

**A CRITIQUE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: LIFE
HISTORIES OF SELECTED PRINCIPALS IN
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**BY
JABULANI EVEREST MPUNGUSE**

**Promoter: Prof. T.H. Ngwenya
November 2007**

**A CRITIQUE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: LIFE
HISTORIES OF SELECTED PRINCIPALS IN KWAZULU-
NATAL**

**BY
JABULANI EVEREST MPUNGOSE**

**Thesis submitted to the School of Educational Studies in the Faculty of Education at
the University of KwaZulu-Natal in fulfilment of the requirements of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
in Educational Leadership
and Management**

**Promoter: Prof. T.H. Ngwenya
November 2007**

A CRITIQUE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: LIFE HISTORIES OF SELECTED PRINCIPALS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

By

Jabulani Everest Mpungose

ABSTRACT

The central aim of this study was to describe through qualitative inquiry how school principals have dealt with the post-1994 changes in school governance and the change in their leadership roles as leaders and professional managers of public schools, and how these changes have impacted on the construction of their professional identities and re-definition of their leadership roles. The critical research questions that guided the study were: (1) How do principals interpret or understand their roles and functions as leaders in the democratised system which relies on participatory management approaches? (2) To what extent can the principal's beliefs, personal and cultural values and interests shape or influence his or her leadership style? (3) To what extent has the principal's socialization into the teaching profession shaped his or her self-definition and professional identity? (4) How do principals transform their personal knowledge into professional practice?

A qualitative, interpretive research design that made use of stories, accounts, and narratives was used to investigate different areas of the leadership process in KwaZulu-Natal schools. Six principals were selected to participate in the research process using the purposive or selective sampling procedure. The procedure was judgemental because it

was more informed by the researcher's experience and knowledge of the area of study to select cases that are representative or typical. The selection was based on racial demographics of the province, socialization of the participants into the teaching profession, ex-departments of education of the apartheid era, experience of managing public schools in the old and the new democratic political dispensations, and experienced female principals. The data analysis in this study borrowed from three prominent approaches to life history analysis, namely: the realist, neo-positivist and narrative approaches.

The outcomes of this study identified that the selected principals' socialization into education was shaped and directed by their parents. This challenges the belief that the principals' social lives, on entering the teaching profession, are determined and shaped by the structured rules and educational policies. The study also shows that the trends towards democracy and participation in work places have caused the situational approaches of leadership to be replaced by structural functional approaches that attempt to respond to current changes in education. The combination of the principals' experiences with what was expected from them influenced the construction of their professional identities and the way they interpret their professional roles. The principals' life stories revealed that after twelve years of democracy, they were still struggling with the implementation of the democratic education policies.

Declaration

I Jabulani Everest Mpungose declare that the work contained in this study is the result of my own original research and ideas, and that the conclusions therein are mine. Where information and ideas from another work/s have been used, it has been acknowledged. This thesis has not previously in its entirety or parts thereof been submitted at another tertiary institution for a degree.

Signed J E M
Date 16 NOVEMBER 2007
Place PINETOWN

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my wonderful family that provided me with love and support during the long hours of work. First, to my wife Linda, for her patience and support in all the years I started following my dreams, up to the stage when this thesis was finished. To my children Londiwe, Nosiphiwo, Zinhle and Zekhethelo, for the times when they were deprived of my love and attention and for encouraging me to follow my dream. My gratitude also goes to my late parents, my father Hyacinth and my mother Praxedis, who instilled a love for learning and belief that anything is possible if you have faith.

Acknowledgements

During the process of the thesis I was fortunate to work with a team of senior lecturers and supervisors who provided me with supportive academic and professional advice and guidance. I would also like to acknowledge the support from my fellow students for their constructive criticisms during our discussion seminars. My deepest gratitude goes to my promoter, Professor Thengani Ngwenya for believing in me long before this thesis was conceptualised. He guided, directed, and encouraged me from the start and told me to open my mind and venture to other fields of leadership studies. He took time to listen to my ideas, added and shared his ideas, and sometimes asked me difficult questions about my theory and what I wanted to contribute to the pool of academic knowledge with this study. This thesis has taken many changes, from the topic to the last chapter through the inputs and new perspectives from my promoter and the other people mentioned above.

I would like to thank the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (Regional office, District and Circuit Offices) for allowing me to go to the selected schools and interview the principals. A special thank you to the principals who took part in this study. I know it was not easy for you to accommodate me even during after hours when you were supposed to be with your families. You were very kind to welcome me to your homes when some of our appointments could not happen due to your tight schedules at schools. Futhi Xaba of Thanduthabiso Training, thank you for transcribing my tapes so well when time was against us. Dr Jeff Woolfson, thank you for proofreading my thesis. My family and friends, who supported me, thank you.

List of Figures

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Page</u>
2.1	The Tannenbaum and Schmidt Continuum of Leader Behaviour	41
2.2	The Life Cycle Theory of Leadership Model	42
2.3	The Interaction between the “Three Hs”	73
6.1	Tension Shaping Identity Construction	229

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

<u>Abbreviations & Acronyms</u>	<u>Description</u>
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DET	Department of Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FET	Further Education and Training
HOD	Head Of Department
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
L1	Level 1
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PTD	Professional Teacher Development
PRO	Public Relations Officer
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
R&R	Redeployment and Rationalisation
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SASA	South African Schools Act
SATESA	South African Training and Education Sports Association
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SDT	School Development Team
SEM	Superintendent of Education Management
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
SRC	Student Representative Council
STD	Secondary Teachers' Diploma

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	(ii)
Declaration	(iv)
Dedication	(v)
Acknowledgements	(vi)
List of Figures	(vii)
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	(viii)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP INQUIRY

Introduction	1
Aim and Objectives of the Study	2
Rationale of the Study	4
Critical Questions	8
Theoretical Framework	8
Research Design and Method	15
Definition and Clarification of Terms	17
Structural Framework of the Study	27
Conclusion	31

CHAPTER 2

THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction	33
Leadership Theories for the Changing World	34
Situational or Contingency Theories	35
Behavioural Leadership Theories	40
Participative Leadership Theory	46
Transformational Leadership Theory	49
Distributed Leadership Theory	53
The Concepts of Self and Identity	57
Constructing Professional Identity	61
Life History as a Methodological Tool and an Analytical Framework	67
Conclusion	72

CHAPTER 3	
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	
Introduction	74
Research Methodology	75
Research Instruments	82
Research Sites	88
The Sampling Frame and Sampling Procedure	89
Data Analysis	92
Reliability and Validity of Research Findings	96
Conclusion	98
CHAPTER 4	
PRINCIPALS' PROFESSIONAL LIFE STORIES	
Introduction	100
Presenting the Stories	102
From Individual Narratives to Theoretical Reflections	185
Emerging Patterns from the Life Stories	192
Conclusion	199
CHAPTER 5	
THEORIZING LIFE HISTORIES	
Introduction	200
Data Analysis	201
Reviewing the Principals' Life-stories	219
Conclusion	224
CHAPTER 6	
RESEARCH FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	
Introduction	225
Summary of Findings	226
Recommendations	235
Conclusions and Implications	237
References	240
Appendix 1:	
Interview Schedule A	253
Interview Schedule B	259
Interview Schedule C	260
Appendix 2: Questionnaire	262

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP INQUIRY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Adopting a humanistic perspective to the study of leadership, this study seeks to uncover the various complex ways in which principals understand their professional roles as leaders and managers of public schools in the post 1994 South Africa. This study utilizes a life history approach both as a methodological and interpretive framework to examine the way principals define and interpret their roles within the context of a radically altered legislative and policy framework. Thus, although the study focuses on professional life histories, these are analysed within the context of professional identity construction and policy interpretation. The central focus of the study is on the complex interplay between structure and agency (Archer, 2000, 2003; Giddens, 2002; King, 2004; Musolf, 2003; New, 1994) as principals position and re-position themselves in accordance with defined structural parameters.

As reflected in various policy documents dealing with the governance and management of public schools (*National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996, South African Schools Act No.48 of 1996, Employment of Educators Act No.76 of 1998*), conceptions of school leadership in South Africa have changed radically in the past thirteen years. There have been attempts to follow global trends in education management involving the devolution of power to schools and their governing bodies, increased centralisation in terms of the curriculum and learner assessment, and the promotion of parental choice and competition

between schools. South Africa, like other developed and developing countries, is witnessing the emergence of the so-called “self-reliant” or “self-managing” schools. Needless to say, this has had and will continue to have major implications for school leadership and the ways in which principals conceptualise and interpret their roles and professional identities. This study looks at both national and global drivers of change in school leadership. Consequently, national policies and legislation as well as global trends will feature prominently in this exploration of professional identity (re) construction.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The central aim of this study is to understand how school principals have dealt with the post 1994 changes in school governance and the concomitant changes in their leadership roles as principals of public schools, and how these changes have impacted on the construction and re-construction of their professional identities. The focus of the study is to investigate how principals have had to re-define their roles and re-construct their professional identities in relation to the post 1994 policy context changes, some of which were responses to global trends in educational leadership and management. It could be argued, therefore, that the study examines the complex interplay between external determinants of professional identities and the internal cognitive forces that shape those identities. It is for this reason that the concept of structuration features prominently in this project.

It is also for this reason that the analysis of principals' life histories in this study revolves around the symbiotic relationship between what is often referred to as 'structure' and 'agency' in the social sciences. It may also be argued that the professional identities of principals as school leaders are both structurally pre-determined by legislation and policy and also constructed by the principals themselves in so far as they have the agency to interpret and implement both education laws and policies. The study, therefore, proceeds from the assumption that changes in education legislative and policy framework are likely to lead to changes in self-conception and roles of principals as school leaders.

In a nutshell, the objectives of this study are:

- (a) to examine the professional histories of selected principals, especially the manner in which their socialisation into the teaching profession has impacted on their role re-definition and professional identity (re)construction;
- (b) to investigate each selected principal's views or perceptions about what is expected of them as leaders and professional managers of schools, and how they reconcile these perceptions with structural expectations as articulated in policy documents;
- (c) to explore the complex interplay between structure and (human) agency in school leadership; and
- (d) to establish the extent to which school leadership is determined by personal values, interests, beliefs, gender, professional expectations and societal influence.

1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The 1994 democratic dispensation led to changes in the socio-political environment within which education is embedded. Changes were also effected in the legislation as reflected in *The National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996*, *The South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996*, *The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998*, and management and governance structures in the educational institutions. As from 1996, there has been a call for participatory or participative management in schools from the Department of Education (DoE) (SASA, 1996). There has been a fairly general agreement from various participants in the education sector that participatory management ensures that all stakeholders are involved in setting goals, resolving problems and making decisions that affect the school.

To ensure this involvement, school management teams (SMTs) were introduced, and democratic school governing bodies were put in place to promote community involvement in education and good relations between parents and teachers. It was also believed that the active participation of governing bodies in the governance and management of the schools would provide better teaching and learning environments and improve the quality of teaching and learning. To attain this goal of general school improvement, a new quality management system known as the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) was introduced in 2003. Needless to say, this had a profound impact on the ways in which principals conceive of their roles, functions and professional identities.

The socio-political and cultural change in education has resulted in principals being faced with new challenges in their leadership and management duties and responsibilities.

Principals are expected to transform their schools by promoting partnerships with communities. It has been my observation as a school principal that the transformation process in schools was not easy to implement, let alone the change of behaviour and practice among the principals themselves. The reason for this was that they found it difficult to adjust to their new roles in the new dispensation. Structurally and in terms of policies, the roles and responsibilities attached to them are fairly explicit. It is often the subjective understanding of these official or structural prescriptions, which impedes effective implementation of national policies. This study seeks to interrogate this subjective dimension of role and task interpretation by school principals.

In this study, I consistently refer to myself as “I” instead of “the researcher”. The reason for this is that I have been part of the school management team (SMT) since 1986 at different levels up till between 1994 and 2005 when I was a school principal. Throughout the study I have considered myself as one of the selected principals. My management and leadership experience has influenced the choice and structuring of the critical questions of this study but I have maintained an objective position during the interviews with the selected principals. I have also used my experience in this study to shed some light on issues of the principals’ roles and of policy interpretation where not enough information was obtained from the interviews.

The conceptual and methodological significance of this study is that it focuses on the principals' professional life histories or biographies and uses these as a means of exploring issues of role definition and professional identity construction. This study also looks at various ways in which personal and cultural values, interests, beliefs, gender-related biases, expectations, and societal influences determine and shape leadership styles. This study has an important sociological dimension as it relies on the work of the Chicago School of Sociologists as well as established sociologists of education such as Stephen Ball, Ivor F. Goodson, Pierre Bourdieu and others.

This study is located within two sometimes contradictory and challenging change processes in the lives of school principals, namely changes within and around schools as organizations, and the subjective change of leadership roles and professional identities of school principals. As Mullern and Wahlin (2005:4) have observed:

When organizations change, arenas are created, deliberately or not, for new and changing identities. In change processes demands on managers often change both from senior managers as well as from subordinates and these changing demands are powerful triggers for identity creation and change.

Bauman (2004) points out that in order for identity construction to be successful, change and fluidity need to be acknowledged as basic ingredients in the process of creating an identity. Mullern and Wahlin (2005:6) believe that the important point of departure in change processes is the need for self-reflection and socio-political negotiations from the leaders. In the field of education, principals construct their professional identities within

crossfire of demands emanating from government policy makers and officials, educators, learners and parents.

Some principals have viewed this change as an opportunity to grow in their leadership roles while others see it as creating problems and confusion. Empirical studies on leadership and management challenges (Dopson, Risk and Stewart, 1992; Goodson, 1991) reveal that during their search for new roles in changing organizational settings, the principals bring both their personal and professional experiences to the practice of leading schools. It is believed that these experiences shape and are shaped by the principals' identity and socialization into the education profession. Goodson (1991) refers to these experiences as "life data" and maintains that these experiences and priorities influence what the principals do. The principals' knowledge, values, beliefs, interests and conceptions are determinants of professional identities and these are traceable to the principals' socialization into the society in general and into the teaching profession in particular.

Given the fact that the principal's job has two fairly distinct dimensions, namely the objective or professional dimension as outlined in the policies, manuals, circulars and job descriptions; and a subjective and interpretive aspect which involves the principal's understanding of his or her role, the key focus of this study is to explore ways in which principals transform personal or private knowledge into professional practice (Ball, 1987).

In terms of the new school leadership and management policies and procedures in the post 1994 context, the principal is no longer the sole decision-maker in management-related issues, but a participant in a team of decision-makers. Yet, in spite of this, the principal is still accountable for everything that happens within the school. This state of affairs, coupled with various national and global policy changes, necessitates a radical re-appraisal of the principal's role at the subjective versus objective level of professional role definition or re-definition.

1.4 CRITICAL QUESTIONS

The following critical questions are asked in and answered by this research:

- (a) How do principals interpret or understand their roles and functions as leaders in the democratised system which relies on participatory management approaches?
- (b) To what extent can the principal's beliefs, personal and cultural values and interests shape or influence his or her leadership style?
- (c) To what extent has the principal's socialisation into the teaching profession shaped his or her self-definition and professional identity?
- (d) How do principals transform their personal knowledge into professional practice?

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study has afforded me an opportunity to use a combination of social identity theory and personal identity theory in conducting a life history research in school leadership.

However, these two identity theories are used within a social phenomenological approach which is the overarching theoretical framework or meta-theory of this study. Using these two identity theories has deepened my understanding of the sociological influences or thinking within educational research, especially when studying people's lives in particular social and organizational contexts. The social phenomenological approach covers both the sociological and educational aspects by explaining how principals view or perceive their leadership roles and construct their identities through their life stories. After giving an account of the social phenomenological approach, I give a brief explanation of how the identity theories feature in this study and also outline a few similarities and overlap between the two identity theories (Stets and Burke, 2000).

Social phenomenology

The phenomenological approach to the study of leadership attempts to understand leaders through their views of themselves and not through the eyes of an observer (Burns, 1982). It seeks to understand how each individual's personal and cultural values, beliefs, interests, perceptions, and expectations influence his behaviour towards his role and his colleagues. Behaviour in this study is regarded as resulting from the principals' perceptions of their leadership roles in the new policy and legislative framework. According to Burns (1982:20), "Perception is the central concept in phenomenology and refers to the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting material into a coherent construction of the psychological environment".

Phenomenology is a theory of human consciousness because it is man-centred and it caters for the perennial need of human beings to find significance in their lives, and to integrate their personalities around some clear, consistent and compelling view of existence (Lamont, 1965; Vandenberg, 1995). In order for a human being to develop human characteristics and therefore maintain his personality, he needs to interact through communication with other people with whom he shares social space, like in an organization. This human being also needs to conduct his life according to some general pattern of behaviour that is more or less adequate to cope with the everyday affairs of the organization.

The humanistic perspective, which is adopted in this study, is inherent in life history studies to gather and theorize from the experiences and biographies of the selected leaders and managers of educational institutions in KwaZulu-Natal. The humanistic approach uses life histories of these leaders to define systematic accounts of their lives within their social and cultural milieus, and choices they make in specific circumstances. Principals' personal life stories reflect their professional self-identities and cultures. Personal stories reveal the meaning and the subjective interpretation each principal gives to his life (Oplatka, 2001). The stories that principals tell usually express their personal and professional identities.

Human beings construct their views of life through stories, and stories give meaning to life. Lamont (1965) maintains that meaning to life will be attained only if a human being combines personal experiences and continuous self-development with experiences and

knowledge of significant others. Knowledge is a human product that is socially constructed. New knowledge, particularly knowledge of the social world, can be obtained through social phenomenology by using it to understand how society operates.

The social phenomenological approach is concerned about the creative nature of human agency and it pays systematic attention to human creativity and subjectivity. This means that while conditioned by the past and by the structural or contextual prescriptions of their roles, human beings possess freedom of creative choice and action to determine their destiny or how they respond to a particular situation. Reason is considered as the final decider of what is meaningful and relevant, and through reason, the subjective side of man is fully recognized (Lamont, 1965). Humanists as opposed to structuralists and post-structuralists believe that man has the potential to solve his own problems through reason and vision.

The central focus of social phenomenology as a meta-theory is on the person or self. According to sociological thinking, there is a reciprocal relationship between the self and society (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1962). Stets and Burke (2003:1) maintain that:

The self influences society through the actions of individuals thereby creating groups, organizations, networks, and institutions; and society influences the self through its shared language and meanings that enable a person to take the role of the other, engage in social interaction and reflect upon oneself as an object.

Self, in this study, is each principal's primary interest-at-hand in the school situation, manifested in aspects of enjoyment, functions, health and stress, autonomy and maintenance of self-image (Woods, 1987).

Identity theories

Recent studies on leadership (Rousseau and van der Veen, 2001; Pittaway et al, 2003; Andras and Charlton, 2005; Mullern and Wahlin, 2005) have shown a great interest in identity construction among leaders and managers of organizations. The focus of these studies is on the changing organizational settings and the pressure that has been put on the leaders and managers to re-construct their identities and re-define their roles in order to cope with the structural demands of the organizations. By building new identities, the leaders will be in a position to balance between what others expect from them and what they are able to deliver in their roles. Mullern and Wahlin (2005:10) support this when they say:

There is an ongoing struggle to reconcile what others expect you to do with what you are able to do based on available resources and restrictions. The process of constructing an identity is placed at centre of this tension, and we emphasize the active construction of identity based on how individual managers relate to others through interpretations of what others expect from them.

Principals are social figures who occupy positions in public institutions and therefore have to perform some roles according to the expectations of their organizations and communities. In order to keep up with the organizational changes, Burke and Reitzes

(1981: 84) argue that individuals are motivated to formulate plans to achieve high levels of role performance or activity that will reinforce, support or confirm their identities. Principals as powerful and influential members of the institutions can influence the way the staff define their identity. However, the principals themselves, knowing that they belong to the social groups called schools, tend to set their personal identity in the context of the expectations of their structured roles as school managers. It is in the role situations that teachers would respond to the principal as a performer in that particular role and therefore identify with him or her. The above factors made it necessary to include the identity theories in this study.

Social identity theory considers how people individually conceptualise themselves with reference to behaviour of particular groups to which they belong. Principals as professional leaders do this when they identify themselves with, or adopt a particular behaviour of, a group of principals they belong to in a circuit or district. Jedwab (2001) defines social identity theory as an exploration of relations between communities from the group perspective. Individuals try to find out who they are by comparing themselves to the other group members. The process whereby individuals compare themselves to other social group members is called self-categorization. As Stets and Burke (2000:224) point out, “Self-categorization or identification is a process during which the reflexive self takes itself as an object and then categorizes, classifies or names itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications”. This process always results in members of the social group perceiving similarities among themselves.

The identity theory considers how members of a social group are put into different positions and thereafter given names according to the roles they occupy or perform. These individuals will construct their identities based on the meanings and expectations of these roles. Burke and Reitzes (1981) maintain that these meanings and expectations associated with the roles form a set of rules or standards that guide behaviour in the social group. Likewise, school principals are called managers or leaders because of their role, which requires them to lead the schools in a professional manner. Besides the job descriptions that come with the positions, the principals are sometimes required to make decisions based on the meanings they create and behaviour they choose concerning their roles. In a school situation, the policies that guide behaviour among staff and learners are a combination of the complex interplay between structure and agency. It is my hope that this study will demonstrate this process as it plays itself out in the life histories of selected principals.

The social and personal identity theories are sometimes used interchangeably (Stryker, 1980; Stets and Burke, 2000) as if they have the same meaning. In fact, Stets and Burke (2000) go on to say that as far as they are concerned, there are similarities and overlap between the two theories. Social interaction and social structure are the two key concepts in the discussion of identity theory. According to Burns (1982) one's identity is significantly influenced by what the individual believes others with whom he interacts think of him. The group leaders are given roles and names within the organizational social structure. Both leaders and followers create meanings and expectations with regard to the leaders' behaviour and also to the organization behaviour. These meanings and

expectations form the guidelines for normal and moral behaviour for all group members. To sum up, it may be assumed that because of the position an individual occupies, he may use it to influence the behaviour of others in the group while his own behaviour may be in turn be influenced by the expectations of the group on him.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

This is a qualitative, interpretive study, which will make use of stories, accounts, and narratives that describe turning-point moments in the lives of the six principals, to investigate different areas of the leadership process in selected KwaZulu-Natal schools. The qualitative, interpretive approach has been chosen because it describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, experiences, views, and perspectives.

The life history approach has been selected from this broad qualitative, interpretive framework as the appropriate tool to collect and analyse data for this study. According to Bromley (1977:127&129), "Life history data are usually necessary in any serious attempt to explain, predict, or influence the person's behaviour, which is usually (though not always) more explicable in the context of his life-history and future prospects". In this study, I hope to explain the behaviour of principals as leaders. The data that was collected only covered the professional experiences and perceptions of the principals in their leadership roles. The reason for the use of the life history approach is that it involves the narrative reconstruction of the participant's experience and will yield insights about the

subjective dimensions of the principal's role. The focus will be on the person or self and not on the structure and requirements of the job the principals have to perform. However, the structural or objective aspect will not be totally ignored as the focus of the study is on the interplay between structure and agency.

The interplay between structure and agency as the process of structuration will be reflected in the life stories that the principals are going to tell. The personal knowledge or experience that they use in pursuing their professional roles is influenced by the rules and resources, procedures of action, and aspects of praxis which are elements of structure. Principals of schools are in this study referred to as human or social actors who while enacting structure, reflect on their experiences and thus perform consciously and knowledgeably in the conduct of their everyday life (Giddens, 2005:122). The theory of structuration acknowledges that in order for the structured roles, rules and policies to succeed in an organization, social and personal experiences of human actors or agents need to be considered. This is supported by Giddens (2005:123), when he says "In structuration theory a hermeneutic starting-point is accepted in so far as it is acknowledged that the description of human activities demands a familiarity with the forms of life expressed in those activities".

The professional life histories of the principals were collected by means of interviews. The purpose for interviewing will be to find out ways in which principals turn personal knowledge into professional practice. Semi-structured interviews will be used to access the perspectives of the principals, their experiences, feelings, thoughts, opinions,

knowledge and intentions. An interview guide (Appendix 1), which lists all the questions or issues that will be explored in the interview, will be used. The narrative data analysis approach will be used to analyse the data since it helps the researcher in understanding the views and subjective perceptions of the participants. It also analyses the manner in which the participants perceive their situations and activities in social structures and networks (Miller, 2000).

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Terms like governance, management and leadership that are used in this study are closely intertwined but distinguishable from one another. It is imperative to define and differentiate these concepts right at the beginning stage of this study so that the researcher's intentions for using them can be understood throughout. Furthermore, other terms like life history, structuration, structure, agency and professional identity will also be defined to ensure that they are used consistently with particular contextual meanings.

Governance is a term used to refer to policy determination or policy-making decisions. It can also be defined as an act of governing, guiding or ruling an organization. "In general terms, governance implies overall control and authority of the school and its policies and direction" (Thurlow, 2002:28). *The South African Schools Act (SASA)*, No.48 of 1996 stipulates that the school principal should act as an ex-officio member of the governing body and should work closely together with the governing body to ensure that its decisions are properly carried out. The Act, however, does not elaborate on the tasks and

duties that must be performed by the principal in this governance structure. It does not specify the extent to which the principal can influence the decisions of the governing body, since he is the only member with skills, knowledge and expertise.

The process of management can be discussed in several different ways.

Management can be referred to as a process or series of continuing and related activities aimed at reaching organizational goals by working with and through people and other organizational resources. Management also refers to the internal organizational structures, and external structures which consist of parents and the wider community. In short, management focuses on organizational design, leadership, decision-making process and communications (Hoyle, 1986). The basic management activities that are usually outlined by contemporary management thinkers are planning, organizing for implementation, motivation and exercising control. Advocates of management like Certo (1980), Hoyle (1986) and Hughes (1985) agree that there is some overlap in practice between these activities. This overlap results from the fact that the performance of one activity depends upon the performance of the others, for example, a well-thought out plan will make organizing and implementation easier, and so will be controlling.

Planning as an activity of the management process is characterized by problem identification and a search for and choice of solutions to address the identified problems. Planning requires managers to choose tasks that must be performed by

subordinates to attain organizational goals, to outline how the tasks must be performed, and to indicate when the tasks should be performed.

Organizing includes communicating, delegating, consulting and coordinating. This will involve bringing together or integration of resources: people, capital, and equipment (Hersey and Blanchard, 1993). After planning, the school principal is required to assign tasks to the staff, individually or in groups, to ensure the smooth running of the school and the attainment of set goals. The introduction of SMTs in South African public schools meant that the principal was no longer going to run the school alone. He must involve the SMT by communicating all ideas and new developments to them, consulting with them before taking decisions, and delegating duties within their capacity to them. The process of communication assumes a crucial role for both the principals and educators at the time where important decisions have to be taken in order to save educators' jobs. The process of consultation among the school management teams and other staff members has caused many schools to adopt what is called participatory or participative management, which ensures that all the employees are involved in the running of the schools.

The participatory management process in South African public schools was introduced at a time when the education system was undergoing change. The new approach to education management was aimed at initiating a radical cultural shift from dependency to empowerment in schools (Thurlow, 2002). Empowerment of educators was a means of

change from an authoritarian, non-consultative and non-participatory management practice to a more democratic approach.

Motivation plays an important role in increasing worker performance. It is sometimes referred to as directing, influencing or actuating (Certo, 1980). Motivation is concerned with people within the organization, and managers use it to determine the level of performance of the employees. Managers also use it to guide the activities of the members and this plays a large part in influencing the attainment of organizational goals. It stands to reason that highly motivated employees will perform to their fullest ability and therefore increase production.

Exercising control is an on-going assessment process that involves:

- the gathering of information which is used to measure performance within the organization,
- comparing of present performance to pre-established performance standards, and
- determining if there should be any modification of practice to meet the pre-established standards.

Leadership and Leaders. Leadership scholars like Kouzes and Posner (1993), Sergiovanni (1992) and Gunter (2001) contend that leadership belongs to everyone and is a practice that can be learned and understood by ordinary people if the leadership potential of every single individual is cultivated in them. Sergiovanni goes on to say that leadership is an attitude which informs behaviour rather than a set of discrete skills or

qualities. Caroselli (1990:94) suggests that “leadership is about challenging the prevailing wisdom and the capacity to influence and organize meaning for the members of the organization”. Andras and Charlton (2005:6) define leadership as “the interpenetration between the organization system and personality systems of humans generating mostly organizational communications that are part of the management subsystem of the organization”.

In a leadership process, the leader makes an input into the organization’s capacity for concerted action whereby the organization members set their goals and establish priorities. Contemporary images of school leadership evoke calls for leadership that is based on sharing of power, participation by stakeholders, recognition of cultural values and beliefs, effective decision-making, effective communication, and effective leading (Goldring and Greenfield, 2002). The leaders often link this type of leadership in organizations to the process of identity definition.

The process of leadership can only occur when there is a leader and a follower influencing one another with the aim of bringing about change toward a desired future. Both leader and follower should be prepared to give something in order to get something in return. Bole and Davenport (1975) view influence as a relationship in which one individual affects the thoughts, attitudes or behaviour of others. This individual takes an initiative to assist a group of followers through motivation, direction, supervision, guidance, evaluation, counselling, inspiration and setting ethical standards for them, to move toward the achievement of goals that are acceptable to the organization. Wynn and

Guditus (1984) view leadership as being associated with the implementation of change and innovative ideas with the aim of achieving goals that serve the needs of the organization and the individuals who are part of it (p. 28).

Leaders as people with new ideas and ability to put them in use are always acting on inducing their followers to act for goals that represent their values and motivations (Wynn and Guditus, 1984). Leaders are experimenters who take risks, go with the flow and focus on mistakes as learning opportunities. Leaders are models for their followers, who imitate the leaders' attitudes or behaviours if they are good, and may reject or avoid them if they are not good. Leaders should mean what they say and believe in what they do in order for the followers to trust them. 'The leader may also be an ambassador or representative of a group. That is why positive consequences follow when subordinates find that their leader has influence with his or her superiors in matters such as promotion' (Hughes, 1985:268).

The ability to lead depends upon the ability to understand and address one's own desires about the future and those of other people in the organization. "Good leadership inspires and touches, holds and cherishes, is humble and certain, pushes and directs, waits and listens, notices, moves, contains, breaks through, senses the movement ...and rests" (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997:154). The desires are part of the vision, imagination, passion about their calling, enthusiasm and commitment that good leaders should have and communicate to the members of their institutions. A vision is a leader's magnetic north which gives direction and purpose to the organization. It can also be regarded as a

picture of an ambitious desirable future for the organization (Kouzes and Posner, 1993; Daft, 1999).

A number of leadership styles have been identified by leadership writers like Gronn (1996), Daft (1999) and others. The following are frequently mentioned: authoritative or autocratic, laissez faire, affiliative or peacemaker and democratic. Although we tend to label some as bad and others as good, Loock (2002) maintains that none of these styles are right or wrong. All that the school principal should do is use each of them according to the situation at hand.

A good leader is sensitive to the moods and needs of his or her followers. He or she must be flexible and able to recognize the difference and respond appropriately so that he or she is not bound by rules but rather guided by his or her values, beliefs, interests, intuition and wisdom (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997). Leaders themselves, therefore, need to be effective in their leadership roles by making good use of resources available to them, especially human resources. For leadership to be effective, leaders need to understand and relate to the people they are working with and thereafter build a solid relationship with them. The democratic and participative relationship that is required in schools by the education department means that all the staff members should be involved in decision-making, their opinions should be respected, and their advice should be sought.

Although the school principal is expected to be actively involved in all these activities, the concepts (governance and management) are in no way synonymous with one another. Governance is concerned with policy-making, guiding or ruling of an organization by the stakeholders like the School Governing Body (SGB), some of whom are not professional people. While both governance and management are concerned with the control of the school, they differ in that governance is the legal part of control and management is the professional part of control. Leadership differs from management in that it is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purpose, while management is an authority relationship between a manager and a subordinate who coordinate their activities to produce and sell particular goods or services (Rost, 1993).

Life History can be defined as an exploration of how individuals or group of people who share specific characteristics, personally and subjectively experience, make sense of, and account for things that happen to them (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). They go on to say that “Life history reveals the influences, experiences and relationships within any individual’s life which have led to their developing a particular philosophy of leadership and taking on a specific professional identity which informs their work” (p.21).

Structuration: According to Giddens (2005:121), structuration is a circular process which takes place between human agents (social actors) and structure where “structure teaches agents who help to form the structure”. Human social practices and activities are seen as recursive, that is to say ‘they are not brought into being by social actors, but continually

recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors'. In and around their activities, agents reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible. New (1994:188) points out that:

We are born into a particular set of social relations, a particular culture in which a particular language is spoken – none of these are chosen by us, and nor is our own relational position with its particular set of opportunities and restrictions. But the continued existence of society and the form it takes in future depends on human activity: we do not create it, but through our actions we reproduce or transform it.

According to the theory of structuration, neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of social whole or societal totality, is the basic domain of study of social sciences, but social practices ordered across space and time. Structuralism tends to express a naturalistic standpoint and is inclined towards objectivism (Giddens, 2005).

Structure refers to uncountable social facts that each individual is faced with in his or her daily activities. Among such social facts are organizational hierarchies, rules and culture. Individuals in various organizations do not have much control over these social facts and have to operate within them. Giddens (2005:121) sees structure as:

A set of rules and resources, procedures of action, and aspects of praxis, that exists as such only in a virtual state, made palpable and thus socially real through their enactment by human actors. Structure in this sense effectively comes into being and is sustained through the continuity generated by the social practices of

human actors; their practical activities embody and enact, but never perfectly replicate its constituent components.

In this study the concept of structure refers to the rules, roles, and policy in educational institutions. Policy constrains everyone. Those who lead should see to it that everyone in the organization conforms, though some do not. Policy goes together with power which (power) sometimes creates inequality among organizational staff. Power leads to human resistance, which eventually results in social transformation (Musolf, 2003).

Given the development of the person as someone with particular values, motivation, habits, capacities and experiences, structure determines what range of options she or he is faced with. It determines in what ways she or he can make a difference by acting one way rather than another” (New, 1994:188-9).

Structures that are constructed by human beings can also be altered by human agency.

