

**Sailing in turbulent conditions: Principals' leadership
experiences about turning around underperforming schools
in deprived contexts**

By

Wilson Myboy Nzimande

**Submitted to the School of Education, University of
KwaZulu-Natal in fulfilment of the academic
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Durban, South Africa

Supervisor: Professor T.T. Bhengu

APRIL 2019

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Wilson Myboy Nzimande declare that:

- i. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.'
- ii. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- iii. This thesis does not contain other persons's data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- iv. This thesis 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-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced.
 - b) Where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.
- v. The thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the thesis and in the references sections.

Signed:

Wilson Myboy Nzimande

Date...30/04/2019

STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

As the Candidate's Supervisor, I agree to the submission of this thesis.



Supervisor: Prof. T.T. Bhengu

Date...03/05/2019.....

12 April 2017

Mr Wilson M Nzimande 982159404
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Nzimande

Protocol reference number: HSS/2118/016D

Project title: Sailing turbulent conditions: principals' lived experiences about turning around underperforming schools in deprived contexts.

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 07 December 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



Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Dr TT Bhengu
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc School Administrators: Mrs B Mnguni, Ms T Khumalo, Ms P Ncayiyana and Ms M Ngcobo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4608 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohund@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to God, the Almighty for His unfailing love, support, and protection. To Him all the glory.

This thesis is also dedicated to my late brother, Samson Lindela Nzimande, who assisted me to obtain my first qualification in education. I also extend my gratitude to my wife, Nthabiseng, and my three daughters, Siduduzo, Anele and ZamaGwala, for giving me the time to complete this study and giving me encouragement when I needed it most. Without their support and love, I would never have succeeded.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Of the people who have contributed, formally or informally to making a study a reality, I extend my profound indebtedness:

- I wish to sincerely thank the following, in no particular order of contribution, for the different roles played during this study:
- My supervisor, Professor TT Bhengu, for supervising and guiding this work to its logical conclusion. His supervisory style is hereby acknowledged.
- I wish to acknowledge and thank all members of staff from the School of Education and the Discipline, Educational Leadership, Management and Policy (ELMP), at University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus.
- To the Department of Education for allowing me to conduct research in their schools.
- My sincere thanks to the seven principals of the participating schools for giving me time and sharing information with me to make this study possible.
- Dr B.S. Mchunu who took time to read the thesis and provide his critical analysis.

ABSTRACT

The study was aimed at exploring the leadership experiences of principals in transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts in the Umgungundlovu District. The problem that gave rise to the research was about how principals turned around the backbone of underperformance whilst working against deprivations of different nature. The deprivations that exist in both rural and informal settlements have a negative impact on learner performance. Transformational leadership approaches offer the ways and means of working against such conditions, whether these are found in rural or informal settlements.

A qualitative case study design was considered appropriate and was adopted for the study that included seven school principals, purposively selected to participate. In addition, I drew on a constructivist/ interpretative paradigm to guide the design of the study. Data were generated by means of semi-structured interviews, observations and documents reviews. Findings were discussed in terms of emerging themes relating to the understanding, implementation, benefits and challenges of the efficacy of transformative leadership in seven schools. Findings point to strategic planning, problem analysis, analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), visionary leadership, attitude change, instructional leadership, school functionality, curriculum management, stakeholder management, systems for monitoring and evaluation, quality teaching and learning, extra-tuition programmes, staff recruitment and professional development as key factors in turning around the situation to ensure sustained academic performance.

The implementation of shared turnaround plans is of benefit to the teachers, learners, SGBs and parents in achieving the set academic goals, despite the prevalent deprivations. The principals' understandings of transformation is evident in the manner in which schools were able to sustain improving results over a period of time. The principals used a number of strategies to address the negative effects of deprivations as they had a negative impact on the school's academic performance yet schools were expected to perform well, and also to provide quality education like all other schools regardless of their contexts. The success of the principals relates, *inter alia*, to working closely with the teachers to get their vision for the school, the understanding of their contexts, the acute awareness of the need to involve all key stakeholders in what they did and demonstrating decisiveness when dealing with a number of issues, including dealing with irregular practices and teacher indolence and apathy that, from

time to time, occurred. In conclusion, this research study contributed to the body of knowledge in terms of examining the principals' understandings of leadership practices in turning around underperforming schools in deprived contexts through their transformational and instructional leadership practices.

ABBREVIATIONS

ATPs	Annual Teaching Plans
ANA	Annual National Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CVs	Curriculum Vitae
CMC	Circuit Management Centre
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ELITS	Education Library Information Technological Systems
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HOD	Provincial Head of Department
DHs	Departmental Heads
LTSM	Learner and Teaching Support Material
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NLTSM	Non- Learner and Teaching Support Material
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NPC	National Planning Commission
PMDS	Principals Management Development Programme
RCLs	Representative Council of Learners
R&R	Rationalisation and Redeployment
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SASA	South African Schools Act
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring International Quality
SDC	School Development Committee
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SNES	Special Needs Education Services
TLO	Teacher Liaison Officer
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
Content	
Title	ii
Declaration	iii
Supervisor's statement	iv
Ethical Clearance Certificate	v
Dedication	vi
Acknowledgment	vii
Abstract	viii
Abbreviations	ix
CHAPTER ONE	
ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background to the study	1
1.3 Statement of the problem	3
1.4 Setting the context of the study: personal account	6
1.5 Purpose and rationale	9
1.6 Significance of the study	10
1.7 Objectives of the study	11
1.8 Research questions	12
1.9 Clarification of key concepts	13
1.10 Overview of research design and methodology	15
1.11 Outline of the chapter	15
1.12 Conclusion	17
CHAPTER TWO	
REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON LEADERSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF TURBULENT CONDITIONS	
2.1 Introduction	18
2.2 Leadership and management	20
2.3 The concept of underperformance	21
2.3.1 Underperforming schools and policy landscaping: A South African perspective	22

2.3.2 Factors that influence school underperformance	24
2.4 Leadership dimensions	26
2.4.1 Instructional leadership and its contribution to the school's performance	27
2.4.2 Transformational leadership and its contribution to the school's performance	29
2.4.3 Asset-based leadership approaches	31
2.5 Principals' leadership in transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts	33
2.5.1 The concept of turnaround	33
2.5.2 Leadership practices to guide the work of the principal in different school contexts	34
2.6 Leadership experiences in dealing with effects of deprived contexts	38
2.6.1 The origins of the concept of multiple deprivation	39
2.6.2 The principal leadership enacted in challenging circumstances	40
2.6.2.1 Four core leadership practices	41
2.6.3 The South African perspective	42
2.6.3.1 Factors which promote successful performance despite challenges	42
2.6.3.2 Characteristics of ineffective or failing schools	43
2.6.3.3 Successful leadership enacted in school facing multiple deprivation	44
2.7 Conclusion	46
CHAPTER THREE THEORIES THAT PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY	
3.1 Introduction	48
3.2 The evolution of transformational leadership theory	48
3.3 The transformational leadership theory and its importance to this study	48
3.4 Principles of transformational leadership theory	51
3.4.1 Individualised influence	51
3.4.2 Inspirational motivation	53
3.4.3 Intellectual stimulation	55
3.4.4 Individualised considerations	56
3.5 Merits of the transformational leadership theory	57
3.6 Limitations of the transformational leadership theory	57
3.7 Weber's (1996) Five Domains of Instructional Leadership Model	58
3.8 Conclusion	61

CHAPTER FOUR	
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	
4.1 Introduction	62
4.2 Research positionality and bias	62
4.3 Research aims and questions	63
4.4 Research paradigms	64
4.4.1 Critical paradigm	64
4.4.2 Interpretive /constructive paradigm	66
4.5 Research design	70
4.6 Population and sampling procedures	70
4.7 Research methodology	72
4.7.1 Case study methodology	73
4.8 Data generation methods	75
4.8.1 Semi- structured interviews	75
4.8.2 Participant observations	77
4.8.3 Documents reviews	78
4.9 Qualitative data analysis	79
4.10 Issues of trustworthiness	81
4.10.1 Credibility	81
4.10.2 Dependability	82
4.10.3 Transferability	83
4.10.4 Confirmability	83
4.11 Ethical considerations	84
4.12 Limitations of the study	85
4.13 Conclusion	85
CHAPTER FIVE	
TURNING AROUND SCHOOLS' PERFORMANCE: PERSPECTIVE FROM SCHOOLS IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS	
5.1 Introduction	86
5.2 A brief profile of the participating schools	86
5.2.1 Profile of Phumelela Secondary School	87
5.2.2 Profile of Thuthuka Secondary School	87
5.2.3 Profile of Kuyasa Secondary School	87

5.3 Data presentation and discussion	89
5.3.1 Factors that prompted the school principals to embark on the change process	89
5.3.2 Transforming underperforming schools into performing ones	91
5.3.3 Initial challenges encountered during the early stages of the turnaround process	97
5.3.4 Creating conditions that are favourable for the turnaround process	99
5.3.4.1 Maximising the utilisation of learning and teaching support materials	100
5.3.4.2 Enhancing teachers' and own professional development	101
5.3.5 The process of turning around	104
5.3.5.1 Addressing the educators' negative attitudes	105
5.3.5.2 Monitoring teaching and learning	107
5.3.5.3 Incentivising high performance in a drive to turnaround the school's performance	114
5.3.5.4 Providing feedback	115
5.3.5.5 Dealing with educator's response to feedback	117
5.3.6 The role of School-based stakeholders in turning around the school's fortunes	119
5.3.6.1 The role of the educators in turning around the school's fortunes	123
5.3.6.2 The role of the school governing body in turning around the school's fortunes	124
5.3.7 The role of the district officials in turning around the school's fortunes	126
5.3.8 The relationship between deprivations and teaching and learning	127
5.3.9 Principals' leadership strategies that they used to mitigate the negative effects of deprivation on teaching and learning	128
5.4. The system of recruiting educators	130
5.5 How new school cultures unfolded	132
5. 6 Conclusion	135
CHAPTER SIX ANALYSING PATTERNS THAT EMERGED FROM THE DATA PRESENTATION	
6.1 Introduction	136
6.2.1 Profile of Kuhle Secondary School	136
6.2.2 Profile of Siyaphambili Secondary School	137
6.2.3 Profile of Mathafeni Secondary School	138
6.2.4 Profile of Thando Secondary School	138
6.3 Data presentation and discussion	139
6.3.1 Factors that prompted the school principals to embark on the change process	139

6.3.2 Transforming underperforming schools into performing ones	141
6.3.3 Initial challenges encountered during the early stages of the turnaround process	143
6.3.4 Creating conditions that are favourable for the turnaround process	146
6.3.4.1 Maximising the utilisation of learning and teaching support material	146
6.3.4.2 Enhancing teachers and own professional development	147
6.3.5 The process of turning around	150
6.3.5.1 Renewed focus on teaching and learning	150
6.3.5.2 Focus on monitoring teaching and learning	154
6.3.6 The role of School-based stakeholder in turning around the school	156
6.3.6.1 The role of SMTs as a collective in transformation process	158
6.3.7 The role of District officials in supporting effective teaching and learning	160
6.3.8 The relationship between deprivations and teaching and learning	163
6.3.8.1 Learner discipline	164
6.3.9 Strategies principals used to mitigate the negative effects of deprivations on teaching and learning	165
6.4 New cultures that emerged after the change process	167
6. 5 Guidance to principals in underperforming schools	168
6. 6 Conclusion	169
CHAPTER SEVEN ANALYSING PATTERNS THAT EMERGED FROM THE DATA PRESENTATION	
7.1 Introduction	170
7.2 Similarities and differences between and among communities	170
7.3 Similarities and differences between and among participating schools	175
7.4 Similarities and differences in challenges principals encountered in turning around underperformance	182
7.5 Similarities and differences in the strategies principals used to mitigate the negative effects of deprivation on teaching and learning	188
7.6 Emerging features of principal leadership practices in the transformation process	191
7.6.1 Working on the mind-set of teachers to embrace change	191
7.6.2 Creation of conditions favourable for transformation	193
7.6.3 Mobilising various stakeholders for active participation in the change process	193

7.6.4 Special focus on instructional leadership priority areas	197
7.6.5 Establishing new school cultures	199
7.6.6 Utilisation of learner teaching support material	204
7.6.7 Enhancing teachers' and own professional development	205
7.6.8 The system of recruiting educators	206
7. 8 Conclusion	207
CHAPTER EIGHT	
TURNING AROUND UNDERPERFORMING SCHOOLS IN DEPRIVED SCHOOL CONTEXTS: LESSONS FROM SEVEN PRINCIPALS	
8.1 Introduction	209
8.2 Synthesis of the whole thesis	210
8.3 Restating the research questions	211
8.3.1 What are principals' understandings and experiences of leadership for transforming underperforming schools in a deprived context?	211
8.3.2 How do principals who have transformed underperforming schools in deprived contexts enact leadership?	213
8.3.3 What can be learnt from the principals' understandings and experiences of leadership for transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts?	217
8.4 Implications of the study for various stakeholders	218
8.5 Conclusion	218
9. References	220
APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Letter to DoE requesting permission to conduct research in KZN schools.	255
Appendix B: Letter requesting permission from the Principal to conduct research in the school.	257
Appendix C: Permission from the DoE to conduct research in the KZN schools.	258
Appendix D: Acceptance from principals to participate in the research process.	259
Appendix E: Interview Schedule.	260
Appendix F: Turnitin certificate	261

TABLES	
Table 1: The pseudonyms of schools	71
Table 2: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009- 2017)	86
Table 3 : Learner enrolment in the past 5 years (2013-2017)	86
Table 4: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009- 2017)	87
Table 5: Learner enrolment in the past 5 years (2013-2017)	87
Table 6: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009- 2017)	88
Table 7: Learner enrolment in the past 5 years (2013-2017)	88
Table 8: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009- 2017)	135
Table 9: Learner enrolment in the past 5 years (2013-2017)	136
Table 10: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009- 2017)	136
Table 11: Learner enrolment in the past 5 years (2013-2017)	136
Table 12: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009- 2017)	137
Table 13: Learner enrolment in the past 5 years (2013-2017)	137
Table 14: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009- 2017)	138
Table 15 : Learner enrolment in the past 5 years (2013-2017)	138
Table 16: Academic performance (2009-2017)	174
Table 17: Comparison of academic performance, PPN with learner enrolment	175
Table 18 : Subject Packages and streams	177
Figure 1: Emerging principals' leadership practices for turning around schools performances	214

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Through this study, I looked at the experiences of successful principals who have managed to transform the performance of their schools despite deprivations. I aimed to understand and learn from the experiences of the selected secondary school principals that had successfully turned around their schools from dysfunctionality to well-performing ones. This is the first chapter of the thesis consisting of eight chapters. I begin this chapter by providing a brief background about the South African education system and its performance viewed from the perspective of learner academic achievement over the past two decades. I then move on to discuss the statement of the problem, my personal context, the rationale and purpose of the study, significance of the study, the overview of the methodology, research objectives and research questions, clarification of key concepts and the outline of various chapters brings this chapter to a close.

1.2 Background to the study

The importance of education in South Africa can be traced back through the expressions of the Freedom Charter when it called for the doors of learning to be opened to all, articulating the provision of free, compulsory, universal and equal education to all children (Freedom Charter, 1955). About four decades later, South Africa became a democratic state after the 1994 general elections and the adoption of its constitution in 1996. Section 24 (1) (a) of the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 declares education as a basic human right (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1996a). Since that declaration, the South African government has increasingly been spending a lot of money on education with the aim of transforming the broader society (Chisholm, 2004; Harber, 2001). Furthermore, education has been declared an apex priority for the South African government (Department of Basic Education, 2015). There is evidence that the quality of education in South Africa is not congruent with the expenditure from the state. For example, South African schools consistently fare poorly in international tests even among African countries with low per capita income (Bergman, Bergman & Gravett, 2011). South African learners have fared poorly in both numeracy and literacy, compared to African countries (Spaull, 2013). It is also worth noting that even the better performing group of

wealthier schools is still underperforming by international standards (Spaull, 2013). Only about 25% of the learners are performing better than the majority who performed extremely poorly in the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring International Quality (SACMEQ) tests (Spaull, 2015). South African learners also did not perform well when compared to learners from Chile and Singapore in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (Reddy, 2006). This is indicative of the fact that while the government is spending such huge sum of money on education with a view to improving its quality, there is very little evidence to suggest return on investment.

Whilst learner performance is an important indicator of school quality, others should also be considered such as management and infrastructure (Gallie, 2007). The South African school system has an obligation to bridge the gap between its populace by providing quality education to all learners. Hence, the biggest driver of better education outcomes is the school manager, the principal (Gallie, 2007). School academic performance is highly correlated with the ability and commitment of the principal (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The principal and his or her School Management Team (SMT) members set the turnaround agenda, while leading teachers, involving the community and building their general capacity to perform (Murphy & Meyer, 2008). The South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 (hereafter, the Schools Act), makes provision for the school principal's duties. For instance, in terms of Section 16A (1) (b), principals are required to provide a report on the school's academic performance (RSA, 1996b). The SMT led by the school principal has to develop the School Improvement Plan (SIP), (De Clerq, 2008) which details actions to be undertaken by the school, aimed at improving its performance (Kerr, Marsh, Ikemoto, Darilek, & Barney, 2006). The school principal has to lead the school's transformation process (Bhengu, 2005). It should also be noted that, whereas, school improvement is viewed as a gradual and continuous process in which almost all schools are expected to engage, school transformation or turnaround focuses on the most consistently underperforming schools and involves dramatic transformative change (Leithwood, Harris & Strauss, 2010). In the quest to transform schools' performance, the leadership of underperforming schools operates within a context that is complex and to some extent, which is turbulent (Setlhodi-Mohapi & Lebeloane, 2014).

The turbulent environments make the task of principals to be a challenging one, as they have to address the demand for changing schools while at the same time faced with the realities of this environment (Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018). However, research indicates that there are schools

that are able to perform well despite these turbulent environments. While poor performance has been recorded in schools in deprived contexts, some of these have been turned around and they have attained outstanding results over some time. As I state elsewhere in this report, the rise and the fall of any organisation lies on its leadership (Bhengu & Mthembu, 2014; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Kelly & Sanders, 2010). I therefore, argue in this study that the outstanding performance of these schools can be attributed to the outstanding performance of their leadership, especially the principal. Therefore, to ensure acceptable learner performance in all schools, it is crucial to identify good lessons from those school leaders who have managed to transform their schools into performing organisations. These lessons may inform schools, especially those operating within the deprived conditions as to what others in similar circumstances have done to succeed. It is against this background that this study aimed to expose the lived experiences of principals who have successfully transformed their schools in deprived contexts from being underperforming to well-performing schools. The study tried to understand the lives of these principals in and outside their schools with an aim to explore the kind of leadership they enact in their daily activities; the way they respond to challenges posed by their contexts. Lastly, the study aimed to provide some lessons that can be drawn from the lives of these principals.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Despite South Africa spending about 6% of her GDP (Gross Domestic Product) on education, the country is not performing well when compared to other countries (National Planning Commission, 2011). Literacy and Numeracy test scores are low by African and global standards (National Planning Commission, 2011). The Planning Commission further reveals that efforts to raise the quality of education for poor children have largely failed. Apart from a small minority of black children who attend former white schools and a small minority of schools performing well in largely black areas, the quality of public education in South Africa remains poor (National Planning Commission, 2011, p.14). These statements reveal that something is not going well in the country's education system as poor performance is still prevalent and this study views principals as being critical in influencing the performance of schools.

A formidable challenge most school leaders in South Africa face is to improve the academic results in state schools (Heystek, 2015). Other scholars share this view. For example, Taole

(2015) contends that there are challenges regarding effective leadership and management among many serving South African principals. They lack the necessary skills needed to perform their leadership roles (Taole, 2015). The focus of schools these days should be to provide effective teaching and learning and the role of the school leadership is to support this by transforming schools performances. However, Phillips (2012) argues that principals feel inadequate to initiate and develop instructional programmes given a variety of subject areas taught. Hence, Taole (2013) states that school principals pay more attention to management and administration tasks and tend to relegate instructional leadership function to others in the administrative hierarchy. Taole (2013) further contends that principals are not in touch with what is happening in the classroom and this leads to poor learner attainment. In addition, Mafora (2013) states that some SMT members perceive their distributive leadership roles as an add-on to their prescribed teaching and administrative responsibilities, which can be ignored or be deferred to others. Their attitudes affect the performance of schools and lead to low learner academic achievement (Mafora, 2013). This shows that principals need to do more work in terms of attitude change and focus on their core duties and responsibilities.

The leadership role of the school principal is widely regarded as the primary factor contributing to successful relationship between school transformation and school improvement, and is therefore an essential dimension of all effective schools (Chikoko, 2018; Marishane & Botha, 2011). Principals of schools are expected and required to take a lead in creative and collaborative ways that would contribute to their learners' performance. For instance, they are expected to lead aspects such as organisational change (Baloyi, 2011; Pretorius, 2002). However, research shows that a number of them are in such an unenviable position where they lack preparation programmes for their leadership and management positions (Mafora, 2013; Msila, 2010; Taole, 2015). However, they are expected to lead change as people at the helm and guide their SMT members and teachers through change, by minimising fear and resistance (Baloyi, 2011; Pretorius, 2002).

Despite the South African government's major changes in educational policies, governance and management, most schools are still struggling with regards to effective teaching and learning (Bhengu & Mthembu, 2014). The school leadership has the responsibility of transforming schools from a state of dysfunctionality to that of effectiveness (Fleisch & Christie, 2004). My contention is that, given the evidence from various scholars in the field of educational leadership and management, school leaders can address many of these challenges

by, *inter alia*, paying attention to aspects like the environment around the school, developments in education and the improvement of opportunities for every learner at school. It is important that leaders in schools, as drivers of the state's transformational agenda, understand and provide school cultures that facilitate these ideas (Bhengu & Mthembu, 2014). Mthiyane, Bhengu and Bayeni (2014) further argue that strong leadership or lack thereof determines the direction that the school takes. Successful schools are therefore characterised by effective and efficient instructional leaders.

Mafora (2013) argues that some schools, especially from previously disadvantaged areas, still face challenges like poor quality of teaching and learning, ineffective leadership and management, low level of parental participation, poor state of infrastructure and limited resources. However, Botha (2011) contends that school leadership can play a pivotal role in determining and enhancing the success of a school irrespective of the myriad of challenges they face. Notwithstanding the challenges faced by schools, the call for improvement in learner performance and the provision of quality education necessitate new and creative approaches to school leadership. The quality of leadership within schools can and does steer the school's direction towards the desired outcomes (Bhengu & Mthembu, 2014). The major challenge is that some school principals, still lack skills that can assist them to navigate challenges facing their schools and be able to transform their performance. To improve teaching and learning, educational leaders engage in the social distribution of tasks, like delegating and sharing the situational distribution of support, in order to achieve the school's performance (Blasé, Blasé & Phillips, 2010). Papa and English (2010) argue that it is not difficult to identify an underperforming or failing school. These scholars argue that evidence is visible to all stakeholders like parents, community leaders and students long before tests are administered. Their main argument is that evidence is not only confined to mere test scores because test scores only reveal specific gaps in academic achievement and not the contexts. Papa and English (2011) further argue that the creation of a high performing school is always a dynamic combination of leadership and circumstances embedded in specific contexts. The argument advanced by Papa and English (2011) is that the recitation of the same thing offers no guarantee that the results will be the same from place to place.

When school leadership engages in the transformation of the school, they should identify allies in an effort to implement changes and to identify early who is or who is not on board with the changes so that it can rally support for the school vision and turnaround process (Thielman,

2012). Underperforming schools are similar to high performing schools in one critical respect, that is, they are a human construction, meaning that they are governed by human mores, values, rules, expectations and traditions (Papa & English, 2011). All these can also constitute a social constraint, and thus are changeable. Papa and English (2011) posit that underperforming schools are not simply isolated failures. These scholars argue that their poor performance is indicative of the failure of the system and transforming their performance will contribute to the system and the public at large. Without question, leadership is the central force driving school transformation and sustainable improvement, and all evidence points towards the importance of leadership in securing sustainable change (Leithwood, Harris & Straus, 2010). It is also worth noting that parents and the wider community can play a major role in the child's educational attainment. Challenges emerging from aspects of student's family background, especially issues like poverty are a key factor in the learners' performance especially in a number of underperforming schools (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2010). This study will assist by providing insights about the roles played by principals in turning around the performance of their schools. Therefore, it may come up with new knowledge, which may inform readers and researchers about how principals can turn around their schools' performance within the context of deprivations of various kinds.

1.4 Setting the context of the study: personal account

The rationale for undertaking this study has personal, professional and academic components in it. I grew up in a rural area in which I had to travel long distances to access education. That journey was not easy, as I came from a poor family with meagre resources; my parents were not educated and my father was just a labourer in Pietermaritzburg, the capital city in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. A number of learners with whom I started schooling, did not complete our National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations because of a number of challenges within the education system as well as the social welfare system of that time. Some of those who ended up completing NSC education level did not go any further to pursue tertiary education, as their NSC certificates were not of good quality. That meant that the education system had somewhat failed them; consequently, they had to compete for scarce employment opportunities with those who did not complete secondary school education. The quality of education they had obtained did not assist them to change their livelihood and a reasonable standard of living.

I also had the opportunity of working with adult learners who had anrolled at Adult Education Centres. What I realised at that time was that adult centre classes were not only attended by adult learners, but also by the youth who had dropped out of normal schooling. The main aim of the learners was to further their studies so that they could actively participate in the country's economy. It was amazing to find that some of these learners had failed Grade 12, as NSC is also called, and were attending adult education classes with the hope of getting the certificate as some of these centres were providing education to learners whose aim was to write NSC examinations on part time basis. The plight of these learners was somehow difficult to comprehend as some of them ended up being prey to unscrupulous people who offered them finishing classes at exorbitant fees. Others were alleged to be paying for certain people to write NSC examinations for them, thus creating many irregularities during the examinations process. Those who failed to attend these institutions, ended up without NSC certificates, which they regarded as a gateway to higher education institutions.

As I am writing this thesis, I am managing schools in UMgungundlovu District as a Circuit Manager. My informal observation is that within my circuit, there are schools that have been underperforming well for a number of years. These schools are now losing learners as they move to the neighbouring schools that offer better quality education. As learners leave, resources for the school shrink because the learner subsidy from the provincial Department of Basic Education is reduced. Apart from that, the teaching posts for the school are reduced because the Post Provisioning Norm (PPN) for the school is influenced by the number of learners enrolled (Langa, 2013). The above factors also contribute to chronic underperformance, thus contributing a vicious cycle. Poor school performance in South Africa reinforces social inequality as children inherit social situation of their parents, irrespective of their own motivation (Spaul, 2015). This study looks at the experiences of successful principals who have managed to transform the performance of their schools despite circumstances of deprivation. The expectations for the school principal have moved from demands of management and control, to demands for an educational leader who can foster staff development, parental involvement, community support, student growth and succeed with major challenges and expectations (Bergman & Bergman, 2011). Leithwood, *et al.* (2010) suggest that building compelling visions of the organisation's future is a fundamental task in the transformational leadership models. Leaders who transform their schools set the direction for their organisations. They also inspire others with their clear vision for the future. The principal whose major aim is to transform the school has to be an instructional leader. This is

because such leaders focus on improving teaching and learning conditions so that learner academic outcomes are also improved. Instructional leaders' understanding is that all other duties associated with the school are to support the primary responsibility of supporting teaching and learning (Thielman, 2012).

The educational background I presented earlier provides a motivation for engaging in a study of this nature. I have explained that I grew up in a rural area in which I had to travel long distances to access formal primary education. Working as Circuit Manager has now exposed me to the realities of working with schools with serial underperformance. In my informal observation, I have noted how schools were supported by district teams, yet some continue experiencing chronic underperformance, whilst others have improved despite the fact that they operate within similar situations. Endless efforts have been made by District Teams in trying to curb underperformance, only to find that the schools that had come from this category in previous years have become worse in terms of underperformance. A number of piecemeal and straightjacketed strategies have been implemented in an effort to curb this poor dysfunctionality and underperformance but to no avail. However, other schools have emerged victorious in the sense that they have managed to change their situation and have become well performing schools. I have been a team leader that is providing support to underperforming schools. During that time, I noted that not much research had been conducted to find out what had led such schools to an improvement trajectory. Any improvement in the area of learner academic achievement should be welcomed and as researchers, we need to learn from their experiences.

In my current work as a Circuit Manager responsible for managing a number of schools allocated to my circuit, I have made numerous personal observations. These include the fact that numerous schools have broken the cycle of underperformance and are now performing at accepted levels. These schools are located in both the rural and informal settlements areas where there is abject poverty and other factors that are debilitating against them. It is against this background that I have seen the need to conduct a study to find out more about this phenomenon of turning around underperformance. The study looked at the experiences of successful principals who have managed to transform the performance of their schools despite deprivations. The assumption is that the principal as an instructional leader is responsible for improving the academic performance of an institution, despite all the negating factors (Thielman, 2012). Obviously, this study may assist by providing deeper insights about the role

that principals play in turning around the performance of their schools. Therefore, it may come up with new knowledge, which will inform the readers and the researchers alike about how principals can turn around their schools' performance within the context of deprivations of various kinds.

1.5 Purpose and rationale

The rationale for this study is driven by my personal, academic and professional background, as well as theoretical issues as I have highlighted in the previous sections. This study is premised on the notion that in spite of the overseas studies of turning schools around, there is a scope for finding out about the role that principals play in turning around the underperforming schools in deprived areas. Furthermore, many stereotypes exist about principals regarding their lived experiences in working with stakeholders to turn poor academic performance in deprived contexts. It is important to learn from the principals' lived experiences about the strategies they used in turning around poor performance in schools located in deprived contexts. Secondly, given my role as a circuit manager responsible for supporting schools, I have observed that schools differ when it comes to academic performance, although they are located in the same context. Current literature on principal leadership is dominated by research conducted from overseas countries. Coincidentally, we tend to borrow their ways of doing things and ideas on issues of school leadership. This study will fulfil the utilitarian value of providing insights on current policy imperatives that may result in new insights about how transformational leadership can be utilised for the schools' benefit. Thirdly, there is limited literature available for policy makers and scholars regarding the successful implementation of turnaround strategies in schools located in deprived contexts. South Africa is lacking in literature that provides an understanding of the transformational leadership approaches to improving academic performance in rural and informal settlements schools, suffering from various deprivations. There is not much focus on the process of transformation of the underperforming schools. This assumption is based on the understanding that its findings and recommendations may contribute to the addition on knowledge relating to principals' leadership in deprived areas.

The purpose of this study is to examine the leadership experiences of the principals in turning around the academic fortunes of poorly performing schools into shining stars in spite of the

prevailing challenges of deprivation. It is my conviction that professionals, academics, and research community need to understand not only how principals transform schools, but also to understand the conditions under which this is or can be done. By examining transformational leadership in deprived contexts of both rural and informal settlements schools, this case study can make a unique contribution to knowledge on academic performance under the leadership of transformative principals. The local available local literature does not assist in explaining the role of the principal at various schools, yet producing similar results. This suggests that there is limited theory in this particular field that explains this phenomenon.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study provides benefits for both researchers and policy makers in terms of providing insights about transformational leadership practices that respond to issues of deprivations. In this study, there is recognition that principalship is a complex phenomenon, especially in the context of deprived areas. There is further recognition of the ongoing understanding of transformational leadership theory and its application in the context of the schools and its flexibility to areas that are considered to be deprived. In this research, I assume the role of facilitator of accessing the hidden knowledge which is located in different contexts for our understanding. The argument is that this study will strengthen the capacity of both the principals and circuit managers in engaging in continuous transformation of the school system at any given area and context.

Ngcobo and Tikly (2010) contend that although many aspects of effective leadership are similar to those reported in the wider international literature, they assume a specific form and the contexts of emphasis related to contexts of disadvantage in South Africa. A factor that has consistently been identified in the international literature being critical for managing change and raising the achievement of learners is that of effective leadership. Understanding the role played by the school leadership on learner achievement, needs to be interpreted in the light of local values, perceptions and realities. Furthermore, there is a need to engage with local goals of education and leadership relating to the specific needs of children who live in distinct communities. Hence, this study sought to explore and theorise practices played by principals and their SMTs in transforming their school's performance in spite of challenges encountered in their contexts. The values that leaders of informal settlements and rural schools must engage with in South Africa are unique and need to be understood at various levels. These leaders must

learn to manage across boundaries and to deal with the new values emanating from national and provincial policies that may or may not clash with the values of the teachers, the parents and the learners. Bringing the best out of the most disadvantaged learners require the school leadership to engage with the contexts from which they come and seek ways to empower parents with ways that support their children's learning - the approaches and strategies are critical (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010).

The leadership approaches of school principals and their SMT members seem to be changing in relation to the substantial changes and school wide reforms that are taking place in South African schools today (Botha, 2012). In the light of this, it is therefore important to understand the type of leadership approaches that are suitable for transforming the school performance. These studies further hope to contribute in producing contemporary knowledge on the factors that contribute to the schools' performance in rural and informal settlements schools. Understanding the causes for the decline in schools' performance could enable policy makers and practitioners to better identify and offer insights into declining schools; assist in understanding the critical processes responsible for the phenomenon and prevent schools from ever developing into low performing schools (Mthiyane, *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, understanding the causes for poor performance could provide policy makers and practitioners with insights on how to address under performance rather than attempting costly and unreliable school strategies (Mthiyane, *et al.*, 2014). This study further seeks to provide some insights on the approaches and strategies that could be employed by principals and their SMT members in turning around the performance of their schools in South African contexts. The context is characterised by challenges in learner discipline, high pregnancy rate from learners, high rate of absenteeism from learners, drug abuse and unemployment and child headed homes.

1.7 Objectives of the study

The goal of this study is to examine the leadership experiences of principals who have successfully transformed their underperforming secondary schools. The broad goals of examining the principal's leadership understanding and experiences in transforming the underperforming deprived schools needs to be further divided into subsidiary objectives. The other subsidiary objectives for the study that support the main goals are:

- To examine the principals' understandings and experiences of leading for transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts.
- To understand how principals who have transformed underperforming schools in deprived contexts enact leadership.
- To draw lessons from principals' understandings and experiences of leadership for transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts

1.8 Research questions

The questions guiding this study emanate from the main question dealing with the inspection of the leadership understandings and experiences of principals in transforming schools in deprived contexts. The questions are categorised as follows:

- What are principals' understandings and experiences of leadership for transforming underperforming schools in a deprived context?
- How do principals who have transformed underperforming schools in deprived contexts enact leadership?
- What can be learnt from the principals' understandings and experiences of leadership for transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts?

The first research question is the primary question. However, this question focuses on the principals' understanding and experiences of transformation of schools in deprived contexts. In the body of literature that will be presented in Chapter Two of this thesis. I will make reference to the prevailing thinking on transformational leadership. The second research question emanates from the question proceeding it regarding the phenomenon of transformational leadership. It explores the understanding of the concept transformational leadership in terms of its relation to the deprived contexts that prevail in schools. The other subsidiary question seeks to examine the challenges and benefits of transformation of underperforming schools. The final question aims to provide deep insights about our understanding of transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts by locating it within transformational leadership. In the section that follows, I briefly discuss the research key concepts that need to be understood as a precursor in the study.

1.9 Clarification of key concepts

There are four key concepts that I believe have to be clarified in order to contextualise the discussion and focus of the study. The four concepts are (a) Turbulence (b) Underperforming school (c) turning around (d) Deprived contexts. I provide a brief description of each concept below.

Turbulence

The term turbulence is closely associated with aerial aviation and refers to volatilities or difficulties to predict discontinuities in the environment (Barrow & Neely, 2012). In the context of this study, turbulence can be defined as a situation filled with obstacles or challenges that have to be overcome (Gage, Green & VanZandt, 1980). Turbulence is an inherent feature of the public school and it is something that school principals must successfully manage (Myers, 2014). It can manifest itself in a number of forms such as loss of support, tension filled conditions, rapid changes and external pressure. These forces may combine and present themselves as forces which the school principal should face (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017). This study seeks to understand and explore the roles played by the school principals in handling turbulence in their quest to transform their schools performance.

Underperforming schools

The term underperforming schools refers to those schools that consistently perform below the expected norm, standard or benchmark (Selthodi-Mohapi & Lebeloane, 2014). Therefore, an underperforming school, and in the context of this study, is a secondary school whose pass percentage in the NSC examination falls below 60% (DBE, 2014). A primary school is deemed to be underperforming if when using literacy as a proxy, it has more than 50% learners performing at Level 3 and below in the Annual National Assessment (ANA) in Grades 3 and 6 (DBE, 2014). Therefore, all those schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal have been performing below 60% in the NSC examinations for the past three to five years are defined as underperforming.

Turning around

This concept is mainly used in the corporate world and is associated with a high degree of intolerance for consistent failure (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2010). Action is then taken to change the prevailing underperformance situation to that of better performance. This act requires certain skills, strategies and approaches. In the context of this study, turning around schools refers to those schools that have consistently been underperforming for some years but have, in the past three to five years changed and are now performing above 60% benchmark as defined by the Department of Basic Education in the province.

Deprived contexts

The term means a confluence of factors that depress learning. This is an environment in which communities face socio-economic hardships and disadvantages relating to abject poverty, cultural and social dissonance like child headed families. This environment is characterised by the lack of opportunities to develop oneself and does not stimulate high education expectation from learners.

Educator

The term educator refers to a person who provides instruction to the learners. In this study, the term has been used to refer to any educator regardless of the level they occupy in terms of promotion.

Teacher

The term teacher refers to a person who provides instruction to the learners. In this study, the term has been used to refer to a Post Level One educator.

1.10 Overview of research design and methodology

The study being reported in this thesis is qualitative in design and adopted a case study methodology. Through this study, I examined the lived experiences, thoughts, and feelings of the principals in sampled rural and informal settlements schools about strategies that they used to turning around their schools' fortunes from underperformance to well performing schools.

A detailed discussion about various aspects of the methodology and the whole process of conducting this study is presented in Chapter Four.

1.11 Outline of the chapters

The thesis comprises eight chapters and each chapter is briefly outlined in this section.

Chapter One

This is an introductory chapter; it sets the scene and background to the problem being explored in the study. The chapter provides a detailed discussion about the focus of the study. Other elements of the chapter such as the rationale, the objectives and research questions, the significance of the study and clarification of key concepts are provided in this chapter.

Chapter Two

This is the second chapter that focuses on the current landscape of the topic. It reviews current literature, and such a review takes the form of published empirical studies, theses and dissertations as well as policy documents relating to the topic. Furthermore, this chapter is used to reveal the gaps that this thesis seeks to address.

Chapter Three

The third chapter is dedicated to the comprehensive discussion of the theoretical framework of the study. Transformational Leadership theory frames the study and is thus discussed in-depth, including its evolution and its relevance for this particular study.

Chapter Four

The fourth chapter is about research design and methodology. I begin this chapter by discussing the research paradigm through which I view the work of principals as they enact their leadership as part of turning around and sustaining improvement in their learners' academic achievement.

Chapter Five

The fifth chapter is the first of two data presentation chapters. This chapter focuses only on rural secondary schools that participated in this study.

Chapter Six

This chapter is the second of data presentation chapters and it focuses on informal settlements and peri-urban schools.

Chapter Seven

The seventh chapter attempts to bring together stories and realities from the two contexts (rural and urban/informal settlements contexts). The purpose of this chapter is to further the analysis by mapping a pattern that emerges from the second level of analysis which goes beyond descriptive analysis that characterised the first two chapters.

Chapter Eight

The eighth chapter is the last chapter and attempts to bring the whole study to a conclusion. This chapter attempts to show the extent to which all research questions have been addressed, and on the basis of which, recommendations can be made.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an orientation to the problem. Through this chapter, I have managed to bring to the fore, various perspectives to understanding turbulent conditions under which school principals operate. I have also indicated that school principals are expected to do more as agents of societal transformation in South Africa. Initial review of literature has shown that many principals are not adequately skilled to deal with all the challenges they encounter in and around the schools; yet, it is an imperative to engage with all types of environments as they

affect their schools. The next chapter deals with the literature that speaks to issues of leadership and how it can shape the direction of the school despite contextual factors.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON LEADERSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF TURBULENT CONDITIONS

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I set the scene by introducing the study; providing the background of the problem and the context within which the problem is located. In that chapter, I also provided an overview of various aspects of the study, including the outline of various chapters. This chapter provides a review of the literature around leadership for school transformation. The reason for that is that the whole study focuses precisely on change and transformation of schools from undesirable situations to the desirable one. Therefore, the selection of the literature was informed by my desire to conduct a systematic review linked to the three central themes, namely, the principals' understandings and experiences of leadership for transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts, strategies and approaches enacted by principals who transformed the performances of their schools in deprived contexts, and lessons that can be learned from these principals' leadership practices.

This chapter aims to explore the principals' leadership experiences in transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts, an area that has not received adequate attention from researchers. In general, leaders are needed in order to challenge the *status quo* through inspiring and persuading organisational members to rally behind the set goals and vision of the organisation (Lunenburg, 2011). Scholars posit that the principal is the driving force behind the school's success (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010; Ramatseba, 2012; Steyn, 2013). Principals as people in charge of the schools' activities are leaders of the School Management Teams (SMTs), and are expected to deal with every issue, including difficult ones (Makoelle, 2011). Principals as leaders are generically expected to give direction and guidance about matters like the school vision, mission, and improvement of results and the development of educators (Mokoelle, 2011). In support, Luqman, Farhan, Shahzad and Shaheen (2011) contend that the context of educational leaders like principals, has increased in complexity and this has led to changing expectations on what they need

to know and do in order to improve their schools' performances. It can be argued that principals really face increasing demands from all directions; from communities and the Department of Education to guide their schools performance trajectory to greater heights irrespective of the context in which they operate (Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018). My observation is that at times, communities do not verbalise their aspirations but they just desert the underperforming school and move their children to better performing schools. Lunenburg (2011) asserts that leaders are able to conquer the context whether turbulent, volatile or filled with ambiguous circumstances that conspire to depress any progressive acts for success. Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010) contend that the principal has a direct or indirect influence on the learners' performance as he/she is next to classroom instruction. Emphasising the importance principals' leadership role in schools, these scholars argue that:

To date, we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of the talented leadership (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010, p. 9).

This view is supported by various scholars such as Bhengu and Mthembu (2014), Chikoko and Naicker (2015), Marishane and Botha (2011), as well as Marks and Printy (2003). These scholars argue that the leadership role of the school principal is regarded as the main factor which contributes to the school's performance trajectory and that it is viewed as the essential dimension of all effective schools. This resonates with my experience in working with schools; whilst school principals normally work with their SMTs but schools with strong principals, someone who is well grounded on policy, leadership and management issues, tend to perform well.

There is a perception that schools stand and fall on the strength of the principal (Masondo, 2016). Principals of underperforming schools face a number of challenges including various deprivations and are expected to demonstrate effective leadership that will transforming them into better performing schools. The principal has the task of leading and managing the school irrespective of its condition and circumstances (Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018; Mokoelle, 2011). Once appointed, the school community expects him/her to drive the school's performance to greater heights regardless of its circumstances and challenges. He/she has to deal with a number of leadership and managerial tasks like developing a vision for the organisation and aligning people to that vision through motivation,

commitment and empowerment, recruitment and the appraisal of the staff, conflict management, management of the curriculum and resources and the transformation and management of change (Lunenburg, 2011; Makoele, 2011; Mendels, 2012). The leadership and management roles of the principal has led to the close discussion of these concepts.

2.2 Leadership and management

There is little consensus among scholars on the nature of comparison between leadership and management (Bass, 2010; Lunenburg, 2011; Simonet & Tett, 2012; Yukl, 2010). To some scholars, the contestation is on the extent or degree of overlap between the two concepts. School principals are expected to provide leadership and management as they execute their daily duties; hence, the discussion of these two concepts is pivotal in this section. These two concepts are viewed as distinct but depict complementary processes as they both influence the functionality of the organisation (Simonet & Tett, 2012). They do possess differences, though. For example, leadership concept is concerned with change and application of new approaches, breakthroughs, innovation and greatness whilst management is concerned with the control, problem solving, stability, order, analytic decisions and routine (Clarke, 2007). Therefore, management is an important aspect in addition to school leadership as it contributes to the school's performance, drive through proper administration and allocation of human and physical resources (Sharp & Walter, 2012). The setting up of sound structures can be viewed as a prerequisite to leadership because for any change to occur there should be viable systems to enable any move to the next level (Lunenburg & Lunenburg, 2013).

The school principal has to display leadership and management qualities when managing the school. He/she has to develop the school's vision based on high standards and stimulate others to rally behind it (Celikten, 2001). He/ she has to create a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning (Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010; Wallace Foundation, 2012). He/she has to display the two leadership roles, which are positional and functional (Marishane, 2011) by demonstrating his/her ability to deliver high learner performance in spite of the context or situation in which he/she finds himself or herself when enacting leadership duties. The principal has to display an understanding that all stakeholders should be involved in the school's development agenda. He/ she has to work with educators,

learners, parents and community leaders to set up organisational structures which serve as the basis for organisational development and performance and this calls for his/her managerial acumen (November, Alexander & Van Wyk, 2010). He/she has to execute managerial functions in such a way that the school's performance is enhanced. He/she should display good people management skills by building and managing effective teams (Makoella, 2011). He/she must be able to manage the staff and facilitate the creation of rules and procedures that will ensure smooth operation of the school (Louis, *et. al.*, 2010). Other management functions that are critical include the management of data, which is looking at school's performance patterns, management of processes, time and change in order to foster school improvement (Mendels, 2012). The principal is also expected to play an important role in the effective management of the curriculum (Taole, 2013). He/she has to motivate educators to perform well and create a culture that is conducive to learning and teaching (Taole, 2013). For this study, it is assumed that effective enactment of leadership practices will enable principals to be effective in executing their management duties.

2.3 The concept of underperformance

Various dimensions are emerging as descriptors of the concept of underperformance in schools. These dimensions and definitions usually speak about either schools' internal circumstances or they acknowledge the significance of external factors in measuring school's performance. For example, within the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in South Africa, a primary school is deemed to be underperforming if using literacy as a proxy, it has more than 50% of learners performing at Level 3 and below in the Annual National Assessments (ANA) in Grades 3 and Grade 6. A secondary school is deemed to be underperforming if its percentage pass in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination falls below sixty (60) percent (DBE, 2014). The second dimension to this concept of underperformance refers to schools that are eligible for special measures. In such schools, internal factors have led to them failing to meet the set standards. Therefore, they require great corrective measures to turn around the situation (Gray, 2000). The third dimension refers to failing schools and this applies to schools that achieve poorly in tests and examinations and schools where attainment, learner behaviour, teaching quality or management systems are considered poor (Araujo, 2009).

In this research, I use the concept of school underperformance to refer to those schools that consistently fail to achieve 60% and above in the NSC Examinations. Most underperforming schools serve learners from impoverished communities, and thus require education to set up opportunities that would give affected learners breakthroughs to better life (Setlhodi & Lebeloane, 2014). In the main, these schools are located in areas of high social deprivation which creates a turbulent and often volatile context for any improvement efforts to be implemented and sustained (Harris, 2009; Leithwood, Harris & Strauss, 2010). The gap in achievement between children from low income and those from affluent families persist and rise through their school years (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2010). This is explained by the fact that socio-economically disadvantaged children experience many unmet needs that lead to feelings of hopelessness and negative behaviours that put their academic future at risk (Lumby, 2015). At school, it is the responsibility of the school leadership and educators to shape and redirect these learners to better performance and self-actualisation.

2.3.1 Underperforming schools and policy landscaping: A South African perspective

In the South African context, the importance of schools' academic performances is so important that school principals are expected to provide a report on their schools performances, in line with Section (16) (A) of the Schools Act (RSA, 1996). The earlier version of the Schools Act does not focus much on the schools performances; hence, it was amended through the Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007 to include issues relating to school underperformance. Policy maker added a Clause that specifically directs those in authority on how they should address the issue of underperformance (Langa, 2013). This particular section authorises the Provincial Head of Department (HOD) to identify an underperforming school. The Head of Department (HOD) then writes to the school principal and requests the school to generate an Academic Performance Improvement Plan, detailing how the school intends to improve its academic performance in that school calendar year (RSA, 2014). This requirement is applicable to all schools regardless of their contexts. South African schools that fail to achieve the stipulated achievement standards set by the DBE are labelled as underperforming and corrective measures are taken against them. Emphasising the accountability requirements Moletsane (2010, p. 2) argues: "Schools are expected to be effective and efficient in producing the particular outcomes pre-determined at government national level, and those who fall short are said to be

inefficient and ineffective and are appropriately sanctioned and punished and/or identified as needing special intervention.”

For serial underperformers (schools that have underperformed for more than two years in succession), the KwaZulu-Natal Department is considering the following options: implementing the incapacity code and procedures for poor work performance to the school principals in terms of the Employment of Educators Act, (RSA, 1998); and withdrawing the functions of the School Governing Body (RSA, 1996), and appointing persons to perform the functions of the School Governing Body (SGB). These measures clearly indicate that the principal is mainly responsible for the school’s performance because his/her failure might result in him/her being subjected to the incapacity programme. The provincial education department can identify another principal to serve as a mentor for the principal of the underperforming school to improve the performance of the school. These accountability measures fail to take into consideration the diverse make up of schools as their performance is determined through a single aspect, namely, the end of the year examinations regardless of their contexts. For example, rural schools suffer great inequalities and are inundated with challenges of learners’ poor social- economic backgrounds, poor school infrastructure, inadequate resources, poor quality and shortage of suitable qualified educators (Hlalele, 2012). Despite all these challenges, these schools are expected to perform well in the NSC examinations.

It is worth mentioning that provinces that are mainly rural, are the ones that usually lag behind on the NSC results. Besides being rural provinces, their schools suffer from multiple deprivations which impact on their performances. These provinces are Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. In KwaZulu-Natal, the three bottom districts in terms of the NSC (2015) performances are UMzinyathi, ILembe and Zululand (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2015). The Department of Basic Education (DBE) at national level uses assessment results to plan for strategies for school improvement. For example, its Strategic Plan 2015-2020, indicates that standardised assessment and systemic evaluations will be used to measure whether learners are achieving the desired curriculum outcomes and to identify the key areas in the curriculum that require improvement. The DBE will then use all the internal and external evaluation processes to check where underperformance occurs and the underlying reasons for underperformance so that appropriate interventions can be prepared (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The

Department of Basic Education's concern with schools underperformance in Grade 12 has resulted in the extended focus, with the focus on primary schools, especially Grades 3 and Grade 6 and then Senior Phase, which is Grade 9.

The DBE has thus requested schools to write the Annual National Assessment (ANA). The testing programme is designed to assess the level of achievement by learners in respect of the learning outcomes and in identifying causes for poor performance in the respective grades. Through this intervention, the DBE hopes to address underperformance and lay a solid foundation for learners as they climb their academic ladder towards the NSC or Grade 12 examination, as these two terms are interchangeably used. As schools battle to meet the set standards/benchmarks for good performance, they have to make efforts regardless of their contexts and challenges they face in these contexts and some school principals are able to navigate these turbulent conditions and transform their schools' performances, from underperformance to performing, whilst others struggle to achieve the desired outcome. I must also state here that during the process of conducting this research ANA was suspended after meeting strong resistance from the South African Democratic Teacher Union (SADTU), which is the biggest teacher union in the country. Despite its usefulness, it appears for now that the suspension of ANA will continue because there are no talks about the suspension being lifted.

2.3.2 Factors that influence school underperformance

The environment in which children grow up somehow influences their daily lives and their schooling (De Lange, Olivier, Geldenhuys & Mitchell, 2012). Schools with multiple deprivations influence learners performance (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane; 2015). This is because these areas present challenges such as low socio- economic factors, poverty and inequalities. The fact that many children in rural areas lag behind in comparison to their urban peers is unjustified because the choice of rural communities to reside in a rural area should not affect the quality of their children's education (Langa, 2013). Christie, Sullivan, Duku and Gallie (2010) further contend that the context of the school and its composition, are major influences on the quality of learning and teaching the school provides. Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015) provide a different viewpoint as they posit that some schools have been able to perform well and comparable to first class in relation to their pass rate

whilst operating in areas of multiple deprivations. Mthiyane, Bhengu and Bayeni (2014) identify a number of factors, they contend, lead to the school's poor performance. These include the absence of a clear school vision and mission statement, specifically with reference to teaching and learning; a lack of instructional leadership which emphasises quality teaching and learning; ineffective and inefficient leadership at all school levels; poor curriculum alignment and focus and failure of the teachers to hold learners to high expectations and budget reductions that may be associated with socio-economic conditions of the school.

Whilst these factors affect schools across the spectrum, this study only sought to explore how principals of schools in deprived contexts address them in order to keep their school's performances with the set benchmark. This is because in the South African context, most of the schools labelled as underperforming are rural and to some extent, informal settlements schools servicing communities with poor social-economic status who suffer from high poverty levels and deprivations (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The next section looks at the concept of leadership and its aspects, as it is through leadership, especially with the principals at the forefront, that a school's performance can be transformed.

2.3.3 Contextual factors that influence school underperformance

From my experience as a circuit manager, I have observed that the schools that underperform depict the following characteristics: poor curriculum management and monitoring, lack of parental support. The lack of teamwork among the educators within the school minimises the prospects for team teaching. Issues of late coming by the learners because of long distances they have to travel is a reality. Absenteeism by both educators and learners for various reasons is another factor. Overcrowding, especially in the peri urban schools, affect the effective delivery of the curriculum. More often than not, overcrowding has negative effects on learner academic performance. The schools in rural areas struggle to attract and retain suitably qualified educators especially in the science subjects and that too, has a negative impact in the performance of some rural schools.

2.4 Leadership dimensions

This study explored the principals' leadership experiences of turning around underperforming schools in deprived contexts. The act of transforming an underperforming school necessitates that the principal should be able to exercise effective leadership skills. There is voluminous literature on the concept of leadership generally, and effective leadership in particular (Botha, 2013; Bush, 2008; Bush, *et al.*, 2010; Christie, 2010; Harris, 2009; Leithwood, *et al.*, 2010; Leithwood & Morris, 2010; Yukl, 2002). Leadership has been a topic of research for a while now but there is no generally agreed upon definition (Avery, 2004; Gill, 2006; Grimm, 2010; Western, 2008). For example, Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010) contend that leadership is about organisational improvement and specifically, it is about establishing agreed upon and worthwhile directions for the organisation in question and doing whatever it takes to influence and support people to move to a particular direction. Gill (2006) contends that there is no agreed upon definition of the concept of leadership. This view resonates with that of Grimm (2010), who posits that leadership is complex and comprise many definitions and qualities.

Whilst there are different definitions of leadership, this research adopts one of the traditional and widely accepted definition for leadership of Greenberg and Baron (1993). These scholars describe leadership as a process whereby one person influences individual and group members towards goal setting and goal achievement without any force or coercion (Greenberg & Baron, 1993). Despite differences on the definition of leadership, scholars agree that leadership involves influencing the actions of others in achieving desirable goals. It involves elements such as motivating people, either as individuals or as groups, managing conflicts and communicating (Botha, 2013). However, what is not clear is the form of leadership that is enacted by school principals who manage to turn around their schools performances in deprived contexts. There are different leadership typologies that can be enacted in an educational setting. Some of these leadership typologies include instructional leadership, transformational leadership, distributed leadership, asset-based leadership and servant leadership. Whilst all these leadership typologies are important, this study will only look at three, which constitute leadership for transforming school's performances. I provide more details on this aspect in the next chapter.

