

**Leadership for Learning: A case study of three secondary schools in
the Umlazi District of KwaZulu-Natal**

by

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

in the

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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June 2017

ETHICAL CLEARANCE



16 September 2016

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Dear Ms Buthelezi

Protocol reference number: HSS/0846/016M
Project title: Leadership for learning: A case study of HODs in three secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 09 August 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have 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.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

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This dissertation has been submitted with / without my approval.

Dr Inba Naicker

Date

DECLARATION

I, Catherine Nokulunga Buthelezi, declare that

- I) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- II) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- III) This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs, or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other person.
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Student No. 207517154

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late grandmother Octavia Buthelezi who played an important role in raising me to become what I am today. She taught me that education is the key to success and I also have to persevere, if I were to succeed in life. May her soul rest in peace. I always thank God for giving me such a great person to be my guardian.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It gives me great pleasure to express my ultimate gratitude to my creator, God almighty for granting me the wisdom to complete a task of this nature.

My sincere gratitude also goes to the following people:

- My supervisor, Dr Inba Naicker, who enlightened and empowered me with the knowledge to complete this dissertation. I also thank him for working tirelessly on each and every chapter with me and for the good advice and prompt feedback on my draft chapters ;
- My co-students and team mates, Jane, Bheki, Erin, and Ashkelon for standing by my side through thick and thin, through-out the course;
- My children, Sanele and Nomvula for their patience and understanding while I was working on this study;
- My nephew, Sandile for the courage and motivation he had provided me with when I was on the verge of losing hope of completion of this project;
- The University of KwaZulu-Natal for awarding me the bursary towards the completion of this study and
- The Department of Education of KwaZulu-Natal for giving me permission to conduct this research project in the Umlazi District.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMES

AET	Adult Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
HOD	Head Of Department _ School
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
USA	United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
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COVER PAGE	I
ETHICAL CLEARENCE	II
SUPERVISOR’S STATEMENT	III
DECLARATION	IV
DEDICATION	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VI
LIST OF ABBREVIATIOS AND ACRONYMS	VII
ABSTRACT	XII
Chapter 1	
Orientation to the study	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.1.1 Problem statement	2
1.2 Rationale and Motivation for the study	2
1.2.1 Personal justification	3
1.2.2 Professional context	4
1.2.3 Theoretical context	4
1.3 The significance of the study	5
1.4 Objectives of the study	5
1.5 Questions to be answered in the research	5
1.6 Definition of key concepts	6
1.7 Chapter outline	7
1.8 Conclusion	
Chapter 2	
Literature review and theoretical framework	
2.1 Introduction	9
2.1.1 The leadership for learning practices in South African schools	9
2.1.2 The influence of leadership on the improvement of quality education in township secondary schools	11
VIII	

2.1.3 Learning to lead for learning improvement	12
2.1.4 The importance of communication among SMTs and the teachers in the delivery of quality education	13
2.1.5 The role of SMTs in creating professional learning communities	14
2.1.6 The SMTs as transformational and instructional leaders	16
2.1.7 The influence of context on the improvement of learning in secondary schools	19
2.1.8 The importance of staff motivation	21
2.1.9 Relevance of vision and mission statement	22
2.1.10 Support from stakeholders	22
2.2 Theoretical framework	22
2.2.1 Leadership for learning theory	27
2.2.2 Instructional leadership theory	28
2.3 Conclusion	30
Chapter 3	
Research design and methodology	
3.1 Introduction	
3.2 Research paradigm	31
3.3 Research approach	31
3.4 Research methodology	32
3.5 Selection of schools	32
3.6 Selection of the participants	33
3.7 Data generation methods	33
3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews	34
3.7.2 Observations	35
3.8 Research setting	36
3.9 Analysing data	37
3.10 Considering ethical issues	38
3.11 Trustworthiness	38
3.12 Conclusion	39
	40
IX	

Chapter 4	
Presentation of the finding	
4.1 Introduction	41
4.2 Findings and discussions	41
4.2.1 Putting leadership for learning into practice in South African secondary schools	42
4.2.1.1 Proper planning for leading learning	42
4.2.1.2 The SMTs having regular meetings with subject committees	44
4.2.1.3 The SMTs having regular meetings with SGBs	46
4.2.1.4 Monitoring of teachers' work	47
4.2.1.5 Managing learners' text books	51
4.2.1.6 Ensuring proper discipline for both teachers and learners	53
4.2.1.7 Providing support for teachers' professional development	55
4.2.2 The reasons for leadership for learning practices by the SMTs in the South African secondary schools	59
4.2.2.1 The policies that inform the SMTs to operationalise leadership for learning in the way they do	59
4.2.2.2 The SMTs taking instructions from the principal	63
4.2.2.3 The SMTs modeling best practice for teachers	67
4.2.3 The support given by the stakeholders to the SMTs in leadership for learning	68
4.2.3.1 Support from the SGBs	69
4.2.3.2 Support from RCLs	70
4.2.3.3 Support from the DoE	70
4.2.3.4 Support from local businesses	71
4.3 Conclusion	72
Chapter 5	74
Summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations	
5.1 Introduction	75
5.2 Summary of the study	75
5.3 Conclusions	77
5.3.1 Putting leadership for learning into practice in South African schools	77
5.3.1.1 Proper planning for leading learning	78

5.3.1.2 The SMTs having regular meetings with the subject committees	78
5.3.1.3 Monitoring of teachers' work	78
5.3.1.4 Ensuring proper discipline for teachers and learners	79
5.3.2 The reasons for leadership for learning practices by the SMTs in school schools	79
5.3.2.1 Policies inform the SMTs to operationalise leadership for learning the way they do	80
5.3.2.2 The SMTs taking instructions from the principal	80
5.3.2.3 The SMTs modeling the best practice for the teachers	80
5.3.3 The support given by stakeholders to the SMTs in South African secondary schools	81
5.4 Recommendations	81
6 List of references	84
APPENDIX A: Informed consent letter to the participant	89
APPENDIX B: Letter to the principal	91
APPENDIX C: Declaration	94
APPENDIX D: Semi-structured interviews	95
APPENDIX E: Observations	97
APPENDIX F: Turnitin Repport	98
APPENDIX G: Language Editing Report	99

Abstract

The role played by the SMT members as leaders in South African schools is crucial due to the indirect impact on learner and school achievement. In this study I explored the following: How SMTs are operationalizing leadership for learning in their schools; Why the SMTs operationalise leadership for learning in particular ways and how SMTs are supported in their leadership for learning by school stakeholders. This study is underpinned by leadership for learning theory and instructional leadership theory. This study was located within the interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative research design was employed. The sample of the study was purposive and comprised one principal, one deputy principal and one HOD from each of the three secondary schools. Data was generated using semi-structured interviews and observations.

Various findings emerged from the study. In this study, it was found that the SMTs should work collaboratively as teams, because they have a tremendous role to oversee the implementation of the school policies and also to involve all the stakeholders in order to enhance effective teaching and learning in the school. The reason for the SMTs to practising leadership for learning was also clearly stated, which is to holistically improve both learner and school outcomes. Lastly, how the stakeholders such as teachers, SGBs, RCLs, DoE officials, and business support the SMTs was crucial to school success.

Chapter 1

Orientation to the Study

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is an orientation to the study as it sets the stage for the discussion of key elements related to the study. It presents the problem statement of the study, rationale and motivation for the study, significance of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, definition of the key concepts and lastly, the chapter outline of the study.

1.1.1 Problem statement

After 1994 South Africa became a democratic country, hence South African schools should be implementing the principles of democracy such as participation of the community and transparency in all their activities (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). Whitehead, Bochee and Decker (2013) further elaborate that there seems to be lacking stakeholder-involvement in South African schools. Leadership for learning should allow the communities inside and outside the school to participate in order for learning culture to be instilled (Hallinger, 2011). A Senior Management Team (SMT) which works collaboratively with all stakeholders is perceived to be the most successful one (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013).

In many South African schools there seems to be an appalling failure rate, hence some schools are at the brink of collapse (Botha, 2012). It was reported on Channel 24 News, which was broadcast on 28 April 2016 that one of the schools in the Umlazi District obtained a 0% pass rate last year (2015). This has resulted in the provincial Department of Education threatening to shut down the under-performing schools. This shows that there is a need for leadership for learning in our schools. District officials often visit such schools in order to monitor school functionality.

This study examines the SMTs' perceptions about leadership for learning in secondary schools. It is argued that leadership styles such as instructional leadership, transformational leadership and shared leadership are together regarded as the approaches which may enhance change in schools (Bridges, 1967; Hallinger, 2011; Wegner, 2001).

The purpose of this study is to engage the principals, deputy principals and HODs to voice their views on how leadership for learning in schools can be operationalised.

1.2 Rationale and Motivation for the Study

The motivation for embarking on this study on leadership for learning practices was the large number of learners failing to achieve their learning outcomes and the teachers becoming demotivated (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013). Therefore in this section I present the personal, professional and theoretical justifications for the study.

1.2.1 Personal justification

In my experience as a level one English First Additional Language teacher at a secondary school in Umlazi for the past eight years, I have observed some principals as members of the SMT not sharing their roles and responsibilities with other SMT members. The leadership role still rests on the shoulders of one person, the principal as a valued member of the SMT (Hallinger, 2011). In some instances I have observed that learners have failed to successfully achieve their learning outcomes due to lack of competency (DoE, 2016). Seemingly, teachers have lost interest in teaching learners effectively (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013). In my experience the failure rate is appalling in some of the subjects in Grade 12 (DoE, 2015). I have realised that some principals still solely act as instructional leaders with limited involvement of the rest of the other SMT members. I suggest that there is a need for conducting this research in order to find out from the principals, deputy principals and heads of departments in the secondary schools how they operationalise leadership for learning in their daily activities.

I have learnt that in order for effective teaching and learning to occur in school, the principals as part of the SMT should not only manage teachers and learners, but they should also be able to lead learning by becoming life-long learners themselves (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013).

1.2.2 Professional context

SMTs are supposed to be the driving force behind the whole school (Smith, Mestry & Bombie, 2013). How learning is led by the SMTs depends on the quality of leadership which they execute in a school (Bush, 2013). Most of the time the SMTs instruct teachers about how they should implement policies in terms of curriculum delivery in their classrooms without the inclusion of such teachers in the formulation of such policies. This results in teachers not performing their duties up to their anticipated standard hence learners wind up failing most of the subjects. In English we say “practice makes perfect”. The SMTs should “practise what they preach”. This means they should lead by example by working together with teachers and learners. In the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document, it is articulated that teaching of learners is one of the roles of the SMT members, as stated in the *Employment of Educator’s Act, 76 of 1998* (Republic of South Africa, 1998, section 4). The SMTs should make others feel that they have ownership of the school (Bush, 2013). Eventually, the schools with the declining pass rate might improve.

There seems to be lack of communication between the SMTs and teachers in terms of achieving the school goals. Leadership for learning is an approach that needs to be practised by SMTs in the professional learning of staff members and learners (Hallinger, 2011).

1.2.3 Theoretical context

For four decades researchers such as Hallinger, Bickman and Davis (2011) have conducted international studies about the direct relationship between the principal’s leadership styles and leadership for learning. In these studies it has come up that the instructional leadership is still predominantly applied by most of the school principals. This implies that the role of a principal carries more value than other SMT members. Leadership for learning is the model which every school should attempt to implement in order to improve learning because it allows all SMT members to share leadership powers (Hallinger, Bickman & Davis, 2011).

Schools which are excelling are the ones that have principals, whom together with other members of the school management team share the school values and goals with all stakeholders (Hallinger, 2011). In these schools everybody is supported and motivated by SMT members to engage in life-long learning in order to achieve the learner and school outcomes (Whitehead, Bochee & Decker, 2013).

The SMTs also are transformed leaders who intend to transform the school systems and those who are co-partners in the teaching and learning process in order to instill the culture of learning in school (Whitehead, Bochee & Decker, 2013).

1.3 The significance of the study

This study may enable all the role players and stakeholders to see the need to work together towards achieving the school goal (West-Burnman, 2010). The SMTs may engage themselves in leadership activities that may assist them to instill the culture of learning in school, not focusing on achieving the learner outcomes only, but also on outcomes of the school as a whole (Hallinger, 2011). This means that not only the learners may be encouraged and supported to learn. Teachers, parents, non-teaching staff members and the community at large both inside and outside school may be involved.

SMT members may effectively lead learning by becoming life-long learners themselves, thereby setting good examples in changing schools to become effective learning organisations (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013). It is argued that motivated teachers may in turn benefit the school and raise the standard of education as they may be more productive (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013). If everyone is eager to learn, then they might as well be able to take responsibility for their own learning. The SMTs might attempt to learn to lead themselves in order to be able to lead others and everybody may become agents of change (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013). In this way the school leaders and stakeholders may be able to take joint decisions in order to improve the learner and school performance (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2012).

1.4 Objectives of and need for the study

1.4.1 To explore how SMTs are operationalising leadership for learning in their schools.

1.4.2 To determine why the SMTs operationalise leadership for learning in the way they do.

2.3.3 To examine how the SMTs are supported by school stakeholders in the implementation of leadership for learning.

1.5 Questions to be answered in the research

1.5.1 How are the SMTs operationalising leadership for learning in their schools?

1.5.2 Why do the SMTs operationalise leadership for learning in this way?

1.5.3 How are SMTs supported in leadership for learning by school stakeholders inside and outside their schools?

1.6 Definition of key concepts

Leadership is shared work and commitments that shape the direction of school and the learning improvement agenda and the average effort in pursuit of the school's agenda (Bush, 2013). Leadership is linked with change in the education system (Bush, 2013). Further, leadership influences actions of others in achieving desirable goals. In other words, school leaders have the ability to transform others by shaping their goals, motivation and actions (Bush, 2013).

Management is seen as the activity which is utilised by school managers to maintain order. This is done with the aim to accomplish the ultimate goal which is the achievement of learner outcomes (Bush, 2013). Further, management tends to efficiently and effectively maintain current organisational arrangement rather than change (Bush, 2013). Frequently, managers tend to fail to determine whether they are leading or managing because they seem to focus on achieving one goal (Bush, 2013). Bush (2013) maintains that management and leadership should have the same vision to achieve the school's goal.

Leadership for learning is a process of activities which seek to create conditions that support effective teaching and learning and builds capacity for professional learning and change in learners, teachers and other communities (Hallinger, 2011). This means it is a learning-centred leadership model.

Further, Hallinger (2011) states that this leadership approach encompasses a number of conceptual models, rather than focusing on instructional leadership only. The instructional leadership style tends to value the role of the principal only. The SMTs implement leadership for learning by assuming formal and informal positions to influence people within the school (Bush, 2013). These individuals direct, guide and support the work of others, as well as their own in pursuit of some school-wide learning improvement agenda (Bush, 2013).

1.7 Chapter outline

In this section I outline the overview of the study by stating what is entailed in each chapter.

Chapter 1

This chapter introduces the whole study. It also gives the background of the study, the reason why the study was conducted, significance of the study, aims and objectives of the study, the critical questions and definition of the key concepts.

Chapter 2

In this chapter I review literature in order to elaborate on what leadership for learning actually is according to literature and I also draw from what is said by other writers to broaden my understanding of this approach. It also entails the theoretical framework of the study by examining what other scholars have researched about. The theories which I be looking at are leadership for learning and instructional leadership.

Chapter 3

This chapter entails the research design and methodology of the study which includes the research paradigm, selection of participants, research methodology, ethical issues and trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter 4

This is where I analyse data of the study and also discuss the findings of the data which I have generated from the participants and literature.

Chapter 5

In this chapter I present the summary of the study and also give some conclusions and recommendations.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have introduced my study which is about leading learning in township secondary schools. I have done this with an attempt to curb the decline in the learner and school performance which is prevalent in our schools. I have articulated the problem statement, motivation and rationale, significance of the study, objectives, research critical questions, definition of the key concepts, as well as the overview of the study by giving the chapter outline. In the following chapter I elaborate on literature reviewed and theoretical framework.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework



2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an orientation to the study. In this chapter I review literature related to leadership for learning. The chapter also explains the theoretical framework of the study. The theories which I am looking at are leadership for learning and instructional leadership.

2.1.1 The leadership for learning practices in South African schools

Leadership for learning is an approach that the South African schools are attempting to employ to achieve important school learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2011). Firstly, there is a belief that successful schools have teachers, learners and community members who are committed to personal and professional learning, however some of the SMTs seem not to be keen to lead learning in an appropriate manner in school (Bush & Glover, 2012). Bush and Glover (2012) note that the SMTs do not seem to include all stakeholders in the decision-making.