Agency, herewith referred to as *human agency*, refers to the ability to ascribe meaning to objects and events, by human beings, to define the situation based on those meanings, and to act (Musolf, 2003). The actions of human beings should always be intentional during each event in which a human actor, in this case the school principal, is involved.

“For an item of behaviour to count as action, whoever perpetrates it must intend to do so, or else the behaviour in question is just a reactive response” (Giddens, 2005:126).

However, agency does not only refer to the intentions human actors have in doing things, but also to their ability or power to do those things.

An agent or actor is someone who is knowledgeable and has power and skill to act according to a particular situation and thus bring a change in people's lives. The Oxford English Dictionary defines an agent as 'a person who acts for another in an organization, or a person who exerts power or produce an effect'. As far as Giddens (2005:127) is concerned, "Action is a continuous process, a flow, in which the reflexive monitoring which the individual maintains is fundamental to the control of the body that actors ordinarily sustain throughout their day-to-day lives". Bhaskar (1989:36) also supports the reflexive monitoring in the act of agency when he says that:

Agents are knowledgeable beings, and social practices their skilled accomplishments. Some of this knowledge is implicit in the practical consciousness of how to go on, for example of how to manage the rules of civil inattention, and reflexive monitoring can itself take place at an unaware level in much the same way as we unconsciously correct or balance while riding a bike.

1.8 STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Introduction to the School Leadership Inquiry

The first chapter describes the research aims and objectives, the rationale of the study and the critical questions. My position on how I wish to present myself in this study is explained. An explanation of how the social phenomenological approach will be used as an overarching theoretical framework or a meta-theory of the study is given. The personal and social identity theories are discussed to explain how they influence the behavior and construction of professional identity of the selected principals. Finally, the research

design and method are discussed to explain how the research data was collected and analyzed.

Chapter 2: Theories of Leadership and Professional Identity Construction

In the second chapter I review and discuss the major theoretical approaches to leadership within the discipline of educational leadership. A link is developed between every school leadership theory in the study and the life-history methodology. This chapter also discusses the use of life history as a methodological tool and theoretical or analytical framework in this study because of the alternatives it offers to the researcher to connect the lives and stories of individuals to the understandings of larger human and social phenomena. These are followed by the discussion of different approaches to identity construction, particularly professional identity construction.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This is the traditional methodology chapter in which I explain my research methodology, research instruments (interview schedule and questionnaire), research sites, sampling procedure, data analysis, and reliability and validity of the research findings.

Chapter 4: Leadership Narratives of the Selected Principals

In this chapter I present and discuss the narratives of the six school principals that were interviewed in order to give background to their upbringing and description of their educational and professional lives and to determine the manner in which they perceived their roles as leaders and professional managers of schools within the context of current

policies and legislative frameworks. I have chosen to present the stories in the first person narratives so that I can be able to maintain their authentic meanings and critically comment on the principals' values, beliefs, and interests that they use in interpreting the policies that define both their roles and functions as leaders. The presentation of narratives follows three of the five initial themes in the interview schedule A; themes A, B and C are combined (Appendix 1). The narratives are further analyzed, guided by the critical questions, to show their significance within the context of the study. The chapter is concluded by the discussion of the challenges of leadership from the point of view of the experiences of the selected principals at their schools, the biographical meaning that these experiences had at the time they happened, and the construction of their present meanings of experiences under emerging patterns.

Chapter 5: Theorizing the Life Histories

In this chapter the stories of the selected principals are analyzed to evaluate the connection between the principals' life histories and the leadership theories discussed in this study. As a result, four major inferred themes emerged from these stories namely:

- Professional socialization, leadership roles, and professional identity. In this theme the entry of the principals into the teaching profession is evaluated in order to determine how it changed their lives. The influence of the professional training, mentorship and their role models on their professional development and identity construction is also discussed.
- Coping with change in the legislative and policy framework after 1994. This theme examines how the selected principals reacted towards the new education

policies, especially those principals who were in the school management before 1994. The focus is also on how the principals interpreted and implemented the new policies in their schools, and how they redefined their roles and responsibilities within the context of these policies.

- Power-sharing and empowerment of stakeholders. How do the principals relate to the democratic change that is taking place in their schools? How do they see themselves leading with their staff and being influenced by their demands and expectations? Are they comfortable with the participatory management demands of power sharing, staff empowerment and an all-inclusive decision-making method? These are the questions that are dealt with in this theme.
- Complex interplay between personal knowledge and professional practice. This is a very important point of discussion in this study. The aim of this theme is to find out if the selected principals can convert their personal knowledge into professional practice. Can they use their personal experiences to influence policy or can they use both equally to approach their daily activities and situations that arise daily at their schools?

The life narratives will also be used to answer all the critical questions of the study, and to demonstrate the transformation of private knowledge into professional practice and the extent to which they reflect the construction of professional identities. I sum up the chapter with a review of the principals' life-stories with the aim of determining the impact and influence of the interviews and interview questions on the nature of stories that end up being told. Are the stories based on reality, for example, experiences and

events or are they just fictitious expressions with no connections to the past and present reality. Do the life-stories reflect the principals' construction of professional identity?

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

In this chapter, I begin by presenting a summarized discussion of my findings, which mainly revolve around the main objectives of the study. Next, I present the recommendations for future research of this nature and finally I end this chapter with a few limitations of the study and the concluding remarks.

1.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have indicated that I am going to adopt a social phenomenological approach to understand how school principals understand or view themselves as leaders of public schools and how their personal and cultural values, beliefs, interests and expectations determine their leadership styles. The focus is, as it has been stated, on the person or self rather than on the structure and requirements of the job the principals have to perform. This is why I am interested on how the principals perceived their re-defined roles and construct their professional identities. Taking into consideration that principals bring their personal and professional experiences to the process of role definition and identity construction, the study also explores the ways in which the principals transform personal knowledge to professional practice.

The combination of the humanistic and sociological approaches in this study stems from the belief that any individual is best understood through his behaviour and how he communicates with, and conducts himself when he is among other members of the organization. The individual as a member of a group or institution is guided by the rules of the organization in the performance of his leadership roles. The leader is able to take his role, communicate or interact socially, and reflect upon himself through the shared language and meanings of the institution (Sterts and Burke, 2003).

CHAPTER TWO
THEORIES OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY
CONSTRUCTION: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I begin by reviewing and discussing the major approaches to leadership within the discipline of educational leadership. The aim of this is for me to attempt to make sense of the contemporary leadership theories for change in a South African context. Following this will be a review of the concepts of self and identity, and the different approaches to identity construction, particularly professional identity construction. The focus in this chapter will be on how, through contemporary leadership theories, the principals use their *prescribed* leadership roles and functions to define their *professional* identities. Essentially, what I intend to do is to explore the complex interplay between structure, which consists of prescribed roles and functions in terms of the current legislative framework, and agency which is the will, choices, and subjective actions in the construction of principals' professional identities.

The terms “challenges” and “change” are constantly used in this chapter and throughout the thesis. They refer to the changes in the socio-political environment in which education is embedded, and describe the state of transition in terms of the policy and legislative framework in which the principals find themselves. The leadership theories that are discussed in this chapter reveal that the leadership roles of principals in the

schools have undergone a lot of changes. Change in the policy framework, which results in change in leadership roles, is evident primarily at the strategic level where school principals have to develop and apply skills that are suitable for particular situations. Principals find themselves faced with inconsistent and conflicting expectations from their staff and communities, and they have to reconcile these expectations with reality (Mullern and Wahlin, 2005). Perhaps the most significant of these changes is the notion that schools should be self-sufficient and self-managing with the principal playing the role of leader, manager and fundraiser. In short the principal has become a Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

2.2 LEADERSHIP THEORIES FOR THE CHANGING WORLD

A number of leadership approaches have been discussed by theorists like Leithwood et al (1999), MacBeath (1998), Railey and Louiss (2000), Horner (2003) and others to describe the ways in which school principals could respond to daily challenges in their leadership duties. According to MacBeath (1998), an effective school is not categorized according to student attainment or any outcome measures of school performance but by the way in which the school principal creates and sustains healthy relationships with all stakeholders. This section discusses the following leadership theories: situational leadership theory, behavioural leadership theory, participative leadership theory, transformational leadership theory, and distributed leadership theory. An attempt will be made to link these approaches to school leadership with professional identity construction.

2.2.1 SITUATIONAL OR CONTINGENCY THEORIES

A study of effective leaders and schools by MacBeath (1998:141) has shown that “successful school leaders do not learn how to do leadership and then stick to set patterns and ways of doing things along a prescribed set of known rules. They are willing to change in response to new sets of circumstances and to differing needs of children, young people and teachers – and they are often rule breakers”. They also change as a result of their own personal values and interests as well as how they interpret and understand particular functions and roles.

Situational or contingency theorists like Fiedler (1967), House and Mitchell (1971), Vroom and Yetten (1973), and Hersey and Blanchard (1993), maintain that the range of styles used by leaders will vary according to specific situations. Situational theories recognize the interaction of leaders and their environments, which means that the leader has to examine the situational variables first before selecting a leadership style to apply in a specified situation (Razik and Swanson, 1995). This is supported by Certo (1980:321) when he says “... successful leadership is a function of the leader, the follower, and the situation, which means that the leader, the follower, and the situation must be appropriate for one another if a leadership attempt is to be successful”.

According to Daft (1999:93), “...contingency means that one thing depends on other things, and for a leader to be effective there must be an appropriate fit between the leader’s behaviour and style and the conditions in the situation”. In other words, the

leader of an organization is expected to behave in a flexible manner in order for him or her to be able to determine the leadership style suitable for the situation he or she is confronted with. In the case of the principal as a leader of the school, the success and effectiveness of the school is dependent on the type of action or style he or she chooses to adopt in different situations.

One of the key concerns of this study is to examine how school principals combine their professional knowledge with their personal or private knowledge in order to respond to new set of circumstances and policy changes in their schools. The situational approach addresses this concern by clearly stating that principals do not have to stick to set policy frameworks when they deal with new situations and ever-changing needs of their learners and educators. They have to consider how the situations they are experiencing at a particular time and the decisions they intend to take would influence their relationships with their staff in order for them to adopt appropriate leadership styles.

The situational approach further suggests that the principals can rely on their personal values, interests and beliefs to deal with the expectations and demands of their educators, learners and communities. The situation at a school will determine whether the principal needs to stick to policy or use personal knowledge, or combine the two to successfully deal with it. My experience as a school principal tells me that mature and experienced principals would use their private knowledge to their advantage in dealing with new policy issues.

Fiedler (1967), in his contingency model, presents three elements in terms of which leadership situations can be discussed, namely:

- the quality of the personal relationship between the leader and the followers and how far the followers' support and loyalty to the leader can go,
- how far can the leader go with the enforcement of rules using his or her positional power and authority,
- the degree of structure in the task that the followers have to perform as a group, and how clear have the task goals and roles been defined.

Concerning the relationship between the leader and the followers, the influence results from the support the leader receives from the group, and the followers' attitudes toward and acceptance of the leader. The leader's positional power and the task structure will determine the successful achievement of organizational goals. The extent to which the leader exerts his influence or authority over his followers will determine the appropriateness of the leadership situation.

Positional power is high when the leader has the power to plan and direct the work of his subordinates, evaluate it, and reward or punish them. Positional power is low when the leader has little authority over his subordinates and cannot evaluate their work or reward them (Daft, 1999:95).

According to the contingency model, the most appropriate or favourable situation is the one which the leader is well-liked by his followers, where the leader has a powerful position, and where the tasks and roles are well-defined, and have clear, explicit goals.

Contingent leadership focuses on how leaders respond to their organizational circumstances or problems they are faced with at a particular time. These may result from the nature and preferences of the followers, conditions of work and tasks that need to be done (Leithwood et al, 1999). This theory assumes that, because of the different circumstances leaders in organizations are faced with, different responses will be expected from these leaders. Simply put, this means that a leadership response to one situation will differ from a response to another situation. A response to a situation is the choice of a suitable leadership style. The needs, maturity, and cohesiveness of followers make a significant difference to the best style of leadership (Daft, 1999:94). Contingency theory explains the relationship between leadership styles and effectiveness in specific situations.

The use of situational theories in school leadership is aimed at guiding the principals in choosing appropriate leadership styles for their schools. In order to choose the appropriate styles, the principals have to make decisions that will influence their relationships with their educators and learners. They should, therefore, be flexible and consider the situation at hand before adopting a leadership style. Flexibility means that even a leadership style that has worked for a principal before may need to be changed when new situations are encountered. Successful leaders are those who achieve their goals, and situational theorists maintain that such leaders use different leadership styles to approach different situations.

Although principals in South African schools did not receive any leadership or management training before they assumed duties at their respective schools, they generally have a good understanding of the education policies. While they are trying to do things according to a prescribed set of educational rules, they combine these with their personal experiences. The different situations that prevail at schools all over the country have taught the principals to be flexible in order to respond to the values and beliefs of their organizations. Today we are seeing a breed of school principals whose leadership decisions are not only based on the current legislative framework but also on their choices of leadership styles based on the circumstances and needs of children and teachers that prevail at their schools. Successful and effective leadership in most of the schools has been a result of principals 'responding from within to their daily realities at their schools' that is, drawing from their past experiences. This helps the school principals to deal with their daily leadership challenges in the new dispensation.

The willingness of the school leaders to change from doing things according to the prescribed set of rules is an indication that principals are behaving in a flexible manner in order to respond to the values and beliefs of their institutions. This means that they are prepared, in their decision-making, to consider the needs of the learners, teachers and the communities they serve. The collaborative relationship that occurs between the school leaders and their staff and communities helps the principals to define themselves in their professional roles. The meaningful feedback that they get from such interactions also helps them to gain insight into their talents, abilities, values and beliefs, and therefore construct meaningful professional knowledge and identity.

2.2.2 BEHAVIOURAL LEADERSHIP THEORIES

McGeown (1984) argues that situational approaches adopt a method which takes too little account of the salience of the leader's personality in influencing the situation, and may be criticized for this. The result has been a shift to behavioural theories of leadership as the more useful approach to understanding the exercise of influence in organizations.

Behavioural approaches are mainly concerned with the study of observed behaviour rather than a capacity for leadership, which may be inferred from behaviour (McGeown, 1984:189). The leader's behaviour is based on two dimensions, namely: person-oriented and task-oriented. It is believed that person-oriented behaviour fosters group productivity while task-oriented behaviour inhibits group productivity.

According to Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958), there are seven leadership behaviours the principal has to choose from in order to make a sound decision (fig. 2.1), ranging between the democratic or relationship-oriented and authoritarian or task-related. The leadership behaviours illustrated in figure 2.1 characterize, at one end, a leader who determines policies and makes decisions by himself; while at the other end the leader allows group discussion and decision-making, and self-direction by the followers. The styles of leader behaviour between the two extremes show a gradual change from a manager or task-related leader behaviour to group-oriented leader behaviour. Leaders whose behaviour tend to move towards the authoritarian end of the continuum, use their power to influence their followers, whereas those who are democratic in their approach, allow their followers freedom in their work.

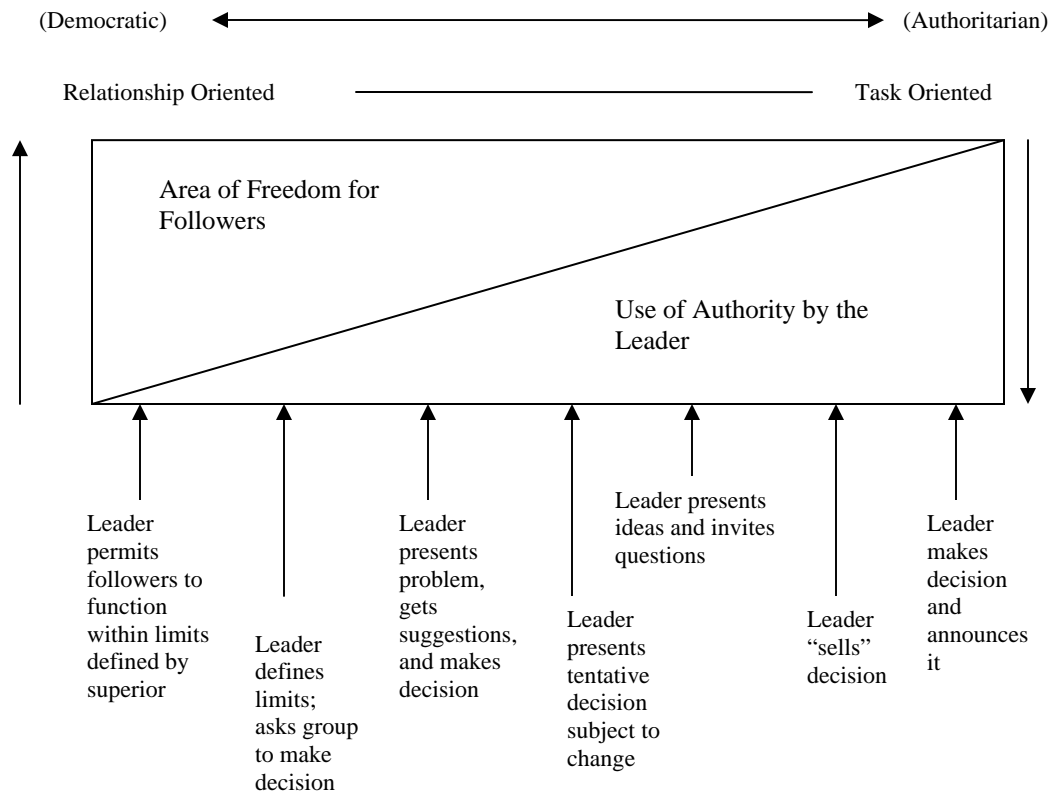


Fig. 2.1 The Tannenbaum and Schmidt Continuum of Leader Behavior
Source: Hersey and Blanchard, 1993:118

Hersey and Blanchard argue that there are two main types of leadership behaviours, namely the task behaviour and relationship behaviour. These types of behaviour are based on the characteristics of the followers as the important element of a situation. The characteristics the followers display indicate the level of readiness or maturity of each follower. The focus is therefore on the relationship between follower maturity, leader task behaviour, and leader relationship behaviour (Certo, 1980:30). “People low in task readiness, because of little ability or training, need a different leadership style than those who are high in readiness and have good ability, skills, confidence, and willingness to work” (Daft, 1999:99). According to Hersey and Blanchard, the leadership style or

behaviour should reflect the maturity or readiness of the followers. The mature the followers are, the more independent they will be in performing their jobs. Figure 2.2 summarizes the leadership styles the leader decides to adopt after evaluating the followers' level of maturity.

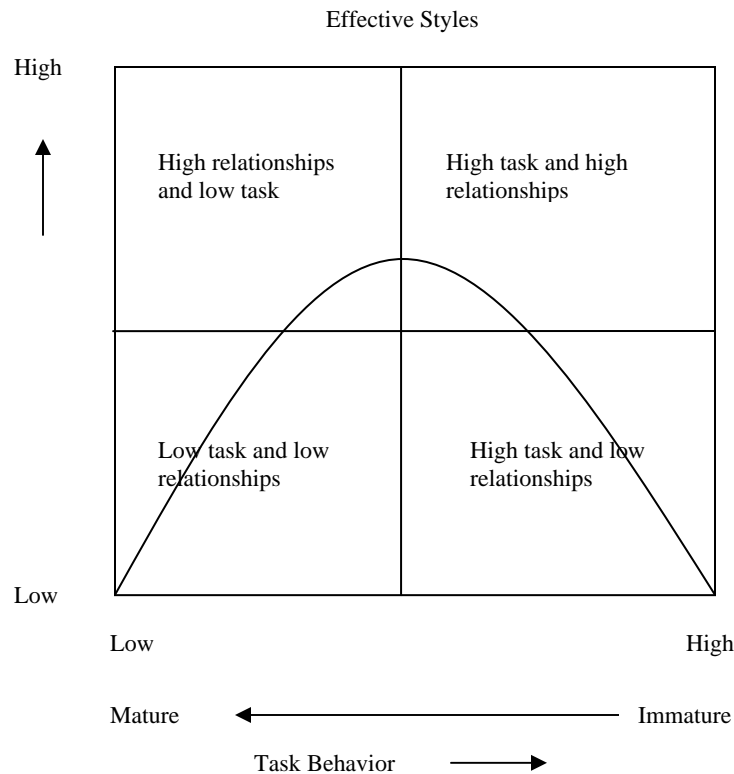


Fig. 2.2 The Life Cycle Theory of Leadership Model
Source: Samuel C. Certo, 1980:330

Blake and Mouton (1964) explain this clearly in their model called the 'Leadership Grid'. In this model they refer to the two leadership dimensions as 'concern for production' and 'concern for people'. The leadership grid identifies five major styles, which are:

- the impoverished leadership style where there is low concern for both production and people;

- the authority-compliance leadership style where there is a high concern for production and a low concern for people;
- the country club leadership style where there is high concern for people and low concern for production;
- the middle-of-the-road leadership style where there is medium concern for both production and people; and
- the team leadership style where there is a high concern for both production and people. According to Blake and Mouton, a good leader will consider using the team leadership style which considers both high productivity and morale.

The situation in South Africa is rather different from that posited by the American leadership theorists. From the five theories or styles mentioned above, I believe that three will be commonly practiced in South African schools. These are the Impoverished Leadership style, which I will refer to as the Laissez-Faire style; the Task or Authority-Compliance Leadership style, which I prefer to call the Autocratic or Top-down Leadership style; and the Country Club style, which I will call an Extremely Democratic style. However, principals in South African schools are still faced with:

challenges of a new order, the challenge to embrace democracy, the challenge to adopt new leadership styles that are attributes of a democratic ideology, and challenges of moving away from the top-down leadership styles of the apartheid era (Phendla, 2002:22).

Out of desperation to be seen as transparent and democratic, and uncertainty caused by these challenges, principals tend to rely more on their history and past experiences to interpret their present roles and make their choices of leadership styles. Those who are new in management use either the extremely democratic style or the autocratic style to win the teachers' and learners' support or to be seen by education officials as being productive respectively. A combination of experience and policy will create a healthy situation, free of uncertainty, in which a principal can make a choice of a leadership style that will accommodate the needs and demands of his or her school.

The trends towards democracy and participation in work places have caused the situational approaches of leadership to be replaced by structural functional approaches that attempt to respond to current changes in education. They are aimed at transforming the climate, vision and direction of the schools. However, many researchers argue that very little, if any, transformation has been achieved because many school leaders still use old models and metaphors that are no longer appropriate or useful to respond to new and current educational experiences (Betts, 1992). The reason for this is that they don't have training in using the new models. In carrying out studies on school leadership in current times, researchers like Banathy (1991), Betts (1992), Katz and Rosenzweig (1996), Keith and Girling (1991), and Leithwood (1992) have adopted the use of 'better suited' theories like the participative leadership theory, transformational leadership theory, and the distributed theory. They also refer to these theories as relevant paradigms of leadership that help the leaders in dealing with the changing world. They are paradigms that are

moving us from deterministic systems toward purpose-seeking systems, which simply means that we are moving from dictatorial to participative leadership styles.

The way in which the leader behaves among his or her colleagues and his or her followers will influence the way in which they perceive and respond to him or her. If the leader feels that the response is negative or positive, he or she will in turn respond by being authoritative or democratic respectively. The choice of leadership style will be influenced by the image or identity that the principal has constructed of him or herself. A positive response from mature followers will result in a motivated principal with improved skills, ability, confidence, and willingness to face all challenges.

The behavioural approach can be of great assistance to the selected principals in involving all the stakeholders in setting goals, resolving problems and making decisions. As the focus in the behavioural leadership approach is on the relationship between the leader and the followers, it is very important for the school principals to treat their staff as important elements of situations that occur in their schools and allow them freedom in their work. The healthy relationship that is developed from such a democratic approach influences the way in which the staff perceive and respond to the principal and therefore help him or her to choose the relevant leadership style and redefine his or her roles and reconstructing his or her professional identity. A negative response will require the principal to change his or her image and leadership behaviour while a positive response will result in an improved self-esteem and willingness to take more risks and face all challenges.

2.2.3 PARTICIPATIVE LEADERSHIP THEORY

Participative leadership is about the democratization of decision-making, which includes consultation and discussion. When the participative approach is used, leadership no longer remains an individual emergence, but rather an expression of the group as a whole (Green, 2001). Participation takes place in different situations, including where a leader sells an idea to the team, listens to feedback but decides on his own; where a leader allows the team to propose a decision, but has the final decision himself; and where a joint decision is made by all team members. The level of participation of staff or team members will therefore differ with each situation. At institutions where there is more shared decision-making, the staff members will be more enthusiastic about participation than at institutions where there is no shared decision-making. Shared decision-making improves the understanding of issues that need to be tackled and decided upon by all staff members.

The participative leader as a visionary, communicates the organizational priorities and performance results to the staff members; involves staff members in developing or setting realistic goals and sensible performance standards, and resolving problems; delegates power appropriately and develop staff talents; supports staff members with clear direction and necessary resources; and facilitates teamwork and sharing of responsibility by focusing on processes and tasks. A participative leader will also tap the full potential of the staff members. This is supported by Thorp (1985:418) when he says, “A much more

meaningful level of participation comes with delegation, when a head would empower a member of staff to act on his behalf’.

Delegation may only mean that no real authority is passed down by the leader to the staff members, but only workload. However, it has become a norm in many schools in South Africa that when a responsibility is delegated to a member of the senior management team, it should go with some measure of authority and decision-making power. In some cases major policy decision-making powers are extended down to junior staff members. This means that those who are at the pivotal point of the task or service under consideration willingly push authority down the ladder because they trust that those staff members at the bottom are best qualified to make a given decision (Wynn and Guditus, 1984). Where this is done, all staff members share accountability.

The amount of power and influence the participative leader gives to the subordinates may depend on the type of decision-making to be made and also on the leader’s preferences and beliefs. The leader’s style of leadership may also determine the type of participation by all staff members, that is: genuine participation, where power is shared; and pseudo participation, where there is less or no power sharing and equalization of resources (Thorp, 1985). Sometimes when work on a decision becomes more complicated, more comprehensive in scope, and more significant to the organization; responsibility for that work is shifted upward to the senior management team (Dill, 1972). Since responsibility usually goes with power, participation at the higher level of management will be more genuine than at the lower level.

The participative leadership theory is a relevant framework for this study in that it allows the principals to make choices about the type of changes they want to introduce in their schools with regard to decision-making. However, many principals in South African schools still find it difficult to introduce change based only on the new policies because they are “vague, ambiguous, unclear, long on ideas and vision, but short on implementation” (Phendla, 2000:22). The education legislation suggests that the staff members should be involved in genuine decision-making, but the school principal should remain accountable for all decisions made by him or her and the staff members. Principals need to combine the policies with the knowledge which is acquired from their past experiences in order to create open communication and cooperation within their schools.

While observing the policies, principals with sound social and cultural backgrounds in South African schools have created a situation where decision-making powers and responsibility are shared equally among staff members thus also sharing accountability. This makes their staff feel wanted and appreciated, creates collective and shared responsibility, team spirit, and allows everybody to contribute in terms of ideas and suggestions and makes them feel that their contributions mean a lot to the group. A participative leader trusts his or her followers and thus delegates decisions to them and always taps their full potential. A situation is created where decision-making is shared and staff feel wanted and appreciated. They will share constructive suggestions and ideas with the principal, which will result in the principal constructing a positive professional identity of him or herself. Professional identity construction in this relationship will result

from a process of social learning that includes knowledge acquisition about the organization and themselves.

2.2.4 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

Among the objectives of this study is the need to establish the extent to which school leadership is determined by personal values, interests, beliefs, professional expectations and societal influence. Daft (1999) believes that a new paradigm of leadership will make it possible for school leaders to promote change and deal with resistance to it. This change emanated from the introduction of the post 1994 education policies. Principals need to give meaning to it and to the new ideas by using knowledge which is acquired from their past experiences (Phendla, 2000). Such meaning can be derived from cultures, values, norms, and traditions that are a result of their social and cultural upbringing. This new style of leadership should be democratic, empowering, participative, relations-oriented, considerate, and situational. One type of leadership practice that has all these characteristics is transformational leadership. According to Gronn (1996), transformational leadership is a combination of charisma, vision, and humanity and service of a servant. A systematic synthesis of the above ingredients of transformational leadership will result in a methodical guidance of the organization through the adoption of a new paradigm.

As van Knippenberg et al (2004) point out, charismatic and transformational leadership promotes follower personal identification with the leader. This means that the followers

see their interests the same as those of the leader. They experience the leader's interest as a shared interest. The followers are loyal to, and have trust in the leader. The leader in return, must also be loyal to, and respect the followers because he or she relies on them for his or her roles. Leaders acquire their roles through their ability to meet the demands and needs of the followers (Green, 2001).

Selected principals in this study who adopt this approach are therefore capable of meeting the demands of their staff, learners and communities. They are capable of building trust and confidence in their staff in such a way that the staff will want to identify with and emulate the principals' visions. This eventually influences the construction of the principals' professional identities.

Frazier (1997) defines transformational leaders as paradigm pioneers who know how to lead between paradigms and not within them. Transformational leaders are not afraid to take risks when they decide to discard an outdated paradigm, and ask their followers to do the same and follow them (leaders) to try new things. Van Knippenberg et al (2004:833) suggest that transformational leaders help to build follower self-efficacy by expressing confidence, developing follower potential, providing feedback, and emphasizing the relationship between persistence and important goals and values.

Transformational leadership occurs when followers are induced to transcend their interests for the good of the organization or group (Bass, 1985). The followers' needs will be aroused and satisfied if the transformational leader:

- inspires and excites them with the idea that they are able to accomplish greater things with extra effort;
- is considerate and treating the individuals according to their personal needs;
- is intellectually stimulating by influencing the followers' thinking and imagination; and
- is capable of building trust and confidence in them in such a way that they want to identify with and emulate the leader's vision. Such treatment will motivate the followers to perform at peak levels way beyond their expectations (Gronn, 1996).

Transformational leadership is best understood when it is compared to transactional leadership. "Transactional leadership is based on leadership style and exchange" (Lussier, 2000). The leader's concern is to get the task at hand done and completed, so he does this by making and fulfilling promises of cash or material rewards for job completed. Bass (1990:22) listed the following practices of transactional leaders:

- management by exception (active) where the leader watches and searches for deviations from rules and standards, and takes corrective action;
- contingent reward, where the leader contracts exchange of rewards for effort, promises rewards for good performance, and recognizes accomplishments;
- management by exception (passive), where the leader intervenes only if standards are not met; and
- laissez-faire, where the leader abdicates responsibilities and avoids making decisions.

The exchange relationship that exists between a transactional leader and a follower typifies the manager-employer relationship in that it involves the element of control. “Transformational leadership is also seen as an extension of transactional leadership, or as a special case of it, and transformational leaders, apparently, cannot be successful without being transactional as well” (Gronn, 1996:17). It is common practice for leaders to explain to employees how to go about performing their duties and what standard of work will be acceptable. Work of high standard is paid better than that of low standard.

The leader may take this exchange relationship further by sharing his knowledge and expertise of the job with the employees. He may also encourage the employees with advice, help, support, and openness. In the end, he gains trust, strong liking, admiration, loyalty, and respect from his subordinates. This is true in especially rural, poor South African schools where teachers, because of the bad working conditions, have become demotivated. Principals are forced to be transactional in order to increase the output. They, however, have to back up their transactional actions by being considerate, inspirational, and charismatic. Since the transactional leaders are known not to care about their followers’ feelings, needs, and values, the leader who uses both leadership styles should use little of transaction and more of transformation. While both leadership styles involve recognizing followers’ existing needs, the transformational leader goes on to engage the full person of the follower in order to arouse and satisfy higher needs (Bass, 1985b).

In a school situation, the principal needs to evaluate the teachers’ level of maturity all the time in order to adopt a positive or effective leadership style. Principals should also bear

in mind that the characteristics of the teachers result from various factors and circumstances within their work environment. An effective leadership style is a result of a reflective principal who makes connections between his or her experiences, values and beliefs. He or she therefore makes decisions that are appropriate to the changing needs and expectations of the school, which decisions eventually influence the construction of his or her professional identity.

2.2.5 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP THEORY

The various post-1994 South African policy documents dealing with the governance of public schools have reflected a radical change in the conceptions of leadership. It has become clear to everyone, including the education officials, that the principal's job jar has been stuffed with many chores in such a way that it has become difficult for the principal to single-handedly lead and transform a school to the expectations of democracy. The government in its effort to democratize the governance of schools, has therefore adopted what is known as distributed leadership, a mode of leadership which subsumes but also goes beyond conventional notions of team, participative or even democratic leadership. In an effort to bring about a democratic change in the governance of schools and thereby create self-reliant or self-managing schools, the South African national Department of Education has adopted this type of leadership. This is evidenced by the creation of statutory and semi-statutory governance and management policies and structures such as the SGB, SMT, SDT and PDT.

Distributed leadership is not a management technique, as many people would perceive it, but an attitude which describes how school leaders think about and act in sharing responsibility and accountability with all staff members (NCSL, 2003). The distributed leadership approach will bring about co-operation among staff members because they are all seen as experts in their own right and are uniquely important sources of knowledge, experience, and wisdom. In short, people are given a chance to lead where they have expertise. High performance-expectations are set for staff members by the principal who also expresses confidence in their ability to meet these expectations (Loock, 2002). The principals do not delegate to staff or simply ignore their leadership obligations, but strive towards finding the best path by tapping the expertise, ideas, and effort of every SMT, SDT or PDT member and weaving together people, materials, and organizational structures in a common cause (Lashway, 2003:3).

Distributed leadership does not require an individual who can perform all of the leadership functions, but only a set of people who can collectively perform them (Gronn, 2002: 424). It emphasizes teamwork, which operates within an open climate where interpersonal relations are based on mutual trust and open communication (NCSL, 2003). It is grounded in expertise and activity rather than in position and role. In order for all educators to be fully and effectively involved, a programme for the development of strong teamwork skills should be introduced. Competent or expert educators should be used as leaders in staff or professional development teams. Values, beliefs and interests form a central part of a comprehensive professional development programme in distributed leadership. Professional development helps the individual members of a team

to analyze accurately the nature of situations in which leaders find themselves (NCSL, 2003).