2.4.1 Instructional leadership and its contribution to the school's performance

Literature on school performance emphasises the impact of leadership on the success and performance of schools (Hornig & Loeb, 2010; Salo, Nylund & Stjernstrom, 2015). Instructional leadership is one of the leadership dimensions that can contribute to the school's academic transformation process. It has been conceptualised in different ways by various scholars and researchers (Hallinger, 2010; Naicker, *et al.*, 2013; Pashiardis, 2014). Bush and Glover (2003, p.11) define instructional leadership as leadership that focuses on teaching and learning and on the behaviour of teachers in working with students. Southworth (2002) concurs with this view as he contends that, instructional leadership is strongly concerned with teaching and learning, including the professional learning of teachers as well as students growth. Instructional leadership is a term that has been designed from effective school research movement perspective, primarily in the USA (Hallinger, 2005; Marzano & McNulty, 2003; Nettles & Harrington, 2007). This form of leadership is important because it has been recognised as one of the most important activities for principals and other school leaders (Bush, 2013; Daley & Kim, 2010). There is a convergence of views among scholars that instructional leadership supports effective teaching and learning in schools (Bhengu & Mthembu, 2014; Globler & Conley, 2013; Naicker, Chikoko & Mthiyane, 2013; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Sim, 2011). Instructional leadership has a significant impact on student learning and achievement and is second only to the quality of the teachers' instruction in the classroom (Globler & Conley, 2013; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). The impact of this leadership dimension can be traced from a number of research projects. This study presents highlights from the a few that have confirmed the contribution of instructional leadership on the school's academic performance trajectory.

In a study conducted by Haughton and Balli (2010) in California, the principals were able to transform their school's performances using the instructional leadership dimension (Haughton & Balli, 2010). This study was based on a campaign called No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in which a number of the schools were deemed to be underperforming and put on a programme called "Program Improvement". About two parents in these schools were able to benefit from that programme that was driven at the front by the school principals. In this study, it was discovered that the academic performance of the schools improved through the principals' leadership and met the set standards by the NCLB. Evidence reveals that, with the leadership strategies of these principals, the school's academic performance was set to an improvement trajectory. There was an observed

improvement in the quality of teaching and learning delivered which promoted a set of high academic expectations. The principals were in the forefront of the NCLB programme in turning around underperformance in schools. Qualitative evidence was obtained through the case studies designed using in-depth interviews, and government review methods. The general observation is that, in performing schools, it is the principals who ensure that educators are always on time in their classrooms and teaching, and the SMT members monitor classwork in order to ensure they obtain good results. The role of the principal is to ensure that they conduct classroom visits, and monitor the work of the SMTs and other leading teachers who are specialists in their respective subjects. In other words, there are many educator experts actively involved in monitoring the work of teachers, and principals lead from the front. This view is supported by Louis *et al.* (2010) when arguing that principals generally focus in supporting good instructions in their schools because of the complexity of the school's subjects especially in secondary schools. Louis *et al.* (2010) further contend that whilst principals may not have expert knowledge of all curriculum, they have a responsibility of ensuring that the task of monitoring is delegated to Departmental Heads (DHs) and is executed to support learners' learning and academic performance throughout the academic year.

Calik, Seggin, Kagan and Kiline (2012) conducted a study in Turkey whose findings indicated that instructional school leadership positively affected learner academic achievement. In this Turkish study, 328 classrooms were sampled and the results indicated a 47% improvement of transference of knowledge by the classroom teachers. The researcher used the collective scale instrument to collect quantitative data. The finding of this study revealed an increase in learner achievement due to the principal's instructional leadership. The principal's instructional leadership resulted in an improvement of the student academic achievement (Calik, Seggin, Kagan & Kiline, 2012). This leadership dimension has also been applied in developing countries where schools are affected by a variety of deprived conditions. These factors were found not to have a negative bearing on their academic performance due to the principal's instructional leadership. Naicker, *et al.* (2012) conducted a case study on five schools at Umlazi District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The researchers, Naicker, *et al.*, 2012 used semi-structured interviews to generate data. In that study, it was discovered that academic performance improved due to the principals' distributed form of leadership. The following section will present more information and understanding on the instructional leadership dimension. The increasing

emphasis on accountability from school principals has also reignited the interest on instructional leadership (Brauckmann, Geibler, Feldhoff & Pashiardis, 2016).

The principal is the prime instructional leader although he/she has to delegate some functions to other staff members (Mafuwane, 2012). He/she has to conduct the following activities: provide guidance and direction to the school activities, set the academic goals, familiarise himself/herself with what happens in all levels of instruction in the school, ensure that all educators perform to achieve the same goals, allocate the staff and organise the resources to maximum effect (Mafuwane, 2012). The hiring, supervising and evaluating of the educators is another major instructional leadership task of the principal.

Correct appointment of staff members is also vital, as the principal will not spend a lot of time trying to address content challenges of educators although they will still need mentoring and support. The principal, as an instructional leader, should provide his/her staff with continuous opportunities for development in order to ensure that the school goals are achieved. He/she must also protect instructional time and programmes and monitor unplanned disruptions to instructional time (Mafuwane, 2012). Other duties of the principal as instructional leader include creation and provision of a suitable school environment for teaching and learning and organisational climate (Mafuwane, 2012). Lastly, the principal has to ensure that there is assessment, evaluation and review of instructional programmes. The data generated from performance levels of learners will assist the school to shape its performance and ensure that it is performing within the expectations of the Department of Education.

2.4.2 Transformational leadership and its contribution to the school performance

Transformational leadership is defined as finding the current energy in the followers through creating an active environment in the organisation and mobilising this energy in the direction of the organisation's objectives (Cemaloglu, Sezgin & Killing, 2012). Dimmock (2013) suggests that transformational leadership is a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems, creating valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. These definitions underscore the importance of transformational leadership in motivating followers to be

actively engaged in bringing change to the organisation through the attainment of the set goals and objectives. This form of leadership focuses on innovation, change and reform (Akçakaya, 2010). Through this form of leadership, the principal is seen as a person who realises his/her staffs' dreams about the future, and channel them through the school vision so that the school's goals and objectives are realised. Dimmock (2013) contends that transformational leadership enhances motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms. This is activated by connecting the followers' sense of identity and self to the mission statement and the collective identity of the organisation (Dimmock, 2013).

The principal in the schooling system is expected to construct a roadmap leading towards better academic performance and ensure that all teaching staff share the same vision with him/her (Selesho & Ntisa, 2014). The transformational leadership model has four factors, which if effectively implemented, could lead to the school's better performance. These factors are inspirational motivation, individualised consideration, individualised influence and intellectual stimulation (Balyer, 2012). A detailed discussion of this is provided in Chapter Three. With regards to effective leadership, these factors could be executed as follows: for inspirational leadership, the principal has to serve as a role model to his/her staff. Through the actions of the principal, teachers are persuaded to join the vision and share the ideals of the organisation (Naidoo & Botha, 2012). In respect to individualised consideration, the principal has to create a close bond with his/ her staff, as this will develop trust and better understanding (Balyer, 2012). Understanding his/her staff will help to utilise them appropriately and this could assist in enhancing the school's academic performance (Balyer, 2012).

Individualised influence has to do with inspiring and influencing the staff towards the realisation of the set goals. Lastly, intellectual stimulation encourages the principal to effectively utilise his/her staff. Bayler (2012) further contends that the principal should do the following: understand the needs of the staff, allows them to take part in discussions and tasks that force them to think of creative solutions, understand their capabilities in order to better delegate as this will enhance their skills, encourage growth and development and contribute to the school's better performance. The principal can further enhance his/her school's performance by co-ordinating the following activities: directing the teaching staff intrinsically

towards the achievement of the school's academic target, changing the perception and beliefs of the teaching staff to enhance their involvement and commitment to the school's academic performance. What is central to this leadership construct is the transformation of the *status quo*, which is critical in turning around the school's performance and importance for this research study.

2.4.3 Asset- based leadership approach and its contribution to the school's performance

The asset-based approach is based on the notion that rural development is possible and sustainable when local community people are committed to invest in themselves and their resources (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). In support, Myende (2015) contends that this leadership centres on the notion of decentralising rural development. Whilst supporting the previous scholars, Loots, Ebersöhn, Ferreira and Eloff (2012), provide a broader version, when they postulate that the asset-based approach believes in the presence of assets in individuals and resources in systems. Chikoko and Khanare (2012) advance that the concept of community assets has three tiers of assets. They are classified as primary, secondary and the outside layer. These scholars contend that the primary tier consists of those assets which are accessible and which are mostly located within the school (Chikoko & Khanare, 2012). This could be aspects like teachers, learners, principal and other SMT members. The secondary tier consists of assets located within the school neighbourhoods but are not controlled by the school. Components of this tier includes faith-based organisations, community members and other community-based organisations, which contribute in improving learners' academic performance. The third layer of assets is described as those assets outside the community in terms of location and ownership (Chikoko & Khanare, 2012). Components of this layer include private businesses, non-government organisations, national corporations, universities and research institutions.

Through broad community involvement, the asset-based approach provides means for the community to actively participate in the academic affairs of their children and this enhances the academic performance of schools (Myende, 2015). The principal has to coordinate the school activities by ensuring that all stakeholders are involved in supporting the school's development agenda. He/she has to facilitate and ensure that the environment is conducive for social trust and that the human capital is strengthened (Myende, 2015).

The asset-based approach transcends the school boundaries (primary tier of assets) and looks at important secondary tiers and outside tiers of assets in developing the school (Chikoko & Khanare, 2012). Schools can therefore, address their challenges by not only focusing on their primary tier but they can attempt to tap on the secondary and the outside tier.

It is worth mentioning that like all approaches, the asset-based approach could face implementation challenges if not well managed. Some of these challenges could be the confusion about the meaning of citizen-driven community development and this could transcend the implementation challenge for this leadership approach (Mathie & Cunningham, 2005). The challenge occurs when the approach neglects the class and power relations inherent in the social relationship and the community level (Mathie & Cunningham, 2005). Myende (2015) argues that this situation can also manifest itself at school level if there are no guidelines on how to implement this leadership approach.

The second challenge could be unclear school goals and objectives and this could hinder the utilisation of this leadership approach (Chikoko & Myende, 2014). Failure from the principal and his/her management team to clearly articulate the school goals and objectives could create a gap between the leadership and the staff and in turn affect the leaders' efforts to harness individual and group assets (Chikoko & Myende, 2014). Connecting community assets is crucial in ensuring sustainable community initiatives and this will contribute in creating future benefits and the quality of life for residents (Myende, 2015). I therefore argue that the asset-based approach is important in managing schools as it ignites holistic participation from all stakeholders. As school underperformance is mainly prevalent in rural schools (KwaZulu- Natal Department of Education, 2015), this approach could assist principals to turn around their school's performances.

2.5 Principals' leadership in transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts

This section is dedicated to discussing principals' leadership practices that can transform their schools into effective ones. Before engaging in such a discussion, I thought it prudent to start by highlighting what I mean by turning around.

2.5.1 The concept of turnaround

This concept of turning around the situation in organisations has its roots in the corporate world and is associated with a high intolerance of chronic failure or chronic underperformance and, the concept is closely associated with the quest for high performance (Jensen, 2013; Leithwood, Harris & Strauss, 2013). Jensen (2013) conjectures that the turnaround concept was developed in the realisation that school improvement system was not ideal for the underperforming schools as it advocated incremental change to school improvement. The turnaround phenomenon then advocated for comprehensive overhauls that target numerous aspects of failure (Jensen, 2013). It is a process that fully reforms the environment and practices in the underperforming schools. Jensen (2013) further contends that the turnaround process looks at simultaneously improving leadership, academic expectations, teaching and learning methods and improving the school's culture and relationships with parents and the wider community.

The turnaround process focuses on academic underperforming schools. These schools serve students from challenging circumstances in most developed countries (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2010). These scholars further contend that schools operating under less favourable conditions with minimal resources have much lower chance of being successful and that some of these schools consistently demonstrate poor academic results. The challenging circumstances include high levels of poverty and disadvantage among the student population (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, Jensen (2013) contends that low performing schools are often located in poor areas that serve learners with low academic expectations and who have special learning needs. Sharing similar views as these scholars, Pinskaya, Kosaretsky, Harris and Jones (2013) contend that the most common characteristics of schools with consistently poor academic results is a challenging student population whose parents are out of work and uneducated and that some of these students display deviant behaviour and their schools have limited resources. A lack of resources may cause students living in poverty to struggle to reach the same academic achievement levels similar to those of students not living in poverty (Lacour & Tissington, 2011). In the Southern African context, these underperforming schools face socio-economic challenges, for example, inadequate resources, social ills like the consequence of diseases, large scale unemployment, drug abuse, gangsterism and violence (Bayat, Louw & Rena, 2014). Although students in high poverty schools can achieve high academic performance, this is

unlikely without effective schools' leadership (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2013). The challenge posed to the school leadership of these schools is that they operate within a context that is complex and may to some extent, be turbulent as well (Setlhodi-Mohapi & Lebeloane, 2014). I now turn to discussing leadership practices of principals that can bring about radical changes to their schools.

2.5.2 Leadership practices to guide the work of the principal in different school contexts

To discuss leadership practices to guide the work of principals, I am drawing from the work of Leithwood, *et al.* (2012) and Jensen (2013). I begin by discussing the work of Leithwood and colleagues (2012) who propose four core leadership practices. This is followed by a discussion of Jensen (2013) who proposes five factors that are critical for turning around organisations that are underperforming. There are four core leadership practices which were developed by Leithwood, *et al.* (2012), which can assist principals of schools to transform their schools performances. The four core leadership practices are (a) Setting direction (b) Developing people (c) Redesigning the organisation and (d) Improving instructional practice, and each of these practices is outlined next.

(a) Setting direction

According to Leithwood *et al.* (2012), setting direction refers to the principal's ability to provide focus on the work of individuals and groups within the school. This is realised by building a shared vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, creating high performance expectations and communicating the school's direction (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2012). This is useful in analysing how school principals set the direction of the new direction that the school should take and reverse underperformance.

(b) Developing people

The principal has to ensure that his/her educators' knowledge and skills base is improved. He/ she has to promote their application through the following means of supporting the instructional practice; motivating educators and celebrating their accomplishment, providing individualised support and consideration, modelling appropriate values and

practices, being aware of the individual educator strengths and the needs of the staff within the school and then offering intellectual stimulation to the staff (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2012).

(c) Redesigning the organisation

I have emphasised elsewhere in this thesis the notion that leadership is about creating and redesigning future realities for the organisation, rather than just maintaining what is already there. Maintenance is the duty of managers (Clarke, 2007). Therefore, the principal has to create conditions that promote collaboration and that allow individuals to maximise their talents (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2012). The principal can facilitate this by promoting a collaborative culture. This could be realised by putting up structures that support collaboration between the school, parents and the wider community.

(d) Improving instructional practice

One of the core functions of the principal as an instructional leader is to ensure that effective teaching and learning occurs (Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018). The principal has to focus on the staffing programmes, provide instructional support, monitor school activities, protect the staff from distractions from their work and organise resources for the staff (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2012). These scholars further provide a framework that I hope, can assist underperforming schools to transform their performances. The aspects presented here can assist the principal to direct his/her school towards an effective teaching and learning path and this can result in high learner academic attainment.

I am now turning to discussing Jensen's (2013) five factors for turning around underperforming organisations. Jensen (2013) argues that the five factors are critical to the successful turnaround process. These factors are (a) Strong leadership that raises expectations (b) Effective teaching with an emphasis on professional collaboration (c) Measurement and development of effective learning behaviours and outcomes (d) Positive school culture and (e) Engaging parents and the community. In the section below, I discuss each of the five factors.

(a) Strong leadership that raises expectations

According to Jensen (2013), the principal has to practice distributed leadership by creating a team of people who will assist him/her to drive change. The staff has to be given additional and clearly articulated responsibilities. The principal has to foster a spirit of high expectations from the staff, learners and parents and these parties should work towards the goals of high quality learning and teaching that produces strong student outcomes. The school should adopt continuous evaluation of programmes in order to timeously, identify learners who are struggling and adapt their teaching accordingly rather than blaming the learners. Learners should be motivated as they come from poor backgrounds and nearly suffer from low self-esteem. The school has to role model success by inviting former learners who had performed well in the past and who are in higher education institutions to address learners (Jensen, 2013). The school should also encourage professional collaboration between educators, as this will enlarge their teaching practices.

(b) Effective teaching

The provision of effective teaching and learning remains the core duty of the school principal (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, the principal has to, amongst other things, ensure that the following activities are happening; namely, providing the staff with development sessions, ensuring that educators work together and practice team teaching, ensuring that poor performing learners receive adequate attention and that content is delivered in smaller packages with rapid assessment, evaluation and feedback taking place (Jensen, 2013).

(c) Measurement and development of effective learning

It is always important that teaching or any planned activity for that matter should be assessed in order to measure the level of achievement of the goals (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). The principal, in the context of a school, has to facilitate the creation of a positive school culture (Jensen, 2013). The school should practice continuous assessment. Educators should be taught data retrieval handling techniques and its application. The school should reduce truancy and work closely with parents. The school should improve

learner and educator attendance. The principal should provide emotional support to educators and facilitate peer support programme. The guidelines that Jensen (2013) provides are useful as measures that school leaders use to ensure that their schools are on course to achieving their set goals.

(d) Engaging the community and parents

The principal together with his/her SMT members has to organise classroom visits. These visits should further accommodate parents-teacher meetings, in which parents visit class teachers to be appraised about their children's progress in academic performance. The principal should develop partnership with the community as this could assist the school in its fundraising projects and community leaders can also raise funds to pay stipends to volunteer educators in order to turnaround the school's performance. The school can also collaborate with universities (Jensen, 2013). The views expressed above address a variety of critical aspects of the school such as its relationship with communities around it, business community and keeping parents appraised of progress that their children are making. These activities may form a crucial part of accountability.

(e) Positive school culture

The fifth factor is about the creation of an effective school culture. According to Jensen (2013), the school should inculcate and sustain a positive discipline culture. The notion of a positive school culture has been highlighted by various scholars such as Dimmock (2005), Durant and Holden (2006), O'Neil (1994) and Preedy (1993), to mention a few. At the core of what all these scholars say is that there should be a positive working relationship between educators and learners in order for the school to be effective in its operations. To have all stakeholders working closely with the schools helps the learners to value their education and will ultimately encourage regular attendance and assist to improve the academic performance of the school (Jensen, 2013). The school should also provide emotional support to learners through non- academic programmes like, mentoring schemes, community service and peer support programmes. Lastly, support programme should also address practical issues that might affect learning; for example, running breakfast clubs for children (feeding) and support for uniforms and other school equipment (Jansen, 2013).

2.6 Leadership experiences in dealing with effects of deprived contexts

These schools suffer from an absence of effective leadership which results in poor teaching and learning and a lack of direction. They are usually located in historically disadvantaged areas (informal settlements, rural and farm areas). They also serve predominantly learners from these areas (DBE, 2011; Jensen, 2013). They are characterised by low morale among the school staff resulting in high absenteeism from teachers, which affect teaching and learning. They also lack effective staff development, monitoring and support by the SMT (SMT). Their teaching staff believe that they are doing all they can and that failure to achieve results is the fault of someone else. The school's system of control for learners and teachers have either not been established or are ineffective and there are no agreed upon guiding principles. It is the principal's work to lead the school's turnaround process (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2010). Leithwood, Louis and Anderson (2012) have developed a framework that can assist principals to transform their schools' performance.

The concept of multiple deprivation is a relatively new concept in education and as such, has not been adequately theorised and conceptualised (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). The concept of multiple deprivation has been developed specifically to bring a sense of differentiation and comparison between the circumstances of different communities (Maringe, Masinire & Nkambule, 2015). These scholars further contend that the concept of deprivation differs significantly from the idea of challenging circumstances. Multiple deprivation affect a large portion of South African schools (Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). Maringe and Moletsane (2015) argue that there is little in the public domain that explains the combined effect of deprivation on learners and learning and less on the nature and extent of challenges experienced by principals who lead schools facing multiple deprivations. There is no educational policy that speaks directly to how schools, faced with multiple deprivation should adjust their workings (Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). The broad policy framework, formulated by the government fails to recognise the contextualised challenges faced in specific schools (Maringe, *et al.*, 2015).

Multiple deprivations conspire and affect the workings of the schools and the developmental aspects of people (Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). South African schools face a number of deprivations, which can be categorised as follows: income and material deprivation, employment deprivation, living environment deprivation, and health

deprivation (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2015; Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). The task of leading schools with multiple deprivations is more challenging than leading a school with less challenging circumstances (Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). In support, Mbokazi (2015) shares the view that principals in developing countries such as South Africa face problems that differ greatly from those of developed countries such as the United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK) and Australia. The daunting challenge is to manage and transform the performances of schools in deprived contexts (Mbokazi, 2015). However, research has revealed that the role of the principal as the leader has positively influenced learner performance and teacher effectiveness (Barber, Whelan & Clark, 2010; Drysdale & Gurr, 2011; Naicker, Chikoko & Mthiyane, 2013). Leadership is therefore one of the key answers to why some schools in areas of multiple deprivation perform well (Chiome, 2011).

2.6.1 The origins of the concept of multiple deprivation

The concept of multiple deprivation originated from a concern about the effects of poverty on communities in different parts of the world (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). There was dissatisfaction with the aggregate estimates of poverty derived from a particular census statistics. A proposal was then adopted that smaller units like municipalities, should have a clear picture about the extent of poverty within their jurisdiction so that they will be able to develop useful interventions to ameliorate the lives of the disadvantaged communities in those municipalities (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). The concept of Multiple Deprivation Indices (MDI) was then proposed. The MDI measures the number of people in a specified area who experiences different forms of deprivation (Maringe, & Moletsane, 2015).

The evidence of higher indices indicates more acute levels of deprivation in specified areas (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). According to Maringe and Moletsane (2015), the first MDIs were first calculated in 2004 and later refined in 2007. The South African government adopted the English model of MDI but modified it to five dimensions, which are income and material deprivation domain, employment deprivation domain, health deprivation domain, education deprivation domain and living environment deprivation domain (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). The effects of deprivation concerning the quality of education are strongly felt by disadvantaged communities because advantaged communities are able to use substantial fees to purchase additional educators and resources

for the children, while the impoverished receive few or no fees and struggle to offer even the most basic conditions of learning (Books & Ndlaleni, 2011).

The focus of the discussion would now shift to the principal's leadership enacted in challenging circumstances on the international area. The discussion looks at how principals manage schools that face contextual challenges. These schools face challenges like poverty, lack of resources, poor facilities, unemployment and violence (Al-Jaradat & Zaid-Alkilani, 2015; Leithwood, Harris & Strauss, 2010; Papa & English, 2011).

2.6.2 The principal leadership enacted in challenging circumstances: International perspective

This section looks at how the principals in different parts of the world exercise leadership in challenging contexts. I begin by presenting stories from the USA, specifically in California in relation to how principals enacted their leadership in the schools facing challenging circumstances. Schools in California faced challenges like low socio economic conditions and high poverty (Klar & Brewer, 2013). These principals also faced pressures associated with accountability measures such as the need for all learners to continuously increase their performance on the state and national examinations (Klar & Brewer, 2013). Schools, which had been persistently underperforming, were able to record improvements in academic achievements during the tenure of these principals (Klar & Brewer, 2013). To sustain high performance in those schools facing challenging circumstances, their principals adopted a framework designed by Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010). The following framework assisted these principals to successfully manage their schools despite challenges like high poverty and others.

2.6.2.1 Four core leadership practices

In the following section, this study looks at how some principals in California implemented this framework to successfully manage their schools despite challenges. The following core leadership practices were postulated by Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010, p.75) in detail in their work.

(i) Setting Directions

When setting direction, the principals enacted the following activities: They built a shared vision, created high performance expectations and communicated the directions of their schools. These factors were adapted to suit different schools (Klar & Brewer, 2013).

(ii) Developing people

The principals of the sampled schools, worked hard to develop their educators by providing professional learning opportunities that addressed the needs of their staff. They balanced high expectations with individual consideration and support. They modelled appropriate practices and demonstrated values that were familiar to their communities. They provided opportunities for staff development and collaboration to address contextual challenges. They also subjected themselves to high expectations and maintained high visibility presence in their schools (Klar & Brewer, 2013).

(iii) Redesigning the organisation

The principals built collaborative cultures in their schools. They worked to improve relations with parents and developed stronger connections with their wider communities. They developed teams of teachers who regularly collaborated to assist learners. They also incorporated teacher development in their schools programmes (Klar & Brewer, 2013).

(iv) Managing the instructional programme

In all the sampled schools, principals were involved in the management of the instructional programme. Amongst the duties they executed, they selected staff for their schools and used data to monitor learner progress, provided individual instructional support, and aligned available resources to achieve school goals. They also screened candidates for teaching and non-teaching positions to determine whether they will be able to deliver on their school goals; they closely monitored teaching practices and used results from standardised examinations to support teachers in making instructional improvements. They

also adopted a notion of a “family” concept, to stimulate teachers to act as a family and provide extra support to learners (Klar & Brewer, 2013).

2.6.3 The South African perspective

In this section, the discussion commences with factors that promote successful school performance despite challenges, then characteristics of ineffective or failing schools and thereafter, the principal’s leadership enacted in schools facing multiple deprivations.

2.6.3.1 Factors that promote successful performance despite challenges

We have outlined the key factors, which contribute to improved performance as elaborated by Maringe, *et al.* (2015) in their work.

Factors driving sources	Levels of success
1. Leadership	
2. Commitment to teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is school wide emphasis to the quality of teaching and learning with the focus on content learning, inclusive education, time on task, personalised teaching and assessment and classroom and school discipline.
3. A safe and orderly environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school places more attention on the safety of learners and on monitoring good discipline.
4. A culture of concern and desire to improve life chances of learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school develops an empathetic and community oriented leadership.
5. Working with communities and parents to improve the conditions of learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school promotes strong community involvement in the school’s development programme.

2.6.3.2 Characteristics of ineffective or failing schools

Furthermore, the chart below illustrates the characteristics, which contribute to ineffective school results as enunciated by Maringe, *et al.* (2015).

Key responsibilities	Key manifestations
1. Weak leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is affected by invisible leadership, that does not walk about in the school to check and monitor whether effective teaching and learning is taking place. There is little or no interaction with the school community like, external community members, teachers and learners. The school lacks strategic forms and it is instructionally disengaged.
2. Weak management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has no order, resulting in the high levels of absenteeism from learners and educators. The school is also affected by learner truancy.
3. Weak focus on teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has no structured operation procedures for classroom practice and there are no models for good teaching to improve and sustain practice. The school has a poor teacher support programme to improve instruction. There is also no instructional leadership team to inspire and motivate teachers.
4. Weak focus on assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has no assessment strategy for interrogating poor performance by learners. There is also no analysis of learner performance.
5. Weak parental and community involvement and engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school suffers from poor parental support and involvement, not just at school but also at home. There is minimal or no community involvement in school matters.
6. Absence of improvement planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school lacks developmental plans like, the vision and strategy and the school improvement plan.

(Adapted from Maringe, *et al.*, 2015, p.370).

2.6.3.3 Successful leadership enacted in school facing multiple deprivation

There are successful leadership practices that are associated with effective schools facing multiple deprivations. For instance, asset-based leadership and servant leadership approaches are some of the leadership approaches that have been used successfully, in schools facing deprivations (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). Maringe, Masinire and Nkambule (2015) argue that school-based improvement initiatives, should seek to interrogate the impact of factors of multiple deprivation towards school improvement. Successful principal leaderships' practices have been criticised as taking into consideration views from different scholars (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Maringe, *et al.*, 2015; Mbokazi, 2015; Ronfeldt, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2013).

Strategic leadership

Strategic leadership is one of the approaches that many principals of schools facing deprivations of various kinds embraced. The school principals were familiar with the school context, as they had successfully served in those schools for a number of years (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015). Principals also set out school goals through articulating the vision and values of the school (Mbokazi, 2015). The schools were not affected by redeployment, which is a process of moving educators from schools whose learner enrolment has decreased to those with an increased learner enrolment (Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). The redeployment of educators can have adverse effects on the school's academic performance. In support of this view, Ronfeldt, Loeb and Wyckoff (2013) argue that the teacher turnover harms student achievement in significant ways. Schools with few teachers find it difficult to work and match the performance of schools with a high educator population. The staff felt valued and that stimulated them to work hard. Using these ideas to understand how principals enacted leadership will be useful for understanding leadership practices of principals in the participating schools. Educators were seen as assets to the school and their value became immeasurable (Maringe, *et al.*, 2015).

Instructional management

Principals were supervising teaching and learning, even subjects, which they did not teach (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015). Teaching was seen as the core business of the principals. They ensured that appropriate learning and teaching support material (LTSM) was available (Mbokazi, 2015). They spent a lot of time on task in their schools (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015).

These scholars contend that their presence energised teachers and learners. They modelled good behaviour and actions, for example, by performing well in examination subjects, they opened themselves up for scrutiny when results came out (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015). That motivated educators to offer extra-teaching hours including Saturdays and Sundays. This enabled the staff to provide more time on tasks for the learners (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Maringe, *et al.*, 2015).

The principal valued the Departmental Heads (DHs) and entrusted them with the responsibility of properly monitoring the delivery of the curriculum, but they were called to account at the right time (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015). The power and authority given to the DHs, and the principals' trust on them induced a feeling of being valued as assets and this enhanced the schools performances (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015). Mbokazi (2015) further contends that in the sampled schools, the principals monitored the work of the DHs. In these schools, educators were continuing with their studies and there was a culture of hard work, which was coupled with maximised utilisation of time (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015). Experienced educators were twinned with newly appointed educators, valuing their expertise in the subjects that they taught. The performance of learners was scrutinised on regular basis through internal assessments and examination results (Mbokazi, 2015). Former students, provided free extra tuition to learners and organisations outside the sampled schools, sought to be associated with them in development projects. These schools also sought partnerships with institutions of high learning (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015).

Regulatory aspect

The principals of the sampled schools, took a firm stance against any union influence which could lend the school ungovernable (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015). They were empowered by their knowledge of what the law allowed and did not allow unions to do. These principals were firm against any distractions and emphasised maximum utilisation of available resources and accountability (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015).

Working with the stakeholders

The schools worked closely with all stakeholders (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). These schools accommodated parents and the community to their affairs (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). Through parents and community support, ills such as the theft of the schools properties, were collectively tackled. The corporate world progressively opened its doors to financially supporting various initiatives for these schools (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015). This aspect emphasises the importance of integrating the schools and the communities within which they are located.

2.7 Conclusion

Through this chapter, I have presented a comprehensive view of underperforming schools and leadership practices that can turn that situation around. I have also highlighted (broadly) the origin of the turning around concept and what deprived contexts entail. The discussion has also centred on the practice of transforming underperforming schools and current debates in relation to this topic and other important aspects which are interlinked to the process of transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts. Various scholars presented their solutions to the same problem of underperformance and strategies that can be adopted to reverse the situation. The next chapter focuses on the theories that frame the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORIES THAT PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the literature on the principals' leadership experiences in relation to turning around underperforming schools in deprived contexts. The basis for reviewing the literature was to understand various dimensions related to the process of successful transformation of underperforming schools into performing schools in deprived contexts. There are two theoretical constructs that underpin the analysis of the study, and these are Burns' (1978) Transformational Leadership and Weber's Five Domains of Instructional Leadership Model. The main purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the two theoretical constructs as they provide a framework for analysing data from school principals regarding their experiences and processes they went through as they turned around performance of their schools. The discussion addresses a variety of issues, including the evolution of the transformational leadership theory, its relevance to this study, its underlying principles and how it may influence the school's performance. Thereafter, I discuss Weber's Five Domains of Instructional Leadership Model and its relevance for the study, after which, I conclude the chapter by offering a summary of the main points discussed.

3.2 The evolution of transformational leadership theory

Transformational leadership theory has evolved over time. It was formulated by Bennis (1959), who viewed it as a form of leadership in which a person has the capacity to raise another person's consciousness, build meaning and inspire human intent (Biggerstaff, 2012). Moore (2012) suggests that it was Downton (1973), who first came up with the term, 'transformational leadership'. Moore (2012) further opines that Downton (1973) examined leadership variations by looking at the various categories of leaders such as the ordinary, the rebellious, the revolutionary and the reforming leaders. Thereafter, came Burns (1978) who viewed transformational leadership as the ability to champion a particular course or outcome, which will benefit everyone's goals. My focus is on Burns' (1978) version of transformational leadership.

Burns (1978) argues that transformational leaders possess leadership capabilities which enables them to influence their followers regarding important issues and that can successfully direct them towards the attainment of desired outcomes. He further argues that effective leadership should not be based on notions of absolute power and compliance, but should focus on the relationship between people and the achievement of the desired outcome (Burns, 1978). His contention is that power and authority should be employed to achieve common interest (Burns 1978). This scholar further asserts that power should not be used for negative purposes, but that effective and popular leaders are those who lift themselves and their followers to higher levels in order to achieve the desired needs of the organisation. Burns (1978) advocates the idea of a leader who embraces shared values and ethics and he is against personal agendas and self-interest (Biggerstaff, 2012).

Bass (1985) modified Burns' original concept and came up with two factor theory which placed these two theories of leadership at opposing ends of the leadership arena (Biggerstaff, 2012). Bass (1985) argues that the qualities, which are related to these leadership theories (transformational and transactional) shape the leader (Biggerstaff, 2012). The transformational leadership model has four components, namely, idealised influence, inspirational motivation, individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985). Through the concept of idealised influence, leaders are able to inspire followers towards attaining the organisation's vision and the establishment of a strong school culture (Bass 1985).

Leithwood (1994) revised transformational leadership theory and identified factors that constitute this model, namely, shared vision, group goals, individual support, modelling desired behaviours and communicating high expectations to ensure higher performance and the attainment of the organisational goals (Leithwood, 1994, cited in Biggerstaff, 2012). Next, I briefly discuss the importance of transformational leadership for this study.

3.3 The transformational leadership theory and its importance to this study

This theory is important for this research because its focus is on the role played by principals in transforming their underperforming schools in deprived contexts. This calls for a principal with special leadership qualities, skills and knowledge, which will enable

him/her to drive the school's turn-around process. Supporting this view, Steyn (2005) theorises that transformational leaders have special leadership acumen, which they can utilise to influence ordinary people to do extraordinary things in the face of difficulty. The principal has to set the school's vision and direction (Svosve, 2015). The educators will then have to accept and internalise the shared vision and then sacrifice their own personal interests for the benefit of the organisation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Transformational leadership theory is aligned with interpretive paradigm (Svosve, 2015) in the sense that its main objective is to capture the people's perspectives on their lived experiences and not some objective notion of that experience (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). Furthermore, interpretivists believe that the world is socially constructed and that meaning is made through understanding people's daily experiences (Flick, 2014). This study uses transformational leadership theory to understand the lived experiences of principals who have managed to turn-around their schools' performances despite deprivations. It also sought to explore their daily leadership roles, which they enact to inspire educators, parents and other community leaders to commit to the school's vision.

Leithwood (1994) integrated the work of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) and further modified the transformational theory. He came up with a transformational leadership framework that can be easily applied to the school situation (Biggerstaff, 2012). His model supports the concept of distributed leadership because it assumes that principals share leadership roles with other staff members (Biggerstaff, 2012). Distributed leadership approach is one of the important leadership dimensions which, if well utilised, can assist the school principal to gain educator support and trust. This is echoed by Ljungholm (2014) when he contends that transformational leadership promotes collaboration in accomplishing a collective task and that it also promotes the assessment and evaluation of group achievement. This then creates and promotes collective responsibility and efficacy (Ljungholm, 2012). Transformational leaders act as role models, enhance and stimulate followers' trust in the organisation and encourage them to change their mind-sets towards the organisations' challenges and practices (Nica, 2013). School leaders should therefore embrace an understanding that leadership is not about power and authority; its focus should be on serving others to reach the shared vision of the organisation (Murphy, 2011).

Transformational leaders develop systems, which enhance optimal stakeholder participation and better support for the organisation (Biggerstaff, 2012). In a school setting, the principal has to cultivate and induce characteristics from the staff and community members that seek to actively engage them in the school activities (Biggerstaff, 2012). Principals are expected to drive their schools' performances by igniting staff support and eliciting community involvement (Savory, 2014). This could be realised if they succeed in influencing change among their staff towards achieving organisational goals (Bass & Bass, 2008; Northouse, 2012). This is also echoed by Wright, *et al.* (2012) when they contend that transformational leaders sensitise their followers about the relevance of organisational values and outcomes, which ultimately stimulate them to higher levels of performances. Transformational leadership has a positive impact on the learners' achievement trajectory as it enhances the creation of a conducive school culture that emphasises effective learning at all levels (Biggerstaff, 2012; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). In order to achieve optimal performance and commitment, principals should motivate their followers by giving them time to meet their personal and professional needs (Northouse, 2012). Educators should be exposed to capacity development programmes as these will enhance their performances and ultimately boost the schools' overall academic performances. Educators must be inspired and motivated to see the importance of taking a particular action in order to achieve positive change in an organisation (Savory, 2014).

3.4 Principles of transformational leadership theory

In this section, I present the four principles of transformational leadership theory that are used as lenses to discuss the suitability of this theory in this research study. These four principles are idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration (Hickman, 2010; Shields, 2011; Warrilow, 2012). I made few comments on these considerations in the previous chapter, but here, I am presenting a detailed discussion on them.

3.4.1 Individualised influence

Individualised influence is the first of the four principles of transformational leadership. In terms of this principle, transformational leaders serve as role models to their followers and share the vision and mission of their organisations with their followers (Kouzes & Posner,

2010; Robbins, *et al.*, 2011). Extending this argument, Middleton, *et al.*, (2015) contend that transformational leaders serve as role models and depict behaviour that is admired and emulated by their subordinates. Leaders choose to do what is ethical rather than what is expedient (Kelloway, Turner, Barling & Loughlin, 2012). In a school that is underperforming, the principal has to be exemplary in driving the school's activities that are geared towards change. Curriculum management should be one of the principal's key responsibilities. Being a role model reduces the chances of resistance against change or initiatives to be implemented (Wang, *et al.*, 2011). Modelling by the principal can also go a long way as it can have ripple effects upon the organisation (Laine, *et al.*, 2011). He/she can influence educators through his/her actions. For example, his /her high subject performance in the NSC can influence other educators to work harder and improve their subject performances, which can result in the improvement of the school's results. For instance, the leadership style of a transformational leader is easily replicated throughout the management team (Laine, *et al.*, 2011). Shields (2011) contends that transformational leaders are able to stimulate and influence their followers to perform optimally, even beyond expectations. In support of this view, Dubrin (2012) contends that a transformational leader is the most capable and trusted person to bring about change in the organisation.

A transformational leader communicates a clear message and encourages his/her followers to be hopeful and to put their utmost efforts in order for the organisation to grow and develop (Hickman, 201; Warrilow, 2012). In a school setup, the principal has to communicate the school's performance expectations to the educators and also set performance targets. As transformational leaders, principals are expected to support their educators and other staff members with ideas, serve as role models and portray moral values and ethical principles (Svosve, 2015). The principal must ensure that the school environment supports change (Shields, 2011). The principal is expected to provide human and material resources and ensure that the educators' needs are addressed.

The management of human resources and the improvement of human relations is one of the key leadership attributes of the transformational leader. This calls on him /her to take into consideration aspects like the provision of support, stimulating and acknowledging worthy contributions from followers and providing coaching and mentoring (Svosve, 2015). The principal has to encourage educators to mobilise resources and use them to the

fullest for the betterment of the learners and to enhance the school's performance (Svosve, 2015).

Transformational leaders have the capacity to align educators with the school's shared vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2010). As a transformational leader, the principal has to involve other staff members in the development of the vision and mission statement (Wang, *et al.*, 2011). He /she must promote innovative thinking and encourage his/her staff to take risks in order to promote change in the organisation (Warrilow, 2012). Hickman (2010) concurs with this view when he contends that a transformational leader nurtures innovation and facilitates the adaptation of followers to the entire system. This could be realised for example, as educators offer extra tuition hours or teach during the weekends in order to improve the school's academic performance. The principal has to solicit commitment from educators in order to achieve the desired goals (Svosve, 2015). He/she has to inspire educators to work harder and attain extraordinary outcomes for the school. He/she has to acknowledge and accommodate the educator's interests and shared values in order to galvanise them to perform well and contribute to the school's performance. As a transformational leader, the principal has to encourage educators to use a variety of strategies to enhance their curriculum delivery processes, which can lead to the realisation of the school's goals. As a transformational leader, the principal is expected to constantly update his/her knowledge and use the evidence- based approach (Doody & Doody, 2011). He/she must be charismatic and should possess personal attributes like persuasiveness, self-confidence and extraordinary ideas that can arouse the educators' commitment to the shared vision and goals of the organisation (Northouse, 2010).

3.4.2 Inspirational motivation

Inspirational motivation is the second of the four principles of transformational leadership. In terms of inspirational motivation principle, a transformational leader is able to inspire and motivate followers to perform optimally for the benefit of the organisation (Hargreaves, *et al.*, 2010; Robbins, *et al.*, 2011). Akbar, *et al.* (2015) concur with this view and postulate that transformational leaders have high expectations of their followers and that they inspire them through motivation so that their commitment is enhanced (Carney, 2011; Northouse, 2010). Drawing from inspirational motivation perspective, to turnaround

performance of an underperforming school, the principal has to inspire and motivate his/her educators to raise their performances. He/she should encourage the educators and non-educators to work harder in order to achieve more than what was once thought possible. Such a leader can also inspire followers through communicating the school's shared vision and setting high academic expectations that will stimulate and motivate the whole staff to tackle any challenges (Wang, Oh, Courtright & Colbert, 2011).

A transformational leader encourages his/her followers to be innovative and creative (Warrilow, 2012). To achieve the set targets and goals of the school, leaders have to find new ways of doing things with their educators. Educators have to be innovative and be prepared to take risks. A transformational principal has to use emotional symbols to attract educators to achieve and perform beyond their personal interests and, hence, improve their spirit and zeal to achieve the goals (Bigharaz, *et al.*, 2010). A transformational leader motivates his/her followers by giving them specific challenges and issues (Akbar, Sadegh & Chehraz, 2015). The principal has to build his/her educators' confidence and raise their trust by assigning them tasks which could be seen as challenging in order to empower them. New educators should be orientated and be taken through the school's vision, goals and expectations (Doody & Doody, 2012). Inspirational motivation increases the understanding of the followers about the organisation's mission and vision, and encourages them to own and grasp the vision, which is a key element for any organisation (Northouse, 2015; Li, Zhao & Begley, 2015). As a transformational leader, the principal should drive the staff development programme in order to achieve the school's goals (Salanova, *et al.*, 2011). He/she has to lead change in the school through the articulation of an inspiring vision about the school. This could be realised by turning around the school's performance trajectory from underperformance to high performing institution. I now move on to discuss intellectual stimulation, which is the third transformational leadership principle.

3.4.3 Intellectual stimulation

Intellectual stimulation is the third principle of transformational leadership as espoused by Hickman (2010). In terms of this principle, followers are intellectually challenged by their leader. This stimulates them to try new ways of tackling challenges (Warrilow, 2012). A transformational leader stimulates critical thinking and creativity and this encourages the

followers to try new strategies to solve organisational problems since they have confidence in their leader who they trust and believe will not criticise them when they try new strategies that may be different from his/her expectations (Hargreaves, *et al.*, 2010; Warrilow, 2010). Gheith (2010) concurs that a transformational leader encourages staff to come up with new ways using the evidence-based approach. Mistakes made along the way are treated as a learning curve because there is trust between the leader and the followers (Hargreaves, *et al.*, 2010; Shields, 2011). Employees are encouraged to question their beliefs and to reframe their approaches in an innovative way in order to achieve organisational goals (Kelloway, *et al.*, 2012; Northouse, 2010). This befits this study, which sought to examine the lived experiences of principals who have successfully transformed underperforming schools in deprived contexts. For an underperforming school to be turned around the principal has to ensure that his/her educators are amenable to new approaches and strategies, especially if the approaches they are using do not assist them to achieve the desired outcomes.

A transformational leader provides an enabling environment and facilitates staff development programmes through formal and informal learning, as this will promote innovation (Dignam, *et al.*, 2012; Northouse, 2010). These programmes assist the staff to perform optimally and bring about organisational outcomes (Svosve, 2015). The principal should facilitate this by paying attention to the educators' concerns and challenges, which could affect the realisation of the schools's vision. Educators should be treated as assets that contribute positively to the school's performance. This will be enhanced through the creation of an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning.

3.4.4 Individualised consideration

Individualised consideration is the fourth and last principle of transformational leadership. In terms of this principle, transformational leaders pay special attention to the needs of the employees in order to enhance performance. Some of these needs could be capacity building, monitoring of the curriculum, empathy and guidance (Kelloway, *et al.*, 2012). Warrilow (2012) further points out that individuals are given opportunities for professional growth. This could lead to active participation and positive outcomes for the organisation. A transformational leader is expected to be knowledgeable in terms of skills and expertise

in the organisation (Shields, 2011). The principal is expected to take a lead in a number of activities within the school as this could easily be emulated by staff members.

Deputy principals and DHs are also expected to adopt the principal's transformational leadership strategies (Svosve, 2015). They will then ensure that educators are supported by all means, through mentoring and proper supervision (Svosve, 2015). The support should be extended to monitoring the provision of resources and the delivery of effective teaching and learning. Of course, induction assumes that the conditions within the organisation are conducive to optimal operations and that is why a new person has to be inducted into the organisation so that continuity can be ensured. There should be induction programmes for the newly appointed educators. Attention should be paid to individual differences of followers and their confidence should be stimulated through the delegation of responsibilities for learning and supervision (Fernet, Trepanier, Austin, Gagne & Forest, 2015).

According to this dimension, a transformational leader encourages and nurtures individuals to perform at the highest peak (Northouse, 2010). This is realised by providing advice to the staff to facilitate higher levels of achievement. A transformational leader provides support to the staff in the form of regular positive feedback and staff appraisals (Doody, Doody, 2012). In support of this view, Riaht (2011) argues that leaders, who provide regular feedback on their staff's performances, increase their self-esteem and professional image. It is important then for the principal to reinforce good performance through regular feedback, as this will spur educators to perform optimally, thereby realising that their efforts are recognised.

3.5 Merits of the transformational leadership theory

The transformational leadership theory places great emphasis on teacher motivation, which assists in maximising the performance of the organisation (Warrilow, 2012). It supports professional educator development, which contributes to the development of the educators and assists them to perform optimally (Warrilow, 2012). Transformational leaders imitate good practice and this inspires educators to work harder and to take ownership of the school and to work as a team towards the achievement of a common goal (Shields, 2011).

Transformational leadership promotes change and enables leaders to motivate their followers to go beyond their self-interests and to develop themselves, leading to better organisational performance (Lee, 2014; Yukl, 2012). Mullins (2007) echoes a similar view that transformational leadership is concerned with transforming organisational performance from an underperforming to a performing state.

The transformational leadership theory highlights the importance of the organisation's vision (Lee, 2014). The vision is created to direct the activities of the organisation and it becomes the focal point, which binds employees to work together towards a shared goal (Lee, 2014; Northouse, 2013). Followers are encouraged to forgo their personal interests to achieve a common goal. They are also encouraged to develop their skills in order to achieve the organisational goals and set targets, which will be achieved once they become selfless and self-motivated individuals (Northouse, 2013). Effective leadership therefore plays a pivotal role in the organisation's performance.

3.6 Limitations of the transformational leadership theory

Transformational leaders are viewed as people who force followers to work more than their stipulated hours for the benefit of the organisation (Kouzes & Posner, 2010; Shields, 2011). It is argued that transformational leaders develop a vision for the organisation, which is expected to be accepted and pursued by the followers (Shields, 2011). This process results in the individual's interests being sacrificed in favour of the organisations. The negative part could be that followers may run the risk of adopting their leader's vision, which may be impractical (Northouse, 2013). Transformational leaders are portrayed as great men and women (Northouse, 2013). This form of heroic leadership may lead to harmful consequences, such as blind trust from the followers (Northouse, 2013). Leaders are also viewed as "putting themselves above followers' needs which is anti-democratic" (Northouse, 2013, p. 203). There are many aspects to school improvement that transformational leadership addresses. The notion of bringing employees to a higher level as well as, the four principles of this theory (namely, individualised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration) are appropriate for school contexts. This is more important considering the fact that the majority of staff in schools is made up of professional personnel.

3.7 Weber's (1996) Five Domains of Instructional Leadership Model

To obtain a comprehensive picture about how principals managed to change their respective schools' fortunes, I also used instructional leadership model as advocated by Weber. Therefore, I drew further perspectives from Weber's (1996) Five Domains of Instructional Leadership Model due to its congruence with the roles and responsibilities of school principals in instructional leadership. As the name of the model suggests, while there are many instructional leadership models designed by key scholars such Hallinger and Southworth, I chose Weber's (1996) Five Domains of Instructional Leadership Model. Weber (1996) identifies five essential domains of instructional leadership. These domains are (a) Defining the school's mission; (b) Managing curriculum and instruction; (c) Promoting a positive learning climate; (d) Observing and improving instruction; and lastly, (e) Assessing the instructional programme. Next, I briefly discuss these five domains.

(a) Defining the school's mission

The process of defining the vision of the school is a dynamic process, which entails cooperation among key stakeholders and also involves reflective thinking amongst all concerned. This is done with a view to construct a vision and mission that is clear and that is understood by all stakeholders. It is of absolute importance that such a process is as inclusive as it is possible so that every stakeholder feels part of the new vision that emerges from such a process. The mission of the school should bind the staff, learners and parents to a common vision (Weber 1996). The importance of acting as a unit cannot be overemphasised in a situation where a new direction has to be sought and achieved in order to overcome underperformance and create a new reality for the schools. Evidently, for change to occur, it is important all key stakeholders adopt a common vision about where they want to see their institution in the future.

(b) Managing curriculum and instruction

To manage curriculum is one of the most important responsibilities of school principals. Managing the curriculum and instruction entails the principal's instructional leadership practices, which involves but not limited to supervising classroom activities of the teachers. As part of classroom supervision, principals are expected, according to this model, to offer

teachers the needed resources to provide learners with opportunities to succeed (Weber, 1996). In other words, classroom supervision is not limited to just observing teachers teach, but the leader has to ensure that teachers receive all the resources they need in order to support their teaching. This implies that the principal has to mobilise teaching and learning support materials, amongst other things, as part of classroom supervision rather than to just, check how teachers are teaching in class. This activity is closely related to the one I discuss next which is about the creation of a positive teaching and learning climate.

(c) Promoting a positive learning climate

The third domain relates to the school principal's need to promote a positive learning climate. This can be done in a number of ways including communicating instructional goals, establishing high expectations for performance. The first two activities are very important, especially in a school where there has been underperformance. Once a new vision has been agreed to and committed to paper, it is important that new instructional goals are set. Once such goals have been set, it becomes imperative that new expectations emerge, and such expectations should invariably be high in order to address previous performance (Bhengu, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2014). Other activities meant to promote a positive learning climate include establishing an orderly learning environment with clear discipline expectations, and working to increase teacher commitment to the school (Weber 1996). This speaks directly to a situation where learners as well as teachers lack discipline; no effective teaching and learning can take place, and that is why principals have to work vigorously to ensure that the climate within the school is conducive to teaching and learning.

(d) Observing and improving instruction

The process and act of observing and improving instruction starts with the principal establishing trusting and respectful relationships with the teaching staff. Weber (1996) is of the view that classroom observations should be organised in such a way that they provide opportunities for professional interactions between management and teachers and these should be geared towards supporting improved academic achievement by the learners. It is evident that when any member of the SMT visits teachers in their classrooms they do that with respect and also that prior arrangements are made and clear purpose for the visit is clarified. There should be no suspicions from both sides about what the intentions are. Therefore, there should

be no misunderstanding of any kind between the two stakeholders about each other's intentions.

(e) Assessing the instructional programme

The fifth dimension is assessing the instructional programme, and it entails the principal as an instructional leader, initiating and contributing to the planning, designing and analysing assessment tasks that evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum (Weber, 1996). The principal has to be up to date about what the learners need to demonstrate as having achieved. Of course, the principal may not do all these activities by himself or herself as they work with Departmental Heads as one team, but the principal must be hands on and it must be seen that he or she takes keen interest in what the learners learn and achieve in their respective subjects. Such a continuous scrutiny of the instructional programme (in the form of assessment of instructional programme) enables teachers to effectively meet learners' needs through constant revision and refinement of their tasks. Therefore, this model provides a clear lens that can enable me to look at the extent to which principals in the study are able to interact with staff and learners in a way that supports endeavours to facilitate effective teaching.

3.8 Conclusion

As I conclude this chapter, I must highlight that an in-depth presentation of transformational leadership theory as well as Weber's (1996) Five Domains of Instructional Leadership have been discussed. The discussion focused on the importance and relevance of these theoretical constructs for this research. It was noted that transformational leadership theory has a great influence on the organisation's performance; hence, it can be used to understand how principals transform their schools performances. Given the various elements of this theory, it is clear that educator development and empowerment can be realised through the application of transformational leadership theory. This is because transformational leaders inspire their educators to work beyond expectations as they attempt to improve their schools performances. They are also encouraged to sacrifice their self-interests for the benefit of the learners. Similarly, Weber Five Domains of Instructional Leadership Model provides a clear framework for analysing principals' leadership practices that are aimed at improving teaching and learning in their

schools. In the next chapter, I introduce the reader to a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology that was chosen for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I provided a detailed discussion of transformational leadership as a theoretical framework for analysing principals' leadership practices in their quest to turn around their respective schools' academic performances. As part of that discussion, I presented various perspectives focusing on issues relating to understanding transformational leadership. I also discussed Weber's Five Domains of Instructional Leadership.

In this chapter, I discuss at length the different aspects of the research design and methodology. I begin my discussion with a special focus on the selected research paradigm relevant to the study. Initially, I explicate my positionality and bias and the justification for choosing the interpretive paradigm. Through this chapter, I also expand on the choice of the case study methodology, the selected research methods for data generation, which are semi-structured interviews, observations and document reviews. Furthermore, I clarify how I analysed data and ensured trustworthiness of the findings and conclude with a discussion of ethical considerations, both from theoretical and as well as, from my experience at the field perspectives.

4.2 Research positionality and bias

In social science research positionality is used to indicate amongst others, the narrative placement, the context of the study, the power relations and social identities of the researcher, the transparency in terms of perspective, place and position in scholarship of the field or discipline (Muhhamad, Wallerstein, Sussman, Avilla, Belone, & Duran, 2014). The argument made is that bias can be kept to a minimum by the researcher's reflexivity by declaring upfront assumptions and by testing them in analysis (Gilson, Hanson, Sheikh, Agyepong, Ssengooba, & Bennet, 2011). It is from this reality that reflexivity takes its importance, and I will state my known prejudices and orientations in the positionality (Mantzoukas, 2005). As a researcher, it is important that I declare my positionality and bias. In this regard, I declare that my close proximity and insider opportunity in understanding subjective truths and perceptions that may or may not exist for interpretation and meaning. In Chapter One, I indicated how I work as a

Circuit Manager with principals, some of whom were affected by this phenomenon of turning around underperforming schools. I selected a sample of principals across the Umgungundlovu District in terms of their proven record of accomplishment in terms of turning around underperforming secondary schools. The selected sample was considered to reflect the principals who were meeting the criteria, but not in the circuit where I am stationed as a Circuit Manager. I based that decision on the view that power dynamics might have negative effects on my participants.

In spite of the above, every effort has been made to reduce my biases and create a relaxed objective atmosphere for purposes of this study during the gathering of data. I used recording devices, transcripts, document reviews, observations and semi-structured interviews as means of alleviating my biases. I followed all protocol in ensuring that sound ethical codes were followed including issues of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Precisely, this multicase study is relevant in examining the lived experiences and understanding of principals in transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts. This case strategically is not to effect change at the identified sites, rather to examine and understand the lived experiences of the principals. The theoretical perspective that informs this study is transformational leadership and instructional leadership model as advanced by Weber (1996). Its fundamental ontological assumption is that the principal's leadership is the critical factor in transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts. From an epistemological position, transformational leadership is subjective because it enables the researcher to provide a rich description of the principal's reflections on their lived experiences in transforming underperforming schools.