Secondly, some of the principals, as members of the SMTs in the South African context seem to be skeptical about sharing their powers with stakeholders (Department of Basic Education, 2015). These principals seem to be fearful of sharing their roles (DoE, 2015). Moreover, these school leaders do not seem to be effectively communicating with all stakeholders inside and outside school and consequently, learners are not academically competent (DoE, 2015). In addition, DoE (2015) states that there is a need for the SMTs to encourage and support the teachers, learners, parents and non-teaching staff members to learn. This may motivate the school stakeholders to become life-long learners in order to enhance excellence in learner and school performance.

Thirdly, parents should be involved in the teaching and learning of the learners and therefore, school governing bodies should be democratically elected (DoE, 2015). The SMTs have a huge task of collaborating with the school communities and outside-school communities. Strategies such as parent-teacher organisation involvement, monitoring and educational support should be implemented by the SMT (DoE, 2015).

Moreover, the usage of leadership for learning is likely to be influenced by the immediate context of the educational organisation within which the discourse of the leadership is located, the prevailing policy and cultural conditions of the country involved (MacBeath & Dempster, 2009). Hallinger (2011) stipulates that linkage between management processes and learning outcomes has led to recognition that leadership for learning can occur at all levels of conditions in school and is fostered by opportunities to build professional learning communities. The quality of teaching in schools has long been associated with the likelihood of successful learning outcomes in many nations (Bush, Bell, & Middlewood, 2010).

In addition, Hallinger (2011) confirms that the followers of leadership for learning are transformed into partners, co-leaders, life-long learners, collaborators and adaptive leaders who are undertaking new roles as creators and sustainers of contexts that allow people to lead others and themselves in learning.

Instructional leadership is the one that focuses on the improvement of learner outcomes. In a research conducted by Blasé and Blasé (2004) in The United States Of America it was noted that school leaders have a tendency to regard instructional leadership as consisting of supervision, staff development and curriculum development. Further, Blasé and Blasé (2004) emphasise that instructional leadership embraces the instruction, teacher learning and student learning, however the emphasis in this type of leadership is on the value of only one person, the principal, hence it was enacted into becoming leadership for learning (Hallinger, 2011)

Further, a learning organisation refers to school-based change efforts by individuals and teams of teachers to improve their everyday teaching and learning activities and this school seems to be the one which utilises leadership for learning (Bush, 2013). There is no better type of leadership style, however, a choice of leadership by school leaders depends on the situation or context of a school (Bush, 2013). Therefore, it might be useful for school leaders to infuse leadership for learning together with the instructional leadership style in leading learning in school in order to achieve the learning outcomes in all the stakeholders (Bush, 2013).

Furthermore, Drysdale and Gurr (2011) view leadership as a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups in which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of the organisational goals. Lateral influence which can also involve both upward and downward hierarchical influences makes the above process to be successful in making a school to achieve its utmost excellence (Drysdale & Gurr, 2011). This is not easy to happen in some of the South African schools because of the dictatorship by the SMT members to the teachers and lack of communication among post level one teachers (Bush, 2013).

2.1.2 The influence of leadership on the improvement of quality education in township secondary schools

Historically, township schools have been faced with complexities in terms of the attainment of school outcomes, which continue to be persistent and pervasive even to date (DoE, 2015). Issues of racism and ethnicity, inequity and inequality are still perpetuated in our schools despite the endeavors of the SMTs to curb the situation (Christie, 2010). Redistribution of resources is still problematic due to different demographics and different socio-economic backgrounds of learners (Christie, 2010). The issues which I have just mentioned make it difficult for the SMTs to practice leadership for learning in schools which lack resources (Hallinger, 2011). The historic issues stem from the racial segregation and poverty, however these issues have, and continue to shape our education system. The argument is, the SMTs and district leaders are still not finding equitable access to high quality teaching and learning. The learners have different learning experiences thus there is an achievement gap. The poor learners are still failing to compete globally (Christie, 2010). It is suggested that the redistribution of resources should tally with recognition of the school's context in order to enhance improvement in leadership for learning (Christie, 2010).

The element of leadership in leadership for learning is indirectly linked with learner outcomes (Hallinger, 2011). After four decades of Hallinger's research in the United States of America school leaders have failed to involve all the stakeholders in the learning process. Leadership for learning is allowing the school leaders to relate to learners, teachers, parents and other communities on a more personal level in order to improve learning in school (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010).

Moreover, the inclusion of parents as integral stakeholders has great impact on the improvement of their children's learning. The SMTs undergo tremendous pressures in fulfilling their roles in school, so they need full support from all stakeholders (Bush, Bell, & Middlewood, 2010).

In addition, it is important that principals as part of the SMT have a clear vision that will drive their schools towards success (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). It is argued by Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) that not only the principal should practise instructional leadership, but deputy principals, HODs and teachers should also bear the authority to instruct in school. Leadership for learning has its roots embedded in democracy (Bush Bell & Middlewood, 2010). Everybody is equally important in the decision-making process at school (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). To concur with the above Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013, p.9) assert that "effective principals have learnt how to make sure that all individuals feel they have ownership in their school."

2.1.3 Learning to lead for learning improvement

School leaders need to learn certain skills if they are to pursue ambitious learning improvement (DoE, 2015). In South Africa, as in most other education systems around the world, the position of principal is highly rung in the school ladder (DoE, 2015). This means that many teachers aspire to be a principal further along their career. Once this level is reached, the aspiration ceases as continuous learning is rare, if there is any.

Barth (2011) stipulates that if the main business of school and the entire education is about creating and sharing knowledge and leading learning, then all those who are employed in education should be involved in the process of learning, including the SMTs. Principals, deputy principals and HODs need to rethink and expand their knowledge to supervise, direct and instruct in the learning organisation. These school leaders have to learn how to manage the learning infrastructure with expertise. They also need to learn how to treat schools like places of business (Barth, 2011).

2.1.4 The importance of communication among SMTs and teachers in the delivery of quality education

The SMTs of different schools should network in order to share ideas (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). This may assist them to overcome the challenges which they are faced with in their schools. Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013) assert that when the SMTs of the under-performing schools cluster with the SMTs of excelling schools, they might be able to resolve their problems. Sharing of ideas may contribute to the understanding of the issues which occur in the school. In this way the under-performing SMTs will be standing on the shoulders of the giants in order to learn how to deal with the issues of leading teaching and learning in their schools.

West-Burnham (2010) points out that the SMTs should never procrastinate by turning a blind eye to the power which is exerted by professional learning communities. Moreover, two or more minds can be very powerful when they collaborate. The SMTs may also share knowledge with regards to the management of resources and fundraising skills. In the England context strong partnerships amongst schools is advocated (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). In addition, leadership for learning puts emphasis on the relationship amongst staff members, managers, principals, learners, and members of the community. These networks are the key to successful teaching and learning, which can bring about competency in learners (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). Advocacy for the need for shared values, vision, mutual support and trust was conducted by Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) in Malta. In my experience the liaison between the SMTs and individuals from different contexts within a community creates a sense of unity.

The SMTs also need to be supported in order to face the challenges they are confronted with in school so that transformation might prevail within the educational system (West-Burnham, 2010). If the principal as an SMT member, is an innovative leader who is willing to share ideas collaboratively with others, there can be efficient and effective teaching and learning in school. This kind of leader is able to use creative ways to lead learning in school (West-Burnham, 2010).

Further, West-Burnham (2010) stipulates that school leaders should utilise leadership strategies that make a positive contribution towards school improvement. These leaders should have capability to create good and close relationships between themselves and stakeholders of education (West-Burnham, 2010).

2.1.5 The role of SMTs in creating professional learning communities

Professional learning communities work together as teams, with the principal playing a leading role (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). The principals may not attempt to blow their own horn when the school is being successful as they would have delegated some of their tasks to the teachers. It is important that SMTs network with one another and also make closer relations with the communities in order for the schools to be successful (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013).

Professional learning management entails providing instructional leadership within the school; supervising and monitoring staff members; writing or countersigning reports on staff; ensuring the equitable distribution of work among staff members; including new members of staff; developing all staff members; participating in teacher appraisal systems with the aim of improving teaching, learning and managerial skills and ensuring that all evaluations conducted in the school are properly and efficiently organised, as it is articulated in *Section 16 of the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998* (Republic of South Africa, 1998). In addition, the SMT members as well as teachers are required to engage in teaching learners in class, assess and record the attainment of learner achievement. They are also required to be involved in committees which promote learning in school. This includes giving support to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which occur within the school.

Professional learning communities may have a positive impact if school leaders, teachers, parents and other communities may amalgamate to engage in conversations to come up with amicable solutions to resolve the issues of learning in secondary schools (West-Burnham, 2010). In addition, West-Burnham (2010) maintains that schools are the extensions of the social contexts in which they are embedded and that the quality of education depends on this factor.

Further, Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013) argue that the SMT, with the principal as an Ex-officio member, should interact with all stakeholders involving serving in the governing body. The SMT assists the governing body members to carry out their functions efficiently and effectively. They should also open the school doors for community learning programmes which may take place in the afternoon.

In terms of communication, the SMT is required to maintain good relationships with the school community members and the school governing body members. It also has to liaise with the circuit district and provincial education officials. It is also supposed to meet with the relevant structures with regards to school curriculum development. Meetings with parents with the aim of evaluation of learners' progress should be arranged and organised by principals. The school principal, as an SMT member must also consult with the universities and businesses to do follow-up on the performance standards of its learners.

In terms of instructional leadership, the *Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998)* reflects the role of a principal. Guiding, supervising and mentoring of staff, teaching and taking a more active role in curriculum development and extra-curricular activities are all the roles of the principal, however, working together with the other SMT members.

A successful SMT understands the values of communication and democracy in decision-making (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). It also leads to a trusting relationship being created, which contributes to a favourable learning environment (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). Successful instructional leaders recognise the need to allow learners and staff the freedom to voice their opinions. This leads to the development of a trusting relationship being created. Leaders should take cognisance of the staff involvement and also engage in mutual discussions that emerge as an effort to improve learner outcomes and learning (Bush, Bell & Decker, 2010).

In my experience a school community must share responsibility with SMTs so that school and learner improvement should occur (Shields, 2011). Net-working could be the key to an excellent and successful school.

Shields (2011) postulates that transformational leaders understand that their position mandates them only to speak when it is necessary and in some instances they need to keep quiet and listen to others. The transformational leaders also fully understand that they should engage in a dialogue with others in order to overcome challenges they are faced with in their schools (Shields, 2011). Further, Shields (2011) emphasises that in this way these leaders invite others to bring their perspectives with the aim of shaping their own perspectives about leading learning.

Secondly, from my perspective a professional learning community is a community that is totally engaged in learning. In this community everybody is capacitated and nurtured to become a life-long learner (Munro, 2010). Teachers are given a chance to contribute towards changing knowledge of the community at large. In this way both teachers and community members share knowledge, thereby learning from one another in order to be able to adapt to change that might be occurring in education (Munro, 2010).

Munro (2010) states that in the England context, clustering of teachers from different schools, including universities, is quite popular. Networks among SMTs allow them to learn from one another. They also assist them to derive one school culture as they would have learned from other people's different cultures (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010).

2.1.6 The SMTs as transformational and instructional leaders

West-Burnham (2010) argues that transforming a school might be a daunting task for some of the school leaders. That is why it is considered by some of the writers as a process which is not an overnight event (West-Burnham, 2010). It takes a dedicated, motivated, strong, committed and mostly supportive person in order to be regarded as a transformational leader (West-burnham, 2010). Transformation happens when school leaders are willing to change. They acquire knowledge of utilising strategies such as collaboration and shared leadership, democratically oriented instruction and joint efforts which the stakeholders render in the improvement of learner and school outcomes (Boschee & Decker, 2013). The SMT plays an important role in making everyone who is involved in the teaching and learning processes to take part (Boschee & Decker, 2013).

Despite the challenge of time constraints, the school leaders in many instances take priority and there are sometimes arguments between them and teachers with regards to the tasks they should perform in school (Grant, 2012). Transformation in education has brought about a revamp in the roles which are played by SMTs. It has also brought about critical issues which have caused malicious conflict among stakeholders and educational leaders (Grant, 2012). The SMT is perceived as the integral role player and his or her value is the most important one as compared to others in the school. Whether the school achieves its goals, depends on the SMT's ability and competency to perform its tasks. Bush (2013) argues that if one places a good SMT in a school, and puts a good teacher in front of a learner, that school is likely to succeed.

The ability of the SMT members to think critically may enable them to apply innovative ways of problem-solving and decision-making. The SMT should allow creativity of others to take place, orchestrate teamwork and also adapt to changes which are taking place in the educational system. Moreover, good SMTs may be able to create good relationships among other SMT members, teachers, learners, parents and other community members to instill a learning culture in school (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). Further, Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013) maintain that transformed principals are able to practise democratic disciplinary measures when they manage conflicts. By implementing democratic measures, the principal may be portraying good leadership skills and this might propel the teachers to do the same in their classrooms.

Furthermore, Grant (2012) states that transformed SMTs ensure that smooth curriculum delivery is carried out by recruiting highly qualified staff members. These members of staff may be mentored, trained and developed through workshops and integrated quality measurement standards (IQMS).

The SMT must also generate funds to run the school and see to it that such funds are properly managed (Nene, 2015). It is responsible to set clear goals and allow collaborative formulation and implementation of school laws and policies which are in line with the South African constitution. SMTs must also ensure that teaching and learning occur in a safe and healthy environment for teachers and learners.

The SMTs in the democratic era are faced with the challenge of accountability to make learners to achieve the learning outcomes (Hoadley & Ward, 2010). This can be done by not focusing on learner learning only, but also on the learning of all other stakeholders (Hoadley & Ward, 2010). Hoadley and Ward (2010) further state that the SMTs as instructional leaders should be able to instruct their teachers on how to implement the formulated policies in the curriculum delivery.

The role of an instructional leader is to work together with his or her staff and learners' parents to nurture them with skills which will enable them to learn (Drysdale & Gurr, 2011). This might enable teachers to impart adequate knowledge of sharing and working together as a team in the attainment of the school goals (Drysdale & Gurr, 2011). Further, Southworth (2010) concurs with what has been stated above by asserting that the instructional leaders have an integral role to support the teachers in classroom, although some of them fail to do so, as they have multitudes of tasks to perform as leaders.

In addition, Hoadley and Ward (2010) stipulate that the SMTs and teachers still are unable to put into practice what is written in the policies. Similarly, Hallinger (2011) concurs that leadership for learning differs from context to context, thus it is situational. This is why it seems as if little is considered with regards to proper implementation of policies in different schools. Further, Hallinger (2011) affirms that since schools differ in context they should be lead differently by school leaders.

Shields (2011) articulates that the SMTs are vigilant of the prospective negative effects that might emerge between them and the teachers caused by tension of them having to constantly increase their performance. This has resulted in them lacking the expertise to adequately instruct the teachers as they fear that they might be drifted apart and their relationships might be jeopardised by the tensions. In addition, Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013) argue that there can never be quality teaching and learning, if the SMTs are uncertain about their role as instructional leaders in education.

The Department of Education can formulate recently revised learner assessment policies with the aim of quality improvement in learning, however the SMT should have the ability to allow the transformation to take place in the classroom (Drysdale & Gurr, 2010). It is assumed that the SMTs are the key role players in the improvement of teaching and learning in school (Hoadley & Ward, 2010). As Hoadley and Ward (2010) have articulated earlier on, that the SMTs are supposed to come up with innovative measures to create improvement in the classroom, but are uncertain about their instructional role I attempt to close the gap in this research.

Similar to Hallinger (2011) I maintain that leadership for learning can be possible if different leadership styles such as transformational and shared leaderships can be utilised in conjunction with instructional leadership, thus leadership for learning could prevail. I also concur with Hallinger (2010) when he asserts that schools are different in context thus they should be led differently by different school leaders.

2.1.7 The influence of context on the improvement of learning in secondary schools

In most South Africa schools other SMT members lack the understanding of their role as instructional leaders (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). Some teachers in the South African context work under dreadful conditions, such as lack of resources, classroom congestion and inadequate security. The shortage of learning materials such as text books make learners and teachers to face complexities when they attempt to attain learner and school outcomes.

Moreover, it is not easy to work in overcrowded classrooms. These conditions impact negatively on the improvement of teaching and learning. Our schools need leaders who can democratically implement the leadership for learning approach by creation of networks with other communities, especially school leaders of excelling schools. They can share their problems and might come up with innovative ideas to lead learning in their schools (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010).