While taking into consideration the embryonic stage of distributed leadership research, it is my belief that the theory that is there concerning the concept can be used to encourage and bring about fundamental changes in the thinking of school leaders. Principals of schools need to be educated on how and to what extent they should distribute responsibility to all staff members and still retain the key role as architects of organizational leadership (Lashway, 2003). They should decide what work to do themselves and what should be left to others. By distributing, principals entrust work to their educators, assign responsibility, grant authority to act, and at the end expect them to accept accountability. Educators who accept accountability take a direct obligation to the principal to answer back to him for performance results (Loock, 2002). Principals and teachers need to understand that by using distributed leadership, the aim is not to make everyone a decision-maker, but to engage everyone in contributing their knowledge and expertise in the making of decisions for the organization.

The distribution and reshuffling of assignments to all staff members will result in added or heightened co-operation and trust among staff members who share the same mission and vision. Everyone will feel empowered and will therefore strive to make their jobs efficient, meaningful and effective. This is supported by Loock (2002:54) when he says, “when educators are valuable, capable and responsible, the school essentially becomes a place where everybody is involved in attempts to see the positive potential in others and

themselves and thus release the positive forces within them”. The educators will be made valuable and responsible by their principals who believe in them and show this by constantly inviting them to comment on and make suggestions on leadership issues.

In my opinion, the use of distributed leadership in South African schools will influence the way in which the principals interpret or understand their roles and functions as leaders in the democratised system, which relies on participatory management approaches. It will also bring more commitment among teachers and will make the principal’s job a lot easier because it does not only concentrate on empowering senior management members but everyone across the organization. The equal spreading of responsibilities to even the newest teacher at school will bring a stop to competition among individual teachers and groups. Mistakes will be treated not only as challenges but also as a means of discovering new valuable approaches to problem-solving and finding success in a climate of shared purpose, teamwork, and respect (Moneyhon et al, 2004).

Such a climate will give time or opportunity to the principal to combine his experiences and the new knowledge or ideas, and thus review his or her leadership style. The new leadership style will be influenced by the way in which the principal perceives his or her professional roles and professional self within an organization where teachers are committed, accountable, and decision-makers.

While the life stories of the principals indicated that they favoured the situational approaches more, it was also clear that they supported participation and involvement of staff in decision-making. Collective decision-making would include teamwork, participation, accountability and distribution of power within the SMTs and among the entire staff. The responses of the teachers to the questionnaire also showed that the principals SMTs were practising some form of distributed leadership. This was supported by the fact that teachers were involved in the selection and interviewing of new staff, they were members of the financial and curriculum committees, and they participated in policy interpretation and implementation.

2.3 THE CONCEPTS OF SELF AND IDENTITY

An individual's self or identity is significantly influenced by what one believes others think about him or her. Self can be referred to as a perception of oneself as reflected by the shared meanings and values of others. This is echoed by Burns (1982:18) who defines oneself as a specific role-player in a given relationship accomplished by recognizing and sharing meanings and values others have of you. Theorists like Cooley (1902); Mead (1962); Stets and Burke (2003), see self as a social structure that emerges from the mind, and the mind as arising and developing out of social experience or interaction. This means that the self is both individual and social in character because it is based on personal and shared meanings resulting from social interaction. Social interactions and social structures provide identities for people, based on either their professional

affiliation, their role in their organization, or their political orientation (van Knippenberg et al, 2004).

Over and above the sharing of meanings and values in an identity relationship, Burns (1982:13) views the self-concept as a powerful determinant of behaviour which shapes the way in which an individual experiences interpret things that we come across. Van Knippenberg et al (2004) also view the self as a knowledge structure that helps people organize and give meaning to memory and behaviour. An individual's idea of oneself arises primarily from one's experiences of how one reacts to other people's behaviours and how these people react to him or her. These past experiences can also influence the behaviour of a person in the present and the future. That is why Giddens (1991) looks at self-concept as a coherent phenomenon that presumes a narrative about a person's past, present and future life as perceived by himself.

The most special experiences of an individual always furnish him with an identity or sense of self. The importance of knowing oneself as one ascends to a leader position plays a significant role in how the leader constructs his or her identity. However, becoming a leader should not simply be an exercise in understanding oneself in relation to issues such as use of power differentials, decision-making, and managing accountability; but should also be about growth, change, and good leader behaviour and persona as perceived by the members of the organization (Curry, 2002).

Self-concept is a process that controls and integrates human behaviour. Human beings themselves continuously monitor the circumstances of their activities as a feature of doing what they do. Self-concept will influence the direction of these activities, rather than initiating them or directing them entirely. This allows the individual to form generalizations about and give interpretations of the nature of and reasons for behaviour in which they engage (Giddens, 1991:35). Individuals further learn to conceptualize or categorize their behaviour, both their external conduct and internal states (Gergen, 1971).

One's concept of who one is depends partly on what he or she has previously learned about him or herself in the type of situation at hand and will carry that with him or her to the future. A teacher who had learned that he performs better when he works with others in a management or leadership role may decide to adopt a participative style of leadership and would use this style to perform any leadership role. Many school principals, who have no previous management or leadership experience, find it difficult to function in their new roles if they don't share meanings and values with their staff. On the other hand, principals need to interact with each other frequently in order for them to share experiences and therefore re-define their identities and roles in line with the policy and structural changes.

Identity is part of the self but it is created for a particular position or role one holds within a group or organization. It is the meaning one creates based on the role one holds.

Leaders, like actors, always tend to identify with the roles they are required to play. They see themselves as actually having those attributes characterizing the role and they tend to

adopt the role behaviour for use in situations where they have to exercise authority. In sum, leaders develop an identity based on the role and use this identity in their behaviour over a wide variety of circumstance (Gergen, 1971).

Like self, identity rises from a gradual integration of all identifications resulting from the individual coming into contact with members of the organization or institution. Burke (1980) maintains that social interaction is mostly between people who hold positions or are members of a group or organization. There is always a relationship between identities claimed by two or more members who are involved in an interaction, like when a principal is interacting with one or two of his staff members. In an educational institution, the principal's identity is played out in relation to the teacher's identity. In this interaction, only issues that are relevant to both persons' roles will be discussed. The principal, as the leader, will use the most suitable style of interaction in order for cooperation to exist between them

Principals are expected to play roles that are given to them, as reflected in various policy documents. However, there are times when they can make behavioural choices and decisions on how to perform their duties of leading schools. These choices and decisions are based on personal and cultural values, interests, beliefs and expectations that the principals bring with them. In the previous chapter, I refer to these as personal or private knowledge. In general, principals are always addressing both social behaviour as spelled out in policies "social structure", and personal behaviour "agency" in their day-to-day leadership roles.

CONSTRUCTING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Who am I? is the question that is usually asked by individuals who intend to define themselves and their roles within an organization, and therefore set their personal identities in the context of the expectation of the group members. In order for an individual to define himself, he needs to first understand himself or herself. In order for him to understand who he really is (Antikainen et al, 1996:20), he has to have an idea about how he became what he is, and also where he is going. This, he will acquire through his life-story (Giddens, 1991). The answer to this question serves as a foundation for organizing and establishing relationships with peers, both in the personal and interpersonal fields (Lessard, 1986; Rousseau and van der Veen, 2001). The identities that the principals construct in their day-to-day activities and relations at schools have three dimensions, namely the personal, professional and socio-political. Abrahao (2002:8) argues that in education we cannot separate the personal from the professional self, particularly in a profession that is impregnated with values and ideals and that is very demanding from the standpoint of commitment to human relations.

The answer that the principals give to the question ‘who am I?’ gives a definition of themselves which will then influence how they respond to their professional and social demands. Professional identity involves professional socialization and development which “..is a social learning process that includes the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills that are required in a professional role and the development of new values, attitudes, and self-identity components” (Brott and Kajs, 2001:2). The manner in which

the principals respond to their immediate socio-political and cultural environment, results into building and accumulation of knowledge about themselves. During this process each individual principal allocates his or her acquired knowledge, values and energies to shape his or her identity (Abrahao, 2002).

Professional identity can be defined as a development process that forms over time through collaborative and flexible relationships whereby people use attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences to define themselves in their professional roles (Brott and Kajs, 2001; Schein, 1978). According to Schein (1978), the experiences and meaningful feedback that allow people to gain insight about their central and enduring preferences, talents, and values make professional identity more adaptable and mutable early in their careers.

Schwier et al (2004:2), maintain that the leadership practice, to which self-reflection is critical, will reflect the principal's values and belief structures, understandings, prior experiences, construction of new knowledge through social interaction and negotiation. Chamberlin (2002:70) supports this when she says that a reflective principal makes connections between his or her experiences, values, and beliefs and the way in which these personal ways of knowing are played out in leadership decision-making. Reflective principals are able to monitor, reflect, and make decisions appropriate to the changing needs of schools and the demands of their work. At the end, they are able to transform their leadership practice.

The way in which principals construct meanings describing themselves is called self-definition or identification, which derives its value from the perceptions of their staff, learners and the community they serve. Identification is a process, in identity theory, whereby symbols are used to designate positions to the individuals in a group or institutions. People who hold positions in the social structure of a particular organization are given names according to the roles which they occupy or perform (Pittaway et al, 2003). Principals of schools construct professional identities of themselves based on the meanings and expectations of their role as leaders. Burke and Reitzes (1981) maintain that these meanings and expectations associated with the role of the individual form a set of rules or standards that guide behaviour.

The mere fact that principals construct their identity in the context of the expectations of their organizations means that they feel psychologically embedded within the organizations (Pittaway et al, 2003). This self-definition, which is based on group membership, is called self-categorization and it results in members of the social group perceiving similarities among themselves. Out of self-categorization develops social prototypes, which individuals use to define the importance of being a member of a particular group (Pittaway et al, 2003). The groups to which individuals belong have been there for a long time and each individual as a member grows, learns and identify him or herself with the group activities, and eventually develops self-efficacy or self-esteem.

According to Curry (2002), self-efficacy as a factor influencing the aesthetics of the leader persona, can be viewed as trust and confidence in one's ability to pose and then

answer questions related to identity. Confidence and belief in one's ability may result in an individual striving to achieve certain goals, be persistent in his or her goal-directed behaviour, and succeeds in his or her pursuit of these goals. This may lead to members of the organization having more trust in the leader and thus better performance and more positive work attitude among themselves (van Knippenberg et al, 2004:833).

The process of self-definition or professional identity is shaped in profound and unpredictable ways by the principal's beliefs, cultural values, interests, gender, professional expectations, and societal influences. The relationships amongst peers and followers are established through a process of socialization. According to Leithwood et al (1992:148), socialization encompasses those processes by which an individual selectively acquires the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to perform effectively the role of school leader. Such processes may range from carefully planned formal education programmes, for example, through less formal but still planned experiences, like working with a mentor, to informal usually unplanned on-the-job leadership experiences. Such processes may also yield positive or negative results, depending on the manner in which they are organized and offered to the principals.

The changes in relationships, behaviour, knowledge, values, norms and beliefs at the work places results in identities being not fixed in either time or space (Rousseau and van der Veen, 2001). Identity construction is therefore an ongoing and confusing process. Some principals find it difficult to make sense of themselves in relation to the relevant 'others' internally and externally because of these changes that force them to reconstruct

their identities time and again (Watson and Harries, 1999). What is significant however, is that principals do not rely solely on external influence for guidance and validation, but also by critically looking at their own work to initiate change (Chamberlin, 2002).

Relevant 'others' refer to members of a social group who identify or view themselves as members of the same social category. In this case, the identical roles that the principals are expected to perform as leaders of public schools make them similar to each other and therefore categorize them as the in-group (Stets and Burke, 2000). The demands of the new education policies in South Africa have caused some principals to construct their professional identities in relation to particular groups that have been formed to deal with these demands. Mullern and Wahlin (2005) refer to this as a search for a collective 'we'.

Given the fact that the leadership role of the principal requires him/her to work among people in an organization, the process of professional identity construction of the principal cannot only be categorised as 'personal' but as both personal and social. The self-definition or self-concept of each individual principal results from the process during which group individuals conceptualise themselves via reference to groups of which they are members. Pittaway et al (2003) refer to this as the social identity process. Social identity is a person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social group (Stets and Burke' 2000:225). Put in simple terms, individual principals construct meaningful descriptions of themselves in the context of the expectations of, and the use of collective values and meanings acquired during the interaction and socialization with 'relevant others'. However, the way in which individual principals construct meanings describing

themselves via self-categorization also plays an important role in social identity (Pittaway et al, 2003:3).

The knowledge and experience that is acquired by the principals help them to know how to lead and to be leaders. However, the principals should be aware of the necessary conditions such as the need for autonomy, existence of cultural and social values, and the relevance of professional experiences or practices, that will enable them to lead their schools effectively and successfully. For many principals in KwaZulu-Natal schools, the process of professional socialization has been largely unplanned and informal. They were appointed to leadership positions by virtue of their competency as subject teachers, experience and qualifications (Mpungose, 2004).

No planned and formal pre-leadership training was offered to them. Their leadership skills and knowledge are acquired on-the-job and thus result in the principals having no detailed and focused vision for their schools or the technical competence to run the schools effectively and efficiently. However, some principals with sound personal principles, values and beliefs have critical capacity to see 'blemishes' on the education system (Leithwood et al, 1992) and then work towards transformation, while others with no skills and knowledge allowed their vision to be blurred and thus have blindly accepted the purposes and procedures set by the system. They have, in the process become cogs in the organizational wheel (Leithwood et al, 1992). In the absence of any formalised pre-service training, principals have had to rely on their own understanding or interpretations of what they are required to do as leaders of schools. In most instances, provisions of

governance policies such as the SASA are either ignored or re-interpreted to suit the principals' leadership styles.

2.4 LIFE HISTORY AND LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Qualitative researchers use the life history approach to gather events and happenings in people's lives as their data and then use its analytical procedures to produce explanatory stories (Polkinghorne, 1995:5). The advantages of using life history as a methodological tool in this study are that its data illustrate the relationship between the selected principals and the communities that they serve; they demonstrate how the principals continually negotiate their leadership roles in their daily activities; and they make possible the examination of the links between structure and agency and the construction of professional identity (Bloom and Munro, 1995:100).

Life history offers exciting alternatives for connecting the lives and stories of individuals to the understanding of larger human and social phenomena. It also produces self-referential stories of individuals situated in culture, time, and place who (individuals) wish to make sense of their lives and construct their identity from their stories (Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995). The stories that the principal tell are professional life stories that are made up of events that take place in their professional lives that are defined by their leadership roles and responsibilities.

Principals are always challenged to make sense of their professional lives by constantly reviewing their values, beliefs and interests in order to respond positively to the needs and expectations of their staff, learners and communities. The educators also need to know, through the principal's story, about his or her preferences, expectations, beliefs, values and perceptions of his or her roles so that they can respond to his or her leadership demands and therefore successfully address the organizational circumstances. According to the situational or contingency theory, there must be an appropriate fit between the professional leader's behaviour, which includes values, interests and leadership style, and the roles he or she has to perform. A leadership style suitable to a particular situation will influence the success and effectiveness of the principal's leadership role performance.

The life history approach is used in this study to provide different perspectives of principals' lives and also to provide useful information as to how they consistently or inadvertently construct their professional identities. In fact, life history acknowledges the existence of multiple, and possibly conflicting personal realities and perspectives (Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995). The stories told by the principals reflect on their confusions, indecisions, insecurities, contradictions, fears, joys, successes, fateful moments, and most of all, their complex lives as leaders of schools in the democratic dispensation. These give an idea to the educators on what to expect from the principal during the socialization process and what kind of support they can give to him or her. The principal's transparent nature motivates the educators to open up to him or her and therefore work together towards the common goals of the organization.

Professional life stories of the principals give us a deeper understanding of the relationships that are created between them and their staff and learners. These relationships are based on understanding and acceptance of individuals' cultural, political and social values that are part of the socialization process that takes place at the schools as public institutions. A relationship-oriented leadership is democratic and participative and thus promotes group productivity, which means that the principal and teachers are talking about things and making decisions about their school together. A participative and transformative principal's professional life story will always generate new ideas on school leadership because it is a true-life narrative and not a romantic hero narrative.

This is supported by Munro (1993) who points out that life stories of individuals give us a deeper understanding of the complex relations between ideology and culture, self and society. Life history requires a historical, cultural, political, and social situatedness in order to avoid the romanticization of the individual, and thus reproduction of a hero narrative, which reifies humanist notions of the individual as autonomous and unitary.

The analysis of life stories of leaders would always reveal a link between life history and the leadership theories such as these discussed in this study. The analysis of life history data can be carried out using two complementary methods namely, the thematic analysis used to identify central themes in the life history or story, and the social phenomenological theory in which the identity theories emerge. Oplatka (2001:9) suggests that if the central themes are compared, an emerging theoretical relationship in variables and themes among all the life stories collected in the study can be clarified. As

can be seen in the leadership theories discussed above, there are connections between the leadership theories and the phenomenological approach in that it seeks to understand how each individual leader perceives his or her leadership role based on one or more of the leadership theories.

The use of the two complementary methods allows the researcher to sort through data for emergent themes as well as to realize that current theory serves as a template for interpreting the data (Chamberlin, 2002:71). In this study the life history approach, combined with social phenomenology, form a tool that can be used to deconstruct the stories that make up lives of the selected principals. Social phenomenology becomes a theoretical perspective to analyze constructs like personal and cultural values, knowledge, beliefs, perspectives and expectations as they are constructed within the principals' life histories (Munro, 1993).

Hatch and Wisniewski (1995) argue that as much as life history is imbedded in the general tenets of an overarching theoretical framework, theory itself could be informed by the findings of life history research. A theoretical framework like social phenomenology is like a skeleton with theoretical bones whose work is less interactive with people who react to and live in the social phenomenological era. Life history would help put some valuable meat on these bones (p. 123).

The professional life stories of the principals enable us to investigate the transformation process and explore issues of policy interpretation and implementation in the selected

public schools. The stories also inform us on how the principals have survived the leadership challenges that come with the changes in the education policies and organizational goals. The life history data, which are in the form of professional life stories, clearly explain to us how the principals try to make sense and develop meaning of the education policies so that they can understand their roles and responsibilities. The principals adopt different leadership theories and use the data that are collected through life history approach to interpret their leadership roles and therefore construct their professional identities.

The information that is obtained through the life history interviews with the principals gives us an idea on how the principals have demonstrated the leadership skills and qualities in enhancing the functions of the schools' governance and management structures. The review of their professional life stories would indicate which leadership approaches need to be adopted in order to create relationships based on trust. The questions that are asked in the interview are aimed at determining whether the principal involves his or her staff in decision-making, whether he or she trusts them enough to give them freedom in their work by delegating more meaningful responsibilities, and whether he or she is flexible enough to sometimes use his or her personal knowledge to deal with the leadership issues at school. The answers to these questions will help the principal to select the appropriate leadership style for each situation that arises at the school at a particular time.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Interaction, cooperation and mutual influence of behaviour among the members of a group are a reflection of transformational, participative and distributed leadership existing within an organization. That is why approaches like participative theory, transformational theory, and distributed theory have been referred to as paradigms of leadership that help leaders to deal with the changing world. This is because they all support sharing of responsibility and accountability, open communication, and trust among leaders and followers within an organization. However, these theories cannot be effective enough if they are not shaped by the leader's beliefs, values, dreams and commitment, which in turn influence the behaviour, decisions, choices and actions of the leader. A leadership function will, therefore, be effective if there is a fit between the leader's behaviour and style and the conditions in a situation.

A leader in an organization where there is interaction and communication among its members will be capable of positively responding to the organization needs and demands. The identity of such a leader, the way he or she makes his or her mark on the organization, the ways in which the members of the organization and whole organization acts in response to the actions of the leader, and how the leader uses organization resources to re-structure his or her roles to be in line with the organizational changes, will result in the fulfilment of the organization goals and the definition of the organization's identity. However, leaders come and go in organizations and with them they bring and take away parts of the organizational identity (Curry, 2002). The longevity of the

organization is therefore dependent on the changes in organizational leadership and how long the organization can retain its leaders.

To sum up all these ideas, Sergiovanni (1992:7) says that “If the heart and the head are separated from the hand, then the leader’s actions, decisions, and behaviours cannot be understood”. The heart has to do with what a leader believes, values, dreams about and is committed to. The head has to do with a leader’s theories of practice and how she or he uses them to reflect on the situations she or he faces. Sergiovanni (1992) defines these theories as ‘mindscapes or mental pictures in the leader’s head, about how things are done and work’. Leaders need to change their mindscapes about how things were done before the democratic dispensation and fit them in the current situation in order to be successful. The hand refers to the decisions, choices, actions and behaviour of a leader.

Figure 2.3 below illustrates how the “three Hs” interact with each other.

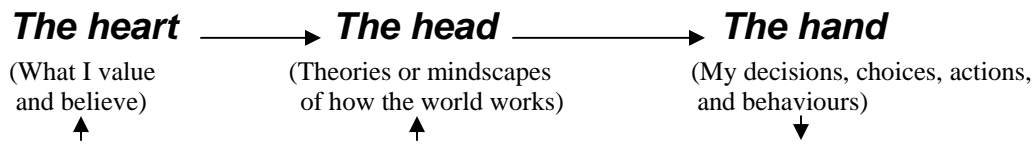


Fig. 2.3 The interaction between the “three Hs”
(Source: Sergiovanni, 1992)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to discuss and describe the methods that have been used to elicit information from the selected principals of schools in the eThekweni Region of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. Taking into consideration the position of the study whereby principals were asked to express their understanding and perception of their roles as leaders and professional managers of schools through stories, the life history method was chosen from a broad qualitative-interpretive framework as the appropriate tool to interview the principals with the aim of uncovering their self-conceptions and self-definitions within the contexts of their roles as leaders. In order to elicit relevant and valuable information from the principals, the following aspects of social research were considered:

- appropriate research methods,
- relevance of research instruments,
- research sites,
- sampling frame and procedures,
- data analysis,
- reliability, validity and triangulation; and
- reporting the research findings and conclusion.

The chapter also takes into account the dual status of life history as a data-gathering tool and as an interpretive or conceptual framework, hence it is used as such in this study. In other words, the principals through constructing, telling and retelling of their personal stories, provided personal as well as research data while also providing useful clues and cues as to how they have consistently or inadvertently constructed their professional identities. The epistemological view of life history is that the social world is an interpreted world, therefore it was expected that the selected principals would make different interpretations which would result in them describing different realities since they had different life experiences (Goodson and Sikes, 2001).

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:9) refer to methodology as a design whereby the researcher selects data collection and analysis procedures to investigate or answer specific research problems or questions respectively. Aspects such as research instruments, research sites, sampling procedure and data analysis are always considered as components of a researcher's methodology although in this chapter they are numbered separately from the methodology sub-heading for the purpose of numerical organization and order.

This chapter focuses on the humanistic approach because it pays systematic attention to human creativity and subjectivity and also the naturalistic intimate experiences of people's everyday life in different societies at different times. This is supported by a

statement by Gunter and Ribbins (2002) which says that the humanistic approach gathers and theorizes from the experiences and biographies of those who are leaders and managers of educational organizations or institutions. According to Plummer, 2001: 14:

The humanistic approach to school leadership foregrounds issues of personality, socialization, educational history and agency. It also deals with concrete human experiences like talk, feelings and actions through their social and economic organization.

Another reason for the use of the humanistic approach is that it involves the reconstruction of the past by studying the biographical and autobiographical accounts, and interpreting events and incidents from the individuals' lives in the past.

The uniqueness of this study lies in that, unlike other local studies on the same topic in which researchers use statistical data in reporting reality (Nxumalo, 2001; Misra, 2002), it uses the principals' professional life histories to investigate the transformation process and explore issues of policy interpretation and implementation in public schools. The use of life histories yields first-hand information that is not always quantifiable, and consists of '...a living, experiential, processual, flexible and creative compilation of insights and memories' (Woods, 1987:122).

Life stories were collected by means of interviews, which were conducted with the principals at their schools. The purpose for interviewing was to find out how the selected principals interpreted or understood their roles. The interviews helped me to ask the principals questions in order to know about their understanding of their lives, jobs and

relationships, and about the meaning they attach to what happens around them. From such questioning I expected to gather descriptions of the life-world of the principals with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena (Kvale, 1983). Interviews sometimes end up worthless if participants deliberately misrepresent situations, events and episodes in their narratives because they believe their answers may show them in a bad light or reach the ears of their superiors (Wragg, 2002). In this study I therefore made sure that I undertook the interviews with these possibilities in mind. The interview questions were arranged in such a way that they did not aim at exposing the weaknesses of the principals but to allow them to willingly tell their successes and failures.

Taking into consideration the central research questions of the study whereby the researcher is required to produce data that are more central to the principals' perceptions, beliefs and values, the principals were allowed to tell how they interpreted or understood their roles and functions as leaders in the democratized education system, and have demonstrated their leadership skills and qualities in enhancing the functions of the school's governance and management structures by means of stories. The life history method was eminently suitable for the construction of life stories of selected principals from different schools in the eThekweni Region of KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. In this study the focus was on the person or self and not on the structure of the job these principals had to perform. Self, in this case, was each principal's primary interest-at-hand in the school situation, manifested in aspects of enjoyment, functions, health and stress, autonomy and maintenance of self-image (Woods, 1987).

My role as a researcher in this study was to use my experience and influence as a principal and manager of a school to elicit authentic and relevant information from the selected principals regarding their personal views on issues like policy and role interpretation, leadership practice, professional identity, etc. The mere fact that they knew that I was also a principal made our relationship close and professional and therefore for them to open up to me because they believed and trusted me. Being a school principal made me choose my questions for the life history interview carefully; questions that were not going to interfere with their personal, political and financial lives. The use of the first person perspective “I” in this study indicates that I was wearing both caps of a researcher and a principal during the interviews, and that I understood and shared the selected principals’ challenges of school leadership.

The life stories of the principals would determine whether there were any discernible contradictions in their roles as professional managers and members of the school governing bodies. Similarly, they would reveal the interaction between their private and public selves. They would also be useful in generating new ideas on school leadership, and in sensitizing me to issues that would be raised by the participants concerning their lives and their jobs. Through the life stories, the principals would be able to define their life experiences and render their interpretations of the world they live in.

The life history is a qualitative research method for gathering information on the subjective essence of one person’s entire life (Atkinson, 1998:3). It shares with autobiography its narrative form, its first-person point of view and its recognizably

subjective stance. The principals as autobiographers would be required to narrate their lives to the researcher in a manner that would maintain a close connection between their stories and what an objective investigation may discover. The researcher would, during the interview, refer to the responses of the teachers to the questionnaire in order to maintain the reliability of the stories.

The life stories of the principals began as recorded interviews that were transcribed and ended up as flowing narratives, completely in the words of the principals telling the stories. During the process, I tried to make sure that the life stories did not lose their authentic meaning. The life history research involves a close and intimate relationship between the researcher and the researched, which develops during the regular interview meetings between the two. This relationship needs to be maintained in order to avoid dislike and hostilities that may develop along the way. In this study, as I went about gathering the life histories of the principals, I therefore took steps to ensure that the relationships were protected and that the life histories covered everything that I wanted to explain, ensured that no important fact or event was slighted, and that what purported to be factual squared with other available evidence (Becker, 2002).

According to Runyan (1982:121), “The study of individual lives, as presented in detailed life histories, provides the only possible way of obtaining the granite blocks of data on which to build a science of human nature”. The use of life history interview in this study was to see and understand school leadership from the perspectives of the selected principals, and to understand why and how they came to have their particular

perspectives. According to Bromley (1977:129) “life history data are usually necessary in any serious attempt to explain, predict, or influence the person’s behaviour”. The data that were collected through the life history interviews only covered the professional experiences and perceptions of the principals in their leadership roles. These were topical life stories because they presented only one phase of each principal’s life.

I used the qualitative, interpretive method in conducting these interviews because it describes and analyzes people’s individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, experiences, views, and perspectives. It also involves the studied use and collection of personal-life documents, stories, accounts, and narratives which describe turning-point moments of individuals (Denzin, 1989b:12). The interpretive method attempts to make the lived experiences directly accessible to as many people as possible. The qualitative research method was chosen because I was going to explore the principals’ life histories and everyday behaviour. All the data that were obtained were in written and spoken form, which was analyzed and interpreted qualitatively.

Because of its emphasis on lived experiences, Denzin (1989a:11) argues that “the interpretive method suggests that programmes must always be judged by and from the point of view of the persons most directly affected”. The interpretive method that is adopted in this study is evaluative in that it uses the principals’ life stories to explore issues of policy. The research was conducted from the point of view of the principals who were experiencing the changes and problems that were brought about by the new and democratic policies. At the end, proposals or recommendations for the improvement of

some or all the new policies will be presented. However, these recommendations will not result from generalization but will be based on well-selected researched human experiences.

The principals who were interviewed came from different social, political, cultural and economic backgrounds and they attached different meanings to various organizational issues. The qualitative research method therefore allowed the researcher to be subjective in his approach since he was dealing with human behaviour, which included beliefs, interests and perceptions. The qualitative research method also allowed flexibility in the research process whereby the researcher would be allowed change in the nature of his intervention in response to the changing nature of the context and circumstances (Cassell and Symon, 1994). The use of the qualitative research method in this study provided direct, first-hand, and more contextual information about the participants' behaviour because I was focusing on the feelings, perceptions and opinions of the principals. Van Maanen (1983) supports flexibility in qualitative research processes by pointing out that the current interpretive frameworks, which make the research data more meaningful are looser, more open-ended, fluid, and contingent.

The choice of the qualitative method in this study was that the research focused on principals' everyday work-related activities and situations which the researcher was trying to understand. The significance of the qualitative method, being an approach that seeks to provide a holistic view of such situations, can therefore not be overemphasized. Unlike the usual practice in quantitative research where the researched is seen as a

research object that can be used to obtain accurate information untainted by relationship factors, in this study the researcher and the researched performed equal roles, in that the principals were treated as participants, not as subjects. This means that the participants were proactive rather than being passive. They were given a chance to actively shape the course of the interview process by constructing meaning to their personal lives and I acted as a tour guide with my ability to steer the conversation to the correct direction.

3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

In order to get as close as possible to what the principals thought about their roles as school leaders and managers, I used semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview lies somewhere between the structured and unstructured interviews because of its degree of imposed structure and open-ended questions. A semi-structured interview is different from a structured interview in that:

- The interview is guided by the interview guide rather than being dictated by it.
- There is an attempt to establish rapport with the respondent rather than the interview being single-handedly controlled by the researcher. This allows a greater flexibility of coverage and produces richer data.
- The ordering of questions is less important.
- The interviewer is freer to probe interesting areas that arise.
- The interview can follow the respondent's interests or concerns.

(Source: Smith, 1995:12)

The purpose for semi-structured interviews is to access the perspectives of the people being interviewed; their experiences, feelings, thoughts, opinions, knowledge and intentions. Patton (1980:196) maintains, “The assumption is that those perspectives are meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit”. According to Smith (1995), semi-structured interviews are used to gain a detailed picture of the participant’s beliefs about, or perceptions of a particular topic with as little prompting from the interviewer as possible. It is always assumed that there is a relationship between what the participant says and his or her beliefs and perceptions. The semi-structured interview ensures that the researcher thinks ahead of difficulties that might arise and therefore plans on how to handle them.

An interview guide (Appendix 1), which is in format rather like the structured interview, was used. The interview guide was divided into three schedules and the interviews were held over a period of 9 months with an interval of 3 months between the sessions. The first and third sessions lasted for an hour each and the second lasted for 45 minutes. The interview guide listed down all the questions or issues that were explored in the interview. Many of the questions in the interview guide were open-ended. These questions were asked in such a way that the same information was obtained from the selected principals. The first interview schedule focused on family background, socialization, education, and teaching and leadership experiences while the second and third schedules dealt with management challenges, education policies and relationships with staff.

There was, however, going to be flexibility to allow variation in the order in which groups of questions were asked (King, 1994). This would also allow the participant to introduce issues that I had not thought of. He or she could be perceived as the expert on the researched subject and should therefore be allowed to tell his or her story (Smith, 1995). I would be able to follow up interesting avenues that emerged in the interview and the participant would be allowed to give a fuller picture. I facilitated and guided, rather than dictated; was non-directive, had empathy and non-possessive warmth (Plummer, 1995). I allowed the participant a strong role in determining how the interview proceeded. However, I had to maintain control of the interview by knowing what I wanted to find out and therefore asked the right questions, listened carefully to responses and give appropriate verbal or non-verbal feedback (Patton, 1980).

The interview guide was used as a probe to clear up vague responses or to ask for elaboration of incomplete answers but at the same time allowing the individual perspectives and experiences to emerge. It was also used as a basic checklist during the interview to make sure that all relevant topics were covered. It guided the principals to follow a particular structure or frame and not to tell what they thought I wanted to hear: ‘the right versions of their stories’ (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). It provided topics or themes within which the interviewer was free to explore, probe, and ask questions that would elucidate and illuminate that particular topic (Patton, 1980). The manner in which the interviewer introduced the questions depended on how the interview developed with each individual principal. A common opening question was used to start all interviews.

This question should be easily answered by all participants in order for them to be encouraged to talk descriptively.

The questions that were asked were neutral rather than leading and loaded. The questions provided a gentle nudge from the interviewer rather than being too explicit. According to Smith (1995), less explicit questions are gentle and less loaded but enough to let the participant know what the area of interest is and recognize that he or she has something to say about it. Among the questions that were in the interview guide were feeling questions that elicited the emotional responses of the principals to their experiences and thoughts, and knowledge questions which gave the factual information that the principals had or things that they knew.

Unlike in one-shot research studies that involve tedious collection of specific detail and careful observation of a single group observed at one time only, this study was conducted with prospective follow-up visits to selected principals. The interviews started with their childhood experiences leading up to their educational and finally their work experiences. The area of interest in this study is school leadership, and the data concerning this phenomenon was collected from the selected principals over a period of time. The trust that was developed during the multiple interviews between the researcher and the principals meant that information was gradually provided which would not have been made accessible to the researcher in a one-shot interview (Hartley, 1994).

The data that are obtained from such interviews are quotations that are spoken by the participant (Patton, 1980). I tried to make sure that I captured the actual words of the participant because there is no substitute for these data. In order to capture all that was said in the interviews accurately, I used a tape recorder. However, the participants were informed in advance that the conversation would be tape-recorded. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the conversation and that their identities and the names of their schools would be protected.