4.3 Research aims and questions

As indicated earlier in Chapter One, the quest to answer the research questions emanate out of the purpose of this study. Good research questions direct and focus a study, thereby providing a clear epistemologically and theoretically justified layer for operationalising the study (Maree, 2010). There is no research that has been conducted to date, in relation to the examination of the lived experiences of principals in transforming the underperforming schools in deprived contexts in South Africa, particularly, in the Umgungundlovu District. Other studies have focused on different aspects of transformational leadership in schools most of them in overseas countries.

This case study posed the following key research question: *What are principals' understandings and experiences of leadership for transforming underperforming schools in a deprived context?* With a view to adding to the knowledge base and deepening our understanding of lived experiences of principals in transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts, it examines critical questions and deploys research instruments that are considered relevant to achieve this outcome. This multiple case examined and described principals' understandings of transformational leadership as a theoretical framework. The first question provides a critical theoretical bedrock, context and direction for this study.

The other key questions underpinning this multiple case study are, *How do principals who have transformed underperforming schools in deprived contexts enact leadership?* In addressing this question, perspectives of participants are discussed in Chapter Five and Chapter Six. These chapters provide a detailed discussion about the lived experiences of principals in deprived contexts of rural and informal settlements schools. The other key question for this study is, *What can be learnt from the principals' understandings and experiences of leadership for transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts?* In addressing this question, principals' responses are presented in Chapter Five and Chapter Six.

4.4 Research paradigms

Scholars hold diverse ideas regarding their understanding of the paradigms as ways in which we make assumptions about reality. Research paradigms, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001), is a framework and model that shapes how we derive meaning of the phenomena. According to Bailey (2007), research paradigms are seen as mental windows by means of which researchers view the world. In agreement with this idea, Maree (2010) considers paradigms as a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality, which gives rise to a particular world view. Furthermore, Denzin and Guba (2011) consider the paradigms to be a net container that the researchers' epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises are grounded. The paradigm becomes more applicable in complementing the nature of the study in question.

Ontological and epistemological aspects of the research pertain to the manner in which the researcher sees reality. As the researcher chooses a particular approach, there are particular assumptions, which are made regarding the manner in which we question reality. Philosophical

assumptions consist of a position that a researcher chooses regarding the nature of reality (ontology) is concerned. Furthermore, this also involves a consideration about how the researcher knows what he or she knows (epistemology) and the methods chosen in the process - methodology (Creswell, 2007). In order to find out about the principal's lived experiences, it is vital that the research philosophy that is adopted bears underlying assumptions about the way in which the researcher sees the world (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). The purpose of the paradigm is to serve as an organising principle by which reality is interpreted. There is wide literature on different kinds of paradigms of which there is no agreement in the manner in which they are utilised and categorised. In the discussion that follows, I briefly outline a few paradigms that I could use for this study and, I discuss in detail, interpretive paradigm as it is the paradigm that I adopted for this study.

4.4.1 Critical research paradigm

In terms of this paradigm, the focus is on the reality of human action and it seeks to address issues of social justice and marginalism (Scotland, 2012). The main issue is that knowledge is determined by social and positional power of the advocates of knowledge. In this approach, the focus is on the emancipatory character in which knowledge is embraced from the culture, history and critical stakeholders. Knowledge that is generated is taken from the culture, history and is influenced by the way people think. In critical paradigm, the norm is that it takes into account the how things ought to be and how reality is judged (Scotland, 2012). According to this view, data needs to be critically analysed. It means that a researcher has to focus on critically interrogating the values and assumptions, exposing beliefs and, also challenging the *status quo* by engaging in social action (Crotty, 2003). Scholars agree that within this paradigm, research is considered to be influenced by various factors, which include values embedded in social reality (Bailey, 2007; Maxwell, 2012; Pring, 2000). Similar views are held by a number of scholars who suggest that reflective practice, and awareness of the situation to influence change, is a point of departure for the researcher (Carr & Kemis, 2003; Byrne & Sahay, 2007).

Tammy (2010) further adds that in the emergent and recursive process, the role of the researcher is to align the theory, data and research questions and interpretation of the findings. Critical research is characterised by the collaboration between the researcher and the participants by means of discussion based on how reality is critically analysed and constructed (Frere, 1970).

Furthermore, Creswell (2009) brings to the fore, issues relating to the mechanism of how this dialogue works, by suggesting that its data is generated by means of semi-structured interviews, observations and document reviews. The other recommended tools for critical approach include critical discourse analysis, critical ethnography and action research. The critical paradigm requires that the emancipation happens through engagement with the issues with the aim of bringing the needed changes.

This kind of research paradigm is not relevant for the study I conducted. Although, issues of change and transformation are prominent, no attempt was made to bring about any change. The study I conducted had to do with seeking understandings of principals' leadership practices, and also understanding meanings they attached to their actions. That is why I adopted interpretivist research paradigm. In the next section, I provide details about this particular paradigm.

4.4.2 Interpretive /constructive paradigm

In this section I discuss interpretive/constructivist paradigm. These are two closely related research paradigms with few nuances that distinguishes one from the other. According to Roling and Wagemakers (1998), the term 'constructivism' describes an epistemology that supports learning processes and guides the thinking around whole systems. Within this field, there is a belief that the researcher relies on the participants' views of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2007). As far as the interpretivist/constructivist approach is concerned, the researcher relies more on the qualitative data gathering methods and analysis. Social constructivism can be described as one of a group of approaches that have been referred to as interpretive methods. Amongst the primary objectives of social constructivism is that the researcher seeks to understand the social construction of the world of individuals (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, Sey (2006) argues that the research conducted from this perspective belongs to the postmodern school of thought. Drawing from the views of these scholars, whilst acknowledging that interpretive and constructive paradigms are not synonymous, I use them interchangeably to refer to the life view that foregrounds participants' construction of meaning from their perspectives.

Constructivism is a paradigm that is associated with the qualitative approaches based on understanding phenomena (Creswell & Clark, 2007). There is a strongly held assumption by constructivists that socially constructed knowledge is preferred over individually acquired knowledge (Kelly & Durrheim, 2006; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011, 2013). In the area of social constructivist approach language features critically as a tool for constructing reality during the course of dialogue and discourse (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009; Gerring, & Skaaning, 2013; Holland, 2006). Language also features critically as it includes data generation, construction and discussion of findings. Similarly, sentiments are shared that the community plays a critical role in determining the purpose and use of meaning in context (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). In a different vein, Holland (2006) reiterates that constructivism refers to the mental process and conversions of knowledge. Schunk (2008) shifts the emphasis away from the previous beliefs by placing the learner's skills at the stage as well as the contexts in which they construct knowledge (Gephart, 1999).

Constructivism emphasises that we cannot discover meaning objectively, but rather that we construct them as we interact with the world (Kim, 2001; Vrasidas, 2000). Another lens is that we create meanings independently of experience, that is subjective, and that we impose them on reality. This notion of constructivism is founded on ontological assumptions that reality is neither orderly nor fixed, but that it is on perpetual and continuous emergence. From the epistemological view, knowledge is socially constructed as a way of viewing the world (Gephart 1999; Sheppard, 2004). From a constructivist perspective, the research design accommodates reflections and conversation techniques for data gathering. The main belief held by social constructivists is that reality is a product of people's minds and is interpretive in their nature as they are centred on meaning.

Neuman (2011) surmises that the interpretivist paradigm is a systematic analysis of socially constructed, meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social world. It is also known as social constructivism, wherein people seek an understanding of the world in which they live and work by developing subjective meanings of their experiences (Zongozzi, 2015). Interpretivists presume that reality is socially constructed by the individuals acting in it (Hussey, 2009). Guldkuhl (2012) further contends that in the interpretivist paradigm, participants are viewed as interpreters and co-producers of meaningful data. This means that interpretivism is premised on the assumption that human beings create

meaning in their world and that this meaning is constructed as a product of interactions with others. The goal of interpretivism is therefore to understand the lived experience from the standpoint of the participants (Gruyter, 2011). Snape and Spencer (2003) describe interpretivism as a philosophy that focuses on interpretation and observation. The idea held within this paradigm is that the primary aim of the interpretive paradigm is to interpret the actions on individuals (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Scholars concur that in this paradigm the aim is to comprehend the interpretations of the world by placing people in their social contexts (Gephart, 1999; Kraus, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

Interpretive researchers seek to understand the definitions of the situation of members as well as to examine how objective realities are produced (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009; Kraus, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The argument advanced by Denzin and Lincoln (2009) is that the search for patterns of meanings is the key focus of the interpretive paradigm. Furthermore, these scholars assert the criteria for assessing the authenticity and trustworthiness of the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009). It is therefore, clear that interpretive/constructivism offers ways to understand the world and meanings of individuals. The criticism against this approach is that it does not utilise the methods that are based on scientific procedures which are objective and focused on people's perceptions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The identified limitations within the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, is that it is a costly exercise in terms of the assigned resources and time required to conduct research and data gathering (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Love, 2002). The defence advanced for the interpretive approach is that the critiques levelled against it were based on the gains that have been required by means of this paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009).

This study was guided by interpretive/constructivist paradigm which supports the view that knowledge is socially constructed and influenced by power relations within society (Cohen, *et al.*, 2011). The study of transformational leadership and the lived experiences of principals in deprived contexts was conducted in different research sites in which the participants experience different social backgrounds. This study was underpinned by assumptions that transformational leadership offers alternative approaches to reductionist and piecemeal approaches to turning around underperforming schools in deprived contexts. Furthermore, it examines the understanding of the lived experiences of the principals in transforming underperformance of schools located in deprived contexts. Within this approach, the school is considered as a

complex place influenced by a variety of socio/economic and cultural factors that mirror its performance.

In support of the paradigm, scholars assert that its strength lies in the gathering of data (Guldkuhl, 2012; Mackenzie & Mouton, 2006; Neuman, 2011). The study used qualitative research approach to understand the manner in which principals transformed their schools from underperformance to normal performance, from their own perspectives. The tenets of this paradigm fit well with this research as I sought to understand the lived experiences of principals who have successfully transformed underperforming schools into performing schools in deprived contexts. Interpretivists use open-ended or semi-structured questions (Phothongsunan, 2010). All research paradigms are distinguished by their ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. Similarly, the paradigm I adopted in this study is guided by these ontological, epistemological positions, and below I briefly discuss each of these philosophies underpinning various research paradigms.

Ontologically, the interpretive paradigm denies the existence of an objective reality; its focus is on discovering the multiple perspectives of all the participants in a setting (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004; Hussey, 2009). The aim of the interpretive paradigm is to capture people's perspectives on their lived experiences and not some objective notion of that experience (Henning, *et al.*, 2004). Research that uses interpretive analysis is therefore able to produce a descriptive analysis that emphasises a deep and interpretive understanding of the social phenomenon (Henning, *et al.*, 2004). In this study, this was realised through my close interaction with principals at their schools in order to understand their contexts and work situations. My ontological belief is that multiple realities exist and that social, economical, political and cultural values influence the construction of these multiple realities. In this study, this is acknowledged, amongst other things, by accommodating different views of the participants, as the study embraces a multiple case study approach.

Epistemology is about the nature of knowledge and the way people understand the world (De Gruyter, 2011). My view of knowledge (Epistemology) is that it is subjective and is built from experiences and interpretations and can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the phenomenon being studied. It has multiple realities and is context and time bound. In this study, I sought to understand the lived experiences of sampled principals in turning around underperforming schools in deprived contexts. This was

achieved through observing and listening to their stories of lived experiences. I believe that the principals' stories carry multiple realities and these can be drawn from their experiences related to their schools only. This make the interpretivist to be relevant in this study.

4.5 Research design

Several scholars define the research design differently. Scholars share more or less the same views on what is understood as the research design (Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 1998). For instance, some scholars, research designs are types of inquiry conducted within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches, which provide specific direction for procedures in a research design (Creswell, 2014, p.12). According to Harwell (2011), qualitative methods focus on discovering and understanding. Scholars agree that in qualitative studies, the emphasis is on words as compared to numbers in data gathering and analysis (Cohen, Morrison & Manion, 2011; Creswell, 2014; Harwell, 2011). Amongst the perspectives that embrace qualitative research are ethnography, anthropology, case studies, self-study and others whose evidence always take the form of text rather than numbers. The centre of focus in qualitative approaches is on the observation of how the variables feature themselves in the context of the study under investigation. Another key characteristic of the qualitative research is that it involves a lot of depth and comprehensive information during the quest for a broader understanding of issues (Cohen, Morrison & Manion, 2011; Creswell, 2014; Harwell, 2011).

This research study adopted a qualitative research design. Based on this understanding, this section will discuss the plan, structure and the strategy utilised in this study to examine the lived experiences of the principals in transforming the underperforming schools located in deprived contexts.

4.6 Population and sampling procedures

The study was conducted in Umgungundlovu District in Kwazulu-Natal. Seven schools were purposively selected to participate in the study. These principals had demonstrated a record of transforming the underperforming schools in deprived contexts. These principals and their schools are special in terms of meeting the required criteria in terms of Matric performance, location, background and academic performance. A purposeful sampling was used to

identifying the participants in this case study. Literature cite different kinds of sampling techniques for use due to the main goals of the study (Cohen, *et. al.*, 2007; 2011; Henning, van Rensburg & Smith, 2004). According to Cohen, *et al.* (2011), purposeful sampling is the process of selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. They argue that the researcher has to decide on the people who display the set of characteristics in their entirety, or in a way that is highly significant in terms of their behaviour for which the research questions were appropriate; relating to the contexts which are important for the research, the time periods that would be needed, and the possible artefacts of interest to the investigator. Gray (2004) agrees with these scholars as he further contends that in purposive sampling, researchers choose the participants against on or more traits to give what is believed to be a representative sample. This is accomplished by selecting information rich cases that is individuals, groups or organisations that provide the greatest insight into the research questions (Devers & Frankel, 2000). A group of seven principals were chosen for this research study. The size of a sample used for a qualitative project is influenced by both theoretical and practical considerations. These principals were chosen on the strength that they have managed to turn around the performances of their schools from underperformance to performing schools. Furthermore, they have managed to sustain their schools performances in the past three years. These participants are likely to generate rich, dense, focused information on the research questions to allow the researcher to provide a convincing account of the phenomenon (Curtis, Gesler, Smith & Washburn, 2000; Wash & Downe, 2006).

A group of seven principals was purposively selected for this study in terms of the track record in academic performance of previously underperforming schools in deprived contexts. The schools are selected in terms of their location and size within the Umgungundlovu District. On the other side, these principals possess first-hand information on how they turned around underperformance in their schools, despite the existing deprivations in such schools. This shows that these principals were involved in a hands-on experience in providing transformative leadership in deprived contexts. Since this a qualitative study research, there should be no talk of population representation. Approval to conduct the study in these cases study sites was sought from the participants, and their supervisors. This approval is attached for this project as appendices. Written consent was sought from the principals who participated and shared their lived experiences on how they have managed to transform their schools' performance despite deprivations.

Table 4.1 Fictitious names of schools

No	School	Abbreviation	Location
1	Phumelela Secondary School	PSS	Peri-urban community
2	Thuthuka Secondary School	TSS	Peri-urban community
3	Kuyasa Secondary School	KSS	Peri-urban community
4	Mathafeni Secondary School	MSS	Rural community
5	Thando Secondary School	TSS	Rural community
6	Siyaphambili Secondary School	SSS	Rural community
7	Kuhle Secondary School	KSS	Rural community

4.7 Research methodology

My reading indicates that many scholars use the term method and methodology interchangeable. Nonetheless, there seems to be convergence of views that methodology is more than just methods in the sense that the latter has to do with techniques that researchers use to generate data while the former goes far beyond this. For instance, Harding (1987) argues that a research method is a technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence, whereas, a research methodology is a theory of producing knowledge through research and provides a rationale for the way a researcher proceeds. Therefore, a research methodology is broader and deals with what I can call philosophical issues that underpin the methods or techniques that researchers use to produce data.

A qualitative study such as the one being reported in this thesis takes place in a natural setting to develop an understanding of the context and the experiences of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Qualitative studies just like case study methodologies, allow the aspect of emergence, whereby there is no predetermined path to follow. These methodologies are also interpretive as researchers interpret the data, describing the setting and drawing conclusions from the emerging themes (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Rossman & Rallis, 1998). This study is also concerned with generating and analysing qualitative data. A more detailed discussion of the specific methodology (case study) that I used for this study follows.

4.7.1 Case study methodology

A case study methodology is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth, and within its real life context, using multiple sources of evidence (Graham & Todd, 2004; Yin, 2009). Scholars concur that a case study is an intensive study of a single unit aimed at understanding a larger class of similar units, where a unit represents a spatially bounded phenomenon (Gerring, 2004; Graham & Todd, 2004; Yin, 2009). Furthermore, scholars assert that case studies investigate and report the real life, complex, dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance as contexts are unique and dynamic (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2013). What is clear from these definitions is that whilst scholars converge on some aspects of the definition, they do not agree on all the aspects. Hence, what is deduced from these definitions is that the following attributes can be assigned to a case study; namely, that it investigates a contemporary real-life phenomenon; it focuses on a single instance of a phenomenon; boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear and that it uses multiple sources of evidence.

Yin (2009) names five components of effective case study methodology, namely, research questions, proposition or purpose of the study, unit of analysis, logic that links data to propositions and criteria for interpreting findings. The utilisation of the case study methodology is well suited for the purpose of this study, which was to explore the leadership experiences of principals who have successfully transformed their schools in deprived contexts from underperforming to performing schools. A distinctive feature of a case study is the detailed presentation it makes of the phenomenon in its real context (Hofstee, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Kumar, 2005; Maree, 2010; Yin, 2013).

For purposes of this study, significance rather than frequency (Cohen, *et al.*, 2001) is a hallmark of case studies and as a researcher, I wanted to gain insight into the real dynamics of the school situation and its participants. The seven principals are located in seven different schools which have different issues, socio economic factors, cultural backgrounds and are working in situations which are not the same in terms of size, academic performance, quintile and location to mention a few. This makes the schools to be different cases in the sense that the seven principals work in different contexts. The experiences that the seven participants shared were not the same; hence, a multi case study. In this study, the focus was on the role that principals played in transforming their schools' performances in the uMgungundlovu District. I sought to draw and share lessons from their leadership practices. Hopefully, other principals facing

similar situations may use such lessons and adapt them to their contexts as they address challenges that affect their school performances.

An important component of the case study research is the unit of analysis (Dodge, 2011). Yin (2009) describes the unit of analysis as the area of focus that a case study is analysing. He further contends that an appropriate unit of analysis occurs when primary research is accurately specified. For this research, principals constitute the unit of analysis as this area of focus is directly tied to the research questions I had developed. Case study research facilitated insights about the roles played by principals in turning around their schools performances, despite deprivations. Case studies involve researching an issue within a bounded setting and context (Creswell, 2007; Maree, 2007; Henning, 2010). In the context of this case study research, it is bounded by the following parameters: (a) Understanding of the leadership experiences of principals despite turbulent conditions; (b) The context of deprivation within which participating secondary schools are located within the uMgungundlovu District and (c) A timeframe encompassing the years 2015-2017.

The historical and contextual background of the principals in terms of their lived experiences and dynamics of which this case study emanates is on multi sites. Concerted efforts were made at understanding the transformational leadership of principals in turning around underperforming schools studied. In this endeavour, the study aimed to examine how the principals turned their schools around in those deprived contexts. Case study research can help to develop or refine theory (Crowe, Creswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery & Sheikh, 2011). Rule and John (2015) further broaden this assertion as they state that both theory-generating and theory-testing approaches embody values within case study research. Therefore, the adoption of the case study research methodology added value to this research and assisted in refining and generating the existing theory as well as a new one. Case study research uses a variety of evidence from different sources such as documents, artefacts, interviews and observation (Yin, 2014). This goes beyond the range of sources of evidence that might be available in historical study. This is well suited for this study because it used a variety of data-generating methods like semi-structured interviews, observation and document reviews, to generate data.

4.8 Data generation methods

Scholars categorise research into different fields for different purposes (Creswell, 2014; Kumar, 2012). The purpose of data generation in qualitative research is to provide evidence for the experience it is investigating (Polkinghorne, 2005). Sandelowski (2000) contends that it is directed at the *who*, *what* and the *where* of experiences. Yin (2003; 2012) identified six sources of evidence for case studies, namely, documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and physical artefacts. In the context of this study, I used only three data generation methods, a) semi-structured interviews conducted with school principals, and b) observation of the principals in their contexts of the schools, c) document reviews. A detailed discussion of each follows next.

4.8.1 Semi- structured interviews

There is general agreement amongst scholars that semi-structured interviews are the primary source of qualitative research, including case study methodologies (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2009). Due to the limited nature of this study, I did not delve into laborious details clarifying different kinds of interviews, their merits and demerits. Nonetheless, I can point out that interviews take various forms as outlined in a plethora of literature (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Gray, 2004; Moen, 2006; Patton, 2002). In this study, I used semi-structured interviews due to their benefits for studies such as this one. Semi- structured interviews were administered to seven secondary school principals who have managed to transform the performance of their schools despite various deprivations within their environments. I used semi-structured interviews because they are renowned for affording the interviewees a platform to share their leadership experiences regarding their roles in transforming underperforming schools to performing schools in deprived contexts. This type of interviews is the most common type of interviews used in qualitative research (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). The key feature of this type of interviews is that, they are interactive and they use a range of probes and techniques to achieve depth in soliciting answers (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Gray, 2004; Moen, 2006). The interviews are also conducted in a face-to-face format with the interviewees. Furthermore, in semi-structured interviews, the researcher is free to vary the order of wording of the questions depending on the direction of the interview and to ask additional questions (Corbetta, 2003). When using this type of interviews, the researcher can explore new paths that emerge during the interview process that may not have been considered initially (Gray, 2004; Patton, 2002).

Before I move on to discuss the second method that I used to generate data, I think that it is important that I provide a context within which I generated data and how the process unfolded. Before I went to do what Wolcott (1995) calls fieldwork, I informed the selected principals in writing about the research project and requested them to participate in the research project. I also gave them an estimated length of the interview process. I had already developed the interview guide with a list of issues to be covered during our conversation. We agreed about the most suitable time and place to conduct our conversation (semi-structured interviews). I interviewed all participants in their school premises in order to allow for freedom of expression and reflection of the environment within which they operate. I gave them the interview guide beforehand so that they could prepare themselves and accommodate the interview process in their schedule. Moen (2006) contends that there is a need for a collaborative relationship between the researcher and the participants, which can be nurtured through adequate time spent with participants in a suitable space to develop a caring situation in which both the researcher and the participants feel comfortable.

I did not present the questions to one participants in the same sequence as I had conducted the interviews with the other participant. This was due to the engagement in trying to get the depth of the issues (Creswell, 2014; Devos, 2002). I allowed each participant to respond freely without any interference. Furthermore, I probed on areas where there was a need to elicit more information. During the interview process, I ensured that I employed user-friendly language to elicit information from these principals. For example, I posed open-ended questions. During the interview process, I scribbled some notes whilst the digital voice recorder was recording our conversation. I used the digital voice recorder to maintain an accurate record of the dialogue. I treated participants with respect and as equal partners. I did not project myself as an official of the Department of Education as I believe that issues of power might negatively affect our relationship and the flow of information. We also shared our contact details so that we could continue our conversation some other time in the future. In other words, I did not like the idea that our conversations ended at the end of our formal interviews. Adopting such a stance assisted me in terms of soliciting further data on some of the aspects that were deemed to have not been covered and for clarifications where required. Secondly, during these follow up visits I was able to probe further whilst going through the data on school analysis and other supporting documents to verify transcript content.

The questions required the participants to provide factual responses regarding their work as principals in turning the school academic performance, the approaches used, the areas covered by such a venture and the lessons learnt in the process to mention a few. A detailed presentation is provided in Chapter Five and Chapter Six. Participants were requested to explain their unique leadership experiences as principals working with teachers and other stakeholders in improving academic performance at their various schools. They were requested to describe their application of the turnaround strategies in terms of what worked and what they considered to be challenges in the process of implementation. In terms of this approach, the participants were in many ways guided in presenting their unique experiences and requested to present the documents which contained other forms of data and statistics which benefited the study. Within the parameters of the interview process, I was able to generate data that pertains to all the key questions of the study as outlined in the interview schedule and by means of probing.

4.8.2 Participant observations

The process of observation lies at the heart of the participant-observer and ethnographic or qualitative research (Yanov, 2006). It affords the researcher the opportunity to study what occurs in real life, as opposed to what happens in highly contrived settings (Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2010). Gillhan (2000) posits that it is the most direct technique of obtaining data and not just what the person has written or said but what they have enacted. Observations come in various forms such as participant observation and direct observation. Participant observation is a mode of observation in which the researcher is not merely a passive observer but actively assumes a variety of roles within a fieldwork situation and participates in the actions being studied (BERG, 2001). Whilst it provides unusual opportunities to produce data, its major challenge is that there is room for potential biases to be produced as the participant-observer is likely to follow a commonly known phenomenon and become the supporter of the group or organisation being studied (Yin, 2014). Direct observation implies that the researcher watches the events directly.

In this research, direct observation method was adopted and was applied in the quest to gain understanding and insight about the seven principals' lived experiences in turning around underperforming schools in deprived contexts. Patton (2002) identifies several advantages of using direct observation method, namely, that it enables the observer to understand and capture

the setting within which people interact; see and discover things that people in the location have not paid attention to. Lastly, the researcher may pick up things that he or she might not have thought about in advance. In this regard, I was able to capture the location of the schools in terms of physical terrain, the distances to such schools from the district, the size of the school, the physical features of the school and the place where the principals worked. All of the above-mentioned factors were taken into consideration, as these schools were purposively selected. For instance, some of the criteria for selection were that schools had to be located in the rural as well as informal settlement areas. This enabled me to develop deeper insights about issues relating to leadership ability and resilience to turn around academic performance despite the prevalent deprivations.

4.8.3 Documents reviews

Documents review is a non- reactive technique where the information given in a document is not subject to a possible distortion as a result of the interaction between the researcher and the participant (Corbetta, 2003). It is particularly useful where the history of events or experiences has relevance in the study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). For case study research, the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources (Yin, 2014). For this research, information was sought from schools to corroborate information from semi-structured interviews. This information included amongst others the previous three years academic performance in (NSC), appraisal information and school improvement plans and any other documents to supplement the information gathered.

In conducting this document review, prior approval was sought from the principals in the form of informed consent letters and also during the physical visits to such schools to conduct the interviews. With such prior permission, I was able to time the request of such information in a way that would not cause the principals to view it negatively as some kind of inspection or investigation. The reviewed documents assisted me to dig further in gathering the data and getting an understanding in terms of where these schools come from in terms of academic performance. This information is displayed in some sections of Chapter Five and Chapter Six respectively in the form of tables which draw comparisons between these seven schools. Such information gives a clear picture of the nature of the differences between of these multiple case study sites in terms of academic performance, enrolment size, quintiles, and staff sizes to

mention a few. With such information and comparisons presented it takes the reader to picture such schools and make some informed assumptions and conclusions from a professional perspective.

4.9 Qualitative data analysis

No research can be viewed as credible if data generated through various techniques remains unanalysed, and thus has no meaning. A qualitative data analysis technique was employed in making sense of the semi-structured interviews, observations and documents review. Data analysis sought to make sense of what principals had said during the interviews. In qualitative research, data analysis occurs in an ongoing iterative and emerging process (Hening, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). Extending this idea, Creswell (2011) states that data analysis, in qualitative research proceeds hand-in-hand with other parts of developing the qualitative study, namely, the process of data gathering and the write-up of the findings. This means that while interviews are going on, the researcher may be analysing an interview generated earlier and writing memos that may ultimately be included as a narrative in the organisation and structure of the final report. Cohen, *et al.* (2011) describe data analysis as a process consisting of organising, accounting for and explaining the data. It starts by coding each incident into as many categories as possible and as the analysis continues, the data is placed into categories (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Seal, Gobo & Silverman, 2004).

In this research project, the editing and analysis was conducted immediately after each interview was concluded with each of the principals in order to avoid any lapse of time in data generation (Verd & Andreu, 2011). Some responses were considered to be key if they consistently emerged across two or more of the sources of data namely, a) semi-structured interviews, b) observations c) document reviews. Some themes specific to the leadership experiences of principals, the turnaround strategies, the benefits of the transformation and the challenges on implementation were prioritised especially those that contrasted the views of the participants and those not commonly identified in the reviewed literature. Inconsistencies between the different sources of data and those with known literature and theory also drew the attention of the researcher.

The process of analysis comprised reviewing, grouping and categorisation of every statement or expression or remark that constituted responses to each question for every participant, allowing for themes to emerge naturally. This began with grouping together statements with similar meanings into similar headings for example transformation process, school profiles, teaching and learning, stakeholder engagement and challenges. Each interview lasted about one hour. In order to bring meaning to the responses of the semi-structured interview, observation and document review transcripts, I adopted Krueger's framework analysis as adapted by Rabies (2004) and entailed identifying a thematic framework; indexing; charting; mapping and interpretation.

Familiarisation involved repeated listening to the audio-taped responses, and the repeated reading of all the transcribed short phrases, ideas or concepts in the margins that arose from the reading of the texts. Thirdly, indexing comprised sifting the data and highlighting and sorting out *verbatim* quotes. Fourthly, charting involved lifting the *verbatim* quotes and rearranging them under the newly-developed themes. Lastly, mapping and interpretation entailed being creative and analytical in order to discern the relationship between the *verbatim* quotes and the links between the data as a whole. In order to get an in-depth understanding of the principals' implementation of the turnaround strategies in their schools in deprived contexts.

The aspects of transformational leadership theory like, shared vision, group goals, individual support, inspiring and motivating others to perform optimally, for the benefit of the organisations, featured in the process of data analysis. Other aspects, which featured in the principals' leadership experiences for transforming underperforming schools, included aspects like communicating high expectations and individual support to underperforming educators.

Furthermore, Weber's five Domains of Instructional leadership also related well to the principals' leadership experiences in turning around underperforming schools in deprived contexts. Aspects which highly featured during the data analysis included managing the curriculum, developing the school's vision and mission statement, improving instruction, regular assessment of the instructional programme, promoting a positive learning climate and developing educators through development programmes in order to enhance their professional capabilities and their subjects performances.

As the Weber's (1996) five Domains of Instructional leadership guided the data analysis process, certain aspects featured dominantly whilst others were less dominant. Aspects like curriculum management and monitoring, regular assessment of the instructional programme, commitment to the school's vision featured prominently. The turnaround process involved a number of aspects; hence, I used the two theories, as one theory could not address everything.

4.10 Issues of trustworthiness

It is always important that findings of any research should be believable. The concept of trustworthiness is precisely about believability of the research findings. Specifically, the concept of trustworthiness refers to the extent to which the findings are an authentic reflection of the personal or lived experiences of the phenomenon under investigation (Barbour, 1998). Law (2002) suggests that establishing the trustworthiness of research increases the reader's confidence that the findings are worthy of attention. Researchers should consider the following aspects in pursuit of truth in their research study, namely; credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1994).

4.10.1 Credibility

The concept of credibility refers to the accuracy of the data in order to reflect the observed social phenomena (Wahyuni, 2012). It is concerned with whether the study actually measures or tests what is intended. In subsequent meetings with the practitioners, the interim results from the previous interview can be discussed as a method of respondent validation (Bryman, 2012). There are many ways that researchers use in order to ensure credibility of the findings. Some of these techniques include data triangulation, method triangulation and many other techniques. Data triangulation, method triangulation and evaluator triangulation were used to enhance credibility of this research project. In this research project, preliminary visits were undertaken to the sampled schools to familiarise myself with research settings of the participants. During the data generation phase, participants were encouraged to be honest and frank when answering questions. For instance, I assured that there is no correct or wrong answer to my questions; what is important is for them to share their experiences and views. Other measures I used related to confidentiality issues; I consistently assured them that whatever they said would remain between us, and that there was no wrong or correct answer in our conversation. Therefore, my

main message to them was that they should not be too much concerned about trying to search for what I might think is true, but that they should just share their thoughts and experiences of engaging with the turnaround process. The other technique I used to enhance credibility was through the process of member checking during the interviews process.

4.10.2 Dependability

Dependability corresponds to the notion of reliability in quantitative research; that is, the consistency of observing the same findings under similar circumstances. Merriam (1998) states that dependability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated with similar subjects in a similar context. It emphasises the importance of the researcher accounting for or describing the changing contexts and circumstances that are fundamental to the consistency of the research outcome. Hence, dependability involves the researcher taking into account all the changes that occur within a specific setting and the extent to which those changes affect the way research is conducted. In this research project, dependability was enhanced by presenting a detailed and step-by-step explanation of the research design, its implementation and how data was generated. There are many techniques that can be used to enhance dependability. One of them is that I probed the different contextual issues in terms of the semi-structured interviews and made observations of the physical appearance and location of the schools. Issues were probed to seek further clarities where required. This approach of the study sought to generate rich data and also to triangulate and cross examine the data on the phenomenon under scrutiny. I do enhance dependability by describing the context of the study in Section 4.6.1 of this chapter.

4.10.3 Transferability

Research findings are deemed transferable or generalisable only if they fit into new contexts outside the actual study context (Houghton, Casey, Show & Murphy, 2013; Polit & Beck, 2012). Transferability is analogous to external validity; that is, the extent to which findings can be generalised. Generalisability refers to the extent to which one can extend the account of a particular situation or population to other persons, times or setting, other than those directly studied (Maxwell, 2002). Shenton (2004) contends that the same findings of a qualitative project are specific to a small number of particular environments and individuals, and it is impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions are applicable to other situations

and populations. On the other side, Seal (1999) suggests that transferability is achieved by providing a detailed and rich description of the settings studied in order to provide the reader with sufficient information to be able to judge the applicability of the findings to other settings that they know. Lincoln and Guba (1983) are of the opinion that a rich and thick explanation of research sites and characteristics of case organisations should be provided to enhance transferability. In relation to this, case studies are a dewdrop through which the world can be analysed. This means that this case study cannot be generalised but its findings can be used to understand the happenings in other contexts with similar features.

4.10.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is the fourth and the last criterion for assessing trustworthiness. The concept of confirmability refers to the extent to which others can confirm the findings in order to ensure that the results reflect the understanding and experiences of the observed participants (Wahyuni, 2012) rather than that of the researcher. In short, confirmability aims to ensure that what the researcher regards as findings are not his/her imagination or misinterpretations or distortion. Confirmability aims to ensure that what has been found is indeed confirmed by the participants themselves. To enhance confirmability, I used a variety of techniques such as member-checking during interviews. Member-checking allows the participants to check whether what they have said is a true and accurate account. The other technique I utilised was that of each participant confirming the accuracy of the content of our conversations. For instance, after I had completed transcription process, I gave each participant a copy of the transcript to check the accuracy of the content. It allowed them the opportunity to change anything they deemed to be incorrect, in an effort to assure the reader that the study is credible and thus trustworthy.

4.11 Ethical considerations

In order to address ethical issues in this study, I conducted a number of activities all of which were meant to ensure that the study was conducted in an ethical manner. For instance, before I started the process of contacting my potential participants, I approached the ethics department within my institution. The University has a standing ethics policy that applies to both academic staff and students alike. The University has to be satisfied that no possible harm can be caused to the participants. Therefore, it requires that the proposed study should be submitted to its ethics committee. In line with this University policy, I applied for an ethical clearance to the

research office of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, prior to conducting fieldwork. Some of the requirements are that I produce evidence, that I would respect the autonomy of the participants, and thus that their participation was voluntary and that there was no way that their safety might be compromised by their participation in the study.

Besides the university, I also had to seek permission from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education to conduct research in their schools. Once permission was granted, I approached each principal and explained the nature of the study. I also had to seek permission to conduct research in their schools. I also had to give them guarantees that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study without any negative repercussions. I had to explain not only the nature of the study and that their participation was voluntary, but also that there were no benefits they would receive by participating. That was meant to ensure that participants do not join the study in anticipation of any rewards. Once they had agreed to participate, I requested them to sign informed consent letters after satisfying themselves of its contents.

Permission was sought to record the interviews, conduct informal and formal observations as well as, the use of available documentary materials related to the research project. During the course of the study, permission was sought from principals to make follow- up interviews as part of the information gathering. These consent letters contained all the details regarding the duration, the activities, the location and how much time was required for the interviews and documents reviews. The principals were assured that their actual names would not be disclosed anywhere in the thesis or subsequent publications in spite of their actual names and signatures appearing on the consent forms. Of course, their signatures were never revealed to the readers as that might expose their identities. All the recorded interviews were kept and saved on the memory stick in the supervisor's office and they will be deleted after five year period.

4.12 Limitations of the study

Any study will have some limitations of a certain kind. One of the main limitation issues for qualitative research generally and case studies in particular, is that it can make no claim to generalisation and typicality because the sample is always small (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). This study is qualitative and adopted a case study methodology, and therefore, by its very nature, it has general applicability limitations. Cohen, *et al.* (2011) believe that case studies

are not easily open to cross-checking, and thus could result in them being selective, biased, personal and subjective. Notwithstanding the limitations of the case study research, readers of this research can judge whether the analysis presented sounds convincing based upon what they know in similar situations and circumstances. In any case, the purpose of this study was never focused on generalisation of the findings. Rather, the study sought to provide deep insights about principals' experiences in terms of turning around the fortunes of their schools.

4.13 Conclusion

Chapter Four has provided a detailed discussion about research design and methodology that I adopted for the study. As part of my presentation, I offered details about my experiences of the actual process of doing fieldwork, where and when it was done. I described the context of my conversations with my participants. I also gave a detailed description of all research activities. In the next chapter, I begin the presentation of data analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

TURNING AROUND SCHOOLS PERFORMANCE: PERSPECTIVES FROM SCHOOLS IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed in detail design and methodological issues and processes I followed in carrying out the study. Due to the voluminous data that was generated, data presentation consists of two chapters, that is, Chapter Five and Chapter Six. While Chapter Five presents data and thus, perspectives of principals of schools located in informal settlements, Chapter Six presents the perspective from rural schools. These are schools which are located under traditional leaders as contemplated in the (Traditional Leadership Framework No. 41 of 2003 (RSA, 2003) and the KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership Governance Act No. 5 of 2005 (KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, 2005).

This chapter is the first of the two chapters, and in this chapter, I focus on schools located in informal settlements as I have mentioned in my opening remarks. The data presented is about how school principals of those schools managed to turn around their schools' performances in deprived contexts. The data presented was generated through the use of semi-structured interviews, observations and document reviews as discussed in the previous chapter. In presenting the data, I have ensured that I use the participants' actual voices that I had transcribed into textual form as evidence of my claims. Scholars such as Fouche and Delport (2011) argue that the discussion of data includes the infusion of the voices of the participants in order to ensure the authenticity of their voices. In my presentation and discussion of data, I infused literature and some aspects of the theoretical framework that I presented in Chapter Two and Chapter Three respectively.

5.2 Brief profiles of the participating schools

Before presenting the data, I begin by briefly outlining a profile for each of the participating schools. I believe that it is important that readers obtain a clear background about the schools that participated in the study.

5.2.1 Profile of Phumelela Secondary School

Phumelela Secondary School (PSS) was built in the early 1980s. This is a Quintile 3 school, which starts from Grade 8 up to Grade 12. It has 38 educators and 5 non-teaching staff (this category of workers includes the administration clerk, the security guard, the cleaner and those who assist in the school's nutrition programme). As part of government policy for schools located in poverty-stricken communities, PSS benefits from the government's schools nutrition programme. The large part of the school is not fenced but there is fencing which is just surrounding the school's buildings. PSS serves the peri-urban community around the capital city of Pietermaritzburg. It is currently one of the best performing schools within Edendale Circuit and has an enrolment of over 1200 learners. It offers a wide range of curriculum packages to enable learners to pursue a variety of careers after completing Grade 12. Subject packages include humanities, sciences, commerce and technology streams. PSS is also a Section 21 school. This means that the school has additional functions to buy textbooks and other items on its own without going through the Department's procurement process, as it is the case with schools in Section 20 schools. Due to poor socio-economic conditions around the school, PSS is a no fee-paying school.

Table 5.1: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009-2017).

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	9	42	55	69.9	91.82	87.41	93.41	79.38	84.55

Table 5.2: Learner enrolment in the past 5 years

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Enrolment	1071	1077	1078	1154	1147

5.2.2 Profile of Thuthuka Secondary School

Thuthuka Secondary School (TSS) was established in the late 1950s. This is a Quintile 3 school, which starts from Grade 8 up to Grade 12. It has 38 educators. As part of the government policy for schools located in poverty-stricken communities, TSS benefits from the Department's schools nutrition programme. It is also situated in a peri-urban area around Pietermaritzburg

and serves learners from its surrounding community. It is currently rated as the best performing school within Edendale Circuit. The school is fenced and has the supply of clean, piped water and electricity. It has infrastructure challenges like the poor toilets and play grounds. Like PSS, this is also a no fee-paying school. The community is afflicted by various social ills such as crime of various kinds including drug dealings. The school has not escaped the negative effects of these problems such that the principal has been attacked and threatened by the alleged drug dealers. The school offers a wide range of curriculum packages to assist learners when they have passed Grade 12, and these include humanities, commerce, science and technology.

Its performance in the past years (2009-2017) has been as follows:

Table 5.3: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009-2017).

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	56.2	50.8	45.70	38.73	65.75	88.24	91.76	100	96.94

Table 5. 4: Learner enrolment in the past 5 years

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Enrolment	859	918	920	977	1016

5.2.3 Profile of Kuyasa Secondary School

Kuyasa Secondary School (KSS) opened its doors for the first time in the early 2000s. The school was part of a combined school before 2001. It was established because learners from its surrounding informal settlements could no longer be accommodated in the nearby high schools. As part of the government policy for schools located in poverty-stricken communities, KSS benefits from the Department's schools nutrition programme. The school has 38 educators consisting of 30 teachers, 5 Departmental Heads, 2 Deputy Principals and a principal. KSS is a Quintile 3 school, which starts from Grade 8 up to Grade 12. Due to its socio-economic condition, KSS is a no fee-paying school and is rated as the best performing school within the Swayimana Circuit. Its performance in the past years (2009-2017) is shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009-2017).

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	50	77	70	62.81	69.44	61.54	46.67	90.67	95.65

Its enrolment in the past years is reflected as follows:

Table 5.6: Learner enrolment in the past 5 years

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Enrolment	1205	1117	1030	994	982

5.3 Data presentation and discussion

The next section consists of a detailed discussion of the themes that emerged from the analysis process and tells us more about the process that school principals embarked on as they endeavoured to improve their schools' performance. The analysis developed 10 themes and the discussion is organised according to these broad theme: (a) Factors that prompted the school principals to embark on the change process (b) Transforming underperforming schools into performing ones (c) Initial challenges encountered during the early stages of the turning around process (d) Creating conditions that are favourable for the turning around process (e) The process of turning around (f) The role of School-Based stakeholders in turning around the schools' fortunes (g) The relationship between various deprivations and teaching and learning (h) Strategies principals use to mitigate the effects of deprivation on teaching and learning (i) How principals address teachers' attitudes towards the turnaround process (j) How new school cultures unfolded.

5.3.1 Factors that prompted the school principals to embark on the change process

Participants were asked a question about factors that had prompted them to embark on a change process. The analysis of their responses indicate that there were various factors that prompted principals in this study to embark on the turnaround process. These factors include serial underperformance, continuous underperformance in subjects like Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Accounting, which was contributing to the schools underperformance and the embarrassing situation of seeing in the newspaper that the school has underperformed. These factors were felt by the school principals in their different schools.

I realised that I had to take a decision especially on the subjects that were causing the school to underperform, and that decision was to get educators who were going to assist the school in its turnaround process (Phumelela Secondary).

The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary indicated something different, which prompted him to take action. This is what he said:

Upon seeing in the newspaper that my school had underperformed and the whole nation knowing that I was a failure because by the time I collected the results, I knew that I was a face of shame as I had seen from the newspaper that my school had underperformed (Kuyasa Secondary).

For Thuthuka Secondary School, the principal was sent to the school with the mandate from the Department to turn around the school's performance as that school had been underperforming for a long period of time (serial underperformer).

I was approached by the officials of the Department to come and turnaround the school's performance because of my leadership experience and success in other schools in which I was able to improve their performances (Thuthuka Secondary).

In this research project, I also used the document reviews method to generate qualitative data. This method complemented semi- structured interviews and gave me additional information especially the records about the schools performances as far back as from 2009. This data was used to triangulate what was verbally presented by the school principals. Scholars such as Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and van Rooyen (2010), Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2011), Ramatseba (2012), Sim (2011), Steyn (2013), advocate that the principal is the driving force behind the school's success. Makoelle (2011) further upholds that principals are in charge of the school's leadership process and that they are expected to give direction and guidance about matters of the school vision and the improvement of results. The view expressed by the aforementioned scholars, is further supported by Marishane and Botha (2011) when they argue that the principal's leadership is regarded as the main factor that contributes to the school's performance trajectory and is viewed as the essential factor. The importance of the principal's role plays out when the Gauteng Member of the Executive Council (MEC) advances that he had changed the system of appointing principals in the Gauteng Department of Education, in order to ensure that schools were led by competent principals who would ensure that they perform well.

In light of this assertion by these scholars and from my experience as the Circuit Manager, principals have to steer their school's performances to greater heights and rally other stakeholders behind the schools' turnaround programmes. Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015) and Chiome (2011) concur that good leadership contributes to the school's good performance even in deprived contexts. These principals have to turnaround their schools' performances irrespective of the turbulent, volatile and deprived contexts, which further compound the turnaround programmes and process (Chikoko, 2018; Hallinger, 2016; Hallinger & Truong, 2014).

5.3.2 Transforming underperforming schools into performing ones

Turning around the school's performance needs special attributes and dedication and certain form of leadership dimension. Various forms of leadership dimensions could be employed in addressing the problem. However, what I have noted from the principals' voices is that transformational and instructional leadership dimensions played a major role in assisting them to turn around their schools performances. Whilst transformational leadership assists in stimulating change from the bottom, instructional leadership seems to play a role in promoting top-down participation (Taole, 2013). Whilst the positive impact of the transformational leadership dimension has been discussed in Chapter Two, it is worth mentioning that its attributes like, inspirational motivation, where the principal is seen to be a role model in leading the intervention and persuading educators to join the school's vision and rally behind the agreed upon programmes is noted. Other aspects of the leadership dimension are also noted; for example, understanding the educators' capabilities and then allocating them to suitable positions (individual consideration), setting performance targets for the educators in order to attain the school's target (individualised influence) and effectively utilising the staff (intellectual stimulation) are further noted in the principals' voices. These scholars share similar views on the role played by the transformational leaders in turning around underperformance in terms of learners' academic results (Balyer, 2012; Dimmock, 2013; Naidoo & Botha, 2012; Peter & Archippus, 2016).

The presentations by the principals revealed that their journeys towards transforming their schools' performances took different forms as they focused on different aspects, which were seen as the main causes of underperformance in their schools. Amongst the things they had to do,

Kuyasa Secondary had a different approach, which started with the principal. He reflected on his performance as the leader of the school. In that regard, the principal said:

Before you identify the failures or weaknesses of the institution, you need to look at yourself whether it is appropriate for you to lead the institution or whether it needs someone else. If you say no, I am the right person to lead the institution, you should then think as to how you will address the questions of the failures (Kuyasa Secondary School).

In the self-reflection phase, the principal asked himself critical questions, which were aimed at assisting him before approaching all other stakeholders. He asked himself about his role in the number of areas, which he believed were negatively affecting the school's performance. He asked questions whether he had provided correct leadership in the area of academic programme of the school, the area of professional development of the educators, in the area of providing correct governance and in the area of motivating learners to work harder. This reflection is then followed by the development of the shared vision on what the school wanted to achieve. This then transcended into capacity building for the SMT to understand why it existed in the first place (to properly manage the curriculum). The SMT had to understand its role and be able to provide the necessary support, which is influencing educators to rally behind the school's vision in order for the school to provide quality education.

Training was then extended to educators. Subject Advisors were called in to train them on curriculum delivery and management as outlined in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPs). The implementation of the school's strategy then focused on the following activities: thoroughly preparing Grade 11 for the 2016 Grade 12 class, addressing unprofessional behaviour of some educators as such behaviours had contributed to the school to underperform in the 2015 NSC results. They did not commit themselves correctly during the allocated times and they also criticised the learners who were not performing well in Grade 12 in 2015. The principal then identified poorly performing subjects, which included Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Accounting and Economics, and then enlisted the services of Subject Advisors to assist the school with these subjects. The principal also moved the Mathematics educator, who was unco-operative to Grade 8 and Grade 9 to teach IsiZulu. Educators were also advised to use previous question papers in order to assist learners who were struggling to grasp the content of their subjects.

Parents were requested to come on board by supporting their children and ensuring that they attended extra classes organised for Grade 10 up to Grade 12. In addition, the school introduced a two year programme to prepare learners for Grade 12. Such a programme was consistent with the Department's policy of supporting weak learners so that when they get to Grade 12, they pass. The school also utilised the services of high performing educators from other schools to come and support the school's educators through team teaching. These strategies assisted the school to move from 46% to 90%. Whilst the principals of Thuthuka and Phumelela Secondary schools respectively concurred with the principal of Kuyasa Secondary on the importance of staffing as one of the important areas that needed to be addressed in order to improve their schools' performances, they also presented other areas that needed special attention. One of the two principals had this to say:

There is no one single thing that I would specify except to say that it is a number of things that you look at as a manager and prioritise your intervention. I had to prioritise the basics in terms of the school's functionality; things like punctuality of educators and learners and ensuring that educators stay in class for the duration of the period. This included regular attendance by both the learners and the educators (Phumelela Secondary).

A different approach was noted at Thuthuka Secondary as the principal utilised different approaches to turnaround the school's performance trajectory. This is how he explained:

I started the process by looking at the curriculum and the educators. I was checking whether the educators were suitably qualified to teach the subjects (Thuthuka Secondary).

The Thuthuka Secondary underperformance had been taking place for some time and that was similar to the Phumelela Secondary's case. The principal started his journey by looking at the curriculum and checking the educator's profiles as to whether they were suitably qualified to teach the subjects allocated to them. That exercise revealed that some educators were under qualified to teach certain subjects whilst others were unionists and did not have time for the school and spent more time out doing union work. To address this anomaly, the principal started with the school's staffing challenge as some educators were even teaching during the weekend but the school's performance was not changing. As part of the audit of the educators' qualifications, the principal also checked their experience in teaching a particular subject. That was done by looking at the previous year's results. The process identified a mismatch, as some

educators were teaching subjects for which they were not suitably qualified. This resulted in them being moved to other schools through the process of transfers, as they did not meet the school's curriculum needs. The school's strategy also looked at the management and delivery of the curriculum. Certain subjects like Biblical Studies were seen as piling up work to the educators and such subjects were gradually phased out. The school then introduced strict curriculum management processes, which required educators to be in class on time and to conduct extra classes in the morning, afternoon and during the holidays.

According to the Principal of Phumelela Secondary, to bring about fundamental change, in terms of teaching and learning in the school, the main focus should be on the implementation of the basics. The school prioritised the basic or key things like punctuality by the staff and learners. The second aspect was ensuring that teaching time was utilised for teaching and that learning was supervised and this was monitored by checking that periods were honoured and that learners were learning. Thirdly, the SMT frequently monitored the work of the educators and that was done by setting up a roster to ensure the frequency of checking the educators' workbooks and files and this was part of the school's year plan. The principals introduced a number of aspects, which necessitate change from what the schools were doing as evident in the following extracts.

We had to prioritise the basic or key things like punctuality by the staff and learners and this did not only meant the teaching staff but it was aimed at all the staff members of the school with the major focus being put on the teachers and learners. The second aspect was ensuring that teaching time was utilised for teaching and that learning was supervised and this was monitored by checking that periods were honoured and that learners were learning (Phumelela Secondary School).

Scholars converge on the importance of prioritising teaching time for teaching and ensuring that teaching and learning is monitored (Gillett, *et al.*, 2016; Govender, 2018; Steyn, 2018). The research that was conducted by the Department of Basic Education on the strategies that are utilised by the top performing schools in the National Senior Certificate in South Africa revealed that their most important strategy was time management (Govender, 2018).

When I was generating data, I observed that the school (PSS) was really prioritising teaching time effectively. Educators arrived on time and this was evident when I looked at the Time

Book that educator signed when they arrive and depart. The principal took me around showing me the school and I could see that there was no class without a teacher. When I inquired as to how they managed to ensure that every class had a teacher, he replied by saying that they had established a strong monitoring culture, and the SMT had to ensure that indeed, all classes had educators.

Throughout the day, the School Management Team monitors teaching and learning by checking whether all the classes are occupied by the educators. If someone is absent, arrangements are made to ensure that there is someone that is going to occupy the learners of that educator (Phumelela Secondary School).

I could also observe that as, periods changed, the bell would ring and you could see teachers rushing to their respective classrooms. The importance of teaching time and punctuality was also observed after break as learners quickly moved into their classes immediately when the bell rang for the end of break time. I could observe the same during my other two visits to the school to interact with the school principal and see how school life was.

The principals had highlighted that subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Accounting contributed much to the schools' underperformance. To address the problem, educators teaching these subjects, were asked to conduct regular short tests, and had to give feedback to the learners and to the principal. This was aimed at monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and thus provide instantaneous feedback on progress being made. Learners doing the sciences were highly vulnerable because they had both underperforming subjects in their stream. If they fail Mathematics and Physical Sciences, it means that they fail the NSC examination because the NSC pass requirement does not allow a learner to fail more than one subject. Therefore, to turn around the school's performance meant that there should be academic improvement in these subjects.

Staffing, especially the educators was another important aspect that received the principal's attention. His argument was that, when the school was underperforming, staffing was not right although the school had a full staff complement. Many educators were appointed on temporary basis and that constituted about 20% or even 30% of the teaching staff and was hampering the school's planning process. Whilst the school had qualified permanent educators for certain subjects, they were still failing to produce good results. The principal then used every available

opportunity to search for high performing educators in order to address the issue of underperformance. The school used the transfer process to get the best performing educators. The Accounting educator was the one who was the first head hunted and she was able to turn around the subject's performance in the second year by obtaining one hundred percent (100%). Secondly, the school obtained a Mathematics educator who was practising at the school as a student educator and the principal was able to secure his services when he completed his studies. He managed to turn around the Mathematics performance, getting between 80% and 90%. For Physical Sciences, the school organised outside support for the educator, as he was a novice educator. Good performing educators from the neighbouring schools, came in to support our educator and his subject's performance eventually improved and he is currently achieving at the 70% range. The improvement in the pass rate in Physical Sciences and Mathematics, in a way assisted to address the school's performance as the Mathematics performance was at 95% in 2014 and 70% to 75% in 2015. Networking with other schools and the support from the Subject Advisors, also assisted the school. Correct staffing was therefore the key to the school's academic improvement.

The principals of all these three schools (Kuyasa, Thuthuka and Phumelela) used the programme of extra classes to boost their schools academic performances. At Phumelela Secondary, their programme unfolded as follows: At the beginning of the year, the school issued letters to inform parents about the programme. It started at the beginning of February, with Grade 12, starting classes at 07h00 up to 08h00. Then the same grade would stay for one hour in the afternoon, with classes starting from 14h30 to 15h30, Monday to Thursday. The school also conducted weekend classes for Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Accounting and Mathematical Literacy. The principal monitored extra-tuition to support the educators. These educators were paid the flat rate for attending during the holidays. They were also paid R50 a day for public transport and R60 for using their own cars. What is noted from these principals is that they realised that in the process of turning around their schools, they had to engage some stakeholders like their SGBS, educators, parents and community leaders. They were seen to be creating a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning to thrive. Their actions resonate with the views of other scholars, such as Seashore, Louis, Dretzke and Wahlstrom (2010) who insist that even though principals may not have expert knowledge of all curriculum content but their active involvement in curriculum matters could assist their learners to perform well. A research conducted by Mafuwane (2012) revealed that the principal's instructional leadership role has a positive impact on the school's performance. Principals were seen to be

setting academic goals, organising and allocating resources, ensuring that the correct staff members were appointed, addressing the challenges of the educators and protecting instructional time.

