounds	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
School fees	No fee school	No fee school	No fee school	No fee school	No fee school
DBE allocation	Quintile ranking	Quintile 1	Quintile 1	Quintile 1	Quintile 1

Table 6: School profiles

4.6 Data generation methods

In the opening section of this chapter, I highlighted that this research was located within an interpretive research paradigm and that the design was qualitative. The research methodology was case study, and specifically, it was multiple case methodology. The importance of the alignment of other issues in the research with the research methods are important. These include the appropriateness of the of the language used to describe various aspects of the study such as the methods of data generation. To that end, I must highlight that while other scholars especially quantitative inquirers use the term data collection, I chose to use the term data generation and data elicitation interchangeably. This is based on the ontological and epistemological orientation

which I explained in the research paradigm section. In this study, data generation methods used were semi-structured interviews and documents reviews.

4.6.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the main data generation technique that were used to generate qualitative data for the study. Interviews are described by different scholars differently; however, they all agree that interviews all involve verbal conversations between human beings. For example, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 349) define interviews as "an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, which sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production". Adding to the same notion, Merriam (2019), as well as Kvale (2015) emphasise the issue of interviews as being conversations between two individuals in which one of them asks questions while another responds. In the context of a research process, the researcher is the one who asks questions while the participants respond to the questions posed. In addition to this issue about who initiates the discussion during interviews, Kvale (2015) further highlights that in qualitative inquiry, the researcher becomes a research instruments because he or she personally comes to the research sites. This is the opposite of what happens in quantitative designs where the research instruments are posted to the respondents and the latter send back to the researcher their respective responses. In qualitative research the researcher visits the participants in their natural settings as they proceed with their normal duties (Cohen et al., 2018). This is one of the characteristics of qualitative research designs.

According to Cohen et al. (2011), semi-structured interviews can be regarded as a technique used by qualitative researcher whereby, they prepare a set of questions, sufficiently open-ended to enable flexibility for the researcher to adjust the sequence of questions and follow ups. Equally, Merriam (2009) defines semi-structured interviews as that type of interviews which enable researchers to re-arrange questions as they deem fit during the interviews. In other words, there is flexibility in many respects. This means that the researcher is not compelled to follow the same sequence of questions for all the participants in the study. In addition, its flexibility means that researchers are able to follow up on questions asked and also on the responses that the participants give. Such follow ups can be about clarity seeking purposes or to confirm interpretations that a researcher may make from time to time.

One of the characteristics of qualitative research is that it is multi-methods in its orientation. In the context of this study, I used semi-structured interviews due to the fact that they provide the researcher with flexibility in that he or she is able to prepare questions to guide the discussion before the commencement of the interviews. However, that does not end there. The researcher is able to do follow ups from the responses of the participants (Cohen et al., 2018). This point is also shared by many scholars as well (Holland, 2013; Jamshed, 2014; Leech, 2015; Merriam, 2009). These scholars further emphasise the point that semi-structured interviews are suitable for qualitative research. Since the study reported in this thesis is qualitative in nature, semi-structured interviews were deemed appropriate. I also chose semi-structured interviews because it enables the participants to express themselves freely to share their experiences (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

Furthermore, semi-structured interviews are employed because they allow the researcher to utilise a list of prompts to be explored (Teijlingen, 2014). Similarly, semi-structured interviews enabled me as a researcher to solicit Principals, Deputy Principals, and Departmental Heads' views about successful leadership practices. Furthermore, interviews were conducted telephonically so as to observe COVID-19 regulations. Before conducting the interviews, I had to think about what could be the most appropriate time to hold the interviews, and also, I had to ensure that work time was not disturbed. Therefore, I had arranged with each participant about the most suitable time to have a conversation about their views and experiences regarding their leadership practices. I heeded the advice of Van Nieuwenhuis (2013) who says that interviews should be held in an environment where there are no disruptions or interruptions.

Semi-structured interviews have their own disadvantages as well. Researchers such as Cohen et al. (2011), Bertram and Christiansen (2014) argue that the interviews can be time consuming and thus, expensive. Additionally, semi-structured interviews are prone to researcher biases and anonymity is difficult to maintain (Cohen et al., 2018). To deal with this challenge of researcher biases, I used various techniques including member-checking. Through that process, I checked with my participants if my interpretations were consistent with their own understandings and experiences. In that way, my interpretations would not overshadow their expressed views and experiences. Also, after recording and transcribing the data, I sent the transcripts back to the participants. In that way, I ensured that they checked the content of our discussion for accuracy. Therefore, the researcher has to keep on assuring the participants of confidentiality and anonymity issues. I also kept on explaining that whatever happens between us will remain between the two of us, and how I would maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Because participants can express themselves freely, that may skew the discussion in favour of those

participants who are articulate and those who are not may contribute to unbalanced data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). This puts pressure on the qualitative researchers to ensure balance. Because data takes the form of words, this results in high volume of textual data, which ultimately, leads to the analysis taking a long time to do and complete.

4.6.2 Document review

Documents reviews is the second technique that I used to elicit qualitative data for this study. According to scholars such as Bailey (2007) and Nieuwenhuis (2007), documents can be used to supplement other information that is gathered by other means such as interviews or observations. Documents are known for providing additional information that assists in obtaining a complete picture of the phenomenon (Yin, 2003). Documents have an additional value in that they give further evidence and proof that the phenomenon under study is captured in the institutional records (Burke & Christiansen, 2008; Fitzgerald, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, documents give a perspective about the life of an institution and its activities (Cohen et al., 2011). In the context of this study, I reviewed various documents such as admission books, class attendance, various policies, minutes of meetings held with School Management Teams, teacher attendance registers, leave registers and learner attendance registers. I also reviewed schedule of results to track how the learners have been performing in the past few years. I also reviewed year plans used by teachers and Departmental Heads. That enabled me to obtain a more comprehensive view about plans that were implemented, as well as how the learners had performed. This enabled me to corroborate the data generated through semi-structured interviews.

4.7 Data analysis

This section describes how data was analysed. Data is meaningless if it not subjected to analysis so that researchers can make meanings from it (Cohen et al., 2018; Maree, 2007; Merriam, 2002). Different scholars define data analysis in various ways without necessarily contradicting one another. For instance, Murdoch (2002) describes data analysis as a way of arranging it in such a way that it is organised orderly so that it can make sense to the researcher and the readers. Smith (2009) describes data analysis as a cognitive exercise in which complicated whole volume of text is organised in such a way that it is manageable and consumable. Cohen at al. (2011) describe qualitative data analysis as a technique and process of organising transcribed text into manageable chunks that make meaning. This process entails a researcher searching for patterns

in what the participants have said. Creswell (2014) describes qualitative data analysis as a process that begins with raw data that is generated, and it follows four steps which he describes as organising data for analysis, creating a picture out of the generated data, creating codes of meaning and then generating themes under which the data can be discussed. These four steps are discussed next.

The first step, according to Creswell (2014), entails the researcher organising the raw data in the form of transcribed text. Before this process of analysing commences, the research has to transcribe the data that is kept in the audio recorder into a text that can be read. That process alone can take some time if one is not trained in transcribing data. One can employ a professional transcriber. I found it helpful to do it myself because I was able to reconnect with the voices of the participants as I was listening and writing it on my computer.

The second step involves the researcher developing a general picture about the content of the interviews. As one reads the transcripts for purposes of generating codes of meaning, one has to also reflect on what the literature says on that particular chunk of text. The theoretical framework also comes in as one thinks about what the participants say. A picture emerges as one reads and reflects on what the participants said and comparing it with what scholars and theories say. The third step involves a group of words that represents some kind of descriptors of what is happening as described by the participants in their responses to various questions and probes. These group of words do relate to other group of words, and in some instances, overlaps may occur. Green (2007) defines these groups of words as descriptive codes that are given some labels by the researcher. It is when similar groups seem to give similar descriptions that overlaps emerge.

The fourth step is when these groups of words are brought together to form themes that are then used to present and discuss the data. These themes are also linked to the research questions. Other forms of data such as those captured in the field notes and notes made in the analysis of documents reviews is also brought into a conversation with the themes that have emerged. This helps to corroborate or refute some of the claims that could be emerging from the analysed data from the interviews. When all these analyses are looked at in combination, a clearer picture emerges. The next section then describes techniques that are used to ensure that what is emerging from the analysis and the claims that are made are trustworthy.

4.8 Issues of trustworthiness

There are various techniques that are used by researchers to ensure what quantitative researchers refer to as validity and reliability. However, in qualitative inquiry, an alternative set of concepts have been generated to describe a process of ensuring that what the study finds can be believable. Qualitative inquirers use the concept of trustworthiness as a broad concept that encompasses a number of criteria that ensure trustworthiness of the findings. Believability is at the core of this section as it is critical that readers have confidence in the integrity of the findings (Ryan et al., 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed the four criteria of ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research. These concepts are relevant for qualitative research because this form of research does not use statistical analysis as numbers do not form part of data. The four criteria that these scholars developed are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, and they are discussed next.

4.8.1 Credibility

Many ways can be used to ensure credibility. Some scholars include adopting different data generation techniques as one of the ways of ensuring credibility of the findings. The argument in that case could be the fact that since a clear picture has emerged despite different methods having been used to produce data would be a strong indicator that the findings can be believed; hence, they have credibility. Therefore, credibility can be used to provide a more complete picture of the existing situation as expressed by the participants. In the context of this study two methods of data generation were used, namely, semi-structured interviews and documents reviews. The other dimension to it is that I did not only speak to the principals, but, I spoke to all categories of the SMTs. Using different methods helped in enhancing credibility. The technique I used to enhance credibility include member-checking. I have explained this technique in the previous sections wherein I explained that I had to check my interpretations with my participants.

4.8.2 Transferability

The second criterion that researchers can use is transferability, which essentially means that researchers have to give as much details about their study as possible. The assumption is that when more details are provided, readers can get a clear picture about what happened in the

process of conducting a study. Therefore, if they wanted to conduct their own research in similar circumstances, they can replicate the study (Cohen et al., 2011; Maree, 2007). Therefore, transferability has to do with researchers giving more details about the context of their studies to ensure that readers and/or researchers can conduct their own studies and have confidence that their findings may be similar. This technique helps in terms of facilitating comparability. In the context of my study, I made sure that I give as much details as possible about contextual realities of the study and its context, including the profiles of each participating school.

4.8.3 Dependability

The third criterion is dependability. This criterion can be regarded as an enabler that facilitates comparability and replication should any other researcher wish to conduct a study under similar conditions (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). Some of the techniques that are used to enhance dependability in qualitative studies include audit trail (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). Therefore, in this study, I ensured that I used dependability audit , and also that I carefully selected, described and applied the research methods and data gathering techniques that are appropriate for the study's purposes.

4.8.4 Confirmability

The fourth and the last criterion that Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed is confirmability. In qualitative research, confirmability is a technique that is used to ensure that what is presented in the findings is not based on the researcher's biases and personal preferences, but that it is based the participants' views and experiences. Through the use of confirmability, the researcher has to ensure that his personal assumptions and interpretations are suspended, and relies only on the participants' views and not those of the researcher. To ensure confirmability, I used a variety of techniques as I have highlighted elsewhere in this thesis. For instance, I made sure I checked my interpretations with the participants to ensure that I did not misrepresent their views. Also, after completing my transcriptions, I sent the transcripts back to them to read and confirm if the content represented what was discussed during the interview process. This is consistent with what various scholars say about confirmability (Cohen et al., 2011; Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006).

4.9 Ethical issues

It is always important that research is conducted within strict ethical standards. Because of that, the University of KwaZulu-Natal insists that all its academic staff and students have to comply with its ethical standards. Therefore, before conducting this study, I had to apply for ethical clearance with the University of KwaZulu-Natal and thereafter, I sought and obtained permission from the Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education to conduct the study. It was also important that research participants agreed to participate voluntarily in the study, as they enjoy their own personal autonomy. In response to such a requirement, I requested each participant to participate in the study, and they all agreed. As part of requesting them to participate in the study, I explained the purpose of the study (Denzin, 2000). Once they had agreed to participate, I asked them to sign a declaration of informed consent form as evidence that they had agreed to participate voluntarily and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage of the research without any consequences. Besides the principle of autonomy, there are other ethical issues that must be considered such as the principle of non-maleficence (Cohen et al., 2018). This principle has to do with ensuring that the participants are not subjected to any form of harm. One way of protecting them from harm is to respect and adhere to the principle of anonymity and confidentiality. To hide the identities of the individual participant and that of the schools, I used pseudonyms (Punch, 1994).

4.10 Limitations of the study

Any empirical study has some limitations and as such, each researcher has to declare what his or her study's limitations are and how such limitations were overcome. It is important that the limitations do not negatively affect the credibility and the overall trustworthiness of the findings (Hofstee, 2006). There is one major limitation of this study, and that has to do with its design, that it was a qualitative study of only four secondary schools. Another limitation is the prevalence of COVID-19. This prevented me from interviewing my participants face to face. This challenge was overcome by my using telephonic interviews, even though with some consequences. Another limitation was the use of digital voice recorder. This device seemed to have made participants weary at the beginning of the interviews and may have influenced their responses. In order to put my participants at ease, I attempted to reassure all participants of their right to confidentiality and anonymity.

4.11 Delimitations of the study

Delimitation has to do with the boundaries of the study, and not the weaknesses of the study design. In this study, four secondary schools in the OR Tambo district participated in the study. In each school, a school principal, a deputy principal and two Departmental Heads took part in the study.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology that was adopted in this study. All other methodological issues were discussed comprehensively in the chapter. All crucial elements of a methodological chapter of a thesis have been discussed. I have also attempted to reflect a bit about the impact of COVID-19 on the process of data generation. I did not get into details about any frustration that I went through during that period. The next chapter presents the data that was generated using the two techniques, namely, semi-structured interviews and documents reviews.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research design and methodology issues. This chapter presents data from a multiple-site case study that explored successful leadership practices of SMT members in four secondary schools in a rural context of the Eastern Cape. The study sought to understand the contextual realities that informed the manner in which School Management Team (SMT) members carried out their responsibilities from their perspectives. The data was generated through interviewing the SMT members to explore how they described and explained their successful leadership practices. The data generated in this study responded to the three research questions of this study which are: '

- How do School Management Team members, in selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape, describe and explain successful leadership practices?
- What are the key factors that underpin successful leadership practices of the School Management Team members in selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape?
- Why do School Management Team members in selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape enact leadership the way they do?

The *pseudonym* of the participants and the *pseudonym* of their schools are explained below.

Mr Lala, the first Departmental Head from Langaz Secondary School

Mr Lalyz, the second Departmental Head from Langaz Secondary School

Mrs Patonela, the third Departmental Head from Patoni Secondary School

Mrs Patoniza, the fourth Departmental Head from Patoni Secondary School

Mr Sisa, the fifth Departmental Head from Siwo Secondary School

Mr Siwa, the sixth Departmental Head from Siwo Secondary School

Miss Toleka, the seventh Departmental Head from Toliz Secondary School

Mr Toliza, the eighth Departmental Head from Toliz Secondary School

Mr La, the first Deputy Principal from Langaz Secondary School

Mr Pato, the second Deputy Principal from Patoni Secondary School

Mr Siwole, the third Deputy Principal from Siwo Secondary School

Mr Toliwe, the fourth Deputy Principal from Toliz Secondary School

Mr Lang, the first Principal from Langaz Secondary School

Mr Patyo, the second Principal from Patoni Secondary School

Mr Siwele, the third Principal from Siwo Secondary School

Mrs Tolo, the fourth Principal from Toliz Secondary School

5.2 Brief profiles of the participants and the participating schools

Before I present the data, I begin by presenting the profiles of the participating schools and the participating SMT members. In qualitative inquiry, it is important that readers are given the context of each case study that was studied and this is normally done by providing a background about the research sites, including the institutions and personnel running those institutions. The profiles of the participants and those of the participating schools are presented below.

5.2.1 Profile for participants of Langaz Secondary School

In this section I present a table that summarises the profile of the Langaz Secondary School. This includes their professional qualifications, ages and their experiences in the school and also in the positions of the SMT.

Pseudonym	Mr Lala	Mr Lalyz	Mr Laqa	Mr Lang
Qualifications	STD, BA.	STD, BSc	BTech in Education, STD, BEd Hons, MEd	STD, FDE, BA
Age	44	35	40	51
Experience as an SMT member	4	6	7	8
Years in the school	10	8	12	14

Table 7: Profile of the participants of Langaz Secondary School

The table above shows the profile of SMT members of Langaz Secondary School. It shows the experience, qualifications, age, the number of years of experience as a SMT member, number of years spent in the school for all the SMT members. The names used for the participants are not real names. Four SMT members from each school had been chosen to participate in this study. Two Departmental Heads (DHs), one Deputy Principal and the Principal have been chosen from each Secondary School. Two DHs and one Deputy Principal have been chosen on the basis of having more experience as compared with other DHs and Deputy Principals.

Mr Lala, not his real name, the Departmental Head (DH) holds Secondary Teachers Diploma and specialised in Business Economics, Economics at the then Transkei College. He also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and specialised in similar subjects at University of Cape Town. He is age 44. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 4 years at Langaz Secondary School. He has spent 10 years teaching in the school.

Mr Lalyz, not his real name, the Departmental Head (DH) has a Secondary Teachers Diploma and specialised in Mathematics and Physical Science at the then Mfundisweni College of Education. He also holds Bachelor of Science degree and specialised in Mathematics and Agricultural Science at the then University of Transkei (UNITRA). He also did similar subjects at the University of Cape Town (UCT). He is age 35. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 6 years at Langaz Secondary School. He has spent 8 years teaching in the school.

MrLaqa, not his real name, the Deputy Principal holds, a Bachelor of Technology in Education and specialised in Technology and Drawing at the then Tshwane Technicon. He also holds a Secondary Teachers Diploma specialised in English and Xhosa at the then Transkei College. He holds BEd Honours in University of South Africa (UNISA) specialised in Educational Management. He also holds Masters in Education from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) specialised in Educational Management Leadership and Policy. He is 40 years of age. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 7 years at Langaz Secondary School. She has spent 12 years teaching in the school.

Mr Lang, not his real name, the Principal holds Secondary Teachers Diploma from the then Cicira College of Educationand specialised in English and Geography. He holds a Further Diploma in Education (FDE) from the University of Pretoria and specialised in Educational Management. He also holds Bachelor of. Arts from the University of South Africa (UNISA)

specialised in English and History. He is aged 51. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 8 years at Langaz Secondary School. He had spent 14 years teaching in the school.

What can be drawn from the profiles of the above participants is that all of them are fully qualified as teachers. In fact, they are more than fully qualified if one considers the fact that in South Africa, a teacher is fully qualified if that teacher has 4 years of training as a teacher. These participants started their teaching careers after receiving professional training in the colleges where they obtained teachers diploma. All of them have proceeded to study at universities for their bachelor's degrees. Although the profile does not tell us about the other teachers in these schools in terms of their qualifications, it is evident that the participants wanted to upgrade their qualifications. Therefore, one can argue that the learners in these schools were exposed to highly qualified teaching staff members. What follows next is the table that summarises the profile of the participants at Patoni Secondary school.

5.2.2 Profile for participants of Patoni Secondary School

Pseudonym	Mrs Patonela	Mrs Patoniza	Mr Pato	Mr Patyo
Qualifications	PTD, BA	STD, BCom	PTD, BTech in Education, BEd	STD, BSc Hons, BEd Hons
Age	44	485	40	51
Experience as an SMT member	8	5	11	13
Years in the school	7	15	10	5

Table 8: Profile of the participants of Patoni Secondary School

The table above **(Table 8)** shows the profile of SMT members of Patoni Secondary School. It shows the experience, qualifications, age, the number of years of experience as a SMT member, number of years spent in the school for all the SMT members. The names used for the participants are not real names. Four SMT members from each school were chosen to participate in this study. Two Departmental Heads (DHs), one Deputy Principal and the Principal have been chosen from each Secondary School. Two DHs and one Deputy Principal have been chosen on the basis of having more experience as compared with other DHs and Deputy Principals.

Mrs Patonela, not her real name, the Departmental Head (DH) holds Primary Teachers Diploma (PTD) and studied all subjects of primary schools at the then Sigcawu College of Education as there was no specialisation for primary teachers' diplomas. She also holds Bachelor of Arts (BA)

degree from the University of South Africa (UNISA) and specialised in English and Geography. She is 44 years old. She has been serving as SMT member for a period of 8 years at Patoni Secondary School. She has spent 7 years teaching in the school.

Mrs Patoniza, not her real name, the Departmental Head (DH) holds Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD) from the then Transkei College and specialised in English and Xhosa at the then Mfundisweni College of Education. She also holds Bachelor of Commerce from the University of South Africa (UNISA) and specialised in Economics and Accounting. She is 35 years old. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 5 years at Patoni Secondary School. She has spent 15 years teaching in the school.

Mr Pato, not his real name, is the Deputy Principal. He holds a Primary Teachers' Diploma (PTD) from the then Sigcawu College of Education and he studied all the subjects for primary school as there was no specialisation for such qualifications. He also holds Bachler of Technology in Education from the University of Pretoria, and specialised in Educational Management. He holds Bachelor of Education (BEd) from the University of South Africa (UNISA) and specialised in Mathematics and Geography. He is is 40 years of age. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 11 years at Patoni Secondary School. He has spent 10 years teaching in the school.

Mr Patyo, not his real name, the Principal holds a Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD) from the then Transkei College of Education and specialised in Mathematics and Physical Science. He holds Bachelor of Science (BSc) from the then University of Transkei (UNITRA) and specialised in Mathematics and Physical Science. He also holds Honours in Bachelor of Science from then UNITRA and specialised in Mathematics. He is 51 years of age. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 13 years at Patoni Secondary School. She has spent 5 years teaching in the school.

Similarly, what can be observed in this profile of teachers at Patoni Secondary School is that the participants shared similar features with those of Langaz Secondary School in terms of their professional qualification. Furthermore, it is evident that these participants were not satisfied with their initial professional qualifications and they studied further to improve their qualifications. Again here, I would not want to generalise this picture and say that it applied to all the teachers in the school. Nevertheless, it is evident that the learners at this school were

exposed to the teachers who were highly qualified and the assumption could be that the learners were exposed to good quality teaching. However, it is too early to make any judgement in relation to that. What follows next is the table that summarises the profile of the participants at Siwo Secondary school.

5.2.3 Profile for participants of Siwo Secondary School

Pseudonym	Mr Sisa	Mr Siwa	Mr Siwole	Mr Siwele
Qualifications	PTD; BA; BEd Hons	STD; FDE	PTD; BA; FDE	STD; BSc; BEd Hons
Age	43	30	45	4O
Experience as an SMT member	9	12	15	10
Years in the school	8	14	9	17

Table 9: Profiles of the participants of Siwo Secondary School

The table above (Table 9) shows the profile of SMT members of Siwo Secondary School. It shows the experience, qualifications, age, the number of years of experience as a SMT member, number of years spent in the school for all the SMT members. The names used for the participants are not real names. Four SMT members from each school were chosen to participate in this study. Two Departmental Heads (DHs), one Deputy Principal and the Principal were chosen from each Secondary School. Two DHs and one Deputy Principal were chosen on the basis of having more experience as compared with other DHs and Deputy Principals.

Mr Sisa not his real name, the Departmental Head (DH) holds a Primary Teachers Diploma and studied in all subjects of primary schools at the then Sigcawu College of Education. He also holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree from the University of South Africa (UNISA) and specialised in English and Xhosa. Furthermore, he holds Honours in Bachelor of Education (BEd Hons) from University of South Africa (UNISA) and specialised in Educational Management. He is 43 years old. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 9 years at Siwo Secondary School. He has spent 9 years teaching in the school.

Mr Siwa, not his real name, the Departmental Head (DH) holds a Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD) from the then Transkei College, and specialised in Mathematics and Physical Science. He also holds a Further Diploma in Education, speciaising in Educational Management at the University of Pretoria. He is 43 years of age. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 9 years at Siwo Secondary School. She has spent 8 years teaching in the school.

Mr Siwole, not his real name, is the Deputy Principal. He holds a Primary Teachers Diploma (PTD) from the then Sigcawu College of Education and studied all subjects for primary school. He also holds B.A, specialising in Public Administration and Geography at the University of South Africa. Furthermore, he holds Further Diploma in Education (FDE), specialising in Educational Management at the University of Pretoria. He is 45 years of age. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 15 years at Siwo Secondary School. He has spent 9 years teaching in the school.

Mr Siwele, not his real name, the Principal, holds Secondary Teachers Diploma from the then Mfunda isweni College of Education, and specialised in Mathematics and Physical Science. He holds a Bachelor of Science (BSc) and specialised in Mathematics at the University of South Africa. He also holds a Bachelor of Education and specialised in Educational Management. He is 40 years of age. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 10 years at Siwo Secondary School. He has spent 17 years teaching in the school.

Equally, what can be deduced from this profile of teachers at Siwo Secondary School is that the participants shared similar features with those of the above two secondary schools which Langaz Secondary School and Patoni Secondary School in terms of their professional qualification. Furthermore, it is evident that these participants were not satisfied with their initial professional qualifications and they studied further to improve their qualifications. Once more, I would not want to generalise this picture and say that it applied to all the educators in the school. Nevertheless, I can say with confidence that the learners at this school were exposed to the teachers who were highly qualified and the assumption could be that the learners were exposed to good quality teaching. What follows next is the table that summarises the profile of the participants at Toliz Secondary School.

5.2.4 Profile ofparticipants of Toliz Secondary School

This section presents tables that summarise the qualifications of the participants from Toliz Secondary School.

Pseudonym	Miss Toleka	Mr Toliza	Mr Toliwe	Mrs Tolo
Qualifications	STD, BA, BEd Hons	PTD, FDE, BA	STD, BA, FDE	STD, BSc, FDE
Age	44	51	41	46

Experience as an SMT member	5	7	11	16
Years in the school	10	13	6	4

Table 10: Profiles of the participants of Toliz Secondary School

The table above (Table 10) shows the profile of SMT members of Toliz Secondary School. It shows the experience, qualifications, age, the number of years of experience as a SMT member, number of years spent in the school for all the SMT members. The names used for the participants are not real names. Four SMT members from each school were chosen to participate in this study. Two Departmental Heads (DHs), one Deputy Principal and the Principal were chosen from each Secondary School. Two DHs and one Deputy Principal were chosen on the basis of having more experience as compared with other DHs and Deputy Principals.

Miss Toleka not her real name, the Departmental Head (DH) holds a Secondary Teachers Diploma (S.T.D) specialised in Economics, Accounting, Business Studies at the then Transkei College. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of South Africa (UNISA) and specialised in Economics and Accounting. Furthermore, she holds Honours in Bachelor of Education (BEd Hons) from University of South Africa (UNISA), and specialised in Educational Management. She is 44 years old. She has been serving as SMT member for a period of 5 years at Toliz Secondary School. She has spent 10 years teaching in the school.

Mr. Toliza, not his real name, the Departmental Head (DH) holds Secondary Teachers Diploma (S.T.D) from the then Transkei College, and specialised in Mathematics and Physical Science. He also holds Further Diploma in Education, and specialised in Educational Management at the University of Pretoria. He is 51 years old. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 7 years at Toliz Secondary School. He has spent 13 years teaching in the school.

Mr Toliwe, not his real name, is the Deputy Principal. He holds, a Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD) from the then Mfundisweni College of Education, and specialised in English and History. He also holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A), specialising in History at the University of South Africa. Furthermore, he holds a Further Diploma in Education (F.D.E), specialising in Educational Management at the University of Pretoria. He is 41 years old. He has been serving as SMT member for a period of 11 years at Toliz Secondary School. He has spent 6 years teaching in the school.

Mrs Tolo, not her real name, the Principal, holds a Secondary Teachers Diploma from the then Mfundisweni College of Education, and specialised in Mathematics and Physical Science. She holds a Bachelor of Science (BSC), specialising in Mathematics at the University of South Africa. She also holds a Bachelor of Education, specialising in Educational Management. She is 46 years of age. She has been serving as SMT member for a period of 16 years at Toliz Secondary School. She has spent 4 years teaching in the school.

Likewise, what can be deduced from this profile of School Management Team members at Toliz Secondary School is that the participants shared analogous features with those of the above three secondary schools which are Langaz Secondary School, Patoni Secondary School and Siwo Secondary School in terms of their professional qualification. Furthermore, it is evident that these participants were not thrilled with their initial qualifications and they studied further to improve their qualifications. Once more, I would not want to oversimplify this picture and say that it applied to all the educators in the school. Nonetheless, I can pronounce with confidence that the learners at this school were exposed to SMT members who were highly qualified and the assumption could be that the learners were exposed to good quality teaching. Furthermore, it can be argued that these qualifications for the participants have a contribution in the success of these four secondary schools in terms of learner academic performance.

5.3 Brief profiles of the participating schools

Profiles of the four participating schools will be given below. These school were Langaz Secondary School, Patoni Secondary School, Siwo Secondary School and Toliz Secondary School.