Some researchers prefer to take notes of what the participant is saying during an interview. However, qualitative research writers like Patton (1980), Smith (1995) and Miller (2000) maintain that a tape recording of the whole interview provides an invaluable backup for any system of note taking. Tape recording allows a much fuller record of the interview. Nothing of what is said is lost because the tape recorder does not tune out conversations, nor does it change what has been said or is too slow to record all the spoken words (Patton, 1980). Tape recording also allows the interviewer some time to concentrate on how the interview is proceeding and therefore can respond appropriately to participant's needs and cues. It is, however, possible that the participant may feel unhappy about being recorded and may refuse to proceed with the interview. To avoid this, the researcher should try to convince the participant that taping the conversation is essential.

The research also involved the use of a questionnaire with members of the staff, including management, in addition to a detailed investigation through the interviews. The

use of the questionnaire was discussed with the selected principals who were all comfortable with it. Later on I consulted with members of staff from each selected principal's school to seek their permission and cooperation in completing the copies of the questionnaire. Each principal was given a batch of twenty questionnaires to distribute among a chosen number of his or her staff members. The questionnaire was used as a means of triangulation although the study is qualitative and therefore relies mostly on data from the interviews with the selected principals. In a nutshell, the questionnaire sought to obtain information that would explain how the staff felt about each selected principal's leadership and decision-making abilities, and understanding and implementation of education policies. The questions that were asked in the questionnaire were based on some of the major themes used in the data analysis, such as the fulfillment of the leadership roles or functions by the principals, implementation of the policies and power-sharing and empowerment of stakeholders.

The findings from the questionnaires are discussed in chapter four, together with data or life-stories of the principals. Each selected principal's life-story is presented as it was told and the responses of the teachers to the questionnaire are tabled thereafter. This is done not as a means of stopping the principals from misrepresenting the facts but as a way of saying that, as much as they believed that their relationship with their staff was good, there are educational and management issues that they differ on. It must be stated, however, that not all the questionnaires that were given out to teachers at the selected schools were returned. It must also be mentioned that only about two HODs per school

and no deputy principal from all six schools completed the questionnaires, and the level 1 educators were made to complete the rest.

The interview guide (Appendix 1) and the questionnaire (Appendix 2) used in this study were designed and structured in accordance with the aim and objectives of the study.

Both instruments were piloted before they were used on the respondents. The interview guide was piloted on three principals of mixed races from my neighbouring schools. The questionnaire survey was conducted among ten teachers at my school.

3.4 RESEARCH SITES

The aim of conducting life history interviews is to gather good and genuine life stories from the participants. The interview process is an interaction between the researcher and the participants that should be conducted in a setting or context that is familiar to each participant. The setting should help the participant to relax and feel comfortable, and should be closest to the natural context where the phenomenon under consideration takes place (Atkinson, 1998). In this study I chose to conduct the interviews at the schools where the principals worked, on their own terms, and at the time suitable to them. All the interviews, except one, were done in the principals' offices where they could easily take charge of the process. They had experienced good and bad moments in their offices and they had dealt with all challenges within the premises of their respective schools, and therefore could not be intimidated by my presence.

However, in cases where schools could not be reached due to social and topographical factors, alternative positive accommodation needed to be arranged or organized. Such accommodation could be academic or educational sites such as circuit offices or community libraries. Fortunately such situation occurred with only one principal who was sick on the day of our appointment and she gladly invited me to her home for our third interview session which lasted for an hour.

3.5 THE SAMPLING FRAME AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Qualitative researchers seek samples that are information rich. Life stories are expected to provide intensity sampling where the key participants provide great insight into the area of research (Plummer, 2001). In life history research, the sample is usually selected in two ways: the pragmatic or the formal way. In the pragmatic way the participant is not selected but emerges from a wider study (Plummer, 1995). Sometimes participants volunteer to undergo the intensive studies. Miller (2000) refers to this method as happenstance because the researcher, through chance circumstances, may become aware of an individual or group that provide an opportunity for a valid research project. In a formal way, the researcher should establish theoretical or methodological criteria for selection. According to Miller (2000), this type of method selects participants on a conceptual basis. Each participant is selected because he or she is deemed to represent a certain type or group that is considered on conceptual grounds to be important. “The goal of the sampling is to secure a spread of individuals that represent all the types or groups that are significant for the phenomenon or topic under consideration” (p.77).

The eThekweni Region is divided into three districts from which the sampling frame was drawn and constructed. In this study the sampling frame consisted of those principals who met the criteria for selection that had been established by the researcher.

Constructing such a frame was not an easy task for the researcher because the population that formed the frame was scattered all over the region. The research population in this study consisted of all the public schools principals within the region. With the assistance of a regional office official, the researcher was able to identify all the principals who form the research population. This was done by going through the Education Management Information System (EMIS) program. Accordingly, one thousand four hundred and three public schools, including all ex-departments, could be identified within eleven circuits. From all these schools, only six principals were selected to participate in the research process, two principals from each district. A sample of six participants was a reasonable and workable number in the life history research approach, since I had to pay more than one visit to each school principal before the interview process was completed.

In this study, the purposive or selective sampling procedure has been used. The procedure was judgmental because it was more informed by the researcher's experience and knowledge of the area of study to select cases that are representative or typical (Fogelman, 2002). The selection of the principals was based on the following criteria:

- Racial demographics of the country.
- Socialization of the participant into the teaching profession.
- Ex-departments of education of the apartheid era.

- Experience of managing public schools in the old and democratic political dispensations. This will help in establishing the process of transformation and the leadership styles that were adopted and practised.
- Experienced female principals, to compare their leadership skills and abilities to their male counterparts, and to establish how they interpret and implement policy in their schools. To determine whether they react to scrutiny and criticism, especially from senior male teachers in their schools.

Purposive sampling identifies those people who have relevant information about and have experienced the process under consideration. This information should create a holistic picture of the process by taking into account a number of different perspectives and experiences (Symon and Hornby). This made me think critically about the parameters of the population I was interested in, and choose my sample carefully. The selection of principals, using the above criteria, is believed to have met the criteria of both representativeness and generalizability. I hoped to get the kind of data that would display the leadership style of each individual principal which was shaped by his or her life history; the leadership skills and qualities of the principals and how each principal interpreted and understood his or her roles and functions as a professional manager, a leader and a member of the governing body. This data will be used in responding to the critical questions of the study.

Besides the specific criteria for selection that are mentioned above, the chosen participants had to meet certain practical criteria, for example, accessibility of place and

time (Plummer, 2001). This meant that since I was going to meet with the selected principals on three different occasions for an hour or less, the principals should be reliable in honouring the meetings and keeping time. They should also be easily reached and not too busy. According to Spradley (1979), the chosen participants should be fully aware, deeply involved and informed in their particular cultural world, their stories should not simply be a reinterpretation of the past experiences but statements of current practices, and they should not be overly intellectual and overly abstract but simply talk about their experiences in the raw. They should be good storytellers.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

My intention was that the data analysis for this study be conducted simultaneously with data collection, data interpretation, and narrative reporting and writing. The contents of the stories that would be told by the participants in the interviews would be a combination of past factual events of the participants' lifetime and the views of the participants' lives at that particular moment. This meant that the participants would, by means of an interview schedule, be guided through the recollection of empirical facts of their lives and the construction of their identity and views of their lives. The analysis of data that would be obtained from such interviews would therefore be eclectic, meaning that it would borrow from three prominent approaches to life history analysis, namely: the realist, neo-positivist and narrative approaches.

Life history analysis is about making sense of the story. It includes brooding and reflecting upon all the data that has been collected. When the raw data have been analysed, the key ideas and themes will flow from the story (Plummer, 2001). It is also worth pointing out that the informants are also regarded as interpreters of their own life stories. Thus, in the process of telling their stories in response to questions, they are also involved in a complex process of self-interpretation and self-creation.

The key analytic approach in this study is the neo-positivist approach since I used a semi-structured interview schedule, which is the basis of the neo-positivist interview. The neo-positivist biographical approach has its basis in pre-existing social concepts and theory. It is deductive rather than being inductive. The choice of the neo-positivist approach as the key analytic device was that it is good at collecting life histories. The neo-positivist approach helped me to reconstruct intentions and look for connections in the topical life histories of the principals that were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews. The questions in the semi-structured interviews had their inspiration in a pre-existing body of concepts (Miller, 2000). The information that was required by the research was based on a predetermined conceptually based structure of categories. While searching for recurrent patterns, themes and structuring devices in the life histories of the principals during the interview, I was required to make a series of deliberate, critical choices about the meanings and values of the data that was collected.

The starting point for this approach was theory of professional identity construction, which means that the questions asked were designed to probe issues that were determined

by theoretical concerns. Neo-positivists allow for serendipity and the generation of new theory (Miller, 2000). Following the initial interview was coding and sorting procedures whereby the researcher was checking to see whether each of the predetermined topic areas or themes had been covered at the same point or points of the interview. Inadequate coverage or omission of an area meant that the researcher should rectify that in a subsequent interview, which he needed to arrange with the participant. The next stage of analysis was one of validation. I would be checking if the material collected during the interview coincided with what had been anticipated from existing theory. If it matched, then the theory would rest on firmer ground than before (Miller, 2000). If there were no match between the predicted and empirical data, I would have to move to the realists' grounded theory mode, which deals with generating or formulating new concepts.

The narrative data analysis approach came in when I tried to understand the views and subjective perceptions of the participants. The narrative approach mainly analyses the manner in which the participant perceives his or her situation and activities in social structures and networks (Miller, 2000). Shamir and Eilam (2005:403) argue that the narrative method views individual descriptions, explanations, and interpretations of actions and events as lenses through which to access the meaning which human beings attribute to their experience. This approach was therefore useful since this study seeks to explore the ways in which the public school principals understood their roles as leaders and professional managers of schools. It focused upon the social aspects of the interaction between the participant and the researcher. According to Miller (2000), the narrative

analysis has a triangular-shaped structure. The triangle is an explanation of what may happen during the interviews between the participants and the researcher.

The responses that were given by the participant in the interview were determined by the participant's subjective perception of their situation in social networks and structure and their perception of the researcher's position relative to them. As a researcher I was aware of this and had to frame my questions according to the way in which I thought the participant was capable of providing information, and with regard to my perception of how the participant saw me. The school principals, especially those with senior degrees or post-graduate qualifications, might have seen their status as roughly equivalent to that of mine as a researcher since I was also a school principal. This may have affected the manner in which the interviews proceeded, that is, the manner in which I asked questions and the manner in which the principals responded. I was therefore required to adopt a particular strategy in evaluating these responses. I had to be selective when analyzing the material.

The narrative data analysis involved firstly, the construction of the biographical life history by clarifying and ordering the factual details of the participant's life into correct temporal sequences or chronological order. This information came from the interview and the supporting evidence from the questionnaires given to staff members. Following this was the thematic field analysis. The life story was to be arranged and told in selected themes, which were regarded as important and relevant areas or events in the life of the

participant. The principals told the life stories in their own words, and pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of the six principals and their schools.

After the thematic analysis, I was tasked with the reconstruction of the perspective of the past, the biographical meaning that the experiences had at the time they happened, and the construction of the present meanings of experiences. “The present perspectives determine what the participant considers biographically relevant and how he or she develops thematic and temporal links between various experiences, and how past, present, or anticipated future realities influence the personal interpretation of the meaning of life” (Rosenthal, 1993: 61). The main aim for engaging in the thematic field analysis was to identify emerging trends and patterns in the responses of the principals and thus formulate general conclusions based on general patterns and trends.

3.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

A question that authors like Silverman (2001) asks concerns the credibility, reliability and validity of the research findings that result from the use of a particular research method. Likewise, such question has been asked about the qualitative research method. The concepts of reliability and validity are regarded by some analysts (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1998; Bassey, 1999) as inappropriate in critical qualitative research because of the deliberate strategy, especially in semi-structured interviews, of treating each participant as a potentially unique respondent. Since the primary data of this study was collected through interviews, I had to guard against bias from the participants, myself,

and the substantive content of the questions I asked. According to Cohen and Manion (1994), bias is likely to be endemic in semi-structured and unstructured interviews, no matter how careful the questions are formulated and how properly trained the interviewer has been. It is difficult to eliminate. The objective of reliability in this study was to make sure that if a follow-up study of the same nature were to be conducted among the principals, the same findings would be arrived at.

Reliability is, however, only relevant if it is connected with or a precondition for attaining validity. Validity in this study meant that I had to gain full access to the knowledge and meanings of the principals. This meant that I had to be committed to providing a faithful description of the principals' understandings and perceptions of the phenomenon under discussion. In so doing, reliability and validity would be replaced by or substituted with the concept of trustworthiness (Bassey, 1999), which illuminates the ethic of respect for truth. In life history research, internal validity is appropriate in that it does not relate to generalization of findings to the wider population. Internal validity relates to the degree or extent to which the research findings accurately represent the phenomenon under investigation (Bush, 2002). To ensure internal validity, the following strategies were employed:

- Member checking - whereby the participants served as a check throughout the analysis process. This was in a form of feedback from the participant. The transcribed, interpreted and analyzed interview data were given back to the participants for their comments. This ensured the truth value of the data.

- Repeat visits to the participants to verify some statements that were not clear on the tape-recorded conversations.
- Peer discussions – whereby I was discussing leadership issues with fellow doctoral students who are principals during the doctoral seminars that were held once in every two months at the university.

Where reliability and validity are a problem, there is advantage in using more than one kind or source of data (triangulation) in relation to a particular criterion. Qualitative researchers always seek a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility, that allows them to feel confident about their observations, interpretations, and conclusions (Eisner, 1998:110). In order to obtain this, I used a methodological triangulation whereby the interviews with the principals were complemented by questionnaire surveys of the staff members of each selected school. The primary data of the study collected through interviews, was validated by comparing it with that obtained from the questionnaire (Appendix 2) surveys.

3.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the research design and methodology were discussed in order to explore the processes of leadership and management in public schools and provide the methodological basis for the collection and discussion of the research data. The focus of this chapter was on the investigation of the transformation process and exploration of issues of policy interpretation and implementation in public schools. This was done by

collecting professional life histories of selected principal in the eThekweni Region, using a qualitative procedure. The qualitative procedure included the use of the humanistic approach to gather and theorize from the experiences and biographies of principals as leaders and managers of schools, and the purposive sampling approach to select the key participants. The life histories of the principals were collected through interviews by using semi-structured interview schedules.

The data that was collected was analyzed throughout the study by using a combination of three approaches to life history analysis, namely: the realist, neo-positivist and narrative approaches. At the end the researcher will gain a better understanding of the views and subjective perceptions of the principals. Throughout the analysis process I was trying to avoid bias by verifying all the information that was at hand. The end-result was a faithful and truthful description of the principals' understandings and perceptions of leadership. Where this was a problem, the researcher used triangulation.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRINCIPALS' PROFESSIONAL LIFE STORIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the central focus of this study is to investigate how principals (re-) define their roles and (re-) construct their identities in relation to the post 1994 policy context changes some of which were responses to global trends in educational leadership and management. This chapter therefore investigates the perceptions of principals about their roles as leaders and professional managers of schools, and how they reconcile these roles with the reality as articulated in policy documents. These self-perceptions are revealed in their life stories as told in the first part of the chapter.

According to Shamir et al (2005:15), “The stories they tell about themselves are the means by which they convey important messages about their identities, traits, values, and beliefs, and by which they try to justify their leadership of the group and their right to represent the group and its values”. In his or her own words, each principal discusses his or her family and education background; socialization into the teaching profession; and initiation into and subsequent practice as a school manager. The aim of presenting the stories in the first person is to avoid the distortion of data by the author.

Second, the chapter reflects on the leadership theories that emerged from the data and lastly, the emerging patterns from the life-stories are discussed. As explained in the introductory chapter, the central aim is to establish whether there is a link between the principals' personal interests, values and beliefs and their understanding of their roles as school managers and leaders.

The significance of this study is demonstrated by the insights of the principals regarding their professional identities as revealed in their stories. Bromley (1977:120) argues that, "A person's identity is described partly by statements about his life history, for example his date of birth, and partly by statements about his current existence, his age, address, and so on". The statements that the selected principals made about their upbringing, schooling, socialization and their experiences give a clear indication of where their positive professional identities emerge from. Their statements about how they became what they are and how they overcame the animosity from their staff when they came in, are a signal of their definition of themselves in the context of the expectations of their staff and communities.

The majority of the selected principals have strong personalities. This is evident from the statements they made about the trying and challenging situations at their schools and how they have overcome them and persevered in bringing about transformation. Their experiences, values, and beliefs have contributed in how they reacted to the teachers', learners', and communities' behaviours; and also how they have acted on these behaviours to make decisions. As has been pointed out in the preceding chapters, the

selected principals knew that one of their roles was to address both social behaviour as spelled out in the policies, and personal behaviour of the people around them in their day-to-day leadership roles. Knowledge of their roles would make them understand who they are, where they are going, and how they can organize and establish relationships with their peers and followers.

4.2 PRESENTING THE STORIES

The six principals in this study represent four racial groups of South Africa. As explained in chapter three, the six principals were selected according to the racial demographics of the country, socialization of the participant into the teaching profession, experience in managing public schools in the old and democratic political dispensations, their ex-departments of education of the apartheid era, and gender. All the principals were educated during the apartheid era when there was segregation in education. As a result, their training as educators was different in terms of context, structure, content and quality.

They grew up in segregated neighbourhoods and therefore had different childhood experiences resulting from their diverse upbringings, and different understandings of life as a whole. They all taught in both systems of education in South Africa: the apartheid education system and the new post 1994 democratic education system. Three of them were deputy principals before 1994 and only became principals in the new dispensation.

However, the experiences they had as deputy principals influenced, in various ways, the manner in which they behaved and conducted themselves as principals.

The stories of the six principals are presented in a manner that gives background to their upbringing and describes their educational and professional lives. The descriptive account of each principal is arranged into four main themes, which are their family and social backgrounds, their education up to teacher training at university or college, their socialization into the teaching profession, and their interpretation and implementation of the post-1994 policies in re-defining their roles and re-constructing their identities.

Mrs Campbell's Story

Mrs Campbell is a 50 years old white woman who during our interviews liked to call herself 'gogo', which means granny. She is a very energetic woman who likes to talk about her childhood and her parents. She is a principal of Cato Crest, an ex-Model C primary school in the suburb of Camperdown near Pietermaritzburg. Black learners coming from the townships and settlements of Hammarsdale, Georgedale, Inchanga and Cato Ridge now heavily populate the school. This is how her story goes:

Family and Education Background

I was born in Durban in 1956, which makes me quite an old gogo at this stage, at Parklands Government Hospital, and I grew up on a farm in Paddock about 25 kms out of Port Shepstone on the South Coast. The rest of my school was done there. The funny

thing is that after leaving Port Shepstone to continue with my tertiary education the second teaching post I had was in Port Shepstone, so I ended up teaching with some of the teachers that had in fact taught me when I was a student. My mom worked for SABC as an announcer and my father was an accountant until he decided for a complete change of career and went into farming. I am the only child as my mother lost 3 before I was born, so a lot of people would say “Oh you must have been very spoilt as a child”. I was not spoilt. I had a father who was a strict disciplinarian. Whilst I had the privilege of growing up in a family where I got everything I needed, my father was extremely strict. There were set rules especially when I was a teenager such as the time I had to come home, and who I associated with, etc.

Growing up on a farm exposed me to different cultures because there were a lot of children of different races and different religions around me. Language was not a barrier because I was more fluent in isiZulu as a child than I was in English. So I never ever had a stage in my life where there weren't people around me and children around me. I was free to try new things, but to a certain point. You know I was allowed to stay over at other children's houses. I was allowed to attend parties and so on within the rules that were set.

The practices and celebrations that we followed and had as a family influenced the way I grew up because if I look at the discipline that was imposed on me as a child that is exactly how I am today. I carry those expectations that came from my parents through to the way I behave today. The same sort of traditions are carried on now in my own home.

Religion was very important in my family. My mom and dad were Christians but my mom was quite a devout Christian. My mom would always try and impress on me the importance of being a Christian and so on. They made me go to Sunday school. As result by the time I was about 16, I had completed almost every Bible study exam that you could complete. However, things have changed now in such a way that I am no longer religious. I do not believe in one particular faith. I have philosophies on right living but I do not go to Church.

As I said, my primary school education was in Port Shepstone and the clearest memory I have of that is that the learning environment was, I can't use any other words than, perfect. It was the kind of environment that I would love for every child to have had. I don't ever remember my teacher being away. It was very formal, very structured. I knew exactly what was expected of me. Every facility was available. We could play any sport that we wanted so my primary school and my high school experiences were very good. My parents expected only the best from me. If there were exams coming up I wouldn't even think of saying 'well I'm going to a party tonight'. My parents were extremely involved in my education. They attended school interviews; my mom was on the parents-teachers committee. If we had sports matches, they would be there to watch so they were certainly very involved in it.

Many of my teachers were my favourites; in fact all of them, all of them. I was extremely lucky; I think I had the best. I don't ever remember clashing with a teacher or having any confrontation or altercation. I don't ever remember being called into the principal's

office. Well, if you look back and consider that my early years in education were positive, I would imagine that led to me becoming a teacher. There were various areas that I wanted to pursue but as far back as I can remember that is all I wanted to do was be a teacher. We would come home and play school and I would be the teacher and I think because I had such a positive view of school that's probably why I am where I am today.

When I matriculated I went to Durban University for one year and I unfortunately didn't know which way to go. I knew I wanted to do teaching but I didn't know which subjects to pursue, so I did something totally different and I did Bachelor of Social Sciences, I took subjects like social anthropology and philosophy. At the end of the year I passed and I looked at it and thought what on earth am I going to do with social anthropology? The following year, in 1971, I decided I really wanted to go into teaching and I went to college and that is where I qualified as a teacher. At college I was on the SRC. There again I played sport. I was part of the drum majorettes team. I used to march in the front row and I played hockey again. I was involved in ballroom dancing as well.

Taking part in all these activities taught me a lot of lessons. I think particularly in the career choice, you know, of being a teacher. There is more value than going into the classroom and teaching. I think it is very important that a teacher is able to fit in with groups. Obviously being with large groups of children, if you are an anti-social person, I doubt you would be a very successful person. The fact that I was involved in so many different activities at the SRC, the president of the SRC and being a prefect at school, I think that set the tone for the leadership qualities that carried on later to being a principal.

But certainly taking part in group activities has allowed me to become open to sharing of ideas, sharing of activities and so on.

On Becoming a Teacher

When I started in the teaching profession it was the dream of every teacher to keep going higher and higher on the ladder. It was almost expected of you. If you didn't have those aspirations, you were somehow considered well, there is something wrong with this person why don't they want to get further and further. I must admit though even in those days there was quite a lot of pressure, social pressure, in having those aspirations and being a woman. I remember very early on in my career when the HOD post was advertised and the other lady teachers said, "Wow why do you want to be an HOD , don't you want to have more children?" In those days women were basically, you know, regarded as not suitable for promotion to management.

I must state it on the outset that my earlier experiences in life have made me into the kind of leader that I am today. I must say though that I have come across a whole new range of experiences, and I am changing on a daily basis, thanks to my community. Thanks to the children that we are dealing with here. Never ever can a geography principal remain static because you are dealing with things that are changing around you all the time and if I had to look back now to where I started, the most frightening thing has to be how much change has taken place. When I first started teaching, everything was extremely rigid. You never, I mean, never went into the principal's office. You weren't allowed to pop in

and say “Good morning Sir, how are you?” You had to be summoned and if you wanted to see the principal you had to make an appointment. There was a very strict protocol.

You would never dream of coming to school unless your lessons were prepared and written in the book for the whole week. You had the plan for the year. The most embarrassing thing you could ever do was to ask to be excused for 5 minutes off or be 5 minutes late. It was totally unacceptable. For the first two years of my teaching, once a week the principal would sit in my classroom and write a full report on what he observed and you would be called in every week and the report would be discussed with you. You would keep it in a file. I remember the inspectors coming from the department on a monthly basis into your classroom unannounced and if you were caught without your lessons prepared in front of you, you were in big trouble. I was terrified of the department and terrified of my principal.

However, this made me what I am today. You had to be prepared all the time before you go to class, because that was the way things were done. And it wasn't just me. Every teacher in that school and I think I was in four or five schools in my career and every school was the same. I was at Harvey Primary for 3 years, I was hostel mistress there and I then moved to Port Shepstone Primary and to Camperdown Primary where I became HOD. Then when Camperdown School closed down I moved over here as HOD. I never became deputy. I went from HOD to principal.

Teachers today don't even know what teaching is about. They don't even begin to know. I believe that many of the changes are absolutely fantastic. I don't believe in a principal being autocratic; there is no place for that at all. There has to be structure. There has to be rules in place. As far as preparation is concerned in my school the teachers do what I used to do. Maybe it's my leadership style and I expect my teachers to do the same. Many of them complain bitterly "why do we have to do that?" "Why do we have to have a staff meeting at 7.30 in the morning? We're travelling from far away". I say "Well that is the way I am running my school" "Why do we have to do lesson prep every single day". I collect their books once a week. I check that the lessons are done and the work plan is done, that their registers are filled in on a weekly basis. The HODs, on a weekly basis supervise the children's books and fill in book reports. So there is a certain amount of the way I had to behave when I started teaching. There is still apparently now in my school, those huge changes are taking place.

When I first started teaching it was compulsory to do sport every single afternoon. No teacher left the school premises until 4.30. If you had one day off and it wasn't your sport day; you had to remain on the premises to do your marking, your prep so nobody left school. There were evening functions and you had to attend those functions. On a Saturday morning you had to referee a hockey match or umpire a cricket game. I remember once going to my principal, I think it was my first year of teaching, and he said to me "Right Mrs Campbell, tomorrow morning you are going to referee a rugby match". "No", I said, "I can't do that I've never trained for rugby. I don't even know what's going on". He said "There's a whistle and there's a rule book, it's Friday afternoon,

tomorrow morning you will referee that rugby match”. I was so terrified I never slept the whole night. I phoned my husband and said “you’ve got to help me” and I refereed that rugby match the next morning. I don’t think I would ever have questioned it and said “No, I’m not prepared to do it”. The teachers these days would say, “Don’t be silly I’ve got rights. You cannot make me do anything like that”.

First and foremost I think the training of teachers today is very inadequate. When I look at the new teachers that are coming to my school and I compare the training that they had to what we had, we cannot expect them to cope. Many of the teachers that come here are still being taught by my staff. They don’t know how to do a year plan, they don’t know how to do a daily lesson plan. They don’t know how to do assessments, so we actually have to teach them what they should have been taught at college, yet they are trained for 4 years. They’ve come out with the same diploma, but yet they don’t have a clue how to start. So certainly I believe that tertiary education is very inadequate at the moment.

On Becoming a School Manager

In 1994 Camperdown School closed down because the numbers had diminished very badly. So the governing body of Camperdown and Cato Ridge Schools met with the Education Department and they decided to close that school down and move the remaining pupils here. At Camperdown School it was a small school; I think there were only about 6 teachers. All the teachers at Camperdown said they were not going to Cato Ridge and they all took early retirement. I was the only one at the school who said, “I’m going”. I took 50 children from Camperdown and I was the only teacher that came from

Camperdown and I started here as a Grade 4 teacher. The principal that was here at the moment was an Afrikaans man; Mr Martins and he had exactly the same values and same leadership style that I was familiar with as a teacher. Very strict, a delightful man but not very easy going at all with people, but fluent in isiZulu.

When I moved across here there were no Zulu children at all. It was an English and Afrikaans medium school, not a single African child anywhere here. When I first came here I didn't even know that Mpumalanga and Hammersdale existed. For me there was Camperdown and Cato Ridge, and Cato Ridge School was considered not a very nice school. Camperdown was all the rich farmers and so on and so that is why a lot of the teachers wanted to come here. The rest all moved to Pietermaritzburg then slowly when the children started coming from Mpumalanga and Hammersdale. I think it took about two years for the entire structure of the school to change.

During that time the principal said, "I can't cope. I cannot cope with these changes". He didn't know how to deal with the children that were coming in and at that stage we were the first school to accept children of other races, the very first school in the whole of Kwa-Zulu Natal. And I was the one that said, "Mr Martins, you have to adapt. You can't chase these children away they are our community." It caused a lot of friction between the principal and me. When we got to about 100 or 200 children from the townships he decided that was it. "I cannot teach under these conditions, I can't work under these conditions" and in fact he was so stressed that he tried to commit suicide. He then approached the department and they gave him early retirement. Before he went on early

retirement he went on I think six months sick leave because he was under such stress and so on. In 1996 they appointed me to act in his absence and he never came back. In the very same year we went through the whole procedure of the post being advertised and I applied for it and so on.

When I started as a principal I did not receive any special training. The only training I've had was in the form of workshops. I was just taken out of the classroom literally overnight and put in the office. I didn't know what was facing me as principal and I didn't know what my role was and I basically had to learn overnight how to manage a school. The only thing I had to fall back on was my own values and my insight that I had. My beliefs, values and interests played a major, major role. I must say now though that there have been many instances over the years where I've had to change those beliefs. Okay. So they are not necessarily still like that. Some of those beliefs I struggled to change are causing me big problems in terms of exactly what my expectations are with everything. You know, as much as I say to myself I have to change in my approach and what my expectations are, that kind of change doesn't happen overnight. It takes a lot of introspection and thinking to myself "I need to understand where they are coming from as well" so it's not easy.

In terms of the role of a principal at the moment it is completely different, completely different. You are not the only decision maker. The rest of the educators are entitled to have a say. We have the learners themselves particularly in high school that contribute to the decision-making. The role of the principal is a very, very difficult one these days because you're not the boss anymore. In the old days the principal was the boss and

everyone knew he was the boss. These days you've got the parents and community to consider, you've got your staff to consider, you've got your own values to consider you've got the department to consider. Sometimes it's overwhelming because you don't know who you answer to.

In my school I'm extremely lucky. My community doesn't ever interfere with my role as a principal. I'm possibly very lucky. I have the most supportive community. If there are troubled times or if I need them, they are there. My governing body is also so supportive. They allow me to run the school the way I see fit. They basically say "there's the school you run it, you tell us what you want". However, I know that in many schools this doesn't operate and I do believe that the governing bodies can be extremely destructive and extremely challenging but here I'm talking about the school I'm in and the biggest problem I have at my school are the teachers. Every single day but the children are not a problem at all. The parents are fantastic, they may not pay school fees but in terms of making me feel comfortable, I couldn't ask for a better community.

When we receive policies from the department, first of all I would go through them and then make copies for each of the management team. I would never ever take a policy and adopt it exactly as it is. I don't believe that that's beneficial. I have expressed my views several times to my SEM to my circuit manager. I don't find taking a document and just implement it like that because it cannot possibly suit every single school. What happens is when a national policy comes out, we sit together as the management team and devise our own policy around that, and then we present our policy to the staff for their input. We

have experienced one or two problems with the implementation of the policies like the IQMS. There is big resistance from the teachers and I must say I will not do IQMS exactly as we are supposed to because we have already picked up all the shortfalls.

If I could choose, I wouldn't be a principal at all. Let's put it this way, I would choose to be a principal before 1994 only in terms of that it was secure. You knew exactly where you were going, what you were doing. Well really given a choice I would be a principal now but I must say I believe that being a principal pre 1994 was easier. The first part being was that you were the boss. You made the rules everyone conformed to the rules. If they bucked the system you had an extremely strong education department behind you there was an amazing structure there a hierarchy and I'm not saying a right one. There again an autocratic but in those days you knew if a teacher stepped out of line, the department was right behind you.

I think it's vital that parents play a role in their children's education so I think governing bodies if they are correctly operating, if they use their powers correctly, are a very positive thing. More and more now parents are becoming responsible for their children's education and are aware of the school curriculum and so on. You cannot run a school without involving the educators, without having a school management team. In the old days the principal, the deputy and maybe a senior teacher who didn't have school management skills. So certainly I think it is very important these days to have as many stakeholders as possible, provided that they all have a common goal and that is to make sure the children's well-being is taken care of.

It's been very difficult to change from being autocratic to a democratic dispensation. You know being the old school, when I was a post level one teacher that's how my principal was and I think you use those people as role models. At that stage it was the only way of management that I was familiar with, but I think as you see the situation changing your staff changes all the time. You know people are never ever constant. Children change, their needs change, your parent community changes all the time and to retain that very autocratic style I'm afraid wouldn't work in the classrooms and the offices of today, but it has been very difficult to adapt. The only way that I have adapted so easily is that I've been given the support from my community.

Shortly after arriving here I realised there were other teachers' unions involved as well and of course I started the whole autocratic management by saying to my staff members, "Right, you may not strike. You're not allowed to march. You're not allowed to leave your classes. If you don't report for duty I'm giving you unpaid leave", and I basically used to stand in the staff meetings and say, "No teacher from my school will ever go on strike". Very quickly I realised that I had quite a bit of opposition. In the beginning it came to a big blow up in the office where I had SADTU members and myself and we went through the whole ethical thing where I said to them, "If you are a professional you would not leave your children without a teacher. You need to make sure then that you've prepared work so that the children are occupied during the day.

Concerning my interaction with my staff, put it this way, it's professional but it's professional when it comes to areas of following school procedure and policies. I don't

socialise with any of the staff members, but certainly there's a group of the older ladies that I will sit with at tea time and on a superficial level socialise with them, but after school hours definitely not at all. So, I would say professional, but not autocratic any more. Somehow I do entertain them; I allow them to come into the office. Certainly I hear what they have to say. I will give them my opinion and if they have a valid point I say, "That's fine, let me think about it".

When it comes to decision-making, if it's something like a policy, I would never just make a decision, I would address the management and say to them, "Okay, this is the decision that we have to make together", okay. Once they have given their option, we then take the situation to a full staff meeting. We ask the staff to put their point of view in writing and bring it back to the management, we discuss it. Ultimately at the end of the day the decision lies with me, but certainly we involve the whole staff.

We're also still dealing with the IQMS. Here again, the teachers are extremely suspicious of it. They don't want it to be done. I mean my staff is all saying they don't want their 1%. The government can keep the 1%. They don't care if they lose 1% of their salary. They'll rather not do IQMS. I feel exactly the same. I really do. You know there's so many discrepancies that we've picked up in IQMS as well. If you take for example the principal's role. In my role here I don't teach. I am here as a manager. Now all of a sudden I have to go and prepare a one hour lesson, just a fancy lesson. I've got the most beautiful lesson planned for when the SEM comes to see me, but that is not realistic. He should see me as I perform every day in the office, outside with the children, in a staff meeting, that aspect, but

for me to now go and prepare a fake lesson, how can you score me on that you know. He cannot judge my ability in one hour in a classroom. So, the teachers are very resentful.