5.3.3 Initial challenges encountered during the early stages of the turnaround process

Change is an unavoidable phenomenon in any organisation that wishes to adapt to the new technologies and demands of its environment and, this is also true to schools that desire to achieve a particular vision and objectives (Rastekenari, Monsef & Majnoon, 2013). While in most cases it is implemented for positive reasons, especially to address negative aspects of the organisation and to assist the organisation to adapt to the volatile environment and be productive and competitive, members of the organisation often resist change (Yilmaz & Kilicoglu, 2013). It is imperative for the principals of the underperforming schools to effect some changes. In some instances, change can have a positive impact although at times the impact might be minimal and have no major effects on the school's academic performance. When changes are introduced there is often some form of resistance, which might manifest itself in the form of deviant behaviour to prevent the process or to prevent its implementation (Agboola & Salawu, 2011). These scholars further suggest processes that can be adopted to deal with resistance. For example, they propose that teachers should be educated about the need for change and the kinds of changes to be brought about. They argue that teachers should be given adequate communication on matters affecting proposed change; they should create a platform for the affected staff to raise and contribute ideas; they should provide support to the educators affected by the change in the form of development so that the principal would be seen as being supportive; they should provide some trade-offs and/or incentives where educators feel that they are losing something through the change process, and they should influence others on the organisations goals. If all this fails, one can then use coercion and direct the educators using some form of authority to ensure that educators change their behaviour (Agboola & Salawa, 2011). These sentiments seem to permeate through the principals voices on the conduct of educators in their schools and the actions they took to address the situation.

The principals of the three schools encountered various challenges when they started the turnaround process. Some of the challenges were in relation to the educators' attitudes towards the process whilst others were about the lack of motivation from the learners, the management

of the frequency of tasks given to learners and bringing the learners parents on board. In this regard, the Principal of Phumelela Secondary said:

Some educators felt that the changes that were being introduced, were oppressing them but that did not deter me because I knew that the changes were within the education prescripts and the Department's directive (Phumelela Secondary).

While at Phumelela Secondary the challenge was more about teachers' motivation, at other schools such as Thuthuka Secondary, the challenge was more about resistance to change rather than apathy or anything like that. The issue of change took a different turn at Thuthuka Secondary School and the principal had to take drastic steps to address educator resistance to change and to employ changes, which were going to turn the school's academic performance trajectory.

Other educators had to leave the school because they were not suitably qualified to teach certain subjects. There was a lot of movement that occurred as these educators were transferred to other schools in which they were going to be effectively utilised (Thuthuka Secondary).

Such an approach seemed to be too hard and did not consider individuals' needs to grow in the profession. A person reading the above extract might be left wondering as to whether the principal concerned, cared about professional development of those under-qualified or unqualified teachers who had to be disposed of. At Kuyasa Secondary, the principal had to address the situation of educators who were demotivated and divisive with little hope that the new strategies were going to turn around the school's academic performance and bring back the glory of good performance that the school once enjoyed.

There was a state of hopelessness, some educators did not believe that we were going to turnaround the school's results, the NSC results and we had members of staff who were extremely divisive and very negative (Kuyasa Secondary).

These principals had to try to address the challenges that emerged during the initial stage of the turnaround process. In some instances, addressing the challenges meant that some educators who taught Grade 12 had to be moved either to other schools or to lower grades. For example, at Kuyasa Secondary, one Grade 12 educator who taught Mathematics was moved from Grade 12 to Grade 8 and Grade 9 to teach IsiZulu. That educator is said to have been very divisive and very negative about the turnaround programmes. At Thuthuka Secondary, more than three educators were moved to other schools because they did not meet the school's curricula needs.

At Phumelela Secondary, the main emphasis was on sticking to the basics for example, educators had to be punctual. They were also expected to monitor learners' punctuality, and had to conduct weekly tests in Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Accounting and give regular reports on the learners' performance.

The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary had to rely heavily on the Circuit Manager's support in order to move the educators to other schools. This is because the movement of educators is a highly sensitive matter involving Human Resource and teacher unions. The principal of Kuyasa Secondary created a platform for the conversation between the SMT and the educators in which they shared the challenges that educators experienced. The principal was responsible for monitoring work in the Science and Commerce departments while the two deputy principals took up Technology and the Languages respectively. Their programme also addressed learner component by having a sustained motivation programme for the learners. In terms of such a programme, learners were exposed to the motivational speakers of their age group and that assisted in changing their attitude. Their programme also acknowledged the role of the parents in their children's education by having a sustained programme to discuss learners' monthly results and other challenges with the parents. Research conducted in South Africa and abroad highlights the role that parents can play in promoting improved learner academic achievement (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2011; Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & van Rooyen, 2010; Makoelle, 2011; Marishane & Botha, 2011; Ramatseba, 2012; Sim, 2011; Steyn, 2013).

5.3.4 Creating conditions that are favourable for the turnaround process

The school principals had to intervene and assist in creating an environment that was going to be favourable for the turnaround process. The process of creating conditions that are favourable to the turnaround process, broadly speaking took three dimensions. The first entailed principals maximising the utilisation of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSMs). This approach was adopted in all schools that participated in this study. Second, principals paid special focus on professional development of teachers. What follows is a detailed discussion of each of these dimensions.

5.3.4.1 Maximising the utilisation of learning and teaching support materials

All the principals in the study expressed strong views that they valued the availability of resources and felt that their availability and maximum usage helped in enhancing the teaching and learning process. For instance, at Thuthuka, the school had bought and used a laser-photocopying machine, which assisted them to make photocopies in large volume. This is important because the school did not receive sufficient supply of textbooks from the provincial Department of Education. The facility that enabled the school to make copies was a boon in the context of such a school. The Principal of Phumelela Secondary mentioned that his school had asked for and received a donation of schoolbooks from the District office as they had a library without books and had secured a state of the art science laboratory from a certain firm in Pietermaritzburg. These schools had limited resources and they used the retrieval policies to try to keep their stock in place. They experienced some challenges though because some learners kept on losing the textbooks and were unable to replace them because their parents could not afford to buy new books. Therefore, it was important that strict control measures were put in place and vigorously enforced. This is what the Principal of Phumelela Secondary had to say in that regard:

The control and monitoring process is done on quarterly basis. Grade 12 learners are the ones who are giving us problems because they do not return books and other parents are not able to replace them as most of them are not employed (Phumelela Secondary).

The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary indicated that whilst the school had control measures in place, they nevertheless, experienced some challenges and such challenges were common among many schools serving informal settlements. There was a lot of fluidity as learners simply moved from one school to another and such a tendency placed a strain in terms of immediate material support provision. In that situation, learners did not care to return textbooks; they simply looked forward to where they are going. Expressing frustration at the prevailing situation, one principal had this to say:

You issue textbooks at the beginning of the year and around March, some of the learners have moved to another school with the books. Some of them would have moved back to neighbouring countries such as Lesotho and the school does not have means to trace them in the country and retrieve the books (Kuyasa Secondary).

At Kuyasa Secondary, they have taken a decision to allow learners to use books until 16h00 or at times up to 17h00. Thereafter, they are released to their homes and they leave the books behind. This is done to avoid and minimise losses, and to ensure that all learners are exposed

to the available books. The principal had introduced a strategy in which two learners were sharing a book but the challenge was that at times one learner would be absent and that would end up affecting the performance of the other learner. In the end, the problem is not resolved.

5.3.4.2 Enhancing teachers' and own professional development

The Department provided training to school principals from time to time to sharpen them on curriculum management skills. Other training sessions provided included financial management and others. The Principal of Phumelela has done a course called 'Principals Management Development Programme' (PMDS). This course assisted him to properly manage his school because it is composed of various modules that looked at various aspects of school management and leadership. The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary has just attended professional development programme provided by the Umgungundlovu District and had not enrolled for any other course. This is what he had to say about the usefulness of professional development training course he attended:

This programme gave me insights on how to manage a school effectively using the knowledge that I gained from its different modules on school leadership and management (Principal of Phumelela).

There was a variety of programmes that these principals attended. For instance, the Principal of Kuyasa Secondary did a Financial Management course after he had felt inadequate in terms of managing financial records. The course was of benefit to him. This is how he put it:

Financial Management programme provided me with a new perspective on how to properly manage funds. Therefore, my capturing and record keeping improved, and I can now obtain a clear picture about what we need and this course brought in new perspective.

Furthermore, the participant was of the view that there was a great need for professional development programmes for leaders because there are many changes unfolding in this sector. Therefore, principals need to be exposed to leadership development programmes. Such programmes can assist them in terms of changing their thinking on how they can manage their schools, particularly, in relation to people management, curriculum management and maintaining a healthy relationship with the governing body and other stakeholders. The principals used acquired skills to build capacities in others within the school and that

contributed to the improvement of its functionality. This is evident in his assertion that he was able to develop his SGB and citing a treasurer who ended up being efficient in her second term.

Besides principals' intervention measures to build their management capacities, they also supported teachers to grow professionally. For instance, teachers of underperforming subjects were exposed to capacity building programmes and given necessary resources (Agboola & Salawa, 2011). Subjects in which learner performance was consistently below par were Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Accounting. Support would at times come from within the school; from other educators and that would be some form of team teaching. At Thuthuka Secondary, the principal swapped the Accounting educators. The school happened to have an additional Accounting educator who was not teaching the subject whilst the other one who had been teaching the subject for a long time was underperforming. The principal then moved the one who had been teaching the subject to Grade 10 and the other one moved to Grade 12 and she produced good results, which were above 70%. At times school principals would then look for outside support from educators who are designated as lead educators. These educators would come from high performing schools and would be high performers in their subjects. They are normally identified by the Subject Advisors from the Teaching and Learning Services Sub-Directorate at the district office. Various strategies were employed by the school principals to ensure that their underperforming educators received adequate support and that they were capacitated in order to turnaround their subject's performances. A Principal of Phumelela Secondary had this to say regarding various support that they provided to educators who needed help of various kinds:

Educators were given adequate support by ensuring that they are given resources. Those who were novices were paired with experienced educators from neighbouring schools (Phumelela Secondary).

At Thuthuka Secondary School, the principal had to organise support for the new educators who were assigned to teach Grade 12 responsibilities after conducting a reshuffle resulting in some educators moving to other schools.

The new educators, which I recruited were suitably qualified but did not have the teaching experience. I had to have sessions to enrich them. I also invited experienced educators to come and help them (Thuthuka Secondary).

At Kuyasa Secondary, the principal also invited outside support in cases where internal support was not yielding the required academic performance from the underperforming subject.

If the educator's turnaround strategy was not effective and the school's educators would not be assisted through team teaching, I had to look for outside educators to come and assist and those educators would be identified by the Teaching and Learning Support (TLS) Sub-Directorate (Kuyasa Secondary).

These schools also prioritised learner and parental involvement. Parents were informed about the intervention programme especially the extra- tuition, which was given to their children. The programme of extra tuition classes took place in the mornings, afternoons, weekends and holiday in these three schools. Their role was then to encourage them to attend on regular basis. Beside capacity building support that was given to the educators, some schools like Phumelela and Kuyasa Secondary, went on either to incentivise or demand more from their educators. For example, at Phumelela, teachers were paid the stipend of R60 per day to support them with transport cost when teaching during the holidays. The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary introduced the concept of accountability sessions across levels. This is what he had to say:

I demanded excellent performance from the educators and told them that failure was not an option. If you nurse poor performance, you are not going to make people excel as you are nursing their weaknesses. We also demanded that learners should account for the results they obtain (Kuyasa Secondary).

The accountability stance by the Principal of Kuyasa Secondary was not just directed to other educators and learners, but he also knew that he was also accountable to the Department and to the parents and this is evident in his utterances where he said:

Poor performance was going to get me into trouble with the Department and the parents (Kuyasa Secondary School).

In order to facilitate good performance from the educators, the principal together with his SMT members, designed a programme of supporting teachers. The principal created space for the conversation between the SMT and the teachers by developing a timetable for the management to come and be with educators to discuss subject performances and look at the challenges affecting positive academic performance. The SMT stayed with the educators when they were conducting the programme of extra tuition. One SMT member would be available to provide support and attend to whatever challenge that would arise. This included, sitting down with the

troubled learners to motivate and show them the way. Two deputy principals taught English and History in Grade 12 and he taught Grade 10. His belief was that, they should show accountability when the results are released and lead by example, as that would instil confidence in the other educators and motivate them to excel. The school, assisted by the Teaching and Learning Services Sub-Directorate, designed a capacity building programme for the SMT. That programme assisted the Departmental Head of Sciences as his results improved after getting support, moving from 54% to 72%. The principal of Kuyasa Secondary also came up with the motivational programme to support learners by bringing into the school university students, who had been studying at the school to present career path options and admission requirements in their respective areas. The parents were invited to these meetings as they had to assist their children with support and also for understanding the need for their children to be given time to focus on their school work as the invited university student demonstrated that it was possible for their children to do well and to enter into certain faculties at the university.

5.3.5 The process of turning around

The analysis of interview data indicates that there are five dimensions to the process of turning the schools around. These dimensions are addressing educators' negative attitudes; monitoring teaching and learning; incentivising high performance to drive turnaround school performance; providing feedback and dealing with educators' responses to feedback. Each of these dimensions is discussed next. Leithwood, *et. al.*, (2012) designed a framework which could assist school principals to transform their school's performances. Their framework is about leadership practices, which should be enacted by school principals in different contexts, to transform their schools performances. This framework looks at four aspects, which are critical in turning around the schools performances. One of them is that the principal should build a shared vision and provide focus to the educators. Secondly, he/she should ensure that the educators are developed and supported. Thirdly, the principal should create a condition that is favourable for teamwork and that allows educators to perform optimally. This should be supported by collaboration with parents and the larger school community. The fourth one is about focusing on the curriculum by ensuring that the school is correctly staffed, curriculum delivery and monitoring are well executed and that resources are organised for the staff (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2012).

5.3.5.1 Addressing the educators' negative attitudes

To implement the process of change, analysis of data indicates that the principals of the three secondary schools started by trying to address the negative attitudes that teachers had consistently demonstrated, and which would not assist in implementing the change process. Contexts of deprivation are usually demotivating and participants started by trying to keep their educators motivated and instilled in them the need to go an extra mile in trying to arrest the situation. For instance, at Kuyasa Secondary, the school principal and the SGBs communicated encouraging messages to the educators so that they do not despair. The SGB and the School Management Team organised a variety of motivation initiatives such as an Awards Day at the end of the year where educators from all grades were given awards, in the form of certificate, recognising them for high performance in their subjects. At Thuthuka Secondary, they addressed their teachers' attitudes differently. Educators who were teaching Grade 12 were taken to the planning meeting (normally called Bosberaad) at the end of each year. That *Bosberaad* served like a team building exercise where teachers had the opportunity to mingle, talk and learn from one another in an environment that was free from formal setting of a school. The school would then subsidise the high performing educators by paying part of their trip. For example, instead of paying R1500, the educator would end up paying R500. The principal's argument was that the practice motivated other educators and inspired them to come and teach Grade 12. That practice apparently created a larger pool of teachers that the principal could tap in, in terms of educators who were emotionally ready to teach Grade 12. Automatically, two teams emerged in the school whereby, teachers started what I can call a healthy competition amongst themselves. They had formed Team A and Team B in terms of academic performance and everybody wanted to belong to Team A. That in itself boosted their morale and ultimately, the school's academic performance. This is what the principal had to say:

Those other educators who were not teaching matric, would envy this and pronounced that they could also teach matric and this assisted the school to beef up the matric team by having other educators who were willing to come and teach matric. The school ended up having Team A and Team B teaching (Thuthuka Secondary).

The issue of a planning meeting (Bosberaad) was also highlighted by the Principal of Phumelela Secondary, who indicated that it was for all staff members and that it afforded educators an opportunity to discuss a number of issues concerning teaching and learning. Invariably, topics discussed in that planning meeting were aimed at improving the school's academic performance. This is how he put it:

Every two years, the school organises a Bosberaad (Team building exercise) for all staff members. During this planning session, educators would converge at a certain place and discuss topics meant to improve the school's performance (Phumelela Secondary).

Attending to the basic work environmental needs has also been noted as working at Phumelela Secondary. The school created an appealing environment by improving the educators' staffroom and their rest rooms. The improvement was based on the introduction of air conditioners and buying additional material, which was additional textbooks and certain study guides for Grade 12 and educators. The main objective of the exercise was to motivate educators and to enable them to deliver quality education. In addition, the school principal praised educators who were performing well. That motivated them to do go the extra mile and they understood that everything that was happening was about the work of supporting the learner; when some disagreements cropped up, they began to understand that those were based on the work that was not done or that was poorly done. At Kuyasa Secondary, the school also bought additional resources like teaching aids for the educators, to enable them to implement the curriculum. What is notable is that working in these transforming and performing schools also opened up opportunities for educators to move either, to better promotional positions or to other schools where they would be paid incentives for performing certain functions. This could be seen as one of the motivational factors, which kept them committed to their schools and eager to perform well in their subjects.

The school has been affected by the movement of its educators to senior positions in the department offices where they would take up subject advisory positions. Some educators are being promoted to other schools within the District. Others are being utilised as Cluster Coordinators (Thuthuka Secondary).

The discussion above shows that various initiatives that principals started as a way of turning around the performance of the schools were largely beneficial. However, although some sentiments from some participants indicated a potential loss to the schools due to the migration of teachers to other schools, overall, the schools managed to develop and generate a larger pool of highly motivated teaching staff who were willing to give it all to support their learners' success. The practice of recognising commitment and excellence in the teachers' work is widely acknowledged in the educational leadership scholarship (Gillett, *et al.*, 2015; Klar & Brewer, 2013; Leithwood, *et al.*, 2012; Mkhize & Bhengu, 2015; Peter & Archippus, 2016).

Once schools have a pool of motivated teaching staff, the next logical move is to ensure that the work of teaching is monitored, and the next section is dedicated to this important issue.

5.3.5.2 Monitoring teaching and learning

There is agreement among various scholars that school principals are instructional leaders, and as such, their core function is to ensure that effective teaching and learning occurs. The principals of the three participating schools, agreed with the assertion that they are curriculum managers. They viewed their role as being an important one although they expressed a belief that the other SMT members also had a great role in this matter, especially the departmental head as they have content knowledge in the specific subjects.

I agree with this assertion as the school is about teaching and learning. Educators are then expected to know what needs to be taught. The school then needs curriculum managers, which are in this case, SMT members, starting with the departmental heads, deputy principal and the principal. So, as the principal, I am also a curriculum manager as I have to make sure that things are happening around curriculum matters (Phumelela Secondary).

The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary asserted that whilst the principal is a curriculum manager but the departmental heads also played an important role in that regard, as they are subject specialists.

I agree although I do not believe that if you are a principal you should know everything. In my school, we have a team of specialists who were dealing with the curriculum (Thuthuka Secondary).

The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary accepted the notion that principals are curriculum managers and further contended that principals have to be prepared for the different roles that are assigned to them. This is how he put it:

It is combined; the principal's role has become too complex. As the principal, you are expected to be everywhere; where things are happening. So, we have received workshops as school principals with regards to matters of curriculum management. We must also be good readers on matters of curriculum management so that you know how to instruct the educator (Kuyasa Secondary).

These principals had clear curriculum management plans, which articulated the processes, which had to be followed in order to strengthen curriculum delivery and ensure that it was effectively managed and monitored. They also had tools to monitor the implementation of the curriculum processes at their schools. At Phumelela Secondary, in addition to the five departmental heads, the two deputy principals were responsible for curriculum management instead of the practice of assigning curriculum management to one and administrative duties to the other. The principal's view was that if he only assigned the one deputy principal the administrative duties only, that was going to affect her in future when she is promoted and then expected to manage the curriculum. Therefore, one deputy principal was supervising the departments of commerce and sciences whilst the other two departments, the languages and humanities were supervised by the other deputy principal. The principals acknowledge that they have to play a major role in the management of curriculum in their schools. One of the principals said:

As the principal, I am also a curriculum manager, as I have to make sure that things are happening around curriculum matters. I have a plan that indicates meetings with the school management team, educators and parents. The plan also addresses submissions as it has dates for submissions by the school management team and educators to the principal and submission to the departmental heads by the educators (Phumelela Secondary).

The observation during my visit to this school was that there was a clear direction on what is happening on daily basis. The principal was very quick in showing me the tools he used to control and check that curriculum delivery was indeed taking place at his school. The principal also noted that he received support from other SMT members as they have an important role to play in their different portfolios and as they have requisite expertise in some of the issues. The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary also believed in having a hands-on approach on curriculum management matters when he responded that:

I read every literature related to specific subjects even to the Grade 8 learners. Where I am not sure, I attend the orientation workshops with the teachers and these workshops are organised by the Department of Education. Then I have designed the programme in which SMT members monitor the curriculum on daily basis. I have a tool, which I use to control the curriculum (Kuyasa Secondary).

I noted that the Principal of Thuthuka Secondary also believed that he was a curriculum manager but also emphasised the importance of working closely with the deputy principal and the departmental heads as they had relevant expertise on various subjects.

At the beginning of the year, I would call the departmental heads and subject specialist to discuss how the school is going to manage its curriculum in such a way that Annual Teaching Plans are completed at the end of third term (Thuthuka Secondary).

I asked these principals to give me their curriculum management plans in order to check whether the information they were giving me was correct. I could also find out from other SMT members as they indicated that the principals had certain dates in which they asked for the work of the teachers. During my visit to these schools, I also picked up that the school principals were teaching certain subjects. For example, the Principal of Kuyasa Secondary taught History in Grade 11. I could pick up this during my data generation process because when I arrived at his school, he was in class. I then asked him about the subject he taught and he confirmed that he was busy in a class with the Grade 11 learners. The Principal of Phumelela Secondary taught Life Sciences in Grade 10. He revealed this during my visit to his school and I also checked the school composite timetable. The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary is a Mathematics educator, and taught the subject in Grade 9.

I also noted that the curriculum management plan of the Principal of Phumelela Secondary, indicated that he had weekly meetings with the SMT. These meetings would address issues like the submission of files by the SMT and educators to the principal and also submissions to the departmental heads by the teachers. The departmental heads had meetings with the teachers once in two weeks although they had to submit their files on a weekly basis. The school's control measures ensured compliance as the submissions were recorded and the teachers signed during the submission process and the departmental head counter signed. If the submission was not done, the teacher would have to report in writing and give reasons for not submitting on time and submit immediately thereafter.

As part of the document reviews, I have decided to present the monitoring tool that was used at Phumelela Secondary School. A closer look at the tool corroborates some of the issues raised by the principal; for example, the issue of signing of the form by various educators within the school and sections in the form where line function supervisors can give feedback are clearly

visible. It is also evident that the principal is involved in the curriculum monitoring process. What follows is a copy of the monitoring tool used at Phumelela Secondary School.

PHUMELELA SECONDARY SCHOOL

EDUCATOR WORKBOOK/FILE MONITORING INSTRUMENT

NB: A separate form must be used for each subject and individual teacher.

DEPARTMENT: _____ EDUCATOR: _____

SUBJECT: _____ GRADE: _____

A. EDUCATOR FILE

ITEMS CHECKED	YES/NO	COMMENTS
File index/Table of contents <ul style="list-style-type: none">Does it indicate how the whole file is arranged?		
Personal Time Table		
Annual Teaching Plan (ATP)/Work schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none">Are date entries when work was started and completed indicated?Is the educator keeping pace with curriculum coverage?		
Lesson Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Are lesson preparations properly done and up to date?		
Policy documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Are caps documents, exam guidelines ect. available in the file?		
LTSM: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Is there a record of all text books and workbooks issued to learners?		
Formal Assessment (SBA) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Is the programme of assessment (PoA) available?Is there evidence of learner assessment, marking and recording of marks		
Learners' Written Work [Class work, Activities, Homework, Assignments, Projects, notes, ect.] <ul style="list-style-type: none">Are learners given sufficient written work?Is it marked and are corrections done and controlled?		
Learners whose workbooks were assessed	COMMENTS	
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

GENERAL COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

Educator's Signature

Date

HOD's Signature

Date

Dep. Principal's Signature

Date

Principal's Signature

Date

At Thuthuka Secondary, the principal, departmental heads and subject specialists (Subject Heads) at the beginning of the year, discuss how the school was going to manage its curriculum in such a way that Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) were completed at the end of third term. Their weekly meetings, which were attended by the SMT and the teachers from all grades, discussed the following issues: the implementation of the turnaround strategy, teaching and learning, control of the learners work, monitoring of teaching and learning in terms of educators covering the curriculum, lesson planning and time management in terms of educators going to their classes. The school would invite all educators into the meeting because they wanted to ensure that a solid foundation was laid in the lower grades like Grade 8 and Grade 9 so that it would be easier for learners from those grades to adjust when they enter the higher grades like Grade 10 and Grade 11 in preparation for Grade 12.

The school introduced extra classes in all the grades, as from Grade 8 up to Grade 12. Everyone had to work hard to achieve the targets set for the subjects and the grades. The principal promoted team teaching in which educators had to share expertise in teaching a particular subject although assigned to an individual but someone would gladly assist by teaching certain chapters in which he/she had relevant expertise and was sure that he/she could assist the subject to perform well. The principal had asked educators to state the other subjects or sections of certain subjects beside the ones they were offering which they could easily teach and perform well. That assisted the school to promote its team teaching exercise as one Grade 8 teacher ended up assisting with trigonometry and geometry in Grade 12. Other educators also assisted in certain subjects in which they were good. That assisted the school to share or conduct team teaching in Mathematics and that assisted the school because Mathematics was one of the underperforming subjects. The school had to work with what it had at that time.

The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary had so much interest in curriculum management in such a way that he read every literature related to specific subjects even to the Grade 8 and would attend the orientation workshops with the teachers in the subjects in which he was not sure on how to manage them. Those workshops were organised by the Department of Basic Education. In monitoring the curriculum, he would monitor the work of the deputy principals, the departmental heads and the educators, using different tools. Whilst the departmental heads and the deputy principals were expected to monitor curriculum implementation on daily basis, he would monitor their work once in two weeks and then check and control the one for educators every month.

In monitoring the work of the SMT members, the three principals, would focus on the following aspects for the deputy principals: policies of each department that is managed, ATPs for all subjects, programme of assessment for the school and the monitoring and evaluation reports from the departmental heads work monitored and the recommendations. They checked the following aspects from the files of the departmental heads: subject policy, annual teaching plan of each subject managed, list the people being supervised and their subjects, the programme of assessment, duty loads, feedback from the monitoring and evaluation processes comments and follow up if they have been attended, minutes of the subject meetings to check if relevant things were discussed in their meetings and the list of learners whose work was checked. Lastly, these principals checked the following aspects from the educators' files: subject policy, policy documents, record of resources issued, lesson plans, annual teaching plan, personal time table, formal assessment and the learners' written work.

The research conducted by the Department of Basic Education evaluation unit on the high performing schools in Quintiles 2-4, in the National Senior Certificate revealed that the principals of these schools closely monitor the curriculum and that they work closely with their departmental heads (DBE, 2017). Mbokazi (2015) further contends that successful principals in the three Soweto schools in which he conducted his research had focused on the curriculum management. They had undertaken the following activities: ensured that the teaching and learning support materials were available, had ensured that lesson plans were adhered to, monitored the work of the departmental heads by checking their work plans and portfolios and had given educators feedback after visiting them in their classes (Mbokazi, 2015).

There is some form of correlation between the practices of the three principals (Phumelela, Kuyasa and Thuthuka) and the literature on the strategies for effective curriculum management that assist schools to achieve positive learning outcomes. This could have been some of the reasons why their schools have managed to turnaround their performances from underperformance to performing and managed to sustain good performance. The next section presents a discussion about the second strategy that principals used to turn around the schools' situation from underperformance to performance.

5.3.5.3 Incentivising high performance in a drive to turnaround the school's performance

What is notable is that the introduction of some form of incentives can further stimulate commitment from the educators and assist the school during its turnaround process. This is evident from what transpired at Thuthuka and Phumelela Secondary schools after the introduction of incentives by the school principals and the SGBs.

The issue if incentives also plays an important role; for example, if your subject had performed well, you would be given something. At the end of the year, educators would be taken to a planning meetings (Bosberaad). Educators whose subjects had performed well, would be given a subsidy; for example, if the trip is R1500 rand, the educator would only pay R500 rand. This was some form of an incentive for the matric educators. This entices those educators who were not teaching matric to declare that they were also available and willing to teach that grade and this assisted the school to beef up its matric team and to create some form of competition amongst the school's educators (Thuthuka Secondary).

I also noted that at Phumelela Secondary the turnaround programme was also supported by giving incentives to the educators in the form of stipends especially during the holiday period.

The programme of extra classes also assisted the school to improve its academic performance. At the beginning of the year, the school issues letters to inform parents about the programme. The school also conducts weekend classes for Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Accounting and Mathematical literacy. The principal also monitors extra-tuition to support the educators. These educators are paid flat rate for attending during the holidays. They are paid R50 a day for public transport and R60 for using their own cars (Phumelela Secondary).

Exposing the school's educators to the planning session was also motivating them as it was a special activity, which was used to acknowledge their effort and commitment towards the school's objectives and its turnaround course. The principal's assertion is that it also afforded the educators the opportunity to bond and know each other well outside the formal school environment (Chikoko, 2018; Steyn, 2018).

The research by Steyn (2018) on the female principal's leadership role in successfully improving and raising the school's academic achievement for a school that was once underachieving, in the challenging contexts, indicates some similar techniques to the strategies employed by the principals of Thuthuka and Phumelela Secondary schools. Among the strategies used by the school principal was to take the staff to a planning session (bush deliberation) (Steyn, 2018). It

is argued that after such planning sessions, educators were motivated and they set their performance targets and put up plans to achieve those targets. It is noted that the planning meeting had the same objectives, namely, to motivate educators to work hard and to give them the opportunity to contribute ideas towards the attainment of the school's vision.

5.3.5.4 Providing feedback

The third strategy that principals used during the process to turn around their schools' performance involved providing feedback to all stakeholders that had been monitored. After monitoring the work of the deputy principals, departmental heads and educators, meant that the principals had to give feedback to these stakeholders. The way in which feedback was given, varied according to the two principals. As much as they concurred that, it could either be verbal or in writing but the circumstances under which the type of feedback was given differed greatly. The other principal maintained that feedback was given in writing. He said:

After monitoring the work, the monitoring tool which gives feedback, is signed by the educator, the departmental head and the principal and the copy is kept in the departmental head's file and the other one is given to the educator (Phumelela Secondary).

The principal of Thuthuka Secondary presented an open view on feedback as he contended that the situation and circumstances normally dictated the form of feedback that he gave to his educators.

It was either given in writing or verbally. It was written when there were problems which required close monitoring and in which corrective efforts had been suggested for improvement. When things were going well, feedback would be communicated verbally (Thuthuka Secondary).

The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary further shared the view of the Thuthuka Principal as he contended that the situation in which he addressed the work situation (performance), dictated the form of feedback that he gave to his educators.

It depends on the situation. If I am monitoring the work of the departmental heads or educators, the feedback is always in writing. This is done because the work of either the educators or the departmental heads is supposed to be closely monitored by someone else. For example, the departmental heads are supposed to monitor educators

and their work is supposed to be monitored by the deputy principal (Kuyasa Secondary).

The Principal of Phumelela Secondary believed that feedback had to be in writing and copies had to be kept in the teacher's and the departmental head's files so that they would assist to track progress on the matter. The copy was signed by the three parties, namely, the principal, the departmental head, and the teacher. For the principal of Thuthuka Secondary, feedback had to be in writing when there was a sense of failure on the part of the educator; for example, if he had been repeating one and the same thing for a number of times and the departmental head or the teacher did not demonstrate any signs of improvement, so he would then ask him/her to sign. His argument was that if the person signed the feedback form that was given to him/her, that was going to make it easier when follow-ups had to be done for accountability and consequence management purposes. The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary concurred with this view by arguing that if there was something which was not going well in the educator's file, that meant that the departmental head and the deputy principal did not do their work and they had to sign the feedback form given by the principal and respond in writing to the principal's findings within reasonable time. The reasonable time had to be accompanied by the form of remedial work that should be done by both the educator and the deputy principal.

Scholars converge on the importance of feedback in shaping performance and for the behaviour, skill and knowledge change process (Archar, 2010; Brown, 2010; London & Smither, 2002; Van Dijk & Kluger, 2011). Feedback is important for people that are pursuing certain goals (Finkelstein & Fishbach, 2011). The principals of the three secondary schools, had to lead their schools turnaround processes and they had to give feedback to the educators either to affirm their performances or to conscientise them about the performance that was not in line with the objectives and goals set by the schools. Finkelstein and Fishbach (2011) further contend that feedback shapes the performance of educators either positively or negatively. One would argue that once the educators have been influenced to embrace the school's turnaround plan, they would be enthusiastic to learn how they are performing and that will make them to be eager to receive feedback.

5.3.5.5 Dealing with educator's response to feedback

The fourth strategy entailed responding to teachers' own responses to feedback sessions. It is

important in any working environment where people are working towards the shared vision to be given feedback along the way. In a situation where a school is underperforming and is working all out to pull itself out of the underperformance bracket, feedback is so critical as it tells the participants whether they are on the right track or whether they need to double their efforts. When a school is undergoing some form of transformation, educators will be faced with a number of interventions and these interventions will be aimed at attaining a positive academic trajectory, but they will come with some form of accountability. The principals of the three schools had to give feedback to the educators and in that process, the responses which they received were sometimes not positive.

Previously, educators would not accept feedback that was indicating that things were not well; for example, if you were pointing out to the educator that he/she was behind the annual teaching plan as indicated by the departmental head, and that he/she was not doing what had been promised, the educators would take that personally as if they were being victimised. That was mainly taking place during the turnaround phase and that has now changed (Phumelela Secondary).

The assertion by the Principal of Phumelela Secondary was further echoed by the Principals of Thuthuka and Kuyasa Secondary schools, respectively when they said that educators did not easily accept change. However, through engagements and processes, they ended up adopting new strategies as they realised the importance of contributing to the school's better academic performance.

In fact, they do not want to sign anything that would be used against them in the future. I advised the departmental heads to give written feedback as that was going to make it easier when they do the follow-up and for accountability and consequence management (Thuthuka Secondary).

The principals of these schools had to manage the situation in such a way that these educators would understand the merits for either positive or negative feedback. They explained that it was part of the process, which needed to be undertaken so that it would create space for remedial work to be implemented and then the reporting process to parents and the Department of Education. They convinced them that feedback was assisting their schools to review their intervention strategies.

Scholars concurred with the principals' experiences on the effects of feedback. The 'scholars' assertion is that positive and negative feedback shapes the educators' commitment to the goals. This is so because if it is positive, it motivates the educator to work hard on what he/she has been doing whilst negative feedback makes the educator realise that he/she has to add some efforts towards the attainment of the set targets and goals (Brown, 2010; Finkelstein & Fishbach, 2011; Van Dijk & Kluger, 2011). Negative feedback is so important in an organisation because it indicates whether people are wrong and what they should avoid (Van Dijk & Kluger, 2011). Feedback normally leads to behaviour change and performance improvement, which was a critical aspect for three schools. Literature indicates that educators who are motivated, attend to feedback (Brown, 2010; London & Smither, 2002). Educators had to attend to feedback in order to track progress in the implementation of the turnaround plans and to change their behaviour in order to achieve the goals.

It should be highlighted that the literature confirms what has been stated by the principals of Kuyasa, Thuthuka and Phumelela Secondary Schools. For instance, it indicates that some people do not attend positively to feedback (Archar, 2010; Brown, 2010; Finkelstein & Fishbach, 2011). This is reflected by the principals of Kuyasa, Phumelela and Thuthuka as they indicated that some educators did not take kindly the comments that were given to them because they were used in what they were doing, which had not yielded positive results for their schools. Constructive negative feedback can play an important role in a person who desires to acquire new habits. Through transformational leadership and influencing educators to embrace change and work towards the attainment of the shared vision and positive academic trajectory, it was important for the principals of Kuyasa, Phumelela and Thuthuka, to give feedback to the educators and other role players.

5.3.6 The role of school-based stakeholders in turning around the school's fortunes

There are many stakeholders within the schools that played an important role in turning the situation around in each participating school. These stakeholders included School Management Teams, teachers and School Governing Bodies and. My observation as the Circuit Manager, dealing with schools on daily basis, informs me that principals' responsibilities are huge and they need to distribute some of the functions and closely monitor their execution, as they are accountable for whatever happens in the schools, including learner outcomes. Such sentiments

are congruent with those of various scholars such as Mkhize and Bhengu (2015) when they argue that principals manage and lead schools collaboratively with SMTs to drive the culture of teaching and learning in their schools. In the same vein, Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015) contend that successful principals in deprived context value the role that is played by their departmental heads in monitoring curriculum delivery. Furthermore, they have to monitor the work of their department heads to ensure accountability at all levels. The first stakeholder to highlight in this regard are School Management Teams, followed by teachers and lastly, the School Governing Bodies.

It is evident from the principals' responses that their SMT members also played an important role in the turnaround processes. It must be remembered that the principals work closely with SMT members, and thus, even when they seek buy-in from teachers at large, they begin by first seeking commitment of the SMT members to the turnaround process. Once capacitated on their roles and responsibilities, they closely monitored extra classes and provided support to the educators in terms of resources and assisted them with learners who posed discipline challenges. They closely monitored curriculum delivery on daily basis and generated written reports on each educator's curriculum coverage and reported to their principals. They conducted diagnostic analysis in all subjects and conducted regular tests, which were held after every two weeks or a month. They assisted their principals in arranging team teaching sessions and in supporting lead educators who were brought in to support their schools in certain subjects, which were underperforming. The SMT played an important role in supporting the school turnaround plans in order to achieve the shared vision. One principal had this to say:

The School Management Team had a plan of monitoring the educators work. They were closely monitoring curriculum delivery on quarterly basis, writing reports on each educator's curriculum coverage and reporting to the principal (Phumelela Secondary).

The Principal of Phumelela Secondary school reflected that the deputy principal and departmental heads, had curriculum monitoring instruments which were used to track curriculum coverage. My observation indicated that the school created a platform to have a conversation about curriculum delivery and coverage. That platform would result in a report based on the highlights and challenges to assist the school to monitor and evaluate the progress towards the attainment of the targets and goals at Kuyasa Secondary, the observation reflect the SMT not just supporting educators but also modelling good performance.

We then designed extra classes. After designing them, we, as the School Management Team (SMT) stayed with the educators. If they were having morning , afternoon, weekend or holiday classes, one SMT member would be available to provide support and attend to whatever challenging that would arise. We then said the management must produce good results so that it would be easy for them to demand the same from the educators (Kuyasa Secondary).

The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary intimated that after being capacited by the advisors, the departmental head for Physical Science, moved her Physical Sciences results from 54% to 72%. This was a good sign to be emulated by other educators.

The SMT members therefore played an important transformative agenda in the performance of these schools. For example, at Thuthuka Secondary, the principal recruited a deputy principal who assisted him to train the departmental heads on how to manage the curriculum. In their curriculum monitoring process they went through the educators' files and checked aspects such as ATPs or the work schedules; checked the amount of work covered; checked whether the lesson plans were properly done and updated; checked whether the CAPS documents were being used; checked whether the examination guidelines were available; checked whether the formal and the informal types of assessment were conducted; checked the records of the learners written work and whether the learners were given enough classwork, homework, assignment and projects. After monitoring the educators work, they would then give them feedback and then report to their principals.

When I took over, the SMT members were just doing nothing and I had to start form the scratch and take them through their job descriptions. I then asked them to teach certain subjects. I also recruited a deputy principal from another school. We worked closely with that deputy principal and she also assisted me in training the departmental heads because they did not know how to manage the curriculum (Thuthuka Secondary).

During my visit to the three schools, I noted that they had curriculum monitoring instruments for the teacher, the departmental head, the deputy principal and the principal. These schools also had curriculum management plans, which clearly delineated submission dates for educators' files, meetings and assessment processes. During my visit at Thuthuka Secondary, I observed that some grades were writing tests in line with the school's curriculum management plan. The principal indicated that the moderation process had been undertaken

by the HDs before allowing the papers to be written. Below, I present the curriculum management from Thuthuka Secondary School.

-----Secondary School

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT PLAN: 2013

Preamble:

- ❖ The following is a plan which will help the principal of the school to manage curriculum delivery in the school.
- ❖ The plan can be modified from time to time with the intention of improving its implementation and impact

THE PLAN:

ACTION	DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
Management meetings to be held weekly on Thursdays to check on curriculum issues.	Every Thursday	Principal and the rest of the SMT
Tri- Weekly reports from the Deputy Principal on his findings from his interactions with the HODs and teachers	Every Third Wednesday	Principal and Deputy Principal
Class visits	Once in Two months	Principal
Collection of HOD and Deputy Principal's management curriculum plans, and follow on actions as per findings.	January and Ongoing	Principal
Accountability sessions	Each end of the term	Principal, HOD and Subject Teachers
Check on the teaching and learning file of each teacher	Once a month	Principal and subject teacher
Class visits	Ongoing	Principal and Subject teacher

Soliciting outside assistance relative to the struggling teachers and underperforming subjects	Ongoing	Principal and other Stake holders
Staff Development	Once a term	Principal
Assessment Processes	Weekly and Monthly	Principal and Teachers
Support to Orphans and needy learners	January and Ongoing	Principal and Teachers
Parents Day	Once a Term	Principal and Teachers
Submission of files to the HODs	Bi-weekly	Teachers

Signed at:.....Date-----

Principal's Name: Signature: Date.....

Teacher's Name:Signature:
Date:.....

The curriculum management plan from Thuthuka Secondary School reflects what the principal was doing to turn around its academic performance. The school's plan indicates the intricacies of curriculum delivery, management and monitoring by all the roleplayers. During my visit to the school, I observed the writing of the assessment activity by Grades 10 and Grade 12, as the school conducted them on regular basis. The role played by other SMT members indicated that the involvement of parents and SGB members was clearly defined. Furthermore, my observation at Thuthuka Secondary revealed that members of the SMT did not operate alone and others like teachers played a prominent role in the change process. As I explained the importance elsewhere in this report, the process of change cannot successfully occur without a buy-in from critical stakeholders like teachers in the school context. The next section provides a detailed account of their participation in turning around schools' performance.

5.3.6.1 The role of the educators in turning around the school's fortunes

Evidence from semi-structured interviews showed that educators played an active role in turning the situation around in all participating schools although some difficulties were experienced initially in some schools. For instance, educators committed themselves to the turnaround strategies and embraced the programme of extra classes although in some schools like Thuthuka and Kuyasa Secondary, some educators initially did not want to commit themselves, which resulted in some of them being moved to other grades and other schools. This Thuthuka Secondary case attests to the educators' commitment to the programme of extra-tuition:

At times, I had to resolve conflict among the educators who were complaining that someone was taking his morning time slot and was losing out. That was a sign of being motivated from the educators (Thuthuka Secondary).

Willingness to work extra hours is a special commitment that does not come easily. Educators also assisted in the programme of team teaching whereby two educators would assist each other in teaching a particular subject. This was mainly used at Thuthuka Secondary in subjects like Mathematics and the results improved positively. Educators also assisted their schools in identifying high performing educators who were recruited into their schools through the process of transfers and this was noted at the three schools and it was highly featured at Phumelela Secondary. This is what the principal said:

The school then used the transfer process to get the best performing educators. This was a good strategy of getting good educators although it resulted in the school having many educators in the underperforming subjects (Phumelela Secondary).

Scholars such as Mkhize and Bhengu (2015) as well as Chikoko, *et al.* (2015) who have conducted research in similar contexts like those of this study found that schools that focused on teaching and learning also went an 'extra mile'. These scholars also found that when teachers demonstrate dedication to teaching, the performance of learners remains high. Besides teachers, there were other school-based stakeholders that made remarkable contribution towards the schools achieving improved results. These included members of the school governing bodies, and their contribution is discussed next.

5.3.6.2 The role of the school governing body in turning around the school's fortunes

The role of the SGBs has been highlighted by the three schools in their turnaround strategic processes. Their role was more of legitimising the process that the schools had decided to

undertake. For instance, data shows that the SGBs were consulted in the early stages of the turnaround process when the strategies were conceived by the principals and the SMT of these schools. This is reflected as the words of the Principal of Phumelela when he said:

The first meeting was with the School Management Team; thereafter we had a meeting with the educators, which was followed by a meeting with the parents. With parents, our discussion was about learner attendance and support at home, especially ensuring that learners do their work by supervising them. The school governing body was also included in the decision processes (Phumelela Secondary).

The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary also indicated that the SGB of his school was involved in the initial processes of the turnaround plan. He further stated that their meeting was followed by that of the parents. The turnaround plan involved all role players who had to contribute to its implementation and success. In that regard, the principal had this to say:

There was a start-up meeting, which was attended by the principal, the School Management Team, and all Grade 12 educators and educators teaching other grades. I invited their inputs and gave them a day to come up with ideas. The following day we came up with a proposed plan, which I discussed with the governing body. The SGB endorsed our plan and we then presented the plan to the parents so that there were going to support us when we implement the programme (Kuyasa Secondary).

It was important that SGBs were duly briefed about change strategies for various reasons. For example, as we find elsewhere in this report, some schools (Phumelela and Thuthuka Secondary) compensated their teachers for coming to schools during vacations and weekends and the SGBs had to approve all payments made from the schools' accounts. It is noted that after the endorsement of the turnaround plans by the SGBs, they were then presented to the parents to solicit further support and to ensure effective implementation.

The agenda below is an extract from one of the participants (Kuyasa Secondary School). It was presented at the SGB meeting to address the school's governance related matters. It is noted that the school principal together with the SGB, had amongst the issues to be discussed, included the analysis of the National Senior Certificate results for the school's past year. The agenda below is written in Isizulu and the items, if translated to English language, are as follows:

Opening and welcome, apologies, minutes, matters arising from the minutes, new matters: presentation of the Matric results for 2015, the strategies to turnaround the results, a report on the Schools Nutrition programme (feeding scheme), the selection of

the committee that will review the Learners Code of Conduct and the last item is closure.

Agenda of the SGB meeting at Kuyasa Secondary School

Umhlangano womkhandlu wesikole

Usuku: 15 KuMasingana 2016

Isikhathi: 10:00

Uhlelo: Umphathi womhlangano: Usihlalo womkhandlu

1. Umkhuleko wokuvula
2. Ukwamukela abakhona
3. Izixoliso
4. Amaminithi nezivukayo
5. Ezintsha
 - 5.1. Ukwethulwa kwemiphumela kamatikuletsheeni (Matric) yonyaka odlule.
 - 5.2. Izinhlelo zokuguqula lemiphumela
 - 5.3. Umbiko ngohlelo lokudla kwezingane
 - 5.4. Ukukhethwa kwekomidi elizocubungula umgomo wokuziphatha wabafundi
6. Ukuvala

The agenda above supports a general reflection by the three school principals that their SGBs and parents played an important role in the turnaround processes. Apart from the normal SGB functions, they also played an important role in supporting the turnaround plan by focusing on the programmes like learner discipline, financial support to intervention programmes, merit awards for the educators and learners aimed at stimulating academic performance. The parents supported the schools by ensuring that learners attended extra tuition classes (Botha, 2012; Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll & Mackay, 2014; Mncube & Du Plessis, 2011).

5.3.7 The role of the district officials in turning around the school's fortunes

District officials played a complementary role as they supported the school principals in their quests to turnaround their school's performances. They provided capacity building programmes not only to the educators who were struggling to improve their subjects' academic performances but they also trained the SMT members on effective ways to manage the curriculum. Their

supportive role has been noted by the three schools - Thuthuka, Kuyasa and Phumelela Secondary. One principal had this to say:

The District office assisted the school to transfer these educators to other schools in order to address the school's underperformance challenge. The school's Circuit Manager also played a pivotal role in these transfers by supporting the school principal (Thuthuka Secondary).

The sentiment of the Principal of Thuthuka Secondary was echoed by the Principal of Kuyasa Secondary in his assertion that the District provided extra support to his school in terms of subject advisory support in the event the school's internal process had been exhausted. He said:

If the educator's turnaround strategy was not effective and the school's educators could not be assisted through team teaching, I had to look for outside educators to come and assist and those educators would be identified by the Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) Sub-Directorate and it worked (Kuyasa Secondary).

What I noted from the voice of the Principal of Phumelela Secondary was that the school utilised internal support in the form of team teaching, which was supported by networking with other schools for the support with high performing educators. Where possible, the school would then enlist the services of the subject advisors. This is how he put it:

Networking with other schools and the support from the Subject Advisors, also assisted the school (Phumelela Secondary).

There is evidence that district officials gave support to the schools and that the schools appreciated the support that they received. Most notable, was the role that was played by Subject Advisors in assisting teachers with curriculum delivery issues. Then next section focuses on the interconnections between deprivations in the community and how these affected the participating schools' attempts to turn around the situation.

5.3.8 The relationship between deprivations and teaching and learning

Schools in deprived contexts face a number of challenges some of which are not at times noted when policies are enacted. These schools are either in rural, informal settlements or peri-urban areas (Chikoko, 2018). These challenges conspire and affect teaching and learning in these schools and call for additional efforts from the principals and educators to address them to

ensure that effective teaching and learning is attained and that the schools perform to their maximum levels (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015; Mbokazi, 2015). Principals are expected to influence learner performance and educator effectiveness towards a positive school's performance trajectory irrespective of the deprivations because they are viewed as key answers in such areas (Chiome, 2011).

These three schools suffered from a confluence of deprivations, which combined and affected schools' teaching and learning environment. What is noted from these schools is that they suffered from the following deprivations: most learners were raised by the single parents and others were raised by their grandparents, some children came from child-headed house holds, others are orphans and they depend on the social grants for survival. Poverty was rife among the communities served by these schools. Learners whose parents did not qualify for the social grants lived largely on meagre income generated from menial jobs including jobs as domestic workers. At Thuthuka Secondary, the school also suffered from the drugs dealings smuggled into the school premises by some of its learners and the principal was exposed to drug dealers. This is how the principal put it:

There are learners who came to school to sell drugs. These learners acted as merchants. They came to school not prepared to learn but to sell drugs. I am saying this because they came in the morning to sell their drugs during break and they would leave after break. At some stage, the drug lords hired people to come and kill me because they felt that I was killing their business. You can still see the bullet hole at the school gate (Thuthuka Secondary).

What is also noted is that there were also learners who came with their parents from Lesotho. Some of them ended up staying alone in the shacks and in one roomed houses when their parents had moved on, looking for employment opportunities. In some circumstances, they ended up staying alone if their parents had passed on (Kuyasa and Thuthuka Secondary Schools). Deprivations affected teaching in a number of ways. Lack of proper food affected the learners' concentration span. Learners from child headed household had to look after their siblings and took them to primary schools and that affected them as they had little time for the school work. Drugs also affected the learners with all sort of negative ways, some of which were health related while others were social.

Participating schools had to contend with the issues of discipline among the learners as some of them stayed without their parents. Parents are expected to play a meaningful role in their upbringing. The absence of income meant that learners would be subjected to poor diet at home and this meant that even if the learner was gifted and could naturally compete with other learners, unfortunately, because of poverty and lack of nutritious food, learners affected by poverty could not be pushed up to the level where they could demonstrate their true potential. The lower the education level of the parents, the lower was the level of performance in the schoolwork. This is because their parents were not in a position to effectively support their children with their schoolwork. A remarkable number of learners who came from Lesotho lacked proper documentation. This had negative effect in the sense that they would end up not being counted in the school enrolments and that meant that the affected schools could not benefit from Norms and Standards; thus contributing to the reduction of moneys to buy resources like textbooks (Chikoko, 2018; Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq & Berhanu, 2011; Spaul, 2012).

5.3.9 Principals' leadership strategies that they used to mitigate the negative effects of deprivation on teaching and learning

There are many factors that deprived contexts bring to bear on the performance of schools and principals have to design strategies to deal with such factors. Learner discipline is one of the factors that principals have to deal with. The issue of learner discipline was addressed by the schools through a variety of ways including reviewing the Learners Code of Conduct. At Thuthuka Secondary, the school introduced positive discipline, which was an alternative to corporal punishment. This form of punishment was about giving learners certain task to perform as a form of punishment. The message communicated is that the Learners Code of Conduct, was tighten to address learner issues which were causing disturbances at the schools. At Thuthuka Secondary, the principal and his team, visited child headed families and then took a decision to support those learners with food. They were allowed to take that food to their homes as poverty is rife in the area. The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary also assisted learners with school uniform by approaching the Department of Education's Sub –Directorate called, Special Needs Education Services (SNES)' and this section mobilised sponsors for those needy learners. What I noted at Phumelela Secondary is that the school addressed the issue of late coming by learners by inviting their parents and setting up strict conditions in order to deter them from coming to school late.

The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary addressed the issue of drugs by introducing class registers, which was marked in the morning and after break when the educator enters the classroom. The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary even addressed threats that were directed at him. He did this by using a variety of strategies, including reporting the three cases of attempted murder to the police and by arriving at the school at different times.

At Kuyasa Secondary, they provide learners with food through the School Nutrition Programme and above that, they also gave those needy learners additional food in the form of handouts. The school also attended to those who were sick by taking them to the clinic. This is typical to Mkhize and Bhengu's (2015) contention that principals in deprived contexts at times face mammoth tasks like providing services like social worker, paramedic and others forms in order to ensure that their schools function smoothly and that the lives of the learners were transformed. The principal believed that by addressing these basic needs, learners were assisted to concentrate in their lessons. Despite all these attempts, the school was still struggling to address the case of learners that did not have identity documents or birth certificates, especially those who come from neighbouring Lesotho and others who stayed with their grandparents and who had difficulties accessing certain documents that would aid the process of getting them identity documents. Measures to support such learners had negative effects on the school in terms of financial resources in the sense that the school had to use some of the funds that were dedicated to buying LTSM. The principal also utilised the services of community leaders like the Ward Councillor for assistance on this problem but, evidently, there is no permanent solution. The other challenge facing the school is late coming by the learners. The principal argued that several attempts were employed in the past to address the challenge of learner attendance but there was little success. Upon realising the negative effects of late coming, the school resorted to closing the gate, and such a decision and practice seemed to have more negative effects than the positive ones.

We would remain in the afternoon and talk to them about the negative effects of late coming. We then received an instruction from the department in the form of a circular that we should close the gate, so we locked them out. We understand the contradiction around locking the gate. If you lock the child out in order for him/her to feel that late coming is wrong but this has unintended consequences (Principal of Kuyasa Secondary).

The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary seemed to be convinced that the act of locking the school gate was assisting the school to address late coming by the learners. He acknowledged the shortcomings around this practice like learners losing a number of lessons whilst being locked out, exposing them to the criminal elements, creating enough opportunities for them to get into criminality and giving out a bad portrayal of the school as the community see learners who are not given tuition. In spite of all the negative aspects linked to closing the gate, the principal believed that it assisted in reducing late coming as the gate was closed for the first period and thereafter, learner's names were taken so that their parents would be informed and they would then be released into their classes.

5.4. The system of recruiting educators

Principals of the three secondary schools indicated that they were expected to recruit educators for staffing purposes. They indicated that the appointment process had to follow policy directives as stipulated by the Department. They used different strategies to recruit educators and the recruitment process of educators was informed by the schools' curricula needs. There are similarities in the way these secondary schools recruited educators. The principals of Phumelela, Kuyasa and Thuthuka, indicated that they utilised a system of transfers to recruit educators especially, the new teachers. They would search for the teacher whilst the one they are replacing was still serving the three months notice.

The school uses the system of transfer to get good educators (Phumelela Secondary).