5.3.1 Profile of Langaz Secondary School

Langaz Secondary School was built in middle of the 1980s by the community members. This school is located in deep rural areas of the O.R. Tambo Coastal District. This is a Quintile 1 school, which starts from Grade 10 up to Grade 12. It has 39 educators and 08 non-teaching staff (this category of workers includes one administration clerk, one security guard, one cleaner and five women who assist in the school's nutrition programme). The security guard and the cleaner receive a stipend from the funds of the school. The number of learners that were attending school is I 300. Most learners stayed with their grandparents. Some stayed on their own as their

parents had passed on. The school falls under Section 21. Section 21 Schools are schools that are allocated finances directly by the Department of Basic Education. These schools have power to order stationery and other equipment and also pay for water and lights. They can also undertake maintenance on their own. This school had quite a broad curriculum package which includes subjects in Mathematics and Science, Commerce and Humanities. This broad subject package assists learners who complete Grade 12 examinations to have various options when they enrol at higher education institutions. The school was partially fenced. The big part of the school had no fence at all. The only fence available was around the school buildings. Its performance in the past years (2013-2020) is described next.

5.3.2 Grade 12 learner performance in the past 8 years (2013-2020)

In this section I discuss in a table form, Grade 12 learner performances in the past 8 years.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Performance	30	45	69. 8	75. 8	85. 40	98. 66	91. 70	87. 41

Table 11: Learner performance in the past 8 years

5.3.3 Learner enrolment in the past 6 years

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Enrolment	1020	1060	1069	1075	1176	1160

Table 12: Learner enrolment in the past 6 years

5.3.4 Profile of Patoni Secondary School

Patoni Secondary School was built in 1930s by the community members. At later stage the former Transkei Department of Education took over the responsibility of building the school. This school is located in deep rural areas of O.R. Tambo Coastal District. This is a Quintile 1 school, which starts from Grade 10 up to Grade 12. It has 30 educators and 08 non-teaching staff (this category of workers includes one administration clerk, one security guard, 2 cleaners and four women who assist in the school's nutrition programme). The security guard and two cleaners receive a stipend from the funds of the school. The school is surrounded by hills and there is a river that passes close to the school. When it is full learners are unable to cross it. The number of learners that were attending school is I065. The community living here is

characterised as poor; they do have tarred roads even the gravel road is bad and there is high rate of unemployment. The school suffered from infrastructural challenges such as the lack of working ablution facilities and play grounds for the learners. The community around the school faced a number of social challenges of various kinds such as high levels of crime, orphaned children, child-headed households, and a large number of children were reported to be dependent on social grants. The school falls under Section 21. Section 21 Schools are schools that are allocated finances directly by the Department of Basic Education and they are responsible for ordering stationery, textbooks, paying water and lights and undertaking their own maintenance. The reader should be aware that ordering stationery and text books has been centralised in Eastern Cape Province. This means that this task is performed by the Department of Basic Education in the Eastern Cape. Also, the large part of the school is fenced. This is among the schools that perform well in terms of learner academic performance. Also, this school offers a wide range of curriculum packages to enable learners to pursue different careers after completing Grade 12. Subject packages include humanities, sciences and commerce streams. Its performance in the past years (2013-2020) is described next.

5.3.5 Grade 12 learner performance in the past 8 years (2015-2020)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Performance	15	45	68.7	70.6	80.40	95.55	90	85.50

Table 13: Learner performance in the past 8 years

5.3.6 Learner enrolment in the past 6 years

In this section, learner enrolment for the past 6 years is presented in a table that summarises it.

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Enrolment	1040	1060	1071	1067	1155	1150

Table 14: Learner enrolment in the past 6 years

5.3.7 Profile of Siwo Secondary School

Siwo Secondary School was built in 1970s by the members of the community. At later stage, the former Transkei Department of Education took over by building the school. This school is located in deep rural areas of O.R. Tambo Coastal District. The school is built on a flat land with forests. This is a Quintile 1 school and starts from Grade 10 up to Grade 12. It has 35 educators and 09 non-teaching staff (this category of workers includes two administration clerks, one

security guard, two cleaners and four women who assist in the school's nutrition programme). The security guard, one administration clerk and two cleaners receive a stipend from the funds of the school. This school is Section 21 School. This means that the school is allocated funds directly from the Department of Basic Education and can decide on what those funds can be spent on. The number of learners that were attending school is I060. The community is challenged by socioeconomic factors like poverty and bad gravel roads. There is high rate of unemployment. Due to the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the community, Siwo Secondary School was categorised as a No fee-paying school and was rated as one of the best performing schools within the district. Its performance in the past few years (2013-2020) is described below.

5.3.8 Grade 12 learner performance in the past 8 years (2013-2020)

Table 15: Learner performance in the past 8 years

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Performance	40	42	69. 7	80. 46	97. 40	100	100	98. 50

5.3.9 Learner enrolment in the past 6 years

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Enrolment	800	1065	1070	1081	1087	1150

Table 16: Learner enrolment in the 6 years

5.3.9.1 Profile of Toliz Secondary School

Toliz Secondary School is situated in deep rural areas in the O.R. Tambo Coastal District. It was built by the community. As a result, some buildings are not well-structured. It is surrounded by attractive cliffs and hills. This is a Quintile 1 school, which starts from Grade 10 up to Grade 12. It has 40 educators and 11 non-teaching staff (this category of workers includes two administration clerks, two security guards, three cleaners and four women who assist in the school's nutrition programme). The two security guards, two administration clerk and three cleaners receive a stipend from the funds of the school. This is Section 21 School. Therefore, the school is allocated finances by the Department of Basic Education and can decide on where to do purchases. This school used to present 300 learners for examinations. Out of those 300 learners they got 99%. 250 learners get bachelor passes. One percent lost may be the learner who failed because of irregular attendance due to illness. The number of learners that were attending school is 1700. The community is affected by poverty and unemployment; some

parents are selling on the streets because they cannot make ends meet. Its performance in the past years (2013-2020) is described below.

5.3.9.2 Grade 12 learner performance in the past 8 years (2013-2020)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Performance	99	100	100	98	100	97	100	96. 50

Table 17: Learner performance in the past 8 years

5.3.9.3 Learner enrolment in the past 6 years

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Enrolment	1400	1450	1470	11500	1660	1700

Table 18: Learner enrolment in the past 6 years

5.4 School Management Teams' successful leadership practices

The elements that constitute participants' story are discussed in this section. Through the analysis of qualitative data, the following themes were developed to explain successful leadership practices that of the participating SMT member: (a) Developing a living vision and mission statement and goals (b) Walking the Talk! (c) Intersecting Monitoring Teaching and Learning, (d) Promoting expertise driven by assigning of duties to the other staff members and learners (e) Monitoring and controlling educators work, (f) Motivating the teachers and the learners, (g) Understanding the context of the school (understanding the economic factors, understanding the social factors and understanding the family factors).

5.4.1 Developing a living vision and mission statement and goals

The data generated indicated that all the participating schools had vision and mission statements as a broad statement that guided their operations. Furthermore, data indicates how vision and mission statement was developed. The data also indicates what kinds of goals were developed and how such goals were developed. The data indicates the extent to which these are aligned with those of the District and those of the Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education (ECDoE). In responding to the above claim, Mr Lang the Principal of Langaz Secondary School, explained:

> *Our vision and mission are grounded from the Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education. Then, we stick to some few areas where we think will assist us to achieve what we want to achieve. In developing our vision and mission statement we involved*

stakeholders. The goal that was developed was related to the improvement of learners'
performance even after Grade 12. They were aligned with those of the District and
ECDoE with about 100% (Mr Lang, the Principal of Langaz, Secondary School).

Mr Siwele, the Principal of Siwo Secondary School affirmed the importance of involving stakeholders in developing vision, mission statement and developing the school goals so that they can have ownership of the decisions made. It was believed that when all stakeholders had been involved in the development of vision and mission statements, commitment would be enhanced, and so would the school performance. It is important that the principals should lead the process of developing a vision and mission statement, and that all relevant stakeholders must be involved as well. There is no disagreement among scholars about the role that school principals must play in giving direction and influence in the schools. Mr Siwele was also of the view that it is the principal who must first have the vision and then has to share it with the stakeholders. The belief was that it is the responsibility of the principal to give direction and influence others to follow. Mr Siwele was also of the view that initially it was also possible to out-source the development of vision and mission statement to certain projects to craft it for compliance. However, as the time went on, they stopped doing that because they noticed that it did not address the needs for the school. The school also involved unions at a site level. Mr Siwele has a view that goals are developed by school leaders within the school. This is what he said:

> *As the principal I sat together with stakeholders in an open space in which they had to*
> *look at the vision and mission statement. We involved stakeholders such as educators,*
> *the parents and representative council for learners (RCL). Initially we used to involve*
> *the project by the name of Imbumba Project for compliance as to craft the vision and the*
> *mission statement. Having noticed that the crafted one does not address the needs of the*
> *school, we cut the ties with the project. The goals were developed by school leaders such*
> *as SMT members, SGB and learners. For the school to function optimally, it is my*
> *responsibility as the principal to share and advocate the vision and mission of the school*
> *with educators, parents and learners. That is what I do. It is my duty to give direction*
> *and to get people to follow me in taking that direction* (Mr Siwele, the Principal of Siwo
> Secondary School).

Mrs Tolo, the Principal of Toliz S.S. shared similar sentiments in terms of involving stakeholder in developing vision and mission statement in the school. She specified that the stakeholders must be involved such as parents, SGB, SMT, teachers and representatives from learners as to

share their skills. Their goal is to achieve 100% in terms Grade 12 result. She only mentioned principal and SMT members. She did not mention other stakeholders. That was how she put it:

> *The involvement of the SMT members in developing vision and mission statement is important so as to make them own their performance in the school. I also have a view that it is also vital to involve yourself as the principal and SMT members who are involved in teaching and learning on daily basis and knowledgeable in terms of content* (Mrs Tolo, the Principal of Toliz Secondary School).

The above excerpts from the interviews indicate that the participating schools had vision and mission statements displayed in the principals' offices. It also emerged from the participants that the vision and mission statements provided guidelines about the direction that the schools should take. As a qualitative researcher who has to be physically present in the research sites, I personally saw the vision and mission statements displayed in the principals' offices, and I understood from first-hand what the participants were talking about during the interviews. Furthermore, it is reflected from the findings how vision and mission statement was developed. The data also indicate the kinds of goals that were developed. Moreover, it also reflected from the interview data the extent these goals are aligned with those of the District and those of the ECDoE.

Furthermore, it is reflected from the data that it is important to involve stakeholders in developing vision, mission statement and developing the goals so as to own them and in order for the school to perform optimally. In addition, the data from the SMT members showed that the principal must must take a lead role in the process of vision and mission statement's creation. This is based on the belief that the principals are formally tasked with the responsibility of giving direction that the school should take and he or she has to exercise his/her influence on others to take ownership and to follow. Moreover, it also emanated from the interviews data that initially, it was also possible to out- source the development of vision and mission statement to certain projects to craft for compliance. Also, it emerged that having noticed that the crafted vision did not address the needs of the school, the school decided to cut the ties with the project.

5.4.2 Walking the Talk!

Walking the talk is the second theme that emerged from the analysis of qualitative data. The data generated from interviews revealed that walking the talk was one of the ways in which the

participants described and explained their leadership practices that they believed contributed to their schools' success in terms of academic performance of the learners. The participants revealed that they achieved success in rural setting of the Eastern Cape by putting their words into action. Furthermore, the participants indicated that such an approach showed that they meant what they said by actually doing it. As a result, the latter was one of the ways that assisted them in achieving success in terms of learner academic performance. Leadership abilities such as showing people direction, punctuality and control were used by SMT members. The following excerpt from the interviews with the principals illustrates the participants' views. In illustrating her views, Mrs Tolo, the Principal of Toliz, Secondary School, said:

> *On my arrival in this school in the past 7 years the performance of the school in terms of learner academic performance was very poor. The school results were ranging between 30% and 40% in Grade 12. On my arrival I introduced extra classes so as to improve learner academic performance. As a result, I was the first person to attend extra-classes in order to improve school performance. Therefore, all teachers follow the direction of attending extra-classes without being told. Therefore, if you are a leader you must show your people direction with your actions. As a result, my school achieved not less than 85% for a period of 6 years* (Mrs Tolo, the Principal from Toliz, Secondary School).

Similar sentiments were shared by Mr Toliza the Departmental Head (DH) of Toliz Secondary School who also emphasised the need to show the people direction. This was what he had to say:

> *The principal of our school is the first person to bring her papers together with memorandums to be moderated during quarterly exams. She does not instruct us to do so. But her actions motivate us as SMT members and the staff members in the school voluntarily obliged to follow her actions by making sure that also our papers are moderated. by doing she puts her words into action. This means that she walked the talk. Equally, she practises what she preaches. Similarly, I am the first person to show my teachers how to prepare a lesson plan without instructing them to show theirs. As a result, they give me pressure to see theirs as to moderate them* (Mr Toliza, the Departmental Head from Toliz, Secondary School).

Similarly, Mr Lang, the Principal of Langaz Secondary School emphasised the importance of initiating discipline and punctuality in school. Furthermore, Mr Lang further expressed that discipline and punctuality should be led by the principal. This is what Mr Lang had to say:

As the principal, you have to be disciplined and punctuality should show through your actions. This means that you have to put your words into action when it comes to discipline and punctuality. As the principal you have to be disciplined in executing your roles as the leaders of the school so that others may follow your actions. In this school, I am the first person to come in attending extra-classes. I am emphasising extra-classes on the basis that it is not easy to cover syllabus precisely in rural schools without attending extra-classes. You do that as to cover time that will be lost during Summer seasons due to floods that make learners to absent themselves because of river floods. As the principal, you have to discipline yourself to adhere to extra-classes. Make sure that you also adhere to punctuality if you want to achieve 90% to 100% in learner academic performance. As a result, it makes things easy for you to lead your subordinates by your actions. Walking the talk has made my subordinates and stakeholders to follow my actions voluntarily. As a result, the school has managed to achieve between 90% and 100% in seven executive years without break including 2020 the year of COVID-19 pandemic. This may mean that I have fruitfully managed to put my words into action (Mr Lang, the Principal from Langaz Secondary Secondary School).

Adding to the above utterances, Mr Lala the Departmental Head from Langaz Secondary School emphasised another management skill that the SMT members used. It was to have control over teaching and learning. That is how he put it:

As SMT members, we are all involved in teaching, particularly in Grade 12. All the SMT members are teaching in Grade 12. As a result, that makes teachers to be eager to teach in Grade 12. When Grade 12 results are analysed, subjects for SMT members are first analysed and be critiqued in a staff meeting. In school accountability meetings, we are the first people to account. That makes it easy for the teachers to account freely without fear. In those meetings, we give chance to staff members to make some deliberations on subjects we teach. We allow ourselves to be critiqued by staff members. As a result, that gives a positive impact on Grade 12 results in our rural secondary school. That is the way we do things in our rural secondary school in terms of control (Mr Lala, the DH from Langaz Secondary School).

The SMT members walked the talk by becoming the first people to come to school to attend extra classes, which is a sign of good leadership. Furthermore, it is reflected from the data that when the results were analysed, they were analysed under one roof in a staff meeting. SMT

members allowed staff members to critique their results as SMT. As a result, that gave a chance for staff members to be at ease when their turn came to be critiqued. Therefore, it becomes apparent from the data that if you are a leader you must show your people direction with your actions. Furthermore, the participants highlighted that they put their words into action by being the first people to attend extra-classes as to improve learner academic performance. As the result, all the teachers followed suit in attending extra-classes in order to improve learner academic performance. Moreover, it came to light that maintaining punctuality was another strategy that contributed to the rural secondary schools to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance. The participants were allocated in Grade 12 classes and they were held accountable in the monitoring of teaching and learning. Apart from creating a culture of accountability, the SMT members were also encouraging and motivating other teachers by practising what they preached. Finally, it seemed as if to allocate senior classes to SMT members was a way of showing staff members that SMT members walk the talk.

5.4.3 The use of monitoring as the strategy to manage teaching and learning

The data generated from interviews revealed that the participants used monitoring as one of the strategies for managing teaching and learning. Furthermore, the data revealed that the participants monitored classes by using attendance registers, period registers, class visits for staff development as the tools for monitoring teaching and learning in rural secondary schools. Furthermore, the data revealed that classes were monitored. Period registers were used to monitor teaching and learning. Moreover, the data uncovered that SMT members monitored learning and teaching by visiting classes for staff improvement. Also, the data showed that the SMT members in rural secondary schools monitored teaching and learning by checking the pace of advancement in teaching and learning. Mr Patyo the Principal of Patoni Secondary School, stressed the importance of the role of the principal in monitoring and the availability of monitoring tools that are in acceptable standard. That is how he put it:

> *As the principal, I have to make sure that all tools for monitoring teaching and learning are available. All SMT members and staff members must have monitoring tools and be explained to them. Since I am the principal I have a responsibility to oversee that monitoring is taking place and all monitoring tools are available and are in an acceptable standard* (Mr Patyo, the Principal from Patoni Secondary School).

Mr Lang the Principal of Langaz Secondary School stressed the importance of monitoring by principal as the instructional leader and a person who oversees the management of teaching and learning in the school. That was how he put it:

> *In making sure that all hands are on deck as the principal, I monitor the deputy principal, but I don't rely on the information I get from the deputy principal. I also do physical class visit even if I don't stay in the class and listen. I also take rounds in monitoring managing teaching and learning* (Mr Lang, the Principal from Langaz Secondary School).

The issue of monitoring managing teaching and learning was also highlighted by Mr Siwele the Principal of Siwo Secondary School, who indicated that they have attendance registers for both teachers and learners that also assist them in checking whether the teacher and the learner have attended their periods. This was how he put it:

> *Attendance registers for both teachers and learners are used in different classes to monitor teaching and learning. These registers assist me in checking both teacher and learner attendance. Furthermore, this assists to know both teacher and learner absenteeism* (Mr Siwele, the Principal from Siwo Secondary School).

In addition to the above utterances, Mrs Tolo, the Principal of Toliz Secondary School, emphasised the importance of period registers as monitoring tools. That was how she put it:

> *There are period registers in different classes. These period registers are given to class representatives. Each and every teacher signs this register to ensure that she/he has attended his/her periods. It further indicates how much time he/she spent in that particular class for that period. Furthermore, I and my Deputy Principal adhere to close monitoring where we do random class visits to verify what was written on the paper by DHs were consistent to what they were doing practically in monitoring teaching and learning in class.* (Mrs Tolo, the Principal from Toliz Secondary).

In echoing the above utterances, Mr Siwa, the Departmental Head from Siwo Secondary School, asserted that he was assisted by the deputy principal as the curriculum manager in checking the attendance and period registers. Furthermore, he indicated that the principal played an important role in that regard, as the head of the school who had the responsibility to oversee all the activities that took place in our school. That was how he put it:

> *As SMT members we monitor our classes by doing class visits. We check both the teachers and the learner attendance by using attendance registers for both teachers and*

learners. We also check period registers to ensure that teachers do go to classes and attend to their periods. Furthermore, I also regularly look at learners' books, just to make sure how much homework and class works given. As a result, that reflects a picture of what exactly is happening in class (Mr Siwa, the Departmental Head from Siwo Secondary School).

The other SMT members as participants added to the above utterances. Mrs. Patonela one of the participants and a Departmental Head in this study stressed the adherence to Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) as the guidance in monitoring teaching and learning. That was how she put it:

I monitor learning and teaching by randomly taking class tests book for learners as to check whether those tests relate to Annual Teaching Plan (ATP). I make sure that before class tests are written, they are moderated. I also check if teaching and learning is taking place by doing random class visits. Furthermore, we have the period registers that learners give to teachers to sign when they come to class. It may happen that teachers can go to class and do nothing. We do monitoring in order to minimise that (Mrs Patonela, the DH from Patoni Secondary School).

It also emerged from the extracts above that the participants employed a variety of monitoring tools to check if teaching and learning were taking place in the classrooms. Also, it is reflected from the interviews data that monitoring was one of the ways of managing teaching and learning. Furthermore, the data uncover that principals must make sure that all the tools for monitoring teaching and learning were available. In addition, the data indicated that all SMT members and staff members must have monitoring tools and they must be explained to them. Besides, it is reflected from the interviews data that principals have a responsibility to oversee that monitoring is taking place and all monitoring tools are available and are in an acceptable standard. Furthermore, the data show that attendance registers, period registers, class visits are some of the tools that were used for monitoring teaching and learning in rural secondary schools in the study. Furthermore, the data reflect that classes were monitored. Also, it is reflected that period registers were given to class representatives to supervise them. They supervised them by making sure that each and every teacher signed the period registers to make sure that he/she has attended the period. Furthermore, the data uncovered that attendance registers for both teachers and learners were used to ensure that both teacher and learner attended to the class. Also, attendance registers assisted in monitoring both teacher and learner absenteeism. Moreover, it is indicated that SMT members monitor learning and teaching by visiting classes randomly for staff improvement. Also, the data indicate that home works, class works, class tests and other forms

of assessment should relate to Annual Teaching Plan (ATP). Moreover, the data show that SMT members in rural secondary schools monitor teaching and learning by checking the pace of advancement in learning and teaching.

5.4.4 Supporting knowledge driven allocation of duties

Flowing from the data generated from the interviews, the participants revealed that they could not do the work of managing teaching and learning single-handedly and they saw delegation as an answer. The SMT members headed by the principal delegated some of the work to the teachers and learners. Work delegated included supervising blocks, making sure that the learners were not wandering about outside, allocating Representative Council of Learners (RCL)to mark period registers and making sure that teachers go to class as to provide teaching and learning. Furthermore, the data reveals that there are divergent views in terms of delegation to learners. As a result, some participants revealed that it was the responsibility of the Departmental Heads to delegate period registers to learners. On the other hand, others indicated that it was the responsibility of the teachers to delegate period registers to the learners. This is what Mr Patyo the Principal of Patoni Secondary School said:

> *As the principal, I allocate duties to SMT member and teachers. Automatically when I am not at work, the deputy principal takes my shoes by the virtue of powers vested in him. Furthermore, I allocate duties to heads of departments (DHs). Also, the deputy principal must know that he has a responsibility to make sure the DHs do supervise the work of teachers. You assign duties to people you know* (Mr Patyo, the Principal from Patoni Secondary School).

Another participant by the name of Mr Lang the Principal of Langaz Secondary School, confirmed the above sentiment. This was what he said:

> *As the principal I make sure that the deputy principal ensures that the work for teachers is moderated. Also, he must be sure that the DHs adhere to Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) in checking the work for teachers. It is the responsibility of the deputy principal to make sure that DHs do their work in promoting teaching and learning in a rural setting* (Mr Lang, the Principal from Langaz, Secondary Secondary).

Echoing the similar view Mr Siwele the Principal of Siwo Secondary School said:

> *The DHs has a responsibility to closely supervise teachers. Furthermore, they have a duty to make sure that in supervising teachers they adhere to annual teaching plan*

(ATP). Also, they have a responsibility to make sure that the educator goes to class well prepared to teach and assess (Mr Siwele, the Principal from Siwo Secondary School).

Another participant by the name of Mrs Tolo, the Principal of Toliz Secondary School confirms the above sentiment. This is what he said:

The DHs in our school have a responsibility to look after blocks of the school as to make sure that teaching and learning is taking place. Furthermore, they have a duty to be certain that the environment is conducive to teaching and learning by organizing resources. Myself as the principal and the deputy principal we usually take some rounds to convince ourselves that the DHs are doing their allocated tasks (Mrs Tolo, the Principal from Toliz Secondary School).

Echoing the similar view Mr Siwole, the Deputy Principal of Siwo Secondary School, said:

As SMT members, we have a responsibility to make sure that our learners are not wandering outside. For instance, if there is chaos in some of the Grades the SMT member must check what is happening in his/her block. Furthermore, each and every SMT member must be sure that there is a teacher in each and every class. No hour should be lost because that hour will never come back. We also have the period register which is controlled by Representatives Council of Learners (RCL) and the block manager check on that (Mr Siwole, Deputy Principal from Siwo Secondary School).

On the other hand, the data revealed contrary views in terms of delegation of learners on controlling period registers. Mrs Patoniza the DH of Patoni S.S. explained:

As DHs in our school we delegate to learners to control period registers. Learners make sure that each and every teacher signs the period register after he/she attended the class for the period. This is a way of managing teaching and learning in our school (Mrs Patoniza, the DH from Patoni Secondary School).

In sharing similar sentiments, with the above the above participant, Mrs Tolo, the principal of Toliz Secondary School, explained:

Allowing the DHs to delegate learners to control period registers has promoted good relations between the DHs and learners. It is another way of inculcating leadership skills to learners. Furthermore, that assists the DH in understanding both teacher and learner class attendance (Mrs Tolo, the Principal from Secondary School).

Contrary to the above utterances, Mr Lang, the Principal of Langaz Secondary School, explained:

> *Since teachers are closer to learners, I found it proper to allow them to delegate to learners in controlling period registers. As a result, I found that relevant in instilling leadership responsibilities to both teachers and learners. Also, I found delegation as a way of advancing self-esteem for both teachers and learners* (Mr Lang, the Principal of Langaz Secondary School).

In addition, another important factor mentioned by the participants is the importance of resources for both teachers and learners. To deliberate on this point, Mr Lalyz the DH from Langaz Secondary School, had this to say:

> *The SMT members must make sure that every teacher has needed resources. For instance, they must have such things like their work schedule. Every teacher must have his/her own work schedule. Learners must have such things like programme of assessment for the year. So, they know what they are supposed to be doing and when* (Mr Lalyz, one of the DH from Langaz Secondary School).

It emerged from SMT members as participants that teaching and learning are indispensable main functions of the school. One of the core responsibilities of the SMT members is to manage teaching and learning in a school. Furthermore, it emerged that principals could not execute this task alone; it is on that note that they delegated supervision of teaching and learning to the SMT members. Delegation makes people accountable and responsible because they know that they were given responsibility, so they must show that they can do the work. It seems as if teamwork could lead to good performance because even if the principal is absent from school, teaching and learning will continue as usual. The distribution of work that leads to shared leadership creates a sense of ownership in terms of the efforts to improve learner performance.

The data also reflected contradicting views in terms delegating learners to control period registers. Some schools preferred the DHs in delegating learners while others preferred teachers in delegating learners. There is a belief that when HDs delegate learners in controlling period registers that results in DHs to better know what is taking place in class in terms of attendance. Furthermore, the involvement of learners in controlling period registers may advance self-esteem for both teachers and learners. Also, it reflected from the data that involving Representative Council of Learners (RCL) to mark period registers was another way of assigning duties that the SMT members used to make sure that teaching and learning were taking

place and also to involve and empower learners to be part of the process of accounting for the teaching and learning in the classroom. Representative Council of Learners are part of the leadership in schools representing learners. They are the ones who are the link between School Governing Body (SGB), staff and learners. Furthermore, this also teaches the RCL responsibility and makes the learners observe that they are part and parcel of the school. Therefore, this improves unity in a school as SMT members, SGB members, staff and learners work together to achieve the goals, which is effective teaching and learning. These findings imply that managing teaching and learning can lead the school to thrive if the stakeholders work together for the accomplishment of a common goal.

5.4.5 Monitoring and controlling educators' work

The data generated from interviews revealed that controlling the educators' work was one of the ways in which the participants used to manage teaching and learning. Furthermore, the participants were of the view that it was the leadership practice they believed contributed to their schools' success in terms of academic performance of the learners. Moreover, the data revealed that the participants managed teaching and learning by controlling the work coverage, moving around questioning learners about matters having some bearing on curriculum, evaluating analysis of results, disciplining teachers, and reporting. Mr Pato, the Deputy Principal of Patoni Secondary School emphasised how he managed teaching and learning. That is what he articulated:

> *As the deputy principal I rely mostly on DH because they are the experts in their department. On monthly basis I am checking and controlling the work coverage. I am ensuring the work coverage with the DHs as to how far are the teachers in class as far as syllabus is concerned and learners work. I am not only confined in ensuring educators and learners work. I also ensure how far the principal is in terms of content coverage* (Mr Pato, the Deputy Principal from Patoni Secondary School).

Similarly, Mr. Laqa the Deputy Principal of Langaz Secondary School stressed the importance of understanding the problems of learners related to curriculum. Furthermore, he emphasised the importance of Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) in controlling teachers work. He confidently stated:

> *I frequently move around questioning learners about problems they experience related to curriculum. I also collect their books from them to check they are aligned with Annual*

*Teaching Plan (ATP) and are on par. Furthermore, getting feedback from SMT members and staff about their work is important. I also get feedback from subject advisors when they visit us for support. Otherwise, my teachers know we are here to work and learners come to school to learn (*Mr Laqa, the Deputy Principal from Langaz Secondary school).