When I was appointed as principal I had no goals or objectives. It was quite a shock to me because I went straight from being a head of department to a post level 4 principal. So, there was no progress from HOD to deputy to principal and it took me quite a while to settle down into the role of principal. So, if I actually have to say now, I was thrown in the deep end. In the early days my goals and objectives were to ensure that there was an educational institution within our community that could basically cater for all the children in the community irrespective of their level of economy, what their previous education had been, but basically to serve the community and ensure that our school was a safe place for the children to come to, a place that they could consider home and certainly a place where they could grow as far as academics, culture and sporting activities are concerned.

My previous experience has certainly influenced my position in certain respects. It's very difficult to let go of a management style when you're familiar with it and it has worked in the past, but the more the years have progressed the more I have actually changed my style of management and sort of go with the flow and accommodate the way things are at the moment. But yes, there are definitely certain areas that I remain fixed on. For example, children being correctly dressed in their school uniform, I believe that it is not fair to the learners and parents that teachers should leave school early or not come to school because it's pay day, I remain very rigid on that. The major challenge in my job at the moment is to try and keep education and to keep the role of the educator to be seen in a favourable light in

the community. I need to convince the educators to come to work and to see the importance of the role that they play in the school and within the community.

One should always try to strike a balance between policy and what happens daily at school. I think one is not always perfect, but I think it's very important to have the policies in place so that there is no grey area. If the policy is there it's very difficult for anyone to argue against it. The staff can argue about the validity of the policy if it is not discussed with them before it is implemented but I think they're aware of the fact that the policy is there as a framework. We have to consult the educators more often and share information.

Concerning the way I've managed and led the school so far, I think I'm a lot more flexible and I think I've had to become that way otherwise really I would have driven myself insane you know. I've realised that you have to change. Nothing around you stays the same. The children that we have these days and their situations are very, very different. The situations as far as educators are concerned are very, very different.

Working with and among my staff has had an influence in the way I define my self and my role in the school. In fact I'm learning from my staff members every day. We don't ever say, "Well, we are the management, you are just the educators" ever. If ever policies are formulated, if ever there is a function, I expect all the staff, all the SMT and myself to be involved. We treat each other as colleagues. Obviously at the end of the day if decisions have to be made, the staff have to accept that somebody must make those decisions.

I believe that I've always been a good leader, I still am a good leader and yes, my leadership style has changed quite dramatically. In terms of being a good leader, you have to have a vision, you have to - obviously a leader means that you are in the front, you are paving the way. So, if you don't have a vision you don't have goals, then you don't first of all know who you're leading and you don't know what you are leading them towards. So, I think every leader should know who they are, what their vision is, and where they want to take the group that they are leading. I think a good leader has the ability to listen, to consult and should be consistent. My role is determined and guided by the policies made by the department and the school. I get my direction from the needs of the children and from my previous experiences.

The workshops that are conducted by the department are a bone of contention at the moment, even amongst the teachers that come from the township schools. As far as those workshops are concerned now, I refuse to go. I won't even send my teachers. The workshops are very, very badly run. The actual contact time in the workshop is sometimes less than the time that's set aside for eating and having lunch and so on. We found that the documents are illegible, full of spelling errors, the presenters are late, they often don't handle the topic and at the end of the workshops I object to actually wasting the time of my educators. So, I look very carefully at what the topic is, who is presenting it before I actually attend one myself or send any of my educators.

Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

The teachers from Cato Crest Primary who completed and returned the questionnaires felt that the principal has gained more power over the school governing body (SGB), which makes the quality of governance, leadership and management at school to be poor.

However, members of the SGB and school management team (SMT) are involved in the employment of staff but when it comes to decision-making the principal makes her own

decision or sometimes consult the staff before making a decision but does not use their inputs. They considered their principal as autocratic, biased and racist, and interacting with the staff at a strictly professional level. The staff meetings are held twice a week during which the principal is only dishing out instructions. They said that her attitude towards the school has become worse since 1994 and that she does not involve the community in school matters, let alone attend or participate in their activities and projects. It is because of these facts that they all think that she does not possess good leadership and management qualities and skills.

Significance of the life story

What can be learnt from this life story is that the teachings and values of one's parents and the environment one grows up in have a lasting influence in one's life even at a leadership position. Mrs Campbell turned out to be a strict principal, which is a quality that she inherited from her father and former principal. The people one socialises with influence the way perceives his or her life and this prepares him or her for the future. Being the SRC president and school prefect set the tone for leadership qualities for her. She strongly believes that people should not let go of management or leadership styles that have worked for them before even if it makes them unpopular to the staff. She agrees that she has experienced some problems in terms of her expectations in the new dispensation because she refused to change some of her beliefs.

She believes in structure and rules and expects her staff to act the same way as she did when she was a new and junior teacher, that is, not to question her seniors and do as she was told. She does not socialize much with her staff although she knows that social relationships are built through socialization and they provide a channel for discussion and dispute (Ball, 1987). This has made her very unpopular with her staff and referred to as autocratic. Ball (1987:99) warns that principals who are not close to their staff are not good at personal

relationships therefore they become “cardboard cut-outs to their staff and then they wonder why nothing happens in the way they want it to”.

It comes out of Mrs Campbell life story that she did not receive any formal pre-training for principalship but that did not stop her from taking the challenge and responsibilities. She had personal knowledge and experience which she picked up from her involvement in the school management issues as head of department (HOD). She used this knowledge together with her personal and cultural values to lead the school to where it is today. She is supported by the other members of the governing body who do not question the way she is managing and leading the school. She believes that in order to be a good and successful leader, the principal should involve all stakeholders in school matters but should be guided by the policies and rules.

Mr Allendale’s Story

Mr Allendale is a soft-spoken 54-year-old South African born Coloured/Muslim man whose parents originated from Northern Africa and the Middle East. During our interview he kept on referring to himself as coming from a mixed family. He preferred to identify himself as a Coloured rather than an Indian. He is a school principal of Redman, an ex-Coloured primary school in Overport, outside Durban. Both Coloured and Black learners equally populate the school. The Black learners come as far as the townships of KwaMashu, Umlazi, Lamontville, and informal settlements around Overport and Reservoir Hills. Mr Allendale wasn’t only committed to uplifting the education of the disadvantaged children but he was also taking care of those who are parentless. He was involved in food gardening in order to provide food to those learners who came to school with empty stomachs. This is how his story goes:

Family and Education Background

I was born in the city of Durban, in Victoria Street in 1952. I was born to a family of 14 children and I'm the youngest. My family is mixed. My father's family came from Afghanistan and my mother's family came from Guinea in Northern Africa. We have Coloureds, Indians Whites and Africans married in our family and that makes us a unique family that runs across the racial divide. Our parents brought us up in the Coloured and Malaysian cultures. Our cultural celebrations and rituals were performed within religious practice and they came mostly from my mother's side. My father was very strict and we were given a hiding of our lives if we had misbehaved. He was a furniture salesman; my mother was a housewife all her life. In our family there are no professionals except me. We struggled a lot financially when we grew up. You know there was a time when my father had to pay for education but he just couldn't afford it. However, he struggled on because he wanted to make sure that at least one of us made it.

I went to a primary school that was a military hospital before and they converted it into a school for coloured children. It was at the corner of Albert Street and Queen Street and had a mixture of coloured teachers and white teachers. I have very good memories of my primary school days, although the only pressure I had was from the prejudice from both learners and teachers because it was a coloured school and I looked like a little Indian boy. They couldn't accept the fact that a little Indian boy was attending at a coloured school. My favourite teachers were the English teacher; he's still alive today, and my geography teacher. That's why I majored in geography. My geography teacher later left and went to Australia.

At secondary school it was the same; the prejudice continued. We had good teachers and like I said, to them it was a calling. They put their hearts and souls into teaching, although they did now and then come to school a bit tipsy and so on, but we just overlooked that and we carried on with what we were there for. I wasn't going to be a teacher, I was going to study law because I met a gentleman one day on the train, and he was a lawyer. He was from Nigeria and we were having a chat, we were in the same compartment, and he kept telling me about how good is it to be a lawyer, fighting for people's rights and so on. However, because my finances could not permit me to do law, I turned to teaching.

At college I had a good life because there were lots of proactive students there. There was Robert McBride who was a very famous activist. In fact Robert McBride was my student at the school that I taught before I went to college. He was in my class from Grade 10 and he was a close friend of the family. There was also Warren Vexer who was also an activist. He was also one of my students; I mean he was also at college. I lectured at college at that time. At that time I took part in organizational activities, not in terms of picking up an AK 47, but I did attend rallies and handed out pamphlets you know, I was pro-Renamo.

On Becoming a Teacher

Being a teacher is very rewarding to me. It has its moments really and I don't regret it though really. I have never taught in a private school or in a public school, but only at a college of education. I however, was an acting senior teacher at Fairvale Secondary in 1979 and I was not in an official capacity. I was brought in to assist with some of the duties, like the managerial duties, for example doing the attendance register, also in terms of controlling

prefects, being in charge of furniture, organising detention classes. I was also involved in the allocation of money for textbooks. So, I was never in a permanent teaching position until in 1981 when I went over to lecture at the Teachers' Training College. I lectured there for 13 years. When the college closed down in 1993 they asked us all to move over to assist the college at Edgewood but I chose to come here. I was an HOD for geography at the college so I had a little bit of administrative experience, but it was still quite different to teaching at a school. All that experience that I had didn't count here.

At that time I was promoted to HOD at the college, there were no interviews. The promotion was undertaken by the department. The college council submitted names of teachers for promotion. You just had to submit all your papers and things like that and then the college council sat and they went through your papers, all your CVs and then they would approve the promotion. At college, apart from being involved on the academic side of the work, I was also involved as a student liaison officer; also involved with student elections, and organising student block programs. I was also involved in the examination timetable and I assisted the school in sports. I was chosen during that time manager of SATESA, which is the South African Training College sports body. I was manager of the South African Training College soccer team.

However, teaching the kids is the most important thing to me. When a teacher is not teaching, that upsets me the most. The most important thing here is to teach. The most difficult thing about teaching is that we have got children from all walks of life now coming into school. We've got the older generation of parents, some of them didn't go to school and

so they don't exactly know how a school is run with regard to homework and checking on their children's progress; but generally parents commended the school. In the past we used to get children here with no contact details of their parents. We didn't know where they came from, parents would just drop their children and go, but now it's changed. I'd say there's been about fifty percent change now.

On Becoming a School Manager

When I got here in 1994 this was a coloured school, 99% coloured children. I felt that the situation was in conflict with the whole philosophy of democracy. I stood at assembly the following morning and I said to the children and the teachers, "This is a public school and therefore will be open to all children and not coloured children alone". Most of the coloured parents pulled their children out of the school and a lot of teachers were disgruntled. But it was fine; I wasn't really worried. I knew that there are children out there who needed an education and I just felt this was one way I could open the doors of education to them. So, the children came from some of the informal settlements in Cato Manor and they bussed them to the school. Fortunately, my teachers didn't leave because they couldn't handle those types of children. I mean I'm not feathering my own head, but I think they've grown. I think parents are playing a far greater role in the school than in the past. The governing body mainly consists of active parents whose children are in the school. So, I think we are winning in that respect, getting the parents to see the value of the school. So, really that was the only way I could contribute, to get this school open to everyone.

When I became principal there was no pre-training that was given to new principals. All what we received were workshops on financial management and conducting meetings and so on. So, in that respect there has been no pre-training. Most of the training was in-service done by private training organizations and also by the department as well. The in-service training is to a degree effective. I think it's just there to lay down the guidelines as to how a school should run, but when you are in the school situation, I mean all right, the books and things are there but, how to practically run the school, conduct your finances, to conduct your meetings, and to handle conflict, is a different story. It is good on paper, but in the school situation, it doesn't work as easy as that. Situations are quite different in the school when you handle teacher behaviour. You cannot say, "Let me read this book now on how to handle this teacher". It doesn't work like that. It still boils down to your personality, the teachers' personality, their attitude, your attitude. So, you might pick up a varying account, some are even bordering on mismanagement in a situation, but you'll find that sometimes personality management succeeds.

My upbringing for once makes me view things very differently in a school situation. I'm more open to people's problems because of my own background, the problems we had. I'm more understanding of teachers' problems and the problems they bring to the school. I'm more understanding of parents' situation, when they can't pay school fees you know, the struggle that they go through. I'm more understanding of the child, the problem that they have at home you know. Sometimes, some of these kids come from situations where there's no electricity at home they can't do homework. I allow for things like that. So, I'm more understanding. Even the cleaners at the school I understand their problems. I don't have

that top-down kind of management style. Anyone can come through the door with anything at any time and they'll be helped if I can help them.

When I got here I was a bit, I won't say dictatorial, but I found out in the end that I have changed. You can say I'm mellow or whatever, but yes you're not so dogmatic about things you know, because of your staff. You can see where they're coming from. They have assured me and said, relax you know, don't put yourself under pressure. So, you tend to relax as well you know, so they did influence me in a way, but I think it doesn't apply to all schools. You've just got to look at yourself and see where these people are coming from. To be less, I won't say difficult, harsh on them, one should understand that they're not trying to show off their worth.

I do have values and I do have beliefs, but I came here with nothing really. I came here with no plan to be quite honest with you, because I didn't know the situation that was in the school. I came here not as a blind sheep with no ideas, I had some ideas as to what I would like to do, but at first I had to really have a look at the situation and see you know, what the general milieu of the school was like. I had no idea of how this school worked and for the first year I just went around trying to understand my teachers. So, I had to get to know them better. I didn't know who to pick to do what you know, that type of thing, who is for me and who is against me and you know, who is still harbouring a little grudge and things. If I have a teacher in my project, I know that teacher is that way inclined or who something like that you know, because of my situation. So, I didn't come here with any plan, I'm going to take the school from this point to that. Actually when I came here it was just to learn from the

situation that I found myself in just to get to know the school, to know the parents, the type of children we have in the school, the type of teacher we have and then slowly over the years I've built up my own view of the teachers and what they could do, what they can do and who I could rely on, who is the more responsible, who is more co-operative, who is the one who is still you know, very anti-principal.

Because you sit in a principal's chair and you think I know these people are finding an excuse not to work you know, or they want to have a staff meeting during the break so that they can run right through to change the times, but I used to think like that you know, but then we have the type of staff here and the way they look at you, you'd think, it's not that this person would challenge me, so you seem to relax, and when they come to you with some excuse you don't always look at it as you're lazy or you're trying to show that you are doing your duties. I listen to what they have to say you know. They are important people whether you like it or not. I've become a little more sensitive to personal needs or to teachers' problems and I think it has led us forward, it's led to a lot of co-operation from the teachers whereas in the past you know, this is your job do it, you know that type of thing. At the end of the day I just think that it's more - I'm now myself, I am ready to listen and I'm democratic about issues. It does work.

Teachers and management are constantly involved in decision-making. However, at the end of the day the buck stops here. I will have to make a decision you know, I will have the casting vote as they say. So, my role is more of a responsibility role, because actually I'm a senior official of the department. I am the accounting officer. So, at the end of the day

whatever decisions they make I've got to see that it's within the context of what the department has prescribed and things like that. So, I just feel that, that is my role. If they make a decision that is contrary to the department and contrary to regulations, then of course I can't stand by it, but as far as possible I try not to shoot them down and have a decision and make them feel like look, their decision counts for something.

I have not experienced any problems in implementing the new policies like the IQMS. I was quite surprised. When I got back from the workshop I thought now how am I going to present this to the staff, what are they going to say you know. So, the workshop required me to take an educator and an HOD to the workshop. So, I went to the workshop, took an HOD, took an educator and I think that was a very good move by the department, because now it wasn't like the principal alone coming back to tell the staff. Now you've got your HOD there and you've got an L1 was there to listen to this. So, I think that smoothed it out a lot, because what I did was I presented part of it, I got my HOD to present part of it and my L1 to present it. So, all three of us presented it and we had to sell it to the staff. So, before we got back to the school, I met with the same two and told them, "Listen, don't say anything negative about it, just give all the positive things about IQMS. If there are questions we will tell them".

When making decisions, it's very difficult to keep up with all policies and all regulations in the department, and sometimes you'll find that when you make a decision, your decision is from the standpoint of the department. Teachers know more of some policies that are currently in place than I do because they attend union meetings and unions inform them of

all the changes. So, sometimes when you make a decision it's not always an informed decision because you would find out that the policy is still negotiated. But in spite of all that, I use the teachers and their knowledge in order to make a holistic decision so that everyone is comfortable with it. So, everyone owns the decision, the decision was not just mine, everyone claims ownership of the decision so that at the end of the day when you want to apply the rule everyone knows that it came from the majority of them.

I get my direction from the staff, their problems, their shortcomings, their influence and the decisions that we take together, and also from the fact that they have no resources but are still motivated to go on with their work. I cannot overstretch my staff. At the moment there are a lot of people who are suffering from depression. I've got to know how to handle those people and to say to them, "I'm with you". Right at the end I've got to decide which direction I want to go in. Networking with other principals has also helped me in managing and leading my school. I listen to them and I always go back to them and say, "I will never do that to my staff". No really, honestly at some meetings of principals, I listen to them as they discuss the problems they have and how they managed them and I'd just say, "If I had a problem like that, I would never manage it that way". So, I always take my cue from them, what they have to say with certain problems. If that had happened at my school I won't take that route. So, when I phone the principal, it's not about how to run the school, but maybe about certain regulations and things, if I do call that principal. But as for managing the school and how to handle a situation, I am here and I know what to do when a teacher is in a particular situation.

You see, principals should understand that you're running an institution. That institution will not run if you do not have all the stakeholders have a say in the institution. If you're going to sit in your office and dictate to the teachers you will find that in the end the institution will prevent itself from going forward. If you have everyone involved in it, from the caretaker, the cleaners right up to the parents, parent bodies you'll find that your school will make greater strides, and I found that over the years, because when I got here I was more or less that way inclined you know, that I'm going to show you. But I learned that you've got to get your feet, you've got to understand your problems, now and then you've got to break the rules, bend the rules to understand the situation, because what you give you'll get in return you know.

There are teachers out there and parents that you know, if you give on the one hand you must get on the other hand, and I just feel that exactly that way just helps to move your institution forward. I mean when I got here there was practically nothing. There was just one roneo machine that you had to do it by hand. I mean today we've got three computers, we've got a fax machine, and we've got a remote control gate. We fenced the front of the school. We've got TV, DVD, sport equipment; we've got all types. We're into baseball. We're into rugby, into swimming and that's because teachers are willing to co-operate because it's a give and take type of thing. I turn a blind eye now and again when you come in late. All right fine, I understand that, but in terms of where the teachers are coming from, I understand their problems. We've got evening classes here, matric classes, and adult classes at night. Teachers are willing to give a hand. So, I think you know, I firmly believe in a participatory management.

My role as a professional manager of the school and the ex-officio member of the governing body is to see to it that there is cooperation between the parents, the learners and the teachers. So, I think you are a leader and you are a manager. I really do, because at the end of the day I mean you've got to set an example you know, you've got to be on time at school. You've got to show people at the end of the day that you are fair and just so that they can trust your leadership, that you will make the final decision. So, I think at the end of the day you are responsible for everything. You know, I enjoy being a principal in the new dispensation rather than before 1994. I think there in some cases you were forced to sell your soul, and I didn't like that. I like the democracy. I like the principles that are attached to democracy in the post and all that.

I think the principal's management style is determined by his values and beliefs, because I mean I know a lot of teachers who are at school who say like you know this principal has this style, he's not a very approachable person you know, that type of thing and a lot of your own personal attitude comes into your post. I think I tend to be more approachable because of the fact that I just think at the end of the day you won't have a job to do and I'm just here by virtue of the fact that I need this position by the virtue of the fact that someone has to run the institution. But it doesn't mean that because I run the institution that I must overload it, because this institution has a bearing on everyone. My parents, my teachers, the institutional staff, the education admin, the institution comes up. It's the principal who must lead the way. So, you need just to bring an institution up, you need that co-operation. I mean look at my staff in 1994 that was my staff there in 1994. It was only about 12 teachers. That was in 2000 at the top. Today I've got 23. The school has grown.

I am happy with the new education policies. I think there are a lot of things there that are in line with departmental policies and there are a lot of things that are not in line with departmental policies because day to day running of the school sometimes forces you to make a decision that could be contrary to the policy of the department, but at that moment it works. It's a bit of risk management, but it helps. The only place and time where I find my ideas conflict with the Education Department is in the classroom. I'm not too happy about the approach in the classroom, about the curriculum, how it is being presented and how to approach the OBE you know, that type of stuff, because I just think that whilst it has a lot of merit, I can understand, but I think it doesn't give the children substance you know, knowledge for them to go out into the world. It's a lot of like learning about themselves, trying to express themselves you know, that type of thing.

My relationship with the staff is both personal and professional. I know the personal problems of practically every one of my staff because they come to me and they talk to me and I try to assist them. So, I don't have that type of, I know this might sound - I have more like a friendly attitude or approach towards my staff. They know they can walk into my office and ask me for anything. I know some of them from training college, I lectured some of them. So, I don't have that type of 'them – me' relationship you know, we try to keep together and we try to work together. When it comes to decision-making I allow them to make collective decisions. If the majority of them say, "No, Mr Ally, it's not going to work", I won't unless I know it's something that has to be done you know.

When implementing a policy like the IQMS, you need to have your developmental team, you need to have some kind of full commitment from the staff. It is very involved. So, it comes with a positive thing, but I think the negative thing outweighs the positive and people

become demotivated if I'm too involved. I know that there is always negotiations with the unions and so on because it's there to protect the employee, but at the same time the employees themselves can't become frustrated because they're so involved. Then the other aspects is the progression pay; once you link pay with development people are going to go for pay, and development is not done at all. We often hear it out of school on IQMS, I mean if I go down the right channel of IQMS, I know a school where the staff sit around a table and says, "Right, give me a 2 for this and a 4 for that point, and a 5 for this", and then they just hand it in and then they get their 1%. Here in my school we have experienced cases where teachers are scoring themselves very high. I have to go sit and negotiate with them over that one issue and it takes long, because the teacher will tell you, "No, but I am filling this in my own way". So, you have to get your staff development team and negotiate with the teacher over a few issues. But the discrepancy of it all is that they're finding out that the schools that are scoring themselves so highly are the schools that sometimes have the lowest matric results. So, there in itself already is a flaw.

It's very critical to balance what you are expected to do according to policies with your actions or decisions resulting from what you are supposed to do according to the situation at your school. Sometimes you have to bend the rules, sometimes you have to look at the policy and see whether the policy has relevance to the school, because every school has a certain milieu, and a certain purpose way of managing the school, because at the end of the day what do we judge a school on. Is there better teaching, better learning and I can say in my school there is teaching and learning, but part of the truth, I don't always follow the policy in order to achieve this. Now, if you can follow the policy and there might not be any learning nor any teaching going on you know, and on the other hand, you can bend the policy and see that there is teaching and learning going on. So, it's just a balancing act between the two. I might say bend the policy, I don't mean break it to the letter, but you can

bend it a bit. The circumstances at the school sometimes don't allow you to follow the policy to the letter.

Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

The teachers at Redman Primary School felt that the principal and the school governing body are taking their school towards the right direction of participative governance and leadership. All the stakeholders are involved in school matters but when it comes to decision-making the principal consults the staff with ready-made decisions. However, they consider him as a transformational and visionary leader who interacts with them at both personal and professional levels, and his relationship with them is based on trust, respect, openness and honesty. The principal only convenes staff meetings once a term, which results in communication breakdown. His attitude towards the school has remained positive since his appointment although he seldom participates in community activities and projects. The school management team and the staff have worked together in implementing the new education policies like the OBE and IQMS. The teachers think that the principal possesses good management and leadership qualities and skills.

Significance of the life story

Mr Allendale's story paints a picture of a young boy who came from a family that was struggling financially and who was discriminated against by people whom he thought he belonged to. As a leader he believes in democracy and he is committed to uplifting and supporting disadvantaged and parentless learners because he has experienced that life himself. He sees his role as solving people's problems especially of learners who are denied access to education because of their race and their parents' financial status.

Working and socializing with his teachers has made him to look at his role and responsibility as a principal differently. He has learnt a lot from his staff since he came to

the school with no leadership training and experience of teaching at a school. He has always based his personal decisions on the situation that prevailed at the school. He has used his teachers' ideas and views to define his new role and construct his professional identity.

He considers himself as a good listener and open to suggestions. His role is more of a responsible person who makes sure that there is cooperation between parents, learners and teachers. He allows his staff to contribute to decision-making but has to make sure that the decisions are within the education policy framework.

Mrs Mtolo's Story

Mrs Mtolo is a middle aged Zulu woman who wasn't looking well on two occasions of our interviews. Maybe that is why she didn't look energetic when I first met her in her school office. She was not impressed when I informed her that our first interview was going to take an hour long. During our interviews she liked expressing her love for the learners and her career. That made her sound more of a mother than a principal. Her school is Nonjiko High School, situated in the deep rural area of Ndwedwe next to Verulem. Nonjiko is one of the oldest schools in the Ndwedwe region, dating from the Bantu Education era. This is how she tells her life story:

Family and Education Background

I was born and brought up in D section at KwaMashu. I grew up in a poor but very supportive family. My mom was the pillar of the family. Although she was not educated, she wanted to see us progressing in life. The highest standard of education in my family was Std 2, I mean my parents. My father was working in one of the butcheries in KwaMashu and

my mother started by selling second hand clothes but eventually ended up selling new clothes and that's what we were dependent on. I grew up with both parents until the age of 17 and our father decided to leave us. So, my mother then supported us and she is the one who took us through secondary education up to tertiary level. She encouraged us all through the way in times of difficulty. She was very strong and supportive. She could tolerate and rise above any form of hardship. So what I am today, I learnt from my mother. I would also say that the Christian way in which I was brought up influenced the way I am now.

My family was different from other families in the community. We were strongly influenced by Christian beliefs. Our family did not perform cultural and traditional rituals, like slaughtering of animals. However, we attended cultural celebrations when they were performed by our relatives or community members. As a family, we only observed religious ceremonies and events like Easter and Christmas celebrations. All the children in the family went to Sunday school. My parents were very strict. Discipline was handled in two ways at home. Two ways in the sense that my parents would sit down with us and talk to us; advise us and sometimes we were given a beating. I was not allowed to go and play with other children. I could only play when I was at school and once I came back home, I had to stay indoors and help with household chores.

I don't have good memories about primary school at all because of the beating that we used to get, except for one teacher, Ma'am Hlophe who gave us her love and was like a mother away from home. When I was sixteen I went to a boarding school and since then I've been away from home. College was nice because there was no one behind me. I had to make my

own decisions you know. I had my own freedom but even then I didn't make wrong choices. At the college that's where I got more motivated and actually looked forward to my future, and fortunately I was able to choose good friends who are all occupying senior positions now and who went through. I joined the ballroom dance club and the SCM and that is where I learnt discipline and accountability. In ballroom you have to be disciplined and you need to account to time and work with people.

University was even better. That's where one I would say became more mature even in terms of making decisions. So, I could feel that I was growing up, but I was focused. I didn't spend much time you know, partying every weekend like other students. I didn't even have a boyfriend, you can imagine. We had to make many good and responsible choices. You know, higher education or university life changes the lives of teenagers. I'm talking from what I observed and experienced, especially if you go there and you are not focused. My role model has been my mother because she used to encourage us never to drop out of school. She used to say that because she couldn't get an opportunity to go to school, she was giving us the opportunity to do so. The teachers at school also played a major role you know, to motivate.

On becoming a Teacher

Teaching is something that has been in me since I was young; it was a calling. Sometimes when I was alone at home I would spend time using bricks as my learners; teaching them and beating them up. Sometimes I would take my brothers and sisters, sit them down and teach them. There is a lot that I've experienced since I took up teaching. I didn't have a

problem getting a job to such an extent that I had to make a choice from a long list of schools they kept at the circuit office. There was a huge demand for teachers that time. So, they needed us most.

I have taught at four schools since then. The majority of teachers at my first school were people I was with at university. I moved from my first school at Ntuzuma because of the 1986 unrest when the learners were stabbed and killed in front of us within the school premises. It was 16 of us who left the school and went to KwaDabeka. I taught there for three years then I was promoted to Mshiyane High. I taught there as an HOD for one year and as acting principal the following year, then I was promoted to this school as deputy principal. I was also given an opportunity to go overseas to study teaching English as a second language. That was during my early years of teaching. So, when I came back I became active in the circuit committee. So, even when I was promoted to the second school I continued to work hard. Then the principal told me that there were promotion posts at Mshiyane and encouraged me to apply for the post.

I was called in for an interview and I made it as an HOD. I was well accepted there and we worked very well with the teachers. But there was one teacher who gave me very serious problems. It was a male teacher. You know sometimes males are not at easy to work with especially if you are a woman and their senior. Nevertheless, the other male teachers were fine and they co-operated with me. This teacher was in my languages department and he wouldn't do his work properly. He would sometimes leave during school hours and go to drive his taxi; you know that type of teacher. The worst thing happened when the principal

left unceremoniously because this teacher had attempted to shoot him. I then became the acting principal and the problem became even bigger.

Two and a half years later I applied for a deputy principal post at this school and was successful at the interview. When I came to this school the attitudes were divided. I think it's normal when a new teacher comes that people become divided. Not all people will accept you, that was the case with me, but gradually they accepted me. There was one female teacher who knew that I was a deputy principal, but didn't acknowledge that. Fortunately the principal with whom I work was a strong honest man. You know when a teacher was supposed to go to the HOD and went to him; he would send him back to the HOD where he was supposed to start. That's what he will do.

On Becoming a School Manager

When I became principal in 1998, there was no pre-training to prepare you. The only training I had, was an HOD workshop that we attended for the whole week at Amanzimtoti. Besides that, we had in-service training in the form of workshops where we were reminded of our duties and responsibilities as part of school management and no leadership skills were taught. The reception I got at this school was not good, especially from some male teachers. They wouldn't accept to be managed by a female. Luckily, I had a little bit experience of managing a school which I obtained from acting as a principal at my previous school. The challenges I experienced there made me strong and wise, although they were not similar to those I experienced at this school. I was, however, prepared to face any management challenges.

My Christian values guided me in performing my leadership and management duties. I have learnt not to exploit my colleagues' misfortunes to my advantage so that I could be seen as an effective and efficient manager. However, one's upbringing and socialization also play a major role in one's professional life. The values that you inherit become imbedded in your belief systems and they become you. To be a teacher and a leader you need to be disciplined. There are times when you feel like fighting fire with fire, but then you have to be disciplined because you know your role as a leader, you also have to be exemplary.

Knowledge sharing with other principals has helped me in managing and leading my school. Like let's say if there is a problem that I have encountered or conflict that occurred at school and I share it with the other principals; they may assist me in how to go about in resolving it. However, I think the principal should use policy to deal with issues at school. Most of the time one has to use the policies as they are because that helps a lot. Sometimes if you are not using the policies as they are, although it depends on which policy you are referring to, and you encounter a problem, people will blame you at the end of the day. People will feel they are not treated fairly. Schools also need to have their own policies, which are informed by the policy of the department. Here at this school we sit down, discuss and all make contributions towards the policy of the school.

To make sure that I am in line with the changes in education, I attend workshops also network. I also meet with union reps and site stewards to develop staff and get feed back when they have attended the union meetings. Staff performance is evaluated through the IQMS. In the case of the principal IQMS evaluates the administrative, the leadership,

strategic planning, and all these performance standards that are there. It also looks at what is done in the classrooms. To be honest with you, you know now it's compulsory to go and teach because there is this IQMS, but ever since I became principal I've never stopped teaching because I enjoy it. Another thing, I use it as a strategy because you know you are able to get the feel of the school from the children. Not that they are going to tell you gossips, but when you communicate with them in class, you begin to understand their concerns and grievances. So it helps to keep me informed. There are times when you feel the pressure, especially when we have to come in over weekends and holidays to teach grade 12. It becomes too much to such an extent that you are unable to do other management duties. Sometimes children are left unattended when you have to attend to office work and visitors.

I believe that the principal has to be clear with all the education policies, especially when one has to deal with behavioural problems. There are children in our school who are no longer supposed to be here because of misbehaving. I have sometimes intervened when the governing body had recommended the expulsion of some learners. I know that I have to be firm against misbehaviour, which is most of the time a result of the abolition of corporal punishment, especially at secondary schools. We are dealing with teenagers and this transformation and issue of human rights has confused our children. They do not understand that their rights go with responsibilities. We teach them the constitution from time to time so that they could understand that other people too have rights and that they should respect them.

A good leader should be firm and responsible, should be able to communicate with all the stakeholders, should also be able not only to communicate in terms of giving people information, but communicate in terms of receiving and listening to what other people are saying, and taking what other people are saying into consideration, working together so that you are able to achieve the common goals that you have set as a leader, because you are actually leading people. You need to be part of them. Working with and among my staff has made me realise that that there are times when one has to be firm, and it has also helped me a lot in terms of realising that I need to be knowledgeable well informed of the current departmental policies. I have changed and as a result have also learnt to accept people as they are.

My duty as the principal and the SMT is to motivate our staff and promote teamwork. If one of us has a good idea, we sell and share it among ourselves. I see myself as a facilitator who makes sure that all staff members are involved in decision-making. There are teachers who are very good at performing or executing their tasks, even the tasks that are supposed to be done by the principal in a very effective manner. So, I think if one doesn't actually involve teachers one is overloading herself. So, I prefer sharing things with them, planning with them and involving them in decision-making. However, it also depends what level of decisions should be taken and who should be involved. There are instances where issues need to be decided by the teachers at a staff meeting. I must admit that sometimes we sit as the members of the SMT and discuss an idea that we later on to pass on to the staff and find out that it is rejected.