From what I have reviewed in the literature it is clearly stated that schools are not the same hence they have to be treated differently by different school leaders (Hallinger, 2011). The educationalists still have to reflect on the way they distribute financial, physical and human resources in different schools in order for effective leadership for learning to take place. Christie (2010) affirms that redistribution and recognition should not be separated if teaching and learning are to be improved. Further, Christie (2010) attests that poor and rich schools are treated equally, which tends to be unfair for the poor school as the poor learners become poorer while the rich become richer. Educationalists should revisit the issue of inequity in order to address inequality and inequity in the South African schools (Christie, 2010).

Nene (2015) argues that if the learners are unable to pay the required school fees, the SMT needs to work together with the local council and business people to ask for donations in order to generate funds, but this seems not to be happening in some schools. Nene (2015) postulates that the learners need feeding schemes and other infrastructures, but the SMTs seem not to be willing to assist.

One of the important roles of an SMT is to provide adequate resources for their schools, however this might be a daunting task for some as we are aware that some communities are extremely poor. This calls for a brilliant SMT which has suitable skills to communicate with both school community and outside school community to raise some funds to run the school. In some schools, learners come from poor families where most of the parents are unemployed. These learners walk long distances to school even on sunny and rainy days. Some of them come to school with empty stomachs.

Due to peer pressure they resort to bunking classes and indulge themselves in drug abuse and violence. There is lack of commitment in their school work. The learners also carry dangerous weapons to school hence the teachers do not feel safe anymore. The SMT needs to involve community members and also have to collaboratively work together with the policing forums in the area to bring discipline back into school.

Similarly, the teachers have shown negative attitudes towards learning and appraisal systems (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013). The teachers resist the appraisal system because they regard it as the attempt for the SMTs to find faults in their teaching methods. My own understanding of the appraisal system is to evaluate the school performance with the good intention of learner outcomes improvement. Appraisal is carried out through IQMS in school regardless of the negative attitudes from some of the teachers. Some SMT members are unable to give teachers constructive criticism. They tend to take it personally. Some of the teachers comply with the appraisal system, but they do not undergo the whole process properly and they are uncertain about which criteria to use and how (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013). In this way, self and whole school evaluation are not carried out appropriately and the school leaders are not certain about where to begin with regards to learner and school improvement.

2.1.8 The importance of staff motivation

Motivation is an inner state of mind that drives the worker's behaviour and enthusiasm towards the achievement of the school goals (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2012). The SMTs have to ensure that the teachers are keen to do their utmost best when they do their work in school. It is integral for the SMTs to instruct the teachers to give their best effort in the improvement of learner and school performance. The school leaders should be vigilant about the positive and negative effects of the challenges that the teachers are facing in school (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013). The school leaders need to maintain the internal and external aspects of motivation. This may include encouraging teachers to attend workshops or enroll for further studies at higher educational institutions (van Deventer & Kruger, 2012).

Incentives may form part of motivation for teachers' improvement of their performance towards the attainment of learner outcomes. The teachers may be awarded with certificates after they have attended workshops or for the acknowledgement for the work well performed (van Deventer et al., 2012). This might motivate the teachers to put more effort into their work and learner improvement may be enhanced.

2.1.9 Relevance of vision and mission statement

The most important role of a principal as member of the SMT is to derive a sound vision and mission statement. These must be agreed upon by and shared among all the stakeholders. Before the mission statement is formulated, the principal must present his or her vision to other members of the SMT, the governing body and teachers (van Deventer et al., 2012)

Further, Steyn and van Niekerk (2013) assert that a good principal relies on a well thought of vision in order to be able to focus on the directions he or she wishes to steer his or her school towards the achievement of the school goals. Bush and Glover (2012) define vision as a dream that is expressed in written form. With the efforts of the principal and all the stakeholders incorporated together, it may assist the school to successfully achieve its goals. Principals as members of the SMT should often reflect on the manner in which they implement the vision and mission. In this way they might be able to verify the relevance of such documents and would opt for amendments where and when they feel there is necessity. The goals enshrined in the mission statement ought to be attainable (van Deventer et al., 2010).

2.1.10 Support from stakeholders

Schools are not isolated entities, but they form a wider part of the community which includes parents, district officials, other community members and business industry (Harris, 2013). A mutual influence between the school, business industry and the Department of Education is essential. The school leaders should see to it that they establish good relationships with these stakeholders. School leaders should come up with innovative ideas to encourage such relationships to be possible. This section of the chapter attempts to examine some of the ways of harnessing support from the stakeholders in order to make them the co-partners in the teaching and learning of learners (Harris, 2013).

Firstly, districts should start by initiating their own leadership learning programmes in support of SMTs and teachers in order to improve learner performance (Harris, 2013). The districts create these learning programmes with the aim of primarily preparing new principals, deputy principals as well as HODs and develop teacher leaders.

The SMTs receive learning and support from other sources such as the central office. Where the central office is proactive they tend to be more responsive and engage with schools. The schools gain more support because they are often visited by the district officials to give them support. Effective communication between the school and district makes the school leaders to create and maintain good relationships and it might be easy for them to learn and also allow teachers, learners and parents to learn (Harris, 2013).

Secondly, peer and professional networks must be established to enable school learning improvement to take place (Harris, 2013). This may occur when school leaders connect with colleagues in similar roles and other professionals. Innovative ideas, advice, comfort and modeling can be offered, especially to the underperforming school leaders by excelling SMTs to enhance improvement in school. The school leaders should also motivate the teachers to cluster with other teachers from the neighbouring schools in order to learn from one another how to lead learning in their classrooms. By attending cluster moderation meetings teachers may set standardised formal assessment tasks based on the same work schedule and also may share some knowledge. This may result in learners learning the same outcomes within the same time frame. Consequently, this might result in the improvement of the underperforming schools.

Thirdly, subject to the South African Schools Act *No. 84 of 1996, sections 20 and 21* the School Governing Body of a public school must be in partnership with the school to develop a mission statement of the school, adopt a code of conduct for learners and teachers of the school after consultation with the learners' parents and teachers of the school within the framework laid down in the Constitution (*RSA, 1996b*). The SASA (*RSA, 1996a*). *SASA No. 84 of 1996* mandates the establishment of sustainable relationships between (SGBs), comprising parents, learners, educators and non-educator members. The SGBs are responsible for playing a major role in tackling fundamental issues such as school budget, school and language policy, discipline and appointment as well as promotion of teaching and administrative staff, however led by the SMT.

It seems that teachers support the role of the SGB in learner discipline, but they have reservations about their role in matters of educator misconduct. They also feel that SGBs should be trained for the appointment of new educators (Theron, 2013). This study may help the SMT and teachers to see the importance of seeing parents as partners in their children's learning. I perceive school-community partnerships as important for parents' understanding of what is done for the learners. Some writers say it also may take some time for the educators to build a relationship with the parents. They also say educators have a significant role of empowering parents to address learning difficulties experienced by their children. They see parents as the most integral community resource because the parents are concerned about the success of their children.

My perception of school-community partnership concurs with what is stated by the writers above about parents because they are the immediate community resources that are at the disposal of the school. Thus parents may be used as co-teachers to nurture and discipline a child. This might have a positive impact in the improvement and development of the child's learning both formally and informally. I believe that the parents are responsible for the learner's behaviour. Thus they should be part and parcel in the formulation of the codes of conduct for both learners and teachers. They also said that it builds a good relationship between the parent and school, and allows the parent to know more about the achievement of the learner. It is easy for parents to support and encourage the learners.

It is unfortunate that the SMTs and teachers in some schools only involve parents when there are issues pertaining to behavioural problems only. SMTs and teachers should not call parents only when the child is in trouble, they should invite the parents regularly to view the progress of their children. Lumby (2013) affirms that some SMTs still seem to fail to promote participation of parents. The possibility could be that they are scared of change or they are reluctant to adapt to and embrace change hence they do not lead successful schools.

In the democratic South Africa engagement of parents in school seems a democratic responsibility as well as right of parenthood, but the SMT and teachers seem to fail to encourage participation of parents.

If the SMTs and teachers can involve parents it could mean that they are agents of change and their schools can improve and be effective. The SMTs and teachers should know that change is not a once-off event, but it is a process, so they need to give parents and themselves some time to deal with and internalise change. The shared and transformational leaderships encourage leaders to share their roles with all the relevant stakeholders (Harris, 2013). Transformational leadership regards a learning organisation as one that is based on change in order to allow team work in the school to improve the learners' everyday learning activities (de Vos et al., 2012). Thus collaborative learner performance in some schools has declined which shows that parents are not fully involved in their children's learning.

The SMTs do not fully engage parents in educational problems and they also do not involve parents in policy and decision-making. When the SMTs are having effective communication with the parents, it means that there should be feedback about what is happening to children. The school report to parents is done with the use of letters, telephone and word of mouth, but it does not give adequate feedback.

In some of the schools the SMTs do not regularly call parents meetings and when they happen to call them, there is insufficient time and parents are not given a chance to contribute input on the items they would also like to talk about in the meeting. Most of the time, the SMT and teachers seem not to be listening to parents because they feel that the parents do not have the capacity to be involved in the formulation of policies and decision making.

These SMTs and teachers would like parents to provide solutions even when they are not included in the design of those solutions. In order to communicate effectively, the SMT should implement the Mutual-Adaption perspective which allows "backward mapping", which uses "bottom-up" communication channels (Datnow & Park, 2006).

The above mentioned perspective can be used in order to enhance a two-way communication, but also there should be clear line of authority which is hierarchical. Bush, Bell & Middlewood (2010) maintain that there is no one good theory to be used by SMT and educators, but they use the “over-arching” theories in order to enhance improvement and effectiveness in the school.

Over-arching theories allow both vertical and horizontal communication to happen, thus parents will feel that they also possess ownership of the school, even though there is involvement of the SGB. They will know what is happening to their children. When parents are working together with the SMTs and educators, they could develop mutual trust.

What the SMT and educators can do to establish and sustain good relationships with local businesses is having regular meetings. Networking with prosperous business managers, with the purpose of finding out which leadership styles these businesses might be using which make them to be successful, might help school managers to decide on the leadership styles that might be suitable to make their schools achieve the learning outcomes. Team-working with the business sector might make schools to realise which needs the companies have; in other words which skills do they require the students to acquire in order to become more productive in the workplace. This might assist the school managers to set subject policies which will cater for the company needs. Effective communication between the school managers and prosperous business managers is crucial for the benefit of the country’s economic growth and preparation of the students for the global competition (Morrison, 2010).

The teachers may offer extra classes in the afternoons, week-ends, even during holidays which can be designed by the school in order for it to gain confidence and be resilient thereafter. Learners may be encouraged to go the extra mile in enhancing the learning culture to prevail both inside and outside school.

Lastly in this section, as stipulated in *SASA No 84 of 1996*, the SMT should have a profound relationship with the Representative Council of Learners (DoE, 1996). It is further stipulated that the RCL should be included in the decision-making in order to allow learners to have a say in their learning (DoE, 1996).

The RCL can be utilised to disseminate information pertaining to the implementation of the code of conduct to self-discipline in the learners, and when there is appropriate discipline, the learners and school community are able to learn and develop (Morrison, 2012). Consequently, when learners are part and parcel of the decision-making they are able to come up with amicable solutions to the problems the school might be encountering.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This study was underpinned by two theories namely leadership for learning theory and instructional theory which are discussed in this chapter. These leadership styles constitute collaborative leadership in schools (Bush, 2013).

2.2.1 Leadership for learning theory

Leadership for learning is a model which suggests that there is a wider range of leadership sources which can be incorporated in it. These include instructional leadership, although for the past four decades it has been seen as predominantly utilised by many school leaders (Hallinger, 2011). The researches which were conducted by Hallinger and colleagues in Asia Pacific, North America, UK and Europe confirm that this model highlights the manner in which it provides the contribution that leadership makes to school improvement and student learning.

The term leadership for learning has gained international acknowledgement (Hallinger, 2011). According to Hallinger (2011), this leadership approach is a combination of three concepts such as instructional, transformational and shared leadership styles. In leadership for learning, the school leaders play a crucial role of creating and sustaining a school-wide focus (Hallinger, 2011). This approach further, highlights emphasis on the significance of learning for both school and outside school communities, unlike the instructional leadership which puts its focus on learner learning only (Hallinger, 2011).

Further, Hallinger (2011) stipulates that leadership is influenced by the school and environmental context. The values, beliefs, knowledge and experience of leaders are important (Hallinger, 2011).

This means that personal characteristics of a leader moderate the exercise of leadership of a leader on daily basis. School-level conditions such as vision and goals, academic structures and processes and people capacity mediate leadership to learner and school outcomes which makes the leadership to be indirectly enacted to the learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2011).

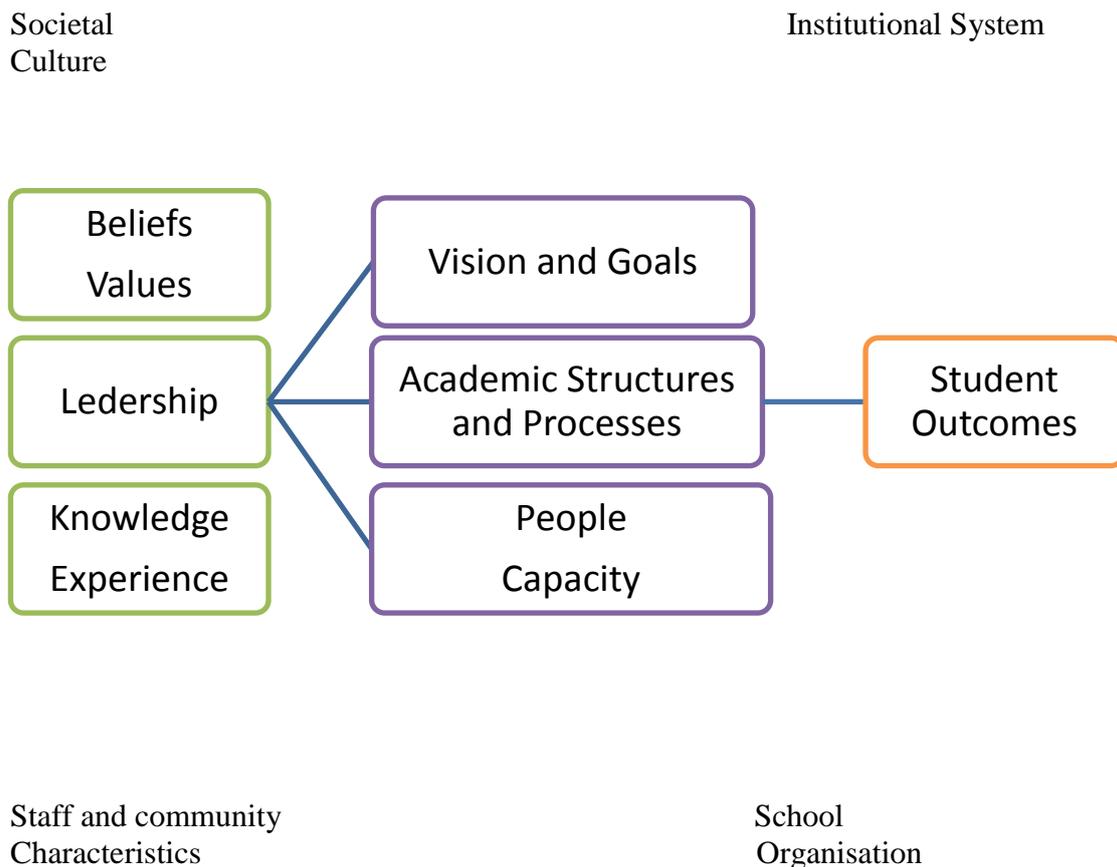


Figure 1: Hallinger's (2011) Model of leadership for learning

2.2.2 Instructional leadership theory

While instructional leadership is still seen as prevalent in this model, other leadership styles such as transformational leadership and shared leadership also feature as well.

Moreover, (Hallinger, 2011) further emphasises that leadership for learning approach encompasses shared vision and goals of schools, understanding of the need for change, relationship based on mutual respect and trust and engagement strategies.

Similarly, I can conceptualise leadership for learning as a democratic approach thus it is the suitable approach towards the achievement of learner outcomes. The instructional leadership, on the other hand, has a bureaucratic nature, that can be utilised in conjunction with the transformational leadership and shared leadership, although it is not supposed to be dominating in the model of leadership for learning (Bush, 2013).

The instructional leadership emphasises on what the school administrators and teachers need to do to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes by a school. Instructional leadership theory has its roots in the 1980s (Hallinger, 2011). Hallinger (2011) also maintains that a lot of emphasis was put on the role of a principal as the key instructor in school. This writer stipulates that this belief still prevails even today (Hallinger, 2011). It is critical that this theory sees the value of the principal as more significant than other SMT members. The principal has all the power and authority to him or herself, however there has been power shifts since the birth of democracy in 1994 in South African schools. Teachers have also become their own classroom instructors, with the support and motivation from the SMTs, although this is not fully practised in some schools (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). The aim of this research is to address the issue of the exclusion of other stakeholders from decision-making and policy formulation and implementation in school. It attempts to bridge the gap between the instructional theory and other theories such as transformational and shared theories in the education system.