In sharing similar views Mr Sisa the Departmental Head from Siwo Secondary School, said:

So, all the subject files for DHs must be submitted to the curriculum head the deputy principal and must contain lesson preparations for these educators weekly, to make sure that they follow their work schedule as prescribed. Then, we must also assess these learners. Assessment and analysis of results must be done to ensure whether you are moving or not (Mr Sisa, the DH from Siwo, Secondary School).

Mr Siwele, the Principal of Siwo Secondary School added:

Subject advisors used to come to our school to give a report that shows where there are gaps. Then, I check what the Departmental Head (DH) is doing to close those gaps. Therefore, all the time I will know that in this subject we are still having a problem because of different things (Mr Siwele, the Principal from Siwo Secondary School).

Affirming the above utterances, Mr Siwa the DH of Siwo Secondary School explained:

As I am the one of the DHs in this school, I go to classes and make use of my time table for controlling educators work. Checking school attendance for both teachers and learners. When the teacher is not in class, I ask the class rep to call him/her. Furthermore, I also warn the educators for not going to class even if they are present at school. I also advise the principal to take disciplinary actions against them when necessary (Mr Siwa, the DH from Siwo Secondary School).

Adding to the above utterances, Mr Patyo, the Principal of Patoni Secondary School stressed the importance of evaluating analysis of results, disciplining teachers and reporting in controlling educators work. That was how he put it:

Working together as SMT members I make sure that the results are analysed and evaluated quarterly. This assisted us in understanding the direction the school takes in terms of learner academic performance. Furthermore, this serves to close the gaps in managing teaching and learning. This further assists in supporting teachers where necessary and apply disciplinary actions to those who are unwilling to perform their duties even after receiving continuous support. Moreover, it is necessary for me as the principal to make that reporting is done for teaching and learning activities by the relevant people to relevant people. For

instance, I make sure that parents do get the progress report for the performance of their children quarterly (Mr Patyo, the Principal from Patoni Secondary School).

Similar views were also shared by Mrs Tolo, the Principal of Toliz Secondary School who also emphasised the importance of the analysis of results as a way of managing teaching and learning. She elaborated:

> *As the principal I took an initiative in making sure that results are analysed in all Grades. I also make sure that diagnostic analysis is done. We analyse the results after formal assessment as a way of monitoring learner academic performance* (Mrs Tolo, the Principal from Toliz, Secondary School).

It emerged from the data that managing teaching and learning required the SMT members to employ a variety of strategies. The participants' strategies include walking around the school questioning learners about their problems related to curriculum and collecting learners 'work to make sure that it correlated with teachers' work. Seemingly, questioning learners assisted the participants to ensure that teaching and learning were really taking place by getting information from the learners. This was based on the assumption that learners always told the truth if the teacher had been to the class or not. It looks as if SMT members are taking teaching and learning as one of the important main concerns in the school. The data revealed that the participants analysed the results after formal assessment as a way of monitoring learner performance. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the SMT members did not only check teachers' work but also compared with learners' work and performance.

5.4.6 Keeping the teachers and the learners motivated

The data generated through interviews reflected that participants described and explained motivation as way of triggering the oomph in the SMT members to work hard as to achieve success in rural areas. The participants revealed that motivation also triggered intrinsic dedication that made the participants to go an extra-mile in instilling knowledge to learners through teaching and learning. Furthermore, the participants revealed how they motivated themselves as SMT members, staff members, SGB members and parents. For instance, they chose any SMT members with skill of motivating people. They were motivated through celebrations and praises. Each of the 16 SMT members viewed motivation as very important because teaching and learning is the core business of the school and thus motivation was seen as a special factor in achieving success in rural settings. Mr Siwele, the Principal of Siwo

Secondary School, when asked about how did he motivate SMT members, staff members and other people in his school as to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance. He proudly announced:

> *I motivate teachers through celebrating their achievements such as getting high levels in their subjects. I also praise them in achieving well. I also motivate the teacher as an individual, in front of other teachers. For instance, a teacher that has done good in certain sections we celebrate that. And I may say in public, that teacher so and so has done a good thing. She produced high levels in Mathematics and Physics although we are in rural areas* (Mr Siwele, the Principal from Siwo Secondary School).

When the same question was posed to Mrs Tolo, she shared similar views to those of Mr Siwele, and explained that she invited learners who were doing Grade 12 in previous years, to come and motivate the ones who are still doing Grade 12, teachers and parents. She also uttered that those learners also motivated parents and teachers, displaying how their support as both teachers and parents inspired them to achieve Grade 12 in previous years even at tertiary level. She explained:

> *It is very interesting to see the previous learner motivating us both teachers and parents. It is also interesting the way the learner motivates his/her colleagues. That inspires those who are being motivated in that way going an extra mile in achieving success even in rural secondary schools* (Mrs Tolo, the Principal from Toliz Secondary School).

The utterances made by SMT members above were also echoed by Mr Lang, the Principal of Langaz Secondary School. The way he displayed how good discipline from other SMT members motivated him in executing his duties in the school. Their good discipline in terms of punctuality and dedication contributed to the success of the school in terms of learner academic performance. As a result, I ended up motivating them, by giving them some awards in the form of certificates due to their good discipline. That was how he put it:

> *I was not only motivated by the way the other participants were motivated. I was also motivated by the discipline displayed by other SMT members. The way they supported me in terms of their punctuality and their dedication. They come to school in time. They work hard in supporting me, especially in leadership activities. Even if I am not at school, they work as if I am around* (Mr Lang, the Principal of Langaz Secondary School).

Adding to the above utterances, MissToleka, the DH from Toliz Secondary School, explained:

When I was in my rural town I met with the SGB chairperson of my school. He uncovered the manner was inspired by the way the former learner motivated them as SGB members, during school motivation day. Furthermore, he revealed that he is prepared to work hard in supporting the school. As a result, he is prepared to supervise evening classes voluntarily. Also, he put to me that even other SGB members precisely parent component is prepared to support the school in terms of supervising extra- classes (Miss Toleka, the DH from Toliz, Secondary School).

The above excerpt reflected that participants described and explained motivation as way of triggering oomph to SMT members to work hard as to achieve success in rural areas. Furthermore, the data revealed that motivation also triggered intrinsic dedication that makes participants to go an extra-mile in instilling knowledge to learners through teaching and learning. Also, the data revealed how participants motivated themselves, staff members, SGB members and parents. For instance, it emerged from the data that they choose any SMT member with skills of motivating people. It emerged that all the participants viewed motivation as very important because teaching and learning is the core business of the school and thus, motivation was seen as a factor that plays a special role. Furthermore, it emerged from the data that when motivating, they invite learners who were doing Grade 12 in the previous years, to come and motivate the ones who are still doing Grade 12, teachers and parents. Those learners also motivated parents and teachers, displaying how their support as both teachers and parents inspired them to achieve Grade 12 in previous years even at tertiary level. Also, the data reflected the way SGB members were prepared to support the school due to the way the former learner motivated them. Therefore, the data revealed motivation as a special factor in achieving success in rural settings.

5.4.7 Leadership that demonstrates understanding the schools and community context

In conducting interviews, I sought to understand the SMT members' perspectives about the context where their schools were situated. The aim was to enable me to understand the schools and the community context as perceived by the participants involved in this study. The responses of the participants were analysed, and it became evident that the contextual factors emerged prominently from the data. In the following paragraphs, three issues are identified and discussed. These issues will be the understanding of the economic factors, the understanding of social factors and the understanding of family factors. These factors are discussed below.

5.4.7.1 Demonstrating understanding of economic factors

The data revealed that the participants perceived the economic factors of their schools as an environment that has numerous financial challenges. The data revealed that the participants viewed their school contexts as underprivileged, influenced by a high population of people who are unemployed, impoverished and could not afford proper housing, as well as providing for the economic needs of their children who are at school. Mrs Patoniza, the DH of Patoni Secondary School, explained:

> *As DH I experience a very serious and challenging context. The mainstream of the members of this community is not employed. Those that are working are selling some chips and sweets near the school. Some are selling small commodities in rural town. As the result, the money they get cannot mitigate the negative rural challenges* (Mrs Patoniza, the DH from Patoni Secondary School).

In adding to the above sentiment, Mr Lala, one of the Departmental Heads of Langaz S.S. said:

> *It is a poor community in deep rural areas. This is a quintile 1 school and most parents are not working. Furthermore, most of learners we teach are from rural communities with rondavel houses* (Mr Lala, the DH from Langaz, Secondary School).

In sharing similar views, Mr Pato, the Deputy Principal of Patoni Secondary School said:

> *We depend on government subsidy since this is Quintile 1 school. On the donations of parents getting grants and other stakeholders such as traditional leaders. Most of the time the parents are unable to donate due to other negative rural challenges that are faced with. As a result, sometimes they come to school as to explain their problems. Therefore, you easily notice the problem of unemployment manifesting its self* (Mr Pato, the Deputy Principal from Patoni Secondary School).

Most of the participants emphasised the challenges of rurality such as floods and lack of access roads. In emphasising rurality, Mr Siwele, the Principal of Siwo Secondary School, said:

> *When it is raining heavily, most of the learners do not attend school because of floods since there are no bridges to cross. Also, there are no access roads. In mitigating that negative factor, we attend extra- classes when the weather is fine especially during winter season* (Mr Siwele, the Principal from Siwo Secondary School).

The articulations shared by the SMT members as participants indicated that there were severe challenges in the community where the schools were situated. The data indicated that the

majority of the people who stay in the community were unemployed. These included the parents or guardians of learners who attended the schools. Some people sustained their livelihood through selling vegetables on the streets, and that did not give them enough money to satisfy their needs.

The ranking of the school as indicated by one participant indicated that these schools were no fee paying, which means they got a subsidy from the Department of Basic Education, which helped them in the running of the school. Seemingly, the subsidy could not cover all the needs of the school which is possibly, why some parents were asked to donate some money. It also seemed that although the SMT members were aware of the impoverished state of the community, they still expected the parents to make a financial contribution to the school. A possible reason could be that the SMT members expected parents to take responsibility for their children's education despite financial constraints. Another reason could be that the SMT members expected the community to have a sense of ownership of the school and the teaching and learning should take place despite their economic status. The challenge was whether the parents in such communities recognised the need to take ownership of the school or not. This data also highlighted a financial or economic gap experienced by the SMT members, which affected teaching and learning in schools situated in rural contexts. Furthermore, the data revealed that these schools experienced challenges of rurality such as extreme floods and lack of access roads. As a result, they experienced learner absenteeism in summer due to extreme floods. Despite those challenges of rurality, the SMT members were to attend extra-classes precisely in winter as to mitigate the challenge of learner absenteeism.

5.4.7.2 Demonstrating understanding of and responses to social factors in the community

Another aspect of the context of the school identified by the participants was a range of social factors. The participants indicated that some parents worked far away from home, in big cities and children were left without adult care. Drug abuse was another social factor revealed by the participants in this study. The participants reported that they have learners who were over age and such learners were often involved in taking drugs like 'dagga', and drinking alcoholic beverages. There were also other criminal activities like gambling that the participants had observed in their school environment, as indicated by Mr Pato the Deputy Principal of Patoni Secondary School. In the comment below, he said:

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We have a problem of drugs that are given to learners. We have learners who are over age and most of them are using drugs. As a result, we have a problem of drug which impact negatively in teaching and learning. Furthermore, we have a problem of gambling learners that are over age. Therefore, you find them gambling when there is no teacher in class since there is a process of changing periods in our school as to accommodate other subjects (Mr Pato, the Deputy Principal from Patoni Secondary School).

In addition to the above sentiment expressed by Mr Pato, Mr Laqa, the Deputy Principal of Langaz Secondary School emphasised the negative impact of environment as a social factor. He elucidated:

The environment has many people who are not working. It is a poor environment. Furthermore, those who are working are not staying with their children. We have many child-headed families. As a result, we have many social problems. Therefore, we have a duty of involving other sister departments such as Department of Social Development in quelling the social problems (Mr Laqa, the Deputy Principal from Langaz Secondary School).

Also, in addition to the above opinion uttered by Mr Pato, Mr Siwele the Principal of Siwo Secondary School stressed the impact of social factor.

The majority of our learners are staying in rondavels in that rural village on their own without parents or guardians. As a result, it is difficult for them to have support or to be disciplined when necessary because there is nobody who gives guidance. Furthermore, you will find that they stay with opposite sex in those rondavels. Therefore, pregnancy emanates (Mr Siwele, the Principal from Siwo Secondary School).

Another description of social factors affecting the context of the school affirmed by most participants including Mr Lalyz, the DH of Langaz Secondary School was that other people were not the abiding citizens. That was how he put it:

There are those people within the community that are not easily law abiding. As a result, they do not adhere to the law. Since they are not law-abiding, they end up being troublesome. Furthermore, sometimes a group of boys will come to the school looking for other boys with weapons such as knives and sticks (Mr Lalyz, the DH from Langaz Secondary School).

Adding on social factors, Mr Sisa the Departmental Head from Siwo Secondary School alluded to high unemployment rate.

> *If you have high unemployment rate obviously that may result in a high crime rate. Therefore, use of drugs such as smoking dagga and taking alcohol are some of the problems we are faced with* (Mr Sisa, the DH from Siwo Secondary School).

The data revealed that views shared by these participants were an indication of the environmental social factors that affected teaching and learning that takes place in the rural secondary schools. This indicated that the SMT members had insights about the social challenges in the community and were concerned about how the situation in the community affected the learners. Some of the identified challenges like drug abuse, child-headed families and crime to seemed to call for interventions that are beyond the abilities of the principal, SMT members and the school as a whole. The SMT members tried to assist by involving organisations to help learners with drug problems. Seemingly, these social factors affected the day to day running of the school, for example, sometimes; a group of boys will barge in during school hours with knives and sticks, looking for learners that were part of their bunch of criminals involved in criminal activities. It appeared as if SMT members were not only dealing with managing teaching and learning in schools, but they also had to deal with social factors that affected the daily activities of the school.

5.4.7.3 Understanding family factors for mitigation

The data revealed that participants identified family factors as another aspect of the rural school context. The participants mentioned that there was a lack of monitoring of learners and support at home since most learners were staying alone without adult supervision. It emerged from the interview data that some learners were orphans. Some parents worked far away from home and were not able to adequately care for their children. Some parents were illiterate, and they could not assist learners with schoolwork. Grandparents staying with grandchildren were old and illiterate. As a result, they were unable to be involved in schoolwork activities. The data revealed that understanding family factors assisted participants to devise means of responding to them such as giving psychological and emotional support through caring committees. Furthermore, the data revealed that the participants played a parental role (loco-parentis). Furthermore, the data revealed that schools involved stakeholders, such as parents, community members and traditional leaders as to address family factors. Also, the school involved sister departments such such Department of Social Development, Department of Police Service, Department of

Agriculture and the Department of Justice and Correctional Services. This is how Mr Patyo, the Principal of Patoni Secondary School put it:

Some parents are working far from home. Therefore, that causes a problem of monitoring their children's work. As a result, they are unable to monitor the work of their children. Furthermore, they are unable to take part in assisting them in their education since some are illiterate. Understanding these family factors assisted us to devise means of responding to them such as giving support to these learners such as acting a parental role to them (loco-parentis). (Mr Patyo, the Principal of Patoni Secondary School).

Similar sentiments were shared by Miss. Toleka one of the two Departmental Heads from Toliz Secondary School. She explained:

Some of our learners are under the care of their grandparents. Some parents are employed in far cities. Others learners are orphans. This situation makes learners not to perform in a good way. In mitigating these family factors, the school initiated a caring committee that looked after those learners by providing them with psychological and emotional support. As a result, their school performance improved gradually (Miss Toleka, the DH from Toliz Secondary School).

Most of the participants shared similar views in responding to family factors. This is how Mrs Tolo, the Principal of Toli Secondary School put it:

A lot of members of the community are not educated. As a result, they are not interested in education. Therefore, they do not lend a hand fully with regards to the function of the school and the education of their children. In mitigating that family factor, the caring committee was also involved in visiting the bereaved families in the community. That was the way of galvanising support from the parents and community at large. Consequently, that promoted working together among the parents and the community at large. Parents among themselves developed some groups that assisted each other. Groups with educated parents assisted illiterate parents. As a result, the community at large ended up assisting child headed families. Therefore, that improved learner academic performance. As a school, we developed a motto that says "My child is your child and your child is my child. Similarly, as school leaders, we involved sister departments such Department of Social Development, Department of Police, Department of Justice and Correctional Service to give assistance where necessary (Mrs Tolo, the Principal of Toliz Secondary School).

It emerged from the above from the participants that learners faced various family problems. It seemed that there was a lack of parenting and parental involvement in school activities. The data showed the absence of parents, which could mean that there was no adequate monitoring of their children's schoolwork and other forms of behaviour. Furthermore, the schools were expecting parents or guardians to assist and support learners with their schoolwork. Seemingly, there was a lack of a parental involvement. One of the reasons may be that parents were illiterate, and they could not give effective support to their children with schoolwork. Another reason may be that the economic circumstances of the community made parents to work in faraway cities where they could get jobs. Therefore, they left their children alone without any guidance and direction. As a result, in the absence of parents, some learners ended up sharing a house with their boyfriends which resulted in pregnancy sometimes. On the other end of the continuum, it can be that some parents were not interested in education of their children or worried by other basic needs

5.5 Leadership dimensions that contribute to schools' success in rural setting of the Eastern Cape

The leadership dimensions that contribute to schools' success in rural setting of the Eastern Cape are; Developing positive relationships towards well-being of colleagues, parents and that of the learners; Soliciting the support of the traditional leaders, Strategic recruitment by the schools in rural setting of the Eastern Cape, and Promoting professional development

5.5.1 Developing positive relationships towards well-being of colleagues, parents and that of the learners

The data that was generated from the interviews with the SMT members indicated that there was a concern that the SMT members were not sufficiently supporting their teaching staff, as well as the parents and the learners. It is surprising that the SMT members were not providing sufficient support to the teaching staff. I am saying this because they also acknowledged the importance of creating an environment where positive relationships between staff, parents and learners existed. They acknowledged establishing and sustaining such relationships created a bond that kept them together as they collectively strove for attaining the school goals. In line with the above claim, Mr Patyo, the Principal of Patoni Secondary School said:

> *I develop a relationship of faith, the one where we sympathise with each other. We need to be thankful and appreciative for life. Our educators, parents and learners, though*

rural context, need genuine positive pillar and human empathy. Educators and more particularly, our rural learners must feel appreciated, respected and taken care of, which may be missing in their homes. We walk distances to bereaved families of both educators and learners. I try to make the school a supportive environment for everybody. These learners must see the need to come to school, to find compassionate people who stretch their loving and warm hands (Mr Patyo, the Principal from Patoni Secondary School).

Similar sentiments were expressed by Mr Lang the Principal of Langaz Secondary School who resonated the idea that there is a need to be accommodative, be sympathetic, be supportive and kind hearted. This was how he put it:

As a Principal you should be accommodative, sympathetic, supportive and kind hearted towards yours subordinates, staff members, leaners and the community at large as to galvanise their support. As the Principal I try by all means to be approachable. That makes it easy for the people to air out their views. As a result, that makes to easily support me with leadership strategies where necessary (Mr Lang, the Principal from Langaz Secondary School).

Similarly, Mr Siwele, the Principal of Siwo, Secondary School stressed the importance of creating a supportive environment particularly in rural schools where poverty flourished so that teaching and learning could be made a fulfilling and pleasing experience despite the challenges that faced the school. That is how he put it:

As the principal of the school I use to hold SMT meetings. In one of those particular meetings, the Departmental Head by the name of Mr Siwa raised an important point of learners without birth certificates. He further proposed that there should be a committee called a Caring committee. That committee would be looking at caring for educators, learners and parents. He was supported by another Head of Department by the name of Mr Sis. The proposal was supported in the meeting. It was presented to staff meeting. It was supported. It was further presented to the SGB and was accepted. Lastly, it was presented to the parents meeting and was accepted. As I am talking, that committee works well in creating a supportive environment particularly in our rural secondary school (Mr Siwele, the Principal of Siwo Secondary School).

The impression of being sympathetic and kind-hearted was further uttered by Miss Toliza, one of the Departmental Heads from Toliz Secondary School who added that these had a positive impact on teaching and learning. That was how she put it:

My school changed my behaviour of being greedy. Now I am sympathetic and kind-hearted. I encourage that to my colleagues. The rural environment that we are in calls for us to balance teaching and learning and focus on building relationship. It is vital to see the school as your own, the parents as your own and the children as your own. In that way, you find joy to support the school. Teachers find joy to teach. As a result, learners feel comfortable and happy to learn (Miss. Toliza, the DH from Toliz, Secondary School).

In addition to the above sentiment expressed by Miss Toliza, Mr Sisa, the Departmental Head from Siwo Secondary School, indicated the responsibilities of the caring committee. Among the responsibilities of this committee was to organise birth certificates for learners who happened to not have the birth certificates, to visit bereaved families within the community, to give psychological support to the depressed teachers and learners. He elaborated:

This caring committee plays a vital role in giving support on behalf of the school. It provides psychological support to all those who need psychological support. It also organises birth certificates to those learners who are not able to get them due to varied reasons. Furthermore, this committee visits bereaved families as to give emotional support. As a result, this has made the school to develop positive relations with parents, learners, stakeholders and community at large (Mr Sisa, the DH from Siwo Secondary School).

As highlighted in the previous sections, it has emerged that the teaching staff, the parents and the learners did not receive sufficient support from the SMT members in the four secondary schools. It emerged from the data that most of the participants acknowledged that building positive relationships with colleagues, parents and the learners was a necessary bond to stick them together towards working together to achieve educational goals and success in terms of learner academic performance in rural settings. There is a belief that building intellectual and social connections with the educators, parents and learners reinforced interpersonal connections which were tantamount to developing a commitment to shared teaching and learning. It emerged from the data that a caring committee was introduced to provide psychological support to educators, learners, parents and the community at large. As a result, it emerged from the data that promoted good relations between the school and the community at large.

Furthermore, data emphasised the importance of creating a supportive environment particularly in rural schools where poverty persisted. More so, the need to be accommodating, sympathetic,

supportive and kind-hearted is emphasised. Also, in the data, the participants stressed the importance of creating a supportive environment particularly in the contexts of poverty and other socio-economic challenges.

5.5.2 Soliciting the support of the traditional leaders

The data generated from interviews revealed that accountability usually takes place within the department. On the other hand, sixteen participants asserted that some schools thought outside the box by accounting to traditional leaders in terms of supporting learner academic performance not only within the levels of Department of Basic Education. Having noticed that the school experienced challenges such as lack of parental involvement, poor academic performance, burglary, and theft, the school leaders decided to account to traditional leaders by giving regular feedback in terms of academic performance. School leaders decided to meet with traditional leaders. In their meeting with traditional leaders, it was resolved that traditional leaders would be deeply involved in school activities such as attending to the challenges such as poor academic performance, lack of parental involvement, burglary and theft the school faced with. Therefore, the lack of parental involvement, poor academic performance, burglary and theft were addressed and the situation improved. In asserting this, Mr Patyo the Principal of Patoni, Secondary School said:

> *Noticing that the school experiences challenges such as lack of parental involvement, poor learner academic performance, burglary and theft, I proposed from the SMT meeting how would it be if we solicit support from traditional leaders by accounting to them in terms of learner academic performance. I further stated that even challenges the school experience can easily be mitigated. I further proposed the school to do accountability quarterly as we do within the school. The proposal was accepted and further referred to SGB members and staff members for approval. As a result, it was implemented* (Mr Patyo, the Principal from Patoni Secondary School).

Sharing similar views as the above utterances, Mr Pato, the Deputy Principal of Patoni Secondary School said:

> *Initially, I was not sure if the view from my principal will be understood by the traditional leader Chief Dumasile since he was illiterate. Fortunately, I was one of the delegated members in forwarding the proposal. The way he was so happy and interested in the matter was so amazing. He said "Bendingaqondi ukuba nangona ndingafundanga ndibaluleke kangaka kwesi sikolo." [I was not aware that although I am so illiterate, I*

am important in this school] (Mr Pato, the Deputy Principal from Patoni Secondary School).

Echoing the above sentiments, Mrs Patoniza, the DH of Patoni Secondary School said:

> *Visiting the traditional authority for the first presentation on accountability together with my colleague another DH Mrs Patonela found that there were many people attended the meeting(Imbizo). Initially I thought that we will be presenting to the chief and his committee members only not the whole community. I started to tremble but later I became comfortable due to the warm reception from the chief. I introduced my colleague and the chief introduced us. We did the presentation on accountability for the first quarter. Furthermore, as school leaders, we forwarded the challenges the school faced with such as lack of parental involvement, poor learner academic performance, burglary and theft. The chief applauded us for the good work. He inspired and motivated us for the good work we did for the school and his community. He promised that the challenges faced by the school will be easily addressed if we work as a team* (Mrs Patoniza, the DH from Patoni Secondary School).

Sharing similar views with the above utterances, Mr Siwele the Principal of Siwo Secondary School said:

> *As my school intertwines with Patoni Secondary School, I discovered that he has beaten me in 2020 in terms of Grade 12 results. He got 95% and I got 80%. I asked his secret. He told me that as the principal you have to think outside the box. He told me that since accountability is done within the department, he decided to account to traditional leaders on learner academic performance. I follow suit. As I am talking now many changes have taken place. For instance, crime in terms of burglary and theft have decreased; learner's attendance, parental involvement and learner academic performance improved drastically* (Mr Siwele, the Principal from Siwo Secondary School).

In addition, on the above utterances, Mrs Tolo, expressed the importance of showing a positive attitudeand respect towards traditional leaders as fundamentals in promoting parental involvement, promoting learner academic performance and in mitigating challenges like burglary and theft. That was how she put it:

> *In showing positive attitude and respect towards traditional leaders made the school to be able to promote parental involvement. As a result, learner academic performance*

improved drastically. Furthermore, challenges like burglary and theft were mitigated optimally (Mrs Tolo, the Principal from Toliz, Secondary School).

The above data revealed that accountability usually takes place within the department. On the other hand, it merged from the data that some schools think outside the box by accounting to Traditional leaders in terms of learner academic performance not only within the Department of Basic Education. As a result, that had led to their schools having traditional leaders fully involved in school activities. Therefore, data uncovered that criminality had been minimised. The data further indicated that crime in terms of burglary, theft and rape decreased drastically because traditional leaders and schools were working together. Traditional leaders and the community ended up owning the school and protecting it against criminals. It had emerged from the interviews with the participants that the traditional leader showed a great appreciation for the school to account to him in terms of presenting learner performance quarterly even though according to him, he did not deserve that due to his illiteracy. Furthermore, it emerged from the participants that showing positive attitude and respect towards traditional leaders resulted in the improvement of parental involvement which was rare. Therefore, learner academic performance which was a challenge improved drastically. Also, it emerged from the participants that burglary and theft which were the challenges were mitigated successfully.

5.5.3 Strategic recruitment

The data generated through interviews revealed that the school could not function without teachers. As a result, the data revealed that they are the role players when it comes to teaching and learning. Furthermore, the participants believed that the reason for good school performance was because of teachers that were dedicated, committed, target driven, self- motivated, good support and accountability. These attributes seem to contribute to the good performance of the schools. Furthermore, the data revealed the importance of strategic recruitment by thinking outside the box. Mr Siwole, the Deputy Principal of Siwo Secondary School emphasised the importance of strategic recruitment by thinking outside the box. He acknowledged that sometimes, their learners suffered as a result of the normal recruitment processes that are characterised by delays and that do not consider local contexts. Furthermore, he acknowledged that teaching and learning was impacted negatively by the way the teachers were recruited because they leave the school within a short space of time. Leaving the school with no teachers to teach the subject they taught. The strategy the school used for recruiting local teachers to mitigate around the impact of these negative rural contextual factors. This strategy was not to look for discriminating other teachers looking for employment or

discriminating teachers from distant communities but looked for teachers who were eager to teach and be exposed to rural contexts. Furthermore, he stressed that this strategy was a way of turning the tide of dysfunctionality in terms of learner academic performance in rural secondary schools. This was how he put it:

> *As the school we looked at the way the learners suffered with the consistent way of recruitment. We preferred to think outside the box when recruiting teachers. We discovered that teachers who were not exposed to rural settings leave the school within a short space of time and go back to their places of luxury such as their township and urban areas. As a result, teaching and learning was delayed. Sometimes, the department took a long time to advertise post. Therefore, the school had to employ temporal educators, using school funds that were allocated for other purposes. The school employed this strategy of recruiting local teachers not to discriminating against other teachers from distant communities but to accommodate teachers who are eager and exposed to rural settings* (Mr Siwole, the Deputy Principal from Siwo Secondary School).

Adding on recruitment, some participants including Mrs. Patoniza, one of the DH from Patoni Secondary School expressed the importance of thinking outside the box when recruiting teachers for rural schools in deep rural settings. She expressed that there are times when you have to deviate from the policies for operational policies if those regulations do not make you to reach your destiny. That was how she put it:

> We n*oticed that as the school we are experiencing a problem in recruiting teachers. Since, recruited teachers just stay for a short time and leave. We devised another strategy of recruiting local teachers and head hunt teachers from other rural areas. We convinced each other as the school, especially the School Governing Body. Furthermore, as SMT members we influenced union at a site level. As a result, the local teachers stayed for long in our school and produced good results in terms of learner academic performance (*Mrs Patoniza, the DH from Patoni Secondary School).