The Principal of Phumelela reflected that their search for a well-performing teacher, was open to all educators as they were requested to give the principal the name of a teacher with a good traceable track record of performance in a particular subject, especially in Grade 12. The Principal of Thuthuka also intimated that he used the transfer system but would go the extra mile by approaching other Sub-Directorates like Examinations and Assessment for support in terms of identifying the most suitable replacement. This is what the principal had to say in that regard:

I visited Examinations and Assessment Section and spoke to the head of the Section. I asked him to give me the list of secondary schools and their subjects' performances. I then decided on the target of educators, which I was going to approach. The educator

who was teaching Physical Sciences in my school was in another performing school but her school did not promote her as the Departmental Head and they said they were phasing out the science department. I then approached the educator and promised her the post of the DH. I got other through the single transfer process, for example, when we recruited the Mathematics educator in Bergville, the other educator was still serving a three months' notice (Thuthuka Secondary).

The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary also used the promotion post vacancies to recruit the educator that had a traceable performance record and someone that was going to assist the school to turnaround its performance. The Principal of Kuyasa concurred with the others by indicating that he also utilised the system of transfer as the first option. He said:

We have an authority especially when it is a single transfer to get a good teacher. Currently we have qualified educators who have specialised in the subjects, which they teach. Largely, we no longer employ educators, but we forward our curriculum needs to the district and the district would then send us the educators (Kuyasa Secondary).

It is also noted that in instances where using transfer system did not succeed, the three principals submitted the vacancy details to the district and the school thereafter would be given a teacher from the database. The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary indicated that once the principal together with the SMT, had identified the curriculum needs of the school, they would agree on the post profile and then forward that information to the Circuit Manager. The principal of Phumelela cSecondary, on the other hand, consulted with the SMT and educators and encouraged them to look for a good educator to join the school. That educator must have a good academic performance record, which is traceable and backed by evidence from his/her school. This process was undertaken when the school wanted to appoint an educator in a substantive vacant post. The school had to follow the process that is outlined by the Principal of Kuyasa Secondary when appointing a teacher on substitute or temporary basis. The opportunity for the school to forward the name of its educator would only arise when the District had declared that it did not find an educator matching the school's post profile.

The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary used a different strategy to fill substantive vacant positions in his school. He visited Examinations and Assessment Section and for the list of secondary schools and their subjects' performances. He would then decide on the target of educators, which he was going to approach. In one instance, this principal approached the

physical sciences educator and promised her the post of the Departmental head. Others would be appointed through the single transfer process like the mathematics educator who was teaching in Bergville. This was done not in all the subjects but it was only directed at critical subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Accounting.

The principals of schools would explore the process of transfers when the exiting educator was serving his/her three months' notice and that was the only way of getting educators whom they believed would immediately assist their school to turn around poor performances in certain subjects.

5.5 How new school cultures unfolded

The process of bringing about change in organisations usually entails creating new habits and cultures while discarding old ones that are no longer desirable. Similarly, changes that I have highlighted in the previous sections formed a crucial part of the new school cultures that were gradually being developed. At the core of these school cultures was a new commitment to hold extra teaching sessions in the mornings before normal school times. All these initiatives were attempts to create a new culture of teaching and learning.

The three principals emphasised the importance of staff commitment to do more in terms of providing extra tuition time for the learners at no extra pay. Extra teaching time was set aside daily as another strategy to ensure schools' functionality and ensure delivery of quality teaching and learning. The Principal of Phumelela Secondary highlighted a number of activities they had initiated. For instance, the school revised its operational time by starting an hour earlier that is at 07h00 with Grade 12 getting extra classes that had become part of the school's programme. One educator had to monitor the gate as per time table. According to the new schedule, the starting time at Kuyasa Secondary, shifted from 08h00 to 06h30, with extra classes supervised by the SMT. The school assigned one educator to conduct ground duties at 07h30 and also to support the security at the gate. At Thuthuka Secondary, extra classes started at 06h45 and ended at 07h45 to make way for full teaching time. What is notable from Kuyasa and Thuthuka Secondary Schools is that late coming was closely monitored as some learners failed to arrive on time and that had a negative effect as they missed some lessons. Learners' names were taken and they were warned about the negative consequences of late coming. These

schools seemed to apply some control measures of ensuring that educators arrived on time and that classes started on time with an educator in each class teaching.

There will be a staff briefing as per need but not taking place every day, just three times a week. It is held at 07h30. At 08h00, lessons started for all other grades (Phumelela Secondary).

Control measures were also noted at Kuyasa Secondary and these measures were aimed at ensuring that educators arrived on time and that teaching and learning also began as planned.

Learners are expected to be all seated in their classes at seven forty (07h40). Between seven forty (07h40) and eight o'clock (08h00), form educators mark the registers because all educators are expected to be at school at seven thirty (07h30). At 08h00, lessons start. From 07h40 to 08h00, the deputy principal is moving up and down the school checking whether teachers are in class and is working with the two educators who are in charge of the toilets (Kuyasa Secondary).

The control measures put in place in these schools entailed holding morning briefings at Phumelela Secondary, and these assisted in checking whether all the educators were present on the day. The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary utilised the services of the deputy principal to monitor educators presence in their respective classes. At Thuthuka Secondary, the principal ensured that there was a time table that was followed for extra classes and that formed part of control measures adopted. It is also evident that the three schools prioritised teaching and learning by ensuring that curriculum delivery was closely monitored. For instance, at Phumelela Secondary, the SMT monitored teaching and learning throughout the day by checking whether all the classes were occupied by the educators and if someone was absent, arrangements were made to ensure that there was someone keeping learners occupied. The principal had succeeded to influence educators on this matter.

In the past, educators were resisting the deployment to classes if someone was absent, citing reasons that they were having a free period, during which time they had to rest. However, the principal I had to convince them that, in fact, that period was normal teaching period which could be utilised to do anything educational and that was going to benefit the school. The school has managed to change their attitude in that regard as they are now prepared to freely take up and monitor someone else's classroom even if they have a free period (Phumelela Secondary).

At Kuyasa Secondary, the principal took the responsibility of assisting at the gate to deal with late coming and to release educators to attend their classes. The other SMT members, the

deputy principal, checked classes to find out if all the learners were in their classes and dealt with any issues raised relating to those teachers who were not in their classes. The school had put in place control measures to prevent learners who moved up and down disturbing others, and requested the deputy principal to control their movement by being responsible for issuing permits to go to the toilet. The other activity noted in these schools is the nutrition programme; educators monitored and provided support to the learners. At Thuthuka Secondary, the learners from all grades were given a study period after school, which afforded them additional time to attend to issues they cannot address in their homes.

Principals of schools in deprived contexts have to ensure that their schools prioritise teaching and learning despite challenges which they face (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2015). There is great emphasis on the issue of time on task, and educators ensured maximum usage of time and optimum performance of the school (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015). Educators' contributions are valued and efforts are made to utilise the existing resources and further tap into outside expertise in order to enhance the school's performance (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015; Mbokazi, 2015; Myende, 2015).

5. 6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed data generated from three school principals of schools that were located in the peri-urban and informal settlement areas. Various themes emerged from the analysis and I infused literature in the discussion of these themes. There are a number of lessons to be learned from leadership practices of these principals. For instance, the Principal of Kuyasa Secondary expressed a strong belief that those leading underperforming schools, should among other things, do self-introspection as leaders because it assists to reveal someone's strengths and weakness. Additionally, I have picked from the same participant that as part of self-introspection, principals of underperforming schools should reject failure. Good people management and the maintenance of a healthy relationship with key stakeholders such as the SGB and the parents should be among the highest of priorities. The importance of paying special attention to correct curriculum implementation has a huge bearing on the school's performance, and thus, should not be overemphasised.

I have also learned a few lessons from the participants, especially the Principal of Phumelela Secondary, regarding the primacy of basics such as correct staffing, time management, time on

task, and the importance of working closely with all stakeholders in the schools. The provision of necessary resources for the learners and the educators to enhance teaching and learning should be prioritised. All these activities should be underpinned by a collaboratively constructed vision for the schools. Such a vision can be constructed after a SWOT analysis has been done. The next chapter will present data from the schools, which are located in the rural areas within Umgungundlovu District.

CHAPTER SIX

TURNING AROUND SCHOOLS PERFORMANCE: PERSPECTIVES FROM PRINCIPALS WHOSE SCHOOLS ARE IN A RURAL CONTEXT

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a number of views relating to the experiences of principals of turning around their schools' poor academic performance. Perspectives presented there came from principals of schools located in urban and informal settlements around town. In this chapter, I present the perspectives of school principals who have managed to turn around their school's performances in deprived rural contexts within the same district. This chapter presents the perspective from principals who are managing schools in the rural context. Schools which are located under traditional leaders as contemplated in both the Traditional Leadership Framework No. 41 of 2003 (RSA, 2003) and the KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership Governance Act No. 5 of 2005 (KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, 2005). In my presentation of data, I have made attempts to present participants' direct voices through *verbatim* quotes, and I have also infused literature to enhance the analysis. Before presenting data, I begin by outlining a brief profile for each of the participating schools.

6.2.1 Profile of Kuhle Secondary School

Kuhle Secondary School (KSS) was established in the late 1980s and was named after a prominent leader in the community. It started as junior secondary school and later developed into a fully-fledged secondary school with all the grades (Grade 8 up to Grade 12). KSS has 27 educators and benefits from the Department's School Nutrition Programme. It is serving the community under Richmond Local Municipality and is currently one of the best performing schools within the Richmond Circuit. It is a Quintile 3 Non-Section 21 school. This means that it mainly procures its resources through the Department's process and cannot buy goods itself. The school is fenced, has clean, piped water but has no playgrounds for the learners.

Table 6.1: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009-2017)

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Percentage	31	41	50	57.3	54.72	72.62	61.36	79.24	86.11

Table 6.2: Learner enrolment in the past 5 years (2013-2017)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Enrolment	821	814	877	819	877

6.2.2 Profile of Siyaphambili Secondary School

Siyaphambili Secondary School (SSS) is situated in a rural area of Mpendle under Impendle Local Municipality. The school was built in the mid-1970s. This is a Quintile 2 and a no fee-paying school which starts from Grade 8 up to Grade 12. The main objective of building this school was to provide education to the children of farm dwellers who resided in the area. The school has 11 educators and benefits from the Schools Nutrition Programme. Its performance in the NSC examination has tremendously improved and has recently been noted as the better performing school. The school has its share of problems. For example, it has erratic water supply and relies on the water tanks for water. It has no sports ground and classrooms are in a poor condition. Learners travel long distances, which cause them to wake up early and expose them to dangers of sexual abuse especially in winter. This has caused some of them to look for accommodation in the school vicinity, especially those who are doing Grade 12 so that they can benefit from the school's extra classes programme and to ensure that they do not arrive late. The principal was at some stage attacked by the thugs around the school.

Table 6.3: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009-2017)

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Percentage	43	56	70	34.04	21.43	20.59	62.16	69.23	72.73

Table 6.4: Learner enrolment in the past 5 years (2013-2017)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Enrolment	315	246	243	250	252

6.2.3 Profile of Mathafeni Secondary School

Mathafeni Secondary School (MSS), like all other participating schools, starts from Grade 8 up to Grade 12. It has 11 educators and about 306 learners. It has tremendously improved its academic performance. It benefits from the Schools Nutrition Programme and it is a Quintile 3 school. It is situated at the Richmond Local Municipality in one of its rural areas. The school needs some infrastructure repairs like the toilets and renovation of the class buildings. It is a no fee-paying school.

Table 6.5: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009-2017)

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Percentage	50	45	52	25	42	68	77	82	65

Table 6.6: Learner enrolment in the past 5 years (2013-2017)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Enrolment	301	328	333	299	312

6.2.4 Profile of Thando Secondary School

Thando Secondary School (TSS) is situated in a rural area near Greytown under Umvoti Local Municipality. It was established in 2004 as the area had no secondary school to cater for learners who had completed primary school education in the area. The school has 13 educators and benefits from the Schools Nutrition Programme. This is a no fee-paying school and has a Quintile 2 school. Its performance in the NSC examination has tremendously improved and has recently been officially noted as the better performing rural school. The school has its share of problems; for example, it does not have running /tap water and they rely on rain and water tanks, which do not come on regular basis causing erratic water supply. It does not have a security guard leaving educators and learners vulnerable as the school is situated in a deep rural area, which is unstable with regular faction fights among different area over livestock and other social issues. Learners travel long distances without any scholar/learner transport.

Table 6.7: Grade 12 learner performance in the past 9 years (2009-2017)

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Percentage	56	68	52	25	42	68	77	82	65

The table above indicates the improvement in performance despite the existing deprivations in the school.

Table 6.8: Learner enrolment in the past 5 years (2013-2017)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Enrolment	324	358	352	380	379

6.3 Data presentation and discussion

The next section consists of a detailed discussion of the themes that emerged from the analysis process and tells us more about the process that school principals embarked on as they endeavoured to improve their schools' performance. The analysis developed 10 themes and the discussion is organised according to these broad theme, and these are, (a) Factors that prompted the school principals to embark on the change process (b) Transforming underperforming schools into performing ones (c) Initial challenges encountered during the early stages of the turning around process (d) Creating conditions that are favourable for the turning around process (e) The process of turning around (f) The role of School-Based stakeholders in turning around the schools' fortunes (g) The relationship between various deprivations and teaching and learning (h) Strategies principals use to mitigate the negative effects of deprivation on teaching and learning (i) How principals address teachers' attitudes (j) Emerging New School Cultures of teaching and learning.

6.3.1 Factors that prompted the school principals to embark on the change process

Participants were asked a question about factors that had prompted them to embark on a change process. The analysis of their responses indicates that there were various factors that prompted principals in this study to embark on the turnaround process for their schools. These factors included serial underperformance in their schools, attempts to bring back the parents and the community trust by ensuring that the schools were performing well and that their results were

credible, continuous underperformance in subjects like Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Accounting contributed to the schools underperformance. Principals did not want to be continuously associated with the label ‘underperforming school’. All participating principals in the four secondary schools embarked on a process of dealing with the phenomenon of underperformance, using different approaches. The principals initiated the process of changing the schools performance, and one of them had this to say:

I realised that the school was not performing well, after analysing the school’s results from Grade 8 to Grade 12 (Principal of Mathafeni Secondary).

The Principal of Thando Secondary also initiated the process with the intention to stop the school’s downward performance.

I was the one who initiated the process as I did not want my school to be referred to as underperforming or (T60) school and being called to account in every meeting (Thando Secondary).

The principals were initiators of the strategies to change their schools’ fortunes and they needed the support of all stakeholders for a smooth process. Amongst the things they did, Thando Secondary and Mathafeni Secondary started by conducting an analysis of the Matric results. Principals of Kuhle Secondary and Thando Secondary engaged the SMTs on the issues at hand, whilst Siyaphambili Secondary probed deeper into the allegations of irregularities, which were part of the school practice. This is how he put it:

The school’s performance was not good but it had performed well in one or two years in the past but even those results were questionable as there were allegations that there was copying during the NSC examinations (Siyaphambili Secondary).

This prompted the new Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary to work hard in order to address underperformance and the issue of poor invigilation as well as allegations of irregular conduct during examinations in order to win the trust of the parents. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary was more worried about the staffing in Grade 12, as the initial step to tackle.

Scholars concur with some of the issues that are raised by the school principals as the reasons, which prompted them to take action (Chikoko, 2018; Steyn, 2018). The similar reasons raised are that the community and parents tend to support a well-performing school (Chikoko, 2018). This is evident in a research that was conducted in a community that had deprivations, in which a school called, Thethema Secondary School, was transformed and immediately after obtaining

80%, the school's support grew (Naicker, 2018). Community support grew and parents arrived every time to inquire about the admission spaces for their children (Naicker, 2018). In a research that was conducted on an underperforming primary school in a challenging context of Ekurhuleni District, Gauteng, one of the reasons raised by the participants was that they did not want to be labelled as underperforming for long since it was demoralising; hence, they made efforts to transform their underperforming school (Steyn, 2018). Literature also reveals that the participants in that research felt that they were made to account for underperformance by the Department of Education officials and they wanted to perform well in order to relieve themselves from that burden (Steyn, 2018).

6.3.2 Transforming underperforming schools into performing ones

All of the seven principals embarked on dealing with first things first, which included dealing with the basic functionality issues. In this chapter, I am focusing on the four principals of schools that were located in the rural areas, as the previous chapter focused on three schools that were located on urban and peri-urban setting. As part of putting the systems in place, the principals improved the area of monitoring teaching and learning. These included beefing up the monitoring of the teaching and lesson preparation by the teachers. All the seven principals ensured that there was an extracurricular programme to create space for the finishing of the syllabus and allow more time for revision. The Principal of Thando Secondary included the monitoring of the teacher attendance in classes by introducing the period registers. In a similar vein, the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary introduced a period registers to be monitored by both the learners and the principal. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary ensured that teachers prepared their lessons prior to teaching the learners. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary had to go the extra mile by engaging learners to be patient with the newly introduced teachers who had taken over those subjects.

The monitoring of the curriculum involved a wide range of activities that required a hands-on approach to management by both the principal and the SMT members. Curriculum management involved the process of monitoring how the teachers conduct their professional work including the implementation of the curriculum. The monitoring process at Kuhle Secondary was based on checking how far teachers were covering the subject content in their ATPs. This required a process of monitoring to be implemented by the SMT at all four schools.

On the other side, the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary noted some gaps, which needed to be attended as follows:

I then checked the periods allocation whether they were in line with the policy. I discovered that Accounting was given three periods instead of four. The school was not properly allocating periods to subjects as per Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) policy (Principal of Mathafeni Secondary).

There are some key aspects of curriculum management that all principals were engaged in as part of monitoring.

As the principal, I would closely monitor the work of the educators by checking curriculum coverage, the number of tasks covered and the learner's exercise books to check whether the learners work was in line with what was stated in the educators Annual Teaching Plan (Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary).

The turnaround plan at Thando Secondary School involved a new focus on time management, including ensuring that no teaching time was lost, and finally ensuring that there was curriculum coverage. The Principal of Thando Secondary School had this to say:

The plan also looked at time management, the educators had to be in class on time and teach to the full duration of the period. Sticking to the basics was going to assist us as the school in order to turn around our school's performance (Principal of Thando Secondary).

It has been observed that the principal needed to lead the monitoring of the curriculum. This was attested to by the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary, who closely monitored the work of the educators by checking curriculum coverage, the number of tasks given and the learners' exercise books to check whether the learners' work was in line with what was stated in the educators ATP. On the other hand, the Principal of Thando Secondary had only conducted what used to be basic things in turning things around; these include beefing up the extracurricular programme.

Certain aspects had to change namely, the introduction of the monitoring and evaluation process targeted to the educators and learners work, twinkling the school's human resource (trying to find strength from within the school by changing educators and exposing others to Grade 12 (Principal of Kuhle Secondary).

In all the four secondary schools, the SMTs had to monitor the work of the teachers through a roster to ensure control of curriculum (Chikoko, 2018; Mbokazi, 2015; Steyn, 2018). Literature on managing underperforming schools in deprived contexts highlights the importance of curriculum monitoring by the departmental heads as one of the key aspects to be undertaken (Chikoko, 2018; Mbokazi, 2015; Steyn, 2018). The principals of the four rural secondary schools also mentioned that curriculum delivery, coverage and monitoring, featured prominently in their turn around strategies and they had to lead as curriculum managers.

6.3.3 Initial challenges encountered during the early stages of the turnaround process

The process of transforming underperforming schools in deprived areas has its own merits and demerits. Every transformation has its pros and cons, like the one regarding the changing of underperformance in schools. Principals reported different challenges to the transformation process. For instance, the Principal of Kuhle Secondary reported some kind of resistance, which included nasty sarcastic and teasing tendencies by those who replaced them in Grade 12. The staff changes that were implemented at Kuhle Secondary caused a stir, which led to some resistance from the teaching staff. This is how the principal put it:

The incoming educators had to endure sarcasms and teasing but through support from the principal and other educators, they managed to perform well (Principal of Kuhle Secondary).

The situation was different at Mathafeni Secondary School, as the principal reported that some teachers preferred to leave the school, in which case the District negotiated such transfers and at some point, the situation became worse as seven teachers simultaneously asked to leave the school.

Almost seven of them had to leave the school and we had to replace them with new educators (Principal of Mathafeni Secondary).

The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary put some support systems in place for the performing teachers. At Siyaphambili Secondary, it was different as one SMT member left due to failure to cope with work pressures. The teachers felt this kind of pressure to the point that the principal was perceived as being oppressive. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary further noted that some teachers were used to coming to school, unprepared for lessons, or came late and smelling alcohol. The challenges experienced at Thando Secondary were of a different nature compared

to the other secondary schools in the sense that both the parents and the learners were considered to be non-cooperative for different reasons. At Thando Secondary, the attendance in morning classes was negatively affected by the distance learners had to travel to a school, which is estimated to be between the range of 5kms to 12kms. There had not been any positive response from the Department to the school's application for learner transport to curb this anomaly. Other learners at Thando Secondary could not attend Saturday classes due to their religious affiliation to the Shembe belief system that requires that they attend services on Saturday. The other challenge, which was cited by the Principals of Kuhle, Siyaphambili and Thando Secondary schools respectively, as affecting their schools, was absenteeism, which was caused by a number of factors. The factors included child headed household phenomenon whereby a child will have to look after the welfare of the other siblings and at times, failed to come to school because of home responsibilities. The issue of absenteeism could also be attributed to other social factors such as teenage pregnancy as learners had to travel long distances to school and, sometimes, they failed to come to school every day.

The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary reported the existence of ill-discipline amongst the learners. This was related to their dependence on irregular practices they were used to during the examinations such as copying during examinations. The intensive teach-test programme was utilised at Siyaphambili Secondary. This particular programme created a lot of pressure for the Mathematics, Physical Science and Accounting teachers. The school phased out Accounting and Economics as part of the restructuring process, due to the low enrolment at school. What I consider as key lessons from these principals is that, in spite of the challenges and resistance towards transformation, the best thing to do is to soldier on.

At Kuhle Secondary School, there was a reported lack of cooperation by both the learners and the teacher as articulated by the principal. This is how the principal explained the situation:

There was resistance from some members of the SMT whose subjects had been given to others. For example, Accounting was taken from the departmental head and given to a teacher. The incoming teachers had to endure sarcasms and teasing but through the support from the principal and other teachers, they managed to perform well. For example, one teacher was given Business Studies which was performing around 60% and he raised its performance to 95%, which was good performance considering the context in which the school was operating and the effects of deprivations (Principal of Kuhle Secondary).

The scourge of ill-discipline was portrayed by the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary in the following manner:

Learners were wild and they were coming to school for their own intentions. Some would not do the work like homework and other activities, with the hope that there will be invigilation relaxation during the examination period, which will enable them to copy and subsequently, easily pass the examination. Some educators were coming to school ill-prepared, others would be under the influence of alcohol.

All issues pertaining to the basic functionality at these four schools were non-existent; hence, the underperformance. The issue of ill-disciplined learners, teenage pregnancy, learner absenteeism, faction fighting among the communities, poor leave management, unprepared educators getting into classes and the list goes on. These were issues that all the seven principals had to deal with in order to embark on a transformation process. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary embarked on restructuring the curriculum in order to effect some needed changes as these subjects were only adding a burden to the teachers. In Mathafeni Secondary, subjects like Biblical Studies had to be removed from the curriculum in order to lessen the burden on teacher loads. Teachers and the SMT in the school did not regard Biblical Studies as important for employment prospects purposes.

Another issue, which presented challenges for the schools was the high failure rate experienced in subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Science, Accounting, as well as, the additional loads of subjects on the curriculum of the school. Some of these schools needed to restructure their curriculum due to the low enrolment to be in line with the threshold, which requires for instance, that the school needs to have one stream if it has less than 320 learners. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary prioritised leave management by putting systems of monitoring to curb absenteeism. Subjects like Biblical Studies were removed from the curriculum, as they were not adding value to Mathafeni Secondary School.

Literature concurs with some of the challenges that have been highlighted by the participants in this study although there are also unique items raised by the participants. In a study conducted by Badenhorst and Koalepe (2016), the principals of schools cited the challenge of learner absenteeism, which was attributed to the challenges at their homes. Such challenges included the failure by parents to meet the educational needs of their children. The study by Badenhorst and Koalepe (2016) further revealed challenges like teenage pregnancy, lack of

discipline and overcrowding. These challenges resonated with some of the challenges that have been raised by the the Principals of Siyaphambili, Kuhle, Mathafeni and Thando Secondary schools. A book titled ‘Leadership That Works In Deprived Contexts of South Africa’ (2018), edited by Chikoko, reveals further challenges especially from the educators’ side. The challenges mentioned include resistance from the educators to accept the change, serial underperformance and the non-existence of the culture of teaching and learning. The study by Steyn (2018) corroborates some forms of resistance as it reflected in the resistance by experienced educators when the principal introduced changes in order to turn around the performance of the school. These factors resonate with those raised by the principals of the four secondary schools that participated in the research project.

6.3.4 Creating conditions that are favourable for the turnaround process

Principals in the study embarked on turn around strategies and such strategies focused a few pillars. The first relates to the maximisation of the utilisation of learning and teaching support materials. Second, they focused on intensifying professional development of teaching staff and these are discussed next.

6.3.4.1 Maximising the utilisation of learning and teaching support material

All the principals utilised learner support material and utilised the allocated funds to add to the required LTSM (Mbokazi, 2015). At Siyaphambili Secondary School, for the most part, the schools utilised the photocopiers for making bulk copies. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary School went further by allocating funds to be used for buying required LTSM in order to alleviate the shortage of resources. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary asked for donations from the neighbouring schools in the form of textbooks. Furthermore, an exchange was arranged by the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary for textbooks with neighbouring schools, and this is what he had to say:

For example, we exchanged the Agricultural Science textbooks with the neighbouring school and they gave us certain books. I was able to coordinate all these processes with the support of the SGB.

The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary ventured out to get assistance in photocopying as he approached the other secondary school to assist them with photocopying and managed to

conduct its examinations through this kind of networking and support. Kuhle Secondary showed how the allocated funds were utilised for LTSM and the Non-Learner and Teaching Support Material (NLTSM). Kuhle Secondary outlined the role played by the principal in utilising the allocated Norms and Standards for both LTSM and the Non LTSM. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary expressed some difficulties relating to minimal resources the school had. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary took the initiative to acquire additional textbooks from the neighbouring schools in order to address the shortage of resources. Views expressed by the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary were also shared by the Circuit Officials who provided support by making additional copies. Another area of support was the exchange of teachers that supported the underperforming ones at Thando Secondary for purposes of attaining the set targets.

The observation I made during my visits to the schools was that they struggling from limited resources. Their learners shared books but I saw photocopying machines of different sizes and Kuhle Secondary School had a bigger machine compared to the other schools. This was because they had a bigger learner enrolment which required more copies to be made and the other factor was that is had a bigger allocation for the learner teaching support material. I could see that other schools even though they had photocopying machines but their sizes were small and this could then give credence to the assertion by the Principal of Mathafeni that he had to approach the circuit office to assist with some photocopying.

Literature reveals that the shortage of resources can also affect effective teaching and learning and and is seen as some form of deprivation (Chikoko, 2018; Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). If the majority of learners do not have textbooks, they end up losing out on some important aspects as they are either asked to share the books or to borrow it. Using it during school time does not give them sufficient time to do certain activities during their spare time at home. The role that is played by the resources in the teaching and learning process is therefore critical as expressed by the participants in this study.

6.3.4.2 Enhancing teachers and own professional development

The principals had lately been trained in the area of financial management in order to be able to manage school finances. The experience at Mathafeni Secondary showed that professional

development included a project on financial management training for the principal. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary saw the school as a project; hence, the need to acquire those project management skills. As part of his professional development, the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary was at the time of the study involved in a masters programme in administration which assisted him with financial management. The school was also exposing educators to various in- house professional development programmes. This is what the principal said:

It is also imperative for the newly appointed educator to be equipped with assessment strategies. This is because once the educator fails to properly conduct assessment; those learners will not pass Grade 12, especially if his/her assessment level is below the set standards in terms of question distribution and taxonomy. The school also staged teambuilding workshops for all educators. We request the school Governing Body (SGB) to budget for this activity. We ask for external motivational speakers to come and address educators on certain aspects (Mathafeni Secondary).

As a drastic measure to change things, the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary stopped the payment of the security guard utilising the allocated Norms and Standards funds. Furthermore, Mathafeni Secondary indicated that he was getting support in departmental workshops that assisted him in improving his management of the infrastructure. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary utilised the skills acquired in mentoring and coaching for attending to problem solving issues. Furthermore, Principal of Kuhle Secondary participated in principals association as a deputy chairperson and a former secretary of the Association of Science Educators in South Africa, and networked with other schools and non-governmental organisations like the Vula Mathematics project, based at Hilton College. Departmental Heads at Thando Secondary received training on curriculum management. As part of this programme, departmental heads utilised the tools they obtained from the supporting school.

All of the seven principals considered the role of engaging the teachers emotionally in order to get the required results as of critical importance. The principals as initiators of the transformation process needed to change their mind-set and believe that there was a need to do something about the situation at hand. In this process, they needed to cast the vision to the stakeholders, the key amongst them being the teachers, who are the custodians of the subjects being taught at school (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). This needed a different form of thinking in order to come with a winning mentality that will drive towards achieving the same vision. The feedback that the principals encountered differed from site to site. At Kuhle Secondary, the principal observed great co-operation by the teachers when visited by

the subject advisors from the district. Furthermore, Kuhle Secondary noted the slow acceptance of change by some educators when it comes to managing the submission of their files for control by SMTs. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary also conducted one-on-one sessions with individual teachers to discuss work related issues. He noted that there were positive responses from Kuhle Secondary School teachers. Thus, the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary considered the role of mind-set in the whole process as critical, and he said:

Working on the educators mentally and developing a shared vision assisted the school a lot. Educators did not have a shared vision and working measures put in place, had to go; for example, one of my departmental heads left the school (Siyaphambili secondary).

At Thando Secondary, the process of working with the teachers involved changing their attitudes of teachers towards assessment. A challenge that could not be taken by teachers at Mathafeni Secondary led to seven teachers leaving the school due to pressure to perform.

I was able to develop teamwork atmosphere by being friendly and honest with them; by revealing the challenges faced by the school and the mistakes, which were committed by the school. Some of them requested permission to leave the school as they realised that they are not performing well at the secondary school and wanted to be placed at primary schools. Almost seven of them had to leave the school and we had to replace them with new educators (Mathafeni Secondary).

The resistance was experienced by all the schools concerned, although in different ways as will be indicated below. At Kuhle Secondary, some SMT members who had poorly performed in their subjects started to resist the change process, whereas the Principal of Kuhle Secondary, further indicated the improvement of results in Business Studies and Accounting to prove that the changes that were effected were effective, in spite of the resistance. At Mathafeni Secondary, seven educators sought permission to be placed in primary schools due to the pressure they felt was going to be required of them to perform at secondary school. The principals in these schools made it a point to take drastic actions and change the teachers who had previously underperformed in these subjects. This can be attested to by the Principal of Kuhle and Mathafeni Secondary schools. In both of these schools, reshuffling was undertaken as a strategy to turn things around. Principals were decisive in moving serial underperforming teachers to other areas, with the support of the Circuit Management. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary preferred to reshuffle the staff in order to deal with underperformance, whilst the

Principal of Mathafeni Secondary solicited the support of the Circuit Manager to transfer these underqualified teachers to the primary schools, where they were gainfully employed. It is obvious that amongst other factors, underperformance is caused by the under qualifications and lack of readiness to teach by some of the teachers as demonstrated in the reshuffling efforts. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary in his staff audit discovered that most of the educators at school were not qualified to teach certain subjects with primary qualifications.

There were almost 92% of educators who belonged to the primary school in terms of their qualifications (Mathafeni Secondary).

What is notable is that underperformance can be linked to poor performance as highlighted in the example of schools Kuhle, Mathafeni and Siyaphambili Secondary Schools. For instance, Siyaphambili Secondary gave feedback to all staff members and adopted a friendly approach. In that process, the school benefited from such interactions with departmental heads and staff members in implementing the school plan. An observation is that teachers were reacting positively when compared to when the turnaround strategy was introduced at Siyaphambili Secondary. At Thando Secondary, the principal gave both oral and written feedback to teachers besides the one he gave in formal meetings. As part of formalising the structured meeting between the Principal of Thando Secondary, the departmental heads and teachers concerned, signed the feedback form and he kept a copy of the recorded meeting. As a part of his response, the Principal of Thando Secondary issued an activity plan as part of addressing the gaps. These feedbacks are done transparently, whilst the Principal Thando indicated that some responses might be negative. The next section focuses specifically on the process of transforming schools to well- performance.

6.3.5 The process of turning around

Schools adopted various strategies to turn around schools. Some of the strategies included (a) a renewed focus on teaching and learning (b) Focus on monitoring of teaching and learning.

6.3.5.1 Renewed focus on teaching and learning

Renewed focus on teaching and learning occurred not in a similar fashion across all participating rural schools. One of the most populars way of demonstrating a new focus on

teaching and learning was the introduction of extra tuition sessions. Extra tuition programmes were introduced by the principals as part of changing the situation at the schools. By means of this extra tuition programmes, learners were required to attend morning and afternoon classes including attending on Saturdays (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Mbokazi, 2015). During those extra classes, teachers were requested to go an extra mile by coming early in the morning to conduct lessons. Secondly, teachers were assigned the task of providing support in the afternoon classes in the form of tutoring (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015). On Saturday classes, the teachers demonstrated commitment by offering classes starting from early in the morning until noon.

I would stay at the school until 18h00 to monitor extra tuition and check the work of the educators (Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary).

The demonstration by the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary that leadership by example can work can be seen in his commitment to monitoring extra tuition programme. There was a general agreement across all four schools that they needed more time for finishing the syllabus and revision; hence, the plans for extra tuition.

We agreed that we should complement our teaching with extra tuition after school and during the Saturdays. The school then conducted extra classes during weekends, in the morning and in the afternoons (Principal of Thando Secondary).

The role of the principal entailed changing what was not working at the four schools. In doing this, principals needed to have a common vision with the SMT and staff members on the envisaged changes in curriculum management. Consequently, extra tuition classes were introduced at all four schools as part of the new way of working towards completing the syllabus, particularly, in the most critical subjects such as Mathematics, Mathematics Literacy, Accounting, Economics, Physical Science, Geography, Tourism and Business Studies. The Principal of Thando Secondary worked on the educators using emotional intelligence and developing a shared vision. Another measure was the introduction of the supervised study in all the four secondary schools as part of ensuring that learners took advantage of the allocated time in revising and completing the syllabus. All of the seven principals introduced a commitment pact, which required that parents sign their commitment in supporting the learners to come early for morning, afternoon and Saturday classes.

The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary went an extra mile by rewarding the learners for good performance as part of the motivation. Furthermore, in Mathafeni Secondary School,

motivational speakers were invited to speak and encourage the learners. This also included the awarding of certificates to the teachers for good performance. At Kuhle Secondary School, clear roles were outlined for the SMT members in the management of the curriculum. This is elaborated by the Principal of Kuhle Secondary School in her report on how monitoring was conducted by the SMT on curricula issues. As part of that monitoring, she elaborated on the how they ensured that educators work in line with the ATPs for purposes of covering all the contents of the syllabus. At all of the four schools, the SMTs were required to ensure that all the required teacher curricula records were in place. As part of the monitoring plan, Kuhle Secondary School principal ensured that the SMTs had schedules of dates for checking the teacher files, management of teaching file and feedback to be provided to the teachers based on the findings. All the expectations from the DHs were specified by the principal, and the deputy principal's functions were clearly articulated by the principal. Kuhle Secondary had an advantage of having a deputy principal and three departmental heads due to its enrolment as compared to the three secondary schools, which only managed to have one or two DHs.

The Principal of Kuhle Secondary School outlined how the designed templates were used for purposes of monitoring. On the other hand, the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary School needed to establish the SMT on his arrival as part of changing the management strategy. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary School introduced the School Development Committee (SDC) in order to start working on issues of policy development. In this process, Mathafeni principal included all the members of the SGB and the relevant teachers in order to legitimise the process and create a sense of ownership. In terms of Operation Scaffold, Kuhle was paired with a performing secondary school, from which the SMT was mentored in policy development and effective management strategies (Bayeni, 2016).

Through this networking, the Mathafeni SMT members were empowered to improve their style of management. The principal conducted a workshop for the departmental heads on curriculum management, and this information was disseminated to the teachers. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary invited the English Subject Advisors to support the language departmental head every term of the year as part of the follow-ups. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary ensured that the teaching time was utilised for teaching and that learning was supervised and this was monitored by checking that periods were honoured and that learners were learning (Klar & Brewer, 2013). It was the responsibility of the SMT to monitor the work

of the educators. The support from the district subject advisors cannot be left unnoticed at Mathafeni Secondary. The principal of this school acknowledged and highlighted the significant role that subject advisors played in supporting teaching and learning in his school. This is what he said:

I checked on the curriculum coverage (curriculum tracking) that assist in ensuring that learners are ready to write any common test paper that is presented to them as they will be on par with the required academic standards. Exposing them to previous question papers and covering the syllabus assist learners greatly to write any paper that is presented.

The story is slightly different at Thando Secondary. This school did not get the kind of support expected from the subject advisors due to the distance to the school. At Thando Secondary, an internal system was developed for teachers to assist each other in subject matter issues. The Principal of Thando Secondary conducted curriculum management by encouraging the teachers to conduct a quarterly analysis of the results. Due to the shortage of departmental heads, the principal worked with senior and master teachers in implementing the curriculum management programme. These senior and master teachers assisted the departmental heads in subjects in which the latter were not conversant. The Principal of Thando Secondary used the designed tools to address the monitoring of the curriculum. The Principal at Thando Secondary closely monitored the work of the educators by checking curriculum coverage, the number of tasks covered and the learners' exercise books to check whether the learners work was in line with what was stated in the educators ATP. As part of her commitment, the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary would stay until late to monitor the supervised study.

The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary restricted the curriculum package by reducing the number of subjects, which did not add value to the curriculum stream. The same was also done by the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary who decided to reduce the number of subjects that contributed positively to the school.

With regards to curriculum, some subjects were not assisting the school but only creating gaps in terms of subject packages. These subjects were piling additional work on the educators' duty loads but not assisting learners; for example, subjects like Biblical Study (Mathafeni Secondary).

Litearature supports some of the strategies that school principals used in the process of turning the schools around. In a study conducted by Steyn (2018), the school employed an induction

programme for the new educators to inform them about the school's goals and expectations. Teachers had to attend workshops organised by the Education Department. In addition, they had to attend in-house developmental workshops which were organised by the school to address the needs of the educators (Steyn, 2018). In another study conducted by Maringe, Masinire and Nkambule (2015), the willingness of the educators to work outside teaching hours features as one of the important factors driving positive learner performance in the sampled schools. They are supported by Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015), who revealed in their study that aspects like extra teaching hours and the twinning of schools played an important role in the improvement of the results for the underperforming schools in the deprived contexts (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015). The findings from these studies support some of the strategies that were employed by the principals in the rural areas.

6.3.5.2 Focus on monitoring teaching and learning

The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary focused on protecting effective teaching and learning working in collaboration with departmental heads to check the educators' files and the ATPs. Furthermore, Siyaphambili Secondary forged relations with schools, which had performing teachers to assist his teachers with the subject content. Furthermore, the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary ensured that the work of the DHs was monitored. There was clarity on the work of the Principal at Siyaphambili Secondary. This involved amongst others, checking the curriculum coverage and monitoring the work of the teachers whilst she is also teaching English in Grades 10 and Grade 11. There is emphasis on following the prescripts of the KZN Circular No. 41 of 2012 in the management of the curriculum.

The Principal of Kuhle Secondary combined both the support and the praises to teachers for excellent work conducted. Furthermore, Kuhle Secondary underperforming teachers were paired with teachers from performing schools. As part of the incentive, Kuhle Secondary provided performing educators' payment for transport for their support to educators of Kuhle Secondary. The principal bought study guides and CDs as part of Learner Teacher support material. On the other side, the Siyaphambili principal created some expectations for these teachers such as role modelling. Furthermore, the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary ensured that there was support from the District Sub-directorates in areas where the school needed support. At Siyaphambili Secondary, educators adopted needy learners and donated meals for

these learners as part of addressing the issue of deprivations (Setlhodi-Mohapi & Lebeloane, 2014).

At Mathafeni Secondary, the principal was involved in some kind of intensive teach-test programme in the gateway failing subjects, which were Mathematics, Physical Science and Accounting, for purposes of monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning. All the seven principals highlighted the importance of increasing the intensity of monitoring teaching and learning as a way of improving performance.

The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary prioritised networking amongst the teachers in order for them to share their teaching expertise and learn from one another. Besides that, SMT members at Mathafeni Secondary were empowered to network and they returned the favour by capacitating the teachers. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary had benefitted from his networking with performing schools. He introduced some of those ideas within the school by means of staff development. The Principal of Mathafeni considered that the intensive school programme of monitoring to have greatly contributed to learner readiness for writing common tests. At Mafahleni Secondary, learners controlled the period register to check teacher arrival and departure in classrooms whilst the principal checked the period registers. At Mathafeni Secondary, leadership was given to the Representative Council of Learners (RCLs) to hand over the period registers to the Teacher Liaison Officer (TLO) who collated and sent them to the principal. As part of addressing deprivations, at Siyaphambili Secondary, learners who misbehaved were suspended and parents were required to produce their identity documents as proof that they were the legitimate guardians or parents when they came to school to handle their matters.

6.3.6 The role of school-based stakeholder in turning around the school

The process of transforming the schools came at different levels with certain emphasis by all the seven principals in the schools. The common denominator is that all these principals in these rural schools were not satisfied about the *status quo*. In spite of the diverse approaches they adopted, there were common areas they identified as priority areas. For instance, staffing was regarded as an area that needed the attention of the school principal; hence, the initiative that was taken by the Principal of Kuhle Secondary to change those SMT members who poorly

performed in their subjects. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary on the other side probed into the issue of qualifications of the teachers. He did this to ensure that all teachers were qualified to teach the subjects given to them. After that exercise, there was staff reshuffling, which affected subjects such as Accounting, Physical Sciences, Maths and Geography. Furthermore, the Principal of Kuhle Secondary conducted an audit of staff qualifications. The outcome of these changes at Kuhle Secondary were positive.

The process of auditing the educators' qualifications and moving in new educators assisted learners because most of these subjects were forming combinations and learners who failed two or more fail the entire examination, thus resulting in the overall underperformance from the school (Kuhle Secondary).

The principals started to initiate the process by which stakeholders would take ownership of the examinations results; this can be seen at Kuhle and Mathafeni Secondary Schools where principals were new in the schools. A process of carefully analysing the results was initiated as the starting point. This was done in order to ensure that whatever discussions held were based on facts. In order to ensure that all the key stakeholders were part of the process, the principals first, involved the closest stakeholder; the SMT. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary engaged the departmental heads. These were supposed to hand over their subjects to new teachers, whereas the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary prioritised the issue of examinations and the assessment processes, which were a critical factor for leading teaching and learning. This is what the principal said:

I had to work on the school's turnaround process, which was also to address the issue of the examinations and the assessment process (Siyaphambili Secondary).

The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary initiated strong working relations with the parents in order to address issues at school as part of turning things around (Jensen, 2013). As part of the process, the Siyaphambili principal worked with the Department for support from Sub-Directorates. Learners were informed of the importance of staying in their classrooms at all times studying. The role of the principal was to provide support on decision-making and facilitate teambuilding activities at Siyaphambili Secondary. On the other hand, Thando Secondary involved the parents and other stakeholders who have an interest in school activities. At Thando Secondary, the principal entered into a consultative process with a variety of stakeholders as part of identifying issues leading to failure and seeking solutions.

The meeting with the SMT after which we called the educators because they were also supposed to contribute to the understanding about why underperformance occurred in their subjects. We also did not like being referred to as underperforming or T60 school, and being called to account as the principal of the 'YoYo' school (Thando Secondary).

The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary engaged the SGB, the teachers and the previous principals of the school. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary met all the required stakeholders to take the plans as part of the process of consultations.

All of the seven principals worked jointly with other stakeholders in embarking on the process of tuning the schools around. Such a move is consistent with current literature in educational leadership and management (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). All of the principals were initiators of the process of turning the school around. This demonstrates the responsibility of the principal as the leader in the school (Chikoko, 2018; Gillet, Clark & Donoghue, 2016; Steyn, 2018). At Kuhle Secondary, the principal took responsibility for engaging various stakeholders; these included the SMT, the SGB, the parents, the learners and other interested parties. However, at Mathafeni Secondary, the principal had engagements with the previous principals in order to get an understanding of the issues at play at school. In these inclusive meetings, the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary included the SMT, staff members, the teachers, the parents and the SGB chairperson as relevant structures to be brought on board (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). This consultation process assisted the Principal of Thando Secondary to get the support of the Shembe religious parents, without which it would have been difficult to roll out the plan for Saturday classes. The Principal of Siyaphambili further elaborated on the plans as follows:

The plan clearly articulated the objectives, the targets and timeframes in order to ensure that the plan was successful. The following requirements were stated, educators had to go to class on time and be prepared; class representatives were asked to control the period register. The principal was responsible for the control of the period registers. If an educator was not going to class on time, he/she will be called into the principal's office to explain why such an act happened and re-commit that such an act will not happen again as formal disciplinary process will be instituted in terms of Employment of the Educator's Act of 1998 as amended (Siyaphambili Secondary).

The conceptions of the turnaround plans were communicated widely within the schools, and wide consultation happened. The principal did this as part of ensuring that the turnaround strategy and vision were understood by all and that there was ownership of the process. The plans that were conceived from these consultative meetings became what I can call ‘clear marching orders’ for a new trajectory. The consultative process shows the power of sharing the vision by the leadership of the school with all those who have a role to play in turning around the school culture (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2012). In the next section, I focus on the role that SMTs played in the transformation process.

6.3.6.1 The role of SMTs as a collective in the transformation process

The cogwheel in the process of transformation is the SMT (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2012). SMT members play a critical transformative agenda in turning the performance of a school. As noted in the previous paragraph, some principals played a critical role in ensuring that their SMT members performed to the expectations. For instance, the Principal of Siyaphambili conducted orientation sessions for the newly appointed teachers before handing them over to departmental heads. At Siyaphambili Secondary, departmental heads were responsible for monitoring curricular work of teachers by checking their files and adherence to the ATPs. They also assisted with the tracking of curriculum implementation by teachers and checked learner workbooks and focus areas. Effective teaching and learning is paramount; hence, it is important for the departmental heads to check the educators’ files and the ATPs to ascertain a clear picture about work that has been covered and check learners’ exercise books to see if there was any correlation from the educators recordings and what appeared on the learners exercise books.

The SMT members were given the responsibility of supporting the novice Grade 12 teachers at Kuhle Secondary. It must be noted that the schools in the deep rural areas were experiencing difficulties within the SMT team, due to incapacity and wrong allocation of departmental head to the discipline. In this instance, I can cite a story of Siyaphambili Secondary school, where the departmental head left the school due to non-performance and a wrong placement. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary assigned clear roles of curriculum monitoring. As part of monitoring at Kuhle Secondary the departmental heads checked the teacher curricula files and verified the progress in learner workbooks. All of the above work is assigned to SMTs as part of curriculum management (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2012).

At Siyaphambili Secondary, great support was given to the teachers as part of the rotation system based on performance. The role of the departmental head was to monitor this process and guide the new teachers offering subjects in Grade 12. Teachers were given liberty at Siyaphambili Secondary on issues that are of benefit to the school. The role of the Siyaphambili Secondary principal was to provide support and promote team building amongst staff members. This view is supported by literature reviewed in Chapter Two (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2012). The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary assigned monitoring of educators' curriculum files to the Departmental Heads (DHs). The other role assigned to DHs was to track the implementation of the curriculum by verifying learner workbooks. The role of the principal at Siyaphambili Secondary was to check the work of DHs. The Principal of Thando Secondary initiated a plan for a turnaround strategy as espoused in the work of Leithwood, Louis and Anderson (2012).

Secondly, the principal proposed a plan to have extra tuition programme for Grade 12 learners starting at 07h00 in the morning and finishing at 14h00 in the afternoon. The Principal of Thando Secondary also initiated Saturday and vacation classes for Grade 12 learners. A monitoring schedule was implemented by the Principal of Thando Secondary for the Grade 12 extra tuition lessons. Another responsibility attached to the principal was the monitoring of the period registers. At Siyaphambili Secondary, the principal took responsibility for networking with high performing teachers to assist his teachers in content and lesson presentation. In order to monitor class attendance, the Principal of Thando Secondary ensured that by controlling the period register. At Thando Secondary, the principal organised that DHs were trained at the neighbouring school on curriculum management. The SMTs at Thando Secondary were assigned the task of monitoring the work of the educators, which entailed controlling the roster indicating the submission dates.

Another critical strategy contributing to the turnaround at these schools was the improvement of the monitoring and evaluation in the schools as highlighted in literature review (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2012). The issue of monitoring and evaluation is noted as amongst others one of the key factors which the principals considered as an area of improvement. In schools where there was poor monitoring by the school leadership, there was no control of the quality of work done by both the teacher and the learners. Other drastic steps that were introduced to turn things around was the strict and scheduled monitoring of the teachers' and the learners' work. There was

commonality amongst all participants in terms of the importance of teaching and learning monitoring systems.

I have noted the significance of establishing and sharing a common vision for the transformed school as depicted by the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary. Another interesting observation I have made in Siyaphambili Secondary is the notion of working on the mindset of the teachers if one wants to see fundamental change. As part of ensuring that there was basic functionality of the schools, the principals focused on the basic issues that make the school to be functional (Jensen, 2013). This is a point supported by all the principals of the participating schools; they knew that in order to stabilise teaching and learning they needed to ensure that all the basic necessities for such are in place in the schools.

At Mathafeni Secondary, the principal ensured that SMT members monitored the first periods on Mondays to check teacher attendance in classroom, whilst the deputy principal checked for loiterers in the toilets. Working on the educators mentally and developing a shared vision assisted the school a lot (Jensen, 2013). Basic functionality of the school is the key to restoring the culture of teaching and learning (Jensen, 2013). In the next section, I move on to focus on the role that the district played in supporting effective teaching and learning as part of ensuring that school improved their performance.

6.3.7 The role of district officials in supporting effective teaching and learning

Some of the schools highlighted the value of the support from the district, which contributed to the process of change and success in the schools. The principals took it upon themselves to ensure that a plan was in place to implement the necessary changes in the schools. Leadership demonstrated by the principals made the task of the district easy in providing support where it required. It also shows that the main role players who are the catalysts for change are those at the school site; that is, the principal, the SMT and the teachers. While school leaders were the catalysts, the district undertook various initiatives to assist underperforming schools. These included the strategy of twinning underperforming schools with the performing ones. They also encouraged networking among different schools and circuits. The twinning intervention was called ‘Operation Scaffold’. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary acknowledged the contribution of such an initiative to the school development. In terms of this programme, the

performing secondary schools were required to provide guidance, mentoring and support to the principal of underperforming secondary schools including the area of policy development. In this instance, Mathafeni Secondary was twinned with a best performing school for purposes exchanging and sharing their experiences. This benefitted Mathafeni Secondary, particularly in the area of policy development. In highlighting the support he received, he had this to say:

We then started to make the turnaround strategy; my school was paired with the school that is situated in Northdale. That programme was called the Scaffolding programme. It paired the best performing schools with the underperforming ones. The school had almost 92% of educators who belonged to the primary school in terms of their qualifications. These educators were teaching major subjects; the ones which are perceived as the difficult subjects. For example, one had only the Matric qualification and was teaching the Life Sciences. The DH for Languages was also leading the Commerce Department without any background or experience in any Commercial subjects. I had to rectify these challenges through working closely with my Circuit Manager (Mathafeni Secondary).

The extract above, indicates the support that the school received from the district in the form of Scaffolding programme in which the school was twinned with the performing school and the support the school received from the Circuit Managers to address issues of staffing at the school as one of the aspects in the turnaround plan.

Networking among various schools and circuits largely through clustering was another strategy that paid tangible dividends for the schools. For instance, the Principal of Thando Secondary reported that they received support from the cluster of Mvoti Circuit, which belongs to Umzinyathi District, whereas, in reality they belonged to a different circuit, Mpofana Circuit. The location of the school made it easier for Thando Secondary to work with their neighbouring Mvoti Circuit. At Siyaphambili Secondary, there was a close working relationship with District Sub-directorates. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary, solicited the support of the Department of Community Safety and Liaison in order to assist where there were faction fights which were disturbing the school. At Mathafeni Secondary, the SMT and the principal used the curriculum monitoring tools from the performing school. Highlighting the usefulness of the networking initiatives, the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary had this to say:

The school had very few resources and some means were made to share them equitably among the learners. The principal will request neighbouring schools to support his schools with their additional textbooks. The school was also able to get additional textbooks by trading with the neighbouring schools to get textbooks for those subjects, which had been phased out and then requesting the neighbouring schools to give us books for certain subjects. For example, we exchanged the Agricultural Science textbooks with the neighbouring school and they gave us certain books. I was able to coordinate all these processes with the support of the SGB. I also approached the other secondary school to assist us with photocopying.

This extract highlights the mitigating strategies employed by the Principal of Mathafeni after realising that the school had limited resources whilst there was a need to turnaround its academic performance trajectory. While officials from the district office received some accolades from principals, it also emerged that some officials who should be playing a significant role in supporting curriculum delivery were actually not performing this task as they should. For instance, an ironic scenario was picked up by one of the principals that subject advisors were the least supportive, and the terrain to the schools received the blame from these officials as excuse for not visiting rural schools as frequently as they should. This notable gap was identified by the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary when he said:

There are no visits by the subject advisors to this school due to the inaccessibility issues. Local roads are treacherous and unusable on rainy weather conditions.

The issue of inaccessible roads adds further to the deprived conditions in which these schools are located. The literature has highlighted the importance of the twining of schools as one of the strategies, which are useful in turning around the schools performances. In a study conducted by Bhengu and Mthembu (2014), it showed that if an underperforming school is twinned with a performing school, the underperforming school could benefit in terms of learning about and embracing best practice. Their study revealed that the performing school prioritised certain practices such as the monitoring of teaching and learning, the emphasis on the attainment of the performance targets, the articulation of clear expectations to the teachers and learners and positive school culture. The strategy of twining was used by the district to support underperforming schools as articulated by the Principals of Mathafeni and Thando Secondary respectively. It assisted the schools because they were able to learn from the high performing schools and that eventually assisted them to turnaround the performance of their

schools. In the next section, I move on to explicate the intersection of deprivations and teaching and learning.

6.3.8 The relationship between deprivations and teaching and learning

The notion of the intersection between deprivations and teaching and learning has been established in the literature (Chikoko 2018; Maringe, Masinire & Nkambule, 2015). At Kuhle Secondary, it was reported that there was a high rate of unemployment, low income among parents who worked in sugar-cane farms, Rainbow Chicken factories, forestry, vegetable farms and others being domestic workers. Some of these employment opportunities are temporary and seasonal. Kuhle Secondary school is located in a place without a local health clinic; people survive on the mobile clinic, which visits once a week. These deprivations affect learners, as they do not have adequate learning support materials beside the ones issued by the Department. As learning is supposed to continue at home, these learners do not receive adequate support because some of them stay with their grandparents and siblings. Siyaphambili Secondary is poverty stricken, and this has resulted in teachers adopting some of the learners. Additionally, at Siyaphambili Secondary, there is a high level of illiteracy coupled with a lack of parental support to learners. Siyaphambili Secondary highlighted the plight of learners who walked more than 10km to and from school and thus ended up renting accommodation spaces in the nearby cottages. At Siyaphambili Secondary, learners stayed in cottages without any form of parental supervision; hence, the level of pregnancy was high, and it negatively affected learning by girl children. The gesture of teachers to adopt some needy learners and donating meals has greatly assisted at Siyaphambili Secondary. The idea of learners staying around the school at Siyaphambili Secondary has its own pros and cons.