According to the instructional theory the principal and SMT members have to lead learning towards the attainment of quality curriculum delivery (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). Further, these school leaders have to be hands on in the identification of problems and solving them thereafter (Hallinger, 2011). They should have good communication skill and rapport with fellow teachers. A horizontal communication strategy, as well as bottom up communication channels must be encouraged among the staff members and school leaders. Moreover, school leaders need to focus on self and whole school development (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010).

I concur with what Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) state when they affirm that there is no best theory to be used by a particular school for it to become successful in leading learning. If the SMTs can acknowledge teachers as co-leaders by sharing their powers, though with the principal being the over-seer of the achievement of the school goals, there can be improvement in school. A learning culture can be instilled in the school if everybody works together as a team. The type of leadership to be used by school leaders depends on the context of the school, hence it is situational (Hallinger, 2011).

In addition, Hallinger (2011) argues that school leadership has an indirect impact on learner learning outcomes. The current research makes attempts towards attaining optimal understanding of how learner learning outcomes may be achieved (Hallinger, 2011).

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the literature review and theoretical framework. Firstly, an introduction which elaborated on the term leadership for learning was presented. The introduction was followed by an exploration of South African, African and international literature on leadership for learning model. Lastly, this chapter ended by highlighting the underpinning theory, such as instructional leadership as it is enacted into leadership for learning. The following chapter deals with the design and methodology of the study.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with local, continental as well as international literature and the theoretical framework around leadership for learning. This chapter attempts to describe the research design and methodology. Aspects such as research paradigm, research approach, selection of participants and data generation are discussed. It also includes the description of the research setting, trustworthiness and ethical issues of the study.

3.2 Research paradigm

Paradigms are the different ways in which people perceive the world (Gill & Johnson, 2010). My study is driven by an interpretive approach of viewing the world of leadership for learning. SMTs of different schools have different perceptions about leadership for learning. Using my own world view of leadership for learning, I have always been critical of the way it is practised by some of the SMTs. Since the beginning of my teaching experience in the two township schools in Umlazi, I have been puzzled by the manner in which the learners perform most of the time. I have been questioning myself how the SMTs are going to do to curb the situation.

My experience in the teaching of English First Additional Language has taught me that people have different views about the same phenomenon. I have realised that the interpretivist perspective has its own ontology which assumes that there are various truths or social realities that might exist (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Cohen et al. (2011) highlight that individual people have their own subjective, unique, social realities. Further, epistemology in the interpretivist perspective is an individual's knowledge that is subjective, personal and unique (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche' & Delpont, 2012). Interpretivists treat others as equals in order to create close relationships with them (de Vos et al., 2012). Being an interpretivist that I am has helped me to gain more information from the SMTs about my study.

The participants were engaged in a semi-structured interview in order to state their views about how the SMTs are operationalising leadership for learning by articulating what actually occurs in their schools, using their knowledge. My interpretive view of the world was complemented by my engagement with the literature and empirical studies. I have also worked closely with my participants hence I am now also being able to value other peoples' world views.

3.3 Research approach

This study uses a qualitative approach. A research approach refers to, according to Gill and Johnson (2010), the type of data generation approach, either the qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods approach. My study has employed a qualitative approach in a case study because I believe it is suitable for an interpretivist paradigm. I did this with the purpose to explore the daily life experiences of the SMTs pertaining to leadership for learning practice in school. The research approach showed me and my participants the direction to which I had to steer my study. It also entailed how I intended to generate and analyse data to respond to the critical questions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

3.4 Research methodology

This study utilises a case study as its methodology. This case study enabled me to obtain detailed primary and in-depth information as my participants engaged in qualitative semi-structured interviews in which they had an opportunity to elaborate in the manner they might have wished to (Gill et al., 2010). The study methodology also entails how I have deduced ways of ensuring reliability, ethics and trustworthiness, the kind of sampling, population, choice of research setting, and data generation methods which I have employed such as interviews and observation schedules in my study (Cohen et al., 2011).

At first I was indecisive about which methodology to use between a narrative inquiry and case study. I have been intrigued by a number of factors to utilise such methodology. One of the factors was my engagement in discussions with some of my peer students. This factor contributed a lot towards my accumulation of knowledge based on what a case study actually is.

Further, this case study has allowed me to generate a lot of information pertaining to the critical questions of my study. This is where I have been able to use cases of experienced SMT members to find out the authentic truth about SMTs operationalising leadership for learning. It has been a suitable methodology for my study because it has allowed the participants to state their cases of actually what is happening in their schools without any fear or discomfort (Cohen et al., 2011).

3.5 Selection of schools

I selected three schools, Mpokohelo Secondary, Tholimfundo Secondary and Eyethu Secondary. I attempted to examine the manner in which the SMTs of the three schools practise leadership for learning. I undertook a purposive sampling in selecting the participating schools. Purposive sampling helped me to an extent that I was able to determine which schools were consistent in obtaining good marks in the previous years. I have carried out this activity by looking at the matric exam analysis of the seven consecutive years, from 2009 to 2015. This painted a clear picture of which schools I needed for my research because the analysis shows the overall pass rate of each school. The analysis has informed me which schools have excelled and which ones have declined.

3.6 Selection of the participants

In qualitative research, knowledge is located within its setting, thus the responsibility of the choice of sample of participants who come from different backgrounds lies entirely in the hands of the researcher (Mason, 2002). The purpose for this case study is to generate authentic information from various reliable participants who have been working in the educational field for a long period of time. My study comprises three experienced SMT members, one principal, one deputy principal and one HOD from each of the three secondary schools. All the three principals have been working as heads of the schools for more or less 13 years. The deputy principals have been in their leadership positions for more than 10 years. The HODs from each of the three schools also have been leading teachers and learners for more than 10 years in the same schools.

These participants were be fully informed about what is going on in their schools. I have undertaken purposive sampling. Three SMT members from each school were interviewed in order for them to voice their views about the practice of leadership for learning in their schools.

3.7 Data generation methods

This study used semi-structured interviews and observations as its methods to generate data.

3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are flexible, in-depth interviews which are often called conversations with a purpose (Cohen et al., 2011). In these interviews the interviewer and interviewee are equal partners (Cohen et al., 2011). Semi-structured interviews are useful when generating information on large scale (Cohen et al., 2011). It is difficult to establish uniformity across participants because of the open-ended nature of the semi-interview questions (Cohen et al., 2011). It is therefore important for the researcher to maintain flexibility and control (Cohen et al., 2011). The researcher must harness the interview and bring it back to the subject under discussion by means of prompt questioning (Cohen et al., 2011). These open-ended questions define the topic under investigation, but also provide the opportunities for the researcher and participant to discuss some other topics in more detail. In a semi-structured interview the researcher also has the freedom to probe the participant to elaborate on the original response or to follow a line of inquiry introduced by the researcher (Cohen et al., 2011).

All nine interviews were audio-taped and conducted in English. The SMT members did not encounter any complexities when they were responding in English as it is used as the medium of instruction in their schools, although there were minor language barriers in some instances as English was not their mother tongue.

The participants were used to expressing themselves through English. Interviews were the most valuable instruments when I was generating data about the perceptions of the individual SMTs.

The SMT members were interviewed individually so as to allow freedom of expression, without fearing any negative criticism from their counterparts, if any. The interviews process entailed face-to-face discussions with the SMTs.

I believe that the semi-structured interviews are excellent tools for data generation because they allowed me to “dig” for authentic truth and knowledge from my participants, as I also used some probes (Mason, 2002). Through semi-structured interviews I enabled my participants to conveniently interact with me. My participants found it easier to communicate orally than writing down their views. Mason (2002, p. 64) argues that “interviews make it easy to ask questions, to listen to participants, to gain access to their accounts and to analyse their body language.” Semi-structured interviews also allowed my participants to elaborate on their responses in order to clarify certain statements they had made with regards to leadership for learning. I constructed a semi-structured interview schedule to guide me through the interview process (See appendix C, p.94).

3.7.2 Observations

An observation lies at the centre of a qualitative research because it allows the researcher to capture information live (White, 2003). It also allows the study to be seen through the eyes of the participants, providing ‘unique examples of real people in real situations’ (Cohen et al. 2011, pp. 181-183).

Further, Cohen et al. (2011) elaborate that a research is some form of observation, since we cannot study the world without being part of it. White (2003) mentions that participation observation is generally regarded as the principal data-generating strategy of qualitative research, therefore I regarded observation schedules to be relevant for my data-generation because I was able to relate to my daily experiences of teaching and learning at the school.

I also formulated observation schedules as one of my data generation instruments (See appendix D, p.95). At all three schools I was granted an opportunity to visit certain classes in which some of the SMTs teach and I also recorded some activities which seemed to be relevant to my critical questions.

The observation schedule enabled me to generate data about the participants operationalising leadership for learning in their real contexts, during my visits to the participant offices and classrooms. In some instances I made appointments with the HODs as part of the SMT, with the aim of observing how they offered class visits to monitor curriculum delivery and how often they organised staff meetings in their schools.

I also requested permission to walk around the school to observe whether all the teachers honoured their teaching periods and whether the school had adequate and conducive infrastructure to promote effective teaching and learning. I took notes while I was moving around the school. This assisted me in adding on to the data given by the participants.

3.8 Research setting

This semi-structured interview took place at the 3 schools namely, Mpokophelo Secondary, Eyethu Secondary and Tholimfundo Secondary in the Umlazi District, in Kwazulu-Natal. All three of them are public schools which are located in the same township, but with different backgrounds. Two of these schools are surrounded by extremely poverty-stricken communities which are under-resourced. One of the three schools is highly-resourced, compared to the other 2 schools. The interviews were conducted from July 2016 to August 2016. The deputy principals and HODs were asked to spend 45 minutes of their time to engage with me, the researcher in the interviews.

Mpokophelo is a quintile one school. It is a no fee school. Children of this school do not pay fees because they come from extremely poor socio-economic backgrounds. These children walk long distances to school with empty stomachs. This makes some of the learners to fall asleep while they are still learning inside their classrooms. They hardly grasp whatever teachers teach them. Families of the surrounding community suffer high unemployment rate. The school lacks physical resources such as text books and equipment such as desks. There are 1 500 learners and 45 teachers. The SMT comprises 1 principal, two deputy principals and 5 HODs. The learner pass rate is very low as the learners are faced with many challenges.

Eyethu is a quintile two no-fee school. The socio-economic background of the learners is also very poor. The school also lacks physical resources, as they are inadequate. Learners use taxis to come to school and are also able to buy their stationery and text books.

The learners arrive early at school and also attend afternoon classes. Almost 40 percent of learners' parents are employed. The school consists of 1200 learners and 42 teachers. The SMT comprises 1 principal, 2 deputy principals and 5 HODs just like Mpokophelo. Learners seem to cope with their learning, despite the circumstances of low income which is earned by their parents.

Tholimfundo falls under quintile five because children pay school fees and the school is highly-resourced. The school has a computer lab, fully equipped Science laboratory and library. Learners come as early as 6: 30 to school and are able to stay until 17:00. Some of learners' parents manage to drive the learners to and from school. Some learners use public transport. Almost 80 percent of parents are working and earn high salaries. The school consists of 1000 learners and 40 teachers. There is 1 principal, 1 deputy principal and 5 HODs at the school.

3.9 Analysing data

My purpose of conducting data analysis was to collate different but related categories of obtained information. There were 9 interviews carried out with SMTs of 3 secondary schools. Each interview lasted for 45 minutes. I encouraged open discussions to take place in keeping with qualitative frameworks. Field notes were taken during the informal interactions with the participants and observation of meetings.

Data analysis is primarily the process of organising data into categories and themes (de Vos et al., 2012). De Vos et al. (2012) elaborate that data analysis in qualitative research begins as soon as the generation of data begins. This can be attained by reducing data by the researcher, whereby data is evaluated carefully in order to screen and sift unimportant information which is given by the participants (de Vos, et al., 2012).

It also includes transcription of data, repeatedly listening to the entire audio-taped interview, clustering units of relevant meaning, writing a summary of each interview, identifying general unique themes and lastly, writing a composite summary of all the interviews (de Vos et al., 2012).

As it suited the case study, I analysed the data that was generated through the semi-structured interviews and observations. I also wanted to make it a point that the data that I had generated were exactly what the participants iterated to me during the interview process. That was exactly what I did in order to obtain relevant and convenient information for my study. I also used thematic analysis, which enabled me to come up with the relevant and related themes from the important data for my study. Further, data analysis assisted me to arrange and organise information in order for it to make sense to me and the reader of my research (de Vos, et al., 2012).

3.10 Considering ethical issues

It is integral that the researcher must demonstrate that he or she is vigilant about the binding ethical responsibilities (Newman, 2006). Newman (2006) attests that researchers have to abide with ethical principles such as autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence. “Researchers have a moral obligation to be ethical even when participants may not be aware or concerned about ethics (Newman, 2006, p. 129). “

All ethical protocols were observed in this study. The ethical clearance from The University of KwaZulu-Natal was applied for. Permission was asked from the Department of Education Head Office, in Pietermaritzburg. Also permission to conduct the study was requested and obtained from the Umlazi District Office and principals of the schools (See appendix B, p.91). Informed consent letters stating the use of pseudonyms, instead of proper names were issued to all the participants (See appendix A, p.89). I ensured confidentiality of data generated by not revealing what was said by the participants to any one without their permission to do so.

The research was honestly carried out as it contained a clear purpose and also showed respect for the rights of all the participants by not compelling them to continue to engage in the interviews, even when they no longer felt comfortable. No false information was added, except what was said by the participants (Gill et al., 2010).

3.11 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness entails how much credible and dependable the results of the study are (Cohen et al., 2011). This relies on the ability of the researcher to avoid biasness. It also depends on how far the researcher is being able to remain as neutral as possible during the interview process.

According to Botha (2011), qualitative research should establish trustworthiness by considering criteria which entail principles such as credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability of data. This enables the researchers to assure them to obtain accurate data (de Vos et al., 2012).

As the researcher I have enhanced the credibility of this study by describing the reasons behind my decisions throughout the study (Cope, 2014). Further, transcripts were given to the participants to verify the accuracy of what was transcribed (member check).

Dependability is enhanced by the authenticity of the participants throughout the research (Botha, 2011). Botha (2011) suggests that qualitative research should try to be as authentic as possible, thus it requires an effective interviewer who should be knowledgeable of the subject matter of the study. The researcher should also have good communication skills, including being able to listen critically to what the participants are saying (de Vos et al., 2012). To ensure authenticity I repeated my interview questions and also provided a number of probes for my participants to clearly understand such questions.

Cofirmability of the study entails explicitly describing how the findings were established (Cope, 2014). The interpretation of data might be influenced by the researcher's misinterpretation which may result in biasness of the interview (Cope, 2014). To avoid becoming biased, I made it my responsibility to confirm the subjective reality of my participants' knowledge about leadership for learning practice, by revisiting to ask them to verify data generated from them. Moreover, I have also supported the findings with rich quotations from my participants and also have involved them in my final texts of research to ensure that their data was interpreted accordingly (Cope, 2014).

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the design and methodology of the study. Aspects such as research paradigm, research approach, research methodology, research setting, which included selection of schools and selection of participants, data generation, interview process and observations of the study were discussed. It also included the description of trustworthiness, ethical issues of the study. The next chapter presents data analysis which will also elaborate on the findings of the study.

Chapter 4

Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology employed in this study. This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the findings in order to address the three critical questions generated from the study, as articulated in chapter one, namely:

- How are the SMTs operationalising leadership for learning in their schools?
- Why do the SMTs operationalise leadership for learning in this way?
- How are SMTs supported in leadership for learning by the stakeholders inside and outside their schools?

I also reiterate the purpose for my study that it is to explore how the SMTs enact leadership for learning in their daily activities in three township secondary schools in the Umlazi District, KwaZulu-Natal. In presenting the data, the key research questions are used as an organising framework to present and discuss the data. Under each research question, the data is presented under themes and sub-themes which emerged from the interviews and observations. A discussion of data using relevant literature and theoretical framework is also presented. To ensure authenticity and thick description, verbatim quotations from the data of the participants are presented.

4.2 Findings and discussions

I present my findings and discussions under the themes emerging from the three critical questions that inform my study, namely:

- Putting leadership for learning into practice in South African township secondary schools.
- The reasons for the SMT enacting leadership for learning the way they do in South African secondary schools.
- The support given by stakeholders to the SMTs in leadership for learning.