The interaction between me and my staff is both professional and social or personal. It varies depending on the context in which we find ourselves at that particular time. There are times when one talks to the members of the staff informally while socialising with them and there are times where one has to be professional at the meetings. As staff we share responsibilities and accountability. Each and every teacher, HOD or deputy has his or her own load or job description. We also have staff development workshops that are run to empower teachers. These are conducted by the SMT and senior teachers. Sometimes departmental officials are invited especially when new policies are discussed. Teachers are also encouraged to network with other teachers from neighbouring schools.

My roles are determined predominantly departmental policies. Then the parents, learners and teachers all give us direction, because it is also on the basis of all these people that you move in order to develop the school. The school mission and vision also gives me direction in my daily activities. What motivates and keeps me going is the love of my job; the love of teaching; the realisation that we are dealing with human beings whom we need to develop to responsible adults and also the support that one has from the parents and the school governing body. Communication is important and transparency especially when it comes to all the matters that people need to know about. One thing that I have learnt especially when it comes to parents, you know if you are transparent with regard to the finances of the school you become popular because everything is clear when it comes to that.

Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

The questionnaires from Nonjiko High School did not reach me although the principal said that she posted them to me in a self addressed and stamped envelope that I gave to her. After that incident I spoke informally with some of the teachers that I know from her school and the responses I got from them were mixed, meaning that they did not come out clearly about how they viewed their principal's leadership abilities. They said that they would have preferred to complete the questionnaire that I spoke to them about. That statement sent a different message to me and I chose to ignore it.

Significance of the life story

The lesson in Mrs Mtolo's story is that even uneducated parents can instil good values in their children and inspire them to achieve greater things in life. Her parents' religious values and teachings and the support from her community gave her faith and strength to persevere in her dreams and goals. The new democratic dispensation does not discriminate between sexes in as far as who should take the leadership of an institution. Mrs Mtolo took advantage of this and worked very hard to achieve her dreams despite the bad incidents she encountered on her way to becoming a principal of a high school.

Her religious values and beliefs made her a caring person despite the difficult challenges she is facing as a principal. She has come out stronger and wiser because she always rose above the challenges that came her way. She sees herself as a firm and responsible leader who communicates with her staff and encourages participative decision-making. She values the

support of her staff because it has given her knowledge and good understanding of her leadership roles and functions.

Sharing ideas and planning with her staff, and making decisions together have made her work of leading the school much easier. It has taken the load off her shoulders because the teachers are willingly doing some of the tasks that are meant to be done by her. However, she warns that the principal should not give too much responsibility to the teachers.

Mr Kunene's Story

Mr Kunene is a grey haired Zulu man, approaching his sixties. He speaks proudly about his parents and his place of birth. He is a soft spoken but focused man. You could see this by the lines that spring up on his forehead as he takes you through the history of his school. He is the principal of Vumezakho, one of the oldest and most prestigious high schools in Umlazi Township, next to Isipingo, outside Durban. It is one of the boarding schools that are found in this township. This is how he tells his story:

Family and Education Background

I was born here in Durban and grew up in section D here in Umlazi. When you grow up in a place such as the one that I grew up in, you are surrounded by people who know you very, very well and treat you like their own child. My father was a very quiet person, a man of very few words. However, he was very supportive and knew how to advise you if you had a problem. I was very close to my mother because of my father's nature. We did share information and experiences with him, but not as often as we did with our mother.

She did almost everything, she did not work, she did not have a job, so she was a full time housewife. My father was a panel beater and worked for a panel beating company. Financially we battled, otherwise socially and being with the family we did not battle. Our family was different from other families in the neighbourhood. We were a religious family. As a child I attended Sunday school and the family observed religious services and ceremonies. I had a good relationship with my brothers and sisters. We used to spend hours in the evenings talking and telling stories because there were no TVs at that time. That made us a close and happy family. Discipline was handled very rigidly in my family. My mother would always use her body language, the way she would look at you would tell you that she does not approve of what you have just done or what you are about to do. You would know what would happen if you went ahead and did it all the same.

My parents encouraged us to receive the best and they wanted us to go to the best school. I received my primary and secondary education here in Umlazi. We had very good teachers at primary school. I remember two of them called Mr Zondi and Mr Sithole. My favourite teachers were Mr Mzizi, for instance, because of his very neat handwriting, the late Mr Ngwenya, the late Mr Jele, who happened also to be my Sunday school teacher. So he would teach me at school during the week and then I would meet him again on Sunday as my Sunday school teacher.

My high school days were full of positive experiences than negatives. Like I said, we were very well looked after. When I grew up there were very few choices for black

people, you could either be a nurse, a teacher, a policeman or a clerk in a state institution like a government office. I knew that I would not be a doctor because my parents would not have been able to pay for the fees in the medical school and in any case I never did mathematics which was a prerequisite at medical school. What I wanted was to be a civil servant. I wanted to work in an office because if I could show you my results for the first year courses, I also have a course called public administration, because I did have that in me that I wanted to work for the public, then I said maybe the public I want to serve is the youth as a teacher and that is where I chose this career path.

From high school I went to the University of Zululand to do STD which was a two year course at the time. University was a strange place because you were on your own, far away from home. However, I made new and met old friends, and I learnt to make my own decisions. That made me grow, matured and be independent. The experiences of higher education can be negative or positive in the life of a teenager. I can remember some boys who learnt drinking, smoking, falling in love, and having sex at the university. So you have got to be very, very careful because that's where you can be destroyed and that is where you can also be built into a person with a particular character.

On Becoming a Teacher

In my career I only taught at two schools. I started teaching at Makhumbuza, my principal there was Mr Shandu, who is now retired, a good man. He was a good English speaker who would teach us how to speak the language. I don't know whether I learnt from him to speak the way I do now. I worked there for 10 years as a post level 1

educator. I was transferred to this school as a post level one educator in 1985. I was well received and I served for three or four years before the department created H.O.D post and I was promoted and became an HOD in this school in 1987 and then in 1992 I became one of the deputy principals in the school and then in 1998, I became the principal of the school. So that is why I say I have only taught in this school and it looks like my career is going to end that way.

What I sometimes find difficult about being a teacher is realizing your goals. That's the most difficult thing about being a teacher because when you leave home in the morning you want to do a lot of things, and to achieve one small thing, you will need to do a lot because people are not like objects, they have mood swings, you find that the particular person, you would have earmarked for a particular task, would come to school the following morning in a bad mood. Maybe he or she is the only person who could do it and then you will have to postpone until the right day. Sometimes when you want to achieve something you need to win the support of other members of staff and that's not an easy thing to do, because people may say we have come to teach, we have come to serve and they have got their own agendas, so you may find that, what you want to do clashes with what people think should be done that day.

On Becoming a School Manager

I was fortunate that before I was appointed as principal I received some training. Before I became an HOD we would attend a number of courses or workshops on management, which took a day or a week, depending on the time of the year, sometimes during the

holidays and sometimes during school hours. Our school was what was called a territorial school. Territorial schools were privileged schools because whenever we needed something we could deal directly with the provincial education department. We could bypass the local inspectorate and go direct to the minister or the secretary as they would call them. So it was easy for them to hand-pick those people they wanted to groom for senior positions and take them to the workshop where they are trained. That training helped me a lot, for instance they would call us into a workshop and say that the main focus is delegation, why do we delegate, how do we delegate? What is the necessity of delegating, and then they will deal with that as a topic.

My upbringing has also contributed a lot to my career, for instance as I mentioned that growing up in a big family makes it relatively easy for me to make friends and to interact with people, communicate with people because I grew up in a big family so the staff is like a family to me. I just have to continue doing things the way I did them when I grew up although slightly at a different level. I believe that a leader should be able to give instructions to the subordinates. At school we have got to have rules so that we can instruct people. Some people, because of their nature do not need that because they like to take the initiative.

I was not a principal before the 1994 dispensation but I was a deputy principal. During that time principals used to take decisions on their own. After 1994 many policies have been introduced in education. The process of teacher involvement began at schools where you start by saying to the SMT, we have this problem, we need to find a way to solving

it, this is how it came about and then you share ideas and then have a decision then you go to the staff. We even do that with the learners now who are in the RCL. I took over as principal in 1998, but we had already started using the democratic principles even before that. The previous principal, himself, had already changed his approach or his policies before he left.

I literally ran the school when the previous principal was still here, because he would call us to a meeting as the SMT and say, “I have a dream. You are going to turn into reality. How, that’s your baby. I’m the head of this institution and mine is to dream dreams, yours is to make my dreams a reality”. Then he would leave the office and later come into my office and he'd say, “Look, this is what we are going to do”. Then we would draw up a plan, something of that nature. Then we'd go back to him and present the document. He would then say that part I like very much, that one no, these are my reasons, then we would talk around that. Then finally he would say I endorse it, let’s implement it.

I also dream a lot and bounce my ideas against the SMT. I have done that with the coming internal examinations. We have discussed the examinations with the SMT and I have delegated to them. For instance, I won't be making a presentation tomorrow at the meeting with the staff; the Deputy Academic will be doing that. I will only talk once he has made his presentation to say what the deputy has said, has the full backing of the SMT and the principal. My role as the principal is to provide support and guidance. It doesn't mean that just because you have discussed something with a teacher, you let go. You don’t let go. They are free to come to you and say I hit a snag. I was trying to do this

and that and that. What can you suggest? Sometimes you throw it back to him or her, and say did you think of anything when that happened. The person will say no, I did not. Then you want me think for you, go back and think of something and you come back. Being a professional manager and an executive member of the governing body are two different roles. As a school manager, you have got to work towards striking a balance. There is a set of rules from the Department of Education that tell you how to manage or lead the school. I call them 'hard rules'. Then we have those rules that we develop as a school, based on the hard rules and I call them 'soft rules'. So as a principal, you must keep at the back of your mind that you have to look after the interests of the learners. You need to combine both the hard rules and the soft rules and then you will never go wrong.

Some principals do not apply the policies as they are, but they combine them with their values and beliefs to develop their school policies. I think I do that myself, but whatever soft rules you develop or draw up, they should never be in conflict with the statute.

Although we are not happy with the abolishing of the corporal punishment, it does not mean that you should go on with caning the learners because you believe that it is the best method to discipline them, because you will get into trouble. You have got to find an alternative to corporal punishment and discuss it with your staff.

There is a big gap between policy and implementation. Some Departmental policies are destructive and do not achieve what they are meant to. The IQMS as an instrument is fine; it's okay but the implementation thereof leaves much to be desired because people were not honest when they were giving themselves scores. The tendency was for people to award a score of four for every aspect of the work that they were doing. Now, the

implication is that these people do not need training. There isn't any more room for development because if a person scores a four that means that person is excellent which is not the case. I think there is a problem that the scoring is linked with the monetary incentives, people want money, they don't think about development. So, that is the flaw in IQMS, but as an instrument, on paper it looks good, but when you implement it and people concentrate more on the money aspect of it, that's where it creates problems for our staff. So, in a nutshell it's not working.

My major challenge as the principal is change. Our country is going through a period of transition. There are new things almost each and every day. Whenever I go out to attend the principals' meeting I come back and inform staff about new developments. Change is something that makes one uncomfortable, it takes us out of our comfort zones and people do not like that, and some people are resistant to change, so it makes it difficult for you to implement new things. That is the main challenge, and also the fact that we are in a democracy and people think that just because you have a new Constitution we are a democratic country; they can do as they please. You have rights and the responsibilities should always balance.

My previous experiences with my colleagues and subordinates have influenced my present position in a number of ways, you know. I don't know whether I was fortunate or unfortunate, as deputy I did just about everything. So, there is very little that I do not know about the school and about how we should run the school, and the relationship that I have had with my colleagues as a deputy hasn't changed much. In order to deal with the daily demands and expectations from your staff and stakeholders you have to have regular meetings with all the stakeholders as much as is possible, not only if possible to meet with parents, but with the senior management team you have got to have regular meetings, and with the staff we have what we call stand-up meetings. We meet every day, even if it means

saying there is nothing to report. It also gives us the picture of who is ill and who is not ill, but in the main the stand-up meetings is for informing staff what would be happening today, or who is planning to do what which may disrupt teaching one way or the other.

I subscribe to the policy of situation and leadership. That is my belief. As the situation demands I respond. For instance, if I can give you an example, if I should get somebody as a deputy principal who has never been an HOD, I would treat him rather differently from somebody who before becoming a deputy, started off by being an HOD, that person is bringing with him or her some experience in a managerial position. So, I will not disturb that person from scratch in terms of the training that I will be required to do for that person. So, I'll be starting that person somewhere, I'll have to find out from him how much does he know, because I don't want to bore this person and train him on things that he or she already knows or is capable of doing. I should know at what level of development is this person and I start from there. So, that is the situation.

I have grown and one thing I have realised is that you should know the strengths and the weaknesses of your people, and this has also exposed my own weaknesses as well and I am not shy to say to them, "I know I'm weak when it comes to this, so I need your support when I deal with a particular issue". So, I have grown as a person because of what I learnt from my teachers' experiences. What gives me direction in my work are the learners' needs and expectations. The learners have come to learn. If they don't learn it means we have not done our job. That's the source of inspiration, that is the driving force behind any person who goes to school with the purpose of teaching. The learners must come to school to learn and that's it. Any other thing besides teaching and learning should not be entertained at school. That's the core business of the school.

When you lead an organization you've got to be committed, you've got to have goals. If you don't have goals then it becomes a problem. You must involve your staff in making those

goals and decisions. What I have also learnt is that there are certain skills that you need as a leader, one which is always taken for granted is listening and we pay dearly for not doing that. When people knock on the door and they say, "There's a problem, you didn't do this and this quite well, we'd like you to reconsider your decision". You must listen to them and even go to the extent of apologising. As the SMT we involve the general staff in the decision-making process so that they will feel as valued members of the team. What we do here, we meet as the SMT and take a stand on a particular issue and then we present this to the staff. There are times when the decision that we have taken gets the support of the staff and is carried out, but there are times when it is not carried out because a member of the staff will come up and say, "When you were looking at this matter did you consider that if we take this route, this is the effect that it will have on the teachers, the learners or the parents?". If we haven't considered that and they come up with an even better suggestion, then that is the one that is implemented because it makes sense and we've considered all these various aspects that are relevant to the issue at hand.

Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

The school governing body at Vumezakho High are working harmoniously together and that has led to the governance, leadership and management of the school to improve. This has also encouraged participative leadership and management at the school. The teachers at the school are happy with the way in which the principal involves all the stakeholders in school matters such as the employment of staff. However, when it comes to decision-making the staff is divided into two, with some saying that the principal consults the staff before making a decision but does not use their input or simply make his own decision and enforce it on the staff, while others are saying that the principal allows a democratic and collective decision-making at all levels.

The teachers regard their principal as a transformational, motivational and visionary leader who interacts with them at both personal and professional levels. They see their relationship with the principal as being based on trust, respect, openness and honesty. Although he meets with his staff twice a month, he has not managed to implement the education policies successfully. He is regarded as having a positive attitude towards the school and good management and leadership qualities and skills. He is often involved in the community's celebrations and projects.

Significance of the life story

Mr Kunene grew up in a religious family, so he has been guided by his religious values and beliefs throughout his general and professional lives. He believes that a disciplined leader will always command respect from his or her followers. He learnt from his father to value his family as he does his staff and learners. He has a lot of good dreams for his school and believes that he will achieve them if he has full support from his staff.

Growing up in a big family has made it easy for him to socialize with his staff and community. He believes in working through the school challenges and problems together with his staff. He believes that he is there among his staff as a word of reason and as a provider of support and guidance. We learn from his story that a good principal always look out for the interests of the learners. He does this by combining his experiences, values and beliefs with the education policies to deal with daily situations at his school. He also deals with changes and new challenges by holding regular meetings with all the stakeholders. A good leader should be aware of his people's strengths and weaknesses so that he or she can support where there are weaknesses and tap into the knowledge and experience of his or her staff when faced with challenges beyond his or her knowledge.

Mr Vezi's Story

Mxolisi Vezi is a black, Zulu-speaking religious man. He has a big structure you'd think he was once in wrestling. He takes pleasure in telling about his youth and his parents. During our interviews you could feel that he has vast knowledge of the education system. Like most of the six principals, he started teaching during the early 1980s but unlike others, it only took him four years to become principal of a senior secondary school where he has been serving for 19 years. Sithembile Secondary School is an ex-Department of Education and Training (DET) School situated in Clermont, outside Pinetown in the eThekweni Municipality. It is one of the best schools, in terms of discipline and grade twelve results. This is how Mxolisi Vezi tells his story:

Family and Education Background

I was born in Verulam, the rural part of that which is Amawotana, under Inanda District. My father was a teacher and because of that, we were a respected family. He subsequently became the Inspector of Schools. He was a very strict person, a no nonsense person, highly moral person, and a highly religious person. My mother was a housewife; she never worked. She was a very moral person and very strict too, fully involved in the community activities. When I was young I did not really like them being strict, but now that I'm a grown up I realize that they did me good by being strict because when I look at the people that we grew up with, whose parents were not strict, today they are nowhere. But having been brought up in such a controlled environment, controlled family, strict parents, that has put me somewhere and it has also inculcated moral values in me, which I am using now that I am an adult.

We were brought up under very strict conditions; therefore we would hardly go out to play with other kids. The only time we would get time to play was when we went to fetch water at a nearby stream. My father hardly had time with us. In fact, my father was distancing himself from us, up to a point that when he was aged he wanted us to come closer to him and sit down and discuss issues, but we were not used to it. We feared him, so we never had time to come closer. At least my mother, we could sit down with my mother and discuss issues. Being the eighth born, if we had any problems we would discuss our problems more with the bigger brothers and bigger sisters than with our parents. So we were not very close to our parents. Discipline in the family was handled rigidly. I would say firm, rigid and uncompromising. We however, grew up very well. We shared very good and common understanding, very good family relations, and family networks.

Attending religious ceremonies and services was compulsory to all in the family. Every Sunday as youngsters we used to go to Sunday School and as we grew up we tended to be the teachers in the Sunday School when we were at secondary school level, and that applied to all of us at home. As people that came from an enlightened family in the area, as I indicated it was a rural area, it was expected that children of the Vezis will take that leadership role at a Sunday school level. Even at church, being a rural area, my family was like a nucleus in our Methodist church because the services were conducted at home up to a point when my father built kind of a structure that was used as a church. I still attend church even now, although I shifted from home to my own house, family, in Glenwood. I'm still a staunch church person and also occupy a position in the church.

We were brought up fairly well because my father was an enlightened person who could take us to school, although given the number of siblings, life was not always easy. At school, I never had any problem. I never repeated a class. I was also never bullied at school because I was popular. There was never a time when I was frustrated. We also never had any financial troubles or problems because my father was a teacher. He made it a point that he established contact with the teachers at school so that in the event that there was any trouble or problem, they would contact him directly because the phones were not easily accessible. It was the norm at home that once you passed Standard 6 then you'd go to the secondary school or go to the boarding school. Life in the boarding school is totally different from the life at home but you eventually get socialized into it. So I didn't have a problem of adjusting from home to the boarding school. I just got on very well with everyone and everything.

My main role model was my father. My mother and my bigger brothers, especially the second born Cyril, are the people I tended to emulate when I was growing up. I'm certain that I wanted to be like my father. As I've indicated, growing up in the rural area you hardly have any role models, so at least at home we were perceived as better people, so I had no reason to look for somebody outside who didn't have the qualities that I could see within the family.

When we were at primary school, we walked a distance of about 30 kilometers to and from school barefooted. I still have memories of that, and what is interesting is that we never played any truant, we never missed going to school, although we had to travel such

long distances. It was kind of a latent discipline that was instilled unintentionally in us. Mr Ntshingila was my favourite teacher at the primary school. He was my principal in the primary school and Afrikaans teacher. In the high school, Professor Bhengu who is former Minister of Education was my principal and was quite a good person who I can still remember in my life. There was also a certain Mr Sambo. Mr Sambo was a disabled teacher, but very interesting character. He was never shy about his disability and in fact he even joked about it and he was loved by everybody, and very influential to everyone. There was also Mr Mzoneli who was my geography teacher and he was the person who influenced me to take geography.

From the secondary school I moved to Dlangezwe High School, and from Dlangezwe I moved to the University of Zululand where I did my B.A. and my University Education Teachers Diploma. The transition from high school to the university was quite a difficult one. I was coming from a strict, well disciplined, well controlled situation at Dlangezwe High School, into a licentious environment in the university, where there was no one to tell you to do what at what time. You did as you pleased, so it was taken that you are grown ups who know right and wrong. So that slightly put me out because I was not used to such a kind of life, but I was able to adjust after quite some time. At the university I was the president of the University of Zululand Methodist Society.

I would say it's kind of dicey for a child to grow up under strict conditions, because the minute that person goes out to an environment that is free, at times he gets confused. I've seen quite a number of students that really failed to cope in a free environment because

they were too protected. Some do manage, but there are those that fail. I think in life it is important to instil the correct moral values in a person than be over-strict, because those who came to the university with correct moral values did cope. I am one of them. Those who were protected and cocooned by their families; when they went there and experienced freedom, they failed to cope.

When I went to university I wanted to be a psychologist. As a result I majored in Geography and Psychology. But when I completed my degree, my father influenced me to be a teacher, and coincidentally I had majored in Psychology which tends also to feed into teaching because there's guidance and counselling, so I found myself being attracted into teaching. But if it was my choice, I was dreaming of being a psychologist, and I was influenced by a lot of psychologists that came to address us on career guidance at high school. That person succeeded in selling that profession or career to us such that for many of us psychology was our first choice. We were going to be psychologists. But through the family influence, I had to take teaching.

On Becoming a Teacher

I started teaching in 1983 when I came out of university. I started teaching in KwaMashu at Isibonelo High School. I taught under a very organised principal, Mr N.O. Nhlapho, who is now a retired inspector. The school was very organised and I learned quite a lot from it. I never had any problems up to the time when in 1986 I applied for a post of Head of Department in Humanities at our school and I went to the interview. At the interview something very strange happened; at the end of the interview the Chief

Superintendent at that time, said I must not leave because he wanted to speak to me at the end of all the interviews.

The Superintendent called me in when the interviews were over and he said, “We picked up from what you told us that you are staying in Claremont and we are desperate in Claremont, we have a school that has been running for over a year without a principal, and you are applying for a post of Head of Department at Isibonelo. Would you be interested in taking up a principal post at a school in Claremont?” which is this school where we are sitting now. I was a bit jittery because at that time I didn’t have any experience in the leadership and I was still very young. I happened to be staying in Claremont and I knew the reputation of this school, and I was a bit resistant, but they persuaded me, urged me, until he said he was instructing me to come over to Sithembile to be the principal. So I had to, it was now an instruction, so I had to succumb. So I came over here at the beginning of January 1987 to be the principal of this school.

On Becoming a School Manager

I jumped two levels. If you’re talking about hitches, I did experience some hitches at the beginning in 1987 when I came. It was mainly the disciplinary problems. Students were really uncontrollable, very rude. But I managed to set up the structures of communication to get them to understand, to get them focused, get them to buy into the vision and the objective of being at school. Fortunately when I came here the teachers were desperate because they had been without a leader for over a year, so they were dying for a leader

that would be visionary that would be able to take the school, drive the school forward. So I did get the full support from the educators.

The students were a bit of a problem, and the community also was a problem. The most important thing about teaching is the love of teaching. You must love the career for you to be successful in it. And the second important thing about it is you must have the necessary credentials for you to be successful in teaching. And I think it is important also to engage in life-long learning in teaching. It is important also to engage in professional development in teaching, especially if you are to rise to the level of leadership, it's important that the teachers should respect you for your professional development, the credentials that you are carrying with you. So that inspired me to further my studies to the level of B.Ed and up to the level of the Masters Degree in Education, and there are a lot of theories that I learned on leadership and management when I was pursuing my studies.

Having experienced being in a school that was under-resourced was the biggest challenge for me when I became principal. I had to try and provide the resources for my school as I'm now in a position of trust and authority. I go all out to make sure that I assist my students, because I think one of the challenges of the leader is that you get to do your best to assist the institution that you are leading. So I go out and try and get the resources to assist the students. Maybe the other challenge having gone through such experiences is, I would love that my students would come to me as one of the people that make positive contributions in their lives. I want to be counted as one of the people.

The other challenge was that I've never wanted to disappoint my father. My father, having been a teacher, having been a principal, having been the superintendent, and was a very good role model for me so I want to hoist or uphold that reputation which the family has seen me through. Maybe the other thing is that I've always been in the leadership. From primary school I was class leader, and even in high school I was class leader, so there has been that leadership quality in me that was identified from an early age when I look at it now.

I was initiated into management through help, through experience and training as it were. I think the main thing that assisted me was I enrolled for further studies in management through the University of Natal, and there are a lot of theories that I got around management. When I became the principal, we would have meetings where the Superintendent would share with us some strategies, but I think the other important platform that really helped me was the principals' forum, which was called the Principals' Association. That platform was very important because when I started we were still together with the schools in KwaMashu and so there was a KwaMashu Principal's Association, which was very active. So I learned a lot from that Association, because it was a forum where we would share the problems and the expertise.

The teachers at this school are fairly and actively involved in decision-making. If you talk to teachers here, already they have duties allocated to them with regards to the fact that the system dictates that we involve people through the SMT, therefore it's no longer about principals. There is the SMT in which we're talking about Heads of Department;

those are people who are in full charge of what is happening in the class. In the old dispensation, you would understand it was the principals that would go into the class, that would do the class visits and assess the teachers. We all knew how to do that, and I don't regard that as taking the authority from me. I regard that as participatory management, and that is the involvement of the people.

Concerning my leadership style, I can confidently say that I'm being democratic in the way I approach teachers and I'm not dictatorial, and I think to substantiate on that or support that, in this school I introduced committees or commissions if you like which go a long way in devolving responsibility to almost everybody and teachers enjoy it. Everyone feels important in his or her own committee. There are coordinators in the committees who feed onto the SMT or feed onto the office on the achievements that are being done by those people, and every grade has a grade principal or a grade coordinator and anything that pertains to the grade, before it comes to me, it goes through the grade coordinator, and I think that's one way of trying to be collegial in the approach, inclusive in the approach and democratic if you like in the approach.

Good leadership, as far as I'm concerned, is democratic leadership, being able to respect the views of other people and listening when people talk, delegating responsibilities to the other people, being empathetic, that's also part of the qualities of good leadership. You've got to be empathetic. A good leader would be a person who does what he's expected to do and a person that goes beyond the call of duty, a person who goes beyond the school, a person

who is innovative, a person who is proactive, a person who is interested in good performance, a person who does things according to the regulations.

I think I have developed in my leadership through working with the staff, because I've learnt to understand the dynamics of leadership through the staff that I'm leading. I have learnt to sympathise, because it is true that people have a lot of problems. Some of them work-related, some of them personal problems, I've developed that kind of sympathy or even empathy with the teachers. Some of them have made me develop democratically because I've seen that it's not all the time that people would do what you think is right. It's also important that you respect the views of other people, because some of them they may be junior, but they will come up with sound ideas.

I do understand that the unionization concept is a new concept, but even at national level it's people participation, it's democracy, which we never had in the past. People must have a voice; people must participate. Teachers are participating through their organised structure, which is the unions, and we as principals have got to adjust and learn to work with these unions. I don't see, I've never had a problem with the unions, because I don't perceive them as interfering with my work. I perceive them as colleagues in the same vision, which is getting the work done in the school. My approach or my viewpoint is that the whole system is collaborative, therefore we need to work together with relevant stakeholders.

My role as the school principal is to lubricate the system. That's my role. Secondly, my role is to ensure that there is an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and

learning. My role is to market the school. My role is to be PRO of the school, to interact with the visitors like I'm interacting with you, and to ensure that the policy of the Department is carried out clinically as required by the Department of Education, to ensure that the relevant people attend to correspondence that comes to the school. And I don't share the view that principals must get into the class and teach. It's one area that has frustrated me because I don't see myself as a teacher – I see myself as a manager of this school. To me that's one grey area that still needs to be addressed. Either you're a teacher or you're a principal. It has even been said, the president said, teachers must teach and managers must manage. How can you be a manager and a teacher at the same time in the classroom?

Two days ago we sent teachers to a workshop, three teachers to a workshop; they have come back with a report back. We are starting to introduce the levels of the IQMS. We haven't experienced any difficulties in implementing it, but I have expressed my misgivings which are that it says that we as principals must get into the class and teach and we're going to be assessed on the strength of that, and to me that doesn't make sense because I'm designated as a manager of this school and yet I'm expected also to get into the class and teach. I think that somewhere that needs to be looked into because we have a lot of responsibilities more than getting into the class.

The period before 1994 had a lot of frustrations in education. However, the new dispensation also introduced changes and that was also a confusing period when new policies were introduced. So after 1994 we started seeing things happening, policies

getting into place, and we know the direction now so I think I'm quite comfortable being a principal now. Leadership style should be a combination of both because you cannot really say you lead the school according to your personality. There are policies in place that you are required to follow, and I think your personality then would assist you in influencing the policies of the Department, but I think the leadership style has got to be in line with the policy of the Department. You cannot do as you please.

I brought quite a substantial amount of experience from my previous school. I happened to have served in a very organised school. That's where I started my career in teaching and that was at Isibonelo High School. I'm happy to say that my principal Mr Nhlapho is a very organised person. In terms of the administration he was excellent, administration and the management of the school he was excellent. There's a lot that I emulated from him, that I copied from him and I tried to practise it here at school. If I may cite just one example, he used to be very emphatic when he spoke to us in the school. If you want a staff meeting to address important issues and not to get derailed, never address a staff meeting in your vernacular, because people there get a chance of saying all that they want to say and some of the things being irrelevant. Just be official when you handle the meeting and in any case you are expected to handle it or to run your business in English, because that's a language of teaching in the school.

My whole background and personal experience really does play a significant impact in my job. One of the teachings I've got when I grew up was perseverance and as a leader you've got to persevere in what you are doing, and the art of listening. When people talk you've got

to listen. Give them time to listen, give yourself time to listen to what they are saying and don't just expect people to think the way you think, and I think I was brought up in that way where I was time and again reminded it's important to respect the opinion of another person before you can actually get that person to think the way you think. The discipline that I learnt at home has helped me to tackle many problems that I encountered when I came especially to this school. Strong moral values, I learned at home have also assisted me to cope with the pressures at school and in the community where I live. My religious background which was instilled in me by my parents has also assisted me to deal with the problems, which I encounter now that I am serving in the school community.

I think policy acts as a framework and a guideline. There is also a discretion. There are times when you have got to use your discretion. For example, in terms of policy we are not allowed - you don't have the right to close the school. Before you can close the school you must seek the mandate from the head of the Department of Education, but there were instances when I had to take a decision based on the circumstances prevailing on the ground at that time, and then after that inform the head of the department that owing to urgency, owing to a person's situation at that time, I had to take this decision then account for that after that. So, you have got to use - there is nowhere where the policy says do not use your discretion. So, we have got to integrate the policy with the prevailing circumstance at the time, but act within the guidelines or the framework of the policy. That's how I balance it out. I also use the policy to respond to daily demands and expectations from my staff and parents. I've got to make sure that my response is within the dictates of the policy. If I'm to take a decision I should make sure that that does not clash with the policy of the department.

Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

The feeling of the teachers at Sithembile High is that the quality of leadership, governance and management has improved since the principal was appointed. The relationships between the principal and other members of the school governing body are positive and this encourages participative governance and leadership. All the stakeholders are involved in the school matters as well as in a democratic and collective decision-making. The staff regards the principal as a motivational and visionary leader who interacts with them at a strictly professional level and whose relationship with them is based on trust, respect, openness and honesty.

The school management team, led by the principal, and the staff are working together to successfully implement the education policies such as the OBE and IQMS. The principal meets with the staff once a month and often participates in the community's celebrations, activities and projects. The staff sees him as having good leadership and management skills, an ability to initiate things and act decisively, and a positive attitude towards the school.

Significance of the life story

Mr Vezi also has a religious background and comes from a respectable family. A lesson that we learn from his story is that as a young person, you must not think that your parents' successes will make it easy for you in life. However, you must use that to build your own future by learning from them. He made use of the moral and religious values he inherited from them to shape his professional career and identity.

We also learn that role models in one's life play a very important role. The influence of his teachers and lecturers gave him direction in terms of choosing his career. He was influenced by many psychologists he came across and ended up majoring in psychology. At school he specialised in guidance and counselling as his teaching subjects.

He believes that a leader should be well prepared, academically and otherwise, for the leadership role he or she wants to take. It helps the leader to solve problems, and develop and manage effective communication structures. He gives us an example of a very volatile situation that he came across when he was deployed to his school. He used his psychology and personal knowledge to change the mindset of the teachers and parents.

A good leader is somebody who socialises responsibly with his or her staff and learn from that relationship. One can learn and understand the dynamics of leadership and roles and responsibilities and how to communicate well with his or her staff. Communication gives you an idea about how people perceive your leadership abilities and style. This will help you in changing your leadership style and re-construct your identity.

Dr Vish Chetty's Story

Dr Chetty is an English-speaking Indian man in his late forties. He is a very energetic man who can engage you in a conversation for hours without stopping. He was very excited to tell me about his childhood years in Chatsworth and his excellent performance at school. Dr Chetty was very welcoming and prepared to assist me with my research, as he was also involved in a number of research projects himself. He is a principal of Nedbank, a big ex-HOD secondary school situated in Wyebank next to New Germany, outside Pinetown. Indian and African learners who come from Wyebank, Clermont, KwaDabeka, New Germany, Molweni, Hammersdale, Botha's Hill and the neighbouring informal settlements now equally populate the school. This is how he tells his story:

Family and Education Background

I was born in an area known as Kingsrest, that's on the Bluff but we were later forcibly removed by the Group Areas Act to Happy Valley in Tarra Road where I spent much of

my growing up years and did my Primary school education. From Happy Valley we were once again moved to the housing scheme in Chatsworth at Unit 7, and that's where I did my high schooling and where I spent most of my best years. However, in Chatsworth I had to put up with all the problems of township life, overcrowding, lack of amenities, and long distances to walk to schools.

I owe much of my success to the motivation of my parents; both were ordinary people with limited education. My father was quite a creative individual who worked basically moulding things, making pots and making lampshades, designing it out of metal. He also had a part-time job on Saturday, where he used to work at Greyville and Clairwood racecourses to make some extra money to support the family. My mother never really worked but was very committed to ensuring that all of us went through High School and was very supportive in my years of university and she was able to follow my career right through.