Affirming the above articulation, Mr Lang the Principal of Langaz Secondary School, paid more emphasis on commitment from teachers, stating:

> *One of the reasons why we are performing well is the dedication, commitment, target driven, good support and accountability from teachers. Furthermore, if you want best results the recruitment of best teachers may be the answer. It is the commitment from the teachers that we have in our school that made us to achieve 97% especially in Grade*

12 results for the past 5 years. We have 95% of teachers that work very hard for us to achieve better results in terms of learner academic performance yearly. They know what is expected of them. As the principal I keep on motivating them by awarding them (Mr Lang, the Principal from Langaz, Secondary School).

Adding to the above sentiments, Mr Siwele, the Principal of Siwo Secondary School stressed the importance of target driven recruitment. That was how he put it:

In our school teachers are well polished and are like oiled machinery. Furthermore, they are target driven. One of the aspects of a good teachers, he/she must be target driven. One of his/her target must be to complete the syllabus. Also, another target is that learners should pass with flying colours precisely (Mr Siwele, the Principal from Siwo Secondary School).

Affirming the above responses, Mrs Tolo, the Principal of Toliz Secondary School emphasised the role played by dedicated teachers. That is how she put it:

You know it is because of the dedication from the teachers who are here. They are trying really hard. Furthermore, mostly their dedication and their experience in teaching in secondary school had contributed a lot for the school to thrive in terms of learner academic performance among other schools in rural setting (Mrs Tolo, the Principal from Toliz Secondary School).

Some participants such as Mr Toliwe the Deputy Principal of Toliz Secondary School felt that it was necessary for them to attend extra classes and to be the first people to arrive at school and the last people to leave the school. That is how he put it:

As SMT members we are here at school 6 o'clock in the morning. In the afternoon and evening we remain here because we cannot go away and leave learners. As SMT members although we've got our time table where there are people who monitor but our presence here and the support that we give to educators makes a difference (Mr Toliwe, the Deputy Principal from Toliz Secondary).

Another SMT member, Mr Toliza the DH of Toliz Secondary School, stressed the vitality of dedication. Furthermore, he uncovered that through dedication a person works extra hours as to achieve success without being pushed but that coming through dedicating yourself to your work. He further explained how the staff members were influenced by his dedication in working extra hours. He named their achievements through dedicating themselves to their work. He also

indicated that he maintained a good communication line with staff members motivating them in doing good work continuously. This is how he put it:

> *Having noticed that they follow my tune of dedication. I motivated them as to keep the fire burning by awarding them with certificates. I also supported them through Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM). I further capacitated them. As a result, we continuously achieve Grade 12 results in flying* colours (Mr Toliza, the DH from Toliz, Secondary School).

The views shared by the participants were an indication that they believed that teachers contributed a lot to their school performance. The participants indicated that their teachers were committed to their work. Seemingly, if the school has committed teachers, the school has the potential to be successful. Furthermore, motivating teachers was another strategy used by the participants. They also encouraged teamwork. The SMT members also encouraged them to continue with the good work and cautioned them to work together as a team. Such appreciation and the recognition of the good work done by the teachers are motivating. The principals in consultation with other SMT members recruited the best teachers who were self-motivated. Seemingly, SMT members are part of the recruitment of teachers, which assist them in selecting the best teachers. It appears as if the teachers in these schools were target driven and dedicated to their work. Some participants felt that supporting teachers by being the first person in the school and staying until late made a difference. It appears as if the SMT members should show support for teachers which motivates the teachers. The participants believed that reminding teachers of their responsibilities and making that accountable improved teacher performance. Furthermore, participants also believed that teachers' contribution to a school is very important and hiring the best teachers who are dedicated and hardworking can produce good academic performance. Furthermore, the views shared by the participants showed the importance of strategic recruitment by thinking outside the box. Moreover, the utterances shared by the participants indicated that their learners suffered as a result of the consistent way the recruitment of teachers was done (consistence to the law). Furthermore, participants acknowledged that teaching and learning was impacted negatively by the way the teachers were recruited because they leave the school within a short space of time. Leaving the school with no teachers to teach the subject they taught. The views shared by the participants indicated the strategy for recruiting local teachers, was not intending to discriminate other teachers looking for employment or discriminating teachers from distant communities but looked for teachers who were eager to teach and exposed to rural contexts. Participants indicated that the strategy was a way of turning

the tide of dysfunctionality in terms of learner academic performance in rural secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape Province.

5.5. 4 Promoting professional development

The notion of professional development has to do with developing an understanding or insight that can guide and determine professional practice. The school must make sure the teachers through School Management Team has got proper plans in place for the effective teaching and learning and assessment. Furthermore, the school should provide them with relevant curriculum documents. School Management Team members should provide proper guidance for the proper use of documents for the professional development. From the responses of 16 participants, it is evident that professional development is essential in transforming education. Mr Lang the Principal of Langaz Secondary School explained:

> *As the Principal, I make sure that the teachers through School Management Team have got proper plans in place for their development in effective teaching and learning and assessment. I also provide them with relevant curriculum documents. Therefore, I guide them; I mentor them and motivate them* (Mr Lang, the Principal from Langaz, Secondary School).

Mr Siwele the Principal of Siwo Secondary School concurred with the experiences shared by Mr Lang describing his approaches of developing his SMT members and staff members. That was how he put it:

> *As the principal, I first read and understand the documents I will be using in developing SMT members and staff members. Having read the documents, I hold a meeting with SMT members. We analyse and scrutinise the documents. After galvanising their support in understanding the documents, I develop them on the relevant aspects. Thereafter working together as SMT members, we develop staff members to the relevant aspects that need development* (Mr Siwele, the Principal from Siwo Secondary School).

The above utterances were shared by Mr Patyo the Principal of Patoni Secondary School, by sharing the other angle of professional development approach called Bottom-Up Approach. This means that even the teacher in Post level One can make wonders in developing people professionally. That was how he put it:

> *In my school, I noticed that even though I am the principal, there are things that I am less skilful in doing. There was a teacher who was very vibrant in instilling good*

leadership skills when he is delegated to do something in school. I once called him when I was experiencing a leadership problem. I gave him a scenario of the problem. Oh! What a skilful teacher in solving leadership problems he was. I requested him to develop the whole school in solving leadership problems. That contributed a lot in achieving a higher learner academic performance in our school. As I speak, that teacher was head hunted to be a principal in one of the local secondary schools. He is doing wonders (Mr Patyo, the Principal of Patoni Secondary School).

The SMT members in this study unanimously stated that they encouraged their teachers to attend workshops that were organised by the provincial Department of Basic Education, and those that were organised locally by the clusters. These workshops were meant to provide professional development on various aspects of their work. They held a strong belief that attending such workshops was important for the learners and for the school in terms of providing professional development, especially on those aspects that the teachers would have identified as areas of need. Mrs Patonela, one of the DHs of Patoni Secondary School maintained that her approaches to professional development assisted in improving curriculum delivery. The approach included working on individual teacher's development plans and some workshops that were directed at improving curriculum delivery. In addition, to this, her staff received commendations when they did exceptionally well in their work. She clarified:

> *I also encourage educators to attend developmental workshops and cluster meetings organised by the Department of Basic Education. I know that it takes teachers away from the core which is teaching in the class, but it is helpful for them and for the learners. They come with innovative knowledge or enhanced abilities to improve their teaching. Educators write their development plans and mine is to encourage them to develop* (Mrs Patonela, the DH from Patoni Secondary School).

Similarly, Miss Toliza, one of the Departmental Heads from Toliz Secondary School indicated that as SMT members they persuaded and encouraged their staff members to attend workshops and cluster meetings. She revealed that she was also attending workshops not because she had also a class that she was teaching but for her improvement as well. She asserted that this helped her in the monitoring of curriculum. That is how she put it:

> *As the DH, I have Learning Areas that I am also teaching. I have to be developed in that area. I also attend curriculum workshops on other learning areas. It is important that as the DH you are knowledgeable of what is supposed to be happening in the classrooms. I assist those who do not have cars to the workshop venues and I attend with them. They*

must know that we are all in this journey (Miss. Toliza, the DH from Toliz, and Secondary School).

Echoing the above sentiments Miss.Toleka one of the Departmental Heads from Toliz Secondary School stressed that developing teachers was a good way of sustaining teaching and learning and maintaining good academic records. As SMT members they were doing it by encouraging teachers, supporting teachers and providing resources. She emphasised:

> *As SMT members we usually encourage teachers when we do briefings and staff meetings. We use to tell them that these learners need us as educators. As a result, we need to empower them. Also, as educators you need to study so that you keep yourself abreast of what is happening and you do not lag behind* (Miss Toleka, the DH from Toliz Secondary School).

In addition to the above opinions, Mr Lalyz one of the DH from Langaz Secondary School, said:

> *Sustaining of those two aspects of encouraging and developing educators, it is predominantly reliant on creating assertiveness. Creating a positive mind-set from the teachers for teachers to continue performing they need to be supported* (Mr Lalyz, the DH from Langaz Secondary School).

Equally, in affirming the above views Mr Laqa the Deputy Principal of Langaz Secondary School said:

> *We have to see that we have all the relevant resources that are required. We are able now to motivate our educators through meetings after results come out. We take them out for an outing where we just socialise and enjoy our results and regroup to come back and work harder*.

It emerged from the participants that the notion of professional development has to do with developing understanding or insight that can guide and determine professional practice. It was further revealed that the school must make sure that the teachers through School Management Team has got proper plans in place for the effective teaching and learning and assessment. Furthermore, the school should provide them with relevant curriculum documents. School Management Team members should provide proper guidance for the proper use of documents for professional development.

Another professional development approach called Bottom Up Approach emerged from the participants. This approach meant that even the post level One educator can perform wonders in

developing his/her superiors professionally. It was also reflected from the data that SMT members promoted and motivated their educators to attend workshops that were organised by the Department of Basic Education and cluster meetings for their learning areas. Furthermore, it emerged from the participants that there was a strong belief that attending workshops was important for the learners and for the school.

5. 6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the data that was gathered from the participants was analysed and presented. Before presenting the data, I begin by briefly outlining a profile for each of the participating schools. I believe that it is important that readers should have a clear background about the participants and schools that participated in the study. Four schools were profiled. Profiles of the participants and the profiles of the participating schools were discussed. In the next chapter, the second levele of analysis is presented and literature is injected into the discussion in ordert to enhance the quality of analysis and discussion.

ACROSS SITES ANALYSIS: MAPPING PATTERNS IN THE DATA

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Five presented a descriptive analysis of the qualitative data about how SMT members enacted leadership in their respective schools, and why they exercised leadership the way they did. The presentation of data from the SMT members did not include the use of literature to enhance the discussion as I reserved that process for Chapter Six where I present a second level of analysis. This chapter constitutes a second level analysis by *inter alia*, doing the across sites analysis, thus developing a pattern for the purpose of showing an emerging picture about the context of the research sites themselves, the context of the participants, about leadership practices that have brought about success in their respective schools. Furthermore, in this chapter, I present the themes that I developed from the descriptive analysis and I infuse literature as well as the theoretical framework that I had discussed in in Chapter Two and Chapter Three respectively. I provide a list of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the analysis of successful leadership practices of School Management Team members. Both the review of literature and the theories that provide a framework of this study assisted me in developing the themes that I discuss in this chapter. I begin this chapter by outlining the following eight themes; (a) Similarities and differences amongst the communities in the study; (b) Similarities and differences amongst the participating schools; (c) Similarities and differences amongst the participants themselves; (d) Going beyond the rhetoric of leadership; (e) School Management Team members' leadership practices that focus on effective curriculum delivery; (f) Leadership practices that emphasise knowledge-driven allocation of duties to the teaching staff; (g) Consulting with traditional leaders as a way of soliciting their support in school. In the next section, I move on to discuss similarities and differences amongst the communities in the study.

6.2 Similarities and differences amongst the communities in the study

In this section, I present the similarities and differences amongst the communities served by the four participating schools. The discussion will also explore the issues of successful leadership practices as they find expression in the words of the participants in the research sites. Scholars such as Cleveland and Cleveland (2020) argue that the leadership practices find expression in

the words of the participants because the success of organisations depends on leaders who are capable of determining not only the critical factors that lead to organisational success, but also by applying leadership practices to sustain successful organisational practices in different contexts.

The discussion will also look at similar patterns across the research sites and look at unique cases as they unfolded in a particular site. These four schools serve learners from the communities affected and plagued by socio-economic challenges such as poverty and deprivation, social ills, diseases, migration and infrastructure to mention a few. All these combined, negatively affect the quality of education provided in the schools. Similarly, this is in line with the studies conducted by scholars such as Mhlanga (2019) and Mngomezulu (2020) in their respective contexts. Some of the common deficiencies eminent amongst these communities include the fact that communities suffer from high rates of unemployment. The prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic made things worse in these communities, especially in schools situated in these communities. The argument of the prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic reflects the contention of scholars such as Bhuda, Marumo and Motswaledi (2021); Palmer, de Klerk and Modise (2021) and Maye (2020) who emphasise the negative impact of the pandemic on teaching and learning. Job opportunities are scarce, and most community members are not working and they survive through the state social grant. The argument of community members provided with social grant as the means of mitigating the effects of poverty reflects the contention of scholars such as Nzimande (2019) who contends that disadvantaged community members were provided with social grants as way of lessening the effects of poverty in deprived communities. In addition, scholars such as Books and Ndlaleni (2011) contend that the negative effects of social deprivations on the quality of education are highly visible in rural and other disadvantaged communities. These negative effects are severe because these communities cannot raise funds to supplement financial contributions made by the Department of Basic Education. It must be noted that their counterparts in the previously advantaged communities and schools are able to, for example, employ additional staff to enhance the quality of teaching and learning experiences of the learners in their schools (Bhengu, 2021).

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that, even those people in these communities who are employed, receive meagre salaries which are far less than the inflation rate. In rural areas like these, community members mainly work in tree plantations, local homes (as domestic workers), and in the local projects like the expanded public works project. The argument of

community members work in places such as tree plantations and in local projects reflects the contention of Nzimande (2019) in his study conducted in rural and informal settlements. Community members in the rural areas have lost jobs from shops and domestic work in the local homes and local projects like the expanded works project due to the national lockdown that started in March 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The argument of community members losing their jobs among other things due to the prevalence of COVID-19 reflects the contention of the scholar such as Haye (2020); and Kwatuban and Malaodi (2021) when they contend that the prevalence of COVID-19 among other things, has resulted in the suspension of classes as the preventative measure to curb the spread of COVID-19 in different contexts of the societies. It has to be noted that even the jobs that were lost did not earn the community members decent salaries that could assist them keep up to their children's schooling. The schools in the study were No-Fee paying schools. This is evidence of the prevailing socio-economic deparavations that the communities endured; although the parents in the community could not afford payig school fees, they, nonetheless, were were still expected to pay for other educational related expenses such as school excursions, study guides, security and other additional resources. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Mhlanga (2019) and Nzimande (2019).

The data presented in Chapter Five indicated that some parents experiencd some difficulties in paying for other educational expenses and resources such as educational excursions for their children and such failures to pay negatively affected the quality of education their children received. Families in these communities mainly depended on social grants due to high levels of poverty and unemployment. Similar sentiments are expressed by scholar such as Nzimande (2019). In essence, poverty was rife in these four communities and because of that, schools that participated in this study also participated in the Department's Nutrition programme, officially known as the National Schools Nutrition Programme (NSNP). In terms of this programme, learners receive meals daily while at school. This is an indicator of the communities' socio-economic status such as poverty among other things. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Chikoko et al. (2015); Chikoko (2018); Maringe et al. (2015); Maringe and Sing (2019); Makhasane and Khanare (2018); Mbokazi (2015); Tshepo, Tapala, van Niekerk and Mentz (2020). Additionally, communities in which the participating schools were located also suffered from various social ills like the high rate of teenage pregnancy among the school going youth. This was discussed extensively in Chapter Five.

Teenage pregnancy had a negative impact on their schooling as they had to suspend their studies at some stage and focus on their own children. They did however, return to school where they faced numerous challenges such as the task of catching up on what had been taught during their absence. It is generally known that during preganancy, these young expectant mothers suffer form multiple distractions, including the need to focus on their soon to be born babies and also focus on education. Consequently, school attendance is affected and so does full focus on school work. As a result, education is negatively affected. Furthermore, the unplanned pregnancies exposed teenagers to various sexually transmitted diseases and this put on them a further burden to their poor family situations. Similar sentiments on unplanned pregnancies are expressed by scholars such as Maringe and Sing (2019), Mhlanga (2019) as well as Nzimande (2019).

The other distinctive features in four rural communities include the high crime rate, which impacts negatively on the learners schooling outcomes and drug abuse by the learners. The selling of drugs was severely affecting other learners in class as it affected their concentration span and their behaviour. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Mhlanga (2019); and Nzimande (2019). The argument of challenge of crime in these communities reflects the contention of scholars such as Mhlanga (2019) and Nzimande (2019) that contend that crime is the other distinctive feature in rural communities that impact negatively on teaching and learning, precisely on the learners schooling outcomes. Furthermore, what is emerging in these communities is that crime is also rife in such a way that; school properties are stolen by the members of the communities and as these schools which are Langaz, Patoni, Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools are No fee schools. All of them give a stipend to the security guards and they also do not have security guards that are employed by the Department of Basic Education because of financial constraints. It is on those bases that some scholars such as Chikoko et al. (2015); Chikoko (2018); and Nzimande (2019), share similar sentiments on the view that schools facing multiple deprivations require certain forms of leadership that can steer the school through and ensure that it performs well despite the challenges. Similarly, scholars such as Buckmiller, Townsely and Cooper (2020) contend that leaders in rural areas often face challenges that are significantly different from those of their urban and suburban counterparts.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that all the communities where the participating schools are located are also afflicted by the scourge of HIV/AIDS epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Adeagbo and Naidoo (2021); Chikoko (2018); Chimbindi, Mthiyane and Zuma (2021); Nwimo, Elom, Ilo, Ojide, Ezugwu,

Eke and Ezugwu (2020) and other diseases such as COVID-19 pandemic are expressed by Haye (2020); Kwatubana and Molaodi (2021); Palmer, de Klerk and Modise (2021); and Nzimande (2019). Such diseases have left some families being headed by the children, who have to look after their siblings while also having to contend with their own schooling demands. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Maringe and Sing (2019). Furthermore, some families are headed by grandparents as their parents have passed on through the HIV/ AIDS epidemic, COVID-19 pandemic and other diseases. Similar sentiments are expressed by Mhlanga (2019); and Nzimande (2019).

Another pattern that is emerging in these communities, is the migration of some parents to cities looking for better jobs opportunities. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that parents have moved to other areas in search of job opportunities, and they live behind young children who cannot care for themselves. This is highly featured in the community where Langaz Secondary school is located. For example, in some communities where Langaz and Patoni Secondary schools are located, fathers have gone to cities to look for employment in the mines and in Durban working in factories and in sugar cane plantation. Therefore, this leaves children with no old people to look after them. Therefore, this impacts negatively on teaching and learning because nobody is encouraging these learners to attend school on regular basis. As a result, learner absenteeism is prevalent. This is highly featured in Langaz and Patoni Secondary schools. The learners cannot be in a position to look after themselves. Furthermore, this resulted to child-headed families. These rural communities have headed child-families with orphans who had to often struggle to cope with the demands of both home and school. The profile of these communities in terms of child-headed families reflects the contention by some scholars such as Maringe and Sing (2019); and Mhlanga (2019) on the conditions faced by deprived communities.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that learners have to travel long distances before getting to their relevant schools because there is no infrastructure such as access roads and bridges to cross when it is raining and rivers are flooding. Similar views of travelling long distances are expressed by scholars such as Nzimande (2019) and Mhlanga (20200). As a result, that promotes learner absenteeism and impact negatively on teaching and learning. This is highly featured in Langaz and Patoni Secondary schools. All four Secondary Schools hinted that there were no libraries in the rural locations where their schools are located. The evidence surrounding the lack of libraries in some rural communities is supported by the literature as one of the

challenges experienced by learners in rural communities (Maringe & Sing, 2019; Nzimande, 2019). Similarly, the narratives about the lack of libraries is supported by South African literature when it divulges that substantial backlogs in public and school library services in South Africa, precisely in the previously disadvantaged, remote rural areas is prevalent (Roux & Hendrikz, 2021). On the other hand, although all the four communities suffer the same consequences in terms of negative factors that impact negatively teaching and learning but the other two communities where Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools are located differ from the other two communities where Langaz and Patoni Secondary schools are located in terms of mitigating factors that hinder teaching and learning. What makes them differ is that Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools involve traditional leaders in whatever they do in their communities. As a result, they are successful in tapping into the traditional leadership's capital. Furthermore, these two communities benefit a lot in things that uplift them. Similar views are expressed by scholar such as Mngomezulu (2020). As a result, in analysing the patterns of the data it is noticed that the involvement of traditional leaders to community activities enhances strong school-community partnership. Similar sentiments are expressed by scholars such as Myende (2018). Therefore, this school- community partnership makes it easy for traditional leaders to assist in mitigating negative challenges that include poverty.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the traditional leaders play a vital role in leading agricultural projects in the community. It does not end there; the schools that serve these communities play an important role in enhancing these projects since the traditional leaders were also part and parcel in these two schools which are Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools that are located in these two communities. The two schools initiated working together with these two communities by accounting to the traditional leader for the two communities in terms of learner academic performance. Therefore, that strategy of accounting to this traditional leader strengthened the relationship amongst the schools and the traditional leader. As a result, the two schools find it easy to work with the two communities led by the traditional leader in terms of strengthening projects to alleviate poverty. The working together of the two communities where Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools are located resulted in the lessening of crime and poverty because the two communities working together with the traditional leader enhanced relations amongst themselves. Therefore, the community members working together with the Traditional Leader worked together in the production of abundance of food.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that in these two communities where Siwo and Patoni Secondary schools are situated are less afflicted by high incidence of crime than other two communities due to their initial involvement of traditional leaders. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that working together with traditional leaders in alleviating poverty and combating crime and in addressing other challenges such as child-headed families, migration and infrastructure that include transportation system, communication network and water challenges lead to achieving success in terms of learner academic performance. This is highly featured in Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools where the involvement of traditional leaders is prevalent. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is showed that the communities where Langaz, Patoni, Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools there are taps but the water does not come consistently. The two communities where Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools are situated, community members address other challenges such as infrastructure by exerting pressure on the relevant departments who have a duty and responsibility to address such challenges by virtue of the powers vested in them. In my view, it is through that working together, you can do more. The two communities where the two schools exist, water supply was prevalent through the pressure from both traditional leaders and communities working as a team. Therefore, water taps were placed is these communities although they were scattered and producing water on irregular basis. In my view, in referring to the last-mentioned sentiment, I can say half a loaf is better than no bread.

The profile of traditional leaders in playing important roles in rural areas reflects the contention of some scholars in divulging developmental, administrative and political roles traditional leader play in rural areas, despite modern state structures (Kurebwa, 2020). In substantiating, the developmental roles of traditional leaders, the literature reveals that traditional leaders are integral part of the development infrastructure in many African countries (Carlson & Seim, 2018). Equally, it is evident that across 22 countries, traditional leaders unwaveringly receive meaningfully more positive ratings on trust, performance, listening, and lack of corruption (Logan & Katenda, 2021). Similarly, the argument of working hand in hand with traditional leaders by communities is contended by scholars such as (Mngomezulu, 2020) on learner discipline in traditional communities.

All the four communities suffer the similar challenges such as poverty, teenage pregnancy and lack of infrastructure such as clean water supply, as well as network connectivity. The differences lie in the involvement of traditional leaders. The latter two communities where Siwo

and Toliz Secondary schools are located involve traditional leaders in lessening the challenges that hinder learning and teaching in order to achieve success in terms of learner academic achievement in rural settings. It is within this perspective that some scholars confirm that the involvement of traditional leaders to community activities enhances strong school-community partnership and parent-teacher collaboration. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Myende (2018); and Myende and Nhlumayo (2020). On the other hand, evidence also shows that while school–community partnerships are not a solution for all school challenges, they offer access to additional assets that are relevant in combating learners' social and educational challenges. Similar views are expressed by scholar such as Myende (2018).

It is clear that the two communities were also able to involve the traditional leaders. In terms of this perspective, the four participating school are regarded as successful in terms of high learner academic performance in the O.R. Tambo Coastal District in Eastern Cape Province. Finally, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that it is vital to involve the traditional leaders so as to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance and in different contexts. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Bender, Kinuthia, Schuring, Ikua, and Pouw (2021); Bhuda, Marumo, and Motswaledi (2021). In the next section, I move on to discuss similarities and differences among the participating schools.

6.3 Similarities and differences amongst the participating schools

In this section, I map out observed similarities and differences between the participating schools. In the presentation of the profiles of all the four secondary schools, there are marked similarities as well as the uniqueness of each school. Furthermore, the similarities and differences that will be looked at are challenges faced by these four participating schools, learner academic performance and learner enrolments. In analysing the patterns in the data, it is noticed that all the four participating schools are exposed, affected and plagued by socio-economic challenges such as poverty and deprivation, social ills, diseases, migration and infrastructure which connive to affect the quality of education provided in the schools. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Maringe and Sing (2019); Mhlanga (2019) and Nzimande (2019). As a result, the argument of schools affected and plagued by socio-economic challenges in some rural communities is supported by the literature as one of the challenges experienced by learners in rural communities (Mhlanga, 2019; Maringe & Sing, 2019; Nzimande, 2019). Furthermore, all four schools are Quintile 1 schools, and belong to the Section 21 schools category. South African

Schools Act of 1996, particularly Section 21 declares that Section 21schools are allocated finances by the Department of Basic Education and are responsible for ordering stationery, textbooks, paying water and lights.

The evidence presented in the paragraph above suggests that, in essence, poverty is rife in these four schools and because of that, these schools are benefiting from the Department's Nutrition programme, officially known as the National Schools Nutrition Programme (NSNP) as a way of mitigating socio-economic conditions that include poverty. Similar views are expressed by scholar such as Nzimande (2019). In terms of this programme, learners receive meals daily while at school. This is as a result, of this intervention of National Schools Nutrition Programme by the Department of Basic Education. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that learner academic performance has improved because learners had something to eat, particularly, those coming from poverty-stricken communities. This is highly featured in Langaz and Patoni Secondary schools. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that non-governmental organisation played a vital role in mitigating poverty in such schools in those communities by providing food. This is highly featured in Langaz Secondary school when the principal states categorically that non- governmental organisations provided the school in those communities with such things like food to mitigate poverty. As a result, learners were eager to attend school on daily basis without any break and that resulted in learners not to miss any class activities. Therefore, that tendency of attending schools daily improved learner academic performance because that improved learner attendance. This is an indicator of the mitigation of poverty as one of schools' socio-economic status. This means that SMT members were going beyond rhetoric leadership. The profiles of these participating schools reflect the contention by various scholars such as Chikoko et al. (20150); Maringe and Sing (2019); Makhasane and Khanare (2018); Mbokazi (2015); and Tapala, van Niekerk and Mentz (2020), regarding the conditions in similar communities. The tables (9, 10, 11, and 12 below show the similarities and differences in learner performance in the past 8 years (2013-2020) in four schools which are Langaz, Patoni, Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools.

Grade 12 learner performance in the past 8 years (2013-2020)

In this section, I present Grade 12 learner performance in the past 8 years. This discussion gives a clear picture about how learners have performed.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Performance	30	45	69. 8	75. 8	85. 40	98. 66	91. 70	87. 41

TABLE 19: Learner performance in the past 8 years at Langaz Secondary School

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Performance	15	45	68.7	70.6	80.40	95.55	90	85.50

Table 20: Learner performance for the past 8 years at Patoni Secondary School

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Performance	40	42	69. 7	80. 46	97. 40	100	100	98. 50

Table 21: Learner performance for the past 8 years at Siwo Secondary School

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Performance	99	100	100	98	100	97	100	96.50

Table 22: Learner performance for the past 8 years at Toliz Secondary School

All four rural secondary schools illustrate a high learner academic performance between 2013 and 2019 but a little decline in 2020. It is emerging in analysing the patterns of the data that one of the causes for the decline was COVID-19 pandemic. It is emerged that due to COVID-19 suspension of classes in 2020 was implemented in schools as a preventative measure to lessen COVID19 pandemic that may have contributed to the decline. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the suspension of classes was going to impact negatively on learner academic performance, especially in Grade 12 learners. The four schools decided to think outside the box. These schools decided not to suspend classes for Grade 12 learners. These four schools decided to suspend classes in Grades 8, 9 and 10 so as to pay more emphasis on Grade 11 and 12. This is highly featured in all four schools. The argument of COVID-19 pandemic regarded as one of the challenges that caused a decline in terms of learner academic performance reflects the contention from some scholars when they argue that the suspension of classes in March 2020 as a preventative measure to curb the spread of COVID-19, negatively affected the majority of learners globally in various ways (Kwatubana & Molaodi, 2021). Even though these schools were negatively affected by challenges including COVID-19, all of them managed to achieve above 87% in 2019 in terms of leaner academic performance. This is clearly illustrated in Table 9, 10, 11 and 12. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is observed that all schools adhered to COVID-19 regulations. This highly featured in Langaz, Patoni Secondary schools. A general observation indicates an overall improvement in performance by all the School Management Team members, despite the existing deprivations and poverty in all the four schools. These School Management Team members have led schools without fail in improving the Grade 12 results, despite deprivations and rural setting. All the four schools are located in

rural areas. Therefore, these schools are consistent with the studies that have confirmed that there are some pockets of excellence amongst schools in rural contexts (Chikoko, 2018). It is therefore, important that we draw lessons from those school leaders whose schools have been known to be successful. Scholarly, high academic achievement in such schools is associated with effective and successful leadership that prevails in the schools (Bhengu, 2019).