4.2.1 Putting leadership for learning into practice in South African secondary schools

With regards to the issue of putting leadership for learning into practice in the secondary schools seven sub-themes emerged, which I discuss below.

4.2.1.1 Proper planning for leading learning

There seemed to be lack of time for proper planning, for leading learning in two of the three schools. There seemed to be a need for the principals to provide the SMTs with enough time for proper planning. Bush and Glover (2012) maintain that school leaders, as management team should have some time to sit down and plan for leadership activities which might lead to school effectiveness. Some HODs seemed reluctant to engage in leadership roles which had not been planned for, as they presumed to be busy teaching in class. The SMTs of Tholimfundo and Eyethu secondary schools seemed to have lacked scheduled time for planning and therefore had lost interest in the undertaking of some of the leadership responsibilities. It was evident that they were presumably involved in many teaching activities in class, rather than planning for leading learning. The deputy principal of Mpokophelo Secondary, Mrs Sithole accounted:

We usually organise, co-ordinate and control meetings to plan for leadership activities. We try by all means to attend all planning meetings, although we still have time constraints, as we are given only one hour by the principal, per week. (Mrs Sithole)

The same sentiments were shared by Mr Majozi of Tholimfundo who stated:

...We have SMT meetings where we share ideas and gather challenges. As management we have our own meetings. There are various scheduled meetings which appear in our year planner. (Mr Majozi)

Congruent to this previous view, Mr Mthembu the principal of Mpokophelo pointed out that:

We also invite the SGB to the meeting, when we do planning for each forthcoming term. In this meeting we plan to meet with the SGB and teachers at the beginning of each term to analyse the manner in which we have performed in the previous term, which then determines the nature of our leadership path we are going to take. (Mr Mthembu)

The HOD of Mpokophelo Miss Tembe added:

I like that we are given some time to plan, although it is inadequate, because it allows us as management to have knowledge of what it is that we must do, when and how. (Miss Tembe)

The HOD of Eyethu commented:

The principal emphasises that we should spend more time in class, rather than sitting for planning meetings. We are constantly told that as SMT members, we should set good examples to our teachers by honouring our teaching periods, in order to enhance effective learning in our school. Usually, our principal does the planning for leadership activities, in spite of sharing the responsibility and this makes us feel isolated. It also makes us not to indulge ourselves in the solving of the problems which emerge in our school. (Miss Zethembe)

This study indicates that there is lack of time for SMTs to meet and plan for leading learning and this has caused a barrier for leadership for learning to be enacted in Mpokophelo and Eyethu. Hallinger (2011) attests that leadership for learning is influenced by context, because, as much as some SMTs are given time by their principals, most seem to struggle in finding time to plan for leading learning. I must indicate that albeit the visibility of the year planner, in my observation, the minutes produced did not corroborate with the number of meetings suggested in the planner, however there was proof that meetings do convene but not as planned.

4.2.1.2 The SMTs having regular meetings with subject committees

From the generated data in all the three schools, it was evident that in addition to the SMTs, subject committees were formed to facilitate the achievement of schools and learner outcomes (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). Teacher leaders of those committees were democratically elected with the aim of allowing teachers who did not hold higher management positions to become team leaders and also for other teachers to share innovative ideas with the SMTs. This notion was supported by this view below, herewith:

I make sure that we have committee meetings that address the issues of curriculum and come up with strategies to improve quality of our learners' achievement. (Mr Gumede, the principal of Eyethu)

It came up that in one school, Mpokophelo, the subject committees were effective, however in the other two schools, Tholimfundo and Eyethu were unsuccessful. The principal of Mpokophelo, Mr Mthembu stated that he organises subject committee meetings. At Mpokophelo the subject committees would meet after school hours so that they might not disturb the process of teaching and learning. This would happen with the support and guidance from the SMT. Some of the tasks were delegated to committee members by the SMT with the purpose of sharing new ideas. The committees worked under the supervision of the subject heads and the membership representation seemed to be balanced.

The principal of Mpokophelo Secondary stated:

I note the dates and times of the committee meetings. At management meetings we discuss which tasks would be delegated to the subject heads and are identified according to the needs of those particular subjects. We would thereafter, allow the HODs to organise meetings with their stream teachers in order for them to democratically elect their own subject heads. (Mr Mthembu)

The HOD of Mpokophelo Secondary explained further:

...at the grade meetings the teachers bring innovative ideas about the improvement of teaching and learning in our school, which are recorded in the minute book and the SMT looks at them thereafter. (Ms Tembe)

Some of her comments were:

We promote teamwork by formulating subject committees, whereby we nominate subject heads, teachers who are performing well in their subjects to co-ordinate the teams. These selected teachers work with teachers from grade 8 to 12. The HODs monitor the success and sustainability of the teams. (Ms Tembe)

Drawing from the above, it is evident that the principals of the three schools were in agreement that leadership needs to be shared among all the SMT members and teachers. The above statements concurred with what Bush and Glover (2012) state, and that is when leadership is shared across the school, it enhances teamwork among teachers, as well as learners.

All the stakeholders participate in the achievement of the schools goals. Teachers who do not hold high leadership positions feel a sense of ownership when they are elected to lead in the subject committees, they feel respected by others. The HOD explicitly stated that sharing of leadership roles makes all members of the SMT, teachers and learners feel that they have ownership of the school. Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013) affirm that in this way everybody in the school has a say in the achievement of the school goals.

It was evident that the principals believed that some of the leadership roles should be delegated by them across the school to encourage the teachers to be involved in achieving the goals of the school. These principals emphasised that the aim of sharing leadership was to make teachers feel that the school belongs to all the stakeholders and that ownership of the school does not belong to the SMTs only. It was explicitly evident that the three principals believed that sharing the responsibilities made teachers feel like they were making a valuable contribution to the school.

Further, Harris (2013) states that by allowing teachers to work as a team, provides them with a source of authority. It seemed that the SMTs agreed that sharing of leadership avoids resting the leadership role on the shoulders of one or a few people (Bush & Glover, 2012). This corroborates with what Spillane (2010) asserts when stating that shared leadership allows individuals without formal leadership designation to take responsibility for the work of leading and managing schools.

4.2.1.3 The SMTs having regular meetings with SGBs

This study revealed that the SMT shared the responsibility of decision-making closely with other stakeholders, such as district officials and teachers, however they tended to isolate school governing bodies.

Evidence also indicated that although the SGBs, which represented parents were involved in decision-making, it was in a limited degree. The South African Standard for Principals (2005) highlights the role of the principal as the member of the SMT is developing and empowering all stakeholders, including the SGBs, by involving them in the decision-making. There seemed to be a remarkable difference in the extent of decision-making carried out by the SGBs at Mpokophelo Secondary as compared to Tholimfundo Secondary and Eyethu.

The principal of Mpokophelo stated:

I organise meetings for us to meet with the SGB members, fortnightly with the aim to identify and solve problems we might have encountered in our school. This may include discussing financial and disciplinary issues. We also get the chance to hear what the parents think about the school functionality and also invite parents to collect their children's quarterly exams reports, so that they get to meet with the class and subject teachers to review learners' performance. (Mr Mthembu)

The HOD of Eyethu commented:

We do organise meetings with the SGBs, although not enough time is given to them to participate in the discussions we engage in. The feedback that is given by the principal is inadequate because of the little time which is given to the SGBs to engage in the meetings. (Miss Zethembe)

The HOD of Mpokophelo stated:

There is a huge gap between the time interval allocated for the meetings between the SMT and the SGB, even when the SGB is invited for a meeting, it is not given enough time to contribute in the meeting, especially in matters concerning financial issues, for instance the school budget is not overtly disclosed in the meeting. This makes the SGBs to lose interest in what is happening at school. (Miss Tembe)

Regular meetings with SGBs seemed to have impact on the improvement of the school outcomes (Bush & Glover, 2012). The SMTs viewed the meeting as the platform where issues could surface and also be clarified. This study has indicated that when the SGBs are informed about their children's performance, they tend to have interest in the improvement, thereafter. Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) put emphasis on the involvement of the SGBs in school in order for them to partake in the embetterment of the achievement standards. It goes without saying that feedback from SMTs to the SGBs is essential.

4.2.1.4 Monitoring of teachers' work

I asked the SMTs to describe the strategies that they use to monitor teaching in their schools. They all responded by stating that they do class visits, let teachers submit their files, verify class attendance, moderate assessment tasks, check learner exercise books, and teacher leadership development. It came up that SMTs focus mainly on the roles that teachers played in the classroom although, some like class attendance register, could also be used to monitor both the teacher and learner activities. The SMTs all do whatever they can to improve the teaching and learning standards for the teachers. Most of their time is dedicated to leading learning, not anything else.

Here is what Mr Mthembu stated:

All the work I do is related to teaching. The HODs do regular class visits, though some of the visits are unannounced. Sometimes the teachers are told to prepare for the IQMS process to take place, whereby the HODs and SDGs sit and observe. This is meant to assist educators identify problematic areas in their teaching methods and also to strive for excellence in their work. We also check learners' records and ensure proper reporting, thereafter. (Mr Mthembu)

One of the excelling schools principals, Mr Majozi added:

In our school we go an extra mile to instill the learning culture. To improve the learner and school outcomes, we organise recovery classes such as committing teachers to arrange morning classes with the learners. Learners are also instructed to honour study periods in the afternoon. We as SMT members monitor the study periods. We also encourage teachers to participate in teaching their subjects during winter school holidays. Our school serves as a learning centre selected by the Department of Education to cater for learners from different schools to attend such learning sessions, we also monitor that. (Mr Majozi)

An HOD of Tholimfundo added:

Work coverage is now properly done, as I ensure that the educators finish the syllabus on time, for a given year. I ensure that all the records of teachers' and learners' work are well kept and organised in files. Teachers should make it a point that they have their own files, whereby they keep evidence of their work intact. These files should contain all the formal tasks which tally with the work prescribed for the learners, in a particular year. The continuous assessment tasks, together with the quarterly examinations form the final year mark, which we as the HODs moderate regularly to ensure authenticity, fairness and accuracy. (Mr Mathenjwa)

The checking of teachers' files seemed to be the common strategy that was used by the participants to keep track of the teaching and learning activities. Teaching files contained, among other things daily teaching preparations, annual subject teaching plans, copies of tests and memoranda and mark scores on continuous assessment.

Similar to the case of New Zealand (Archer & Brown, 2013), participants utilised specific tools to monitor progress in a variety of these teaching activities. For instance, there was a tool which the SMTs used to monitor lesson preparations. The SMTs preferred to check the teachers' files of daily preparations once a week. Sometimes various departments within the same school also differed. Participants were asked to reveal their strategies of monitoring teaching learning.

To this end, Mr Mthembu, the principal of Mpokophelo responded:

We asked each teacher to select a day in a week on which they will submit. Then we know that the Grade 11 teacher, for instance, will submit on this day, not daily and the Grade 12 teacher also chose his own day to submit. (Mr Mthembu)

The use of the strategy was also confirmed by Miss Tembe, the HOD of Mpokophelo. Weekly submission of files was also echoed at the neighbouring school, Eyethu. The slight difference between Mpokophelo SMT strategy and that of Eyethu is that the HODs at Eyethu took charge of the agenda; they sat down and decided on the submission day, and it was not the teachers who chose the day of the week on which teachers in the department were going to submit preparations.

Further, the teacher preparations were done a week before the actual activities ensued. Also, teachers of department submitted on the same weekday. Mr Zethembe, an HOD of Eyethu had this to say:

Teachers are supposed to submit on each and every Friday at the end of each week for the week to follow. In their lesson plans, I check the correlation between work schedules (also known as Annual Teaching Plan; or ATP) and lesson plans.

Sometimes I take learner exercise books and files to check for the correlation between the (ATP. Lesson plans, learner exercise books and file). (Mr Zethembe)

Mr Mthembu re-iterated what Mr Mathenjwa, had stated:

In my school, an examination committee was put in place in order to verify authenticity and accuracy of the learners' marks. This assists us to see whether the teachers have covered all the tasks which they are supposed to have done by the end of each term and also have allocated the marks correctly. The records also tell us which learners are ready to progress to the next grade. As the principal, I advise the HODs and teachers to design turnaround strategies when many learners seem to have failed. This is done with the aim of improving the learners' performance. (Mr Mthembu)

It was evident that in the first meeting of Eyethu Secondary School submission dates are announced. The version of the event was corroborated by Mr Gumede who stated:

On the first meeting we gave Friday as the day when lesson plans should be submitted for contents to be taught the following week. (Mr Gumede)

When the HODs were asked about what they did if the teachers did not submit on the agreed days, this is Mr Zethembe responded:

I give them a reminder. One has to remind the teachers that, for instance, I have received only one file out of five. Then they remember that it is a Friday and they submit their lesson plans for a week, failing which, I have to report to the principal. (Mr Zethembe)

It was evident that some of the HODs seemed to cover for the teachers' delays by trivialising the teachers' lack of compliance with the set submission dates; these HODs claimed that the teachers forgot and therefore had to be reminded. Obviously these HODs were vigilant not to bluntly criticise the teachers' lack of punctuality. Instead, they had strategies of making teachers ultimately submit. Other HODs would remind teachers of the commitments they made at the beginning of the year and then, as a last resort, report to the principal.

It was obvious that submissions did not come easily as would be expected from the teachers who had agreed on the scheduled submissions. In my observation there was an element of unionism, which might have had a negative influence on such deeds (Bhengu, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2014).

In order to confirm that the HODs had monitoring instruments and such instruments were utilised, I asked them to show me their monitoring files so that I could check the tools they had filled the previous weeks. The tools requested included those for monitoring teachers' weekly preparations, period registers and copy of minutes of a meeting held during the month of August. The main focus was to check the volume of work the teachers could have done, to my satisfaction, although there were some inconsistencies, the evidence of teachers' work records was there.

Inconsistent monitoring was not in harmony with Marks and Printy (2003) when they suggest that data gathering, including monitoring, must be conducted on regular basis followed by the analysis and feedback for the teachers. This is done with the aim to give necessary intervention strategies to the teachers. Furthermore, monitoring on regular basis enable the SMTs to better schedule their work as well as improve quality and efficiency.

It was evident that the SMTs in all the three schools went out of their way in ensuring that teaching and learning processes are carried out smoothly by the teachers and learners in their schools. In the two schools, Mpokophelo and Eyethu, however, the SMTs' endeavours seemed to have been in vain, as failure of learners was perpetual (DoE, 2015). The teachers' work was monitored, as even unannounced visits were conducted and extra classes were organised and well monitored by the SMTs.

4.2.1.5 Managing learners' text books

In all the three schools, it was evident that there was tremendous shortage of resources, more specifically, text books. My observation showed me that learners were given books to share during the learning periods, whereby they sat in threes at each desk. With other subjects, teachers made copies from one available original copy and had to let learners sit in pairs so that they were able to share.

The principal of Mpokophelo Secondary School, Mr Mthembu stated:

We manage and distribute the text books in such a way that the learners share them and help to create a 'do care' attitude among them because they have power to take good care of books, so that at the end of the year they will return them. This creates an atmosphere in which all the learners feel a sense of ownership. This in turn makes it easier for us, the managers to lead rather than to instruct. (Mr Mthembu)

I probed the deputy principal and HOD by asking them to elaborate on this issue and Mrs Sithole further commented:

When we place an order for the following year, we make sure that each and every learning area in our departments is checked so that those with enough text books do not require what they already have. All the teachers indicate the shortage of the text books in each and every learning area so that they will be added, because effective teamwork is the hallmark of a successful department. This allows us to avoid unnecessary excessive purchases of books. (Mrs Sithole)

In addition, Mr Mthembu stated:

The SMT is responsible for the planning and controlling of the school's stock, text books and equipment, however the subject teachers are involved in all of this. (Mr Mthembu)

According to Nene (2015), the SMTs should be able provide and manage necessary text books. They must control the available stock by doing stock-taking yearly and also encourage teachers to do the same. Strategies to make books available are needed, in order to enhance effective teaching and learning (Nene, 2015). Seemingly, the three schools experienced shortage of text books, however, the SMTs tried to harness the available stock by encouraging the subject teachers to record whatever books they might have issued to learners. Learners, in return should look after the books.

It is a responsibility of the school principal, in collaboration with the HODs to provide the teachers with adequate text books (Nene, 2015). The teachers make requisitions for their subject text books after the HODs have given them the mandate to select from a catalogue. Normally, the SMTs use money from the norms and standards to buy books, however where there is shortage of funds the SMTs may opt for fund-raising.