Mathafeni Secondary reported that the learners at school had young parents. In the 1990s the Mathafeni community was greatly affected by the scourge of political fights which resulted in a number of parents being killed (Setlhodi-Mohapi & Lebeloane, 2014). Consequently, in the Mathafeni community there were many orphaned children and child headed households. Another problem at Mathafeni is the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS amongst learners, which affects learner performance and this resulted in high learner dropout rates (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2015; Mbokazi, 2015). The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary initiated working relationship with both the local and city health clinics to undertake health education at school.

Other partnerships involved NGOs, which worked closely with the Department of Health in providing assistance to Mathafeni Secondary learners with food parcels. This intervention has improved the nutrition condition of Mathafeni Secondary learners who were taking antiviral drugs medication. Teachers at Mathafeni also supported those learners by giving them food surpluses from the National School Nutrition Programme. Parents at Mathafeni Secondary had two sources of employment, mainly the farms and at the shops at Richmond. The parents found it difficult to fund Mathafeni Secondary learners with uniform from these meagre wages.

6.3.8.1 Learner discipline

At all four schools, learner discipline was attended to in order to bring stability and create conducive conditions for effective teaching and learning. At Siyaphambili Secondary, the principal introduced a system, which required that learners who had committed transgressions to call their parents or guardians to school, with be proof that the person who was accompanying the learner was indeed a parent. According to the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary, learner discipline is a problem at schools. This is how he put it:

Learners who are over age are the ones who are ill disciplined. They are few and are enrolled in Grade 8. They are progressed because of age cohort (Siyaphambili Secondary).

The issue of learner discipline is also a serious problem at Mathafeni Secondary.

Our learners were not disciplined and there were even assaulting educators prior to my arrival at the school. There was an incident in which a learner tried to stab me whilst I was disciplining him but I was able to overcome that situation.

This led to the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary strengthening the policy on the management of absenteeism by the learners and the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Learners. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary recommended that going the extra mile by visiting the homes of the learners has had a positive impact. He further initiated a positive reward system by awarding the learners for good performance.

6.3.9 Strategies principals used to mitigate the negative effects of deprivations on teaching and learning

At Siyaphambili Secondary, discipline was enforced and when learners deviated from the norm; their parents were called and to confirm their credentials as legitimate parents. Siyaphambili Principal made them to produce their identity documents. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary initiated strong partnership with the parents in order to support learners in their work. Mathafeni Secondary reported high level of absenteeism due to learner sicknesses and other household chores that learners needed to undertake. The Principal of Mathafeni had observed that some learners were becoming increasingly rude and lacked motivation due to the lack of parental guidance and support at home. An initiative was undertaken by the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary, which entailed establishing the Mkhobeni Care Committee to handle a variety of social ills. The Mathafeni Care Committee was able to enforce the adoption of indigent learners to get uniforms and to monitor learner progress at school. Whenever, Mathafeni Secondary had surplus food, such surpluses were given to these learners. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary tightened the school policy to control learner absenteeism. In support of his assertion, the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary had this to say:

Some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which work closely with the Department of Health also assisted the learners with food parcels. This was assisting needy learners and those taking antiretroviral drugs to have food so that they will be able to take their medication. We also support those learners by giving them food, which remained after the surplus daily feeding process. It assists learners to eat in the afternoon and then take their pills.

The support given to the needy learners to ameliorate the effects of deprivations in the process of teaching and learning was also done at Siyaphambili Secondary school. The principal indicated that efforts were made to assist learners as he said:

Poverty is rife in the community and educators end up adopting learners whom they support by providing food and clothing.

The Principal of Kuhle Secondary reported ill-discipline amongst the learners and factional fighting in the community as prevalent. The faction fights were spilling over into the school premises. These fights were negatively affected the school's turnaround plan because learners were disturbed and were not able to concentrate on their studies as outsiders would enter the school premises during breaks and attack the learners. Its impact was felt as the principal indicated that:

At some stage, the school experienced a drop in enrolment because of faction fights as parents removed their children over safety concerns. The fights occurred on regular basis causing the school to call learners' parents and reading them the school's Learners Code of Conduct and informing them about the consequences for any breach of it. Fighting among the learners (boys), who at times would fight over a certain girl, and then friends and relatives will join the fight, which will end up in two camps.

The Principal of Kuhle Secondary indicated that the school had to try to address the challenge of faction fighting among the boys. It initiated a number of interventions, which were aimed at addressing the situation. At first, the school reviewed its Learners Code of Conduct and ensured that all learners were exposed to and understood its content. Those learners who misbehaved and transgress the Learners Code of Conduct, would be subjected to disciplinary processes and the school would either write to the provincial Head of Department (HOD) and recommend expulsion or, as per parents agreement, the school would write a letter to the parent and ask him /her to withdraw his/her child from the school and find him/her space somewhere else. The latter was mainly used to avert harm, which could result in the delay by the provincial Head of Department in responding to the school's recommendation, as it is usually the case. Secondly, the school initiated a dialogue between parents and learners to build relationships and received support from Ward Councillor where the school is located. Thirdly, the school invited the Department of Community Safety and Liaison to provide support concerning faction fights. At times, the school would intervene and assist the parents in finding an alternative school for the learner. This was done by phoning the principals of the neighbouring secondary schools. Lastly, the school utilised the services of the social workers and ask them to provide assistance by finding an alternative school for the learner.

The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary reported an incident of a learner who tried to stab him whilst instituting discipline. The principal believed that a principal needed to go beyond the call of duty as he did by visiting learners' homes. As part of positive discipline, the principal used reinforcements as some form of punishment, which was aimed at re-enforcing positive learner behaviour. This motivation assisted the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary to encourage those learners to improve performance.

6.4 New cultures that emerged after the change process

All four rural principals mentioned some normal daily processes that they undertook to demonstrate the functionality of the school. For instance, the Principal of Kuhle Secondary took responsibility for conducting gate checks in order to monitor the school uniform. Discipline was enforced as the principal, for example, sent home those learners whose hair was not combed. At Kuhle Secondary, there was a routine of Monday SMT meeting. As a matter of routine, at Kuhle Secondary, departmental meetings were held on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Fridays. On the other hand, at Siyaphambili Secondary, the principal indicated that the school started at 7h30 for all the grades except for Grade 12 that started at 07h00. The school held morning assemblies, before learners departed to their respective classes. Grade 12 learners go the extra mile by having morning, afternoon and weekend classes. The Principal of Thando Secondary indicated that learners were interested in sport such as soccer and netball, inspite of the lack of facilities for playing such sports. Another area of interest for the learners is participation in traditional and cultural activities. However, on a normal day at Thando Secondary, teaching and learning was supervised by the SMT. The school day normally started at 07h00-08h00 for Grade 12 learners. The Principal of Thando Secondary had a schedule for teachers to monitor and control the gate. Whenever an SMT member is not involved in a morning class with Grade 12, he/she is also deployed to conduct gate control for latecomers. The SMT has scheduled Monday and Friday meetings to discuss teaching and learning and coverage of the ATP. A normal school day at Thando Secondary started at 08h00 and ended at 15h00 for all the other grades besides Grade 12, which has a different time to accommodate the extra tuition. For Grade 12, school time started at 07h30 and ended at 16h30.

6. 5 Guidance to principals in underperforming schools

All of seven principals have some lessons to share with principals in underperforming schools. For instance, at Siyaphambili Secondary, they expressed a belief amongst other things, that there needed to be a way of changing the mind-set of teachers. Furthermore, Siyaphambili principal prioritises commitment to the school functionality. According to Mathafeni principal, team building is critical between the teachers and the SGB, to foster an element of trust between the principal, the parents and the teachers. Another form of advice is that the teachers needed to take the initiative to work with DHs and subject advisors on curricula areas of development. According to the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary, innovation was needed in deprived schools. This school advocated that the principal should take the lead in the results analysis

and plan for subject improvement. Mathafeni Secondary believed that the learners needed to be empowered to analyse their own results in the form of graphs.

At Kuhle Secondary, the principal considered these as the advice for turning around a non-performing school by identifying the critical areas that lead to underperformance. Secondly, the principal supported the idea of working in collaboration with SMTs in formulating the turnaround strategy. The Principal of Thando Secondary saw the role of the principal as that of curriculum manager. However, the DHs needed to be hands-on in working with teachers and learners on curricula issues. This principal went further to advise that schools needed to work with senior and master teachers. In small schools, the Principal of Thando Secondary believed that senior and master teachers could be used to assist as DHs in subjects/learning areas they were not conversant with. The role of the principal was to keep his file where the work of DHs' and the teachers' work is recorded. A schedule to control teacher submissions is needed for the DHs and the teachers. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary encouraged the DHs to engage in discussing the analysis of results after every quarterly assessment. This analysis need to be followed by the devising of strategies to address the poor performance in those failed subjects.

The Principal of Thando Secondary offered advice, which included the early start of extra tuition programmes from Grade 10 and Grade 11, which needed to be discussed with parents to get their buy-in. Furthermore, the principal believed that rural schools should be given a chance to choose the subject packages that are relevant to the community. She advocated for fewer subject packages in the schools. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary said that it is important for the school principal to work on the educators' emotional intelligence, as this is critical to everything. Furthermore, this principal believed that the principal needed to dedicate most of his/her time at school. The principal needed to monitor the educators' work and the teachers must account for their performance to the principal.

6. 6 Conclusion

This chapter summarised the data obtained from the school principals who were leading and managing schools in the rural areas. The analysis generated ten themes that I have presented in this chapter. I have infused literature to enhance and situate the participants' views and experiences within a broader international context. The next chapter attempts to provide a clear

picture about patterns in the manner in which principals turned around the performance in their respective schools.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANALYSING PATTERNS THAT EMERGED FROM THE DATA PRESENTATION

7.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, that is, Chapter Five and Chapter Six, I presented what I can call the first level of analysis where I made a descriptive analysis of the stories from the participants. Such descriptions of the principals' experiences and explanations about how they managed to turn around their schools' situation were organised according to various themes. In Chapter Five, I presented perspectives from principals who were managing schools located in the peri-urban areas and served informal settlements. In Chapter Six, I presented perspectives from principals who were managing schools located in the rural areas, which were under the control of traditional leaders. In this chapter I move on to present an across site analysis with a view to establishing if there is any emerging pattern in the manner in which principals in the study turned around their schools. In doing this, I draw from the data that I discussed in Chapters Five and Chapter Six. In the discussion, I infuse literature and theoretical framework that I presented and discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three respectively.

The purpose of this level of analysis is to move from a mere description of the case or cases as presented in the previous two chapters to an explanation of why what appears to be the case is the case. Drawing from this discussion, it is evident that in this chapter I will attempt to explain for example, why principals turn around their schools' underperformance the way they do given their circumstances. In other words, as I have highlighted in the previous two chapters, how deprivations, which I argue constitute turbulent conditions, affect their leadership. I have also explained why they mitigate their effects the way they do. Before I embark on deep discussion about all these important factors, I begin this chapter by outlining similarities and differences among the participating schools, as well as, in the similarities and differences in the communities in which they are located.

7.2 Similarities and differences between and among communities

In this section, I present the observed similarities and differences between the communities served by the participating schools. The discussion will also explore the issues of turbulence

as they find expression in the research sites. Their discussion will be looking at similar patterns across the research sites and look at unique cases as they unfolded in a particular site.

These seven schools serve learners from the communities affected and afflicted by the myriad of deprivations, which conspire to affect the quality of education provided in the schools. Some of the common deprivations noted amongst these communities include the fact that both communities suffer from high rate of unemployment. Job opportunities are minimal, and most community members are not working and they survive through the state social grant. Even those who are employed, have seasonal jobs. In rural areas like these, community members mainly work in sugar cane plantations, farms, Rainbow chicken factories (some have closed), vegetable farms, certain local homes (as domestic workers), depend on livestock and subsistence farming and in the local projects like the expanded public works project. Community members in the informal settlements also faced conditions of seasonal work opportunities in the factories, shops, domestic work in the neighbouring suburban areas and local projects like the expanded works project. These jobs pay community members low wages and salaries, which are not adequate to assist them to keep up with their children's schooling demands although all these schools are no fee-paying schools. This means that parents do not pay school fees in these schools. Even though parents are not expected to pay school fees, they are expected to pay for educational excursions for their children and to pay for certain educational resources like certain study guides and other additional educational resources.

Data presented in Chapters Five and Chapter Six indicate that some parents are failing to pay for other educational resources and educational excursions for their children and this affects their children's education. In essence, poverty is rife in these two communities and schools are benefiting from the Department's Nutrition programme in which learners are fed on a daily basis. The profile of these communities reflects the contention by various scholars on the conditions faced by deprived communities (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Chikoko, 2018; Maringe, *et al.*, 2015; Makhasane & Khanare, 2018; Mbokazi, 2015).

Most families are headed by children and there are various reasons for such as some areas (rural and peri-urban) have been ruined by political violence which occurred during the 1990s, and destroyed families and left others orphaned. These communities are also afflicted by the scourge of HIV/AIDS epidemic and other diseases. Such diseases have left some families being

headed by the children, who have to look after their siblings while also having to contend with their own schooling demands. Some families are headed by grandparents as their parents have perished through the HIV/ AIDS epidemic and other diseases. Some parents have moved to other areas in search of job opportunities, and they live behind young children who cannot fend for themselves. For example, in some rural areas, fathers have gone to Gauteng to look for employment in the mines. Families in these communities mainly depend on social grants (as cited by the principals of Phumelela, Kuhle, Kuyasa, Thando and Siyaphambili secondary schools).

These communities also suffer from social ills like the high rate of teenage pregnancy among the youth. This is affecting their schooling opportunities, as they have to break at some stage and later return to school to be faced with a daunting task of catching up on what had been taught during their absence. These pregnancies also affect the learners' attendance, as they do not attend on regular basis. Furthermore, the unplanned pregnancies exposed them to diseases and put on them a further burden to their poor family situations. Crime is also rife in these communities; school properties are stolen by the members of the communities and as these schools are no fee, they are unable to employ security guards and they also do not get them from the department because of financial constraints.

There are issues, which are more prevalent in rural areas and not featuring dominantly in the peri- urban communities (informal settlements). Water supply is a challenge in some rural schools. They have to rely on the water tanks and its delivery through the water tankers from the Local Municipalities. The supply is not reliable as water tankers do not deliver as expected. Learners in the rural communities also have to travel long distances (about ten kilometres) to and from school and this affects the programme of extra classes as learners cannot remain behind and then travel long distances alone without their peers (the principal of Siyaphambili Secondary revealed that learners are advised to look for accommodation closer to the school). The provision of health services is also a problem as health clinics are not available and the communities have to rely on the mobile clinics which arrive on certain days (as indicated by the principals of: Kuhle, Siyaphambili, Mathafeni and Thando secondary schools). Faction fights are also common in these areas and they are triggered by disputes over the stealing of livestock, quarrel over girls by boys of different clans or areas and can be caused by copying a particular song perceived to be belonging to a particular area. Faction fights have an adverse effect on the attendance of the learners, especially the boy children as they are assaulted and

could be killed (revealed by the Principals of Kuhle and Thando secondary schools). The Principals of Kuhle, Siyaphambili, Thando and Mathafeni Secondary Schools intimated that there were no libraries in the rural locations where their schools are located. Learners from their schools had to go to nearby towns if they wanted something from the library. That is not easy as it means either going to Greytown for the learners of Thando, or going to Pietermaritzburg for the learners of Siyaphambili or going to Richmond for the learners of Okuhle and Mathafeni. The main challenge is the lack of money from the parents to pay for transport to these facilities.

There are also deprivations, which feature more dominantly in the peri –urban areas compared to the rural areas. In the peri- urban areas, communities have migrant labourers who settle in these areas in search of job opportunities. Some of them are undocumented and their children have to attend schools where they live. These children end up being undocumented as well and when schools admit them, they have to give them time to organise their documents and that ends up affecting the schools’ financial allocations, as the system does not recognise undocumented learners. The major challenge is that they end up staying in the overcrowded places, which do not give them adequate opportunities to do their schoolwork. As their parents are looking for job opportunities, at times they leave them behind with relatives and move to other places and this deprives these learners adequate support from the families (these have been highlighted by the Principals of Kuyasa and Thuthuka secondary schools). The other distinctive features of deprivations in this area include the high crime rate, which impacts negatively on the learners schooling outcomes and drug abuse by the learners. For instance, the Principal of Thuthuka Secondary revealed that some learners attended school just to sell drugs and then leave during the break time. The selling of drugs was severely affecting other learners in class as it affected their concentration span and their behaviour. Scholars converge on the view that schools facing multiple deprivations require certain forms of leadership that can steer the school through and ensure that it performs well despite the challenges (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Chikoko, 2018; Maringe & Moletsane, 2015; Maringe, *et al.*, 2015; Mbokazi, 2015).

During the process of turning around their underperforming schools, the principals of these schools had to endure some form of turbulent conditions. The principals from the peri–urban and rural settlement had to address learner discipline, which was impacting negatively on the schools culture. At Mathafeni Secondary school, the principal was attacked by an unruly

learner, who was inciting others to revolt against the educators who were not from the area. Threats against the principals from both areas were revealed by the Principals of Thuthuka and Siyaphambili secondary schools. When the Principal of Siyaphambili took over the principalship, the school had performed well once in two years. However, its good performance was clouded by allegations that learners had cheated during the examinations and the Department decided to send a permanent monitor to the school. The permanent monitor would stay at the school for the full duration of the paper, especially the National Senior certificate examination. After being exposed to strict monitoring, the school went back to underperformance for three consecutive years (2012-2014) and the principal was moved to a primary school. Thereafter, the new principal of Siyaphambili was appointed and he introduced a number of changes through the turnaround plan. It can be argued that some of the new changes could have irked some people; hence, he was attacked around the school premises but had to soldier on with parental and community support.

The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary school, which is serving learners from the informal settlement also received death threats from the people who accused him of creating unfavourable and oppressive conditions at school. His assertion was that they were not happy because their merchants (certain learners) could no longer sell drugs with ease because of the strict conditions, which he introduced as part of the turnaround plan. Other turbulent conditions varied from rural settlements compared to the peri urban settlement.

The principals of two rural schools, Thando and Okuhle Secondary, had to endure the challenge brought by the faction fights between learners from different areas. These faction fights were spilling over to the school premises as some boys who were not schooling, would visit the school and stay around to support boy learners from their area. That was affecting other boy learners as they could not concentrate and attend extra- classes as that was exposing them to a dangerous situation. Faction fights also created insecurity for the educators and affected extra-tuition programme during the weekend as indicated by the Principal of Thando secondary school. She stated that educators in her school, had to attend classes as a group and if some educators were not going to attend classes, they had to be cancelled because of security concerns. At Mathafeni, the principal had to address infrastructural challenges as the school toilets were not in good condition and the school Nutrition programme was not correctly administered as some learners were not fed because the service provider was not delivering food according to the specification, resulting in the delivery of less food to the school and

shortages for the learners. In the next section, I move on to discuss similarities and differences among the schools.

7.3 Similarities and differences between and among participating schools

In this section, I map out observed similarities and differences between the participating schools. A list of themes and sub-themes that emerged fall within the broad overview of transformative leadership of principals, their lived experiences, the challenges they faced and the lessons to be drawn from the whole process. All the above deserve analysis and there may be overlaps as the presentation unfolds. There are general observations of similarities with both the rural and peri-urban schools as was indicated in the previous two chapters (Chapter Five and Chapter Six). In the presentation of the profiles of all the seven schools, there are marked similarities as well as the uniqueness of each school. These are clearly indicated in terms of the pass percentage, the PPN, the enrolment, subject packages and the leadership experiences of principals. The schools presented in Chapter Five are located in peri-urban settings, whereas those presented in Chapter Six are located in rural areas. Table 7 displays academic performance of learners between 2009 and 2017.

Table No7.1 academic performance 2009 to 2017

Siyaphambili Sec.	Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	%	31%	41%	50%	57.3%	54.7%	72.6%	61.3%	79.2%	86.1%
Mathafeni Sec.	Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	%	50%	45%	52%	25%	42%	68%	77%	82%	65%
Thando Sec.	Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	%	56%	68%	52%	25%	42%	68%	77%	82%	65%
Okuhle Sec.	Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	%	31%	41%	50%	57%	54.7%	72.6%	61%	79.2%	86%
Thuthuka Sec.	Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	%	56%	50%	45.7%	38.7%	65.7%	88.2%	91.7%	100%	96.9%
Phumelela Sec.	Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

	%	9%	42%	55%	69.9%	91.8%	87%	93%	79%	84%
Kuyasa Sec.	Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	%	50%	77%	70%	62%	69%	61%	46.7%	90.6%	95.6%

Table No7.1 above illustrates a clear comparison of learner performance between the years 2009 and 2017. The comparison between Table No7.1 and Table 7.2 is aimed at indicating the size of each school against its pass percentage. Table 7.3 shows the subject packages. The issue of principal leadership and the deprivations comes into play in the comparison of all these three tables. The first point that is illustrated refers to the size of the school, which shows both the rural and peri-urban schools. A close comparison shows that the rural schools, with the exception of one school, Kuhle Secondary, have an enrolment, which ranges from 249 the lowest to 379, the highest. All these rural schools are located in sparsely populated areas, with the exception of Kuhle Secondary, which is situated in a densely populated area. On the other side, the peri urban school's enrolment ranges from 859 to 1205 and could be attributed to their areas, which are densely populated.

If these figures are read against the academic performance of the peri-urban schools, it shows that peri urban schools have bigger enrolments and that can be attributed to different factors such as the bigger population around the schools or the schools positive performances. On the other side, rural schools presented in these tables are unable to attract more learners as illustrated in the Table 7.2, in spite of the good academic performance. This could be attributed to the sparsity of the population around the schools. Nevertheless, there is a demonstration of transformative leadership by the rural principals in ensuring that their schools are sustainable. One makes this observation against what one has been observed over the years, where some schools in rural areas had to close due to low enrolments. Another observation is that peri-urban learners have a wide choice of subjects, which are streamlined into three subject packages, with the exception of Kuhle Secondary (serving a rural community), which also has more than one stream. The number of streams give the peri-urban learners the opportunity to be exposed to a broad range of subject packages, which could assist them as they make career choices. A general observation indicates an overall improvement in performance by all the principals, despite the existing deprivations in all the seven schools. These principals have led

schools consistently in improving the Grade 12 results over a period of three years despite deprivations.

Relationship between enrolment, Post Provisioning Norms (PPN) and subject packages

The allocation of subject packages is in accordance with the school enrolment and its PPN. In terms of the KZN Circular No 76 of 2014, a school is allocated one stream for 320 learners. A comparative look at the Table 7.1, Table 7.2 and Table 7.3 indicates the relationship between the academic performance over nine years (2009-2017), academic performance and learner enrolments and subject packages in all seven secondary schools. The aim of presenting these tables is to make the reader aware of the differences and similarities between the rural and peri-urban schools in terms of these three factors, i.e., academic performance, learner enrolment and subject packages. There is a relationship between these three factors including the allocation of staffing for each of these schools. The allocation of teacher posts and teachers is according to the learner enrolment, so is the allocation of subject packages. In terms of the policy, schools with 320 learners are allocated only one subject package.

Table 7.2 Comparison of academic performance, PPN with learner enrolment

SCHOOLS						PPN
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Kuhle Secondary	55%	72%	61%	79%	86%	
Enrolment	821	814	877	819	877	22
Thando Secondary	42	68	77	82	65	
Enrolment	324	358	352	380	379	9
Mathafeni Secondary	42%	68%	77%	82%	65%	
Enrolment	301	333	299	300	312	8
Siyaphambili Secondary	21%	21%	62%	69%	72%	
Enrolment	315	246	243	250	252	6
Kuyasa Secondary	69%	61.5%	46.7%	90.7%	95.7%	
Enrolment	1205	1117	1030	994	982	25
Thuthuka Secondary	65.8%	88%	91.8%	100%	96.9%	

Enrolment	859	918	920	977	1016	25
Phumelela Secondary	91.8%	87%	93%	79%	84.6%	
Enrolment	1071	1077	1078	1154	1147	29

Table 7.3 Subject packages and streams

School	Subject	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Stream							
Kuhle Secondary	Science							
	Commerce	Math	Accounting	Econ.	Business studies.	LO	English FAL	IsiZulu HL
	Humanities	Math Lit	History	Geography	Life sciences	LO	English FAL	IsiZulu HL
Thando Secondary	Science							
	Commerce	Math	Life sciences.	Geography	Business studies	LO	English FAL	IsiZulu HL
	Humanities	Math Lit	Life sciences	Geography	Business studies	LO	English FAL	IsiZulu HL
Mathafeni Secondary	Commerce	Math	Accounting	Tourism	Business studies	LO	English FAL	IsiZulu HL
	Humanities	Math Lit.	History	Tourism	Life sciences	LO	English FAL	IsiZulu HL
Siyaphambili Secondary	Science	Math	Physical sciences	Econ.	Life sciences.	LO	English FAL	IsiZulu HL
	Commerce	Math	Accounting	Econ.	Business studies	LO	English FAL	IsiZulu HL
	Humanities	Math Lit.	Life sciences	Agri. Sc.	Business studies	LO	English FAL	IsiZulu HL
Phumelela Secondary	Science	IsiZulu HL	English FAL	LO	Mathematics	Agric/EGD	Life science	Physical sciences
	Commerce	IsiZulu HL	English FAL	LO	Mathematics	Economics	Business studies	Accounting
	Humanities	IsiZulu HL	English FAL	LO	Maths Lit	Tourism	History	Geography
	General	IsiZulu HL	English FAL	LO	Maths Literacy	Life sciences	Geography	Business studies
Thuthuka Secondary	Science	IsiZulu HL	English FAL	LO	Mathematics	Geography	Life sciences	Physical science
	Commerce	IsiZulu HL	English FAL	LO	Economics	Accounting	Maths Literacy	Business studies

	Humanities	IsiZulu HL	English FAL	LO	History	Geography	Tourism	Maths Literacy
Kuyasa Secondary	Science	IsiZulu HL	English FAL	LO	Mathematics	Physical sciences	Geography	Life sciences
	Commerce	IsiZulu HL	English FAL	LO	Economics	Accounting	Maths Literacy	Business studies
	Humanities	IsiZulu HL	English FAL	LO	Maths Literacy	Dramatic arts	Geography	Business studies
	General	IsiZulu HL	English FAL	LO	Maths Literacy	Consumer Studies	Life sciences	Business studies

A comparison of Table 7.1, Table 7.2 and Table 7.3 shows that rural schools are allocated fewer teachers according to their enrolment and they also have one subject package. The only exception is Kuhle Secondary School, which has a high learner enrolment and more than one subject package while serving a rural community. The question to be asked is whether that scenario has anything to do with the kind of leadership that the principal practices or not. Usually, principals in rural schools are disadvantaged when it comes to subject packages, and so are the learners. Historically, rural schools used to enjoy a choice of either two or three subject packages. However, a new policy framework was introduced, which made it compulsory for them to only choose one stream. This was in line with the teacher allocation, which made it easy for the rural schools to focus on fewer subjects. All the rural principals have complied with the policy of streamlining their subject packages to only one.

In all the seven secondary schools, principals have subjects allocated to them but in rural schools, some principals had more than one subject because of the school's PPN. The rural principals share the workload with the rest of the staff, and that is not the case with their peri-urban and urban counterparts. Schools are allocated a deputy principal and DHs depending on the school enrolment. Some of the rural schools, had only two DHs (Thando, Siyaphambili and Mathafeni Secondary schools) because their learner enrolments were in the region of 300 and, therefore, did not qualify for a deputy principal posts. In comparison, schools in the peri urban or urban areas enjoyed more than three DHs and they had deputy principals as well. The bigger the number of posts the school has, the more subject packages the school can have, and thus, the greater the subject choice the learners have. The opposite is true for schools with a small number of teaching posts.

In 2017 all three peri-urban schools (Kuyasa, Thuthuka and Phumelela Secondary schools) performed in the region of 80% to 90% whilst the rural schools were led by Kuhle SEcondary with 86% and the others, (Siyaphambili, Thando and Mathafeni), performing between 72% and 65%. This showed that the principals had really established their systems and that their schools had turned the corner in terms of good performance. Their schools have also maintained good performances in the past three years and this can be attributed to their leadership practices.

The performance of the seven secondary schools in the past five years reveals that there was a positive impact on the learner enrolment. The pass percentage of the school is checked against the enrolment at the school. Kuhle Secondary is the only rural school with an enrolment that is averaging 800 learners, compared to Mathafeni, Siyaphambili and Thando Secondary Schools that average 320 to 300 learners respectively. Kuyasa Secondary had the highest enrolment of 1205 way back in 2013. However, there has been an observed decline which cannot be explained as the results have declined in 2015 but have improved in the past two years (2016 and 2017) respectively. There has been an observed increase in enrolment at Thuthuka Secondary in the past two years, 2016 and 2017. Kuhle Secondary had 877 learner enrolment in 2015 and 2017 despite their Grade 12 results having fluctuated between 61% and 86% respectively. The fluctuation in the results has not had a significant difference in the enrolment at Kuhle Secondary School. The other factors that may have contributed to unstable learner enrolment is that of faction fights. A closer look at the statistics shows that Kuhle Secondary is a big school compared to the other three secondary schools. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary clarified that the enrolment declined due to the faction fights as the parents moved learners to safer environments. On the other hand, the Principal of Siyaphambili observed a positive influence of the results on the school enrolment, and a drop whenever results were not good as indicated in the above Table 7.2. A quick look at Mathafeni Secondary School shows a drop in 2013 after a slight decline in results and a growth in 2015 when the results had increased. An observation at Thando Secondary indicates that learner performance and learner enrolment had an influence on each other. The principal clarified that there is a limit when it comes to floor space, which also negatively impacted on additional enrolment for the school.

A closer look at the schools located in peri-urban areas (Thuthuka Secondary) reveals that learner enrolment has increased from 2013 to date. The initial drop in enrolment precipitated by instability experienced by the school when the new principal was appointed to the school in

2010, later changed. The school's learner enrolment has tremendously increased, and this can be attributed to the school's positive performance. Learner enrolment in 2013 was 859 when learner academic performance stood at 65%. In 2017, learner enrolment had gone up to 1016 when learner academic performance had reached 96.9%.

Phumelela Secondary's story shows that the learner enrolment increased as the school's results improves year by year. The case being that learner enrolment stood at 1020 learners in 2011, when learner academic performance was 55%. Learner enrolment has increased to 1221 in 2017 when learner academic performance had gone up to 85%. Kuyasa Secondary school has been performing just above 60% in the years, 2011-2014 and learner enrolment was at 1100, before dropping in 2015. While the school's performance picked up in 2016, with a sterling performance of 91%, the school's enrolment has somehow dropped and the principal attributed the drop to the new measure that were introduced to the school after its underperformance in 2015. The school introduced extra tuition in all grades and that called for all learners to attend them. It also put up measures to reduce the number of progressed learners. In addition, question papers had to be quality assured by conducting pre-moderation as well as post-moderation measures to ensure that questions were fairly balanced, and to prevent a situation in which learners are given easy questions, which do not address all the aspects as set out in the policy document. The school also put up tough measures in Grade 9 by requiring performance above 45% for learners who wanted to take subjects like Physical Sciences and Mathematics in Grade 10. The school principal said that such measures, somehow, contributed to the decrease in learner enrolment, despite good performance in the past two years, which stood at 94%.

A cursory look at the Table 1 shows that Kuhle Secondary School is the only secondary school among those serving rural communities with a justified three streams, comprising Physical Science, Commerce and Humanities because of its enrolment. Initially, Mathafeni Secondary had two streams (commerce and humanities). The principal reported that some of these subjects were not taught by competent teachers, and that negatively affected the results. At Mathafeni Secondary, the principal introduced Economics in the commerce stream. Looking at the schools serving the peri urban and informal settlements, the schools have three or more streams and that is justified looking at their enrolments but these schools had challenges in having good performances in all the subjects. The other notable commonality was that the most underperformed subjects were Mathematics, Accounting, Physical Sciences, and Geography.

In the general steam, the failing subject was Geography and it was causing the problem for some of these underperforming schools. Some people may argue that many streams contribute to the school's underperformance. This argument would be based on the school's PPN as few educators would be exposed to many subjects and that would end up overstretching them. In my personal experience as a Circuit Manager, I have noticed that this argument has some credit. We have, from time to time, requested the Provincial Head of Department to allow small schools to keep one or two educators, and to the first advice given to underperforming schools is to check the number of their streams. Whilst issue of the number of stream is valid but there might be an argument that the underperforming subjects were common in these schools, regardless of the number of streams.

The subject packages are diverse depending on the enrolment at each school. Table 7.3 indicates the different subject packages and the subjects that are being taught in each school. This Table 7.3 indicates the subjects and streams offered in the seven secondary schools. When comparing Table 7.3 with Table 7.2, we can be in a position to see the relationship between learner enrolment and the subject package allocations. I have also noted that as part of implementing the turnaround changes, schools like Thando and Siyaphambili and Mathafeni Secondary had to restructure their curriculum packages in accordance with the enrolment and the PPN allocated to the school. In short, my argument is that, in the context of this study, there is a connection between learner enrolment and PPN, as well as the allocation of subject packages.

7.4 Similarities and differences in challenges principals encountered in turning around underperformance

The process of transforming underperforming schools in deprived areas has its own merits and demerits. There are similarities in terms of the nature of the challenges, which were experienced by the principals regardless of the location in which the schools are situated. Every transformation has its own positives and the negatives like the one regarding the changing of underperformance in schools. Among the challenges I noted from the data is that the principals had to address the issue of correct staffing especially in Grade 12 as part of the turnaround strategy. This meant that the principals had to either reshuffle (move) educators, to other grades and provide development or just provide development without changing anyone or they had to

look for someone who had to assist the school to get the desired outcomes in the subjects seen as being underperforming and dragging the schools to the underperformance bracket.

I also noted that there were instances of resistance and that such resistance came from the educators across the spectrum (from some SMT members and teachers). The subjects that contributed more to the schools' underperformance were Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Accounting, Life Sciences and Geography. Immediate support was needed not just for these subjects only, but for others as well to ensure that schools changed their performance trajectory. What is noted is that some of these teachers had been teaching the underperforming subjects for some time without any positive outcome. As the turnaround process unfolded, there was resistance from the educators across all seven schools, and this manifested itself in different forms and was directed to the change that was being introduced. The notion of resistance to change and how to handle it is not new (Bouchamma, 2012; Chikoko, 2018; Flintham, 2015; Gillet, *et al.*, 2016). The form of resistance displayed will be discussed in detail as it occurred in each site in the ensuing paragraphs.

The second common challenge among all seven schools was that the principals had to address the issue of learner discipline as learners came from different social backgrounds as indicated in Section 7.2 above. The schools had to instil discipline, high moral standards and provide some form of motivation to ensure that learners support the schools turnaround plans by doing what they were asked to do in order to contribute to the schools' turnaround strategies. The third challenge addressed by the principals was poor parental involvement and support. They had to call parents to meetings to explain the turnaround plans and to solicit their support. Some principals like, Mathafeni, went further and sought the support of the Traditional Council and the neighbouring farms to ensure that the school received various forms of support although the educators at the school later rumoured that he was going around talking about them to all these stakeholders. Principals of the rural schools like Thando and Siyaphambili Secondary schools had also to grapple with the challenge of learners who were traveling more than ten kilometres to the schools. This was affecting the morning and afternoon classes because learners could not come on time in the mornings and they could not remain in the afternoons as security was a concern especially for Thando Secondary school learners where there were faction fights. The principals of the rural schools (Thando, Siyaphambili and Mathafeni Secondary schools), had to change their curriculum by phasing out some subjects in order to

adhere to policy which stated that the school with an enrolment of 320 and below should have one package. Whilst this policy is assisting schools especially educators, not to be over loaded but it leaves learners with only one package, and in a way, limits their career choices. Therefore, the principals of these rural schools had to conduct thorough consultations in order to ensure that the SGB, parents and the wider school community, had a buy-in on the subjects that the schools had to keep in their curriculum. In the next paragraphs, I present the challenges in more details as they unfolded in each research site.

At Kuhle Secondary School, the principal reshuffled some educators, for example, Grade 12 Accounting was given to another educator who was teaching other grades other than Grade 12. That subject was taught by the DH for commercial subjects and he was not happy when the subject was taken away from him. Other educators were also moved to Grade 12 to take up certain subjects, like Business Studies, Mathematics and Geography. This resulted in some kind of resistance, which included nasty sarcastic and teasing from those who were replaced in Grade 12. These kinds of negative messages were directed to the new coming educators. Every transformation has its victims as observed at Kuhle and Mathafeni Secondary schools, where some teachers negotiated to be transferred to other schools.

The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary conducted a staff audit, which revealed that seven educators were not suitably qualified to teach the subjects they were teaching and some of them were not qualified to teach at the secondary school. Among these educators, there was a DH for sciences, who did not have any science related subject and had a primary school qualification. Other educators not suitably qualified were Accounting educator, who had a fake master's qualification with Accounting that was later declared invalid, the Life Sciences educator had only Grade 12 certificate, and this is not a teaching qualification. The Tourism educator had only a diploma in tourism and had no Post Graduate Certificate (PGCE) to make him a qualified teacher. The Economics educator had only a Grade 12 certificate. These educators requested to be moved to primary schools through the support of the Circuit Manager. The effect of their transfers did not go smoothly though as the principal was later accused by some educators of talking about them at the Traditional Council. Whilst this issue was resolved but the principal later received death threats from the unknown sources calling on him to leave the school. The Circuit Manager had to intervene by talking to various leadership structures to ensure that the principal was protected and to show support for the changes that were

implemented. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary School also reflected that he was attacked and nearly stabbed by a learner, who had become unruly when he tried to discipline him.

At Siyaphambili Secondary, a member of the SMT left the school due to failure to cope with work. However, other teachers felt this kind of pressure to be oppressive, to point that the principal was perceived as an oppressive leader. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary further noted that some teachers used to come to school unprepared for lessons, while others came late and with a smell of alcoholic beverages. This principal also revealed that he was attacked by unknown people around the school, which was perceived as being some form of resistance to the changes that were introduced. He decided to stay at the school and continue with the changes, which were introduced to turn around the schools performance trajectory. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary, further reported that one SMT member, DH for Humanities left the school when he realised that he could not cope with the working measures that were introduced to achieve the shared vision. The scourge of ill-discipline at Siyaphambili Secondary manifested itself in the lack of cooperation and a relaxed atmosphere on the side of the learners, who had false hopes of cheating during examinations.

The nature of the challenges experienced at Thando Secondary was different from those experienced in other secondary schools in the sense that both the parents and the learners were considered non-cooperative for different reasons. For instance, at Thando Secondary, learner attendance in morning classes was negatively affected by the distance learners had to travel to a school. Other learners at Thando Secondary could not attend the Saturday classes due to their religious affiliation to the Shembe belief system, which requires that they attend services on Saturday. The issue of over-aged learners was also raised as one of the factors which was causing ill-discipline as those learners had other motives other than focusing on the learning process. The Principal of Thando, Secondary further reported that some learners were not able to come on time to the morning classes due to the long distances they had to walk to school. The school applied for learner transport from the Department of Education and they have been waiting since the department's response cited the lack of funds as the reason for the non-provision of learner transport to curb this anomaly.

The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary School revealed that he faced challenges from the teachers, learners and the drug lords. He contended that when he was appointed as the principal, the school had been underperforming for a number of years and he was just brought in to

turnaround its performance trajectory. As part of the turnaround process, he conducted the SWOT analysis and the staff audit. He also reviewed the curriculum offered at the school. The staff audit revealed that there were certain subjects that caused the school to underperform and one of the reasons for the educators' poor performance was because some of them were not suitably qualified to teach certain subjects. Other educators had little time for their school work as they were devoting a lot of time to union activities whilst others were under qualified to teach certain subjects.

The subjects, which were not assisting the school, were phased out and the new ones were introduced. The school introduced tourism as the eighth subject to give learners an additional subject as schools normally present seven subjects in Grade 12. The change in the curriculum caused him to consult the educators, SGB, parents, district officials and the wider community. The staff audit was undertaken in the whole school and educators who were underperforming were either moved to other grades and those who could not meet the school's curricula needs, were transferred to other schools. Educators did not take these changes kindly and there was some form of resistance. The principal was assisted by the Circuit Manager to transfer some educators. The second challenge came from those who were giving learners drugs to smuggle into the school premises. When the principal introduced strict control mechanisms, which prevented learners from doing this illicit act, the principal received death threats and someone tried to shoot him when he entered the school but because of support from the parents, the SGB and the wider school community, he remained resolute and was guarded by the school security guards at school. The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary also reflected that some learners were ill disciplined as he had to review the Learners Code of Conduct to curb deviant behaviour and to ensure that those learners who were misbehaving, were taken through the disciplinary processes and corrective discipline instituted. He stated that at some stage, the local newspaper supplement, wrote an article about his school, saying that he was very strict towards the learners.

The Principal of Phumelela Secondary School indicated his main challenge was from the educators who felt that the changes that were introduced were oppressive as they were expected to conduct weekly assessments in Mathematics, Physical sciences and Accounting. He indicated that other subjects like Mathematical Literacy and Life Sciences joined these three subjects. The educators were complaining that they had other grades to teach and that it was difficult for them to keep up with regular assessments. The regular assessment strategy was

part of the turnaround plan and these subjects had to conduct these regular assessment processes because they were underperforming and the assessment data was going to be used to ascertain their performances. The school principal also had to work on the issue of parental involvement in the school activities. Doing this was somehow a challenge because of numerous deprivation which have been discussed in Section 7.2; nevertheless, he indicated that they were able to work through the challenges eventually gained the parents support. The Principal of Phumelela Secondary also indicated that he introduced strict attendance conditions for the learners, which meant that if they had been absent, they had to come with a letter from the health clinic as proof that they were sick or they had to produce a letter from the parent. Educators were also expected to be present and to be punctual to school and to their classes.

The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary School revealed that his educators had a sense of despair and hopelessness, as they did not believe that they could change the underperformance situation. However, he further reflected that there were educators who were divisive and negative towards the school's plan to turnaround underperformance and that resulted in one of the educators being moved from Grade 12 to Grade 8. That educator was teaching Mathematics. What can be considered as lessons from these principals is that in spite of the challenges and resistance towards transformation, the best thing is to soldier on and influence educators to work towards the shared vision and the school's turnaround plan. The seven principals addressed the challenges by involving other role players within their schools, in the community and through support from the Department. Some of the challenges were addressed by sticking to basic tenets of school functionality and by implementing school policies. The cases of threats to the principals' lives were reported to the police, especially the case of Thuthuka Secondary School principal, who was nearly killed by people he believes were the drug lords.

7.5 Similarities and differences in the strategies principals used to mitigate the negative effects of deprivation on teaching and learning

The presentation of data in the two previous chapters (Chapter Five and Chapter Six), revealed the extent of role played by the schools in mitigating the negative effects of deprivations on teaching and learning. In this section, I present the similarities and differences in the strategies that principals use to minimise the negative effects of deprivations to teaching and learning. I

commence the discussion by highlighting similar strategies across sites and then move to areas of differences, which are unique to particular sites. Some scholars argue that schools in the informal settlements, townships and rural areas, experience numerous challenges like under resourced infrastructures, socio economic challenges and poverty (Bush & Glover, 2016; Mbokazi, 2015). These schools further face a number of deprivations, which affect the provision of effective teaching and learning. This theme looks at how principals across the seven participating schools deal with the negative effects of deprivations like: material deprivation, health deprivation, income poverty deprivation, capability deprivation and nutritional deprivation, as they conspire to affect teaching and learning.

My observation of the seven schools indicate the following strategies that principals used to minimise the negative effects of deprivations. To address the negative effects of poverty to teaching and learning, schools gave learners food parcels from their school feeding programme and the learners were allowed to take these food parcels home in order to have a meal in the evening. The schools took it upon themselves to identify the needy learners so that the process is conducted fairly. It is also noted that the principals of the seven schools have introduced a system in which educators adopt the needy learners by providing food parcels and also organising school uniform for them. Further to this, the Principals of Thuthuka, Kuyasa and Mathafeni Secondary schools, visited some learners in their homes to personally, ascertain the extent of situation and to map out how the schools could further provide assistance. The idea of adopting some learners came out of such visits. The adoption of learners to address their educational needs can enhance the school's academic performance as echoed by Mjoli (2018).

Learner discipline and attendance is also another challenge, which has to be addressed in order to create a conducive teaching and learning environment. The schools have reviewed their Learners Code of conduct to address this matter. They also work closely with the SGB and parents to address indiscipline among the learners. Parents are expected to report their learners' absence so that schools can be sure that they were aware that their children were not at school. Some schools have introduced other strategies to enforce learner attendance and reduce learner indiscipline, and they will be discussed under schools individual strategies.

The other challenge faced by these schools was to ensure that their educators are motivated and that they perform optimally. The principals have noted that they provide mentoring programmes to the newly appointed educators and that they promote team teaching in order to

share expertise within the schools. Educators were exposed to workshops with the schools and those organised by the Department. Schools have also introduced merit awards to recognise excellence and motivate educators. The other challenge, especially among the rural schools, is that they lacked the ability to attract and retain suitably qualified educators because they prefer areas around towns and do not benefit from the rural incentive programme which compensate educators who are working in deep rural areas. The principals noted that they praise them, and visit their families when they are in need of support. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary School further reflected that the school also recognise them when promotion posts arise in the school.

Parents are called to regular meetings to update them about the performance of their children and to address issues of discipline and learner attendance. This assist to create a strong link between the school and the child's family and I have also noted from my experience as the principal that once the school works closely with the learners families, learners tend to behave well because they realise that their parents will be informed about their deviant behaviour. The research data presented in the previous chapters, Chapter Five and Chapter Six, further revealed strategies which are employed at a particular site to address the negative effects of deprivations. At Thuthuka Secondary, the principal stated that the school had to mark the learner attendance registers twice, in the morning and after break, in order to prevent learners from leaving during break time, especially those learners who would come in the morning to sell drugs and then leave during break, after selling their drugs. The principal also intimated that the school gave the needy learners more than one food parcels so that they could eat with their siblings who were attending at the primary schools. The school further motivates educators through incentives like paying for the best performing educators during the school's planning (Bosberaad) meeting, held outside the school to plan for the coming year. The educators are also divided into two teams, which compete against each other to obtain many "A" symbols. This causes teams to work hard and support each other all the way, as they know that the winning team will be awarded. The Principal of Phumelela Secondary intimated that if the learner has been absent and the school did not receive a report from the parent, that learner has to come with the parent on the day he /she attends school. Learners who misbehave are further threatened with expulsion, which is just a threat because learner expulsion rests with the provincial Head of Department.

The Principal of Kuyasa Secondary contended that the school addressed late coming by learners by locking the school gate and then releasing them to class after taking their names. The school acknowledges that this practice might have some unintended negative consequences but they believed that it is minimising late coming from the learners. Participants from this school further revealed that the school was working closely with other departments like Home Affairs and Health to address the needs of learners like the issue of undocumented learners and health issues. Okuhle Secondary revealed that the school addressed faction fighting amongst learners by working closely with the neighbouring schools in order to request them to admit those learners who were seen to be perpetuating fighting among the learners. If the school fails to secure space for the learner, it will approach the Social Workers to assist in finding an alternative school for the learner. Parent would also be asked to come and look after (guard) the learner at school and this would be difficult for parents, and they opt by finding another school for their children. The *Inkosi* (Chief), the local Ward Councillor and the Department of Community Safety and Liaison, also assisted the school in addressing faction fighting among the learners which emanated from the community.

Siyaphambili Secondary addressed the issue of learners traveling long distances by encouraging them to stay closer to the school in order to benefit from the school's extra tuition programme. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary School intimated that if a learner had been absent and has not been reported, he/she must come with his/her parent or guardian. In addition, such a person had to produce an identification document to authenticate that he/she is the legitimate parent of the learner as learners had a tendency to just grab their friends and asked them to represent them at school. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary revealed that he also visited the learners' homes to check on those who were absent and would fetch them if they had no valid reasons for not coming to school. Those learners were then taken through the positive re-inforcement programme, which was exposing them to positive behaviour. Regular learner attendance and good performance was re-enforced by giving learners medals and certificates. The motivational speakers were also invited to motivate learners.

7.6 Emerging features of principal leadership practices in the transformation process

The analysis indicates that there are five leadership practices that principals adopted as they engaged in the transformation process. The pattern to emerge shows that principals engaged in the following activities; (a) Working on the mind-set of teachers to embrace change; (b)

Creation of conditions favourable for transformation;(c) Mobilising various stakeholders for active participation in the change process; (d) Special focus on instructional leadership priority areas; (e) Establishing new school cultures; (f) Utilisation of learner teaching support material, (g) Professional development and (h) the system of recruiting new educators. In the next section, I give a brief discussion of each of these features.

7.6.1 Working on the mind-set of teachers to embrace change

All principals in the study considered it critical to engage in a dialogue with the teachers which was geared towards changing their attitudes such that they can acquired requisite skills for transforming their schools' performance. The principals as initiators of the transformation process needed to change their teachers' mindset and believe that there was a need to do something about the situation at hand. In this process, they needed to construct the vision for change together with the stakeholders. The key amongst them are the teachers who are the custodians of the subjects taught at school. This needed a different form of thinking in order to come with a winning mentality that will drive towards achieving the same vision (Bush, *et al.*, 2010; Ramatseba, 2012; Steyn, 2013). The feedback that the principals encountered differed from one school to the other on the issue of emotional preparedness of the teachers. For instance, at Kuhle Secondary, the principal observed great co-operation by the teachers when visited by the subject advisors from the district. Furthermore, the Principal of Kuhle Secondary noted the slow acceptance of change by some educators when it comes to managing the submission of their files for control by SMTs.

At regular intervals, the Principal of Kuhle Secondary would conduct one-on-one sessions with individual teachers to discuss work related issues. There was an observed positive response by the Kuhle teachers to the need to engage in transformation. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary considered the importance of the role of mind-set in the whole process as critical in working on developing a shared vision, which never existed in the past (Bush, *et al.*, 2010; Mthiyane, Bhengu & Bayeni, 2014; Ramatseba, 2012; Steyn, 2013). At Thando Secondary, the process of working emotionally with the teachers involved changing the attitude of teachers towards assessment. However, this scenario did not happen in other schools such as Mathafeni Secondary. At this school, many teachers did not respond positively to the change message from the principal. Those teachers who were aggrieved decided to leave the school.

The resistance to change was experienced by all the schools concerned, but others succeeded in dealing with it, and teachers turned around and embraced change. At Kuhle Secondary, some SMT members who had performed poorly in their subjects started to resist the change process, whereas the Principal of Kuhle Secondary further highlighted the improvement of results in Business Studies and Accounting to prove that the changes that were effected were effective, in spite of the resistance. As mentioned in the previous section above, at Mathafeni Secondary seven educators sought permission to be placed in primary schools, due to the pressure they felt was going to be placed on them to perform at the level of the secondary school. The principals in these schools made it a point to take drastic actions and change the teachers who had previously underperformed in these subjects. This can be attested to by the Principal of Kuhle and Mathafeni Secondary Schools. In both of these schools, the reshuffling was undertaken as a strategy to change things around. Principals were decisive in moving the serial underperforming teachers to other schools with the support of the Circuit Management. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary preferred to reshuffle the staff in order to deal with underperformance, whilst the Principal of Mathafeni solicited the support of the Circuit Manager to transfer these underqualified teachers to the primary schools, where they were gainfully employed. The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary was also assisted by the Circuit Manager to transfer educators to other schools due to curricular needs of the school. It is obvious that amongst other factors, underperformance is caused by the under qualifications and lack of readiness to teach by some of the teachers as demonstrated in the reshuffling efforts. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary in his staff audit had discovered that most of the educators at school were not qualified to teach certain subjects because they only possessed primary school qualifications.

What is notable is that underperformance can be linked to poor performance as noted in the example of schools Kuhle, Phumelela, Thuthuka, Kuyasa, Mathafeni and Siyaphambili Secondary Schools. For instance, at Siyaphambili Secondary, the principal gave feedback to all staff members in a friendly manner. In the process, Siyaphambili benefited from this interaction with departmental heads and staff members in implementing the school plan. An observation is that teachers are reading positively compared to when the turnaround was introduced at Siyaphambili Secondary. At Thando Secondary, the principal gave both oral and written feedback to teachers besides the one-to-one meetings. As part of formalising the structured meeting between the principal of Thando Secondary, the departmental heads and the

teachers concerned signed and kept copies of their recoded meeting. As a part of the response, the Principal of Thando issued an activity plan as part of addressing the gaps. These feedbacks were done transparently, whilst the Principal of Thando Secondary indicated some responses may be negative. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary ensured that he communicated the school vision for purposes of enlisting teacher performance. He promoted reflective feedback sessions to be held as a means of checking whether teachers were able to reach their set targets. All the principals set scheduled dates for accountability sessions with teachers and the DHs. All the sessions that principals had with their teaching staff were meant to prepare them for change. It was important that all of the teachers saw the need to change course and visualise a new reality of a well performing school.

7.6.2 Creation of conditions favourable for transformation

The transformation process could not have thrived if all these principals did not create conditions that are conducive to the implementation of the turnaround strategies. This responsibility falls squarely in the hands of the principal, and it is a critical foundation on which other factors can be based. One way in which conducive atmosphere was created, involved taking teachers, SMTs and SGBs into confidence regarding, for example, what the principal saw as opportunities and possible benefits for bringing required change. All these principals made it possible for all these stakeholders to have the vision of achieving schools. All the principals were able to mobilise the stakeholders to work towards achieving one vision. The idea of creating a common vision was achieved by all the principals, as has been presented in detail in Chapters Five and Six respectively.

Both the rural and peri-urban principals were able to convince the teachers, SMTs, learners and SGBs about the reality of breaking out of the cycle of underperformance. This is illustrated by the academic results that have been achieved over the past few years, which indicate a trajectory towards improvement. In both the rural and peri-urban schools, extra classes were conducted, as proof that teachers were prepared to go the extra mile. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary combined both the support and praises to teachers for excellent work done. Furthermore, at Kuhle Secondary, underperforming teachers were paired with teachers from performing schools. As part of an incentive, the principal provided performing educators monetary compensation for transport for their support costs. The principal bought study guides and CDs as part of Learner Teacher support material. On the other side, the Principal of Siyaphambili

Secondary created some expectations for these teachers, for example, through role modelling. Furthermore, the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary ensured that there was support from the district sub-directorates in areas where the school needed support. At Siyaphambili Secondary, the educators adopted needy learners and donated meals for these learners as part of addressing the issue of deprivations.

At Mathafeni and Phumelela Secondary Schools, the principals were involved in some kind of intensive teach-test programme in the gateway failing subjects like Mathematics, Physical Science and Accounting, for purposes of monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Adopting such a strategy has been credited by various scholars for its efficacy in monitoring teaching and learning (Gurr-Mark, Drysdale George, & Mulford, 2010; Horng & Loeb, 2010). Besides close monitoring of the curriculum, teachers were appraised in various ways. For example, at Kuyasa Secondary, educators were given certificates during the school's Merit Awards function as a form of motivation. All the seven principals alluded to the increase in performance to the intensity of monitoring of subjects. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary prioritised networking amongst the teachers in order for them to share their teaching expertise. Besides that, Mathafeni SMT members were empowered to network and returned the favour by capacitating the teachers. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary had benefitted from his networking with performing schools. He introduced some of those ideas within the school by means of staff development. Mathafeni principal considers that the intensive school programme of monitoring to have greatly contributed to learner readiness for writing common tests. At Mafahleni Secondary, learners control the period register to check teacher arrival and departure in classrooms whilst the principal checked the period registers. At Mafahleni Secondary, leadership was given to the Representative Council of Learners (RCLs) to hand over the period registers to the Teacher Liaison Officer (TLO) who collated them and sent them to the principal. It is evident that conditions that are favourable for improved teaching and learning took different forms in different schools. Nevertheless, there were some commonalities in what they did, and these included close monitoring of curriculum delivery.