Religion was very important in my family, up till now no matter how busy I am I have been taught that I must light the God lamp daily, in the morning and in the afternoon and that is like you know like how you eat, you've got to do that and my son has also learnt that, it's very important, very important. We had to attend all religious services and ceremonies. In fact it was porridge prayers that any one aunt or uncle's house it is expected that the entire family irrespective of your commitments must be present at that place, it still goes on, and you cannot change that and I don't think, I don't think you're going to change that.

My family was very strong and very demanding with strict rules and guidelines.

Discipline was handled very firmly. There was no scope for sort of performance that you were very upset. You had to follow the rules. In the evening, after doing the chores, we had to do our homework or read a school book. When it came to meal times, there was no such thing as children eating later. Growing up was a struggle but what I was grateful for was my mother's resourcefulness. She used to go to the morning market in Durban to help her mother who owned a couple of stalls there. In the afternoon she would come back with all the vegetables that were not sold on that day for us to cook and eat.

I had too many friends; in fact just about everybody was a friend. My parents were also very strict about who I made friends with. I was not allowed to stand on street corners. We did of course run around and play ball on the road, but I had to be at home at a certain time. There were no youth clubs in our times. However, the Montford Library was opened and we used to go there even for our political meetings. I was able to withstand peer pressure. I didn't smoke or drink right through university until after I started teaching here.

I did well in school and all that, so in that respect my parents were very supportive. I owe a lot of my success to Mrs. S. Naidoo who taught me at primary school. She motivated us a lot and she gave me my first book to read, entitled "Reach for the Sky". Most of my primary and secondary school days were very positive. I would say all my life I was blessed with excellent teachers all very strongly motivated. The years in Durban Westville University, 1976 to 1978, were very difficult. Those were the years in which

students became political. In the first year we were on boycott and many of us were convinced that the exams would not be written.

Suddenly they changed the decision and we had to write and many, many failed. I was one of those, and my other friend; I think it was just the two of us who passed all five courses. It didn't look good when the others had to repeat the year and that was distressing when many of them had to leave that year. Those courses we obtained were for the year, and you had to produce three, if not, your bursary was not renewed. I'm very, very grateful for that I passed all my courses, and I didn't fail anything at university. I did well in History, English, and obviously Speech and Drama that I enjoyed, but a very costly course. I wanted to do it at second year level, but I couldn't do it because it was expensive.

When I entered university, I had no intentions of being a teacher. I had gone out and enrolled for law. I wanted to do law and I was quite excited about that. But one day I accompanied this girl, she was in my class, to go and get her registration done. I had applied for teaching as a student and had received a reply, but there was no way I was going to do teaching. When this girl got a bursary of R500, I looked at it carefully and I said, I was at the bottom of my class list, and to teach only Economics they gave her a bursary of R500. That was the last day of the interviews for these bursaries. I looked at it carefully and I thought about it, so I went in and I told Dr van der Walt that I had applied for teaching and the reply came and I put it somewhere. He said to me, "What can you teach? What would you like to teach?" I showed him my results. He said, "Can you teach English?" I said yes and he said,

“Sit down, you can get a bursary”. Teaching then became my future career. From that bursary I was able to fund myself, pay the fees and buy the books.

On Becoming a Teacher

I started teaching at Greytown High. It was sad to leave home but I was paid a good salary and I was able to pay for boarding. The committee there was very acceptive of me and when I went there I made a difference immediately in terms of results. In the first year I taught matric History and I got involved in the sporting and community activities. From there I came back to teach at Wingen Heights. I had a good career there. From Wingen Heights I got promoted to Phoenix, Palm View Secondary. I had good experiences there where I taught a junior class as well. From Palm View, there was a problem in searching for a Head of Department of English here with the principal. The principal worked very, very seriously to get me here. Then I finally got here as head of Department. I was HOD for eight years and I acted as Deputy Principal after that.

The English Department was one of the strongest departments in the school. We had a hundred percent pass in the subject in the matric examinations in all the years. We worked as a good team, and that is what is worrying me now when we are even struggling to have meetings. Those days my teachers never complained, that was in 1991. We could even finish our meetings at five o'clock and there was no problem. That was long before 1994, in fact it was in 1991 when we admitted our first two Black students.

I was very fortunate that my first promotion was the first that I applied for. I got my HOD post and people were shocked about it. In my subject I was appointed the senior certificate examiner, and I did that for ten years up to the post-apartheid era. Once I became principal it became difficult for me to continue. From the management that existed here, there was another senior person who did not apply for the post because she felt that I would automatically get into it. So, it was a very smooth thing into the principalship, but of course you'll get one or two politicians who would like to raise issues. I think the community was excited, given my standing at that time.

My experiences in the union had an influence on the way I managed the school. I would say my years in unionism far exceed the knowledge that I gained at university in terms of the practical hands-on leadership development, character development and so on, it was excellent. That's an excellent package on its own you know, the leadership, the conflict resolutions, as a branch chairman and at TASSA I was the last vice-president for publications, interacting at high profile built my confidence related to teachers, parents, departmental officials. I was also secretary of the board of trustees that actually took care of handing over to SADTU. I'm quite happy that I'm here although the management is not yet fully settled here. We still have some disputes and all that. Once I'm quite sure that everything has settled, maybe I'll look at something more than the school.

I enjoyed my teaching and I don't think there is anything difficult about it. However, nowadays teachers are not committed in their work. They are in the profession for security, for monthly income, housing subsidy, medical aid cover, and all. I agree that teachers have

the right to strike. I also want to be assured of my job security, but we must also be concerned about the future of the learners. What I did as a teacher, I don't see that now. People are tired and are sleeping for the whole year, and only come alive when there is a strike. That worries me a lot.

On Becoming a School Manager

I was appointed as a principal in 1998. At that time we went to one or two courses arranged by the Department of Education, but I don't think it was an approach to equip us for this very important job. I think that the Department has to do a lot more and to understand that school managers need intense training, not something like meetings called by SEMs to tell the principals to do one, two and three. When you talk about leadership training I'm talking about calling people with expertise to address leadership issues. That is leadership training, getting high profile people from industry and business to give us that kind of acumen and that kind of skills. Today what we really need is the education side that is fairly equipped. The schools demand the kind of leadership that involves a lot of entrepreneurial skills, private sector management style, time management, conflict management, and a lot of training that the private sector invest in. Our Education Department has nothing compared to that type of training.

As I indicated, much of the principal's training was routine stuff you know, how to order stationery, how to keep a logbook and so on. What we knew about management was what we learnt by working closely with our former principals. The structure of management here has always been an all-inclusive school management team managed not just by the

principal. We haven't been workshoped on all leadership skills. Like the Public Finance Management Act is something that school principals need to know and work with and then we can teach our teachers. I mean at the moment, the whole saga about salary negotiations is quite a waste of time, because the amount is set, that's what you're going to earn and that is determined at the macro level in terms of the medium term expenditure framework and school principals and school managers need to understand how that works, union leaders need to understand. So, in terms of high-level training there hasn't been much from the department, and the department needs to go beyond its SEMs and so on for that kind of training, and there are leading figures that do this motivational training and so on.

My upbringing has definitely helped me a lot in my career. Like there was an obsession about financial accountability at home and I also worked at the market where my grand mother trusted me with cash. So, I guess all that has sort of prepared me in terms of managing school funds. We've gone through our seventh audit you know, every single cent can be accounted for. So, those values in which we were brought up and punctuality are very important. I get very, very impatient with those who come late and not reporting in time for the class and missing a day from school.

Since I became the school principal, I've always advocated stakeholder empowerment and participation in decision-making. Empowerment of teachers at my school has always been aimed at helping them to deliver the curriculum without interference from bureaucracy. Empowerment of parents is all about bringing them on board the school matters. Our staff does more decision-making, but sometimes you need to keep a firm hold on things as well.

They know that I am also empowered to rule against some sensitive issues, but the majority of issues are settled democratically. Some of the decisions that I take, make me a bad guy but then as I told them you know, in this job we are not on any popularity stakes. You're going to make certain people unhappy and they will blame you for their failures, but after a while they will realise how inadequate they are.

As far as policy is concerned, I think we have got excellent policies, like the FET policy, but there is not enough money, time and resources to implement and evaluate these policies. Some of our policies have shortcomings, like the monetary value that is attached to the IQMS, and lack of capacity to train people adequately on it. So, once again the policy is good. Yes, teachers need to be evaluated, but the procedure that's been put in place and how to give effect to that policy is problematic, because it's now become you know, 'you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours' and we all get good scores and we're happy. Some of the policies are very liberal in design, even for the first world, for example, the discipline policy. The harsh realities that the teachers are faced with are not taken into consideration. It's nice to have a fancy policy that says corporal punishment is bad, but there is no effective alternative in the hands of school principals and educators.

I'd say values, interests, and beliefs will influence the leadership style, but it's not a definite factor. Leadership depends on the circumstances that prevail at that time. What would be appropriate today would be totally inappropriate tomorrow, and what would be an appropriate style of leadership in my school could be inappropriate at another school. We do things differently because our behaviour and actions are determined by the way in which we

view the different situations at our schools. The leadership style is also determined by how the leader looks at the needs of the followers, their interests, commitments, and their expectations. Well, I'd like to believe that my style is a very participative and democratic leadership style, but I get firm at times.

A school manager needs to listen and be tolerant. Of course at times you do go off and use the bullying tactic, but you need to control yourself and avoid being arrogant. You must be willing to learn and to share knowledge. You have to be committed to your work.

Leadership is a human quality that can also be learnt. A lot of it can be picked up on the way by reading widely and by observing how the corporate sector works and looking up the profiles of their leaders. Furthermore, a leader needs to keep abreast of the latest developments and keep track of the changes in the labour laws by, besides reading widely, attending all the workshops arranged for leaders of organizations.

Performing the role of the school manager and that of the executive member of the governing body takes a lot of my time. We take lovely decisions in the governing body meetings but the real execution and implementation of these decisions rests with the principal and the school management team. So, I find myself spending quite a bit of time in governance matters. Mine is a blurred role, there's no clear line between what's professional and what's governance. You find that you end up spending a lot of time doing things that are not strictly professional duties. You know, I can argue that it is not my job and it's a waste of good professional time, but if I don't do it, our school will not function.

I enjoy being a principal in the current dispensation. I mean the challenges are there. It allows so much more for you to be creative and innovative. In the old days, in terms of the old House of Delegates, the principal had a red book that was a policy handbook. Everything was in there; you just had to follow the instructions as they were. Today we have a law and policy handbook for the principals, but a lot depends on the principal's interpretation of things and applications. In the old days you know, the moment you had a problem you picked up the phone and the circuit office would sort it out for you. It didn't really develop creative, initiative, and imaginative leadership. So, I think this is the best period you could be in. Prior to 1994 those principals were really glorified clerks and administrators and you had to make an appointment to see them and they wouldn't deviate from the red book. So, I see the present as a challenging period to all school principals. It's a lot tougher in that you have to create a self-reliant school and develop supporting policies, but you really develop as a leader.

My experiences in the union had an influence on the way I managed the school. I'd say my years in the union are equal to, if not better than my university education. That's an excellent package in its own you know, the leadership, the conflict resolutions, and interacting at high profile as a branch chairman and the vice-president for publications in TASSA, built my confidence with teachers, parents, departmental officials. I would say my years in unionism you know, far exceed the knowledge that I gained at university in terms of the practical hands-on leadership development, character development and so on, it was excellent.

The unions that we have now in our schools also have a role to play in the running of the schools but they need to be reminded about the parameters because they tend to overstep the boundaries. They should pay more attention to the behaviour of their members, teach them discipline and respect. Unfortunately there seems to be a bad pattern of behaviour among teachers who belong to some unions. They abuse the system by being absent most of the time and neglecting their work, and hide behind the union when they are challenged. I always make my voice heard when people are violating the rules. Furthermore, in our school, we have become more clinical in the way we deal with union movements by sticking to policy and not answering any questions outside the framework.

I am, whilst there are policies of the Department, mainly guided in my roles and responsibilities by the Constitution. “Anyone that's debating and arguing with me about what they should do and shouldn't do I refer them to the particular chapter the Bill of Rights and I'm guided very much by that where we have the right of the child to an uninterrupted education. I'm also governed very much by the Batho Pele principles of service delivery. I subscribe wholly to that and I'm governed by Chapter 10 of this Constitution that tells us how public administrators should work” (Dr Chetty). I derive my inspiration from my upbringing, my religion, my association with great figures and minds in the teaching profession.

Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

At Nedbank Secondary school the teachers who responded to the questionnaire have seen a lot of improvement in governance, leadership and management of the school since the

appointment of the principal. The principal and the other members of the school governing body are encouraging participative governance and leadership with all the stakeholders being involved in the school activities and democratic and collective decision-making. The staff considers the principal as a transformational, motivational and visionary leader who interacts with them at both personal and professional levels.

The teachers regard their relationship with the principal as being based on trust, respect, openness and honesty. The principal meets with the staff once a month and he often participates in the community's celebrations, workshops, activities and projects. They think that he possesses good management and leadership skills and uses both the education policies and his experience to lead and manage the school successfully.

Significance of the life story

Dr Chetty got his motivation from his parents. The strict rules that he grew under made him a disciplined person all his life. He is guided by his religion, values and beliefs. His socialization at university made him a lot of friends who at a later stage influenced his choice of career. His involvement in the teachers' union shaped him for the leadership role he undertook at a later stage. He thinks that the education department should work together with the teachers' unions in order to improve education and for all the stakeholders to value education.

To him, the kind of leadership that the schools should be provided with is that which involves a lot of entrepreneurial skills, private sector management style, time and conflict

management skills and a lot of training that the private sector invests in. His story clearly indicates to us that as far as he is concerned, the type of in-service training that is provided to principals is inferior and does not provide high profile leadership skills. Unless the Department of Education improves on management and leadership training and development, the standard of leadership will always be low at our schools.

The skills that he has, like financial, time and resource management, were transferred from his parents to him at the childhood stage of his life. He has combined these skills with what he learnt from his former principals to successfully lead his school. He has committed himself to pass on these skills to his school management team (SMT) seeing that the Department of Education does not have a meaningful high profile leadership training programme arranged for them.

Some of the education policies have shortcomings and therefore do not develop the teachers and principals. His view is that the roles of the principals are blurred. Principals should therefore use their personal knowledge to support these policies in order to improve their leadership roles and functions. He believes that leadership depends on the circumstances that prevail at a particular time and that the principal's values, interests and beliefs can influence the type of leadership style he or she chooses to use at that time.

4.3 FROM INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVES TO THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

Theories of leadership can be located as far back as Blake and Mouton's (1964) behavioural theories and Fiedler's (1967) Contingency or Situational theories. Gunter (2001:66) sees leadership theories as acting a part of a lens through which to look at practice, and a predictive model that can become prescriptive by determining what educational practitioners should do. She goes on to say that theories can be used to describe what is happening; explain what and why something is or not happening, provide one or many ways in which change can take place, and provide the description, understanding and change imperative to enable radical changes to existing power structures (p. 65).

Using the social phenomenological approach as the overarching theoretical framework, the study has attempted to understand how each principal's personal and cultural values, beliefs, dreams, and commitments have influenced his or her behaviour towards his or her role of leadership and towards his or her colleagues. This made the central focus of the study to be on the complex interplay between structure and agency. Structure in this context refers to the expectations attached to the principal's role in terms of policies, rules and processes. It also refers to the principal's professional knowledge of his or her role. Agency refers to the principal's subjective behaviour resulting from his or her personal knowledge or experiences. It also refers to the ability of the principal to ascribe meaning to objects and events, to define the situation at his or her school based on that meaning, and to act (Musolf, 2003).

Eraut (1993) argues that structure is public knowledge that is factual and theoretical, and agency is private knowledge that can be procedural and can also be gained through access to theory and research. It is about knowing how to (lead) and is often tacit. Hoyle (1986) differentiates between theories for understanding things like policy, and theories of power which are used to challenge and question established expectations and assumptions about organizations and people within them. Both theories are used in this study, like those that are used to understand the situations at schools and behaviour of school principals before deciding on the type of leadership style, and those that challenge the existing leadership styles in order to bring about transformation. Ball (1987) sees the interrelationship between these theories as a place where the day-to-day realities of leading and leadership are located, and how principals seek to position themselves to conform, resist or ritualise.

The ability to ascribe meaning means power to act or do things. In order for the principal to act accordingly, he or she needs knowledge and skills to do things. Lamont (1965) maintains that knowledge is a human product that is socially constructed. Some of this knowledge is implicit in the practical consciousness of how to do things, for example, of how to change or transform the behaviour of followers (Bhaskar, 1989:36). This implicit knowledge or skill is referred to as a “theory of practice” (Sergiovanni, 1992) in this study. The leader’s decisions, actions and behaviour; combined with the leader’s theories of practice will help him or her to reflect on the daily situations he or she faces.

As shown in the preceding accounts, the principals’ narratives explain how they went about communicating their personal and cultural values, beliefs, interests, perceptions,

and expectations to their staff and parents through the process of leadership. Leadership involves interaction through communication between the leader and the people with whom he or she shares space. The leader also needs to conduct him or herself according to some general pattern of behaviour which is contained in the rules and regulations of the organization. Through their narratives the principals described how they discussed matters and made choices and decisions in various and specific situations at their schools. The meaning they gave to and interpretation of the situations at their schools was a result of the principals' combination of their personal experiences and professional knowledge.

The new South African paradigm of leadership emphasises power sharing and listening to the ideas of others among staff, the principal included. This is called participative leadership, which implies a high degree of involvement in decision-making and commitment among the staff. Participative leadership is collective in nature and it promotes the growth of each member of the group. The member is able to redefine effectively the institution's mission and being able to take a philosophically sound stand on major issues that confront the school (Wynn and Guditus, 1984). It also promotes change or transformation in workplaces, in terms of attitudes, learning and teaching, and culture of the organization. The principal and his influence will be accepted by his educators as a professional leader and they will share his values of equity, high expectations, and achievement (Loock, 2002).

From the principals' stories, it is clear that they think that leading an organisation is probably one of the most difficult and complex tasks that anyone could ever face. The

principal is sometimes required to make difficult decisions that will, at times, not be endorsed by the educators and therefore make him less accepted and unpopular. However, at the end of the day when one sees that the organisation is growing and flourishing, and the people within the organisation are realising how important they are in the functioning of the organisation, that kind of feedback makes one realise that it's a very important job and also it cannot be done alone.

Although all the principals in the study supported participation and involvement of staff in decision-making, it became clear from their stories that there were matters, like curriculum planning and finances, which could only be decided by the principal and the SMT. Most of their leadership decisions were based on the circumstances that were prevailing on the ground at the time when they were taken. Out of the leadership theories that were discussed in chapter two, the situational leadership style seemed to be the one that was favoured by most of the principals. They believed that although they had to observe the Departmental policies, their day-to-day running of the schools relied on situations and issues they had to resolve at a particular time.

Situational leadership theories are a range of leadership styles varying according to specific situations. This means that a principal can use one or a combination of leadership styles depending on the set of circumstances or needs and demands of the learners and teachers of the school. The principals' stories revealed that their decisions were also influenced by their behaviour and styles, and the conditions in the situations that were prevailing in their schools. They had to behave flexibly in order to be able to determine a suitable style for

each situation. The leadership style that the principal chooses is influenced by his or her values and interests, and the relationship between the principal and the staff (Fiedler, 1967).

A strong leader is the one who combines both policy and personal beliefs and values to lead his or her school. A leadership style should be a combination of both because you cannot really say you lead the school according to your personality. There are policies in place that you are required to follow, and I think your personality then would assist in influencing the policies of the Department, but I think the leadership style has got to be in line with the policy (Vezi).

The success of the leadership style of the principal will be determined by the support he or she receives from the teachers, and their attitudes and acceptance of the principal as their leader. The leader's positional power on the other hand, will determine the success of his or her goals. Three principals in the study were not well accepted by their teachers when they arrived at their schools. This was because of the way they were appointed to their leadership positions. They struggled to manage their schools in the first years of their appointments but because of their previous experiences, they managed to respond to these challenges with suitable leadership styles.

When one leads an organization one has got to be committed, and must have knowledge and understanding of the emerging trends in schools in order to provide strong leadership and lead by example. The worst position one can be in is when one lacks knowledge. A leader has got to know the people he or she is working with and understand them in order to lead

properly and successfully. If a leader does not understand where the people are coming from, no matter how much he or she might be following the leadership policies and instructions, it might not work for him or her simply because he or she is not part of the people he or she is leading. This means that the principals should be strategic in their leadership.

Considering the diverse backgrounds the principals were coming from, it was not surprising to get different perceptions and assumptions of leadership roles from them. These emerged from the principals' definition of their professional identities. Some of the principals believe that a good leader should be firm and responsible; be able to communicate with all the stakeholders not only in terms of giving people instructions, but also in terms of receiving and listening to what other people are saying and taking that into consideration; be able and willing to work together with staff in order to be able to achieve the goals that you have set as a leader; be innovative and proactive; and be willing to delegate responsibilities. A good leader should also be transparent and accountable, thus recognizing the right of different individuals like parents, to know how the affairs of the school are managed. This definition created a picture of responsiveness in the principals' leadership, combined with strategic management.

Although the type of leadership that was expected from the principals included commitment, transparency, accountability, participation, distribution of power, teamwork and communication; there were still concerns about the abolition of some of the traditional leadership styles and disciplinary methods, like corporal punishment. There were some

concerns about the amount of power that has been given to the teachers in the form of democratic rights, and also to school governing bodies. The feeling was that the teachers were abusing their democratic rights by making the implementation of policies at schools impossible.

The governing bodies were overstepping their operational boundaries in trying to take over the control of the schools, which made them 'extremely destructive and challenging'. The suggestions that came out of the interviews were in favour of what I can term a 'semi-distributed' approach to leadership that puts limit over decision-making. One principal stated that while they are supposed to be democratic in their approach, the buck still stops with them at the end of the day. Therefore he will prefer an approach that will allow him to have the final decision if he finds that the teachers or parents have made a decision that is contrary to the school rules or departmental regulations.

A semi-distributed leadership approach would limit the powers of the governing body in terms of the employment of educators; school policies like time tabling and code of conduct, finance management; and the curriculum because most of them, especially in rural black schools, did not have appropriate knowledge and skills. They didn't even attend the workshops and training sessions that were organized by the department to give them the knowledge and skills. It would also limit the responsibilities, rights and powers that are given to educators, especially those who hide behind the banners of the unions.

It came out strongly from the principals that some educators were irresponsible and were always challenging the management teams. They never think about the learners when there is a union march or strike; they just leave their classes unattended. There are always discrepancies in the implementation of policies like the IQMS because of the monetary factor attached to it. It was clear in the minds of the principals that there was a need for capacity building among teachers and parents so that their schools could be effective and provide state-of-the-art learning. The focus will not be only on limiting powers but also on educating the school community. These ideas and concerns brought in the concept of educational leadership in their day-to-day responsibilities.

4.4 EMERGING PATTERNS FROM THE LIFE STORIES

From the principals' stories it is evident that all of them up grew under strict but supportive parents. Most of their parents were not educated, did not have secure or professional jobs and were therefore poor. Three of them never intended to take teaching as a career. They either wanted to be lawyers or psychologists, but were coerced by their parents or forced by their financial status to do teaching because of the bursaries that were available for student teachers. It is not surprising that the majority of these principals' career choices were limited, given the structure of education that time where blacks were assigned specific and inferior career options by the apartheid regime (Phendla, 2000). Mr Kunene indicated during one of our interviews that there were very few career choices for black people. One could either be a nurse, a teacher, a policeman or a clerk.

However, from the narratives of the selected principals, one can learn of a change of attitude towards teaching, especially from the three principals coerced into doing teaching. Training as teachers changed them to caring, committed, and democratic leaders. Mr Allendale fought to change the status of his school from being a 'coloured only' school to an integrated school for all racial groups. He risked losing many coloured learners, and support from the coloured parents and the community as a whole. Although he could not fulfil his dream of becoming a lawyer, he achieved his wish to fight for people's rights by changing the political image of his school.

Mr Vezi turned out to be a disciplined manager who commanded a lot of respect from his teachers, learners and parents. His role model was his ex-colleague and principal of Isibonelo High School. Although he could not be a psychologist, he could fulfil his ambitions by giving guidance to the learners and teachers. His success as a good manager and leader of Sithembile High School and a role model resulted from his wish to uphold the reputation of his family, especially not to disappoint his father who was a well known leader. Dr Vish Chetty satisfied his ambitions to be a lawyer by becoming a teacher unionist before he could become a school manager. He emerged as a leader who was aware of the teachers' rights but was critical of and could not tolerate those teachers who were not committed to their work and were in the profession for security, income and other benefits. He is strict about policy and makes sure that he knows about every piece of legislation that is introduced in education.

A pattern that comes up here is that of career choices where the three principals were not serious about or committed to the careers they had chosen. Teaching was not on their lists of careers but they ended up being teachers. Another pattern is that of commitment to their jobs. The three principals became caring, strong and committed school leaders than the other three. They were also democratic and fought for the rights and the empowerment of their teachers and learners.

Mrs Mtolo had always wanted to be a teacher. In her story she emerges as a strong female leader who fought for her human rights, especially against the male gender stereotypes. She said, “You know, sometimes males are not easy to work with, especially if you are a woman and senior to them”. For her, the education policies were useful when she had to deal with these male teachers. She always refers to the gender equity policy in order to deal with the gender behaviour at her school. She went through a lot of challenges at the schools where she was a manager, that is, an HOD, a Deputy Principal, and a Principal. She is a forgiving leader, a protective mother to the learners, and a disciplinarian to those who did not behave well. Mrs Campbell experienced the same reception when she arrived at her school in Camperdown. She said that there were a few male teachers who had been there for a long time and they were very resentful of the fact that, for the first time they were going to be managed by a female principal. They would not accept authority from a woman. What is amazing about these two female leaders is that they persevered and were patient with those teachers until they finally changed their attitudes.

Mrs Campbell was a strict principal who expressed strict school rules but very supportive. In her story, she said that everything was rigid and the protocol was very strict when she started teaching. She went on to say, “You were not allowed into the principal’s office even to say ‘Good Morning Sir, how are you?’ You had to be summoned and if you wanted to see the principal for time off, you had to make an appointment. However, that made me what I am today”. She also mentioned an instance where she was instructed by her principal to referee a rugby match and she could not say no. It therefore came out during the interview and in the questionnaires from her staff that she still practised that type of autocratic leadership at her school. It was a common practice among the six principals to emulate their former principals in running their schools.

The two female principals emerged as disciplinarians who did not want to succumb to male domination. They were big supporters of the policies and would rather do everything by the book. They were not strong enough to make decisions based on their perceptions or judgements.

Mr Kunene is a person with a lot of experience in teaching and school management. He likes to dream a lot about his school, which is a skill that he learnt from his predecessor as a school principal. He is very philosophical and always sets clear goals for himself and always strives to achieve them. He works well with his teachers and parents and has been successful in maintaining the good image of the school.

What is also evident in their stories is that the filling of promotion posts at that time was mostly through promotion rather than interviews. Negative reactions were displayed by the teachers at schools towards new staff members, especially those who came to occupy senior positions. This attitude still exists at the public schools today even though posts are advertised and applicants go through a process of interviews before appointments are made, and even if the applicant is from within the school. Fortunately all the principals had senior university degrees, which qualified them to occupy those posts. All the six principals were interviewed for their posts but still some of the teachers were not happy about their appointments. Mrs Mtolo and Mr Allendale pointed out that although some of the teachers were not happy about their appointments, they eventually accepted them because no one from within the school was qualified for the posts.

Mr Allendale told me about two of his teachers who had applied for an HOD post; one had a service of ten years and was unproductive while the other had a service of five years and was very productive. The one with a longer service expected to be given the post because she was there longer than the other. When the productive one was appointed, the situation became tense and the staff was divided.

Two of the principals jumped one or two post levels on their way to becoming principals, while the other four went through all the levels, either acting or being permanently appointed. The very unique case was that of Mr Vezi who was instructed by the Chief Superintendent of Education to take up the position of principal while he had been in an interview for the post of HOD from post level one. The high academic qualifications did

not help the principals in their leadership roles, since most of them had neither experience nor goals and objectives when they started as principals.

About four of the principals had never received any management training before becoming principals. They were literally taken out of the classroom and put into the supervisory position of the principal. Leading and managing schools for most of them was not easy when they started. They experienced disciplinary problems in terms of learners and teachers, negative attitudes and resentment from teachers, lack or shortage of funds and resources, problems with the implementation of new education policies, and interference from unions and communities. They did not know how to deal with these issues. Mrs Campbell felt like she was thrown in the deep end and left there to pull herself out.

However, knowledge sharing with other experienced principals helped some of the six principals to manage their schools better. Although the Department of Education provided in-service training for principals, it was not enough and of a poor standard. Dr Vish Chetty confirms this when he says, "I think that the Department has to do a lot more and to understand that school managers need intense training, not something like meetings called by SEMs to tell the principals to do one, two and three. So, in terms of high level training there hasn't been much from the department". It is clear then that in order for principals to lead and manage successfully, there should be pre-management training in place for all future and prospective school managers.

The principals' upbringing and socialization played a major role in their professional lives. Mrs Mtolo believes that the values one inherits become embedded in their belief systems. To her, a teacher and a leader must be disciplined and forgiving, and must avoid fighting fire with fire when teachers, parents and learners become ill-disciplined. Mr Vezi believes that a leader needs to persevere, listen and respect the opinions of other people. He says, "If you are a leader you must persevere in what you are doing. When people talk, you've got to listen to what they are saying. That is what I was time and again reminded of when I was growing up". Mr Allendale feels that he is now more open and understanding to his teachers' and learners' problems, and more understanding of the parents' financial situations. Mr Kunene feels that growing up in a big and understanding family like his has made it easy for him to interact and communicate with people. Dr Chetty said that he derives his inspiration from his upbringing, his religion, and his association with great figures in the teaching profession.

All the principals had good relations with their teachers. Their relationships with the staff were both professional and personal. Mr Kunene said that he had more of a professional relationship with the young members of his staff, not because he wasn't getting along with them, but simply because there weren't many things that they had in common, especially outside the school environment. More than fifty per cent of the selected principals admitted that when they took over as principals they did not have an idea of what their roles were, but working with and among their teachers and tapping in their beliefs and values had made them grow and be good leaders.

Mrs Campbell shared her experience like this, “I didn’t know what was facing me as principal and I didn’t know what my role was and I basically had to learn overnight how to manage a school. The only thing that I had to fall back on was my values and my insight that I had. My beliefs, values and interests played a major, major role”. Dr Chetty believes that his values and religion, and the influence of his staff have made him to be more tolerant, understanding and able to listen, and less arrogant.

The final pattern concerns the manner in which the principals were appointed as school managers. Most of them served on the SMTs of their respective schools and were promoted because of their performance in their teaching subjects. They all received negative reactions and attitudes from their teachers because of this. They struggled at first to discipline the teachers but later on managed to command respect and acceptance.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have presented the lives of six selected principals from very diverse situations. I have allowed them to tell their professional life stories, and I have interpreted their stories from the neo-positivist perspective. These stories illustrate how the principals interpret their roles within the framework of the democratic dispensation. It also came out that the principals’ leadership styles were influenced by both policy and personal experiences. The values and beliefs of the principals played a major role in shaping the behaviour and actions of the principals.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORIZING LIFE HISTORIES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The use of the humanistic approach in this study aimed at uncovering models of self-definition and constructing professional identity of the selected principals. The models of self-definition and modes of professional identity were reflected in the stories these principals told. These stories were related to their everyday lives and experiences.

Widdershoven (1993) maintains that personal identity depends on a mutual relation between lived experiences and stories in which these experiences are articulated.

Influenced by the humanist thinking, I attempt in this chapter to theorize the experiences of the selected principals by analysing their life-stories. The data, in the form of life-stories that are analysed in this chapter seeks to explain how each principal constructs his or her professional identity in their life-stories (White and Moss, 2003). According to Kamler (2001:174), “All stories are partial; they are particular rather than general, they represent a perspective, a way of seeing that is complex and multifaceted, rather than universal”.

The life history in this study confronts the human subjectivity, which is always ignored and avoided. The principals’ stories offered the possibility to begin to ask questions about, and improve theories in school leadership and professional identity construction from the point of view of the principal. The mere fact that the stories were presented and

analysed, challenges the conventional conceptions of leadership which are often structural in orientation. This is in a way a critique of the existing models of leadership.

5.2 DATA ANALYSIS

My analysis draws from the responses of the principals to the interview questions, the questionnaires that were completed by the teachers of selected principals' schools, and my attempts to respond to the critical questions of the study. In fact, the critical questions were my beacon that guided me through my navigation into the selected principals' professional lives, which eventually led me into discovering some personal, commonsense theories that the principals use in their leadership roles. Four major themes resulted from the navigation:

- Professional Socialization, leadership roles and professional identity.
- Coping with change in the legislative and policy framework after 1994.
- Power-sharing and empowerment of stakeholders.
- Complex interplay between personal knowledge (agency) and professional practices (structure).

Following the discussion of the four major themes, the information that was solicited by asking the interview questions is used to shed light on issues of transformation and role performance, principals' self conceptions pre- and post 1994, and their leadership styles as reflected in their stories.

Professional socialization, leadership roles and professional identity

It became evident in the stories that the principals' socialization into the teaching profession had an influence on their professional identities. In order to have a better understanding of this influence, the relationship between professional socialization and professional identity is discussed together with the responses of the selected principals. Professional identity can be viewed as self-conceptualization, which is the internal or subjective change of an individual in connection with a particular career role. Professional identity is a development process that can be nurtured through a learning process (Brott and Kajs, 2001).

Issues of professional identity stem from professional socialization and development, which is a learning process that includes the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills that are required in a professional role and development of new values, attitudes, and self-identity components (McGowen and Hart, 1990). The selected principals' life-stories revealed the maturation processes that the principals went through during their training as teachers, during their entry into the profession, and during their development and promotion to head of departments, deputy principals, and principals.

The professional training that the principals received at the universities and colleges that they went to, contributed a lot towards their development to successful and effective teachers and principals. Even the three principals who never intended to be teachers ended up enjoying their careers and professions. The professional socialization into the teaching profession was not smooth for all of them because of the challenges that they

encountered, but they all responded well to them and came out matured individuals. They learnt to be hard workers, focussed and committed teachers, hence their promotions to management. Some of them jumped one or two post-levels to become principals.