4.2.1.6 Ensuring proper discipline for both teachers and learners

The SMTs maintain attendance registers for learners and time books for teachers which indicate arrival and departure times. Also, a code of conduct for both learners and teachers is derived from the National Constitution. The code of conduct should be reviewed each and every year in order to ensure its accuracy and relevance to a particular school.

Good discipline is one of the factors which contribute to learner competency, however, in my observation, SMTs seem to be focusing on curriculum coverage which is done by teachers and learners, rather than enforcing discipline. In the cases where learners were problematic at school, the intervention of parents had been cited as of paramount importance, hence the intervention is sought. This has been confirmed by Ms Sebenzile who pointed out that:

We, however, communicate with the parents of the learners who always appear in the list of late comers. To facilitate this we, the SMT members, with the help of some dedicated teachers and security officer close the gate at 7:30 and tell the late-comers to go back home to ask their parents to come for intervention process.

The significance of parents' involvement in school affairs was also underscored by Mrs Sithole who stated:

I also visit or invite parents of those learners who show persistent absenteeism to come to school so we deliberate on causes of the child's persistent absenteeism trend. It is our responsibility to make the parents aware of the implications to the parent and learner. (Mrs Sithole)

The principal of Mpokophelo stated:

We formulate and discuss a code of conduct which is in line with the National Constitution for our learners and teachers. After we have agreed about the contents of the code of conduct, we read and analyse it to the learners. The parents of learners have to read and sign consent letters to agree with the stipulated rules and regulations enshrined in the code of conduct. We as the SMT see to it that the school governing body in place in order for them to represent the parents of our learners in the decision-making. The SMT, teachers and parents now have a say about how to take joint decisions to allow effective discipline in our school. (Mr Mthembu)

The deputy principal of Eyethu commented:

We need to apply strategies which are in line with the democratic disciplinary measures, now that corporal punishment is no longer in use, in our school. We sometimes find it difficult to control learners without infringing their democratic rights. We are no longer safe at school as some of the learners abuse drugs and come with dangerous weapons to school. The only thing we do is to call the learners' parents to discuss whatever case a child might have. This, we do with the help of the class-teachers who write letters to invite the parents of the alleged learners to come to our school, moreover police officers are called when it is necessary. (Mr Zethembe)

Mr Majози voiced his views by stating:

Some things one does to manage and support teaching and one of them is discipline, there are structures in place to bring about discipline and effective teaching and learning. (Mr Majози)

Following the probing which sought to know the type of structures in place, this is what he added in response:

There is a discipline committee which positively contributes to teaching and learning in our school. I also make it a point that I involve all the stakeholders in solving the disciplinary problems.

...If there is discipline in the school, teachers find it easy to discharge their duties since they need not to focus on peripheral matter of discipline over curricular matters. (Mr Majozi)

Maintaining discipline was identified as means of supporting teachers coupled with monitoring and motivation advocated by most of the participants claiming when there is discipline teachers obtain more time of focusing their attention to the core business which is teaching. This is corroborated by Heikka, Waniganayake and Hujala (2012) who posit that learners' achievement has to be the focal point.

There seems to be lack discipline in some schools, such as Mpokophelo and Eyethu. Learners in these schools seem to be unruly and rebellious. In my observation, these learners seemed to have listened to their peers who most of the time misled them, more than their teachers. Disciplinary measures need to be addressed by the SMT members as corporal punishment is no longer in use. Teachers need to spend more time with their learners so that they might not lose control.

4.2.1.7 Providing support for teachers' professional development.

The findings from the semi-structured interviews with the SMTs revealed that empowerment and development of teachers were the key aspects for leadership for learning practice, in addition to promoting school effectiveness.

The SMTs create opportunities for the teachers to attend workshops and also disseminate information from the district office (Whitehead, Bochee & Decker, 2013). This is demonstrated by some teachers who are willing to develop in the researched schools. It was evident that by practising leadership for learning, SMTs felt motivated to develop themselves and teachers professionally.

Mr Majozi, the principal of Tholimfundo:

I support and motivate the teachers to attend workshops which are organised by the district officials, to capacitate them with the tremendous changes that are taking place in the education system. The SMT also engages teachers in the school-based workshops which are facilitated by some of the HODs.

The teachers who attend workshops are provided with petrol allowance by the school to go to the respective venues. I also encourage them to become life-long learners, by enrolling with the highly recognised tertiary institutions. This helps them to develop in their teaching skills. (Mr Majozi)

Similarly, Mrs Sithole shared views adding to what Mr Majozi had stated and had this to say:

To promote and manage teaching and learning in my school, I do the following, I promote the empowerment of both teachers and learners by developmental programmes, meaning through professional development. I have invited subject advisors to assist and motivate my teachers. (Mrs Sithole)

Mr Mthembu echoed Mrs Sithole and stated:

I organise workshops for my teachers and management team. I also invite subject advisors to assist my teachers with relevant teaching methods in their respective teaching subjects. I have a firm belief in capacity building. (Mr Mthembu)

Another observation made in Eyethu was the understaffing experienced by the SMT members. The reason for the shortage of adequate staff complement is due to the low learner enrolments (KZN DoE, 2015). Sometimes the HODs who had been declared additional from smaller schools, like Eyethu, which does not qualify to have more than two HODs, were placed in other schools with increased learner enrolment. Consequently, teaching in schools like Eyethu, occurred without proper monitoring of teaching and learning and also, not conducted by experienced HODs. Asking the HODs how they coped in such a situation, Mr Zethembe shared his views as follows:

I am managing three departments; Technology, Visual Arts and Life Orientation. So we have talked with the Visual Arts and Life Orientation Departments and we have agreed to identify one teacher among them, from each department who are subject heads, and who can act like their HOD. These teachers are the ones who are assisting me in leading learning as they manage and then come back to me to discuss the work. (Mr Zethembe)

Mr Gumede the principal of Eyethu echoed Mr Zethembe by stating:

Some of the teachers that are there in the Visual Arts and Life Orientation Departments are newly appointed Fundza-Lushaka bursary holders. We are in the process of grooming them to monitor each other in their departments. What is interesting is that they take turns to monitor one another because they are new from the university. They will monitor one another and then submit to Mr Zethembe who is a seasoned teacher. (Mr Gumede)

The teachers in Visual Arts and Life Orientation departments had less than two years of teaching experience, however, due to heavy work load on the HOD, one of the novice teachers from each department had to play the supervisory role as the acting HOD. Acting as HOD was an internal arrangement and therefore could not be remunerated since that was not authorized by the Department of Education. In the absence of the HOD or seasoned teachers, the SMT members became creative in developing leaders among the teachers at lower level, even though they were still novices in the field of teaching. Such an arrangement tallies with the assertion by Hunzicker (2012) that the approach of grooming teachers to assume leadership roles is significant now when socio-economic and political forces have a major impact in current classrooms.

Further, Clark (2012) argues that leadership is working with and through other people to achieve the schools' goals. Again, leadership is seen not as a sole preserve of individuals at the top, but instead, it is to be extended to and exercised by anybody within the school (Frost & Harris, 2010)

Mr Zethembe, an HOD of Eyethu stated:

I always remind teachers that they have a pastoral role to play. I also provide care and support to the teachers and provide safe spaces where they are seen involved, cared for and respected. In this way they see the importance of developing themselves. This assists us in creating a positive culture that will promote professional satisfaction, morale and effectiveness. It will also ensure that leadership decisions are made collaboratively by all of us, the SMT, teachers. One of my teachers is a strategist.

When I am faced with challenges I am not expected to know everything simply because I am an HOD. She deals with the challenges and solve them. (Mr Zethembe)

The principal of Eyethu added:

... teachers do not see themselves having the capabilities to lead and to guide apart from the learners and sometimes one has to let them know, as part of building and developing them in the school. (Mr Gumede)

The sentiments of Mr Gumede were entirely shared by Majozi of Tholimfundo, who stated:

My biggest responsibility is to provide necessary support for teachers to be able to deliver the content to the learners. Most significantly, I have to provide support to my teachers to improve the standard of teaching and learning. (Mr Majozi)

The foregoing assertions of Mr Gumede and Mr Majozi suggested that support is vital to improve learners' performances. Wenzare (2011) posits that principals as instructional leaders are able to fulfill their goals by focusing on learning, encouraging collaboration, providing support to other SMT members, helping the teachers in enlightening curriculum to school context, to benefit learners.

Further, Mr Majozi added:

I do class visits with my HODs with the intention of identifying areas where teachers need to be developed. (Mr Majozi)

The deputy principal of Eyethu confirmed:

We have grown in so many ways. As SMT, we have engaged teachers in leadership activities, in subject and extra-curricular activities. I am proud to say that we as the SMT have gone an extra mile in promoting professional growth in our school. I also encourage networking because I believe a lot is learnt through networking programmes since some teachers emulate those whom they observe in action.

Generally, teachers network for just sharing ideas as subject teachers and new various method of teaching the subject. (Ms Sebenzile)

Furthermore, in valuing the moderation as one of the important instruments in improving learners' achievement, Ms Sebenzile believed that both external and internal moderation is vital for improving learners' achievement this became evident when she stated that:

Clusters are vehicles that we subscribe to as a school for teacher empowerment. Our teachers actively participate in clusters of moderations. We also do internal moderations for quality assurance. We allow teachers to cluster with neighbouring schools in order for them to learn and share new pedagogical skills. I have done some with my management team members. (Ms Sebenzile)

From the above statements it was evident that SMTs realised that leadership for learning has allowed them to instill learning by allowing the teachers opportunities to see the benefits of learning. This has allowed them to grow, develop confidence to lead and improve SMTs' leadership skills. The impression that I got was that the participants did welcome the inclusion of Post level one teachers, as subject heads, in supervisory responsibilities such as monitoring curriculum implementation, although they were circumstantially obliged to do so.

4.2.2 The reasons for leadership for learning practices by the SMTs

With regards to stating the reasons for practising leadership for learning in terms of instilling the culture of learning in secondary schools, three sub-themes emerged, which I discuss below.

4.2.2.1 The policies inform the SMTs to operationalise leadership for learning in the way they do

Policies such as the IQMS policy, the PAM document, SASA, SACE, subject policy and CAPS document are utilised by SMTs to allow smooth curriculum delivery. Schools formulate policies which are in line with the National Educational Policy.

These policies contain acts which serve as guidelines and regulations which assist the SMTs to practise leadership for learning in an appropriate manner. Formulation of policies should not be placed on the shoulders of the one person, the principal only. Other SMT members should be involved in the formulation of policies, in order for them to engage in implementation of such policies. Whether leadership of teaching and learning process is effective, it is determined by proper use of policies.

In the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document, it is stipulated that before the SMT members, including the principals, are managers, they are teachers (DoE, 1996). This means that they should set good examples to teachers by getting into class-rooms to teach learners and also enlighten and support teachers. In this way they would be leading learning. They should also honour their teaching periods and implement the subject policies, just as they instruct the teachers to do.

Ms Sebenzile commented:

On top of the supervisory work that I do in monitoring teachers' work, I also have to teach six classes of more than 35 learners IsiZulu Language, which entails teaching for three examination papers to mark. My work is so strainous as compared to that of the principal and deputy principal, who only have one or two classes to teach. This shows how significant proper knowledge of poiiicies can be. (Ms Sebenzile)

The South African Council for Educators' Act No. 31 of 2000, talks about the significance of leading learning, by making the SMTs to take leading learning seriously. This could be done by letting the SMT members know their roles, by regarding the learner as the important person in the educational system and by granting the learners an opportunity to learn in a safe environment. The SMTs should lead learning by enforcing the democratic rules, thereby allowing the learners to be as comfortable as possible while they are in the process of learning, to enhance the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The principal of Tholimfundo Secondary stated:

It is inevitable that if we want the effective teaching and learning to take place, we refer to policies on regular basis. We are informed by the policies in whatever we do. I also ask for the SMT's point of view, although, as the principal, I sometimes arrive to a point where I decide what must happen. It is democratic to an extent, but you also cannot have democracy if you do not have the guidelines. We also have continuous meetings where we, as the SMT members get the opportunity to share our understanding of the policies. In this way there is constant communication between the SMT and the principal. (Mr Majozi)

Unannounced visits are conducted by the SMTs, including the principal, however sometimes the teachers are made aware that there is IQMS which is going to take place. The participants were reluctant to visit the teachers while they were on duty in class, according to the policy it is not wrong for HODs to conduct unannounced class visits. The teachers felt uncomfortable when teaching in the presence of their seniors. This was echoed by Mrs Sithole, who commented:

When you come for a class visit it is as if you are undermining the teachers' professionalism, as if you are doubting their capacity as subject teachers. The moment you want to monitor the work that is being done, already there is antagonism. So, most of the times, it is a unpalatable exercise. (Mrs Sithole)

The principal of Eyethu, Mr Gumede stated:

The school policies on how the SMTs should lead learning are clear. This makes it easier for the SMTs to implement, however, some policies are formulated, but not implemented by SMTs. (Mr Gumede)

Such endeavours were reiterated by other participants as well, however, some remarks by other participants suggested that these policies were merely symbolic and represented SMT members' wishful thinking.

For instance, on the same point of verifying the quality the assessment Mrs Sithole made the following comment:

According to the policy, each and every assessment that the teachers are supposed to give to the learners should firstly be submitted to the HOD for pre-moderation is supposed, but that is not happening. There is a tool designed for this purpose. To be realistic, it is not used. They give me a question paper today that is supposed to be written tomorrow. Sometimes the HODs only know about the test when it has been written, without having it validated with the departmental stamp.
(Mrs Sithole)

Obviously, the SMTs had policies which were meant to improve learner performance. For instance, in harmony with Southworth (2012), the submission of files was meant for subject teachers to submit tests and other tasks to the HODs. Unfortunately, when the policy was not followed and submission dates were not honoured, the SMT members seemed to lack the courage to confront those teachers who did not submit their work. This practice of failing to submit was contrary to the CAPS guidelines which stated first the question paper must be submitted to the HOD or subject teacher for moderation as a quality assuring measure sometime before it is given to learners (Southworth, 2012; DBE, 2011c).

The subject policy which is articulated in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document, previously known as the Revised National Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (RNCS) (DoE, 2012), is where the assessment guidelines are stipulated. The subject policies guide the HODs to give directions to the subject teachers about how to formulate school-based subject policies. They also give a way to the HODs to guide the teachers about how to plan for lesson activities, how much time is needed to complete each assessment task and the marks allocated for that particular task. This makes it easier for the subject teachers to assist the learners achieve the nationally standardised learning outcomes (DoE, 2014).

Departmental policies which are in line with the CAPS document inform the SMTs about each subject. This document must have dates on which some form of measurement will be conducted and the composite scheduling of subject evaluation dates constituting a school assessment programme (DOE, 2011a).

The principals of the three schools Mr Mthembu, Mrs Majosi and Mr Gumede seemed to agree that knowledge of policies must be shared among all members of the SMTs within the schools, according to the South African national education policy. The SMT members in Tholimfundo secondary seemed to be more engaged in decision-making on how school policies should be implemented, together with the principal through wide consultation, thus the school's results seemed to have improved.

At Mpokophelo, although HODs were granted the opportunity to participate in decision-making through existing structures, all the decisions taken at departmental and Grade-level, in the various committees and with regards to policy formulation were ratified by the principal, who seemed to be accountable. It was evident that the principal seemed to be obsessed with instructing the SMT members and teachers to implement the policies which they were not engaged in their formulation.

4.2.2.2 The SMTs taking instructions from the principal

According to Wenzare (2011), instruction from the principal works in a top-down hierarchical structure, however a principal who is a good leader is able to flatten such structures a bit. When I asked the participants how they practise leadership for learning by taking instructions from the principal in their schools, the deputy principal of Eyethu responded by stating:

The approach has brought tremendous change in our school, because the principal instructs the HODs to conduct IQMS, whereby they form developmental teams in their departments. The principal also oversees that class visits are properly done by the HODs. They are now being able to work collaboratively with other staff members to let them willfully perform their duties. (Ms Sebenzile)

The HOD of Mpokophelo commented:

Seemingly, our principal is the one who is calling the shots because he constantly instructs without consulting with us. The word of the principal is final as he uses top-down communication. There is nothing wrong with him instructing us about how we are supposed to manage our teachers, in such a way that they also become good instructors in their classrooms, however, we should also be given the opportunity to utilise our own discretion in taking decisions of how to manage our teachers. (Miss Tembe)

The principal leads learning in such a way that he or she influences other SMT members to also lead in the same way they do (Bush, 2013). This has propelled the other staff members to see the need to learn because they have seen the SMTs themselves continuously learning. Two of the three schools, Tholimfundo and Mpokophelo, have begun to flourish in their results. Learners are now able to pass most of their subjects, especially in grade 12. The above corroborates with what is said by Bush (2013) that a good leadership is the one that is able to involve others in order to create a sense of ownership in the school. This may result in influencing them to improve their performance.