7.6.3 Mobilising various stakeholders for active participation in the change process

This mammoth task could not have been achieved without the involvement of all the key stakeholders. Both rural and peri-urban principals understood who the relevant stakeholders

are; they understood that without them, the transformation agenda could not have been achieved. They embarked on consultative process of sharing the school vision with these stakeholders, including teachers, learners, departmental heads, SGB members and parents. Every principal attested to the initial meetings that were held with the teachers and others. The outcome of these consultative meetings was the ownership of the failure as well as the turnaround plans to be implemented.

All of the seven principals worked jointly with other stakeholders in embarking on the process of turning the school around. All of the principals were initiators of the process of turning the school around as alluded to by educational leadership and management scholars (Lunenburg, 2011; Mendels, 2012; Makoelle, 2011). These principals demonstrated their responsibility as leaders and the value of involving critical stakeholders in the journey towards breaking the cycle of serial underperformance. The value of stakeholder participation in improving schools' performance cannot be overemphasised (Jensen, 2013; Makoelle, 2011). Both the rural-based and peri-urban based school principals took the responsibility of engaging various stakeholders, which included the teachers, the learners, the SMTs, the SGB, the parents and other interested parties. However, the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary went further by having engagements even with the previous principals in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the issues at play at school. In these inclusive meetings, the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary included the SMT, staff members, teachers and parents and SGB chairperson as the relevant people to be brought on board. This consultation process assisted the Principal of Thando Secondary to get the support of the Shembe religious parents, without which it would have been difficult to roll out the plan for Saturday classes. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary further elaborated on the plans, which involved the close monitoring of curriculum, setting clear objectives and targets with the teachers, SMTs, SGBs and parents. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary engaged the SGB, the teachers and the previous principals of the school. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary met all the required stakeholders to take the plans as part of the process of consultations. Siyaphambili Secondary initiated consultative meetings with SMTs, SGB, educators, parents and learners to come up with a comprehensive plan.

At Siyaphambili Secondary, the principal outlined the plans to all the role players in terms of their responsibilities. The idea of consulting the stakeholders was adopted by all the seven

principals with the intention of discussing the state of affairs at the schools. In terms of these consultations, they assisted the principals to sell the vision that needed to be embraced by all the stakeholders (Bush, *et al.*, 2010; Ramatseba, 2012; Steyn, 2013). If we note the role of the SMT at school, they are the critical component of the school as they are supposed to implement all the plans working jointly with the principal. In the area of policy development, the principals engaged the SBGs. With the guidance of the principals, the SGBs were assisted in formulation of school policies. For instance, the code of conduct was one policy, which all the SBGs revisited and enforced as part of ensuring learner discipline at school.

The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary engaged the SGB, the teachers and the previous principals of the school. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary met all the required stakeholders to take the plans as part of the process of consultations. The turnaround plans were comprehensively discussed and were prepared by the principals as part of their responsibilities to change the situation around in all of the secondary schools. The plans that were conceived from these consultative meetings acted as the clear marching orders for a new trajectory. The consultative process shows the power of sharing the vision of the school to all those who have a role to play in turning around the school culture (Leithwood, *et al.*, 2012). The issues for discussion amongst the stakeholders included a wide range of issues, but the springboard for everything was the point of results.

7.6.4 Special focus on instructional leadership priority areas

All the principals emphasised the role of the principal, which included amongst others the protection of effective teaching and learning working in collaboration with the DHs to check the educator's files and the ATPs. Furthermore, all the principals forged relations with schools, which had performing teachers to assist their teachers with content in their subjects. Furthermore, the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary ensured that the work of the DHs was monitored. There was clarity on the work of the principal as indicated by most of the principals, which involved amongst others, checking the curriculum coverage and monitoring the work of the teachers. Scholars who have conducted research on teaching and learning emphasise this point (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Maringe, *et al.*, 2015). There is emphasis on following the prescripts of the KZN Circular No. 41 of 2012 in the management of the curriculum.

One of an important component of instructional leadership as advanced by Weber (1996) is that of managing the curriculum and instruction as well as promoting a positive learning in order to provide effective teaching and learning. This is part of his Five Domains of Instructional Leadership Model. Therefore, the provision of properly qualified teaching staff falls within that instructional leadership model's provision. Viewed from this perspective, it becomes critical that appropriate resources are mobilised to support effective teaching and learning in schools if they are to improve their performance. As part of the process of turnaround, all the principals conducted the staff audits. This exercise was conducted without any malice, considering historical background and staff baggage of the schools in rural and peri-urban areas. Schools were not staffed efficiently in the past, considering the training teachers had acquired in the past. With the advent of PPN and the policy for Rationalisation and Redeployment (R&R), the previous staffing anomalies were addressed. There has for a very long time, been a persistent phenomenon of 'out-of-field' teaching which entails teaching subjects they are not qualified in teaching, and in some instances, teachers do not have confidence teaching such subjects. Therefore, in the context of this study, I noted that some principals took bold steps to address this perennial problem head-on. For example, staff audits conducted resulted in the reshuffling of teachers who were wrongly placed at secondary level and teaching subjects they had little content knowledge in. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary, for instance, restricted the curriculum package by reducing the subjects that did not adding value to the curriculum stream. The same was also done by the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary. This participant decided to reduce the number of subjects that were not contributing positively to the school in order to realign the subject streams.

The process of transforming the schools included the exercise of staff audits being conducted. Staffing was regarded as an area that needed the attention of the school principal; hence, the initiative that was taken by the Principal of Kuhle Secondary to change those SMT members who had performed poorly in their subjects. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary on the other side probed into the issue of qualifications of the teachers in order to be sure who was qualified to teach the subjects at hand. After this exercise, there was a staff reshuffling which affected subjects such as Accounting, Physical Sciences, Maths and Geography. Furthermore, the Principal of Kuhle Secondary conducted an audit of staff qualifications, and the outcomes of these changes were positive. In order to ensure that all the key stakeholders were part of the process, the principals involved the closest stakeholder, namely, the SMT. For instance, the Principal of Kuhle Secondary engaged those DHs who were supposed to hand over their

subjects to new teachers. Whereas, at Siyaphambili Secondary, the principal prioritised the issue of examinations and the assessment processes, which was a critical factor leading to relations between staff members and learners who knew that they were going to use these irregular practices in order to pass.

Again, at Siyaphambili Secondary, the principal noted that some educators used to come to school ill-prepared, and SMT members found it hard to adjust to the new ways of doing things. The principal intimated that the SMT members later adjusted although one of them failed to cope with the changes and ended up being allowed to move to another school with the permission of the Circuit Manager. In addition, the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary initiated a strong working relationship with the parents in order to address issues at school as part of turning things around. As part of the process, the principal worked with the District for support from its Sub-Directorates like Teaching and Learning Sub-Directorate (TLS), which is responsible for dispatching subject advisors to schools to support educators on curriculum matters. The school also worked closely with Governance and Management Sub-Directorate for advice on parental involvement strategies and for support to the school's governing body. Learners were warned and encouraged to always be in class. The role of the principal was to provide support on decision-making and facilitate team-building activities at Siyaphambili Secondary. On the other hand, at Thando Secondary, the principal involved the parents and other stakeholders who had demonstrated a keen interest in the school's activities. At Thando Secondary, the principal entered into a consultative process with a variety of stakeholders as part of identifying issues leading to failure and seeking solutions. Amongst other things, the Principal of Thando Secondary led the SMT to take full responsibility for the poor performance at school as a starting point for turning around underperformance.

7.6.5 Establishing new school cultures

In this section, I discuss the strategies used by the school principals to initiate change in their schools, and thus create new school cultures. The discussion will look at the similarities between different sites and also present the unique strategies as they were employed at different research sites. These strategies are distilled from the analysis of qualitative data that was presented in the previous two chapters.

All the principals started to initiate the process by taking ownership of the results, as will be seen at Kuhle and Mathafeni Secondary Schools where these principals were new in the schools. A process of carefully analysing the results was initiated as the starting point in order to start a conversation that is based on facts. All of the seven principals embarked on a ‘first things first’ approach which entailed focusing on the basic functionality issues of the school. It has also been observed that all the principals took the initiative to embark on a process of transforming and turning around the underperformance prevailing in their schools. Such an approach is consistent with the views expressed in the literature (Bush, *et al.*, 2010; Ramatseba, 2012; Steyn, 2013). This process included amongst others, the issue of consultation with the stakeholders. This was observed at both the rural and informal settlements schools. The process of NSC examinations results analysis seemed to be a stepping-stone for starting the agenda for discussing the strategies to change the situation around in each of the schools. This can be seen at Kuhle, Kuyasa, Phumelela, Thuthuka, Siyaphambili, Mathafeni and Thando Secondary Schools, where meetings were convened between the SMT, teachers, and SGBs. Thando Secondary went the extra mile by convening a meeting with the learners. The responsibility and direction for these engagements rested on the shoulders of the principals (Louis, *et al.*, 2010). The Principals of Kuhle and Thando Secondary engaged the SMTs on the issues at hand, whilst the Principal of Siyaphambili probed deeper into the allegations of irregularities, which had formed part of the school practice. The principals initiated the process of discussing poor performance with the teachers at the school. At Siyaphambili Secondary, the principal addressed the issue of poor invigilation and allegations of irregular conduct during examinations in order to win the trust of the parents. On the other hand, the Principals of Kuhle, Mathafeni, Phumelela Thuthuka Secondary schools, were more worried about staffing of the Grade 12 teachers, as the initial step to tackle. The Principal of Thuthuka Secondary School, inquired about the educators’ qualifications in relation to the subjects taught and the school’s performance. At Kuyasa Secondary, the principal started the transformation process with self-introspection and reflection. Thereafter, he proceeded to the SMT and the educators. The Grade10 and Grade 11 educators had to develop a two-year programme targeting the underperforming subjects.

As part of putting the systems in place, the principals improved the area of monitoring teaching and learning (Madondo, 2016). These included beefing up the monitoring of the teaching and lesson preparation by the teachers. All the principals ensured that there was an extra-curricular

programme to create space for the finishing of the syllabus and allow more time for revision (Marishane & Botha, 2011). As part of the process, this included the principal initiating the use of period registers in order to ensure the monitoring of the teacher attendance in classrooms. Siyaphambili Secondary went to the point on including both the learners and the principal in monitoring teacher attendance. The principals working with the SMTs in all the schools ensured that teachers prepared their lessons prior to teaching learners. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary had to go the extra mile by engaging the learners and pleading with them to be patient with the newly introduced teachers who had taken over those subjects.

The monitoring of the curriculum involves a wide range of activities, which require hands-on management by both the principal and the SMT members (Taole, 2013). Curriculum management involves the process of monitoring how the teachers conduct their professional work including the implementation of the curriculum (Makoelle, 2011). The monitoring process at Kuhle Secondary was based on checking how far teachers were progressing in terms of covering the subject content in their ATPs. This required a process of monitoring to be implemented by the SMT at all the schools. At Mathafeni Secondary, the principal checked whether the subjects were allocated the appropriate time according to the CAPS policy guidelines. He noted some gaps in Accounting, and closed those gaps. There are some key aspects of curriculum management, which all principals were engaged in as part of monitoring. The process of turnaround plans involved the management of time and ensuring that teachers stayed the full duration of the period in classes amongst other activities (Bayat, *et al.*, 2014; Mafuwane, 2012).

It has been observed that the principals have been taking the lead in the monitoring of the curriculum (Langa, 2013; Mafuwane, 2012). This was attested to by the close monitoring performed by the principals in terms of checking the curriculum coverage, the number of tasks covered and the learners' exercise books to check whether the learners' work was in line with what was stated in the educators ATP. Furthermore, the principals ensured that the extra-curricular programmes were implemented and closely monitored. In all the four secondary schools, the SMTs closely monitored the work of the teachers through a roster to ensure control of curriculum.

The principals of all seven schools valued the programme of extra tuition and were able to influence their educators to rally behind such a programme. Extra tuition programmes were introduced by the principals as part of turning the situation around at both the rural and peri-urban schools. By means of this extra tuition programmes, learners were required to attend the morning and afternoon classes including attending on Saturdays (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015; Mbokazi, 2015). During those extra classes, teachers were requested to go the extra mile by coming early in the morning to conduct lessons. Secondly, the teachers were assigned the task of providing support in the afternoon classes in the form of tutoring (Chikoko, *et al.*, 2015). On Saturday classes, the teachers demonstrated unwavering commitment by offering classes, which started from early in the morning until midday. The Principal of Siyaphambili also demonstrated that leadership by example could be realised through his own commitment to monitoring extra tuition programme. There was a general agreement across all the rural and peri-urban schools that they needed more time for finishing the syllabus and revision; hence, the plans for extra tuition. The same was reported by Thando Secondary that they have extra classes as part of finishing the syllabus and revisions.

All the principals shared the vision of engaging in extra tuition programmes as part of the turnaround strategies in all the schools. In doing this, the principals needed to have a common vision with the SMT and staff members on the envisaged changes in curriculum management. Consequently, extra tuition classes were introduced at all of four schools as part of the new way of working towards completing the syllabus in the most critical subjects such as Mathematics, Mathematics Literacy, Accounting, Economics, Physical Science, Geography, Tourism, Business Studies. Working on the educators' emotional intelligence and developing a shared vision assisted in the turn around process. Another measure was the introduction of the supervised study in all four secondary schools as part of ensuring learners take advantage of the allocated time revising and completing the syllabus. All of the seven principals introduced a commitment pact, which required that parents sign their commitment in supporting the learners to come early for morning, afternoon and Saturday classes.

The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary went an extra mile by rewarding the learners for good performance as part of the motivation. Furthermore, in Mathafeni Secondary, motivational speakers were invited to speak and encourage the learners. Learner motivation also included the awarding of certificates to the teachers for good performance. At Kuhle Secondary, a clear

role was outlined for the SMT members in the management of the curriculum. This is elaborated on by the principal of that school in her report on how monitoring was conducted by the SMT on curricula issues. As part of that monitoring, she elaborated on the how they ensured that educators work in line with the ATPs for purposes of covering all the contents of the syllabus. At all of four schools, the SMTs were required to ensure that all the required teacher curricula records were in place. As part of the Monitoring Plan, the Principal of Kuhle Secondary ensured that SMTs had schedules of dates for checking the teacher files, management of teaching file and feedback to be given to the teachers based on their findings. Kuhle Secondary had an advantage of having a Deputy Principal and three DHs due to its higher learner enrolment compared to the three secondary schools, which only managed to have one or two DHs.

The Principal of Kuhle Secondary outlined how the designed templates were used for purposes of monitoring. On the other side, the Principal of Mathafeni needed to establish the SMT at his arrival as part of changing the management strategy. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary introduced the School Development Committee (SDC) in order to start working on issues of policy development. In this process, the principal included all the members of the SGB and the relevant teachers in order to legitimise the process and create a sense of ownership. In terms of Operation Scaffold, Kuhle Secondary was paired with a performing secondary school, from which the SMT was mentored in policy development and effective management strategies.

Through this networking process, the Mathafeni SMT members were empowered to improve their style of management. The Principal conducted a workshop for the DHs on curriculum management, and this information was disseminated to the teachers. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary invited the English Subject Advisors to support the language DHs every term of the year as part of the follow-ups. The principal ensured that the teaching time was utilised for teaching and that learning was supervised and this was monitored by checking that periods were honoured and that learners were learning. It was the responsibility of the SMT to monitor the work of the educators.

At Thando Secondary, an internal system was developed for teachers to assist one another on subject matter issues. The principal of this school conducted curriculum management by encouraging the teachers to conduct a quarterly analysis of the results. Due to the shortage of

DHs, the principal worked with senior and master teachers in implementing the curriculum management programme. These senior and master teachers were assisting the DHs in subjects in which the latter were not conversant. The principal used the designed tools to address the monitoring of the curriculum. In addition, the principal closely monitored the work of the educators by checking curriculum coverage, the number of tasks covered and the learners' exercise books to check whether the learners' work was in line with what was stated in the educators ATP. As part of her commitment, the Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary would stay until late at 18h00 to monitor the supervised study. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary took the lead in curriculum monitoring process. As part of that process, he conducted an audit regarding the suitability of the qualifications of teachers for the subjects taught.

All seven principals ensured that their schools' daily operations proceeded smoothly, thus assuring the schools' basic functionality. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary took responsibility for conducting gate checks in order to monitor the school uniform. Discipline was enforced as the principal, for instance, sent home those learners who have uncombed hair. At this school, there was a routine of Monday's SMT meetings. Kuhle Secondary routinely held departmental meetings on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Fridays. However, things unfolded differently at Siyaphambili Secondary. The Principal of Siyaphambili Secondary indicated that the school started at 07h30 for all the grades except for Grade 12 that started earlier at 07h00. This school held morning assemblies before the learner and the teacher departed to their respective classes. In both the rural and peri-urban schools, Grade 12 learners and teachers of gateway subjects attended morning, afternoon and weekend classes.

At Thando Secondary, the principal indicated that learners were interested in sport such as soccer and netball, in spite of the lack of facilities for playing such sports. Another area of interest at this school was traditional and cultural activities where learners participated in. However, on a normal day, teaching and learning was supervised by the SMTs, and the school started at 07h30 and ended at 15h00. However, for Grade 12 learners, they started at 06h30, an hour earlier than other grades and they stopped at 16h30, an hour later. The Principal of Thando Secondary had a schedule for teachers to monitor and control the gate. The SMT member who were not involved in a morning classes with Grade 12, were deployed to conduct gate control

duties. The SMT had scheduled Monday and Friday meetings to discuss teaching and learning and coverage of the ATPs.

7.6.6 Utilisation of learner teaching support material

All the principals utilised learner support material and utilised the allocated funds to add to the required LTSM. The seven principals reflected that their schools have limited resources and, as a result, learners are asked to share textbooks. At Kuyasa Secondary School, learners who wanted to use textbooks had to remain behind and use them after school under the supervision of the educators because of their shortage. The shortage is further compounded by the fact that the books that the learners lose are never recovered or replaced as parents cannot afford to buy them. At Siyaphambili Secondary, for the most part, the school utilised the photocopiers for making copies. At Mathafeni Secondary, principal went further by allocating funds to be used for buying required LTSM. In order to alleviate the shortage of resources the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary requested donations from the neighbouring schools in the form of textbooks. Furthermore, the principal arranged an xchange of textbooks with the neighbouring schools.

The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary ventured out to get assistance in photocopying He also approached other secondary school to assist them with photocopying facilities and managed to conduct their examinations through this networking process. The Principal of Phumelela Secondary had also managed to secure resources for the school laboratory, through a donation from a company called Hulamin. The principal further intimated that the school had a library building without books for a long time until they received assistance with textbooks from the Sub –Directorates called ELITS, which support schools with library services and is stationed at the District. Kuhle Secondary showed us how these allocated funds were utilised for LTSM and the Non-Learner and Teaching Support Material (NLTSM). They outlined the role of the principal in utilising the allocated Norms and Standards for both LTSM and the Non LTSM. The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary highlighted some of the difficulties they experienced at school due to limited resources they had. Because of these challenge, the principal of this school took the initiative to acquire additional textbooks from the neighbouring schools. In addition, Mathafeni Secondary also received support from the Circuit Office, which provided additional copies.

7.6.7 Enhancing teachers' and own professional development

Professional development is seen as an important factor that contributes to the school's academic performance (Chikoko, 2018; Gillett, *et al.*, 2016; Steyn, 2018). The principals of the seven schools prioritised the professional development of their educators and, therefore, they participated in some forms of developments. Their educators were mainly exposed to workshops, which were organised by the district; school based professional assistance like team teaching and mentoring and by being paired with performing educators from the neighbouring schools. The seven principals had lately been trained in the area of financial management in order to be able to manage the school finances. The experience of Mathafeni's professional development involved project management.

The Principal of Mathafeni Secondary saw the school as a project; hence, the need to acquire those project management skills. As part of his professional development, at the time of this study the principal was involved in a Masters programme in administration, which assists him with financial management. As a drastic measure to change things, the principal stopped the payment of the security guard utilising the allocated Norms and Standards funds. Furthermore, the Principal of Mathafeni Secondary indicated that he was getting training support in the form of Departmental workshops that assisted him in improving his management of the infrastructure. The Principal of Kuhle Secondary utilised the skills acquired in mentoring and coaching training for attending to problem solving. Furthermore, this principal participated in principals association as a deputy chairperson and a former secretary of the Association of Science Educators in South Africa, and networks with other schools and non-governmental organisations like the Vula Maths project, which is based at Hilton College. DHs at Thando Secondary were trained on curriculum management by the partner school. As part of this programme, DHs utilised the tools they obtained from the supporting school.

7.6.8 The system of recruiting educators

It has been observed that there are different way in which educators are appointed and this is mainly influenced by the Provincial Education Department's policies which are implemented by the Human Resource Management Directorate at that particular time. The system of appointing educators seems to change from time to time. Lately, the Provincial Human

Resource Directorate has informed the districts through Human Resource Circulars, namely, Circular No.3 of 2018; Circular No.6 of 2018 and Circular No.13 of 2018 that schools have to be given five names of educators by their Districts Human Resource Sub Directorates, in which to choose an educator whom they believe better meets their school's post profile. This procedure has only been opened for substitute educators (educators who are appointed for a fixed period of time, against someone who is either sick or has taken maternity leave) or for temporary educators who are appointed against others who have assumed the acting promotion positions within their schools until such time that those positions are filled. Whilst this process gives the SGBs the opportunity to select and recommend educators from the given list, this is just for the short-term appointments. The appointment of educators to substantive vacant positions is centralised at the Provincial Head Office in the Human Resource Directorate. Schools are expected to identify vacant positions and immediately forward them to their Circuit Managers for transmission to the Districts Human Resource Sub-Directorates.

The analysis of the data that was presented in the previous chapters, namely Chapter Five and Chapter Six, suggests that there are similar and also different strategies which are used by the principals to recruit educators. The similarity from all seven schools is mainly relates to the appointment of temporary or substitute educators (educators who are appointed for a short/ fixed period of time). All schools are expected to submit their post profiles to their Circuit Managers, who forward them to Human Resource Management after verifying and checking certain information. Schools are then given five names from the District database to go and interview and then recommend names in the order of their preferences. There are noted differences in the appointment of permanent educators. Data suggests that principals of schools in the peri-urban areas utilised the system of educator transfers to recruit well performing educators before the district could send them an educator either a bursary holder or from the pool of unplaced additional/surplus educators (educators who have been declared additional in their schools because of the drop in learner enrolment or because of the change in curriculum). This is not the case with schools in the rural areas as they battle to attract educators (Chikoko, 2018). They wait for the Department to send them an educator and at times, they do not get the person who perfectly matches their post profile and will have to accept that educator and reshuffle from within to ensure that every subject is taught.

8. Conclusion

Through this chapter, I have narrated the experiences of seven principals leading schools that are located in rural communities, in areas under the authority of traditional leaders and in the peri-urban areas, those that serve learners from the informal settlement. In this chapter, I have outlined how these principals managed to turn around their schools from the state of underperformance to performance. I organised the discussion under various themes as I have highlighted in the introduction of this chapter. I have analysed data through the lens of transformational leadership and Weber's (1996) domains of Instructional leadership. The data have shown that, like their peri-urban counterparts, rural secondary schools face largely, similar deprivations and such deprivations negatively affect teaching and learning processes and outcomes. Similarly, principals seemed to have adopted leadership practices that are characterised by decisiveness, intention to transform the school cultures to that of high performance, high work ethic and high levels of inclusivity of all stakeholders. The notion of inclusivity of stakeholders has enabled principals to adopt uncompromising positions on certain critical matters, without much resistance and/or backlash. The implementation of various decisions seemed to succeed because buy-in of stakeholders had been sought and thus ownership of such decisions had been assured. One of example of what I am referring to here is the decision to conduct extra classes in the mornings and in the afternoons after the normal teaching hours. It is evident that new cultures of teaching and learning were adopted in the participating schools without any hassles. In short, through this chapter, I have been able to show a pattern that has emerged through the across site analysis. The pattern relates to a variety of leadership related issues. The next chapter brings the entire research to a close. Through Chapter Eight, I will try to explain the extent to which the research questions that I had posed in Chapter One have been addressed.

CHAPTER EIGHT

TURNING AROUND UNDERPERFORMING SCHOOLS IN DEPRIVED SCHOOL CONTEXTS: LESSONS FROM SEVEN PRINCIPALS

8.1 Introduction

This thesis consists of eight chapters and the last four deal with evidence from the field (Wolcott, 1995). Chapters Five up to Chapter Seven deal specifically about data that I generated through the use of various data generation techniques. The previous chapter focused on mapping emerging patterns in the manner in which the participating principals turned around underperformance in their schools despite various factors of deprivation that confronted them. Chapter Seven mapped out patterns that emerged from the analysis the descriptive data generated in the previous two chapters (Chapter Five and Chapter Six). To develop such patterns, I did an across sites analysis and thereafter, I injected relevant literature comprising empirical studies and two theories (Transformational Leadership and Instructional Leadership Model). This is the final chapter that attempts to bring the whole thesis to a close. In some ways, this chapter tells how and why these principals succeeded in transforming their schools from such a dreaded situation of underperformance to where they are where they are now known to be performing schools. The caption of the chapter reflects the content, which precisely summarises the entire thesis and paints a brief but comprehensive picture about principals' leadership practices that have brought about desirable changes from a situation of underperformance to where they are properly functioning schools.

I begin the chapters by providing a synthesis of the whole study by way of bringing together various crucial issues that are addressed in different chapters constituting this thesis. I then move on to re-state the research questions I had posed in Chapter One. I then use each research question as a heading to organise the discussion of findings. I then present and discuss the findings, at the end of which I briefly discuss some implications for leadership practices aimed at transforming schools and their cultures for improved learner academic achievement. In most theses and dissertations, researchers usually call this section, recommendations. Personally, I am sceptical about using the term 'recommendations' in the sense that it sounds like I am instructing the readers, researchers and leadership practitioners to do leadership in a particular way as if my research has generalised its findings.

8.2 Synthesis of the whole thesis

This study sought to explore and understand the leadership practices and experiences of school principals who were able to work against the odds to achieve their goals of transforming their schools. Their goals were to turn around their respective schools' poor academic performances and maintain good performances for three years and more. My initial review of literature had pointed to the existence of a confluence between multiple deprivations and academic performance of learners. That is why this study focused on understanding how participants had managed to turn around their schools' fortunes despite multiple deprivations posed by the environment in and around the schools. Therefore, the study essentially looked at strategies that school principals used to overcome or mitigate the challenges posed by the environments within which their schools are situated. In Chapter One, I indicated that my interest in this study emanated from my observation as a young child growing up in a rural area and travelling long distances to access education. Therefore, I openly declared my experience and awareness of the influence of social deprivations on schooling as I was personally exposed to a similar situation in my youth days. Obviously, the next part of my journey is that of engaging in extensive review of literature.

After outlining the background to the problem and formally stating the research problems, I proceeded to review literature on issues relating to leading schools generally and leadership that pays special attention to the core duties of ensuring that effective teaching and learning is happening. The literature review also indicated that there is a close relationship between the context of deprivations and learner academic outcomes. The review also indicated how leadership successfully navigates challenges posed by the environment on schooling. Such literature logically led to the development of the two theories to frame the study, which were about transformation and the kind of leadership that focuses on teaching and learning. When the two concepts of transformation and leadership focuses on instruction converge, they lead to the need to use transformational leadership and instructional leadership models as theoretical lenses to understand principals' practices. A detailed discussion about the research and methodology followed. Thereafter, I presented a descriptive analysis of the narratives that emerged after the analysis process. That descriptive analysis comprised two chapters, namely, Chapter Five and Chapter Six.

I then move on to present an across sites analysis through which I sought to paint a broad picture about what was emerging from the analysis of leaderships practices of the participating principals had wanted to transform their schools from underperformance to fully functional state. Through such analysis, some kind of a pattern emerged regarding a variety of issues including the socio-economic conditions characterising the communities and schools; the effects of deprivations on schooling as well as leadership practices that participating principals adopted in order to transform their schools into performing ones. The concluding chapter that follows after the analysis chapter, attempts amongst other things, to make an assessment regarding the extent to which the research questions guiding the study have been addressed. Finally, in this chapter, I make comments about the implications of this study for various stakeholders such as researchers, and leadership practitioners.

8.3 Restating the research questions

The research questions that underpinned this study were:

1. What are principals' understandings and experiences of leadership for transforming underperforming schools in a deprived context?
2. How do principals who have transformed underperforming schools in deprived contexts enact leadership?
3. What can be learnt from the principals' understandings and experiences of leadership for transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts?

The researched questions will be used below to present the lesson learned from the study.

8.3.1 What are principals' understandings and experiences of leadership for transforming underperforming schools in a deprived context?

The findings suggest that principals' understandings are implied in the manner in which they started and proceeded with the change process that brought about transformed schools' performances. Actually, the findings clearly show that they understood the need to transform their schools' ways of doing things (that is, teaching and learning) so that they can be regarded as functional schools that offer effective teaching and learning opportunities for learners. The way they started the change process, for example, engaging with teachers and SMT members regarding the use of SWOT analysis in order to assess the *status quo*; the collaborative manner in which they sought to find solutions together and the manner in which they implemented

changes clearly indicates that they understood the complexities and dynamics of sustainable change. I have indicated for instance, that there were some challenges during the initial phase of the change process, and that resistance from some teachers occurred. However, being conscious, that change is not always easy to accept, and that stakeholders should be prepared for change, all seven principals managed to overcome those challenges brought about by transformation endeavours. A detailed discussion of these important issues is found in Section 5.3.1 of Chapter Five, Section 6.3.1 of Chapter Six, as well as, Section 7.4 of Chapter Seven.

Change is an unavoidable phenomenon in any organisation that wishes to achieve positive results. A deprived environment makes it difficult for others to adapt to its demands, which are not conducive to quality teaching and learning. The findings indicate that principals in this study understood this challenge and had to find solutions to the challenges of deprived school contexts. The findings revealed that these principals had to lead and manage schools, which had a number of deprivations that conspire and created difficulties for effective teaching and learning to take place. Such deprivations included learners who are raised by single parents and grandparents, and some came from child-headed families, while others were orphaned and depended on the social grants for survival. In addition, there was a high rate of teenage pregnancy, poverty-ridden communities, drug and substance abuse being another challenge.

There was also a high rate of unemployment, low-income employment for many parents working for meagre wages and salaries as well as seasonal employment opportunities. The research revealed that school principals used a number of strategies to address the negative effects of deprivations as they had an impact on the schools' academic performance yet schools were expected to perform well and provide quality education. The issue of learner discipline was addressed by the schools through reviewing their Learners Code of Conduct. Parents of learners who had breached the Learners Code of Conduct were called to the school to account for the disciplinary problems of their children. Some schools are located in places without a local health care facilities such as clinic whilst people are affected by a number of illness, and have to survive on the mobile health clinic, which visits the community once a week. The principals had to work all out to ensure that they minimised the negative effects of these deprivations and navigate through to better performance. More details about how principals' understandings and experiences in combination enabled them can be found in Section 5.3.8 of Chapter Five, as well as, Section 6.3.8 of Chapter Six.

All seven school principals endured some form of resistance when they implemented the turnaround plans. In some of the schools, there were threats posed by drug lords amongst others, and these drug lords wanted to harm the principals because they viewed them as obstacles to their nefarious drug pushing activities. Affected principals did not back down in the interest of their schools and communities. Most principals also faced resistance from educators who perceived the change as giving them more work. Nevertheless, they persisted, and worked closely with the teachers to get to their vision for the schools. More details on these issues can be found in Section 5.3 of Chapter Five and Section 6.3.5 of Chapter Six.

The other important finding about principals' understanding of leadership that can transform schools relates to their acute awareness and understanding of their contexts, the needs of the schools as well as, how to deal with difficult situations. Such situations included teachers who felt unsafe as they realised that their schools were effecting reshuffles and in some schools, there were educators who were moved into primary schools and other high schools to make way for suitable qualified educators. The principals had to step in and provide adequate communication about the schools intentions and influence the educators to embrace change. They also created a platform to address their concerns and created reporting mechanisms for accountability and consequence management. There are many other issues that showed that principals had profound understandings of their circumstances. Some of these are addressed in the next research question, which focuses on the actual leadership practices that turned the schools' situation around to becoming effective schools. Further details about all their activities are found in Section 5.3.4 of Chapter Five, and also in Section 6.3.4 of Chapter Six.

8.3.2 How do principals who have transformed underperforming schools in deprived contexts enact leadership?

This question tackles the core of the study, which is about how principals, through the manner in which they exercise leadership, have succeeded in turning around their undesirable situations to desirable ones. It emerged from the data that the principals of the seven school had to contend with adverse conditions in order to turnaround their schools academic performances. Before I can even talk about how they exercised leadership that transformed their schools, there are two critical factors that I believe underpinned their practices. The first major factor that comes to the fore when reflecting on how they enacted leadership is that their practices were largely dominated by the change focus. The second critical factor is that they were very decisive in

what they had decided to do. Given the fact that almost all their leadership activities were instructional in nature, one may not be wrong to say that they were instructional in their approach to leading. Notwithstanding this, when I look at the context which at times was life threatening, it appears to me that bravery became a dominant factor. It calls for bravery to be decisive (Mukhtarova, 2013), and that is why I use decisiveness to characterise their underlying force that influenced their leadership actions. Now that I have highlighted these two underlying factors, I now move on to briefly discuss their actual leadership practices.

Their leadership was characterised by acute awareness of the situation in and outside the school, and such awareness includes understanding the physical environment, socio-economic conditions as well as human capital. It is because of this acute consciousness and special focus on these conditions that, when they began the change process, they had to think of strategies of working on the mind-set of their teaching staff. Leadership is about working through and with the people to achieve organisational goals (Clarke, 2007; Department of Education, 1996). Arguing along similar lines, Maxwell (1993) describes a leader as someone who has power to obtain followers. Such views are important in characterising leadership practices of principals in this study. Being aware of the importance of obtaining a buy-in from the teaching staff, participants ensured that they worked on the mind-set of their teachers so that together, they developed a school vision and mission statement. Principals, through their inclusive approach, made sure that whatever decision they made and whatever route they took, they had the support of the majority of the stakeholders (teachers, parents, learners and the SGB). A detailed discussion of this and other related matters can be found in Section 5.3.6 to 5.5 of Chapter Five, as well as, Section 6.3 6 to 6.4 of Chapter Six.

Besides collaboration, they also ensured that they focused on creating conditions that are favourable for a change process. One of the ways of creating such conditions is that of paying a special focus on teaching and learning processes, including making the necessary physical and human resources available so that effective teaching and learning can occur. No effective teaching and learning can occur where teaching and learning materials are unavailable or in short supply, nor can it occur where teaching staff are both unwilling and unable to provide clear understandable learning content. That is one reason why the principals in the study ensured that all aspects that Weber (1996) in his Five Domains of Instructional Leadership Model talks about, are addressed. Most Instructional leadership models emphasise the notion of the leader organising learning materials as part of preparing the environment for effective

teaching and learning (see, Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Southworth, 2002). Participants ensured that LTSM are available in the schools and that teachers were able to utilise them.

The second aspect of creating an environment is that of ensuring that teaching staff and principals themselves were continuously learning through professional development programmes that were regularly made available. As I have highlighted in the above paragraph, teachers have to have skills to master their subject content and when they cannot, that constitutes a serious problem. That is why professional development was emphasised for everybody. In addition, that is one of the reasons that the out-of-field teaching phenomenon was resolved; learners had to be confident that the content they received was offered by teachers with expertise in the subject (Steyn & Du Plessis, 2007). Similarly, teachers had to teach with confidence because they are proficient in the subjects they were teaching. More details about these aspects can be found in Section 5.3.4.2 of Chapter Five, and also in Section 6.3.4.2 of Chapter Six, as well as, Section 7.6.7 of Chapter Seven.

Participating principals had beliefs in the participation of all key stakeholders so that even as they constructed vision and mission statements, everybody had a clear understanding of the current undesirable situation as well as, the desired future. Their enthusiasm about stakeholder involvement stems from a variety of sources such as the need for multiple accountability areas, not just upward accountability wherein, employees only report to their seniors and not to their peers and those perceived to fall below their own levels. What the findings indicate is that at the beginning of the year, teachers and the SMT hold accountability sessions where they analyse the results of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations. As part of that analysis, they have to come up with identifiable problem areas that should be tackled. The entire school conducted a SWOT analysis, through which they began to identify priority areas for urgent attention. In that way, everybody is held to account for their contribution to the poor results. In the same way, they work together to identify solutions, however, painful such solutions might be. Therefore, there is always collective ownership of the future route that the schools takes. A detailed discussion on these issues can be found in Section 5.3.6 of Chapter Five, as well as, Section 6.3.6 of Chapter Six.

The manner in which principals in the study enacted leadership can be summarised graphically in the Figure 1. This graphic presentation summarises the findings in relation to the manner in

which principals turned around underperformance in their schools and made them normally functional schools.



Fig. 1: Emerging principals' leadership practices for turning around schools performances

Figure 1. clearly points to key leadership practices that worked in transforming participants' schools from underperformance to fully operational schools that performed well against the odds. As can be seen in the graphic depiction, principals engaged in all these activities simultaneously, and they did not form any particular sequence. For instance, as they reflected on their school performances through accountability sessions at the beginning of the year, they included teachers as key stakeholders. When principals created a new vision for their schools' future, all key stakeholders such as teachers, SMTs and SGBs participated. This clearly indicates that there was no particular sequence of events and therefore, no single activity precedes any other activity.

8.3.3 What can be learnt from the principals' understandings and experiences of leadership for transforming underperforming schools in deprived contexts?

We can learn a number of lessons from the participating principals' leadership practices. Many of the lessons are closely linked to current scholarship, which deals with the importance of embedding schools in their own communities. The first and one of the most important lessons is the significance of decisiveness of leaders when confronted by situations that require bold action such as turning around the schools' situation. In the first chapter, I have characterised the work of the participating principals as sailing in turbulent conditions. I also tried to clarify what constituted turbulence in the work environments of the seven principals. Surely, poor academic performance was not only caused by turbulence in the environment, but obviously, the environment did not make their work easier either. What I think is of absolute importance is the principals' acute awareness of the environment both inside and outside the school. In addition, boldness to tackle the challenges facing the school is similarly significant because awareness alone without action is not sensible.

Principals in the study demonstrated decisiveness when dealing with a number of issues, including dealing with irregular practices and teacher indolence and apathy that from time to time occurred. Evidence presented in Chapter Five and Chapter Six clearly indicates that participants identified weakness in their operations at school level and it was not easy to address them. Schools located in rural communities faced added challenges such as inadequately qualified teachers and those who were teaching 'wrong' subjects. The phenomenon of out-of-field teaching is not a new one, but it persists in certain schools, particularly those located in rural areas. Using a stick and carrot approach, some principals succeeded to move improperly qualified teachers and placed them in their right places where they can teach with confidence. A detailed discussion of this issue is given in Section 5.3.2 of Chapter Five, as well as Section 6.3.2 of Chapter Six.

The second lesson to learn is that all participants showed an acute awareness of the need for inclusivity of all key stakeholders in whatever they did, including the development of new vision for their schools, analysing the *status quo* of their schools in relation to their academic performance. One important aspect of inclusivity relates to the participation of learners in serious decisions in the schools. When learners were invited to participate as we saw in Kuhle Secondary School, the principal demonstrated that he valued learners' participation and thus

regarded them as important stakeholders in the life of the school. When it comes to monitoring teaching and learning, learners constituted an important component. A detailed and comprehensive discussion of this issue can be found in Section 5.3.6 of Chapter Five and also in Section 6.3.6 of Chapter Six.

The other important lesson is closely related with the one described above, as it has to do with consultations with various stakeholders in resolving important issues of the school. For instance, the evidence produced in Chapter Five and Chapter Six has shown that the participating principals had to endure hardships and life threatening situations in their quest to turnaround their schools, performances. Some of them faced threats from drug lords as it can be seen from the experiences of the Principal of Thuthuka Secondary who faced lethal threats from drug lords but persisted in his quest to have a drug-free school environment. What we can learn from this and other narrated episodes is that, working closely with traditional leadership in the communities assisted in resolving the problems. Scholarship in the area of school-community collaborations and partnerships suggests that many schools, especially those in rural communities were less successful in mobilising community support (Bhengu, 2007; Bhengu, 2013; Taole, 2013; Bhengu, Naicker and Mthiyane, 2014). Scholars cited above emphasise the importance of embedding schools in their communities as one of the most effective strategies to solicit community buy-in and thus strengthen partnership with the school. Lessons from these schools add to the body of knowledge regarding the efficacies of school-community collaboration. Detailed discussions on this and other related matters can be found in Section 5.3.6 of Chapter Five, as well as, in Section 6.3 of Chapter Six.

8.4 Implications of the study for various stakeholders

This section highlights some of the implications for various stakeholders. Starting with implications for research, I must immediately acknowledge the fact that scholarship in educational leadership has, in the past decade or so emphasised the role that leadership plays in improving learning outcomes (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018; Southworth, 2002). Therefore, it is evident that leadership plays a critical role in the performance of learners in terms of their learning outcomes. Similarly, it has been established in research that factors such as deprivations have a negative influence on learners' academic achievement. What is now emerging in research is that leadership in schools is able to overcome challenges posed by the

environment to the schools' operations in terms of teaching and learning. However, in the context of South Africa, there is limited research on how school leadership overcomes the challenges posed by the environment on schooling. Hence, this study was conducted to draw lessons from a small sample of schools that had succeeded to turn them around from underperformance to full effective operation. Therefore, there is a need for a big scale research on this phenomenon so that generalisation can be made for the whole population in various districts and provinces in the country.

The second implication has to do with the study design. This study comprised only school principals and whatever conclusion I make emerges from my conversations with principals only but the story relates to the lives of their entire schools. That might be considered a design limitation. However, I can counter that argument and highlight the fact that my use of three data generation methods weakens such assertions. Nonetheless, what remains valid is the fact that a study that elicits views from all stakeholders in a school on this important phenomenon is desperately and urgently needed.

The third implication is directed at educational leadership practitioners. There are many lessons that can be learnt from the leadership practices of the participating principals in this study. Some of these lessons relate to the principals' awareness of the situation in and outside their schools. This made them to work closely with other stakeholders and that assisted them when they were facing challenges and turbulences. Secondly, participants were able to harness their awareness of the situation to mobilise human capital to fight against deprivations; for example, push their agendas to turn around the schools' situations. The ability to handle and treat human resources as assets and combining that with the focus on the core duties of principals is an important feat to be emulated by other principals who face similar predicaments. The case in point was the ability of some principals, especially in the peri urban schools to recruit best performing educators by using the system of single transfers rather than waiting for the Department to send them educators through its pool of either surplus educators or first time appointees. This has been discussed in detail in the previous chapters. Therefore, the issue of inclusivity when tackling important issues of the school is of absolute importance and should not be underestimated given what it can do in creating new organisational cultures. Participating schools were able to establish new school cultures particularly because they were able to move forward together with their teaching staff; they managed to obtain their buy-in in

whatever they were doing. This displayed positive effects of transformational leadership theory.

The other important implication has to do with decisiveness with which principals took various decisions about their schools and teachers. It is important that when principals make decisions or take a particular direction, they demonstrate a clear thought and act on it without any fear or favour. Some good ideas have failed because leaders responsible for their implementation were hesitant and tame. That is why it is important that leaders are decisive when embarking on projects. I have noted that even when principals took unpopular decisions, because an agreement had previously been reached with all stakeholder, it was always difficult for those who may have been aggrieved, and they tend to frustrate it. Principals in the study had to set performance targets for their educators and learners. The SMT had to model good performance and provide the necessary support to other educators. The SMT members had to manage and monitor curriculum implementation even during the weekends and holidays. Time management was observed by everyone at the schools and attendance by educators and learners was closely monitored.

8.5 Conclusion

This study focused on seven schools in the Umgungundlovu District. This is obviously a limited target population of the principals, which does not represent all the schools in the Umgungundlovu District wherein principals have managed to turnaround their schools, performances despite deprivations. While this makes it impossible to present authentic findings beyond the seven schools in which the study was conducted, I must also reiterate that it was never my intention to generalise the findings beyond the seven principals and schools. Having said that, it does not also mean that the findings are less trustworthy, as qualitative research has its own ways of ensuring trustworthiness of the findings. The sections on implications above have highlighted these issues and indicated what research stands to benefit from such a study. I have also highlighted the need for a study such as this one, but which will be conducted on a large scale fashion, in terms of the results being able to be generalisable. I am saying this being aware that education systems globally and locally rely on research that is applicable to the whole education system rather than case studies that are not applicable system wide. Nonetheless, as I have argued elsewhere in this report, the study has generated new insights about how principals can manage to change the school's fortunes despite the challenges posed

by the internal and external environments. It has also explored the strategies used by the principals in adverse and turbulent conditions to turn around their schools performances from underperforming to performing ones.

9. References

- Agboola, A. A., & Salawu, R. O. (2011). Managing deviant behavior and resistance to change. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 6(1), 235.
- Akbar, A.A., Sadegh, R., & Chehrazi, R. (2015). Impact of Transformational and Transactional leadership style on employees' creativity and innovation. *International Journal of Environmental Research*, 13(6), 1109-1123.
- Akcakaya, M. (2010). *21 yuzvilda veni liderlik anlayisi*. Ankara. Adalet Yayınevi.
- Al-Jaradat, M. K. M., & Zaid-Alkilani, K. K. (2015). Successful leadership practices in school problem-solving by the principals of the secondary schools in Irbid Educational Area. *Review of European Studies*, 7(3), 20.
- Ali, S., Sahin, A., Sönmez, M. A. & Yilmaz, O. (2017). "Views of School Managers and Teachers about School Culture." *Online Submission*, 8(1), 28-45.
- Andrews, M., Squire, C., & Tamboukou, M. (2008). *Doing Narrative Research*. London. SAGE Publications.
- Archer, J. C. (2010). State of the science in health professional education: effective feedback. *Medical Education*, 44(1), 101-108.
- Avery, G. C. (2004). *Understanding leadership: Paradigms and cases*. London. SAGE Publications.
- Badenhorst, J. W., & Koalepe, L. J. (2014). How do we manage? Determinants of effective leadership in high-poverty schools. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 39(3), 243-256.
- Bailey, C. (2007). *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research (2nd ed.)*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Bailey, K.D. (1994). *Methods of social research (4th edition)*. New York: The Free Press.
- Baloyi, M. J. (2011). *The perceptions of the School Management Teams towards the effectiveness of the new management system within Malamulele West Circuit of Limpopo Province*. (Masters of Business Administration. University of Limpopo. Mankweng. South Africa.

- Balyer, A. (2012). Transformational Leadership Behaviors of School Principals: A Qualitative Research Based on Teachers' Perceptions. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 4(3), 581-591.
- Barbour, C., Clifford, M., Corringan-Halpern, P., Peggie, G., Maday-Karageorge, T., Meyer, C., & Townsend, C. (2010). *What experience from the field tells us about school leadership turnaround?* Naperville: American Institutes for research.
- Barbour, R. (1998). Mixing qualitative methods. Quality assurance or qualitative quagmire? *Qualitative Health Research*, 8, 352-361.
- Barber, M., Whelan, F., & Clark, M. (2010). *Capturing the leadership premium: How the world's top school systems are building leadership capacity for the future*. New York: McKinsey.
- Barrows, E., & Neely, A. (2012). *Managing Performance in Turbulent Times*. New York: Wiley, Hoboken.
- Bass, B.M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York: Collier Macmillan.
- Bass, B.M., Avolio, B. J., Jung, D. I., & Berson, Y. (2003). Predicting Unit Performance by assessing transformational and transactional leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(2), 207-218.
- Bass, B.M., Bass, R. (2008). *The Bass handbook of Leadership: Theory Research, and managerial applications* (4th ed) New York, NY: Free Press
- Bass, B.M. (2008). *The Bass handbook of leadership theory research and managerial applications*. New York: Free Press.
- Bass, B.M., & Bass, R. (2010). *The Bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2010). The transformational model of leadership. *Leading organizations: Perspectives for a new era*, 2, 76-86.
- Bayat, A., Louw, W., & Rena, R. (2014). The impact of socio-economic factors on the performance of selected high school learners in the Western Cape Province, South Africa. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 45(3), 183-196.

- Bayeni, S. D. (2012). Principals influencing education policy practice: A case study of two schools. In V. Chikoko & K.M. Jorgensen (eds.). *Education leadership, management and governance in South Africa*. (pp. 179-194). New York, NY: Nova Science Publishers.
- Bayeni, S. D., & Bhengu, T. T. (2018). Complexities and Contradictions in Policy Implementation: Lived Experiences of Three School Principals in South Africa. *SAGE Open*, 8(3), 1-12.
- Belle, L. J. (2009). *The role of secondary school principals in motivating teachers in the Flacq district of Mauritius* (Doctoral dissertation).UNISA (Pretoria).
- Bennis, W.G. (1959). Leadership theory and administrative behaviour: The problem of authority. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 4,259-260.
- Bergman, M. M., Bergman, Z., & Gravett, S. (2011). The development and application of the explanatory model of school dysfunctions. *South African Journal of Education*, 31(4), 461-474.
- Bhengu, T.T. (2007). Bringing down the fence through School-Community Partnership: A Case for Community Education Forum Framework. *Africa Education Review*, 4(2), 131-143.
- Bhengu, T.T. (2013). School-Community integration for school change: A case study of a rural secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. *Education As Change*, 17(1), 63-76.
- Bhengu, T. T. & Mkhize, B. N. (2013). Principals' instructional leadership practices in improving learner achievement: Case studies of five secondary schools in the Umbumbulu area. *Education as Change*, 17(S1), S33-S47.
- Bhengu, T. T., & Mthembu, T. T. (2014). Effective leadership, school culture and school effectiveness: A case study of two 'sister'schools in Umlazi Township. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 38(1), 43-52.
- Bhengu, T. T., & Myende, P. E. (2016). Leadership for coping with and adapting to policy change in deprived contexts: Lessons from school principals. *South African Journal of Education*, 36(4), 1-10.
- Biggerstaff, J.K. (2012). *The Relationship between Teacher Perceptions Style and Teacher job Satisfaction*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Western Kentucky University, Kentucky.

- Bipath, K. (2012). *Exploring the Role of the Principal in creating a functional school Culture*. University of Pretoria: South Africa.
- Blasé, J.B., Blasé, J., & Phillips, D.Y. (2010). *Handbook of school improvement: How high Performing principals create high performing schools*. USA. Corwin Press.
- Bloch, G. (2009). *The Toxic Mix*. Cape Town: Tafelberg. South Africa.
- Block, G. (2010). *The Toxic Mix: What's wrong with South Africa's schools and how to fix it?* Bridge, South Africa. The Ark.
- Boeije, H. (2010). *Analysing in Qualitative Research*. London. SAGE Publications.
- Bold, C. (2012). *Using Narrative in Research*. London: SAGE Publications
- Books, S., & Ndlalane, T. (2011). What the US Could Learn from South Africa about Education and Social Justice. *Educational Foundations*, 25, 83-102.
- Books, S., & Ndlalane, T. (2011). What the US could learn from South Africa about education and social justice. *Educational Foundations*, 25 (1-2), 83-102.
- Bossert, S. T., Dwyer, D. C., Rowan, B., & Lee, G. V. (1982). The instructional management role of the principal. *Educational administration quarterly*, 18(3), 34-64.
- Botha, R.J. (2012). Evolving leadership required in South African schools. *Research In Education*, 88(1), 40-49.
- Botha, R. J. (2012). The role of the school principal in the South African school governing body: A case study of various members' perceptions. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 30(3), 263-271.
- Botha, R.J. (2013). The need for creative leadership in South African schools. *African Studies*, 72(2), 307-320.
- Botha, R.J., & Triegaard, P.K. (2015). The role of distributed leadership in functional South African schools. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 43 (3), 207-215.
- Botha, R. J., & Triegaardt, P. K. (2015). The principal as a distributed leader: Supporting change and improving South African schools. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 10(3), 419-427.

- Botha, R. J. (2016). Improving South African school effectiveness through distributed leadership: A study of gender. *Gender & Behaviour*, 14(1), 6804-6813.
- Bouchamma, Y. (2012). Leadership practices in effective schools in disadvantaged areas of Canada. *Education Research International*.
- Bridges, E. M. (1982). Research on the school administrator: The state of the art, 1967-1980. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 18(3), 12-33.
- Brown, J. D. (2010). High self-esteem buffers negative feedback: Once more with feeling. *Cognition and Emotion*, 24(8), 1389-1404.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods*, (4th Edition). Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press. New.
- Brauckmann, S., & Pashiardis, P. (2011). A validation study of the leadership styles of a holistic leadership theoretical framework. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 25(1), 11-32.
- Brauckmann, S., Geißler, G., Feldhoff, T., & Pashiardis, P. (2016). Instructional Leadership in Germany: An Evolutionary Perspective. *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM))*, 44(2).
- Briggs, B. H. (1980). Radar observations of atmospheric winds and turbulence: A comparison of techniques. *Journal of Atmospheric and Terrestrial Physics*, 42(9-10), 823-833.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York. Harper & Row.
- Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2003). *School leadership: Concepts and evidence*. London: National College for School Leadership.
- Bush, T., & Heystek, G. (2003). School governance in the new South Africa: *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 33 (2), 127-138.
- Bush, T., Bell, L. & Middlewood, D. (2010). *The principles of educational leadership and management*. Los Angeles. SAGE Publications
- Bush, T., Joubert, R., Kiggundu, E., & Van Rooyen, J. (2010). Managing teaching and learning in South African schools. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30(2), 162–168.

- Bush, T. (2011). *Theories of Educational leadership and management*. Fourth Edition, Los Angeles: SAGE Publishers.
- Bush, T., Kiggundu, E., & Moorosi, P. (2011). Preparing New Principals in South Africa: the ACE School Leadership Programme. *South African Journal of Education*, 31(1), 31-43
- Bush, T. (2013). Instructional leadership and leadership for learning: a global and South African perspectives. *Education as Change*, 17(S1), S5-S20.
- Bush, T., & Middlewood, D. (2013). *Leading and Managing people in Education*. London. Third edition. Sage Publication.
- Calik, T., Sezgin, F., Kavgaci, H., & Cagatay Kilinc, A. (2012). Examination of Relationships between Instructional Leadership of School Principals and Self-Efficacy of Teachers and Collective Teacher Efficacy. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 12(4), 2498-2504.
- Canaloglu, N., Sezgin, F., & Killing, A.C. (2012). Examining the relationship between school Principals Transformational and Transactional Commitment. *The Online Journal of New Horizons in Education*, 2(2), 53-63.
- Carney, M. (2011). Influence of organizational culture on quality healthcare delivery. *International journal of health care quality assurance*, 24(7), 523-539.
- Celikten, M. (2001). The instructional leadership tasks of high school assistant principals. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 39(1), 67-76.
- Chan, K.W.C. (2015). *Learner's perceptions of servant leadership as practiced by teachers in classrooms of a Hong Kong school: A mixed- methods study*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of Bristol, Bristol.
- Chan, K. W. C. (2016). Servant leadership cultivates grit and growth mindset in learners. *Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice*, 3(2), 2.
- Cemaloğlu, N., Sezgin, F., & Kılınç, A.Ç. (2012). Examining the relationships between school principals' transformational and transactional leadership styles and teachers' organizational commitment. *The Online Journal of New Horizons in Education*, 2(2), 53-64.