On the other hand, the four schools illustrate different percentages in terms of performance for the past 6 years with the exception of Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools where they both show similarities in terms of percentage of 100% in 2019. The tables below show similarities and differences on learner enrolment for the past 6 years (2015-2020) in four schools which are Langaz, Patoni, Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools.

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Enrolment	1020	1060	1069	1075	1176	1160

Table 23: Learner enrolment for the past 6 years at Langaz Secondary School

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Enrolment	1040	1060	1071	1067	1155	1150

Table 24: Learner enrolment for the past 6 years at Patoni Secondary School

Year	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
Enrolment	**800**	**1065**	**1070**	**1081**	**1087**	**1150**

Table 25: Learner enrolment for the past 6 years at Siwo Secondary School

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Enrolment	1400	1450	1470	1150	1660	1700

Table 26: Learner enrolment for the past 6 years at Toliz Secondary School

Table 26above, indicates the enrolment of learners for the past 6 years at Toliz Secondary School. All the four rural Secondary schools illustrate large number of learner enrolment despite the existing deprivations. All the four school have enrolment of not less than 800 learners. Table 15 shows that the enrolment is not less than 800 learner enrolment as compared to Table 13,14 and 16. All these schools have bigger enrolments ranges from 800 to 1700 learners. This is illustrated by Table 13,14, 15 and 16. If these figures are read against the academic performance, it shows that these rural Secondary schools have bigger enrolments despite the negative challenges they faced. This can be as a result to different factors such as the parental involvement, involvement of traditional leaders, teacher qualifications, effective leadership,

high learner academic performance, successful leadership practices displayed by these schools to mention but a few.

These schools differ in terms of performances in percentages although they achieve above the bench mark which is 65%. They all differ in terms of learner enrolments although they all have above 800 learners. Langaz Secondary school leaners' academic performance ranges between 30% and 87. 41% in past 8 years which ranges between 2013 and 2020. Table 10 shows that Patoni Secondary school learner academic performance ranges between 15% and 85.50% in past 8years which is between 2013 and 2020. Whilst Table 11 shows that Siwo Secondary school learner academic performance ranges between 40% and 98.50% in past 8 years which is between 2013 and 2020. Lastly, Table 12 shows that the learner academic performance of Toliz Secondary school ranges between 99% and 96.50% in the past 8 years which is between 2013 and 2020. Therefore, the four schools differ in terms of learner academic performance in the past 8 years.

Table 13 shows that Langaz Secondary school leaner enrolment ranges between 1020 and 1160 in past 6 years. Table 14 shows that Patoni Secondary school learner enrolment ranges between 1040 and 1150 in past 6 years which is between 2015 and 2020. Whilst Table 15 shows that Siwo Secondary school learner enrolment ranges between 800 and 1150 in past 6 years which is between 2015 and 2020. Lastly, Table 16 shows that the learner enrolment of Toliz Secondary school ranges between 1400 and 1700 in the past 6 years which is between 2015 and 2020. Therefore, the four schools differ in terms of learner enrolment in the past 6 years.

Langaz Secondary school is built on a flat place. That allows the school not to spend huge amount of money in building grounds. The playing grounds are of a good standard without being levelled. Patoni Secondary differs from Langaz Secondary school. It is surrounded by hills and the river that provide water for the school. As a result, the school initiated a huge vegetable garden that assist a lot in alleviating poverty. It also assists the child-headed families. This school also involved traditional leaders on accountability in terms of learner academic performance. This school also account to traditional leaders quarterly in terms academic performance. That assisted a lot in mitigating crime and ill-discipline. Siwo Secondary school is surrounded by big forests. This school intertwined with Patoni Secondary school. Therefore, it also involved traditional leaders in mitigating challenges such as poverty, crime to mention but a few. The other two schools which were both Langaz and Toliz Secondary schools also followed suit by

involving traditional leaders in their schools in mitigating negative rural challenges. I found these schools in this level of success in terms of learner academic performance, they ended up involving traditional leaders. It is from this perspective that they were able to mitigate rural challenges such as poverty and deprivation, social ills, infrastructure to mention but a few. The two schools have toilets with cracked doors while toilets from the other two schools have been renovated. Tables 9,10,11 and 12 show learner academic performance in terms of percentages between 2013 and 2020. These schools are all Quintile 1 schools. All four rural secondary schools indicate a high learner academic performance between 2013 and 2019 but a little decline in 2020. This decline in 2020 may be as a result of a negative factors which include Covid-19 pandemic.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that schools were severely affected by negative rural factors that include poverty, high crime rate, unemployment, learner ill-discipline, lack of resources such as water and electricity to mention but a few. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the School Management Team members in these schools achieved success in terms of learner academic performance because they have employed a diversity of strategies to guarantee effective teaching and learning. This is highly featured in all participating schools which are Langaz, Patoni, Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Grant, Naicker and Pillay (2018); Maringe and Sing (2019). Such strategies include incentivising and promoting activities and processes which are more learner time on task (Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018), promoting and developing teacher competences and across a wide range of teacher action zones (Grant, Naicker & Pillay, 2018). In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that developing teachers is another important strategy that has been emphasised by participants in this study in enhancing teaching and learning in order to achieve success and in mitigating negative rural environmental factors. Similar sentiments are expressed by Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2020), when they contend that developing people entails stimulating growth in the professional staff, providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members, model school's values and practices, build trusting relationships with and among staff.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the SMT members in these four participating schools enhance the management of teaching and learning in achieving success in terms of learner academic performance in these rural secondary schools. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Maringe and Sing (2019); Myende (2018); Uleanya, Khumalo,

Momah and Ndlovu (2019) when they contend that in enhancing the management of teaching and learning, school leaders promote school community-partnership (Myende, 2018) by devising means of how to work with the community as the key component. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the SMT members formed partnership with the community so as to achieve success. This is highly featured in Langaz and Patoni Secondary schools. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Chikoko (2018); Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015) when they contend that community-partnership is vital in rural setting in promoting effective teaching and learning to flatten the curve of dysfunctionality in most dysfunctional schools in rural settings.

Furthermore, studies conducted in rural settings reveal some fundamentals in managing teaching and learning that include but not limited to, the regulation of time, the monitoring and support for planning and delivery about curriculum coverage, the procurement and management of books and stationery, the quality assurances of tests and the monitoring of the results are fundamentals in managing teaching and learning (Maringe & Sing, 2019). Similarly, Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008); Harris, 2019; Harris Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2020), Newton and Jarrett (2020) reveal that specific practices like staffing, the teaching programme, providing teaching support, monitoring school activity and buffering staff against distractions from their work are key practices in managing teaching and learning programmes. Furthermore, regular management of teaching and learning of schools not only informs parents and others about schools' achievement, but allows success and inadequacy to be identified (Akram & Khan, 2020; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2020; Newton & Jarrett, 2020). In the next section, I move on to discuss similarities and differences among the participants themselves.

6.4 Similarities and differences amongst the participants themselves

In this section, similarities and differences amongst the participants from four participating schools will be discussed. It is important that readers obtain a comprehensive view of the research sites and, by providing a background of the research sites, I ensure that such an important aspect of qualitative inquiry is addressed. What can be drawn from the profiles of the above participants is that all of them are fully qualified as teachers. in fact, they are more than fully qualified if one considers the fact that in South Africa, a teacher is fully qualified if that teacher has 4 years of training as a teacher. These participants started their teaching careers after receiving professional training in the colleges where they obtained teachers diploma. All of them

have proceeded to study at universities for their bachelor's degrees. Although the profile does not tell us about the other teachers in these schools in terms of their qualifications, it is evident that the participants wanted to upgrade their qualifications. Therefore, one can argue that the learners in these schools were exposed to highly qualified teaching staff members. There is gender mix among the participants in these four schools. Therefore, one can argue that these schools are consistent to affirmative action when recruiting. Furthermore, among the participants was only one female Principal who was participating as an SMT member, was the Principal of Toliz Secondary school. The other three schools were led by male principals. On the other hand, one can argue that there is still a limit in adherence to affirmative action in some educational institutions.

In analysing the patterns from the data, it is emerged that School Management Teams working together with educators, community members precisely traditional leaders played a crucial role in supporting teaching and learning efforts of schools, and this turned the performance of the schools around. For instance, educators committed themselves in achieving success in terms of learner academic performance by employing a variety of strategies such as embracing the programme of providing extra tuition although in some schools like Langaz Secondary and Patoni Secondary schools, some teachers were reluctant to get involved in that initiative. Because of their reluctance to get involved in extra tuition, some of them had to be moved to other grades that the SMT members considered to be not requiring urgent additional support in the form of extra classes. That meant that those schools that had put extra efforts achieved learner academic performance despite the challenges they faced. The same cannot be said about those that did not put extra inputs. Therefore, lessons can be drawn from these schools.

On the whole, educators were enthusiastic about the notion of supporting teaching and learning opportunities they sought to provide for their learners. As part of that support, they demonstrated enthusiasm about supporting and learning from each other and from one another. For example, at Langaz Secondary School teachers supported one another in Mathematics and Natural Science subjects as some of them experienced some difficulties about certain sections of the curriculum. Skills sharing was at the centre of their leadership practices, and this resulted in the improvement of learners' academic performance. In some instances, when a teaching post was available in the schools, teachers assisted in identifying and recruiting a good teacher from another school. This happened in Patoni and Toliz Secondary schools.

What the teachers were doing in these schools can be characterised as going beyond the call of duty. In that regard, Chikoko et al. (2015), Bhengu and Mkhize (2018), Mkhize and Bhengu (2015), and Mkhize and Bhengu (2018) who conducted research in similar contexts as that of this study, highlight the important issue of going beyond the call of duty. These scholars agree that this kind of a positive attitudes shown by teachers like those in this study, learner academic achievement is bound to improve. Other scholars such as Myende and Nhlumayo (2020) emphasise the importance of establishing and strengthening the collaboration between parents and teachers for personal and academic growth of learners.

In two schools the Principals visited classes to verify if what is in the written reports of Departmental Head was actually being done in supervising the educators. This leadership practice also highly featured in both Patoni and Toliz Secondary schools. Among the challenges I noted in analysing the patterns from the data is that the School Management Team members from all the four schools initially had to address the issue of appropriate staffing especially in Grade 12 as part of the strategy. This meant that the School Management Team members had to either reshuffle (move) educators, to other grades and provide development or just provide development without changing anyone or they had to look for someone who had to assist the school to get the desired outcomes in the subjects seen as being underperforming and dragging the schools to the underperformance bracket and this was noted in two schools, namely, Langaz and Siwo Secondary schools. This is congruent with the argument raised by Nzimande (2019) in his study as a turn around strategy in underperforming schools.

I also noted that there were instances of resistance and that such resistance came from the educators across the spectrum. The subjects that contributed more to the schools' underperformance were Mathematics and Physical Sciences. Therefore, there was a need for immediate support but also in all other subjects as to ensure that schools achieve success in terms of learner academic performance. What is noted is that some of these teachers had been teaching the underperforming subjects for some time without any positive outcome. As the turnaround process unfolded, there was resistance from the educators across all four schools, and this manifested itself in different forms and was directed to the change that was being introduced. The notion of resistance to change and how to handle it is not a new phenomenon (Bouchamma, 2012; Chikoko, 2018; Flintham, 2015; Gillet, Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2016).

In analysing the patterns in the data, I noticed the importance of establishing and sharing a common vision for the transformed school as depicted by the Principal of Langaz Secondary school. Another interesting observation I have made in Langaz Secondary school is the notion of working on the mindset of the teachers if one wants to see the basic success. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data I observed that all the principals of the four schools emphasised the importance of involving stakeholders in developing vision, mission statement and developing the goals so as to own them and in order for the school to perform optimally. The argument on involving the stakeholders as to mitigate challenges that impact negatively in improving learning and teaching reflects the contention of scholars such as Demirkesen and Reinhardt (2021), Myende and Nhlumayo (2020), Nzimande (2018), Nzimande (2019) emphasise the importance of involving stakeholders for the purpose of achieving success in terms of learner academic performance. Furthermore, the analysis of the patterns from the data indicates that it is the principal who must first have the vision and then has to share it with the stakeholders. The belief was that it is the responsibility of the principal to give direction and influence others to follow as depicted by the Principal of Siwele and the Principal of Toliz Secondary school. The argument of setting the direction reflects the contention of scholars such as Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2020) when they contend that school leaders when setting the direction, they built a shared vision, created high performance expectations and communicated the directions of their schools.

As part of ensuring that there was basic functionality of the schools, the school leaders focused on the basic issues that make the school to be functional (Jensen, 2013). This is a point supported by all the School Management Team members of the participating schools; they realised that in order to stabilise teaching and learning they needed to ensure that all the basic essentials for such are in place in the schools. Furthermore, it is reflected from the findings that it is important to involve stakeholders. Moreover, it is also emanated in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noted that initially it was also possible to out-source the development of vision and mission statement to certain projects to craft for compliance. Also, it is noticed in analysing the patterns of the data that having noticed that the crafted one does not address the needs of the school, the school decided to cut ties with the project. It is reflected from the findings that the principal can only involve SMT members in developing vision and mission statement and also goals as that can make SMT members to own the vision, mission statement and goals. Furthermore, it is emerged from findings that can make the SMT members to achieve the goals optimally. This is highly featured in Siwo Secondary school.

The participants in four schools differ in terms of their ages, their experiences as SMT members and their years in the schools. Therefore, there is a combination of young blood and old blood. As a result, I can proclaim with optimism that teachers with young blood are exposed to mentoring from teachers with long service in terms of teaching experience in those schools. Once again here, I would not generalise this image and say it applied to all the SMT members in the school but the postulation could be that learners were exposed to SMT members who were overqualified and well experienced in managing teaching and learning in these rural secondary schools in the O.R. Tambo Coastal District.

6.5 Going beyond the rhetoric of leadership

The generic meaning of rhetoric or being rhetorical has to do with using a persuasive language (Fiordo, 2021). For instance, a rhetorical question is "a question asked not for information but to produce an effect, e.g. who cares? For nobody cares" (The Concise English Oxford Dictionary, 1991, p. 1033). According to this explanation, it is clear that a rhetoric issue focuses on what people will believe rather than what actually occurs on the ground. In other words, its focus is more on what people should believe. Scholars who have delved into the issues of rhetoric such as Fiordo (2021), explain rhetoric as a philosophic inquiry into how words work in discourse. Similar views are expressed by other scholars such as Hole and Hawker (2004); Fidrich (2021) and Nzimande (2018). My use of this concept in this thesis has to do with leaders performing their duties in a genuine way that is not necessarily meant to make people believe that there is something going on in the schools, but by being sincere in their leadership actions.

My study differs from other studies since this theme has something to do with going beyond rhetoric leadership. This means that this theme will be looking beyond rhetoric leadership at walking the talk. This means that going beyond rhetoric leadership you practice what you preach rather than being persuasive but using insincere language. This theme shows that SMT members are not rhetorical but they go beyond rhetoric leadership because they practice what they preach or they put words into action in leading in these four participating schools. Going beyond the rhetoric could entail leadership practices through walking the talk, practicing what they preach and aligning their leadership practices with their redefined school vision statements. In analysing the patterns from the data, it is noted that there was a general agreement from all the School Management Team members in this study as leaders of the schools who were keeping the visions

and the schools' destinations in mind. Furthermore, it is noted that all the SMT members adhered in action to the schools' vision and mission statement of the school. As a result, whilst the vision and mission statements were visible in the offices and foyers, the participants, could articulate their "shared" visions for their schools and were able to put vision and mission statement into practice and goals into practice such as achieving learner academic performance above bench mark. Therefore, this is an indication of going beyond rhetoric leadership by SMT members by practising what is displayed in the vision and mission statement of their schools.

All the schools were experiencing varying degrees of different challenges brought by rural setting and deprivations. These challenges were constantly derailing schools from focusing on their core business of teaching and learning despite those challenges the SMT members were able to go beyond rhetoric leadership by adhering to the vision and mission statements of their schools by keeping the vision, purpose and the school's destination in their minds. With the vision and goals in mind, the STM members had to constantly re-orientate focus to teaching and learning. This argument of keeping the purpose and the school's destination in mind by the principals reflects the contention of some scholar such as Covey (2004) when he confirms that keeping the purpose and the school's destination in mind, leaders are better able to deal with daily challenges.

What the SMT members did in terms of their leadership practices is consistent with the vision and mission statement, they walked the talk by becoming the first people to come to school to attend extra classes, which is a sign of good leadership. The argument of good leadership reflects the contention of scholars such as (By, 2021; James, Conolly & Hawkins, 2019). Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that when the results are analysed, they are analysed under one roof in a staff meeting. As a result, SMT members allow staff members to critique their results as SMT members. Therefore, it becomes apparent in analysing the patterns of the data that if you are a leader you must show your people direction with your actions. The argument of showing the direction reflects the contention of scholars (e.g Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2020). On the other hand, this shows that by doing that, SMT members were going beyond the rhetoric leadership in the sense that they put vision and mission statement of their schools into action.

In aligning their leadership practices with their redefined school vision statements, the School Management Team members made sure that they adhere to their vision and mission statements

which outlines the school's purpose. The argument of the importance of vision and mission statement reflects the contention of scholars such as Allen, Kern, Vella-Brodricks and Waters (2018) when they affirm that the vision or mission statement of a school is vital because it outlines the school's purpose and defines the context, aspirations, and goals that govern the school. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that although the four schools have different vision and mission statements but their content was similar in terms of achieving excellence in terms of learner academic performance. Their common goals were to achieve high learner academic performance in terms of bench mark. As a result, all the four schools were ranging between 87.41% to 96% in 2020. I am precisely sticking to 2020 because it was a year whereby COVID-19 pandemic manifested itself in March 2020 with new conditions and regulations being instituted. One of those regulations forced the suspension of classes in schools as a preventative measure to curb the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. The argument of suspension of classes in March 2020 was a preventative measure to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 pandemic (Kwatubana & Molaodi, 2020).

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the STM members in achieving the high learner academic performance as their main goal, they put their words into action by being the first people to attend extra-classes as to improve learner academic performance. By doing so, they were going beyond the rhetoric leadership because they were not using an empty persuasive language in order to convince people about something which was not taking place in action. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that they directed the work for educators, created motivation for effectiveness through their actions as leadership practices that were aligned to the content of the living vision and mission statement. To be precise the goal of achieving high academic performance, was a common goal to the content for the vision and mission statement for the four participating schools. This means that they direct the work for educators through their actions.

The argument of directing the work for educators and the creation of motivation for effectiveness reflects the contention by scholars such as Bhengu (2019), Robinson (2011) when they contend that the school leaders develop clear, common goals and purpose, and direct the work of educators, creating motivation for effectiveness, which permits distractions to be minimised. School leaders have to do the latter in preparing their subordinates to thrive. As a result, all teachers follow suit in attending extra-classes in order to improve learner academic performance. This means that SMT members led by example. The argument of leading by example reflects

the contention of scholars such as Mhlanga (2019) when she contends that leading by example is a good sign of leadership, which makes principals, become role models to their staff and the community. This finding supports the finding in the study conducted by Hargreaves and Harris (2015) who found that leadership in institutions that perform above expectations raised and improved the institution performance by leading from the front by example when they had to lift up the morale of everybody. Moreover, it came to light that maintaining punctuality was another strategy that contributed to the rural secondary schools to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance.

The participants were allocated in Grade 12 classes and they were held accountable for the monitoring of teaching and learning. This allocation of STM members to senior classes such as Grade 12 was a sign of good leadership. The argument of allocating SMT members to senior classes reflects the contention of scholar Mhlanga (2019) when she contends that principals also promoted good leadership by allocating senior classes to SMT members, which was a way of creating a culture of accountability and motivating teachers. This was an action of going beyond rhetoric leadership. Also, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that SMT members walked the talk by maintaining discipline, which was a sign of good leadership and the staff followed suit. The argument of maintaining discipline reflects the contention of scholars such as Mhlanga (2019) and Mngomezulu (2020). Therefore, the four schools achieved high academic performance which was the major goal in their living vision and mission statement. This in an indication that the SMT members in these four participating schools go beyond rhetoric leadership. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that in achieving high academic performance are the outcomes of walking the talk and going beyond rhetoric leadership. The achievement of high academic performance is supported by the utterances from the participants in Chapter Five; Theme: Walking the talk. Mrs. Tolo, the Principal of Toliz, Secondary. That was how she put it:

> On my arrival I introduced extra classes so as to improve learner academic performance. As a result, I was the first person to attend extra-classes in order to improve school performance. Therefore, all teachers follow the direction of attending extra-classes without being told. Therefore, if you are a leader you must show your people direction with your actions. So, this was another way of walking the talk. As a result, my school achieved not less than 85% for a period of 6 years. Furthermore, I decided to account quarterly to traditional leaders in terms learner academic performance. To enhance that the school involved traditional representatives in both

School Governing Body and School Management structure as to make them to be acquainted with school governance and school management.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is emerged that all four schools have vision and mission statements as a broad statement that guides their work. Furthermore, it is noted how vision and mission statement was developed. In addition, it is noted what kinds of goals were developed and how such goals were developed. Apart from creating a culture of accountability, the SMT members were also encouraging and motivating other teachers by practising what they preached. Scholarly, therefore, motivation plays a vital role in moderating the resilience between parenting which is problematic and adolescent externalising behaviours (Hamdam, 2020). Finally, it seemed as if to allocate senior classes to SMT members was a way of showing staff members that SMT members walk the talk (Mhlanga, 2019). The actions that have been alluded in this theme indicate that SMT members were going beyond rhetoric leadership by such actions.

6.6 School Management Team members' leadership practices that focus on effective curriculum delivery

Scholarly, school principals are instructional leaders, and as such, their core function is to ensure that effective teaching and learning occurs (Nzimande, 2019). In analysing the patterns of the data, the principals of the four participating schools (Langaz, Patoni, Siwole and Toliz Secondary), agreed with the assertion that they are curriculum managers. They viewed their role as being an important one although they expressed a belief that the other SMT members also had a great role in this matter, especially the Departmental Head as they have content knowledge in the specific subjects. Educators are then expected to know what needs to be taught. It is indicated that the school then needs curriculum managers, which are in this case, SMT members, starting with the Departmental Heads, deputy principal and the principal. Therefore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is indicated that as principals, they have to play an important role in school, including monitoring teaching and learning as to ensure that effective teaching and learning occurs. Therefore, SMT members were going beyond leadership by understanding their roles in promoting effective teaching and learning in such schools. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noted that the participants used monitoring as one of the strategies for managing teaching and learning. Furthermore, it is noted that the participants monitored classes by using attendance registers, period registers, class visits for staff development as the tools for monitoring teaching and learning in rural secondary schools. This is highly featured in schools such as Langaz, Siwo and Patoni Secondary schools.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that six out of eight participants emphasised the importance of monitoring and the use of monitoring tools. This is highly featured in four schools as alluded to by principals of such schools and two DHs, one from Langaz and one from Patoni Secondary schools. These six participants uncovered that they are essential for developing and maintaining effective teaching and learning in their respective schools through monitoring among other strategies. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Shava, Maradze and Ncube (2021) when they contend that school leaders are the core for developing and maintaining an effective school system. Furthermore, it is observed that monitoring tools such period registers were used to monitor teaching and learning. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is observed that SMT members monitored learning and teaching by visiting classes for staff improvement. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Mhlanga (2019); and Nzimande (2019) when they recommend the use of period register and class visits as means of monitoring teaching and learning. Also, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is observed that SMT members in rural secondary schools monitored teaching and learning by checking the pace of advancement in teaching and learning. Mr. Patyo the Principal of Patoni Secondary School, stressed the importance of the role of the principal on monitoring and the availability of monitoring tools that are of an acceptable standard. This argument of stressing the role of the principal in monitoring teaching and learning reflects the contention of scholars such as Shava, Maradze and Ncube (2021) when they contend that principals are indispensable for developing and maintaining effective teaching and learning in schools. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noted that in monitoring the work of the SMT members, the four principals, would focus on the following aspects for the deputy principals: policies of each department that is managed, ATPs for all subjects, programme of assessment for the school and the monitoring and evaluation reports from the departmental heads work monitored and the recommendations. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the work for both SMT members and educators was closely monitored by SMT members by checking if their work was in line with what is stated in their Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs). Scholars concur with how the work of both SMT members was closely monitored through the use of ATPs (Mhlanga, 2019; Nzimande, 2019). These scholars argue that the work for both SMT members and educators was closely monitored by checking if curriculum coverage, the number of tasks given, the learners' work was in line with what was stated in both SMT members and educators' Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs). An argument on the use of ATPs reflects the contention of scholars such as Nzimande (2019) .

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that Langaz, Patoni and Toliz Secondary Schools detailed the way in which close monitoring was conducted in their respective schools. This is the way these schools conducted close monitoring; both principals and deputy principals from the three schools checked the following aspects from the files of the departmental heads: subject policy, annual teaching plan of each subject managed, list of the people being supervised and their subjects, the programme of assessment, duty loads, feedback from the monitoring and evaluation processes comments and follow up if they have been attended, minutes of the subject meetings to check if relevant things were discussed in their meetings and the list of learners whose work was checked. Finally, the School Management Team members checked the following aspects from the educators' files: subject policy, policy documents, record of resources issued, lesson plans, annual teaching plan, personal time table, formal assessment and the learners' written work. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noted that all School Management Team members were involved in monitoring classes by all also doing class visits. It is noted that they during their class visits, they check both teacher and learner attendance by using attendance registers for both teachers and learners. In addition, it is highlighted that they also check period registers to ensure that teachers do go to classes and attend to their periods. Furthermore, it is emphatically noted that the principals played a leading role in regularly looking at learners' books, just to make sure how much homework and class works was given. As a result, that reflects a picture of what exactly is happening in class. This is highlighted by Mr. Siwa, the DH of Siwo Secondary school and by all the principals from four schools (Mr. Lang, Mr. Patyo, Mr. Siwele and Mrs. Tolo).

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noted that all the participants employed a variety of monitoring tools to check if teaching and learning were taking place in the classrooms. Also, the patterns of the data reflect that monitoring is one of the ways of managing teaching and learning. Furthermore, it is noted that principals make sure that all tools for monitoring teaching and learning are available. In addition, the patterns indicate that all SMT members and staff members must have monitoring tools and be explained to them. Besides, it is reflected from analysing of the patterns that principals have a responsibility to oversee that monitoring is taking place and all monitoring tools are available and are in an acceptable standard. This is highly featured in Langaz, Siwo and Toliz Secondary schools. The actions that are highlighted above indicate that the SMT members were going beyond the rhetoric of leadership in order to achieve success in their respective schools.

Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that attendance registers, period registers, class visits are some of the tools that were used for monitoring teaching and learning in rural secondary schools. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that classes are monitored. Also, it is noticed that period registers are given to class representatives to supervise them. It is noted that they supervise them by making sure that each teacher signs to period registers to make sure that he/she has attended the period. Furthermore, it is uncovered that attendance registers for both teachers and learners are used to ensure that both teacher and learner attended to the class. Also, attendance registers assist in monitoring both teacher and learner absenteeism. Moreover, it is indicated that SMT members monitor learning and teaching by visiting classes randomly for staff improvement. What was interesting in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noted that the participants took a conscious decision to use class observations (direct supervision), as another layer of monitoring or verifying what the DHs have submitted. In other words, physical visits were used to verify paper-based monitoring system. Also, it is indicated in analysing the patterns of the data that home works, class works, class tests and other forms of assessment should relate to Annual Teaching Plan (ATP). The argument for checking if home work, class work was done also to ensure that the ATP was being adhered to. This practice reflects the contention of scholars such as Mhlanga (2019) who emphasise the importance of monitoring as one of roles of the principal in managing teaching and learning. Moreover, it is noticed from the patterns of the data that all the participants in the four in rural secondary schools monitor teaching and learning by checking the pace of advancement in learning and teaching. Therefore, the above actions by SMT members are the signs of going beyond rhetoric leadership.