The HOD of Tholimfundo affirmed:

When the principal gives us instructions, we as SMT members are accommodating because we know that these instructions are not way out. The manner in which the instructions are given as well, it is not meant to crush our spirit but to build us up. We are aware that when the principal is giving us the instructions, he is empowering us to become good instructors to our teachers, which in turn makes the teachers become good instructors to their learners. (Mr Mathenjwa)

Similarly, Mr Zethembe an HOD of Eyethu elaborated:

Despite the challenges that are in the school, there is a great improvement in the behaviour and the academic results of the learners. The school used to get between 40-59% pass rate, but now the pass rate ranges between 85-96%.

In the attempt of illuminating the role of the principal giving instructions to other members of the SMT and teachers, it became evident from the data that the main responsibility of the principal is to craft a vision and mission statement of the school, so that they are able to clearly give clear instructions to all the role players in leading learning. The principals of the three participating schools were interviewed and their documents were reviewed. They concurred with the view that the vision is the driving force behind the school functionality (Bush, 2013). By giving clear instruction, the principal is able to communicate with other SMT members, so that they comprehend what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. The foregoing is supported and justified by these concurring utterances from the principals:

I am responsible for the creation of vision of the school. This is then communicated to all staff members so they know it. All the activities to take us to the realisation of the school vision are mooted in the staff meeting. In this way, the other members of the SMT and teachers are willing to take the instruction I give to them because they will precisely know the goals the school is attempting to achieve. (Mr Majozi, the principal of Tholimfundo)

The same notion was voiced by Mr Mthembu of Mpokophelo who had the following to say:

...but again it is also to advocate the mission and vision of the school informed by the National Department of Education. We use the statements as instruments to help us communicate our instruction to allow effective teaching and learning to prevail. (Mr Mthembu)

Emerging from the foregoing utterances, it was evident that vision and mission are the pillars of instructional leadership. Wenzere (2011) argues in the same vein that principals tend to focus their attention on formulating and explaining the schools' mission, vision and goal. In Kenya, instructional leadership set and promote the vision and mission of the schools which aim to improve the standard of teaching and learning (Wanzere, 2011).

Support from the principal is necessary for the SMTs to assist teachers to be able to provide quality teaching and learning, thereby improving learning. The need to perform well necessitates provision of clear instruction to support the HODs and teachers. Mr Gumede added:

But again, it is to make sure that there is practice of leadership for learning in order to enhance effective learning for the principal to provide the necessary support. (Mr Gumede)

Further, Mr Gumede added:

I advise and encourage the heads of the departments to see to it that teachers who teach the same subjects within the school, plan together so that a teacher who teaches grade 12 knows what is happening in grade 8,9,10 and 11. (Mr Gumede)

Unanimously, all the SMT members from the three secondary schools agreed that, by allowing the principals to give them instruction with regards to the practice of leadership for learning their schools have experienced tremendous change, although in the two other schools, Eyethu and Mpokophelo, there seems to be more that still needs to be done. In these two schools there is still an element of failure, despite the effort which the principals have put into their work as instructional leaders in their schools (DoE, 2015).

It was evident that in spite of the principals trying to collaborate with all the other SMT members by giving them instructions, there is not much that has been done with regards to the involvement of teachers in the leadership activities. The lack of team spirit among the teachers in these schools, also hinders the SMTs from bringing change into their schools (Shields, 2011).

In contrast to the above statements, Bush (2013) states that the top-down hierarchical structures in most of the schools tend to isolate other SMT members and teachers from the principals. The findings of this study would therefore imply that the schools studied did not have particularly top-down management structures.

Steyn and van Niekerk posit that in order to foster teacher leadership the SMTs must make the present hierarchies flatter and create structures that empower the SMTs to work collaboratively in school.

4.2.2.3 The SMTs modeling best practice for teachers

The SMTs, as the school leaders have to practise what they preach. They should walk the talk and not just tell the teachers what to do (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013). In this way they do not only instruct the teachers about what to do, but they also set a good example to the teachers. As leaders of the school, the SMTs should lead learning in such a way that they influence teachers to do the same in their classrooms (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013). In other words, if the SMTs do not honour their teaching periods, teachers will also stay in the staff room. Likewise, the teachers will arrive late at school, if the SMTs are not punctual. To voice how the SMTs model best practice for teachers, this is what Mr Majozi, the principal of Tholifundo stated:

As a principal of the school, I have an obligation to set a good example to other SMT members and teachers by honoring my teaching periods, however, I sometimes get stuck in my office, attending to parents who have come to help solve disciplinary issues for their children. The actual teaching begins at 7:30, but I make sure that I arrive at 6:00 to monitor the morning study. I ensure that all the learners stay inside the classrooms and there is absolutely no noise. This is when I get a chance to cover the work that I was not able to do the previous day, such as teaching the grade 11 class that I suppose to teach during my English periods. (Mr Majozi)

The above statement was echoed by the deputy principal of Tholimfundo who added:

We, as the SMT members make it a point that on top of practicing our leadership role, we also commit ourselves to keep our classrooms occupied during our teaching periods and also assist with monitoring of both the morning and afternoon study periods. We instruct the teachers not to leave the learners unattended as they might bunk the periods or loiter around the school, so we also do the same.

We have also given the class prefects registers to sign in and out both the subject teacher and SMT members to ensure that we all go to teach the learners during the respective periods. (Miss Nompumelelo)

The participants from all three schools indicated that teachers do take on leadership functions voluntarily. This finding is in line with Hallinger's (2011) model of leadership for learning which refers to leadership as directly and indirectly impacting on the achievement of the school and learner outcomes. This may not influence teachers to lead learning to cover the learning curriculum only, but also to participate in extra-curricular activities.

The deputy principal of Tholimfundo, Miss Nompumelelo commented:

Leading learning has changed us a lot, ever since I began teaching in the year 2010 at this school. I am now being able to successfully prepare the duty roster as per arrangement to cover absent staff, of course with the help of other staff members. We also properly manage time, as we are as punctual as possible at school. We want to set a good example, in order to maintain discipline in our teachers and learners. (Miss Nompumelelo)

It is crucial that the SMTs work collaboratively with the teachers to show them the way to effective leading for learning. The subject committees which are formed in the schools could be used to enhance teamwork, however these committees sometimes end up in vein, because while some teachers do work in teams, others prefer doing their work individually, in isolation from their team-mates (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013). This results in the SMTs not being able to achieve the ultimate goals of the school, which is to instill a learning culture (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013).

4.2.3 The support given by the stakeholders to the SMTs in leadership for learning

Pertaining to the support that the SMTs get from the stakeholders, four sub-themes emerged. The first sub-theme was support from the SGBs. The second sub-theme was support from the RCLs. The third sub-theme was support from the DoE. Lastly, the support SMTs get from the local businesses.

4.2.3.1 Support from the SGBs

It seems that SMTs support the role of the SGB in learner discipline, but they have reservations about their role in matters of educator misconduct and financial budget. The SMTs also feel that SGBs should be trained for the appointment of new educators (Theron, 2013). When the participating SMT members were asked what their opinions about them seeking assistance from the SGBs in giving them support, this is what Miss Sebenzile from Eyethu stated:

The SGB is willing to give support to the SMT in our school, but not enough opportunity is given to it to play its role, (Miss Sebenzile)

Miss Tembe, the HOD of Mpokophelo further, highlighted:

The SGB in our school is not fully involved, especially the parents, although we request their assistance for the intervention programmes for the matric students. We also liaise with local community to assist in this regard.. (Miss Tembe)

Mr Majazi, the principal of Tholimfundo commented:

We as the SMT, ensure that the SGB is involved in everything which is taking place within the school. The SGB meetings must take place as scheduled in the school management plan. The school also makes it a point that it interacts with all district Governance officials. In this way, these officials are welcome as, they may visit the school at anytime to assist with the SGB election. As members of SMT, we are allowed to invite the district Governance officials, whenever we are not satisfied with a particular SGB member in order to maintain good relations at the school. (Mr Majazi)

Miss Nompumelelo, the deputy principal of Tholimfundo concurred with the HODs and stated:

The SGB is involved in giving support and seek assistance in as far as provision for resources is concerned. This is a structure which is always available to learners and teachers, and always helps when needed. (Miss Nompumelelo)

The SGBs seemed not to be fully participative in the two schools, Mpokophelo and Eyethu, although in one school, Tholimfundo they seemed to be partially involved. Parents are still not considered as part and parcel of their children's learning, as they are not provided with feedback, through the SGBs, pertaining their children's performance. Incorporating SGBs, by SMTs in support of schools' development is very important (Hunzicker, 2012).

4.2.3.2 Support from the RCLs

Some of the participants, in their responses could hardly say a thing about the involvement of the RCL in the decision-making regarding their learning. I suggest that learners should have a say on how their learning is led by the SMTs. The SMTs encourage the election of the RCLs, but do not give them a platform to voice out their input towards their learning.

Mr Majozi of Tholimfundo stated:

In our school, we let learners democratically elect the RCL by choosing members from the class monitors. The members of the RCL are led by a president who takes full responsibility of overseeing the well-being of all the learners at school. The RCL leads in all the activities, in which learners partake. It also serves as the mouth piece for the learners to the SMT, as two members represent the learners in the SGB. (Mr Majozi)

The SMT should see to it that learners are represented in the meetings with the SGB. Learners' voice should be heard and they should also take part in their learning process. The SMT should know the needs of learners through the RCLs. The participants from Tholimfundo were willing to share their view about including the RCL in the improvement of learning in their school, whereas the participants from Mpokophelo and Eyethu hardly spoke about the involvement of RCLs in their schools. In my observation, RCLs were not involved in Mpokophelo and Eyethu.

The above observation contradicts with what Heika, Waniganayake and Hajuja (2013) surmise when stating that it is important to share tasks with stakeholders, including the RCLs, as they can provide support in assisting with the issue of sustaining discipline.

4.2.3.3 Support from the DoE

The communication gap between the SMTs and the DoE officials is still problematic in some schools, because it hinders the effectiveness of leadership for learning, however in some schools communication is not an issue.

The deputy principal of Mpokophelo stated:

The DoE officials ensure that the teachers avail themselves for moderation sessions of their learners' work. They also pay the school announced regular visits. We also receive correspondence of departmental circulars in the convenient and appropriate time which makes our work to be on track with the district and school calendars. (Mrs Sithole)

The HOD of Mpokophelo stated:

In our district we have formed clusters where some of our teachers have co-ordinated moderation and setting of exam papers. The subject advisors oversee the success of these clusters. They also facilitate in workshops on the implementation of CAPS documents. At first, they used to facilitate the NCS documents which later on changed into RNCS documents. (Miss Tembe)

The HOD of Tholimfundo stated:

The performance standards have improved in our school because of the support that we get from the Department of Education. Teachers get the opportunity to be capacitated by subject advisors and teachers from other schools at the workshops. They also get the opportunity to review and discuss issues they would have encountered at the marking centres in the previous year, which alerts them for the present year. (Mr Mathenjwa)

The deputy principal of Eyethu stated:

At our school we experience communication problems as there are delays of information from the DoE. We receive outdated circulars and it is difficult for us to act on them. Our teachers seem to be lagging behind in terms of acquiring new information about curriculum changes.

This results in our learners performing badly. (Ms Sebenzile)

The district officials seemed to be engaged in many supportive roles at Mpokophelo and Tholimfundo than in Eyethu. The teachers of the two schools seemed to have benefited in terms of development, thus there seemed to be improvement in leading learning, as compared to Eyethu. SMTs to become successful in leading their schools need to understand that other stakeholders need to be involved. This view is propounded by Hunzicker (2012) who stated that for schools to develop as learning organisations, they need to involve all stakeholders. Further to that, Hunzicker (2012) states that leadership is not the responsibility of the SMT only, but they must work collaboratively with other stakeholders, such as the district officials to satisfy the needs of teachers and learners in their schools.

4.2.3.4 Support from local businesses

Two of the three secondary schools, Mpokophelo and Eyethu are located in an extremely poverty-stricken community. Both schools are surrounded by informal settlements whereby there is a high rate of unemployment. Most of the learners walk long distances to school, as a result they arrive late. For several times, they have gone to school with empty stomachs. They have even fallen asleep in the middle of their lessons.

The principal of Tholimfundo stated:

Businesses and wider community are approached to sponsor the needs of the school and of the learners. They also give out bursaries to the top achieving learners, which therefore promotes a good competition among the learners, encouraging them to do their best in their studies. (Mr Majozi)

In addition to the above Mr Mathenjwa of Tholimfundo stated:

We consider that the local businesses are formed by the members of the community, so we sometimes ask for donations from various businesses. We appeal to them to plough back to the community as the CSIs and CSRs. It is their responsibility to come back and give a hand to the schools. (Mr Mathenjwa)

The deputy principal of Mpokophelo commented:

We have approached the local businesses about our learners coming to school with empty stomachs. These businesses gave high hopes by promising to provide our learners a feeding scheme, up to now has not happened. We have been waiting for response for a period of three months, but to our disappointment, we have not received any support from these businesses. (Mrs Sithole)

The deputy principal of Eyethu reiterated what Mrs Sithole had stated, and said:

Our learners arrive at school very late as they walk long distances on foot, most of the time having not eaten the previous day, as a result they hardly grasp the lesson activities which are imparted by the teachers to them. The learners fall asleep in the middle of the lessons, as they will be tired from long walks and hunger. Requisitions for transport from local taxi owners and food scheme from the local shop owners were unsuccessful as there were no responses from their part. (Ms Sebenzile)

The deputy principals of the two schools, Mpokophelo and Eyethu stated that they have consulted with the local businesses with the aim to fund-raise, however their endeavour was in vein, as not even one of those businesses was willing to assist. At Tholimfundo things seemed different, as the principal and deputy principal articulated that they get support from the local business people.

Further, the SMTs in Tholimfundo told me that for three consecutive years, the school has been sponsored by two businessmen with trophies to award high achieving learners. In my observation, it was clear that even Mpokophelo and Eyethu were in need of the same support from the local businesses, which they seemed not to have received. The awards could be used as incentive to motivate learners to improve their performance, even poor performing learners could be motivated by such awards to put more effort into their school work. It seemed to me that a feeding scheme and funds for some resources could have helped to curb the situation.

Harris (2013) surmises that SMTs should not work alone as role players in leading learning, but should allow the community members, such as the local business people to avail themselves, provide support where and when it is needed. In a nutshell, SMTs have to establish strong relationship by building ties with the community. The foregoing hinges mainly on the views shared by Harris (2013) who argues for collaboration and joint enterprise, not only among the principals, deputy principals and heads of departments, but also between the SMTs and local business people.

4.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I dealt with the presentation and discussion of the findings. These findings emanated from data which was generated from the participants, through the interviews and my observations about leadership for learning. In the following chapter I present the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

Summary of the Study, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the presentation of the findings and discussion of the data. In this chapter I focus upon three issues. Firstly, a summary of the study is presented. Secondly, I make conclusions on the basis of the findings which emanated from the in-depth study of the data generated. Thirdly, I articulate recommendations arising from the findings.

5.2 Summary of the study

Chapter one provided an orientation to the study. The rationale and significance of the study were articulated. Personal justification, professional and theoretical contexts were briefly discussed. In this chapter I also expounded the objectives and critical questions. Collectively, this study set out to seek answers to the following questions:

- How are the SMTs operationalising leadership for learning in their schools?
- Why do the SMTs operationalise leadership for learning in this way?
- How are the SMTs supported in leadership for learning by the stakeholders inside and outside their schools?

This was followed by a definition of the key terms used in the study to ensure understanding of such terms. Lastly, in this chapter a brief outline of the whole study was presented.

Chapter two began with a national and international literature review with the focus remaining specifically on leadership for learning. The review adopted a thematic approach to discuss the issues associated with leadership for learning practices in the three secondary schools. Thereafter, the literature review was followed by an exposition of the theoretical frameworks that underpinned this study namely, Hallinger's (2011) leadership for learning model and instructional leadership.

Hallinger's (2011) leadership for learning model stipulates that leadership is influenced by the school and environmental context.

The values, beliefs, knowledge and experience of leaders are important (Hallinger, 2011). This means that personal characteristics of a leader moderate the exercise of leadership of a leader on daily basis. School-level conditions such as vision and goals, academic structures and processes and people's capacity mediate leadership to learner and school outcomes which makes the leadership to be indirectly connected to the learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2011).