- Chikoko, V. Naicker, I. & Mthiyane, S.E. (2015). School leadership that works in areas of multiple deprivation in South Africa. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership*, 43(3), 452-467.
- Chikoko, V., & Khanare, F. (2012). School management teams' conceptualisation of school assets in addressing the needs of children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS: Evidence from South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 32(1), 23-36.
- Chikoko, V. (2018). *Leadership that Works in Deprived School Contexts of South Africa*. New York: Nova Science Publisher.
- Chiome, C. (2011). Preparing school leaders for a changing world: Lessons from Zimbabwe. *In International Handbook of Leadership for Learning* (pp. 445-465). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Chisholm, L. (2004). *Changing class: Education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa*. Capetown: HSRC Press.
- Chisholm, L. (2011). Review: The challenge of South African schooling: Dimensions, targets and initiatives. *Transformation audit*, 50-57.
- Christie, P., Sullivan, P., Duku, N., & Gallie, M. (2010). Researching the need: School leadership and quality of education in South Africa. Report prepared for Bridge, South Africa and Ark, UK.
- Clarke, A. (2007). *The Handbook of School Management*. Cape Town: Kate McCallum.
- Covery, S.D. (2013). *Principal centred leadership in Secondary schools*: New York: Free Press Publishers.
- Christie, P., Sullivan, P., Duku N., & Gallie, M. (2010). Researching the Need: School Leadership and quality education in South Africa. *Report prepared for Bridge, Africa and Ark. UK*.
- Christensen, L.B., Johnson, R.B., & Turner, L.A. (2012). *Research Methods, design and analysis* (11th ed). Boston, M.A.: Allyn & Bacon.
- Cohen, L. M., & Manion, L. (2001). 1. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*, 6. London: Routledge.

- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in education (7th Edition)*. London: Routledge.
- Connelly, G. (2010). A Conversation with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. *Principal*, 90(2), 34-38.
- Covey, S. D. (2013). *Leadership in Learning-Centred Schools: Cultural context, Function and Qualities*: London: Paul Chapman Publishers.
- Corbetta, R. (2003). *Social Research Theory. Methods and techniques*. New York. SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design. Qualitative and Quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks & London: SAGE Publishers.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Quantitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. (2nd Edition)*. Thousand Oakes CA: SAGE Publishers.
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and mixed methods Approaches. Third edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. (2010). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five Traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA & London: SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2011). Controversies in mixed methods research. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, 4, 269-284.
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA & London: Sage. Culture. University of Pretoria: South Africa.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2006). Understanding mixed methods research. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods research*, 1-19.
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Crowe, S., Creswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A., & Sheikh, A. (2011). The Case study Approach. *Medical Research Methodology*, 11(1), 100-

- Curtis, S., Gesler, W., Smith, G., and Washburn, S. (2000). Approaches to sampling and case selection in qualitative research: examples in the geography of health. *Social Science and medicine* 50(7-8), 1001-1014.
- Daley, G., & Kim, L. (2010). *A teacher evaluation system that works* .Working paper. Santa Monica, CA: National Institute for Excellence in Education,
- Day, C., Sammons, P., Hopkins, D., Harris, A., Leithwood, K., Gu, Q., & Kington, A. (2009). *The impact of school leadership on pupil outcomes. Final Report*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
- De Clerq, F. (2008). Teacher quality, appraisal and development: The flaws in the IQMS. *Perspectives in education*, 26(1), 7-18.
- De Jager, R. (2011). Latest changes in the Technology Education curriculum in South Africa. *In Conference Proceedings of PATT 25: CRIPT*, 8,144-150.
- De Lange, N., Olivier, T., Geldenhuys, J., & Mitchell, C. (2012). Rural school children picturing family life. *Perspectives in Education*, 30(1), 79-89.
- De Gruyter, W. (2011). Applications of interpretive and constructionist research methods in Adolescent research: philosophy, principles and examples. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 23(2), 129-139.
- Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks & LondonL: SAGE Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2009). *Hannbook of Qualitative Research*. terjemahan Dariyanto. Badrus Samsul.
- Department of Education. (1996). *Changing management to manage change in education. Report of the Task Team on Education Management Development*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Department of Basic Education. (2011). *Action Plan 2014. Towards the realization of Schooling 2025*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education.
- Department of the Presidency: Republic of South Africa: National Planning Commission. (2011).Vision2030.<http://www.gov.za/Sites.www.gov.za/files/npcdiagnostic.overview.pdf>.

- Department of Basic Education. (2014). *Circular D1 of 2014. Compliance with Section 58B of the South African Schools Act*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education.
- Department of Basic Education. (2014). The ministerial task team report on the National Senior Certificate (NSC). Pretoria.
- De Vans, D. A. (2005). *Research design in social research*. London. Sage publication.
- Devers, K.J., & Frankel, R.M. (2000). Study Design in Qualitative Research -2: Sampling and Data Collection Strategies. *Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality*. U.S.
- De Villiers, E., & Pretorius, S.G. (2011). Democracy in schools: are educators ready for teacher leadership? *South African Journal of Education*, 31(4), 574-589.
- De Vos, A. S., Delport, C. S. L., Fouché, C. B., & Strydom, H. (2011). *Research at grass roots: A Primer for the Social Science and Human Professions*. Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Dimmock, C. (2005). *Education Leadership: culture and diversity*. London: SAGE Publishers.
- Dimmock, C., & Yong Tan, C. (2013). Educational leadership in Singapore: Tight coupling, sustainability, scalability, and succession. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 51(3), 320-340.
- Dimmock, L.K. (2013). *Leadership in Learning Centred schools; Cultural Context, Function and Qualities*, London: Paul Clapman Publishers.
- Dignam, D., Duffield, C., Stasa, H., Gray, J., Jackson, D., & Daly, J. (2012). Management and Leadership in nursing: an Australian educational perspective. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 20(1), 65-71.
- Dodge, P.R. (2011). *Managing school behaviours, a qualitative case study*. Iowa State University. Iowa.
- Doody, O., & Doody, C. M. (2012). Transformational leadership in nursing practice. *British Journal of Nursing*, 21(20), 1212-1218.
- Downton, J.V. (1973). *Rebel Leadership: Research findings, practice and skills* (7th Edition) Boston. George Hoffman.
- Drysdale, L., & Gurr, D. (2011). Theory and practice of successful school leadership in Australia. *School Leadership & Management*, 31(4), 355-368.

- Durant, J., & Holden, G. (2006). *Teachers Leading Change: Doing Research for School Improvement*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Paul Chapman.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Lowe, A. (2002). *Management Learning: An Introduction*, 2nd Edition.
- Elmore, R. F. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. Albert Shanker Institute.
- Farooq, M. S., Chaudhry, A. H., Shafiq, M., & Berhanu, G. (2011). Factors affecting students' quality of academic performance: a case of secondary school level. *Journal of Quality and Technology Management*, 7(2), 1-14.
- Fernandes, M.H., & Rocha, V.M.D. (2009). Impact of the psychosocial aspects of work on the quality of life of teachers. *Brazilian Journal of Psychiatry*, 31(1), 15-20.
- Fernet, C., Trepanier, S.G., Austin, S., Gagne M., & Forest, J. (2015). Transformational leadership and optional functionality at work: on the mediating role of employees perceived job characteristics and motivation. *Work and Stress*, 29(1), 11-31.
- Finkelstein, S. R., & Fishbach, A. (2011). Tell me what I did wrong: Experts seek and respond to negative feedback. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(1), 22-38.
- Fleisch, B., & Christie, P. (2004). Structural change, leadership and school effectiveness/improvement: Perspectives from South Africa. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education*, 25(1), 95-112.
- Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5th Edition). London & New Delhi: SAGE Publication.
- Flintham, A. (2015). *What's good about leading schools in challenging circumstances? Succession planning*. London: National College for Leadership of schools and Children Services.
- Forde, R. D. (2010). *Minds and Hearts: Exploring the Teacher's Role as a Leader of Pupils in a Class*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.
- Freedom Charter. (1955). Congress of the People.
- Fullan, M. (2006). *Turnaround leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey –Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2011). *The six secrets of change: What the best leaders do to help their organizations survive and thrive*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

- Gage, K. S., Green, J. L., & VanZandt, T. E. (1980). Use of Doppler radar for the measurement of atmospheric turbulence parameters from the intensity of clear-air echoes. *Radio Science*, 15(2), 407-416.
- Gallie, M. (2007). The Implementation of Developmental Appraisal Systems in a low-functional South African school. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria. Pretoria.
- Gallie, M. (2009). Gauteng East Underperforming schools, IEPPI, Retrieved April 17, 2011, from, [http://www.slideshare.net, guest c 756a7/ieppi-gauteng east- underperformance high](http://www.slideshare.net/guest_c756a7/ieppi-gauteng-east-underperformance-high).
- Gephart, R.R. (1999). Paradigms and research methods. Academy of Management. *Research Methods Forum*, 4, 1-12.
- Gerring, J. (2004). *What is a case study and what is it good for? American Political Science Review*, 98(2), 341-354.
- Gerring, J., & Skaaning, S. E. (2013). A concept-driven approach to measurement: *The Lexical Scale*. In *APSA 2013 Annual Meeting Paper*.
- Gheith, N.A.R. (2010). Reconstructing organisation culture through enforcing nurses transformational leadership style. *Australian Journal of Basic Appl. Sci*, 4(6), 1288-1296.
- Gill, A.S., Flaschner, A.B., & Shachar, M. (2006). Mitigating stress and burnout by implementing transformational-leadership. *International Journal of contemporary hospitality management*, 18(6), 469-481.
- Givens, O.R. (2014). *Professional Learning Communities and Student Achievement: A Comparative Assessment of North Carolina Elementary Schools*. Northcentral University. California.
- Gillhan, B. (2000). *Case study research methods*. London: Continuum Books.
- Gillett, J., Clarke, S., & O'Donoghue, T. (2016). Leading schools facing challenging circumstances: Some insights from Western Australia. *Issues in Educational Research*, 26(4), 592.
- Goldkuhl, G. (2012). Pragmatism vs interpretivism in qualitative information systems research. *European journal of information systems*, 21(2), 135-146.

- Freire, P. (1970). The “banking” concept of education.
- Govender, P. (2018. MARCH 25). *Performing schools*. Sunday Times. P.25
- Gray, D.E. (2004). *Doing research in the real world*. London: Sage Publications.
- Gray, J. (2000). *Causing concern but improving: A review of schools' experiences*. London: DfEE.
- Grant, C., Gardner, K., Kajee, F., Moodley, R., & Somaroo, S. (2010). Teacher leadership: a survey analysis of KwaZulu-Natal teachers' perceptions. *South African Journal of Education*, 30(3), 401-419.
- Greenberg, E.R., Baron, J.A., DH Jr, F., Mandel, J.S., & Haile, R. (1993). Reduced risk of large-bowel adenomas among aspirin users. *JNCI: Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, 85(11), 912-915.
- Greenberg, J., & Baron, A. (1993). *Behaviour in Organisations: Understanding and Managing the Human Side of Work* (4th ed), Boston: Allyn & Beacon.
- Griman, J.W. (2012). Effective leadership: making the difference. *Journal of Emergency Nursing*, 36(1), 7.
- Grimm, J.W. (2010). Effective leadership: making the difference. *Journal of Emergency Nursing*, 36(1), 74-77.
- Grobler, B., & Conley, I. (2013). The relationship between emotional competence and instructional leadership and their association with learner achievement. *Education As Change*, 17(Sup1), 5201-5223.
- Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *The leadership quarterly*, 13(4), 423-451.
- Gronn, P. (2011). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis: In D., Collinson, D., Gint, & B., Jackson, (ed).2011. *Leadership*. (pp. 180-2011). London: SAGE Publications.
- Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1989). *Fourth generation Evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research*. (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

- Haden, C.A., & Hoffman, P.C. (2013). Cracking the Code: Using Personal Narratives in Research. *Journal of Cognition and development*, 14(3), 361-375.
- Halloway, I., & Wheeler, S. (2010). *Qualitative Research in Nursing and Health care: Third edition*. Oxford: Wiley – Blackwell,
- Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1985). Assessing the instructional leadership behaviour of principals. *Elementary School Journal*, 86(2), 217-248.
- Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: reflections in the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of education*, 33(3) Retrieved November 29, 2010, from [http://www.philiphallinger.com/papers/ccje%20 and 20 trans%20Lship%20 2003.pdf](http://www.philiphallinger.com/papers/ccje%20and%20trans%20Lship%202003.pdf).
- Halliger, P. (2005). Instructional Leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in schools*, 4(3), 1-20.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (2010). Collaborative leadership and school improvement: Understanding the impact on school capacity and student learning. *School Leadership and Management*, 30(1), 95–110.
- Halliger, P. (2010). A review of three decades of doctoral studies using the Principal Instructional Management Rating scale: A lens on Methodological progress in educational leadership and management. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 20(10), 1-36.
- Hallinger, P. (2010). Developing instructional leadership. In *developing successful leadership* (pp. 61-76). Springer, Dordrecht.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (2010). Leadership for learning: does collaborative leadership make a difference in school improvement? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(6), 654-678.
- Hallinger, P. (2011). Leadership for learning: Lessons from 40 years of empirical research. *Journal of educational administration*, 49(2), 125-142.
- Hallinger, P., & Troung, D, T. (2014). Exploring the contours of context and leadership effectiveness in Vietnam. *Leading and Managing*, 20(2), 43-59.

- Harber, C. (2001). *State of transition: Post-apartheid educational reform in South Africa*. United Kingdom. Symposium Books Ltd.
- Harding, S. (1987). Introduction: is there a feminist method? In S. Harding, Sandra (ed.). *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*. (pp. 1-14). Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press
- Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. New York. Teachers College Press.
- Harris, A. (2015) *distributed leadership*: Implications for the role of the principal from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/0262-1711.htm> (Retrieved on a June 2015)
- Heifetz, R., & Linsky, M. (2017). *Leadership on the line, with a new preface: Staying alive through the dangers of change*. Brighton. Harvard Business Press.
- Hlalele, D. (2012). Social justice and rural education in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, 30(1), 111-118.
- Hargreaves, A., Lieberman, A., Fullan, M., & Hopkins, D. (2010). *Second international handbook of educational change*. Toronto: Boston Collage.
- Heidegger, M. (1996). *Being and Time: A translation of Sein and Zelt*. New York. State University of New York. Press Albany.
- Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W., & Smit, B. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Hennink, M. M. (2007). *International Focus Group Research. A handbook for the Health and Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press. New York.
- Herma, W. (1997). *Transforming educational management in South Africa*. Howard University. Washington D.C.
- Heystek, J. (2015). Principals' perceptions of the motivation potential of performance agreements in underperforming schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 35(2), 986.
- Hickman, G.R. (2010). *Leading organisations Perspectives for a new era (2nd ed)*. London: SAGE Publications.

- Hochfeld, T., Graham, L., Patel, L., Moodley, J., & Ross, E. (2016). Does school breakfast make a difference? An evaluation of an in-school breakfast programme in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 51, 1-9.
- Hodkinson, P., & Hodkinson, H. (2001). *The strengths and limitations of case study research*. Cambridge: University of Leeds.
- Hopkins, D., Stringfield, S., Harris, A., Stoll, L., & Mackay, T. (2014). School and system improvement: A narrative state-of-the-art review. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 25(2), 257-281.
- Horng, E., & Loeb, S. (2010). New thinking about instructional leadership. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 93 (3), 66-69.
- Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw, D., and Murphy, K. (2013). Rigour in qualitative case study research, *Nurse researcher*, 20, 4, 12-17.
- Hussey, T. (2009). Nursing and spirituality. *Nursing philosophy*, 10(2), 71-80.
- Jensen, B. (2013). The five critical steps for turnaround schools. *Education and Innovation Theme*, 1-20.
- Jensen, B., & Sonnemann, J. (2014). *Turning around schools: It can be done*. Grattan Institute. USA.
- Jones, A. C. (2015). *Becoming a strong instructional leader: Saying no to business as usual*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Jones, M., Harvey, S., Lefoe, K., & Rayland, N. (2015). *Distributed leadership*.
- Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2012). Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches. *Educational Research*, University of South Alabama: SAGE Publications.
- Kelloway, E.K., Turner, N., Barling, J., & Loughlin, C. (2012). Transformational leadership and employee psychological well-being: The mediating role of employee trust in leadership. *Work & Stress*, 26 (1), 39-55.
- Klar, H., & Brewer, C, A. (2013). *Successful Leadership in High- Needs Schools: An Examination of Core Leadership Practices Enacted in Challenging Contexts*. New York: SAGE Publications.

- Klar, H., & A. Brewer, C. (2014). Successful leadership in a rural, high-poverty school: The case of County Line Middle School. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 52(4), 422-445.
- KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education: UMgungundlovu District. (2015). National Senior Certificate results for 2014. Pietermaritzburg.
- Kerr, K. A., Marsh, J. A., Ikemoto, G. S., Darilek, H., & Barney, H. (2006). Strategies to promote data use for instructional improvement: Actions, outcomes, and lessons from three urban districts. *American Journal of Education*, 112(4), 496-520.
- Kim, B. (2001). Social constructivism. *Emerging perspectives on learning, teaching, and technology*, 1(1), 16.
- Kretzmann, J.P., & McKnight, J. (1993). Building communities from the inside out. Evanston, IL: *Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research*, Neighborhood Innovations Network.
- Kretzmann, J., & Mcknight, J. P. (1996). *Assets based community development*. *National Civic Review*, 85, 23-29.
- Kouzes, J.M., & Posner, B.Z. (2010). *The truth about leadership: The no fads, heart-of- the matter facts you need to know*. San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass.
- KwaZulu-Natal Legislature. (2005). *Traditional Leadership and Governance Act No.5 of 2005*. Pietermaritzburg: Government Printers.
- Lacour, M., & Tissington, L. D. (2011). The effects of poverty on academic achievement. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6(7), 522-527.
- Ladd, H.F. (2013). Education and poverty. Confranting the evidence. *Journal of Policy Analysis & Management*, 31 (2), 203-227.
- Larsson, S., & Sjoblom, Y. (2010). Perspectives on Narrative methods in social research. *Journal of Social Welfare*, 19, 272-280.
- Lain, S., Behrstock-Sherratt, E., & Lasagna, M. (2011). *Improving teacher quality: A guide for education leaders*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Langa, P.P.N. (2013). *Exploring school underperformance in the context of rurality: an ethnographic study*. PhD Thesis. University of KwaZulu-Natal. Durban.

- Larsen, C., & Rieckhoff, B.S. (2014). Distribute Leadership: principals describe shared roles in a PDS. *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and practice*, 17(3), 1-19.
- Law, M. (2002). Evidence-based rehabilitation: A guide. Thorofare, NJ: Slack Incorporated.
- L BERG, B. R. U. C. E. (2001). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*.
- Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2000). The effects of transformational leadership on organizational conditions and student engagement with school. *Journal of educational administration*, 38(2), 112-129.
- Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2009). Transformational leadership. In B. Davies, (Ed). *The essentials of school leadership*. (pp.37-52). London: SAGE Publications
- Leithwood, K., Patten, S., & Jantzi, D. (2010). Testing a conception of how school leadership influences student learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(5), 671-706.
- Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Strauss, T. (2010). *Leading school turnaround: How successful leaders transform low-performing schools*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Leithwood, K., & Louis, K. (2012). *Linking leadership to student learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Strauss, T. (2013). How to reach high performance. *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership*, 255-273.
- Leithwood, K. A., & Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
- Leithwood, R., & Reid, C. (2013). *What we know about successful school leadership*. Philadelphia Temple University. Philadelphia.
- Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How Leadership Influences Student Learning. Review of Research*. Wallace Foundation.
- Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2006). *Seven strong Claims About Successful Leadership*. London: Department of Education and Skills.
- Leithwood, K. A. (1994). leadership for school restructuring. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 30(4), 498-518.

- Leithwood, A.K., Harris, A., & Strauss, T. (2010). *Leading school turnaround: How successful Leaders transform low-performing schools*. San Fransisco .Jossey-Bass.
- Leithwood, K., Anderson, S. E., & Louis, K. S. (2012). Principal efficacy: District-led professional development. *Linking leadership to student learning*, 119-141.
- Leo, M. (2014).Transformational leadership: Is it time for a recall. *International Journal of Management and Applied Research*, 1(1), 17-29.
- Lewis, J., & Ritchie, J. (2003). Generalising from qualitative research. Qualitative research practice. *A guide for social science students and researchers*, 263-286.
- Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative research: Readings, analysis and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA; SAGE Publications.
- Li, C., Zhao, H., & Begley, T.M. (2015).Transformational leadership dismensions and employee creativity in China: *A cross-level analysis Journal of Business Research*, 68(6),1149-1156.
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2013). *The constructivist credo*. New York. Left Coast Press.
- Lincoln, Y.S., Lynham, S.A., & Guba, E.G. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4, 97-128.
- London, M., & Smither, J. W. (2002). Feedback orientation, feedback culture, and the longitudinal performance management process. *Human Resource Management Review*, 12(1), 81-100.
- Loots, T., Ebersohn, L., Ferreira, R., & Eloff, I. (2012). Teachers addressing HIV&AIDS-related challenges resourcefully. *Southern African Review of Education with Education with Production*, 18(1), 56-84.
- Louis, K. S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K. L., & Anderson, S. E. (2010). Investigating the links to improved student learning: *Final report of research findings*. St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota.

- Louis, K.S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K.L., Anderson, S.E., Michlin, M., & Mascall, B. (2010). Learning from leadership: Investigating the links to improved student learning. Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement/University of Minnesota and Ontario *Institute for Studies in Education*/University of Toronto, 42, 50.
- Lumby, J. (2015). Leading schools in communities of multiple deprivation: women principals in South Africa. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(3), 400-417.
- Lunenburg, F. C. (2011). Understanding organizational culture: A key leadership asset. In National Forum of Educational *Administration and Supervision Journal*, 29(4), 1-12.
- Lunenburg, F. C., & Lunenburg, M. R. (2013). Convergent roles of the school principal: Leadership, managerial, and curriculum-instructional. *International Journal of Education*, 1(1), 1-9.
- Luqman, R. A., Farhan, H. M., Shahzad, F., & Shaheen, S. (2012). 21st century challenges of educational leaders, way out and need of reflective practice. *International Journal of Learning & Development*, 2(1), 195-208.
- Lunenburg, F. C. (2011). Leadership versus management: A key distinction—at least in theory. *International Journal of Management, Business, and Administration*, 14(1), 1-4.
- Lynch, J.M. (2012). Responsibilities of today's principal: Implications for principal preparation programs and principal certification policies. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, 31(2), 40-47.
- Maddocks, S., Johnson, S., Wright, N., & Stickley, T. (2010). A phenomenological exploration of the lived experience of mental health nurses who care for clients with enduring mental health problems who are parents. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental health Nursing*, 17(8), 674-682.
- Mafora, P. (2013). Transformative leadership for social justice: Perceptions and experiences of South African township secondary school principals. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 34(1), 37-45.
- Mafuwane, B.M., & Pitsoe, V.J. (2014). Circuit managers as agents of school development and support: A conceptual analysis. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(9), 439-444.

- MacBeath, J., Oduro, G.K.T., & Waterhouse, J. (2014). *Distributed Leadership: An Unpublished Study*. Oxford: National College for School Leadership.
- Makolle, T.N. 2011. The state of inclusive pedagogy in South Africa. *Journal of Social Anthropology*, 3 (2), 93-102.
- Mail and Guardian* ((2011, September 16). School Systems failing our children.
- Makhasane, S.D., & Khanare, F.P. (2018). Leadership Practices of Turning Around Low-Performing Schools in a Developing Country. *International Perspectives on Leading Low- Performing Schools*, 59-76.
- Makoelle, T. M. (2011). *Exploring practices determining the effectiveness and improvement of secondary schools in the Free State Province*. Doctoral dissertation, UNISA: Pretoria.
- Makoelle, T.M. (2014). Exploring factors contributing to school improvement in South African secondary schools in the Free State Province. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 7(1), 119-130.
- Mantzoukas, S. (2005). The inclusion of bias in reflective and reflexive research: A necessary prerequisite for securing validity. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 10(3), 279-295.
- Maree, K. (2007). *First steps in research*. Pretoria. Van Schaik.
- Maringe, F., & Moletsane, R. (2015). Leading schools in circumstances of multiple deprivation in South Africa: Mapping some conceptual, contextual and research dimensions. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(3), 347-362.
- Maringe, F., Masinire, A., & Nkambule, T. (2015). Distinctive features of schools in multiple deprived communities in South Africa: Implications for policy and leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(3), 363-385.
- Marishane, R.N., Botha, R. J., & Du Plessis, P. (2011). *School leadership in a changing context: a case for school-based management*. Van Schaik. Pretoria.
- Mark, D.G., George, L.D., & Mulford, B. (2010). Australian principal instructional leadership: Direct and indirect influence. *Magis, Revista Internacional de Investigación en Educación*, 2(4), 1-16.

- Marks, H.M., & Printy, S.M. (2003). Principal leadership and school performance: Integrating transformational and instructional leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(3), 370-397.
- Masekoaneng, M.C. (2014). *An instructional Leadership Perspective on the Management and Implementation of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (SAPS) at South African schools*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of South Africa: Pretoria.
- Masondo, S. (2016. May 29). Education MEC revamps appointment of principals. City Press Newspaper, p. 10.
- Mathie, A., & Cunningham, G. (2005). Who is driving development? Reflections on the transformative potential of asset-based community development. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue canadienne d'études du développement*, 26(1), 175-186.
- Mawdsley, R. D., Bipath, K., & Mawdsley, J. L. (2014). Functional urban schools amid dysfunctional settings: lessons from South Africa. *Education and Urban Society*, 46(3), 377-394.
- Maxwell, J.A. (2002). *Qualitative research design: an interactive approach*. Thousand Oakes, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Maxwell, G.M., Huggins, K.S., & Scheurich, J.J. (2010). How One Historically Underperforming Rural and Highly Diverse High School Achieved a Successful Turnaround. *Planning and Changing*, 41, 161-186.
- Maxwell, J.A. (2012). *Qualitative research design* (3rd edition). Los Angeles. SAGE Publication.
- Mayoh, I., & Onwuegbuzie, A.J. (2015). Towards a conceptualization of mixed Methods. Phenomenological Research, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. 9 (1), 91-107.
- Mbokazi, Z. (2015). Dimensions of successful leadership in Soweto township secondary schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(3), 468-482.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry, *My Education Lab Series*. Pearson.

- McKinsey, and Company. (2007). How the World's best performing School Systems Media/Repots (18 April, 2011).
- McMillan, J., & Schumacher, S. (2001). *Research in Education* (5th edition.) Cape Town: Miller Longman.
- McMillan, J., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education. Evidence Based Inquiry.* Kevin M. Davis.USA.
- Mendels, P. (2012). The effective principal. *Journal of Staff Development*, 33(1), 54-58.
- Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Case study research in education: a qualitative approach.* San Francisco: Jasey Bass.
- Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* San Fransisco, Jossey –Bass.
- Middleton, J., Harvey, S., & Esaki, N. (2015)Transformational leadership and Organisational change: How do leaders Approach Trauma Informed Organisational Change Twice? Families in Society: *The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 96(3), 155-163.
- Mitgang, L. (2012). *The Making of the Principal: Five Lessons in Leadership Training. Perspective.* Wallace Foundation.
- Mjoli, P. (2018. July 18). 'Ubunye Bethu nabazali busihlomulisile isikole sethu'. Isolezwe, p.10.
- Mkhize, B.N. & Bhengu, T.T. (2015). Creating and sustaining conditions for improved teaching and learning: An ethnographic case study of a secondary school. *International Journal of Education Sciences*, 10(3), 370-380.
- Mkhize, B.N. & Bhengu, T.T. (2018). Leading teaching and Learning: Secondary School Principals' Perspectives. In V. Chikoko (Ed.), *Leadership That Works in Deprived School Contexts of South Africa.* (pp. 77-99). New York: NOVA Science Publishers.
- Mncube, V., & Du Plessis, P. (2011). Effective school governing bodies: parental involvement. *Acta Academica*, 43(3), 210-242.
- Modiba, N. S. (2016). When Expiry Date for Educational Mediocrity Dawns: A Case of Three Selected Secondary Schools. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 14(1-2), 27-36.

- Mokoena, S. (2011) Participative decision-making: Perceptions of school stakeholders in South Africa. *Journal of Social Science*, 29 (2):119-131
- Moletsane, R. (2010). Gender review in South African basic education. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education
- Moen, T. (2006). Reflections on the narrative research approach. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(4). 56-69.
- Moore, S.W. (2012). *Gender Differences in Occupational leadership Styles*. Masters East Carolina University. Greenville.
- Moorosi, P. (2012). Mentoring for school leadership in South Africa: diversity, dissimilarity and disadvantage. *Professional development in education*, 38(3), 487-503.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Murphy, J. (Ed.). (2002). *The educational leadership challenge: redefining leadership for the 21st century*. Chicago: Chicago Press.
- Msila, V. (2010). Rural school principals' quest for effectiveness: Lessons from the field. *Journal of Education*, 48(1), 169-189.
- Mthiyane, S.E., Bhengu, T.T., & Bayeni, S.D. (2014). The causes of school decline: voices of school principals and circuit managers in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 41(2), 295-304.
- Muhammad, M., Wallerstein, N., Sussman, A. L., Avila, M., Belone, L., & Duran, B. (2015). Reflections on researcher identity and power: The impact of positionality on community based participatory research (CBPR) processes and outcomes. *Critical Sociology*, 41(7-8), 1045-1063.
- Mukhtarova, A. (2013, June). EARLY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES IN KAZAKHSTANI EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT. In *CBU International Conference Proceedings* (Vol. 1, pp. 82-90).
- Mullins, L.J. (2007). Management and organisational behavior .8th ed. Harlow: *Financial Times*. Prentice Hall.

- Murphy, J. (1990). Principal instructional leadership. *Advances in educational administration: Changing perspectives on the school*, 1(Part B), 163-200.
- Murphy, J., Elliot, S.N., Goldring, E., & Porter, A.C. (2006). Learning- centred leadership: A conceptual foundation, Nashville, T.N: *Learning Sciences Instruction*, Vanderbilt University.
- Murphy, J., & Meyers, C. (2008). *Turning around failing schools leadership lessons from the corporate and non-profit sectors*.
- Murphy, J. (2011). *Essential lessons for school leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Myers, E. L. (2014). Taming Turbulence: An Examination of School Leadership Practice during Unstable Times. *Professional Educator*, 38(2), n2.
- Myende, P., & Chikoko, V. (2014). School-university partnership in a South African rural context: Possibilities for an asset-based approach. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 46(3), 249-259.
- Myende, P. E. (2015). Tapping into the asset-based approach to improve academic performance in rural schools. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 50(1), 31-42.
- Naicker, I., Chikoko, V., & Mthiyane, S. E. (2013). Instructional leadership practices in challenging school contexts. *Education as Change*, 17(sup1), S137-S150.
- Naicker, S.R., & Mestry, R. (2013). Teachers' reflections on distributive leadership in public primary schools in Soweto. *South African Journal of Education*, 33(2).
- Naicker, P. (2018). How Thethema High School Transformed me. In V. Chikoko (Ed.). *Leadership that Works in Deprived School Contexts of South Africa*. (pp. 37-57). New York: Nova Science Publisher.
- Naidoo, K., & Botha, C. J. (2012). Management and leadership in secondary schools in South Africa. *African journal of business management*, 6(32), 9218-9227.
- Nettles, S.M., & Herrington, C. (2007). Revisit the importance of the direct effects of school leadership on student achievement. The implications for school improvement policy. *Pealody Journal of Education*, 82(4), 724-736.
- Neuman, W.L. (2011). *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*: International Edition. (3rd Edition). Pearson Education, Limited.

- Ngcobo, T., & Tickly, P. T. (2010). Key Dimensions of effective Leadership for change: A focus on Township and rural schools in South Africa. *Education Management Administration and Leadership*, 38(2)-202-228.
- Nica, E. (2013). "The importance of leadership Development within Higher Education" *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice* 5(2):189-194.
- Nicol, D. J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in higher education*, 31(2), 199-218.
- Noble, M., Barnes, H., Wright, G., & Roberts, B. (2010). Small area indices of multiple deprivation in South Africa. *Social indicators research*, 95(2), 281.
- Northouse, P.G. (2010). *Leadership: Theory and Practice 5th edition*. London. SAGE publication.
- Northouse, P.G. (2012) *Leadership; Theory and Practice (6th ed)*. London:Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Northouse, P.G. (2013). *Leadership: Theory and practice*, 6th ed, London: SAGE Publication.
- November, I., Alexander, G., & Van Wyk, M. M. (2010). Do principal-educators have the ability to transform schools? A South African perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(4), 786-795.
- Ong, C, H. (2014). *Challenges and Processes in School Turnaround A Singapore Secondary School Principal Perspective*. Elsevier Publishers LTD. Amsterdam.
- Okçu, V. (2014). Relation between Secondary School Administrators' Transformational and Transactional Leadership Style and Skills to Diversity Management in the School. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 14(6), 2162-2174.
- O'Neil, J. (1994). Managing human resources. In, T. Bush, & J. West-Burnham (eds.). *The Principles of Educational Management*. (pp. 199-221). London: Pearson Education, LTD.
- Oppenheim, A. N. (1992). *Questionnaire design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement*. London, Pinter.

- Otunga, R., Serem, D. K., & Kindiki, J. N. (2008). *School leadership development in Africa. International handbook on the preparation and development of school leaders*, 367-382.
- English, F. W., & Papa, R. (2010). *Restoring human agency to educational administration: Status and strategies*. London. Proactive Publications.
- Papa, R., & English, F.W. (2011). *Turnaround principals for underperforming schools*. London. Lowma & Littlefield Education.
- Pappano, L. (2010). *Inside School Turnarounds: Urgent Hopes, Unfolding Stories*. Harvard Education Press. 8 Story Street First Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138.
- Pashiardis, P. (2014). *Model school leadership across Europe: In search of new frontiers*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). Two decades of development in qualitative inquiry. A personal experiential perspective. *Qualitative social work*. I (3), 261-283.
- Patton, M.Q. (2014). Nitel arastirmex ve degerlendirme (3rd ed) trans M, Butun & S.B. Demir) Ankara, Turkey: Pegem Akademi.
- Peter, K. R., & Archippus, M. K. (2016). Impact of transformational leadership style on secondary school students' academic achievement in Mbeere South Sub-County, Embu County, Kenya. *International Journal of Education and Research*.
- Pierce, P. R. (1935). *The origin and development of the public school principalship*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.
- Phillips, J. A. (2012). *Manager-Administrator or instructional leader: shift the role of the principal*.
- Phothongsunan, S. (2010). *Interpretive paradigm in educational research*.
- Pinskaya, M. A., Kosaretsky, S. G., Frumin, I. D., Harris, A., & Jones, M. (2013). Schools in difficulty: identification, issues and strategies for improvement. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 3(5), 1.
- Polat, S., & Kazak, E. (2015). Primary School Teachers: views on inter-generational learning. University of Kocaeli. D01:10.12 738/estp.20015.5.2523. Turkly.

- Polit, D.F., Beck, C.T. (2012). *Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice*, Philadelphia, P.A: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins.
- Polkinghorne, D. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of counselling psychology*, 52(2), 137.
- Polkinghorne, D.E. (2007). *Validity Issues in Narrative Research*. Retrieved. November 26, 2015, from [http:// 9 ix Sagepub.com/doi/cont./ abstract/13/4/471](http://9ix.sagepub.com/doi/cont./abstract/13/4/471).
- Pope, C., Van Royen, P., & Baker, R. (2002). Qualitative methods in research on Healthcare quality. *Quality and Safety in Healthcare*, 11(2), 148-152.
- Preedy, M. (Ed.). (1993). *Managing the Effective School*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Pring, R. (2000). The ‘false dualism’ of educational research. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 34(2), 247-260.
- Pringle, J., Hendry, C., & Mc Lafferty, E. (2011). *Phenomenological approaches: Challenges and choices*. University of Dundee, UK.
- Rainey, L.R., & Honig, M. I. (2012). Autonomy and school improvement. What do we know and where do we go from here? *Educational Policy*, 26: 465-495.
- Rallis, S.F., & Rossman, G.B. (1998). Learning in the research field: an introduction to qualitative research. *Learning in the field*.
- Ramatseba, L. (2012). An exploration of successful school leadership practices in challenging school context: case studies of two secondary schools in Soweto (Doctoral dissertation, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg).
- Rastekenari, M. A., Monsef, S. M. S., & Majnoon, K. (2013). Study of Factors Associated with Employees’ Resistance to Change and it’s Relation with Customer Responsiveness and Outcome Performance in Private Banks of Rasht. *Singaporean Journal of Business, Economics and Management Studies*, 51(1119), 1-10.
- Reddy, V. (2006). *Mathematics and science achievement at South African schools in TIMSS 2003*. HSRC Press.
- Republic of South Africa (1996a). *Constitution of South Africa: Act No.108 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

- Republic of South Africa (1996b). *South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Republic of South Africa (2007). *Education Laws Amendment Act. 2007* Government Gazzett 30637. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Reeves, T.C., & Hedberg, J.C. (2003). *Interactive learning systems evaluation*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Educational Technology Publications.
- Riahi, S. (2011). Role stress amongst nurses at the workplace: Concept analysis. *Journal in Nursing Management*, 19(6), 721-731.
- Robbins, S.P., Judge, T.A., Ordendaal, A., & Roodt, G. (2011). *Organisational behaviour: Global and Southern African perspectives*. Cape Town: Pearson Education Inc.
- Robinson, V. M., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational administration quarterly*, 44(5), 635-674.
- Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(1), 4-36.
- Rule, P., & John, V.M. (2015). *A necessary Dialogue: Theory in case study research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Şahin, A., & Yılmaz, O. (2017). *Views of School Managers and Teachers about School Culture*.
- Salesho, J.M., & Ntisa, A.M. (2014). Impact of School principal Leadership Style on Performance management: A Schooling Agenda. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*.
- Salo, P., Nylund, J., & Stjernstrøm, E. (2015). On the practice architectures of instructional leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(4), 490-506.
- Salonova, M., Lorente, L., Chambel, M.J., Martinez, I.M. (2011). Linking transformational leadership to nurses extra role performance: the meditating role of self-efficacy and work engagement. *j Adv. Nurs*, 67(10), 2256-66.
- Sandelowski, M. (2000). Focus on research methods-whatever happened to qualitative description. *Research in nursing and health*, 23(4), 334-340

- Savory, E.P. (2014). Perception of Leadership characteristics of principals who influence Positive schools Culture in a Midwest Adventist Union: a Qualitative Study. Andrews University. Doctor of Philosophy. Michigan.
- Schein, E.H. (2004). *Organisational culture and leadership*. London: San Francisco.
- Schoppman, S., Schrock, R., & Schnepf, W. (2007). Then I just showed her my arms bodily sensations in moments of alienation related to self-injurious behaviour .A hermeneutic phenomenological study. *Journal of Psychiatric and mental Health Nursing* 14,587-597.
- Schurink, W.J., Schurink, E.M., & Poggenpoel, M. (1998). *Focus group interviewing and audio-visual methodology in qualitative research*. In A.S. Devos (Ed.). *Research at grassroots, a primer in care professions*. Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik.
- Scotland, J. (2012). Exploring the Philosophical Underpinnings of Research: Relating Ontology and Epistemology to the Methodology and Methods of the Scientific, Interpretive, and Critical Research Paradigms. *English language teaching*, 5(9), 9-16.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2012). Research methods for business students (6. utg.). Harlow: Pearson.
- Seale, C. (1999). Qualitative interviewing. *Researching society and culture*, 202-216.
- Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J. F., & Silverman, D. (2004). *Qualitative research practice*. SAGE Publications.
- Seashore Louis, K., Dretzke, B., & Wahlstrom, K. (2010). How does leadership affect student achievement? Results from a national US survey. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 21(3), 315-336.
- Sebastian, J., & Allensworth, E. (2012). The influence of principal leadership on classroom instruction and student learning: A study of mediated pathways to learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(4), 626-663.
- Selesho, J.M. & Ntisa, A. A. (2014). Impact of school principal leadership style on Performance Management; *A schooling Agenda Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*.
- Sergiovanni, T. (1984). Leadership and excellence in schooling. *Educational leadership*.

- Setlhodi-Mohapi, I., Lebeloane, O. (2014). The Role of school Management Teams in Underperforming schools: A matter of Values. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 475-482.
- Sharp, W. L., & Walter, J. K. (2012). *The principal as school manager*. R & L Education.
- Shenton, A.K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22(1), 63-75.
- Shields, C.M. (2011). *Transformative leadership. A reader*. New York: Peter Hang Publishing Inc.
- Silverman, D. (2011). *Interpreting qualitative data: A guide to the principles of qualitative research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Sim, Q. C. (2011). Instructional leadership among principals of secondary schools in Malaysia. *Educational Research*, 2(12), 2141-2161.
- Simon, M.K., & Goes, J. (2011). *What is Phenomenological Research?* www. Dissertation recipes .com.
- Simonet, D. V., & Tett, R. P. (2013). Five perspectives on the leadership–management relationship: A competency-based evaluation and integration. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 20(2), 199-213.
- Snape, D., & Spencer, L. (2003). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*.
- Soehner, D., & Ryan, T. (2011). The Interdependence of Principal School Leadership and Student Achievement. *Scholar-Practitioner Quarterly*, 5(3), 274-288.
- Southworth, G. (2002). Instructional leadership in schools: Reflections and empirical evidence. *School Leadership and Management*, 22, 73 – 92.
- Spaull, N. (2013). South Africa's education crisis: The quality of education in South Africa, 1994–2011. *A report commissioned by the Centre for Development and Enterprise*. Retrieved on January, 30, 2014.
- Spaull, N. (2013). Poverty & privilege: Primary school inequality in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 33(5), 436-447.

- Spaull, N. (2015). Schooling in South Africa: How low-quality education becomes a poverty trap. *South African Child Gauge*, 12, 34-41.
- Spaull, N., Pretorius, E., & Mohohlwane, N. (2018). Investigating the Comprehension Iceberg: Developing empirical benchmarks for early grade reading in agglutinating African languages. *RESEP Working Paper Series No. WP01/2018*, available at :(<http://resep.sun.ac.za/index.php/research-outputs/stellenbosch-working-papers/2018-2/>).
- Spears, L. C. (2010). Character and servant leadership: Ten characteristics of effective, caring leaders. *The Journal of Virtues & Leadership*, 1(1), 25-30.
- Squire, C. (2008). Approaches to Narrative Research. ESRC. *Economic & Social Research Council*.
- Squire, C. (2012). Narratives, Connections and social change. *Narrative Inquiry*, 22 (1), 50-68.
- Squire, C. (2013). *Draft from Doing Narrative Research 2*. London. SAGE Publications.
- Steyn, G. M. (2002). *The changing principalship in South African schools*.
- Steyn, G.M. (2005). Implementing professional development in invitational education. School of Education University of South Africa. *Education Review*, 2(2), 258-278
- Steyn, G.M. & Du Plessis, E. (2007). The implications of the out-of-field phenomenon for effective Teaching, Quality Education and School Management. *Africa Education Review*, 4(2), 144-158.
- Steyn, G.M. (2010) Creating intentionally inviting schools through professional development. *An appreciative inquiry Koers*, 76 (4), 873-897.
- Steyn, G. M. (2013). Interpreting the leadership practice of a South African school using the leaderful practice model. *Journal for New Generation Sciences*, 11(1), 104-116.
- Steyn, G, M. (2018). Leading a Once Underperforming South African School In: A Challenging Community to A Successful School. UNISA. South Africa.
- Stone, G., Russell, R.F., & Patterson, K. (2004). Transformational versus servant leadership: a difference in leader focus, *Leadership & Organisational Development Journal*, 25 (4), 349- 361.

- Subramoney, P. (2016). The role of the school management team in improving the matric results in a national strategy for learner attainment (NSLA) school. (Master of Education dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.
- Supovitz, J., Sirinides, P., & May, H. (2010). How principals and pers influence teaching and learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46 (1), 31-56.
- Svosve, E. (2015). *Examining the remote rural early childhood Development schools responses to the challenges of resource demand in Zimbabwe*. Amultiple site case study University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.
- Taole, M. J. (2013). Exploring principals' role in providing instructional leadership in rural high schools in South Africa. *Studies of Tribes and Tribals*, 11(1), 75-82.
- Taole, M. J. (2015). Towards a meaningful curriculum implementation in South African schools: senior phase teachers' experiences. *Africa Education Review*, 12(2), 266-279.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddie, C. (2010). *Sage handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Terre Blanche, M., Kelly, K., & Durrheim, K. (2006). Why qualitative research. Research in practice: *Applied methods for the social sciences*, 2, 271-284.
- Terre Blanche, M., & Durrheim, K. (1999). *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for the Social Sciences*. Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Thielman, J. (2012). *School turnaround: Cristo Rey Boston high school case study*. Catholic Education: *A journal of inquiry and Practical*, 16, (1), 115-147.
- Van der Berg, S. (2008). How effective are poor schools? Poverty and educational outcomes in South Africa. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 34 (3), 145-154.
- Van der Berg, S., Taylor, S., Gustafsson, M., Spaull, N., & Armstrong, P. (2011). Improving education quality in South Africa. *Report for the National Planning Commission*. Retrieved June, 2, 2016.
- Van Dijk, D., & Kluger, A. N. (2011). Task type as a moderator of positive/negative feedback effects on motivation and performance: A regulatory focus perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 32(8), 1084-1105.
- Van Manen, M. (2005). *Researching the lived experience*. New York. Buffalo.

- Van Rooyen, K. (1996): *A performance of evaluation of the Pietermaritzburg cluster of theological libraries in order to determine whether it meets the demands of its users.* Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.
- Verde, J.M., & Andreu, M.L. (2011). The rewards of a qualitative approach to life – course research. The example of the effects of social protection policies on careerpaths, In Forum: *Qualitative social research*
- Vrasidas, C. (2000). Constructivism versus objectivism: Implications for interaction, course design, and evaluation in distance education. *International journal of educational telecommunications*, 6(4), 339-362.
- Wahyuni, D. (2012). The research design maze: Understanding paradigms, cases, methods and methodologies. *Journal of Applied Management Accounting Research*. 10(1), 69-80.
- Wallace Foundation. (2012). *The school principal as leader. Guiding schools to better teaching and learning.* New York.
- Walsh, D., & Downe, S. (2006). Appraising the quality of qualitative research. *Midwifery*, 22(2), 108-119.
- Wang, G., Oh, I.S., Courtright, S.H., & Colbert, A. E. (2011). Transformational leadership and performance across criteria and levels: a meta-analytic review of 25 years of research. *Group Organisation Manag* 36 (20:223-70.
- Ward, S.C., Bagley, C., Lumby, J., Woods, P., Hamilton, T., & Roberts, A. (2015). School leadership for equity: Lessons from the literature. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 19(4), 333-346.
- Warrilow, S. (2012). Transformational leadership theory-The 4 key components in leading change and managing change. *Harvard Business Review*, 2 (3), 101-104.
- Waters, T., Marzano, R.J., & McNulty, B. (2003). Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement (pp. 1-19). Aurora, CO: *Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning*.
- Wayman, L, C. (2017). *Lead Fearlessly, Love Hard: Finding your Purpose and IT to Work.* London. Jossey Bass.

- Weber, J. (1996). Leading the instructional program. In, S Smith &, P Piele (Eds.), School leadership. *Clearing house of Educational Management*. (pp. 253-278). Eugene: Oregon.
- Wilding, C., & Whiteford, G. (2005). Phenomenological Research: An exploration of conceptual theoretical and practical issues. *Occupational Therapy Journal of Research OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health*, 25 (3), 98-104.
- Willis, J. (1995). A recursive, reflective instructional design model based on constructivism-Interpretivist theory. *Educational Technology*, 35(6), 5-23.
- Wolcott, H.F. (1995). *The art of fieldwork*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- Wright, B.E., Sanjay, K.P., & Donald, P.M. (2012). "Pulling the levers: Transformational leadership. *Public Service Motivation and Mission Valance Public Administration Review*, 72(2), 206-215.
- Yanova, D. (2006). *Qualitative- Interpretive methods in Policy Research*. Handbook of Public Policy Analysis, 405.
- Yılmaz, D., & Kılıçoğlu, G. (2013). Resistance to change and ways of reducing resistance in educational organizations. *European journal of research on education*, 1(1), 14-21.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Doing case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2013). Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations. *Evaluation*, 19(3), 321-332.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: design and methods 5th ed*. New York. Thousand Oaks.
- Yukl, G. A. (2010). *Leadership in organizations*. New York. Pearson.
- Yukl, G., & Mahsud, R. (2010). Why flexible and adaptive leadership is essential. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 62(2), 81
- Yukl, G. (2012). Effective leadership behaviour .What we know and what questions need more attention? *The Academy of Management Perspectives*,
- Zongozzi, J.N. (2015). *Case studies in South African Public Administration Masters Dissertations in the periods 2005 to 2012*: University of South Africa. Pretoria.

Appendices

Appendix A: letter to DOE requesting permission to conduct research in KZN schools.

34 Elved Wright Circle

Hayfields

3200

15 November 2016

The Head of Department

Dr E.V. NZAMA

Department of Education

Province of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag x9137

3201

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Wilson Nzimande, a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree fulfilment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in five secondary schools under your jurisdiction in the uMgungundlovu District. The title of my study is: **Sailing in turbulent conditions: principals' lived experiences about turning around underperforming schools in deprived contexts.**

The planned study will focus on secondary school principals, whose schools have maintained outstanding performances in the past three years. It will use semi-structured interviews with principals. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 40-60 minutes at the times convenient to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Each interview will be voice- recorded.

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

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

Supervisors:

Dr T.T. Bhengu

Dr P. Myende

Tel: 031- 2603534 (Office)

Tel: 031-2602054

Cell: 0839475321

Cell: 073 9912392

E-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za

E-mail: Myendep@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Office

Mariette Snyman

HSSREC-Ethics

Tel: 031 2608350

E-mail: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za


My contact number:

Cell: 0740606403

E-mail: wilsonnzimande377@gmail.com

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully


WM NZIMANDE (MR)

Appendix B: Letter requesting permission from the Principal to conduct research in the school.

34 Elved Wright Circle
Hayfields
3200
16 November 2016

Attention: The Principal
Ms Z. Mkhize
Umlulama High School

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Wilson Nzimande, a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirement, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct this research at your school. My study title is: **Sailing in turbulent conditions: principals' lived experiences about turning around underperforming schools in deprived contexts**

I have sought the necessary permission from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. This study aims to explore the lived experiences of Principals who have managed to turn around their schools performances from underperforming to performing schools. The planned study will focus on five high school principals who have managed to sustain outstanding performances in the past three years. The study will use semi-structured interviews with principals. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30-50 minutes and each interview will be voice-recorded.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.
Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.
All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
Fictitious names will be used to represent your names.
Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.
The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview.
You will be contacted in time about the interviews.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisors, Dr T.T. Bhengu at 031-260 3534/0839475321. E-mail: bhengu@ukzn.ac.za and Dr P. Myende at 031 2602054/ 0739912392. E-mail: Myende@ukzn.ac.za

You may also contact the UKZN Research Office through: P.Mohun, HSSREC Research Office, and Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Appendix C: Permission to conduct research in the KZN DoE Institutions



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Princele Duma

Tel: 033 332 1041

Ref: 2/4/5/1122

Mr W Nzimande
PO Box 30017
Plessislaer
3216

Dear Mr Nzimande

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"SAILING IN TURBULENT CONDITIONS: PRINCIPALS' LIVED EXPERIENCES ABOUT TURNING AROUND UNDER PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN DEPRIVED CONTEXTS"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 06 December 2016 to 31 January 2019.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kahologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Umgungundlovu District

Dr. EY Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 09 December 2016

..Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag 20137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa

Physical Address: 247 Burger Street • Anton Lembede Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201

Tel: +27 33 382 1004/41 • Fax: +27 33 382 1203 • Email: kahologile.Conn@kzndoe.gov.za / Philele.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za • Web: www.kzndoe.gov.za

Facebook: KZNDOE...Twitter: @DEF_KZN...Instagram: kzn_education...Youtube: kzn_doe

Appendix D: permission to participate in the research process.

34 Elved Wright Circle
Hayfields
3200
16 November 2016

The Principal
Mr T.A. Hlongwane
Nyonithwele High School

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Wilson Nzimande, a PhD student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirement, I am required to conduct research. I have identified you as one of my potential research participants. I therefore kindly seek your permission to be part of my research project. My study title is: **Sailing in turbulent conditions: principals' lived experiences about turning around underperforming schools in deprived contexts.**

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 one 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.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- The interview process will be voice recorded.

I, Wilson Nzimande can be contacted at:

Email: Wilsonnzimande377@gmail.com
Cell No: 074 060 6403

My supervisors are: Dr T.T. Bhengu and Dr P. Myende, they are located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
Their contact details: e-mail: bhengu@ukzn.ac.za; Phone number: 031 260 3534 and myendep@ukzn.ac.za; Phone: 031 2602054.

Appendix E: Interview Schedule.



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Interview schedule for the school principal

1. How long have you been in this school?
2. How has your school performed in the last five years?
3. Indications are that at some point you were able to turn around the school's performance. YES/NO
 - 3.1 Literature reveals that the process of transforming the school's performance needs a comprehensive overhaul of certain aspects of failure, how did you start the transformation process?
 - 3.2 How did you ensure that the conditions were favorable for the turnaround process?
4. The transformation agenda is supposed to come with positive results (outcomes)? What did you achieve if any?
 - 4.1 How did the school's performance affect the learner enrolment if at all?
5. The literature on learner achievement reveals that the absence of basic necessities like: income and employment, good health, parent education and living environment (deprivations) can affect the child's performance.
 - 5.1 Does your school suffer from any forms of deprivations? YES/NO
 - 5.2 What are these deprivations?
 - 5.3 How do you deal with their effect on teaching and learning?
 - 5.4 Do you encounter any learner discipline and attendance challenges? YES/NO, how do you address them?
6. How do you ensure that suitably qualified educators are employed in your school?
 - 6.1 Whom do you consult before making any decision on who to recruit?
 - 6.2 How do you ensure that your educators perform optimally to meet the school's objectives?
 - 6.3 How do you support newly appointed educators?
 - 6.4 How do you support underperforming educators (those whose subjects are underperforming)?
 - 6.5 How do you retain best educators?
7. Take me through your school's daily activities as from morning until learners leave in the afternoon.
 - 7.1 Roles and responsibilities assigned to individuals
 - 7.2 Focus areas and reasons for prioritizing some areas if any.
8. Tell me about your school's educator population and breakdown in terms of positions and roles they play if any?

...Championing Quality Education –
Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag 20136 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa

Physical Address: 168 Jubb Ndlovu Street • Pietermaritzburg • 3201

Tel.: +27 33 341 6467 • Fax: +27 33 342 4481 • Email: Information.Matrics@kzndoe.gov.za • Web: www.kzndoe.gov.za

Facebook: KZNDOE... Twitter: @DSE_KZN... Instagram: kzn_education... Youtube: kzndoe

Appendix F: Turnitin certificate.

The screenshot displays the Turnitin Feedback Studio interface in a Google Chrome browser. The main document area shows the title "Sailing in Turbulent Conditions: principals Leadership Experiences about Turning around Underperforming schools in Deprived contexts." by Wilson Myboy Nzimande. The submission is noted as being submitted to the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal in fulfillment of the academic requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. A match overview panel on the right indicates a total similarity of 10%, with a list of seven sources contributing to this score. The bottom status bar shows the document is 182 pages long with a word count of 65799. The Windows taskbar at the bottom includes icons for various applications and shows the date as 2019/02/26.

Feedback Studio - Google Chrome
https://ev.turnitin.com/app/carta/en_us/?o=1084041016&u=1042004587&lang=en_us&s=3

feedback studio | Sailing in Turbulent Conditions: principals Leadership Experiences about Turning around Underperforming schools in De

Sailing in Turbulent Conditions: principals Leadership Experiences about Turning around Underperforming schools in Deprived contexts.

By

Wilson Myboy Nzimande

Submitted to the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal in fulfillment of the academic requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Match Overview

10%

Rank	Source	Similarity
1	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	1%
2	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	1%
3	scholar.ufs.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1%
4	scholar.sun.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
5	Maringe, F., A. Masinire... Publication	<1%
6	146.230.128.141 Internet Source	<1%
7	www.alliance21.org.au Internet Source	<1%

Page: 1 of 182 | Word Count: 65799 | Text-only Report | High Resolution On

Windows taskbar: 13:04 2019/02/26