The notion of monitoring is supported by the research conducted by the Department of Basic Education evaluation unit on the high performing schools in Quintiles 2-4, in the National Senior Certificate revealed that the principals of these schools closely monitor the curriculum and that they work closely with their Departmental Heads (DBE, 2017). Furthermore, Mbokazi (2015) contends that successful principals in the three Soweto schools in which he conducted his research had focused on the curriculum management. They had undertaken the following activities; ensured that the teaching and learning support materials were available, had ensured that lesson plans were adhered to, monitored the work of the Departmental Heads by checking their work plans and portfolios and had given educators feedback after visiting them in their classes (Mbokazi, 2015). All what has been indicated above shows that SMT members go

beyond rhetoric leadership because they are essential for developing and maintaining effective school systems since school leadership in schools is highly dynamic and complex such that the progressive strategies are critical to turn the tide in the underperforming schools. As a result, the role of school leadership is essential in enhancing learning outcomes, especially in rural areas.

In line with the argument made in the paragraph above, this study has also endorsed the view that the school principals are the core for developing and maintaining school systems. Therefore, school leadership is essential in enhancing learning outcomes of schools in rural settings (Shava, Maradze & Ncube, 2021). Similarly, in supporting the latter scholars, Gwala (2021) confirms that school leadership plays a vital role in transforming both township and rural schools. Seemingly, there is some form of connection between the practices of the four principals (Langaz, Patoni, Siwole and Toliz) and the literature on the strategies for effective curriculum management that assist schools to achieve positive learning outcomes. This could have been some of the reasons why their schools have managed to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance from dysfunctionality to functionality and managed to sustain good performance. Therefore, SMT members were going beyond by setting the direction through monitoring as one of the strategies that are employed to manage teaching and learning (Mhlanga, 2019). Drawing from the arguments made by the proponents of setting the direction as one of the successful leadership practices (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2020; Uleanya, Khumalo, Momah & Ndlovu, 2019), I can argue that the School Management Team members in the current study were setting the direction for building a shared vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals and demonstrating high-performance expectations for effective curriculum delivery. Leadership practices that emphasise knowledge-driven allocation of duties to the teaching staff will be discussed below as another theme.

6.7 Leadership practices that emphasise knowledge-driven allocation of duties to the teaching staff

In analysing the data, it is noticed from the SMT members as participants that teaching and learning are indispensable main functions of the school. Furthermore, it is noticed that one of core responsibilities of SMT members is to manage teaching and learning in a school. Moreso, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that principals cannot execute this task alone; it is on that note they delegate supervision of teaching and learning to the SMT members. This finding supports the finding in a study conducted by Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and van Rooyen

(2010). Lazaridou and Lordanidis (2011) reported that the principals assigned teachers duties that were appropriate for their abilities. This is a way of showing that leadership plays a vital role in putting the school in order and paves the ability to achieve the aim and objectives of educational institutions which is success in terms of learner academic performance (Kamara, 2021). In addition, Mosoge and Mataboge (2021) contend that this shows a shift from top-down style of leadership to shared or distributed leadership which requires the empowerment of those in managerial positions in schools.

According to them the principal is expected to manage the school together with significant stakeholders (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2020). Furthermore, this is a way of empowering School Management Team members to execute instructional leadership (Mosoge & Mataboge, 2021). This is done to avoid the collapse of culture of teaching and learning (Weeks, 2012). According to the study conducted in the South African context, an important challenge is to practice instructional leadership so as to restore the culture of teaching and learning (Weeks, 2012). Therefore, it is from that perspective that principals should empower School Management Team members with instructional leadership by assigning duties to them (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2009). It is on that note, it is said that policy of the government requires principals to manage the school together with significant others including teachers, parents and, in some cases, learners. This makes it imperative for the principal to empower the management team in order to achieve synergy in his/her management (Mosoge & Mataboge, 2021). Scholars such as Heydari, Toorani and Ahghar (2021) contend that delegation of authority is another way to improve culture of teaching and learning in schools. In analysing the data, it is noticed that the principals from all four schools constantly follow-up teachers to whom they delegate authority. These principals were delegating authority to SMT members and teachers but without passing on the ultimate responsibility which has been entrusted to them by their own supervisors. This argument of delegation of authority is supported by a study conducted by Kongnyuy (2020) who contends that delegation of responsibilities is very essential for the success and efficient running of any institution.

In analysing the data, it is noticed that the SMT members were assigning duties among themselves and teachers for the purpose of accomplishing the success in the school in terms of learner academic performance. This is highly featured in Langaz, Patoni and Toliz Secondary. This argument is further supported by scholars such Aceke, Muola and Kimiti (2018) when they contend that in schools where the delegation of duties and responsibilities is done in a

professional way, the school performance improves. Aceke, Muola and Kimiti (2018) further argue that delegation of duties assists the principal in running the institution effectively though it may affect the subordinates negatively depending on how the process is done. In addition, the literature in many aspects centers around the principal as the person who must make sure that things are done in school including delegation (Heydari, Toorani & Ahghar, 2021; Kongnyuy, 2020; Mhlanga, 2019; Mosoge & Mataboge, 2021; Nzimande, 2019). Therefore, studies confirm that the principals' task is focusing more on improving the school education and learning and moving beyond every day administrative duties (Mhlanga, 2019).

In analysing the data, it is noticed that four participants from two participating schools Langaz and Toliz secondary confirm that in their schools, delegation makes people accountable and responsible because they know that they were given responsibility, so they must show that they can do the work. Similarly, it is noticed that the delegation is monitored. The argument of monitoring the delegation reflects the contention of scholars such as Kongnyuy (2020), when he contends that an effective manager must monitor a delegated task as to improve surbordinates' perfomance while also aclnowledging autonomy that accompanies delegation process. It is also noticed that although principals follow good leadership practices, there are challenges in practising effective leadership. Those challenges include some SMT members who do not have initial training to handle delegation in their schools. Therefore, they still need to attend workshops on delegation. This was highly featured in some school like Langaz and Siwo Secondary. In addition, practising effective leadership is supported by the study conducted by Mhlanga (2019) when she contends that although principals in rural contexts, generally followed good leadership practices but there were obstacles such as teachers who do not have initial training to handle real situations in such schools like relating to the interaction with families of learners. Some principals lack an understanding of the educational administration, compensatory education policy make some principal to be unhappy as they regard them as a barrier to effective leadership. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is observed that teamwork could lead to good performance because even if the principal is absent from school, teaching and learning will continue as usual. This was highlighted by the six participants from Langaz, Siwo and Patoni Secondary. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it was indicated that the distribution of work that leads to shared leadership creates a sense of ownership in terms of the efforts to improve learner performance.

Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the participants reflected contradicting views in terms delegating learners to control period registers. It was also noted that some schools prefer DHs in delegating to learners while others prefer teachers in delegating to learners. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that there is a belief that when the DHs delegate to learners in controlling period registers that resulted in the DHs better understanding and knowing what was taking place in class in terms of attendance. Furthermore, in analysing the data, it is indicated that the involvement of learners in controlling period registers may advance self-esteem for both teachers and learners. This is highly featured in some of the participants in three secondary schools, Langaz, Siwole and Toliz. It is indicated that what is actual taking place in these school is a decentralisation of power. This argument surrounding the notion of decentralisation of power in institutions is supported in the study conducted by Ahmad, Adnan, Hanafi and Qamaruddin (2020); Mosoge and Mataboge (2021) when they contend that principals are advised to shift from managing schools alone in an authoritarian manner. These scholars argue further that principals should shift from top-down approach of leadership to share leadership as a way of empowering other people in the institution. Similarly, Ralane (2020) argues that shifting from top-down style of leadership to shared leadership is another way of promoting accountability to others involved in the institution. Therefore, school leaders should be empowered because they are accountable for various aspects of administration such as proper financial control, curriculum management, discipline, monitoring and reporting to mention but a few.

Additionally, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noted that involving Representative Council of Learners (RCL) to mark period registers was another way of assigning duties that the SMT members used to make sure that teaching and learning were taking place and also to involve and empower learners to be part of the process of accounting for the teaching and learning in the classroom. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is observed that Representative Council of Learners are part of the leadership in schools as they represent learners. They are the ones who are the link between the School Governing Body (SGB), staff and learners. Furthermore, this also teaches the RCL responsibility and makes the learners observe that they are part and parcel of the school. The involvement of learners in the affairs of the school is supported by various scholars (Mosoge & Mataboge, 2021; Mhlanga, 2019; Ralane, 2020) as way of sharing leadership skills in the institution. It is another way of making learners accountable to other learners and accountable to the school at large (Ralane, 2020). Therefore, this improves unity in a school as SMT members, SGB members, staff and learners

work together to achieve the goals, which is effective teaching and learning. These findings imply that managing teaching and learning can lead the school to thrive if the stakeholders work together for the accomplishment of a common goal. This argument of working together with the stakeholders reflects the contention of scholars (see, Mhlanga, 12019; Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018; Mngomezulu, 2020; Myende & Nhlumayo, 2020; Nzimande, 2019) when they contend that strengthening and unwaveringly improving relationships and collaboration between parents and teachers is essential for personal and academic growth of learners.

6.8 Consulting with traditional leaders as a way of soliciting their support in school

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that consulting with traditional leaders concerning learner academic performance usually takes place within the department. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that Langaz, Patoni Secondary schools thought outside the box by consulting with the traditional leaders in terms of learner academic performance not only within the levels of the Department of Basic Education. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is not that after the two schools (Langaz and Patoni Secondary schools) as they twined to one another noticed that their schools are experiencing challenges such as lack of parental involvement, poor academic performance, burglary, and theft, they decided to consult with traditional leaders by giving regular feedback in terms of academic performance. SMT members decided to meet with traditional leaders. In their meeting with Traditional Leaders, it was resolved that they (traditional leaders) will be deeply involved in school activities such as attending to challenges such as poor academic performance, lack of parental involvement, burglary and theft the school faced with. Therefore, lack of parental involvement, poor academic performance, burglary and theft were all ddressed and the situation was improved. This is highly featured in Patoni Secondary school. In analysing the patterns of data, it is highly noticed that when the principal Mr Patyo observed that there are challenges such lack of parental involvement, poor learner academic performance, burglary and theft, he proposed meeting with the School Management Team members where he proposed to solicit support from traditional leaders by accounting to them in terms of learner academic performance. That was how Mr Patyo put it:

> *Noticing that the school experiences challenges such as lack of parental involvement, poor learner academic performance, burglary and theft, I proposed from the SMT meeting how would it be if solicit support from traditional leaders by accounting to them in terms of learner academic performance. I further stated that even challenges the*

school experiences can easily be mitigated. I further proposed the school to do accountability quarterly as we do within the school. The proposal was accepted and further referred to SGB members and staff members for approval. As a result, it was implemented.

This view of soliciting with Traditional Leaders was also featured in Patoni Secondary. The Deputy Principal Mr Pato, shared similar views with Mr Patyo. That is how Mr Pato put it:

Initially, I was not sure if the view from my principal will be understood by the traditional leader, Chief Dumasile since he was illiterate. Fortunately, I was one of the delegated members in forwarding the proposal. The way he was so happy and interested in the matter was so amazing. He said "Bendingaqondi ukuba nangona ndingafundanga ndibaluleke kangaka kwesi sikolo." I was not aware that although I am so illiterate, I am important in this school.

Similarly, it is noticed that the DH from Patoni Secondary Mrs Patoniza echoed similar views in terms of soliciting support from traditional leaders. That was how she put it:

Visiting the traditional authority for the first presentation on accountability together with my colleague another DH Mrs Patonela found that many people attended the meeting(Imbizo). Initially I thought that we will be presenting to the chief and his committee members only not the whole community. I started to tremble but later I became comfortable due to the warm reception from the chief. I introduced my colleague and the chief introduced us. We did the presentation on accountability for the first quarter. Furthermore, as school leaders, we forwarded the challenges the school faced with, such lack of parental involvement, poor learner academic performance, burglary and theft. The chief applauded us for the good work. He inspired and motivated us for the good work we did for the school and his community. He promised that the challenges faced by the school will be easily addressed if work as a team.

Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that another participant. Mr Siwele the Principal of Siwo Secondary school shared the above utterances on soliciting support from Traditional Leaders by accounting to them in terms of reporting academic performance quarterly. That is how he put it:

As my school intertwines with Patoni Secondary School, I discovered that he has beaten me in 2020 in terms of Grade 12 results. He got 95% and I got 80%. I asked his secret. He told me that as the principal you have to think outside the box. He told me that since

accountability is done within the department, he decided to account to Traditional
Leaders on learner academic performance. I followed suit. As I am talking now many
changes have taken place. For instance, crime in terms of burglary and theft have
decreased; learner attendance, parental involvement and learner academic
performance improved drastically.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is observed that Mrs. Tolo, the Principal of Toliz
Secondary, expressed the importance of showing positive and respect towards Traditional
Leaders as fundamentals in promoting parental involvement, promoting learner academic
performance and in mitigating challenges like burglary and theft. That was how she put it:

In showing positive attitude and respect towards traditional leaders made the school to
be able to promote parental involvement. As a result, learner academic performance
improved drastically. Furthermore, challenges like burglary and theft were mitigated
optimally.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the benefits of consulting with Traditional
Leaders which are parental involvement, promoting learner academic performance, curbing
crime like theft and burglary, learner discipline, poverty are uncovered. In analysing the patterns
of the data, it is noticed that before the consultation with traditional leaders there was a lack of
parental interest in their children's education. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as
du Plessis and Mestry (2019) when they contend that a lack of parental of interest in their
children's education can impact negatively teaching and learning as well learner academic
performance. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that after the schools were
consulting with traditional leaders, parent involvement improved because traditional leaders
were deeply involved in assisting the schools. As a result, parents attend their school meetings
regularly, learner absenteeism improved, learner extra- classes improved. This is highly featured
in Langaz Secondary school. Similar views on the importance of the involvement of parents are
expressed by scholars such as Mhlanga (2019); Musetha (2020); Nzimande (2019); Tobias
(2020) Torres (2020) contend that when parents are involved in their children's education among
other things, their children have the ability to better understand the activities that are undertaken
by the school because among other things, their parents reinforce the material that is used in the
school.

Secondly, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that learner academic performance
improved because parents and the Traditional Leaders worked, hand with the schools. As a

result, school community-partnership was enhanced. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Myende and Nhlumayo (2020); Myende (2018) and Ncwane (2019) when they contend that enhancing parent-teacher collaboration and creating functional school-community partnership is vital in achieving high learner academic performance, particularly in rural schools.

Thirdly, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the prevalence of crime which is theft and burglary was curbed through the consultation with traditional leaders. This is highly featured in Langaz Secondary schools. Schools working together with traditional leaders formed committees that include members from parents, community members delegated by Traditional Leaders, community policing forums (CPFs) went around to get the culprits when theft and burglary have been committed. When the culprits were caught, they were brought to the court of law. That has resulted in the schools where Traditional Leaders are involved, to be free from crime. Scholars concur with some issues such as the mitigating of crime such as theft and burglary (Mhlanga, 2019; Nzimande, 2019).

Fourthly, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the involvement of Traditional Leaders lessened poverty. Poverty has an influence in multiple deprived schools. Similar views on the influence of poverty in multiple deprived schools are expressed by scholars such as De Lisle, Annisette and Brown-Williams (2019). This is highly featured in Patoni Secondary school. Patoni Secondary school has a river passing the school. The school used that river to develop a project to plant vegetables and for piggery. The school had a problem of theft and burglary but after the school ivolved traditional leaders, that came to an end. There were also projects in the communities around led by the traditional leaders. These projects both at school and the communities around the school, played an important role in alleviating poverty in both the school and the surrounding communities. Similar views on alleviating poverty are expressed by scholars (Ncwane, 2019; Mhlanga, 2019).

Fifthly, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that Traditional Leaders played an important role in learner discipline although sometimes there were no adherence to the law pertaining to the execution of the law, but the involvement of Traditional Leaders in learner discipline minimise the acts of ill-discipline. This is highly featured in Patoni Secondary school. The involvement of Traditional Leaders in school activities made learners to be disciplined in school. As a result, the attendance of extra-classes improved drastically. Similar views on learner discipline involving Traditional leaders are expressed by scholars such as Mngomezulu

(2020). in soliciting support from traditional leaders, you must introduce yourself from the traditional leaders after you have been appointed as a principal to that particular school. This is highly featured in Langaz Secondary. Mr Lang revealed that by the time he was appointed as a principal in Langaz Secondary he found it relevant to introduce himself to the local traditional leader as a newly appointed principal. As a result, that assisted him a lot because the annual general meeting (AGM) in that particular year after his arrival was a great according the teachers and some parents who were present in that meeting. According to Mr Lang, he assumed duties in that school in October and there was a school which was going to be opened in the following year. That school was going to be great competitor to his school. This means that to introduce himself to the local Traditional Leader because at the beginning of the following year the learner enrolment increased as compared with previous years. The opening of that well-resourced school had no impact on learner enrolment.

Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is observed that accountability usually takes place within the department. On the other hand, it was noticed from the analysis of the patterns of the data that some schools think outside the box by accounting to traditional leaders in terms of learner academic performance not only within the Department of Basic Education. As a result, that had led to, in their schools, having traditional leaders fully involved in school activities. Therefore, in analysing the patterns of the data it was uncovered that criminality had been minimised. The data further indicated that crime in terms of burglary, theft and rape decreased drastically because traditional leaders and schools were working together. Traditional leaders and the community ended up owning the school and protecting it against criminals. It had emerged from the interviews with the participants that the traditional leader showed a great appreciation for the school to account to him in terms of presenting learner performance quarterly even though according to him, he did not deserve that due to his illiteracy. Furthermore, it emerged from the participants that showing positive attitude and respect towards traditional leaders resulted in the improvement of parental involvement which was rare. Therefore, learner academic performance which was a challenge, improved drastically. Also, it emerged from the participants that burglary and theft which were the challenges, were mitigated successfully.

In the literature I reviewed the tendency of principals visiting Traditional Leaders to introduce themselves after they have been appointed as principals has not been articulated. Similarly, in the literature I reviewed there are no schools that consult with Traditional Leaders quarterly for

learner academic performance. Quarterly accountability in terms of learner academic performance is done within the hierarchy of the Department. When principals introduced themselves to traditional leaders after they have been employed as new principals in those schools and their strategy of accounting to traditional leaders quarterly in terms of learner academic performance was a way of thinking and acting outside the box because that is not stipulated in school regulations. Similar views on thinking and acting outside the box are expressed by scholars such as Makhasane, Simamane and Chikoko (2018). The literature shows that sometimes as a leader you may not be consistent to rules and regulations if they may not lead you to the success of what you intend to achieve but you may deviate from rules and regulations for operational purposes (Makhasane, Simamane & Chikoko, 2018). The only thing that is usualy happening in school is the involvement of stakeholders since there is a need for all stakeholders' involvement in the education area to achieve quality education (Akintolu & Uleanya, 2020). The literature shows that traditional leaders are invited by schools as agents of development (Carlson & Seim, 2018) and for the purpose of sharing the vision of the school (Makhasane, Simamane & Chikoko, 2018). Furthermore, they play an important role in delivering social policies to poor people (Bender, Kinuthia, Schuring, Ikua & Pouw, 2021). Therefore, traditional leadership is regarded as a central component of African thought (Bhuda, Marumo & Motswaledi, 2021). As a result, it is from that perspective that traditional leaders are advised to stay in development of their societies and stay out of politics (Logan & Katenda, 2021). Moreso, the literature shows that the partnership with communities is vital but for partnerships to be sustainable and functional it is essential to ensure that there is effective two-way communication, eagerness to address power issues, collaborative planning and decision-making, and the creation of a culture that promotes participative leadership to mention but a few (Myende, 2018). Seemingly, these are fundamentals for partnerships to be sustainable and functional. Furthermore, the literature uncovers that the principal's leadership is only critical at the beginning stage of partnerships, and teacher leadership is central in the continuity and functionality of partnerships (Myende, 2018; Myende & Nhlumayo, 2020). Seemingly, principal and teachers' leadership are essential for the functionality of partnerships.

On the other hand, the literature shows that there are still challenges in involving stakeholders such as a lack of parental interest in children's education in rural areas (du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Similarly, Tobias (2020) argues that in some instances, parental involvement is low because the majority of teachers and parents have a wrong understanding of what is parental involvement in pupils' academic performance. Furthermore, parental occupations are also

regarded as having a deep consequence on the academic assistance of their children because their nature affects the attention they give to their children especially in their studies (Malik, Rafique & Qayyum, 2020). Therefore, the literature suggests that in order for educators to increase parental involvement and to better improve student success, teachers need proper training and assistance on different methods they can use to increase parental involvement (Torres, 2020).

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the strategy of the principals in introducing themselves to the traditional leaders after they have been employed as new leaders in such schools and the strategy to account quarterly to traditional leaders in terms of leaner academic performance improved parental involvement and school-community partnerships drastically. The SMT members were going beyond rhetoric leadership by introducing themselves to the Traditional Leaders after they have been appointed as new leaders in such schools and to introduce the strategy to account quarterly to them (traditional leaders) in terms learner academic performance. Therefore, this was a way of soliciting support from them even in terms of leadership and otherwise.

6.9 Instructional leadership practices of SMT members working together with Traditional Leaders in achieving success in rural secondary schools in O.R. Tambo Coastal District in Eastern Cape Province

In this section, I look at how the scholars define instructional leadership. Secondly, I look at how School Management Team members' instructional leadership practices connect with Traditional Leadership so as to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance in rural secondary schools. Thirdly, I look at the common elements between instructional leadership practices of SMT members from the data and peak the leadership practices that talk to instructional leadership theory.

Instructional leadership has been defined in various way by different scholars. However, at the centre of their definitions is the focus on teaching and learning by the leaders at various levels within the schools. In this regard, Sim (2011) argues that teaching and learning has to do with leadership with a special bias for effective curriculum delivery. Leaders do this by guiding teachers on various aspects of the curriculum and pedagogical matter. One of the issues to highlight about Sim's (2011) definition is its focus on teaching and learning processes and minimum focus on learning. On the other hand, scholars such as Lubis, Dewi, Pristanti,

Dalimunthe and Sagala (2021) emphasise that instructional leadership practices are still focused in order to carry out school routines, not on learning innovations or other academic outcome routines. While not disagreeing with the other instructional leadership researchers, Southworth (2009) views instructional leadership as that kind of leadership that focuses on learner centred leadership. In this respect, instructional leadership should focus on learning and teachers should teach and learn simultaneously. This perspective to teaching and learning is refreshing in that it avoids a one directional notion of teaching and the teachers is the knower of it all and does not learn. Southworth's (2009) position is consistent with the notion of teachers being life-long learners as they are both teachers and learners. In the data, I see this idea although on a very small scale. Teachers at Patoni and Toliz Secondary Schools learn from one another in cases where there are knowledge gaps.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that SMT members took into considerations their personal values, beliefs, knowledge and their experiences as sources of differences in leadership practice. Based on their beliefs, knowledge, and experiences they used some strategies to develop the school vision and mission statement. Such strategies include the involvement of other stakeholders from the early stages in the development of living school vision in order to ensure that the school had a shared living school vision. Their belief was to embrace support and to ensure that the vision is effectively implemented. This is highly featured in Langaz, Patoni and Siwo Secondary schools. The instructional leadership theory mdel by Hallinger also acknowledges the personal values, beliefs, knowledge, and the experiences of instructional leaders as sources of a variance in leadership practices (Hallinger, 2011). He emphasises that instructional leaders have to understand their personal values, beliefs, knowledge and their experiences as sources of differences in leadership practice. The model highlights the role of values in shaping leadership. Values define both the ends towards which leaders aspire as well as the desirable means by which they will work to achieve them (Hallinger, 2011). Consequently, every school has a mix of values that shape the day-to-day behaviour of School Management Team members, the teachers, the learners and non-teaching staff regardless of whether the leaders are aware of or seek to impact them (Barth, 1990). Furthermore, values both shape the thinking and the actions of the leaders, in this case, SMT members and represent a potentially useful tool for working with and strengthening the school's learning culture. Therefore, their understanding of personal values, knowledge and beliefs would acquaint them in understanding the values, beliefs, knowledge and experiences of their counterparts and stakeholders in order to achieve success through instructional leadership practices in rural

contexts. This will enable the SMT members as instructional leaders to achieve their complex role in rural context. This is affirmed by the literature. For instance, Mkhize (2017) affirms that principals as instructional leaders in deprived environments adapt to contextual realities in an effort to promote effective teaching and learning. Consequently, Adaptive Leadership Theory also acknowledges that inputs and outputs that shape leadership approaches are not linear (Heifers, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). In addition, other scholars such as Mulford and Silins (2009) and Leithwood, Patten and Jantzi (2010) attest that instructional leaders operate in an "open space" that consists not only of the community, but also of the institutional system and societal culture. Therefore, scholars such as Heifetz and Laurie (2011) affirm that the role of instructional leader is to systematise energy, resources, and creativity to adapt to a particular situation.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that initially, some principals were reluctant in involving parents in developing vision and mission statement of the school, stating that the parents are illiterate. As a result, they cannot be in a position to make fruitful deliberations due to their rural environment. It is noticed that the principals argue that it is easy for them to develop vision and mission statement on behalf of the parents. After robust debates, the staff meeting agreed with the principal. As a result, the school continued to underperform. After noticing that the underperformance in the school continues, the Department of Basic Education intervened by advising them to address the challenge by involving stakeholders. The challenge was clear and was easily defined and the solution was known. It was as lack of stakeholders' involvement in developing vision and mission statement. This in line with Adaptive Leadership Theory which acknowledges that there are challenges that are technical and these challenges are easily defined and have solutions (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that after the challenge of not involving stakeholders was addressed, learner academic performance improved drastically. These schools, Langaz, Patoni, Siwo and Toliz Secondary are among the schools that perform high learner academic performance in rural context of O.R. Tambo Coastal District in Eastern Cape Province.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that Toliz Secondary school initiated another strategy of accounting to tradtional leaders quarterly for learner results in terms of learner academic performance. There was a robust debate when the principal of the school Mrs. Tolo proposed this view as the strategy that can assist the school in many folds such as learner discipline, in reducing crime such theft and burglary. Some members of the SMT did not accept

the view, stating that will mean the school is acting outside the law. Noticing that the meeting is in high degree of heat and there is no consensus among SMT members. she adjourned the meeting giving a chance to the members and to herself to critically observe, interpret and find ways to intervene in the next meeting. This is line with Adaptive Leadership Theory where scholars such as Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) contend that it is well informed to first observe the situation and interpret it as to get informed strategies that would assist to getting to well informed intervention to the surfacing situation. In addition, the strategy of adjourning the meeting as to give a chance to herself to observe, interpret as to get informed means of intervening in a challenging situation reflects the contention of scholars such as Heifetz and Linsky (2017) when they contend that getting off the dance floor and going to the balcony is a way of maintaining the capacity for reflection. Therefore, by adjourning the meeting she was giving herself a chance to observe what was taking place in the meeting as to carefully interpret the meeting situation as to employ informed strategies for intervention so as to achieve success in her view of accounting quarterly to taditional leaders for learner results in terms of their academic performance. Similarly, she was maintaining her capacity for reflection.

In the following meeting, in convincing the SMT members, the principal explained that the community members in these rural communities are loyal to their traditional leaders. She noticed that when she visits some traditional activities in the community such as *'Imigubho yamantombazana', 'Imigidi yamakhwenkwe'*. She further explained that traditional leaders deserve to be respected in their places such as rural areas. She further explained that since she arrived in this community, she never heard about crime committed in traditional laders place. That proves that people are loyal to traditional leaders. This argument of being loyal to Traditional Leaders reflects the contention of scholars such as Heifetz and Ronald (1994) when they contend that people routinely call leaders those who achieve high positions of authority even though, on reflection, they readily acknowledge the frequent lack of leadership they deserve. Therefore, by accounting to them quarterly by informing them about the learner performance in their traditional places, that would assist the school in getting their help in mitigating the challenges that are faced by the school. Finally, SMT members unanimously agreed on the view. Also, the view was taken to the staff meeting. The principal used the similar strategy she used in the meeting with SMT members because it was not easy for staff members to accept the view. What actually assisted the SMT members was to first convince Site Committee members from different unions. As a result, the proposal was accepted by staff members. Finally, the view was taken to School Governing Body and thereafter to parents

meeting and was accepted after robust debates. The SMT members took the view to traditional leaders and the view was warmly accepted. As a result, late coming by both teachers and learners decreased, school attendance in both school and in extra-classes, and learner discipline improved. Poverty and crime such as theft and burglary came to minimal. Learner academic performance improved dramatically in Toliz Secondary school. All the other three schools, Langaz, Patoni and Siwo Secondary twined with Toliz Secondary. These three schools also follow suit in terms of accounting to Traditional Leaders quarterly in terms of learner performance.