The instructional leadership emphasises on what the school administrators need to do in order to make teachers become good instructors in the classroom to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes by a school. This theory sees the value of the principal as more significant than other SMT members. The principal has all the power and authority to him or herself, however, there has been power shift since the birth of democracy in 1994 in South African schools. The SMTs have also become instructors to the teachers, which has resulted in the teachers becoming good instructors in the classroom, because he SMTs support and motivate them. This is not fully practised in some schools, though (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010).

In chapter three I discussed the research design and methodology. The research design and methodology allowed for the discovery of answers to the research critical questions. I started with the delineation of the research paradigm. This was followed by a description of a methodological approach which I used in the study. This study adopted a qualitative approach, in a case study. The qualitative approach allowed me to conduct an in-depth study in leadership for learning in different contexts, as leadership for learning is a complex concept which may not be studied in isolation.

Data was generated through the use of semi-structured interviews and observations. Cohen et al. (2012) indicates that answers to semi-structured interviews are open-ended and the participants can develop ideas and elaborate much further on the issues which are addressed by the research. A purposive sampling was thereafter used for the selection of the three secondary schools, one quintile one school, one quintile two school and one quintile five school.

A description of each of these schools and the participants was provided in order to provide the background information of the participants and to clarify the setting of the study. The ethical issues, trustworthiness, limitations and delimitations were described and discussed.

Chapter four focussed on the presentation of the findings and discussion of the data generated from the semi-structured interviews. Themes were used to organise the discussion in a systematic way. These themes emerged during the study of the interview transcripts. The first theme that emerged was *putting leadership for learning into practice in secondary schools*. The second theme that emerged was *the reasons for leadership for learning practices by the SMTs in the secondary schools* and the third theme was *the support given by the stakeholders to the SMTs in schools*. A discussion of the data and the related findings were then presented in terms of Hallinger's (2011) leadership for learning. Verbatim quotations of the participants were also provided to support the arguments and discussions.

5.3 Conclusions

This study attempts to explore the ways in which leadership for learning is operationalised by SMTs in in three secondary schools in the Umlazi District, KwaZulu-Natal. The conclusions presented are informed by the findings drawn from the data.

5.3.1 Putting leadership for learning into practice in secondary schools

With regards the SMTs practicing leadership for learning, what I see happening is leadership styles, such as instructional leadership and leadership for learning are infused together in Tholimfundo. In this school, leadership for learning seems to be well operationalised by the SMT, whereas, the SMTs in Mpokophelo and Eyethu still consider the instructional leadership as the only model of leading learning in their schools. To me it appeared that the two leadership styles are not completely independent of each other in that they should not be looked at as strict compartments.

5.3.1.1 Proper planning for leading learning

This study indicates that there is lack of time for SMTs to meet and plan for leading learning and this has caused a barrier for the instructional leadership to be enacted into leadership for learning in Mpokophelo and Eyethu. Hallinger (2011) attests that leadership for learning is influenced by context, because, as much as some SMTs are given time by their principals, most seem to struggle in finding time to plan for leading learning.

I must indicate that albeit the visibility of the year planner, in my observation, the minutes produced did not corroborate with the number of meetings suggested in the planner, however there was proof that meetings do convene but not as planned.

5.3.1.2 The SMTs having regular meetings with the subject committees

It was evident that the principals of the three schools believed that some of the leadership roles should be delegated by them across the school to encourage the teachers to be involved in achieving the goals of the school. These principals emphasised that the aim of sharing leadership amongst teachers within the subject committees was to make teachers feel that the school belongs to all the stakeholders and that ownership of the school does not belong to the SMTs only. It was explicitly evident that the three principals believed that sharing the responsibilities made teachers feel like they were making valuable contributions to the school. The participants stated that they arrange regular meetings with subject committees in order to share some leadership roles with them.

5.3.1.3 Monitoring of teachers' work

It was evident that the SMTs in all the three schools went out of their way in ensuring that teaching and learning processes were carried out smoothly by the teachers and learners in their schools. In the two schools, Mpokophelo and Eyethu, however, the SMTs' endeavours seemed to have been in vain, as failure of learners was perpetual (DoE, 2015).

At Tholimfundo the teachers' work was monitored, as even unannounced visits were conducted and extra classes were organised and well monitored by the SMTs, whereas, at Mpokophelo and Eyethu the findings showed that not all teachers submitted their files on time.

5.3.1.4 Ensuring proper discipline for both teachers and learners

Maintaining discipline was identified as the means of supporting teachers coupled with monitoring and motivation advocated by the participants of Tholimfundo school, claiming that when there is discipline teachers obtain more time for focusing their attention to the core business which is teaching. The SMTs in this school detain the unruly learners and the teachers are called to order when they arrive late at school. There seemed to be lack discipline in schools, such as Mpokophelo and Eyethu. Learners in these schools seemed to be unruly and rebellious. In my observation, these learners seemed to have listened to their peers who most of the time misled them. Disciplinary measures needed to be redressed by the SMT members as corporal punishment is no longer in use. Teachers needed to spend more time with their learners so that they might not lose control.

5.3.2 The reasons for leadership for learning practices by the SMTs in schools

I can also conclude that the SMTs practise leadership for learning for several reasons in their schools, however, the most important one is to create a collaborative culture in order to instill learning in learners and teachers, as well as in themselves. SMTs do this by taking instructions from the principal, monitoring teacher's work, as well as setting a good example to the teachers, through implementation of relevant policies. If a school has a collaborative culture and a favourable atmosphere, it leads to a successful practice of leadership for learning. If the cultures of schools are conducive to leadership for learning, then teachers, SGBs and RCLs are made aware of the leading opportunities and they feel free to initiate new, as well as innovative ideas and develop their leadership skills. They also feel that they have ownership of the school because they are working in an environment that is full of trust and support from the SMT.

5.3.2.1 Policies that tell the SMTs to operationalise leadership for learning in the way they do

The principals of the three schools Mr Mthembu, Mr Majozi and Mr Gumede seemed to agree that knowledge of policies must be shared among all members of the SMTs within the schools, according to the South African national education policy. The SMT members in Tholimfundo secondary seemed to be more engaged in decision-making on how school policies should be implemented, together with the principal through wild consultation, thus the school's results seemed to have improved.

At Mpokophelo, although HODs were granted the opportunity to participate in decision-making through existing structures, all the decisions taken at departmental and Grade-level, in the various committees and with regards to policy formulation were ratified by the principal, who seemed to be accountable. It was evident that the principal seemed to be obsessed with instructing the SMT members and teachers to implement the policies which they were not engaged in formulating.

5.3.2.2 The SMTs taking instructions from the principal

It emerged from the data generated that all the SMT members from the three secondary schools agreed that, by allowing the principals to give them instructions with regards to the practice of leadership for learning, their schools have experienced tremendous change, although in the two other schools, Eyethu and Mpokophelo, there seemed to be more that still needed to be done. In these two schools there is still an element of failure, despite the effort which the principals have put into their work as instructional leaders their schools (DoE, 2015).

5.3.2.3 The SMTs modeling the best practice for the teachers

The SMTs in Tholimfundo worked collaboratively with the teachers to show them the way to effective leading for learning. The subject committees which were formed in the schools could be used to enhance teamwork, however, these committees sometimes ended up in vein, because while some teachers did work in teams, others preferred doing their work individually, in isolation from their team-mates.

The SMT members of Tholimfundo do not only instruct the teachers about what to do, but they also set a good example to the teachers. The findings showed that as leaders of the school, the SMT members lead learning in such a way that they influence teachers to do the same. The SMTs honour their teaching periods and teachers also go into class-room to teach the learners. Likewise, the teachers also arrive early at school, because the SMTs are punctual.

5.3.3 The support given by stakeholders to the SMTs in secondary schools

I can also conclude that in Mpokophelo and Eyethu the SMTs, do not allow teachers, SGBs and RCLs to have enough time to engage in leadership activities that can promote leadership for learning activities. If the SMTs, teachers, SGBs and RCLs are to be successful in their various leadership roles, then enough provision must be made for allocation of time for planning for leadership activities. If the SMT can use an open-door policy, they can enable teachers, SGBs and RCLs to engage themselves fully and willingly in leadership activities without being followed by the SMT.

When the SMTs are leading learning by example, teachers and RCLs will also do the same at their levels of leadership and the learning culture will thrive at school. The SMTs should trust the ability of teachers and RCLs of taking part in the leadership activities. Too much authority from the SMT should be avoided, although it can be in place up to a certain limit. Too much authority can also perpetuate bureaucracy. I conclude that the practice of leadership for learning may enhance effective learning which can lead to a successful school like Tholimfundo Secondary school, which is one of the schools I have studied in this dissertation.

5.4 Recommendations

Firstly, I recommend that the SMTs endeavour to adopt a more dispersed model of leadership by making their hierarchical structures more flatter. The leadership for learning model is supposed to be in line with the democratic principles and policies enshrined in the South African constitution. This leadership model can also be promoted by the DoE in a wider socio-economic context. The SMTs and teachers should be given more time and opportunities to plan and engage in leadership activities beyond the school.

Secondly, all the SMT members and teachers should be given some time in the school day to engage in collaborative activities such as a creative interaction and deliberation within their teams. SMTs should be allowed enough time to sit in meetings to plan how to lead learning. The SMTs should also attempt to allow a collaborative culture and harmonious learning environment in order to enhance the successful leadership for learning in their schools.

With regards to monitoring teachers' work and teacher professional development, the SMTs and subject advisors should focus on encouraging teachers to form cluster groups based on subject curriculum, whereas these cluster groups should extend beyond subject curriculum into areas such as disciplinary committees as well. Just like subject committees are formed, disciplinary committees should be put in place at school, as they may assist in the improvement of the learning performance. SMTs should also be consistent in encouraging the teachers to submit their files which contain annual and lesson plans and evidence of work done to ensure excellence in curriculum delivery. This may show that the teachers do go into the classroom to teach the learners.

Thirdly, in terms of giving the reasons for the SMTs operationalising leadership for learning in the manner in which they are doing, I recommend that the SMTs allow both leadership styles, such as instructional leadership and leadership for learning to feature in leading learning. They should not do away completely with the prevalence of the instructional leadership style, however they should tone down its dominance, because of its authoritative nature, and also as it was mentioned earlier in this study, that the instructional leadership values the role of one person, the principal.

Fourthly, at Mpokophelo and Eyethu the SMTs should work together, in harmony, thereby endorsing the possibility of success in the achievement of learner and school outcomes. In these schools, team work should be the norm and the SMT should respect the input of others. This can allow the SMTs to practise leadership for learning successfully as everyone will be willing to learn, including learners, teachers and the SMT members themselves. The SMT can also learn further in order to improve their leadership skills. This may motivate the teachers to study further so that they may also gain more experience in leading and managing learners in their classrooms.

The SMTs and teachers can also develop confidence to apply for higher managerial positions such as HODs, deputy principals, principals as well as district managers. The SGBs can also learn in order for them to understand which roles they should play supporting the SMTs to take good decisions and implement conducive school policies. This may contribute to school effectiveness.

Finally, I also recommend that the SMTs allow all the stakeholders to become co-partners in the learning and teaching of the learners. They can do this by allowing teachers, SGBs and RLCs to give support. In this way these stakeholders will be able to take ownership of the decisions made and they will also be willing to implement the relevant policies, which might be in place. It may be possible that not all the SMTs are practicing the democratic ideals of leadership for learning, thus the SMTs need to be capacitated by the DoE to share leadership and should be held accountable for the decentralisation of power. It is also recommended that the DoE conduct workshops for SMTs, teachers, SGBs and RLCs at school on leadership for learning to motivate them to engage successfully in leadership activities. Also, both SMTs and teachers may be rendered in-service training and also be motivated by the DoE to study leadership and managerial skills at tertiary institutions.

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APPENDIX A

School of Education, College of Humanities,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Edgewood Campus
Cnr Richmond and Mariannahill Rd
Pinetown

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Miss C.N. Buthelezi. I am a School of Education Masters Degree candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus, South Africa. I am interested in learning about how the SMTs operationalise leadership for learning in township schools. I am studying case studies from three secondary schools in Umlazi District, South Africa. Your school is one of my case studies. To gather the information, I am interested in asking you some questions.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- The research aims to generate data about leadership for learning.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- After I have completed this research you will receive a copy of my dissertation to verify the correctness of the information you might have contributed to it.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

I can be contacted at:

Email: lungi.cbuthlezi@gmail.com

Cell: 073 358 9602 or 074 487 9255.

My supervisor is Dr Inba Naicker who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email: Naickeril@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: 031 260 3461.

You may also contact the Research Office through:

P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

APPENDIX B

AA 26 Katushi Avenue

P.O. Umlazi

4031

6 November 2015

The Principal

Zwelihle Secondary School

P.O. Umlazi

4 031

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: Request for permission to do research in your school

I wish to request your permission to conduct research in your school. I am a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood campus in the faculty of education. I am required to conduct research as part of the requirement to complete a Masters degree.

I will conduct semi-structured interviews with HODs regarding the application of leadership for learning principles in Secondary schools. I wish to emphasise that HODs' contact time with teachers and learners will remain unaffected. The research title is "Leadership for learning: A case study of three secondary schools in the Umlazi District of KwaZul-Natal." The main objective of the study is to investigate how the School Management Teams (SMTs) apply the principles and values of leadership for learning in their schools.

Findings from this study will be used for writing my course work dissertation. The school name and participants will not be divulged in the project and in any subsequent writing.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

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

Participants' identities will not be revealed under any circumstances, during and after the reporting process.

All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent participants' names.

Participation is voluntary which means participants are free to withdraw at any time they so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences on their part.

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

Participants will be contacted in advance about the interviews dates and times.

Yours Faithfully

C.N. Buthelezi

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APPENDIX C

DECLARATION

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

APPENDIX D

Semi-structured Interviews

Interview Schedule (Leadership for learning-SMTs)

Date of interview:

Interviewer:

1. Background information

- 1.1 In which year did school begin?
- 1.2 What is the composition of the school management team?
- 1.3 How would you describe the school?
- 1.4 How many teachers are you leading in your department?
- 1.5 How long have you been in the school?
- 1.6 What are your qualifications?

2. Resources available inside and outside school

- 2.1 As a member of the SMT how do you get by with the limited resources (physical and human) you have?
- 2.2 How do you assist the principal with ensuring efficient resource management?

3. How are the SMTs operationalising leadership for learning to encourage learning in their schools?

- 3.1 What do you do on day to day basis to lead teaching and learning in your school?

4. Why do the SMTs operationalise leadership for learning in this way?

- 4.1 What informs how you lead teaching and learning on day-to-day basis? Is it instruction from the principal, the policy or the way they do it?
- 4.2 How do you model leading teaching and learning for teachers in your school?

5. How are SMTs supported in their leadership for learning by all stakeholders inside and outside their schools?

5.1 How does the SGB support you in teaching and learning?

5.2 How do the Department of Education officials support you?

5.3 How do the RCLs support you with teaching and learning?

5.4 How do you engage with the wider community (including businesses) in realising the goals of your school?

Possible probes

What more do you do? Don't you go to teach in class?

What support does your school offer to the community in order for it to be able to learn?

What support would you like your school to offer to the community in order for it to be able to learn?

What support would you like the community to offer to you, as SMT, to help you to instil the culture of learning in your school?

APPENDIX E

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE- SMTs

RESEARCH TOPIC: LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

ASPECTS	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C
No. of SMT members			
No. of staff members			
Availability of resources			
SMTs honouring their teaching periods			
Meetings between the SMTs and subject committees			
Meetings between SMTs and SGBs			
Formulation of RCL			
Contribution by communities to the learning process			



Ms by Lungi Buthelezi
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paper text:

Leadership for Learning: A Case study of three secondary schools in the Umlazi District of KwaZulu-Natal by CATHERINE NOKULUNGA BUTHELEZI Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION in EDUCATIONAL LEDERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND POLICY in the SCHOOL OF EDUCATION at the UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL Supervisor: Doctor Inba Naicker June 2017 I. ETHICAL CLEARANCE II. DECLARATION I, Catherine Nokulunga Buthelezi,

4 declare that I) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work. II) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university. III) This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs, or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other person. IV) This dissertation does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then: a) their words have been re-

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30 JUNE 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

This serves to inform that I have read the final version of the dissertation titled:

'Leadership for Learning: A case study of three secondary schools in the Umlazi District of KwaZulu-Natal' by C.N. Buthelezi.

To the best of my knowledge, all the proposed amendments have been effected and the work is free of spelling and grammatical errors. I am of the view that the quality of language used meets generally accepted academic standards.

Yours faithfully



DR S. GOVENDER
B Paed. (Arts), B.A. (Hons), B Ed.
Cambridge Certificate for English Medium Teachers
MPA, D Admin.