The literature I reviewed, highlights the role of values in shaping leadership (Mkhize, 2017). Furthermore, it is also noticed that values define both the ends towards which we aspire as well as the desirable means by which they will work to achieve them (Hallinger, 2011). Furthermore, scholars such as Barth (1990) contend that in every school there is mix of values that shape the day-to-day behaviour of the people that include principals, teachers, non-teaching staff and the learners regardless of if the leaders are aware of them. Values both shape the thinking and the actions of leaders and represent a potentially useful tool for working with and strengthening the school's culture. Therefore, in my view, SMT members working together with Traditional Leaders in a particular school, values would both shape the thinking and the actions of both of them as leaders. Similarly, instructional leadership practices of SMT members were strengthened by working together with Traditional Leaders. As a result, setting the direction, managing teaching, developing people and redesigning the organisation improved drastically because working together with Traditional leaders mitigated rural challenges that previously impacted rural schools in O.R. Tambo Coastal District.

6.10 Conclusion

Chapter Six has identified patterns in the data and identified similarities and differences between the participants and also between the research sites. These patterns emerged from the descriptive data that was presented extensively in Chapter Five about the SMT members in four secondary schools. It has emerged from the analysis that the SMT members expressed strong beliefs in the values, knowledge and experiences as playing a critical role in shaping the enactment of successful leadership in their rural contexts. The next chapter presents the findings of the whole thesis and also indicates some implications for various stakeholders and knowledge production endeavours.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ENACTMENT OF SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS IN THE CONTEXT OF RURALITY: LESSONS LEARNED

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has provided a second level analysis which included the injection of literature that I had reviewed in Chapter Two. That chapter focused on mapping the patterns in the qualitative data so that I could obtain a comprehensive picture about what was emerging regarding the SMT members' leadership practices in the four secondary schools. The discussion also included the theories that I had presented in Chapter Three. In this chapter, I present the findings of the study. In presenting the findings, I begin the chapter by summarising the whole thesis, focusing on the content of each chapter. Having done that, I restate the research question that underpin this study. These questions were posed in Chapter One as well as in Chapter Five as an attempt to remind the readers about what drove the data generation for the thesis. What follows thereafter, is the presentation of the findings and these findings are presented as themes generated from the research questions. The themes are used as headings that organise the discussion of the findings. This makes it easier for me as the author to assess the extent to which the data supporting the findings speak directly to the research questions. Towards the end of the chapter, I give the implications of the study for further research and other stakeholders. Other researchers use the concept of recommendations. I do not like the use the concept of recommendations because, as Mkhize (2017) put it, it gives an impression that one is prescribing for other stakeholders what they should or should not do.

7.2 Synthesis of the whole study

This study sought to explore and understand successful leadership practices and experiences of School Management Team members in the four schools in the O.R. Tambo Coastal District. My initial review of literature had highlighted what constitutes successful leadership practices and how such practices impacted on academic performance of learners. That is why this study focused on understanding how participants had managed to achieve success in their rural secondary schools despite rural challenges posed by the environment in and around the schools.

Like many rural communities in South Africa, these communities faced enormous socio-economic challenges such as poverty, high levels of unemployment and child-headed household phenomenon. High levels of crime also added to these challenges. Therefore, the study focused on leadership strategies that School Management Team members employed to mitigate the challenges posed by the environments within which their rural secondary schools are situated.

In introducing the study in Chapter One, I attempted to paint a picture about our education system and rurality, as well as how such factors combined to disturb the schools' operations and achievement of the set goals. The background to understanding the research problem is presented in the first chapter. The rationale and the purpose of the study are also presented in that chapter. The research questions driving the study are also presented. I then move on to map out the terrain of scholarship that focuses on leadership generally, and successful or effective leadership in particular. Both the national and the international literature is cited in that regard. The third chapter discusses the two theories that provide a framework for the study. This is followed by the methodological discussion which is contained in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter provides a descriptive analysis, while the sixth one presents a theoretical analysis. In that analysis, I also inject literature to enhance the analysis. The seventh chapter is the last chapter, and it presents the findings and implications of those findings.

7.3 Research questions re-stated

This is the last chapter, and as such, I thought it prudent that I restate the research questions that underpinned the study. The three research questions that drove this study are:

- How do School Management Team members in selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape describe and explain their successful leadership practices?
- What are key factors that underpin successful leadership practices of the School Management Team members in the selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape?
- Why do School Management Team members in selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape enact leadership practices the way they do?

These key questions are used as key themes to organise the presentation and discussion of the research findings.

7.3.1 How the School Management Team members in the selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape, describe and explain their successful leadership practices

The first finding from the qualitative data presented in the previous two chapters is that the School Management Team members set the standards to be achieved. These standards are reflected in the goals that teaching and learning must achieve. Also, the SMT members have devised steps to achieve those standards by for instance, closely monitoring the work of the DHs. The DHs supervise the work of the teachers within their respective departments. As part of supervising the work of the Departmental Heads' work, school principals did the verification of the work of DHs through class visits. In other words, when the principals conduct class visits, they do it for two reasons; first, it is for verification purposes of what the DHs is recorded and also to monitor teaching and learning by visiting classes randomly for staff improvement. What was interesting in analysing the data, it is noted that the participants' principals took a conscious decision to use class observations (direct supervision), as another layer of monitoring to verify what the DHs have submitted on paper is actually what they do in practice in the classroom. The Principal or Deputy Principal will physically visit the class having the tools that have been submitted by the DH for close monitoring. The Principal or Deputy Principal will be looking at the tool previously submitted by the DH to verify if what he or she is doing in monitoring teaching and learning is really what is written on the monitoring tool he or she submitted. In other words, physical visits were used to verify paper-based monitoring system.

The literature I reviewed does not address all the four aspects I have spoken about here. It addresses two aspects which is setting the direction and closely monitoring of DHs' supervision. It does not address the notion of verifying the work of DHs through class visits. Principals or Deputy Principals visit classes for the purpose of verifying if the monitoring of DHs'supervision is related to their (DHs) paper-based monitoring system. The literature is unequivocal on the view that setting the direction is fundamental to the work of a leader in ensuring that the school thrives (Ramatseba, 2012; Uleanya, Khumalo, Momah & Ndlovu, 2019). It is from this perspective that the school leaders develop a clear, common goals and purpose, and direct the work of the educators, motivating them for effectiveness, which ensures that distractions are minimised (Bhengu, 2019; Robinson, 2011). Furthermore, the principal and other SMT members ensured that the work was covered. The Principals, Deputy Principals and DHs monitored

teaching and learning through class visits (Mkhize, 2017; Nzimande, 2019). This finding is consistent with the literature which talks about monitoring teachers regarding the coverage of the syllabus by checking the Annual Teaching Plan to make sure that teachers are not behind syllabus (Mhlanga, 2019). In this regard, the readers can get more details about what I am saying can be found in Section 5. 3. 3 of Chapter Five. This is highly featured in Toliz, Secondary school. As a result, learner academic performance improved radically. That was how Mrs Tolo the Principal of Toliz put it:

> *There are period registers in different classes. These period registers are given to class representatives. Each and every teacher signs this register to ensure that she/he has attended his/her periods. It further indicates how much time he/she spent in that particular class for that period. Furthermore, I and my Deputy Principal adhere to close monitoring where we do random class visits to verify what was written on the paper by DHs were consistent to what they were doing practically in monitoring teaching and learning in class.*

Therefore, the findings suggest that there is a relationship between physical visits and paper-based monitoring system. As a result, that collegiality may be regarded as one of the elements that assist in achieving success in terms of learner academic performance in rural settings of the Eastern Cape.

This study has also found that School Management Team members attribute successful leadership practices among other things, to their quarterly consultations with traditional leadership structures as a way of accounting quarterly directly to traditional leaders in terms of learner academic performance. It is through such consultations that schools get the opportunity to apprise Traditional Leaders about what is happening in the schools. It is not all four participating schools that held such quarterly consultation sessions; this was initiated by the Principal of Toliz, Secondary School. When he initially spoke to the SMT and staff about these consultations, there was a robust debate among the SMT members and the staff members in the schools, but this leadership practice was finally implemented even in other schools such as Langaz, Patoni and Siwo Secondary. On the hand, this initiative was warmly accepted by Traditional Leaders. As a result, a school-community partnership especially the stakeholder involvement in school activities improved drastically. Consequently, these schools were among the other schools that were achieving success in terms of learner academic performance in the rural setting of O. R. Tambo Coastal District. Therefore, accounting to Traditional Leaders quarterly in terms of learner academic performance can be regarded as one of the strategies that

assisted in cementing relationship between school and traditional leaders in schools in the participating schools in the rural setting of Eastern Cape.

This study found that School Management Team members described and explained successful leadership practices among other things, as a way whereby the newly appointed principals physically go to the traditional leaders to introduce themselves as additional members to the communities where traditional leaders reign. This strategy was initially introduced by Toliz, Secondary School. The other schools followed suit after they twined with Toliz, Secondary School. This is featured in Toliz Secondary. According to Mrs, Tolo, the Principal of Toliz, Secondary, this resulted in improved relationship between the Traditional Leadership structure and the schools concerned. As a result, challenges such as the lack of parental involvement in the affairs of the schools, learner absenteeism, crime such as theft and burglary were minimised. Also, that gave the SMT members an opportunity to be shaped by cultural values of traditional leaders such as customs which are trade and rituals; values, which are beliefs; and culture, which is all of a group's guiding values. That allowed their school values such as integrity, innovation, collaboration, team work, passion, diversity, excellence, leadership, a sense of community to be influenced by traditional leaders where the participating schools are located. Therefore, that enabled both the SMT members and traditional leaders to minimise challenges such as crime in terms of theft and burglary, learner absenteeism, learner ill-discipline, late coming in schools by both teachers and learners, to mention a few. In addition, learner academic performance improved in participating schools as all relevant stakeholders collaborated in dealing with whatever challenge that the schools faced as they all regarded them as community challenges.

7.3.2 The key factors that underpin successful leadership practices of the School Management Team members in selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape

The key factors that underpin successful leadership practices of the School Management Team members such as bringing the school to the community and the community to the school, enhanced collaboration between the schools and various stakeholders and accountability, cementing and strengthening relationships with the community are discussed below.

7.3.2.1 Bringing the school to the community and the community to the school

Previous studies have indicated that when the community and the schools work together, there was improved learner academic performance and also that where these two key stakeholders did not work collaboratively the opposite was true. The findings in this study suggest that the SMT members had succeeded in bringing the school to the community and vise versa. Realising how the community revered their traditional leadership structures, the SMT members, particularly the principals initiated a process of enticing traditional leaders to the schools. This theme is closely related to the first I discussed in the previous section where I spoke about consultation sessions with traditional leaders. The consultation with traditional leaders was initiated by schools by visiting the traditional leaders after experiencing rural challenges in order to curb them. For instance, there was poor relationship between the schools and the community at large. Among other things, the parents were dragging their feet in attending parents' meetings. As a result, among other things, the participating schools were experiencing poor performance in terms of learner academic performance. There was a lack of parental involvement. In addition, the schools experienced high rates of crime in terms of theft of school property and burglary, learner discipline and the prevalence of poverty to mention a few.

In analysing the the data, it became clear that there are many benefits of consulting with Traditional Leaders. The benefits are as follows; parental involvement improved, learner ill-discipline improved, school-community partnership improved, learner academic performance also improved. Parental involvement improved after the school consulted with Traditional Leaders. Previously, there was a lack of parental involvement. As a result, the schools experienced learner absenteeism, poor learner attendance in school attendance in all school activities such as extra-classes. The parents' meetings attendance improved drastically. The cooperation between the schools and parents improved because most of the parents were loyal to Traditional Leaders. Parents played an important role in making sure that their children attended school on a regular basis and they also attend extra-classes regularly. The literature has indicated that where parents took part in assisting their children in doing their class works and other school activities, their performance also improved. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that when parents are involved in their children's education among other things, their children have the ability to better understand the activities that are undertaken by the school

because among other things their parents are able to reinforce the material that is used in the school.

This argument of the importance of parental involvement reflects the contention of scholars such as Akter (2020); Berkowitz, Astor, Pineda, DePedro, Weiss and Benbenishty (2021), Leander and Fabel (2020), Matshe (2014), Tan, Lyu and Pen (2020) and Western (2020) when they contend that parental involvement is positively associated with academic performance and that there is a need for parents to work with schools and be involved in their children's learning. These scholars further state that parental involvement in rural public schools in South African education is viewed with mixed feelings from interested and affected groups to the learners in the classrooms, some feel that it is a waste of time and educational issues is the prerogative of professionals and must be left as such (Berkowitz et al., 2021; Leander & Fabel, 2020). Furthermore, these scholars further argue that parental involvement is regarded as playing a significant role in the children's emotional, social developmental, and academic school functioning. Emphasising the importance of parental involvement, Ugwuanyi, Okeke and Njeze (2020) argue that parental support and parenting style play significant roles in learner performance especially in critical subjects such as Physical Science and Mathematics. Therefore, adequate parental support should be provided to learners for academic achievement (Ugwuanyi et al., 2020).

The findings about the importance of parental involvement in the children's education in consistent with the previous findings. For instance, literature shows that there are still challenges in involving stakeholders, such as a lack of parental interest in children's education especially in rural areas (du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Similarly, Tobias (2020) argues that in some instances parental involvement is low because the majority of teachers and parents have a wrong understanding of what is parental involvement in pupils' academic performance. Furthermore, parental occupations are also regarded as having a deep consequence on the academic assistance of their children because their nature affects the attention they give to their children especially in their studies (Malik, Rafique & Qayyum, 2020). Therefore, the literature suggests that in order for educators to increase parental involvement and to better improve student success, teachers need the proper training and assistance on different methods they can use to increase parental involvement (Torres, 2020).

The second benefit for working with Traditional Leaders is that learner ill-discipline improved. These schools experienced learner ill-discipline before working with Traditional Leaders. Also, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that Traditional Leaders played an important role in learner discipline although sometimes there was no adherence to the law pertaining to the execution of the law because sometimes the Traditional Leaders acted inconsistently with the law when it comes to disciplining the learners because they were executing corporal punishment. Nevertheless, the involvement of traditional leaders in learner discipline minimised the acts of ill-discipline. This is highly featured in Patoni Secondary School. The involvement of Traditional Leaders in the school activities made learners to be discipline in school. As a result, the attendance of extra-classes improved drastically.

Thereafter, leaner ill- discipline improved after these schools worked hand in hand with Traditional Leaders. Previously, these schools experienced smoking of dagga by leaners. As a result, among other things they were unable to attend extra-classes such as morning classes, afternoon classes and weekend classes. They were coming late to school. Learner absenteeism, bullying, drug abuse and fights among learners were daily occurences in the four participating schools. To curb this bad behaviour, the schools together with the representatives from Traditional Leadership enhanced school disciplinary committees. Therefore, the involvement of Traditional Leaders in the maintenance of learners' discipline in schools led to the alleviation of challenges such as learner absenteeism, bullying, drug abuse and fights. In supporting the important role played by Traditional Leaders in maintaining learner indiscipline in school, the literature reveals that traditional leaders' influence in communities does not appear to be a criterion that is significant enough to earn traditional leaders' positions in the SGB. The argument on leaner discipline reflects the contention of scholars such as Mngomezulu (2020) when he contends that when major disciplinary challenges arise in school and the SGBs have exhausted all other avenues, principals did not hesitate to approach the traditional leadership for a solution.

The third benefit was that school-community partnership improved. Since these communities were loyal and respectful to their Traditional Leaders that made them (communities) to be more cooperative with schools. This means that the relationship between the schools and traditional leaders gave vivacity to the communities to work hand in hand with the participating schools. Therefore, the school-community partnership improved drastically. The communities where these participating were located, ended up positively deeply involved in school activities such

as school donations, assisting the schools in sports activities, traditional dancing to mention a few. Similar views are expressed by scholars such as Myende (2018) and Ncwane (2019) when they contend that school-community is one of the means to address challenges that schools cannot address alone. Furthermore, the literature reveals that for the partnership to be sustainable and functional there is a need among other things to ensure that there is collaborative planning, eagerness to address power issues, decision making, the creation of a culture that promotes participative leadership (Myende, 2018). Myende (2013) contends that school-community partnership can be sustained through effective communication. Therefore, in my view, these participating schools achieved school-community partnership with their communities through convincing communication with the communities. Therefore, convincing communication by School Management Team members can be regarded as one of the successful leadership practices that brought the school to the community and the community to the school. This successful leadership practices made the participating schools to achieve school-community partnership with their communities. Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that learner academic performance improved because parents and the traditional leaders worked hand in hand with the schools. As a result, school community-partnership was enhanced. In analysing the patterns of the data, it was observed that enhancing parent-teacher collaboration and creating functional school-community partnership which is vital in achieving high learner academic performance, especially in rural schools. That was as a result of consulting with traditional leaders. Therefore, through that school-community partnership the participating schools were able to achieve success in terms of academic performance in rural setting in the O.R. Tambo Coastal District in Eastern Cape Province.

The fourth benefit was the alleviation of crime in participating schools. In addition, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the prevalence of crime which is theft and burglary was a daily occurrence. Cellular phones were easily grabbed from learners in school, with culprits using knives to intimidate the learners. Crime was curbed through the consultation with Traditional leaders. This is highly featured in Langaz, Secondary school. Schools working together with traditional leaders formed committees that include members from parents, community members delegated by traditional leaders, community policing forums (CPFs) to go around to get the culprits when theft and burglary have been committed. When the culprits have been caught, they would be brought to the court of law. That has resulted in the schools where Traditional Leaders are involved to be free from crime. The argument of addressing crime reflects the contention of scholars such as Nzimande (2019) when he contends in addressing

crime among other things the school invites the Department of Community Safety and Liaison to provide support concerning crime. Similarly, Mngomezulu (2020) contends that among things in addressing crime, the government has made attempts to involve Traditional Leaders in the maintenance of order and protection of life and property in areas under the jurisdiction of Traditional Leaders. Furthermore, according to Mngomezulu (2020), Section 20(2) of KwaZulu Traditional leadership and Governance Act 5 of 2005 provides for Amakhosi to protect life, persons and property and report to the relevant department in government or other relevant authorities (KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, 2005). Therefore, Traditional Leaders play a vital role in addressing challenges such as crime in rural setting of O. R. Tambo Coastal Disrict.

The fifth benefit of the school as a result of involving Traditional Leaders was the alleviation of poverty. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that the involvement of Traditional Leaders lessened poverty. Poverty has an influence in multiple deprived schools. Similar views on the influence of poverty in multiple deprived schools are expressed by scholars such as De Lisle, Annisette and Brown-Williams (2019). This is highly featured in Patoni Secondary School. Patoni Secondary school has a river passing the school. The school used that river to develop a project to plant vegetables and for piggery. The school had a problem of theft and burglary but after the school involved traditional leaders, that came to an end. There were also projects in the communities led by the traditional leaders. These projects both at school and the communities around the school played an important role in alleviating poverty in both the school and the surrounding communities. Similar views on alleviating poverty are expressed by scholars such as Ncwane (2019, Nzimande (2019), Mhlanga (2019) when they contend that in alleviating poverty some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which work closely with the Department of Health sometimes also assist the learners with food parcels. In addition, these scholars argue that poverty as one of the external factors can adversely have an influence on teaching and learning. Similarly, scholars such as Day, Gu and Sammons (2016) argue that schools located in highly deprived communities with socio-economic disadvantages such as poverty, confronted a wider multiplicity of staffing and retention difficulties, poverty related issues to mention few compared to those in more advantaged communities.

In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that before the consultation with Traditional Leaders there was a lack of parental interest in their childrens' education. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that a lack of parental interest in their childrens's education impacted negatively teaching and learning as well learner academic performance. In analysing

the patterns of the data, it is noticed that after the schools were consulting with traditional leaders, parent involvement improved because traditional leaders were deeply involved in assisting the schools. As a result, parents attend their school meetings regularly, learner absenteeism decreased and attendance of extra- classes improved.

It is emerged from the data that in soliciting support from traditional leaders, you must introduce yourself to the Traditional Leaders after you have been appointed as a principal to that particular school. This is highly featured in Langaz Secondary. Mr Lang revealed that by the time he was appointed as a principal in Langaz Secondary he found it relevant to introduce himself to the local Traditional Leader as a newly appointed principal. As a result, that assisted him a lot because the annual general meeting (AGM) in that particular year after his arrival was great, according to the teachers and some parents that were present in that meeting. According to Mr. Lang, he assumed duties in that school in October and there was a school which was going to be opened in the following year. That school was going to be a great competitor to his school. This means that to introduce himself to the local traditional leader played a vital role, because at the beginning of the following year the learner enrolment increased as compared with previous years. The opening of that well-resourced school had no impact on learner enrolment. Therefore, the leadership practice that was employed by School Management Team members, particularly the principal of introducing themselves to traditional leaders after they have been appointed as new principals played an important role in strengthening their relationship, which ultimately played a role in achieving success in terms learner academic performance.

Furthermore, in analysing the patterns of the data, it is observed that accountability usually takes place within the department. It was noticed from the analysis of the patterns of the data that some schools think outside the box by accounting to traditional leaders in terms of learner academic performance not only within the Department of Basic Education. As a result, that had led to, in their schools, having traditional leaders fully involved in school activities. Therefore, in analysing the data, it was uncovered that criminality had been minimised. The data further indicated that crime in terms of burglary, theft and rape decreased drastically because traditional leaders and schools were working together. Traditional leaders and the community ended up owning the school and protecting it against criminals. It had emerged from the interviews with the participants that the traditional leader showed a great appreciation for the school to account to him in terms of presenting learner performance quarterly even though according to him, he did not deserve that, due to his illiteracy. Furthermore, it emerged from the participants that

showing positive attitude and respect towards traditional leaders resulted in the improvement of parental involvement which was immaterial. Therefore, learner academic performance which was a challenge improved drastically. Therefore, this indicates that working togethetraditional leaders played an important role in achieving success in terms of learner academic performance. It is from this perspective that the literature supports working hand in hand with traditional leaders especially in rural areas (Carlson & Seim; Makhasane, Simamane & Chikoko, 2018; Mngomezulu, 2020). Therefore, it is from this perspective that traditional leaders are advised to stay in development of their societies and stay out of politics (Logan & Katenda, 2021).

In the literature I reviewed the practice of the principals visiting the traditional leaders to introduce themselves after they have been appointed as principals has not been expressed, save for Mngomezulu (2020). Similarly, in the literature I reviewed, there are no schools that consult with traditional leaders quarterly for learner academic performance. Quarterly accountability in terms of learner academic performance is done within the hierarchy of the Department. When principals introduced themselves to traditional leaders after they have been employed as new principals in those schools and their strategy of accounting to traditional leaders quarterly in terms of learner academic performance was a way of thinking and acting outside the box because that is not stipulated in school regulations. This shows that sometimes, as a leader you may not be consistent in the application of the rules and regulations if they may not lead you to the success of what you intend to achieve, but you may deviate from rules and regulations for operational purposes. The only thing that is usualy happening in school is the involvement of stakeholders since there is a need for all stakeholders' involvement in the education area to achieve quality education. The literature shows that traditional leaders are invited by schools as agents of development (Carlson & Seim, 2018) and for the purpose of sharing the vision of the school (Makhasane, Simamane & Chikoko, 2018). Furthermore, they play an important role in delivering social policies to poor people. Therefore, traditional leadership is regarded as a central component of African thought. As a result, it is from this perspective that traditional leaders are advised to stay in the development of their societies and stay out of politics (Logan & Katenda, 2021). The literature also shows that the partnership with communities is vital but for partnerships to be sustainable and functional, it is essential to ensure that there is effective two-way communication, eagerness to address power issues, collaborative planning and decision-making, and the creation of a culture that promotes participative leadership to mention a few (Myende, 2018). Seemingly, these are fundamentals for partnerships to be sustainable and functional. Furthermore, the literature uncovers that the principal's leadership is only critical at

the beginning stage of partnerships, and teacher leadership is central in the continuity and functionality of partnerships (Myende, 2018; Myende & Nhlumayo, 2020). Seemingly, principal and teachers' leadership are essential for the functionality of partnerships.

7.3.2.2 Enhanced collaboration between the schools and various stakeholders and accountability

One of the strategies that SMT members adopted was that enhancing collaboration with all key stakeholders in and outside the schools. In enhancing collaboration between the school and various stakeholders, the schools among other things initiated a strategy of inviting and accounting to Traditional Leaders quarterly for learner results in terms of learner academic performance. The details about this are provided in Chapter Six where it described how this initiative started and the robust debate that ensured when the Principal of Toliz, Secondary school Mrs. Tolo made that proposal. Obviously, some teachers were not happy with such a proposal. Nevertheless, the fruits of working collaboratively with the Traditional Leaders are evident. These assumed different dimensions, including the maintenance of learner discipline, assisting in reducing crime such as theft of school property and burglary to mention a few. When this idea of inviting Traditional Leaders was proposed, some School Management Team members did not accept the view, stating that the school would be acting outside the law. The data has indicated that the principal had to adjourn the meeting, noticing that the there was no consensus among the SMT members concerning the issue of accounting quarterly to the Traditional Leaders in terms of learner academic performance. This was a way of giving a chance to the members and to herself to critically observe, interpret and find ways to intervene in this issue. Finally, the SMT members unanimously agreed on the issue. The discussions were also held with School Governing Body, the teachers, the parents pertaining to this issue including other issues that may enhance collaboration between the school and other stakeholders. Furthermore, the school took the issue to traditional leaders and was warmly accepted. As a result, late coming by both the teachers and the learners decreased; school attendance by both teachers and learners, attendance of extra-classes, learner discipline to mention a few improved. Learner academic performance improved drastically in Toliz Secondary School. All the other three schools, Langaz, Patoni and Siwo Secondary joined Toliz Secondary School. These three schools also followed suit in terms of accounting to the traditional leaders quarterly in terms of learner performance. Therefore, it is from this

perspective that these four rural Secondary schools are counted among the schools that perform well in terms of learner academic performance in the Eastern Cape Province.

7.3.2.3 Cementing and strengthening relationships with the community

In all the four schools, Traditional leaders were invited to have a representative in the School Governing Body and in the School Management Team. The school that initiated this strategy of cementing and strengthening relationships with Traditional Leaders is Toliz, Secondary school. The other three schools (Langaz, Patoni and Siwo Secondary schools twined with Toliz, Secondary school after noticing its high performance in terms of Grade 12 results continuously without any break. Toliz, Secondary was presenting an average of 350 learners in Grade 12 and achieving an average between 97% to 100% in the past 8 years (2013 to 2020). This school (Toliz, Secondary school) achieved 100% in four years (2014, 2015, 2017 and 2019). Section 6.3 of Chapter Six illustrates learner performance for Toliz, Secondary school for the past 8years (2013 to 2020). This school used to be among the schools that are top achievers Nationally (South Africa). Therefore, that attracted the other schools that include Langaz, Patoni and Siwo Secondary to twin with Toliz, Secondary school.

These four schools after noticing that they are unable to mitigate rural challenges that hindered success in terms of learner academic performance, they decided to consult quarterly with the Traditional Leaders. In doing that, they were also accounting for their schools' performances in terms of learner academic performance. As a result, this way of accountability created a robust debate among the SMT members and the staff members to the schools but this leadership practice was finally implemented even in other twined schools. Therefore, this strategy enhanced and strengthened the relationship between the school and the community because the community members were respectful to their traditional leaders. To enhance this relationship, among other things the schools had to invite traditional leaders to have a representative in School Governing Body and in the School Management Team. The purpose of inviting traditional leaders to have a representative in these two structures (SGB and SMT) among other things was to make both parties to understand the values of both institutions (school and Traditional Authority). Therefore, their actions, behaviours, thinking, attitudes and their understanding can be shaped by these values since these institutions have mixed values. Furthermore, another intention was to make traditional leaders to understand how the school is supposed to be

managed (school management) and to be governed (school governance) and also to understand instructional leadership. On the other hand, this was to assist the schools among other things to understand traditional leadership. As a result, the latter promoted collegiality between the school and the Traditional Leaders and the community at large.

Another way in which the relationships were strengthened between the schools and community is whereby the newly appointed Principals physically go to traditional leaders as to introduce themselves as additional members to the communities where traditional leaders are residing. This resulted in cemented relationship between the traditional leaders and the relevant schools. As a result, that gave SMT members an opportunity to shape the values, beliefs and experiences of traditional leaders. On the other hand, that allowed their values, beliefs, thinking and their experiences as SMT members to be shaped by traditional leaders where the participating schools are located. Therefore, that enabled both SMT members and traditional leaders to mitigate both the technical and the adaptive challenges that emanated internally and externally.

Another way in which the relationships were enhanced between the schools and community is whereby, quarterly, certain Saturdays will be put aside for traditional leaders to visit the school so as to teach learners about traditional leadership in the context of the rurality where these traditional leaders were residing. On that particular day, boys will be addressed in their particular place and be taught by old man nominated by the traditional leader and be taught what does it mean to be a leader. Similarly, the girls will be placed in their separate section and be taught what does it mean to be a future female leader. They will be addressed by an old lady nominated by traditional leader with the assistance of the rural community members. They will also be informed by different rituals that are performed in that particular rural community. This is a result of traditional leaders being represented in the School Governing Body and in School Management Team.

Finally, the cemented relationships between the schools and the community at large resulted in the mitigation of rural challenges these schools were faced with such as crime in terms of theft and burglary, learner ill-discipline, late coming for both teachers and leaners, poor learner attendance, learner absenteeism, poverty to mention a few but not limited to. Consequently, such relationships assisted in improving learner academic achievement in schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape Province. Therefore, the schools working together with traditional leaders and the community at large can do more to turn the tide of dysfunctionality in schools in rural

settings and make them shine in achieving success in terms of learner academic performance. Therefore, it is from this perspective that these rural secondary schools among other things were able to compete with their counterparts in the first world class in terms of achieving high learner academic performance irrespective of rural context of O.R. Tambo Coastal District in Eastern Cape Province.

The diagram below, **Figure 5** depicts the emerging model of this complex interplay of variables that shaped School Management Team members'understandings of successful leadership practices in rural contexts.

Figure: 5 Emerging model of School Management Team members' understandings of successful l leadership practices in rural contexts

The big circle (ellipse) in this model represents School-Community Integration. The isosceles triangle (ellipse) pointed upwards within the big circle, on its bottom left represents the community. On the bottom right of this graphic is school or the bottom right represents the school. On its left side is labelled as instructional leadership. Its right side is labelled as adaptive leadership. These labels represent the frameworks on which this study is framed. Within this isosceles triangle, there is another isosceles triangle (ellipse) pointed downwards that represents traditional leadership. On the top part of the circle, there is another small circle (ellipse) that represents successful leadership practices.

These four rural Secondary schools initially were among the schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape Province experiencing underperformance in terms of learner academic achievement. This was due to rural challenges such as a lack of parental involvement, high rate

of crime in terms of theft and burglary, learner ill-discipline and prevalence of poverty to mention a few. Toliz, Secondary school initiated some strategies to enhance relationships with Traditional leaders. These strategies include accounting to traditional leaders quarterly in terms of learner academic performance. Another strategy was to invite traditional leaders to have a representative in School Governing Body and in the School Management Team. The rationale behind inviting traditional leaders to have a representative in these two structures (SGB and SMT) among other things was to make both parties to understand the values of both institutions (school and Traditional Authority). This was to promote collegiality between Traditional Leadership and instructional leadership.

Moreso, in analysing the patterns of data, the communities where these schools were located, were loyal to their traditional leaders. Consequently, the communities cemented themselves with their traditional leaders. As a result, communities and traditional leaders collaborating with the schools resulted in School-Community Integration. According to this Model, traditional leaders are at the centre between the school and the community. That collaboration has resulted in the understanding of both traditional leadership and instructional leadership by all the parties involved. That understanding has resulted in the enhanced successful leadership practices. The enhanced successful leadership practices have made the schools to be able to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape because these schools were able to mitigate challenges that were prevalent in these rural secondary schools. Therefore, rural schools working together with traditional leaders by inviting them to be representatives in both School Governing Body and School Management Team structures promoted success in terms of learner academic performance in Secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape Province. This is what the above model represents.

7.3.3 Why the School Management Team members in the selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape enact leadership the way they do

There are three (3) findings that speak to this theme. They are (a) Accounting to traditional leaders quarterly in terms of learner academic performance (b) The inclusion of traditional leaders' representatives to School Governing Bodies (c) The inclusion of traditionals' representatives to School Management Teams. They enacted leadership by accounting to traditional leaders so as to cement relationship as to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance selected secondary schools in the rural setting of O. R. Tambo Coastal District.

The schools decided to account quarterly to traditional leaders so as to quell the challenges that hinder success in terms of learner academic performance. They did that in order to address the deteriorating performance in terms of learner academic performance which was experienced in these schools. Furthermore, SMT members decided to account to traditional leaders to shape their values, beliefs, experiences and thinking to mention a few.

On the other hand, they also wanted their values as SMT members to be shaped by traditional leaders. Instructional Leadership Theory model by Hallinger (2011) highlights the role of values in shaping leadership. Every school has a mix of values that shape the day-to-day behaviour of school leaders, teachers, non-teaching staff and the learners. Therefore, they account to traditional leaders quarterly in terms of learner academic performance in order to shape the cultural values of them (traditional leaders) in order to follow suit and also allow their (SMT members) school values to be shaped by traditional leaders as to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance in selected secondary schools in rural setting of O. R. Tambo Coastal District of the Eastern Cape Province. This is in line with Instructional Leadership Theory Model by Hallinger (2011) when he argues that values both shape the thinking and the actions of leaders and represent a potentially useful tool for working with and strengthening the school's culture of learning. Having values that shaped both the thinking and the actions of both School Management Team members and traditional leaders, they were able to address both technical and adaptive challenges that emanated in the selected secondary schools in rural setting of the Eastern Cape. Understanding differentiating technical challenges from adaptive challenges since they do not come as clearly labelled, both instructional leaders (SMT members) and traditional leaders managed to first observe the challenges as to successfully interpret them impartially by first interpreting a diverse hypothesis that will emerge. Having interpreted the challenges, they were being able to intervene to the challenges that emerge. Therefore, working as a collective, their schools managed to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance.

Another successful leadership that was adopted by School Management Team members in order to thrive in terms learner academic performance was an inclusion of traditional leaders' representative in School Governing Body of the school. This was a new successful leadership practice which was previously unknown to me. The purpose of the inclusion of traditional leaders was to strengthen accountability to traditional leaders, quarterly in terms of learner academic performance. Therefore, it was noticed that it is relevant to expose traditional leaders

to the school environment and school leadership and school governance by making them represented in school through School Governing Bodies because they were able to assist in the detoriating learner academic performance in such participating schools since there were made aware of school governing strategies. That was going to make traditional leaders to be conversant with the school culture, school values to mention a few. There is nowhere in the literature I reviewed that this form of accountability was done. This has only happened in this study. Its effect is that the participating schools thrive in terms of learner academic performance which was previously deteriorating. Another positive effect of the inclusion of traditional leaders' representatives in both the SGBs and in the SMTs made the traditional leaders to be conversant with rules and the regulations of the school governance and school management. Another effect is that their cultural values were able to be understood by the school and the school values were able to be understood by the traditional leaders. Therefore, there deteriorating learner academic performance in the four participating schools was mitigated. This can be found in Section 6.5 of Chapter Six under the sub-heading: Going beyond rhetoric of leadership. Mrs Tolo, the Principal of Toliz, Secondary articulated:

> *On my arrival I introduced extra classes so as to improve learner academic performance. As a result, I was the first person to attend extra-classes in order to improve school performance. Therefore, all teachers follow the direction of attending extra-classes without being told. Therefore, if you are a leader, you must show your people direction with your actions. So, this was another way of walking the talk. As a result, my school achieved not less than 85% for a period of 6 years. Furthermore, I decided to account quarterly to Traditional leaders in terms learner academic performance. To enhance that the school involved traditional representatives in both School Governing Body and School Management structure as to make them to be acquainted with school governance and school management.*

It was noticed that it was going to be for their behaviours to be shaped by the mixed school values that shaped the other school leaders such as School Management Team members, teachers, non-teaching staff members and the learners. This made them their thinking and their actions to be easily exposed in being shaped by school values. On the other hand, that made it easy for the values of traditional leaders to shape the thinking and actions of SMT members, School Governing Bodies, teachers, non-teaching staff, and the learners. Furthermore, that would enhance the collegiality between instructional leadership practices of School Management Team members and traditional leadership practices of traditional leaders in rural setting of O. R. Tambo Coastal District in the Eastern Cape Province. This made traditional

leaders to be kept informed about the culture, values and beliefs of the school. It made the school and traditional leaders to find it manageable to navigate both technical and adaptive challenges in rural setting in selected schools of the O. R. Tambo Coastal District in the Eastern Cape, through observing them, in order to interpret the different hypothesis impartially, as to get reliable strategies for intervention. We should bear in mind that effective leadership is both shaped by and responds to the constraints and opportunities extant in the school organisation and its environment.

The third new issue that constitutes a finding in the study is School Management Team members in selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape enact leadership the way they do. In analysing the patterns of the data, it is noticed that there was an inclusion of Traditional leaders through their representatives in School Management Team members' meetings in order to empower them with the culture of teaching and learning and make them aware of instructional leadership practices of School Management Team members. Therefore, assisted the school because the traditional leaders through their representatives made the school to improve learner absenteeism, late coming, supervision of extra-classes, learner discipline. Parental involvement improved, to mention a few. Consequently, detoriating learner academic performance improved gradually. Another reason for the inclusion of the traditional leaders through their representatives was to make them (Traditional Leaders) understand how they (SMT members) manage teaching and learning. Furthermore, they included them so as to be aware of both technical and adaptive challenges the schools in rural setting of Eastern Cape are faced with. Another reason for the inclusion of traditional leaders 'representatives to SMT members' meetings was to gel with both the SMT members' values and traditional leaders' values as to know how to achieve success in terms of learner academic performance. As a result, the mix of values were able to shape their (SMT members' and Traditional Leaders) behaviours. Moreso, values both shape their (SMT members and Traditional Leaders) thinking and actions. Having their thinking and actions shaped, they were able to address both technical and adaptive challenges by means of first observing them and then interpret them as to get relevant strategies to intervene to them. As a result, these schools working together with traditional leaders were able to mitigate crime such as theft and burglary, and alleviate poverty. These schools improved in terms of attending extra- classes without fear because the traditional leaders through their representatives were taking part in the monitoring and supervision of extra-classes. Both teacher and learner absenteeism decreased drastically. Therefore, it is from that perspective these schools are among the schools that achieve success in terms of academic performance in rural

settings of O. R. Tambo Coastal District in the Eastern Cape Province. It is important for the reader to note that these four schools were among the schools that achieved success in terms of learner academic performance by the time I was conducting research in O. R. Tambo Coastal District in the Eastern Cape Province. According to the three schools (Langaz, Patoni, and Siwo Secondary schools), the school that initially showed the way was Toliz Secondary School. The other three schools collaborated with Toliz Secondary School as to get its strategy in order to achieve success. The other schools continuously heard about this school when Grade 12 results were analysed in O. R. Tambo Coastal District yearly. It is from that perspective, that the other three schools (Langaz, Patoni, and Siwo Secondary schools) decided to join this school (Toliz, Secondary school) on this venture. In Chapter Six, it is illustrated how Toliz Secondary School performed in 2015, 2017, and 2019 as compared to the other three schools which (Langaz, Patoni, and Siwo Secondary Schools). This school (Toliz Secondary School) performed 100% in 2015, 2017, and 2019. Seemingly, this proves why the other three schools (Langaz, Patoni, and Siwo Secondary Schools) decided to join hands with this school. This may prove that this school was leading in success in terms of learner academic performance.

7.4 Implications of the study

This section highlights some of the implications for different stakeholders. Starting with implications for research, I must immediately acknowledge the fact that scholarship in educational leadership and management has in the past decade or so paid more emphasis on the role that leadership plays in improving learning outcomes. The argument that scholarship in educational leadership has, in the past decade paid more emphasis on the role that leadership plays in improving learning outcomes reflects the contention of many scholars (e.g Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018; Southworth, 2002). Therefore, it is evident that leadership plays an important role in the performance of learners in terms of their learning outcomes especially in a rural setting. Similarly, it has been established in research that factors such as rural context has a negative influence on learners' academic achievement. What is now emerging in research is that effective leadership in schools, particularly rural schools is able to mitigate challenges posed by the environment to the schools' operations in terms of teaching and learning. However, in the context of South Africa, there is limited research on how school leadership overcomes the challenges posed by the environment on schooling. Hence, this study was conducted to draw lessons from a small sample of schools that had succeeded to turn them around from underperformance to full effective operation.

Therefore, there is a need for a big scale research on this phenomenon so that generalisation can be made for the entire population in different districts and provinces in the country.

Another implication has to do with the study design. This study comprised only School Management Team members and whatever conclusion I make emerges from my conversations with School Management Team members only, but the story relates to the lives of their entire schools. That might be considered a design limitation. However, I can counter that argument and highlight the fact that my use of one data generation method weakens such assertions. I can argue for the use of two generation method by asserting that it due to COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, I had to adhere to its regulations. Nevertheless, what remains valid is the fact that a study that elicits views from all stakeholders in a school on this important phenomenon is desperately and urgently needed. Although I did not review all the documents that I had initially wanted to review, I did have access to the Annual Teaching Plans and the schedule of results for the past few years. These documents provided a better understanding of the schools' previous performances, and also the kinds of plans that various departments had developed.

Another implication is directed at educational leadership practitioners. There are many lessons that can be learnt from the leadership practices of the participating School Management Team members in this study. Some of these lessons relate to the SMT members' situation in and outside their schools. Among other lessons that can be learnt from this study is that SMT members consulted with traditional leaders after noticing that learner academic performance was deteriorating due to among other things challenges such as lack of parental involvement, leaner- discipline, lack of school-community partnership, poverty related issues to mention a few. These challenges were mitigated through bringing the school to the community and the community to the school, enhancing, collaboration between the schools and various stakeholders and accountability, and cementing and strengthening relationships with the community. Therefore, that made the participating schools to work closely with traditional leaders since stakeholders together with the community were loyal and respectful to them (Traditional Leaders) and that assisted them when facing challenges and turbulences. As a result, the SMT members were able to harness their awareness of the situation to mobilise human capital to fight against rurality; for example, push their agendas to turn around the schools' situations. The ability to handle these rural challenges and combining that with the focus on the core duties of SMT members is a vital feat to be emulated by other SMT members who face similar predicaments. The case in point was the ability of some SMT members, especially in the rural

schools to account to traditional leaders quarterly in terms of learner academic performance, to include Traditional leaders' representatives to School Governing Bodies and to include Traditional Leaders' representatives to School Management Team members' meetings so as to acquaint themselves with school governance and school management rules and regulations. As a result, that assisted the participating rural schools to thrive in terms of learner academic performance which was deteriorating in rural setting in O. R. Tambo Coastal District in Eastern Cape Province. This has been discussed in detail in the previous chapters. Therefore, the issue of inclusion of traditional leaders when tackling important issues of the school is of absolute importance and should not be underestimated given what it can do in creating new organisational cultures. Participating schools were able to establish new school cultural values particularly because they were able to move forward together in managing teaching and teaching such that the schools survived and thrived in terms of achieving learner academic performance which was deteriorating. Therefore, these schools were counted among the schools that achieved high results in terms of Grade 12 results in rural setting in O. R. Tambo Coastal District in Eastern Cape Province.

7.5 Conclusion

This study focused on four rural secondary schools in the O. R. Tambo Coastal District in the Eastern Cape Province. This is obviously a limited target population of the School Management Team members, which does not represent all the rural secondary schools in the O.R. Tambo Coastal District wherein School Management Team members had managed to turnaround their schools' performances despite rural contexts. While this makes it impossible to present authentic findings beyond the four rural secondary schools in which the study was conducted, I must also reiterate that it was never my intention to generalise the findings beyond the Sixteen School Management Team members and four participating rural secondary schools. Having said that, it does not also mean that the findings are less trustworthy, as qualitative research has its own ways of ensuring trustworthiness of the findings. The sections on implications above have highlighted these issues and indicated what research stands to benefit from such a study. I have also highlighted the need for a study such as this one, but which will be conducted on a large-scale fashion, in terms of generalisability of the findings. I am saying this being aware that education systems globally and locally rely on research that is applicable to the whole education system rather than case studies that are not applicable system wide. Nonetheless, as I have argued elsewhere in this report, the study has generated new insights about how School

Management Team members can manage to change the school's fortunes despite the challenges posed by the internal and external environments. It has also explored the strategies used by the principals in adverse and turbulent conditions to turn around their schools' performances from underperforming to successful ones.

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ANNEXURE A: REQUEST FOR PERMISION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

P.O Box 1290

Flagstaff

4810

27 November 2020

Attention: The Superintendent-General

Department of Education

Province of Eastern Cape

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Desmond Monde Gogo, a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree fulfilment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in four secondary schools under your jurisdiction in O.R.T. Coastal District. The title of my study is **Successful leadership practices of rural School Management Team members: A case study of selected rural secondary schools**

This study aims to explore how secondary school management teams in rural contexts enact successful leadership practices and why they enact it the way they do. The planned study will focus on secondary school management team members. The study will use semi-structured interviews with principals, deputy principals and heads of departments. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 40-60 minutes at the times convenient to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Each interview will be voice-recorded. Observations and documents review will also be done.

Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews, and they will be purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

You may contact me or my supervisors, or the UKZN Research Office or me should you have any queries or questions:

My contact details:

Cell: 0734753097

E-mail: mondegogo65@gmail.com

Supervisors:

Professor T.T. Bhengu

Tel. 031-2603534 (office)

Cell: 083 9475321

E-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za.

Dr B.N.C.K. Mkhize

Tel. 031-2601398

E-mail:Mkhizeb3@ukzn.ac.za

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION Research Office,
 Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban 4000 KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

D.M. Gogo (Mr)
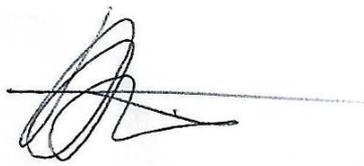
ANNEXURE B: PERMISION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Province of the EASTERN CAPE EDUCATION

CORPORATE PLANNING MONITORING POLICY AND RESEARCH COORDINATION

Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex Zone 6 • Zwelitsha • Eastern Cape

Private Bag   • Bhisho • 5605 • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ter. +27 (0)40 608 4537/4773 • Fax: +27 (0)86 579 7182 • Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za

Enquiries: F. Pakade   Email: fundiswa.pakade@ecdoe.gov.za   Date: 28 May 2021

Mr Desmond Monde Gogo

Sipaqeni Location

Flagstaff

4810

Dear Mr. Gogo

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A DOCTORAL RESEARCH: SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF SELECTED RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1. Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research involving 4 (four) rural secondary schools in O ^{R}. Tambo Coastal district under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved based on the following conditions:

   a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;

   b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;

   c. no minors will participate;

   d. it is not going to interrupt educators' time and task;

   e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time;

   f. no physical contact with educators and learners, only virtual means of communication should be used and that should be arranged and agreed upon in writing with the Principal and the affected teacher/s;

g. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;

h. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;

i. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management;

j. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis;

k. you present the findings to the Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary;

l. you are requested to provide the above to the Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management upon completion of your research;

m. you comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you;

n. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form);

o. You submit on a six-monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management.

2. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there be noncompliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE and/or legal requirements to do so.

3. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.

4. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Mrs. Fundiswa Pakade on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email fundiswa.pakade@ecdoe.gov.za should you need any assistance.

T MASOEU

CHIEF DIRECTOR: CORPORATE STRATEGY MANAGEMENT

FOR SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL: EDUCATIO

Ikamva eliqaqambileyo!

ANNEXURE C: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN O. R. TAMBO COASTAL DISTRICT SCHOOLS

P.O Box 1290
Flagstaff
4810
Eastern Cape Province

The Principal
Zwelibongile Seconda1Y School
O.R.T. Coastal District

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Desmond Monde Gogo, a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree fulfillment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct this research at your school. The title of my study is: Successful leadership practices of rural School Management Team members: A Multiple case study of selected rural secondary schools

This study aims to explore how school management teams navigate around the impact of rural context on their successful leadership practices and still meet the demands and expectations of the department. That is, how secondary school management team members in rural contexts enact successful leadership practices and why they enact it the way they do. The planned study will focus on secondary school management team members. The study will use semi-structured interviews with school management team members. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 40-60 minutes at the times convenient to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Each interview will be voice-recorded. Observations and documents review will also be done. Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews, and they will be purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

PLEASE   NOTE THAT:

C] There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.

C] Your identity will **not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.**

C] All the responses, observations and reviewed documents will be treated with strict confidentiality.

L] Pseudonyms will be used to represent the school and names of the participants.

C] Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

C] Participants purposively selected to participate in this study and they will be contacted well in advance for interviews.

C] The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interviews.

You may contact my supervisors, the Research Office or me should you have any queries or questions:

Supervisors:

Professor T.T.Bhengu   Dr B.N.C.K Mkhize
Tel. 031-2603534 (office)   Tel. 031-2601398

Cell: 083 9475321   Cell: 0836530077
E-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za   E-mail:Mkhizeb3@ukzn.ac.za

Yours in Education

Mr D.M. Gogo

ANNEXURE D: PARTICIPANT DECLARATION LETTER

DEAR ……………………………. (PARTICIPANT)

My name is Desmond Monde Gogo, a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree fulfillment, I am required to conduct research. The title of my study is: Successful leadership practices of rural School Management Team members: A Multiple case study of selected rural secondary schools. The objectives of this study are:

> To explore how the School Management Team members in selected secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape describe and explain their successful leadership practices. To explore some of the key factors that underpin successful leadership practices of the School Management Team members in the secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape. To document key lessons of why do School Management Team members in secondary schools in the rural setting of the Eastern Cape enact leadership the way they do.

I humbly request your participation in order to achieve the objectives of this study. You are requested to participate in the interviews which will be conducted at the venue and times convenient to you. During the interviews I will have to use a voice recorder in order to correctly capture your views. However, I need your permission to do so. Participation in this study will be voluntary and the participants will have a right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequence. In addition, participants will be guaranteed confidentiality and will remain anonymous. Finally, upon completion of the research a copy of the thesis will be made available to you. For more information and questions about the study, contact my supervisors:

Contacts details

Supervisor: DrB.N.C.K MkhizeTel 031-2601398 E-mail:Mkhizeb3@ukzn.ac.za

Supervisor: Prof. TT Bhengu: 031-2603534 Email: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za

Research office: Tel. No. 031 260 3587   Email:HssrecHumanities@ukzn.ac.za

Thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

Desmond Monde Gogo

Cell No. 0734753097; email: mondegogo65@gmail.com

ANNEXURE E: CONSENT FORM

I …………………………………………………………….. (Full name of participant)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this letter and the nature of the research project.
I consent to:

(Indicate by making a cross (X) as your response

	Yes	No
PARTICAPATE IN THE RESEARCH		
HAVE MY NTERVIEWS RECORDED		

I also understand that I am at liberty to withdraw at any time from the project should I wish to do
so.

Signature of participant: ---------------------------------- Date--------------------------------------

Thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

Desmond Monde Gogo

Cell No. **0734753097**; email: **mondegogo@gmail.com**

ANNEXURE F: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW WITH PRINCIPAL

[NB. These questions will guide my discussion with the principals as School Management Team members. Follow-up questions will also be posed depending on the responses of the participants].

There is a general belief among scholars that school leadership is second to classroom practice in relation to their importance on learner outcomes and school impact. Others contend that strong leadership or lack thereof determines the success of the school.

1. In your view, what constitutes a successful school?

(Probes: How does a successful school differ from other schools that may not be considered successful? What role does a principal play in a successful school?

2. Do you consider your schools as a successful one? Yes/No

(Probes: If yes, please explain what it is that makes yourschool a successful one?

What specific activities do you do to make your school what it is today?

3. All schools in SA are expected to have vision and mission statement. Can you share your experiences about how vision and mission statement was developed in your school? (Probes: Can you elaborate on the kinds of goals that you developed from your mission statement and how such goals were developed? To what extent are these goals aligned with those of the District and those of the ECDoE provincially? In your view, to what extent are the set goals for the school achieved? What do you do to achieve these goals? What do you do when they are achieved? What do you do when they are not achieved?

4. One of the roles of school principals is to support or promote teaching and learning. Can you share your thoughts or experiences about how you promote teaching and learning in your school? (Probes: How do you ensure that the right climate is created to facilitate teaching and learning despite rural challenges? What factors do you think assist you in promoting teaching and learning situation in your school? What factors do you think poses some barriers in your quest to promote teaching and learning? Please elaborate on both positive and negative factors.

5. School principals are also expected to develop their teaching staff. Can you explain how you support your teachers in improving their teaching and/or leadership skills! (Probes: What motivates you to support them the way you do? What factors do you think assist you in promoting teaching and learning situation in your school? What factors do you think poses some barriers in your quest to promote teaching and learning? Please elaborate on both positive and negative factors!

6. Does rurality pose any challenges in your school? What is the nature of these challenges in your school? How do these challenges impact on your leadership practices? What leadership strategies do you have in place that assist you to deal with these challenges of rurality? How do these strategies assist you?

7. Do you hold teachers and learners accountable for their performance? How do you do that?

8. What other information can you add as far as the issue of successful leadership and rurality in your school are concerned which I may not have asked you?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview.

ANNEXURE G: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW WITH THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

[NB. These questions will guide my discussion with the deputy principals as School Management Team members. Follow-up questions will also be posed depending on the responses of the participants].

There is a general belief among scholars that school leadership is second to classroom practice in relation to their importance on learner outcomes and school impact. Others contend that strong leadership or lack thereof determines the success of the school.

3. In your view, what constitutes a successful school?

(Probes: How does a successful school differ from other schools that may not be considered successful? What roles does a principal play in a successful school?

4. Do you consider your schools as a successful one? Yes/No

(Probes: If yes, please explain what it is that makes yourschool a successful one?

What specific activities do you do to make your school what it is today?

3. All schools in SA are expected to have vision and mission statement. Can you share your experiences about how vision and mission statement was developed in your school? (Probes: Can you elaborate on the kinds of goals that you developed from your mission statement and how such goals were developed? To what extent are these goals aligned with those of the District and those of the ECDoE provincially? In your view, to what extent are the set goals for the school achieved? What do you do to achieve these goals? What do you do when they are achieved? What do you do when they are not achieved?

4. One of the roles of deputy principals is to support or promote teaching and learning. Can you share your thoughts or experiences about how you promote teaching and learning in your school? (Probes: How do you ensure that the right climate is created to facilitate teaching and learning despite rural challenges? What factors do you think assist you in promoting teaching and learning situation in your school? What factors do you think poses some barriers in your quest to promote teaching and learning? Please elaborate on both positive and negative factors.

5. Deputy principals are also expected to develop their teaching staff. Can you explain how you support your teachers in improving their teaching and/or leadership skills! (Probes: What motivates you to support them the way you do? What factors do you think assist you in promoting teaching and learning situation in your school? What factors do you think poses some barriers in your quest to promote teaching and learning? Please elaborate on both positive and negative factors!

6. Does rurality pose any challenges in your school? What is the nature of these challenges in your school? How do these challenges impact on your leadership practices? What leadership strategies do you have in place that assist you to deal with these challenges of rurality? How do these strategies assist you?

7. Do you hold teachers and learners accountable for their performance? How do you do that?

8. What other information can you add as far as the issue of successful leadership and rurality in your school are concerned which I may not have asked you?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview.

ANNEXURE H: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW WITH THE DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

[NB. These questions will guide my discussion with the HDs as School Management Team members. Follow-up questions will also be posed depending on the responses of the participants].

There is a general belief among scholars that school leadership is second to classroom practice in relation to their importance on learner outcomes and school impact. Others contend that strong leadership or lack thereof determines the success of the school.

5. In your view, what constitutes a successful school?

(Probes: How does a successful school differ from other schools that may not be considered successful? What roles does a principal play in a successful school?

6. Do you consider your schools as a successful one? Yes/No

(Probes: If yes, please explain what it is that makes yourschool a successful one?

What specific activities do you do to make your school what it is today?

3. All schools in SA are expected to have vision and mission statement. Can you share your experiences about how vision and mission statement was developed in your school? (Probes: Can you elaborate on the kinds of goals that you developed from your mission statement and how such goals were developed? To what extent are these goals aligned with those of the District and those of the ECDoE provincially? In your view, to what extent are the set goals for the school achieved? What do you do to achieve these goals? What do you do when they are achieved? What do you do when they are not achieved?

4. One of the roles of deputy principals is to support or promote teaching and learning. Can you share your thoughts or experiences about how you promote teaching and learning in your school? (Probes: How do you ensure that the right climate is created to facilitate teaching and learning despite rural challenges? What factors do you think assist you in promoting teaching and learning situation in your school? What factors do you think poses some barriers in your quest to promote teaching and learning? Please elaborate on both positive and negative factors.

5. School Deputy principals are also expected to develop their teaching staff. Can you explain how you support your teachers in improving their teaching and/or leadership skills! (Probes: What motivates you to support them the way you do? What factors do you think assist you in promoting teaching and learning situation in your school? What factors do you think poses some barriers in your quest to promote teaching and learning? Please elaborate on both positive and negative factors!

6. Does rurality pose any challenges in your school? What is the nature of these challenges in your school? How do these challenges impact on your leadership practices? What leadership strategies do you have in place that assist you to deal with these challenges of rurality? How do these strategies assist you?

7. Do you hold teachers and learners accountable for their performance? How do you do that?

8. What other information can you add as far as the issue of successful leadership and rurality in your school are concerned which I may not have asked you?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview.

ANNEXURE I: TURNITIN REPORT