Through all their development, from university, to their first jobs and present positions, the principals had mentors and role models they looked up to. The influence of the mentors and role models promoted the love for the profession in them, which later motivated them to further their studies as all of them have senior university degrees. They learnt skills such as critical thinking, interpersonal skills, and conflict resolution which are part of the requirements for a principal post. The principals at the schools where they taught were an inspiration to them. “My principal where I started to teach was a good English speaker. He taught us how to speak the language properly; maybe I learnt from him to speak it like I do now” (Kunene). They also learnt to be flexible, transparent, strict, disciplined, and caring.

Staff will sometimes hold high perceptions of and expectations from the principal. They always assume the principal to be more responsible for the actions that he displays. His fulfilment of the leadership function will be crucial to the teachers’ achievement of goals. The principal is considered as a high status person and this makes more stringent demands for certain roles because these carry responsibilities which are greater and more likely to affect important outcomes for members of the staff (Hollander, 1964:227). Besides being competent in some tasks, the principal’s sense of humour and facilitation of the social interaction of staff members may contribute towards greater acceptance of

his influence over his followers. In order to forge healthy working relationships with as many people as possible, the principal need to be a mediator, a mentor, a negotiator and a net-worker.

From the selected principals, it was clear that they perceived their roles as incorporating aspects like participation; stakeholder involvement; collaborative leadership; distribution of power, responsibility and accountability; transformation; and teamwork. It is also clear that the principals see themselves as facilitators, negotiators, counsellors, change agents providing development and guidance, PROs and CEOs, and lubricators of the school systems.

Furthermore, the principals did not regard themselves as experts in leadership. This they displayed by their willingness to learn from the experiences of their seniors and also of their teachers. One of their roles was therefore to share knowledge and experiences with their colleagues. Principals like Mrs Campbell were socialized into a top-down and autocratic style of leadership and to her that was the only way to lead. However, the democratic situation she found herself in made her realize that there was no space for autocratic leaders and therefore, accepted change. She had learnt to listen, be accommodative and democratic. She now defines herself differently from the time she came into the school.

One of the objectives of the study was to discuss how the principals' beliefs, personal and cultural values and interests shape or influence their leadership styles. Leadership can be regarded as a human quality because it can be shaped by human values, which are learnt

over time. As much as the leadership style of the principal may be influenced by what he or she believes in and what he or she values, in most instances it is influenced by the circumstances that prevail at the time and place. What would be an appropriate style of leadership for one school may be inappropriate for the other. The needs and expectations of learners and teachers are most important in determining a leadership style

Another factor that can create a situation at school that might require a change in leadership style of the principal is teacher behaviour. It was a feeling of one principal that a leader should have an open mind and expect different responses or behaviour from the followers. This means that values, interests and beliefs should not be the determining factors but should be linked to situations at hand. Dr Chetty pointed out that the way he behaves generally, is influenced by his religious values and beliefs, but when it comes to managing the school, his actions are determined more by the situation or circumstances that prevail at his school. Mr Kunene subscribes to the situational leadership approach. He maintains that it is a better style to deal with issues like teachers' behaviour and needs, as they arise at a particular time. "I respond to the demands of that particular situation I find myself in" (Kunene).

Principals need to know that their roles these days come with a lot of challenges. They need to consider the educators, the parents, the learners, the Department of Education, the communities, and also their own values when making decisions for their schools. Although four out of six of the selected principals did not undergo pre-management training, they were all clear about their roles. Mr Vezi of Sithembile High School says,

My role as the school principal is to lubricate the system. Secondly, my role is to ensure that there is an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. My role is to market the school. My role is to be PRO of the school, to interact with the visitors like I'm interacting with you, to ensure that the policy of the Department is carried out clinically as required by the Department of Education, and to ensure that the relevant people attend to correspondence that comes to the school. And I don't share the view that principals must get into the class and teach. It's one area that has frustrated me because I don't see myself as a teacher – I see myself as a manager of this school. To me that's one grey area that still needs to be addressed. Either you're a teacher or you're a principal. It has even been said, the president said, teachers must teach and managers must manage. How can you be a manager and a teacher at the same time in the classroom?

According to Mr Kunene, the role of the principal is to provide support and guidance. The unfortunate thing is that teachers are not pro-active and constructive. They refer even the minor issues to the principals. He says, "Sometimes you throw a 'problem' back to him or her, and say: did you think of anything when this happened? The person will say no, I did not and then I'll deal with him or her according to that specific situation. That is why I strongly believe and follow the situational leadership approach". Mr Allendale says that his role as a professional manager of the school and ex-officio member of the governing body is to see to it that there is cooperation between the parents, the learners,

and the teachers. He believes that the principal's management style is determined by his values and beliefs.

Working with and among the staff has had a positive influence in the way all the six principals define themselves and their roles. One of the principals said that when he first started at his school, he was dictatorial but now he has changed because of his staff. He is now mellow and less dogmatic about things. He is now relaxed because of the cooperation of his staff and also the assurance they gave him. He goes on to say, "I don't dictate to my staff, especially the SMT. They rather report to me and we sit down and make a decision about the issue that may be". Mr Vezi said that he has learnt to be tolerant. He goes on to say, "It is important to be tolerant when you lead people because they come from different backgrounds and are not the same. Some of them have genuine problems which you need to address". He also claims to have learned to be selfless and to value democracy.

Coping with change in the legislative and policy framework after 1994

The new South African education policies require school leaders to work in democratic and participatory ways to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education to learners (KZNDEC, 2002). In order for schools to be productive and effective and not to get stuck in a rut or become stale and reactive, principals need to change from being bosses to being leaders. "Leaders seek and accept challenging opportunities to test their abilities and look for innovative ways to improve their organizations" Kouzes and Posner, 1993:4).

The majority of the participants did not have a problem with the new dispensation. They believed in democracy and felt that it was the duty of the principal to create a working relationship with all stakeholders, especially the unions and to perceive them as colleagues and not enemies. Mr Allendale had a close relationship with one of the teacher unions. He says:

We have a union that we can turn to in order to keep track with your responsibilities. That always keeps me up to date with all information that I need. Sometimes you just hear through the grapevine that there has been a change in the regulations and you haven't been officially informed by the Department. That's when the union becomes useful with information.

Some of the principals relied on the constitution for guidance in their duties, like Dr Chetty. They all supported participative decision-making, involvement of all stakeholders in disciplinary issues in the school, and sharing of responsibility and accountability.

The major challenge for most of the principals was coping with change in the legislative and policy framework after 1994. There are new policies and developments almost every day. To Mr Kunene, "Change is something that makes us uncomfortable. It takes us out of our comfort zones and therefore we are resistant to change because of that. So it makes it difficult for the principal to implement new things, like policies". For Mrs Campbell, it was very difficult to change from being autocratic to being democratic at school because it was the only way of management she was familiar with. However, she was forced to go with the flow of change.

Her concern was about those people who thought that democracy was only about their rights. Her feeling was that many of these people did not or failed to understand that democracy was about sharing rights and responsibilities. “People should know that everybody has rights, and that they should not infringe on other people’s rights in order to have theirs recognized” (Campbell). She still believes in the structure of the olden days where ‘the principal was the boss and everyone knew he was the boss’.

The implementation of education policies at schools was a challenge to almost all the selected principals. This came out when they expressed their frustrations with the policies that are presented to them by the Department of Education. Resistance by the teachers made it impossible to implement policies like the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) to such an extent that schools like Cato Crest and Nedbank have never implemented it as yet after so many years of its introduction. Other schools like Redman Primary School, Nonjiko High School, Vumezakho High School, and Sithembile Secondary School have moderated or changed it to suit their needs.

According to Mr Allendale, IQMS has both positive and negative effects at the school, but the negative outweighs the positive because the policy is linked to pay progression and teachers are not realistic with the scoring of their performances. The policy has lost its purpose of developing the teacher. Mr Vezi thinks that the policy has brought confusion among the teachers although workshops were run before it was handed over to schools to implement. This proves the principals’ concern that the Education

Department's workshops are of a lower standard because the facilitators themselves are clueless about all the new policies.

Mr Kunene raises his concerns about IQMS saying:

The implementation thereof leaves much to be desired because people were not honest when they were giving themselves scores. The fact that people gave themselves high scores implies that they do not need training and development. I think there is a problem that the scoring is linked to the monetary incentives; people want money and they don't think about development. So, that is the flaw in the IQMS, and in a nutshell it is not working.

To cope with these fundamental changes, the selected principals applied various strategies to deal with the confusion about policy implementation and uncertainty regarding the roles and responsibilities of the teachers within the context of these policies.

Power-sharing and empowerment of stakeholders

The principals in the study see themselves as part of a democratic change that should be, and is taking place in schools. They see themselves as leading with their staff and not over their staff, which means that they are prepared to share power with their staff and also to listen to their ideas. Leading with the people means that the leader is not commanding and instructional but is acting as a channel to focus and direct the will of the group (Phendla, 2000). They see their daily activities as being mainly influenced by the demands and expectations of the teachers, learners and parents.

Participatory management demands sharing of power and an all-inclusive decision-making method among the teachers. The selected principals have learnt from working with and among their teachers and parents that in order to fulfil the demands of participative leadership, they need to understand their communities and their teachers in terms of culture; and political, social and economic backgrounds. Although some of the principals sometimes seemed a little bit rigid, they were trying their best to avoid being autocratic in their leadership approach. Their approach was to know where their teachers, learners and parents were coming from, what they wanted and what their fears were in order to avoid confrontation and resistance from all the parties.

Effective leadership in contemporary South African schools depends on the empowerment of the staff and the school community. The empowerment of staff may involve motivating them by 'supporting their efforts to realize their vision through coaching, feedback and role modeling, so that they could grow professionally and enhance their self-esteem' (Loock, 2002:54). To be empowered may mean to have choice and control or official authority of legal power. It may also mean that one has the capacity to exercise the power given.

In education, legal responsibility remains with the principal and the governing body, and the teachers have choice and control. The empowerment of the school community will create a sense of ownership and belonging among the parents. Once the teachers and parents are fully empowered, they will sense a wider latitude for risk and innovation and they will freely express their opinions and give constructive ideas. They will perceive the

vision as their own and commit themselves to achieving the organizational goals (Keith and Girling, 1991).

Studies in educational management (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997; Loock, 2002) has clearly shown that in many South African schools, especially in previously disadvantaged schools, too much power was and still is held within the top leadership and management structures. This imbalance of power has resulted in these schools failing to function optimally because the other staff members cannot contribute freely and are not fully involved in decision-making processes. Although the new education policies encourage objective empowerment whereby structures are built in which people can participate and involve themselves in decision-making, some principals still believe that power is only for those who lead and manage institutions. Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) see objective empowerment as a power from within, and maintain that leadership which supports this type of power will always recognize the intrinsic worth of all educators in the school. Of the selected principals, Mrs Campbell was the only one who seemed inclined towards this practice of leadership. This was revealed in her response when she was asked if she could prefer to be a school principal in the period before or after 1994. Her response was, “I would choose to be a principal before 1994 because things were easier. You were the boss. You made rules and everyone conformed to the rules. You knew if a teacher stepped out of line, the Department was right behind you”.

Her feeling was that these days you’ve got parents and the community to consider, you’ve got your staff to consider, you’ve got your own values to consider and you’ve got

the Department to consider. “Sometimes it’s very overwhelming because you don’t know who you answer to” (Campbell). However, she is also aware of the negative aspects of being a boss these days and thinks that it is vital that parents are involved in the running of the school where their children are attending. She also feels that governing bodies are a very positive structure if they use their powers correctly.

Mr Allendale believes that stakeholder involvement is the key to trust and ownership of the vision and mission. He says, “I allow people’s opinions and contributions. The whole thing is to empower them and for them to have a say in the running of the institution.

This is not a one man band”. Dr Chetty however feels that the involvement of staff in decision-making is good, but sometimes you need to keep a firm hold on things.

“Teachers should know that the principal is also empowered to overrule their decision if he thinks it is harsh on the other members or learners. There are things that a principal should rule firmly on, but decision-making should most of the times be democratic” (Chetty).

On one hand, the questionnaires that were completed by the teachers indicated that some of the principals were still holding on to power and did not want to delegate to their staff, while on the other hand principals were complaining of the incompetence of the teachers. Mrs Campbell feels that the new generation of teachers is not properly trained at college as she says:

Many teachers that come to my school from college are still being taught by my old staff. They don’t know how to do a year plan; they don’t know how to do a

daily lesson plan. They don't know how to do assessment; so we actually have to teach them what they should have been taught at college, yet they are trained for four years.

The poor or inadequate training for new teachers, lead to some senior staff doing their work. Dr Chetty had this experience when he had to attend to school finances, when that job had been allocated to someone else. "Sometimes I find myself doing somebody else's job, like say now I'm attending to the school finances when the school treasurer is there. It's a waste of good professional time for me".

The challenge for principals in our schools is to recognize that effective schools are those that are run by teams, the school management teams. Respect, trust and transparency among team members should prevail in order for leadership to be effective. Working within a team helps one to grow as a leader of the institution. All the six principals had overcome this challenge by empowering their teachers through management and professional development workshops.

Complex interplay between personal knowledge and professional practice

Being a professional manager and an executive member of the government body are two different roles. As a school manager you've got to work towards striking a balance on how you approach your daily routine activities and the situations that arise unexpectedly at your school. There is a set of departmental rules in the form of policy which guide the principals in their daily leadership activities and there are personal leadership experiences

which one uses to deal with matters that are not covered in the policies. Mr Kunene calls the policy regulations 'hard rules' and the personal experiences 'soft rules'. There has been a lot of debate among the principals about the combination of policy and personal experiences and values in the running of the schools. My conclusion about this issue during the interviews was that the principals regarded policy as a framework which was there to guide them and not to restrict them. Mrs Campbell felt that principals should strike a balance between policy and what happens daily in the school. They should always have policies in place so that there is no grey area. If policy is there, no one can argue against it but that does not stop the principal to work around it to fit in personal experiences and values when attending to urgent management issues at school.

Mr Vezi also echoes the idea of the policy being a framework and a guideline, but he believes that there are times when a principal has got to use his or her discretion. These are times when a decision has to be taken based on the circumstances prevailing on the ground at the time. He goes on to say that there is nowhere where the policy says that the principal should not use his discretion. So the principals have got to integrate policy with personal experience and values to respond to prevailing circumstances at a particular time, but should act within the guidelines or framework of the policy.

He says, "That's how I balance it out but I have to make sure that my response is within the dictates of the department". Mr Allendale also agrees by saying that it is important to balance what the policy says with your actions and decisions resulting from the situation at your school. Sometimes you have to bend the rules and look at the policy to see

whether it has relevance in the school. Bending the rules does not mean breaking them but just an act of balancing structure and personal experience.

While the principals were trying to do things according to the prescribed set of educational rules, they combined these with their personal management and leadership experiences. The different situations at schools have taught the principals to be flexible in order to respond to the values and beliefs of their organizations. Today we are seeing a breed of school principals whose leadership decisions are not only based on the current legislative framework but also on their choice of leadership styles based on the circumstances and, needs of children and teachers that prevail at their schools. Successful and effective leadership in most of the schools has been a result of principals 'responding from within their daily realities at their schools', which means, drawing from their past experiences.

Principals are knowledgeable agents of change who come to their positions with a lot of prior personal experiences. These experiences have been obtained through training and socialization. Schwier (2004) believes that prior experiences are shared through conversation, negotiation, and construction of new knowledge products. In other words, the individual principal's knowledge and practice will reflect his or her cultural values, norms and beliefs.

Knowledge is constructed through social interactions, negotiations, and common understanding between an individual and those he or she is socializing with. Some of this

knowledge is implicit in the practical consciousness of 'how to go on', for example of how to manage the rules and regulations of the institution; while the other is unconscious, like following the set rules in performing one's daily activities (New, 1994:190).

However, the agents' knowledge is often conscious so that they can offer a description of what they are doing and why. The personal knowledge of the principal is therefore subjective and it results into a particular behaviour that is used to act towards a particular situation.

The majority of the principals in the study came to their positions with some goals and objectives although they were not prepared or trained to be school managers. Almost all of them relied on their prior personal knowledge to see them through their leadership roles. One of the principals was a leader in one of the teachers' unions. He said that the experience he got there to deal with union members helped him a lot during his first year as principal. He had gained knowledge of the education policies during his interactions with Department's officials and was aware how principals were struggling with the new framework. His success was therefore based on the combination of his personal knowledge and knowledge of these policies. His skill to mobilize helped him to get many parents involved in school governance matters.

When Mr Vezi arrived at his school, he had been promoted from a classroom educator and all he was armed with was his strict and formal values, morals, and beliefs. He had gained a lot of leadership knowledge from his previous principal by observing and admiring him at work. Sithembile School was out of control and the learners were unruly.

He started by passing his values down to the teachers, learners, and finally the parents. He acted as an example of what he was preaching to them, by coming to school early, going to class to teach every time he was supposed to, and respecting the school bell when it was rung. He was formal in everything he did in order to command respect from the teachers and learners. He had a special way of conducting staff and parents' meetings. He engaged them in the discussions of the rules and regulations and also allowed them to make critical decisions about their careers and schools. This made them to feel wanted, valued, and involved.

Mr Allendale was perceived as another Indian boy during his school years and even during his early days in the teaching profession. He heard many racial slurs and remarks thrown at him and he had learnt to live with that. When he arrived at his school, only coloured learners were admitted. His challenge was to transform the school. He used his experience to deal with resistance in order to achieve his goal. He got this experience and knowledge of coloured people's behaviour by socializing with coloured colleagues when he was a lecturer at college and also during the meetings of his political movement. He was not over-prescriptive to his teachers, and he allowed them to give their opinions and to make decisions about their school.

Besides all his attempts to get to know the teachers well, the senior teachers were still a closed book to him. He therefore used his skill of developing projects at school, which he distributed equally among the teachers. "From these projects I began to understand the teachers, what they could do and who I could rely on, who is more responsible and who

is more co-operative” (Allendale). After a few months all the teachers were open and he was able to form a team that initiated changes and improvements in the school.

Mrs Campbell grew up on a farm where she socialized with black children and understood their culture and language. When she came to her school as an HOD, it was still a Model C school with only white learners and teachers. When the new dispensation came into place, she was better equipped than everyone else to deal with change. Her personal knowledge of the African culture made it easy for her to transform the school when she took over after the principal of the school at that time resigned. It was not a problem for her to change the attitudes of the white teachers towards the Black, Indian, and Coloured teachers who joined the staff; and also to build the relationship between the black and white parents, although more than fifty percent of the white learners left the school in the first year of integration.

5.3 REVIEWING THE PRINCIPALS’ LIFE-STORIES

Although the life-stories are about the principals’ views and perspectives, they are somehow closely connected both with the history of their own lives and with the larger contexts of their societies (Antikainen et al, 1996). The principals in the study begin to live their lives that are characterised by a set of cultural values, norms, beliefs, and perceptions in their communities. As they grow up and enter the teaching profession they begin to develop ideas of professional behaviour characterised by responsibility, decision-making, and accountability.

The life-stories in this study were obtained by interviews, aimed at bringing together reality at their schools, their experiences and expressions. In their stories, the principals speak of themselves and give meaning to their experiences, which makes these stories more subjective (personal) than objective (social). According to Antikainen et al (1996), the meanings that people give to their experiences are greatly affected by the nature of the interviews that they are in and the specific aspects of the phenomenon being researched that the researcher wants to explore.

The questions that arise are, 'To what extent are the stories themselves constructed, and to what extent are the experiences and events appearing in these stories merely expressions with no connections to the past reality'? In order to address the gaps between reality, experience and expressions, life-stories have to reflect the past life and realise its events and parts of reality filtering through the principals' consciousness (Antikainen et al, 1996). When telling a life-story, the interviewee should strive at merging both the fictional and reality dimensions. Life-stories should be treated as lived experiences with connections to the real world and not as mere fictional or factual text in order for them to play a meaningful role in social research.

The interview questions in this study are aimed at soliciting information that will create stories that show the connection between the principals' experiences, the reality at their schools, and their professional identity that is based on these experiences and social interactions that take place at the schools. Gergen and Gergen (1986) consider leaders' life-stories as life-narratives. They go on to say, "Self-narratives refer to the individual's

account of the relationship among self-relevant events across time. In constructing a self-narrative the individual attempts to establish coherent connections among life events. Rather than seeing one's life as simply one damned thing after another, the individual attempts to understand life events as systematically related" (p.225).

My analysis of the stories show that although some of the principals may have sometimes responded in a way that would make them look transformative and transparent, most of their responses were genuine. An example can again be made of Mrs Campbell when she claimed that her relationship with her staff was not autocratic and that she listened to her teachers' opinions; while all the teachers at her school that filled in and returned the questionnaires said that she was a dictator, racist and autocrat. The first lot of questionnaires that were given to her did not reach the teachers and when I called back after two weeks to collect them, she told me that the teachers had not returned them to her. It was only after one staff member accidentally came across them stashed away that the teachers got them, filled them in and returned them straight to me.

Principals like Mr Allendale from Redman Primary, Mr Kunene from Vumezakho High and Mrs Campbell from Cato Crest Primary claimed that decision-making at their schools were "holistic and collective". Mr Allendale went on to say that his teachers owned every decision that was made at their school because it came from all of them. However, the teachers from the three schools maintained that there was no democratic or collective involvement of staff in the decision-making process. Decisions were either unilaterally taken or their inputs were not considered at all.

Besides a few misrepresentations of facts by some of the principals, their stories were constructed based on their experiences and the true reflection of the situations in the education system and their schools. The stories reflect transformed leaders of the learning institutions who understand their roles and the expectations of the people they lead. They have turned to be good listeners and change agents who promote participative decision-making and sharing of knowledge and information among all stakeholders.

Another question that comes up is, ‘to what extent do these stories reflect the construction of professional identities?’ The life-stories of these principals provide us with an understanding of various personal and professional changes in their lives. Personal changes are internally induced, meaning that they are linked to behavioural change; while professional changes are externally induced, resulting from new and revised policies. These changes result in the reconstruction of identity and redefinition of the roles of the principals. A significant change in the lives of the principals was after the introduction of the post 1994 democratic education legislation and policies.

The events and experiences the principals chose to tell in their life-stories reflect their self-concepts and their concept of leadership, which guided them in enacting their leadership roles (Shamir and Eilam, 2005). The stories reveal that the principals were inspired by role models of various types in their social and professional development, which is one of the things that helped them to define themselves in terms of their roles as leaders. Furthermore, the life-stories are not only about who the principals are but also about how they became principals, why they were at their schools, what their roles are

and how they should relate to their colleagues, learners and communities they are serving.

In answering these questions, they are able to define their new roles, reconstruct their professional identity, and explain and justify their leadership positions. According to Shamir and Eilam (2005), from the contacts with their role models, in the form of bosses, colleagues, world leaders, and literary figures, the principals select and assemble learning experiences from which they extract meanings to help them define their roles.

Stories from most of the selected principals show transformation in their behaviour and leadership styles. An example of this is extracted from Mrs Campbell's story where she tells about the change in her professional life. She began to define herself differently when she came to Cato Crest Primary School, which had started accepting black learners from the neighbouring townships and rural communities. The new environment forced her to change her perceptions and expectations. She says, "It was a struggle to change some of my beliefs and this caused me big problems in terms of exactly what my expectations are with everything. You know, as much as I say to myself, I have to change in my approach and what my expectations are, that kind of change doesn't happen overnight. It takes a lot of introspection and thinking to myself; I need to understand where these people are coming from as well, so it's not easy".

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter analysed the life-stories of the six selected school leaders. The leadership stories were analysed under four major themes that emerged from the navigation of the leadership accounts of the principals. All four themes served as bases for professional identity construction. The analysis of the stories was combined with the theories that the principals use in the performance of their leadership roles. The chapter is summed up by the review of the principals' life-stories whereby the connectedness between reality, experience and expression, and the reflection of professional identity in the stories are investigated.

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is about six school principals who were selected from various racial groups in KwaZulu-Natal. They grew up in different socio-economic settings and conditions and were educated under different education departments of the apartheid era. What was special about them was that they taught at and managed schools in both the apartheid and post-apartheid eras and they formed a suitable sample for this study since its central aim was to understand how they have dealt with the post-1994 changes in school governance and the challenges in their leadership roles as principals of public schools.

This chapter presents my findings, recommendations and conclusions of the study, which were arrived at by analyzing the life stories of the principals. The stories that they told ‘about themselves are means by which they conveyed important messages about their identities, traits, values, and beliefs, and by which they tried to justify their leadership of the group and their right to represent the group and its values’ (Shamir et al, 2005:15). Their stories gave a clear explanation why the education of some racial groups has been and still is referred to as inferior. They also explained why some school principals have successfully led their schools with minimal challenges when others had a lot of challenges to overcome.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The discussion of the findings revolves around the following areas of the analyzed stories: the professional socialization of the principals, their professional identity construction and role-definition, the influence of their personal and cultural values and beliefs on their leadership, and how they interpreted and applied the education policies. These findings are discussed in the context of literature on leadership roles, particularly educational leadership, and professional identity construction among managers and leaders.

Principals' professional socialization

The generation of principals that are in the study come from a period where their socialization into life in general, and education in particular, was shaped and directed by their parents. Gronn (1999:78) supports this statement when he says, "We are born and raised in contexts at particular times that seek to determine and shape us and, so, our choices and actions need to be understood within this environment". Unlike with the youth of today, the parents of the principals influenced their choices of careers. It came out strongly that some of the principals were coerced into teaching by their parents. However, two other determining factors for the choices of careers for some of the principals were the financial status of their parents and the limited career options that they could explore.

Although socialization into the teaching profession was formal, and all the principals successfully completed their training, the introduction into school management and leadership was not structured and planned. Like many principals in KwaZulu-Natal, the majority of the selected principals were not prepared or pre-trained to be school managers. A lot of what the selected principals knew about leadership was learnt through networking with experienced principals or by socializing with their staff. Insight about their enduring preferences, talents, values, beliefs, dreams, and motives was acquired over the years they have been interacting socially and professionally with their staff (Ibarra, 2000).

What made the principals unprepared for their roles, besides the lack of pre-training by the Department of Education, was the struggle by the aspiring principals regarding positions and accumulation of capital. The majority of the selected principals were not driven by the desire to support and facilitate the work of other teachers and bring about change in school leadership and management when they applied for their management positions, but only by the power and authority that came with the package. This worked against the conventional notion that teaching is a calling and that people join the profession to enlighten and empower others.

- Mrs Campbell represented the old school of thought and was driven by the idea of being the boss,
- Mr Allendale chose to be principal at Redman Primary rather than continuing to be a lecturer at a college of education because of the power of the position,

- Mrs Mtolo was a leader in the English teaching committee. She went to the US for special training in the teaching of the subject, but when a vacancy for principalship came up, she jumped at the opportunity although there were problems around the post,
- Mr Kunene constructed and marketed himself well in order to convince the authorities and panel members of his worthiness for the post,
- Mr Vezi applied for the HOD post that was advertised because he felt he deserved it after a few years in teaching, and
- Dr Chetty took advantage of the opportunity when he found out that the English HOD at Westbank Secondary had left because of the misunderstanding between him and the principal.

Professional identity construction and role-definition

“Identity construction is an important part of the ways the individual reach out and meets the world, with all its inconsistencies, demands, disappointments and joy” (Mullern and Whlin, 2005:11). The life stories of the principals revealed that constructing their identities as leaders of schools, the principals combined what they knew and could deliver, with what the teachers, learners and parents expected from them (fig. 6.1). Role expectations are always tied to social positions, which means that the stakeholders’ expectations of the principals are related to how they interpret his or her position within the larger social structure. The combination and comparison of their experiences with what they could deliver has been a strategy aimed at achieving awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. Identity construction is a continuous process because

principals keep on constructing and re-constructing their identity based on the policy changes that are taking place in education.

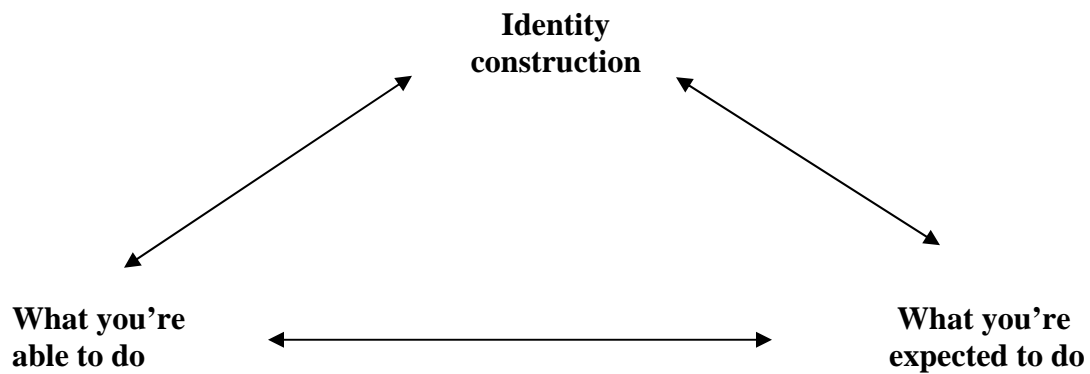


Figure 6.1: Tensions Shaping Identity Construction
Source: Mullern and Wahlin (2005)

All the selected principals admitted that working with and among their staff has influenced the way they define themselves in terms of their professional roles. They were receiving meaningful feedback from their staff which allowed them to re-define their professional identities. They had matured in their behaviour and could handle matters more professionally. The sharing of experiences and qualities between the new and experienced principals led to the acquiring of new behavioural skills which were constantly refined and perfected during the process of development and learning. While learning from their teachers, the principals also improved on their performance and attitudes toward the new policies and their work as a whole.

They were very clear about their roles as leaders and professional managers in the democratic dispensation. Their most important roles were providing support and

guidance to staff, creating a climate conducive for innovation and creativity among staff, marketing their schools, and seeing that there is co-operation between parents, teachers, and learners. The supportive behaviour of the principals and emphasis on participation, created a relationship of trust between the principal and the staff. A climate of innovation can be created by the use of both structure and personal behaviour or knowledge (Elkins and Keller, 2003).

The leadership roles of the principals are justified and supported by the self concepts of the principals which emerged from the stories about their life experiences. In other words, the life stories constructed and told by leaders are part of their image building (Shamir et al, 2005). The principals ensured that the experiences that they chose to use to address the expectations of the stakeholders reflect their self-concepts and their professional identity.

Influence of personal and cultural values and beliefs

The life stories of the selected principals have unveiled the fact that they, regardless of the statement above about the accumulation of wealth during their socialization, were critical thinkers and transformational agents who believed in their cultural and personal values, and beliefs as critical ingredients in the school leadership process. Moral values such as love for their profession and children, provision of quality education to the learners, role responsibility, transparency, accountability, and respect could be identified in their life stories (Abrahao, 2002). The principals, once they became managers, created

clear goals for their schools and showed high regard for change and transformation in their schools.

The analysis of the principals' stories sheds a light on the cultural and personal values, beliefs, and experiences that the principals used to influence the behaviour of their staff with regard to creating and providing education opportunities to learners, and a professional service to their communities. Despite the policy challenges and negative responses some of the principals received from their staff members, they displayed perseverance, commitment, and belief in their abilities to successfully lead their schools. They showed willingness to accommodate and involve other stakeholders in decision-making, and governance and management activities.

Honesty and transparency were on the top of the agendas of most of the principals. In order to bring about change in the schools they had to be honest to themselves and their staff. It was clear to them all that the time for authoritative leadership was over and they had to reconstruct their identities and redefine their roles with respect to the democratic dispensation that came about in 1994. When asked whether they would prefer to be principals before or after 1994, five out of six principals clearly preferred the challenges of the new dispensation. This was a sign of being positive in their endeavours to create effective and democratic schools.

Values, interest and beliefs of the principals are elements of past reality and experiences. The life stories that were told were based on the past experiences of the principals in the

form of social norms, moral nuances, cultural ideas and values, and religious beliefs; and their interpretations of the day-to-day situations at schools, and the negotiated meanings that came out of the participative discussions among stakeholders. However, some of the principals did not quite clearly understand the questions concerning their personal and cultural values in the interviews, hence the ambiguity in their responses to such questions.

Although the principals were highly educated and displayed managerial characteristics, they operated within a set of values and accepted behaviour that was part of the principal's position. That is why it has been indicated earlier on that the communities had predefined expectations for the school principals. If she or he was not delivering according to those expectations (internal and external), she or he had to answer to the governing body or the circuit office. For her or him to be successful, she or he had to know and understand the culture of the school and the policies of the Department of Education. Thereafter she or he could bring in her or his personal or private knowledge.

Feedback to the principals from the teachers at the selected school was poor. This was because principals did not clarify their personal values and beliefs to the teachers and parents in order for them to try and associate with. This could be picked up during the interviews when the principals were asked if their relationships with their staff were personal or strictly professional. Although many of them said their relationships were both professional and personal, the life stories revealed that the relationships were more professional than personal. When socializing on a personal basis with the staff, it was

within the school environment (during tea breaks in the staffroom), or with the senior staff and leaving the junior staff out. The principals would rather socialize with the senior staff because they were more complying and not challenging like the junior staff.

The questionnaires that were completed by the teachers revealed that there was a lack of closeness between the staff and the SMT. The teachers voiced their concerns about how difficult it was for them to give feedback or talk intimately about their personal or professional problems because of the gap between them and the SMT. The feedback the principal was getting from the SMT was not a true reflection of the feelings of the teachers with regard to the principal's implementation of the policies and satisfaction of the teachers' expectations.

Policy interpretation and application

While some of the principals still felt connected to the old structure of leadership and preferred to run their schools under strict and rigid conditions, they believed in the culture of excellence that is 'underpinned by the values of quality, effectiveness, equity, efficiency and empowerment' (Caldwell, 1999:259). They are transformational leaders whom Burns (1978) describe as being concerned with exploring conventional relationships and organizational understandings through involvement and participation.

Principals who decide to blindly adhere to the policies of the education system and plan their leadership strategy around them without considering their personal experiences, are rarely successful. Policies are hard rules and are therefore rigid and do not allow space for human agency. New (1994) refers to these personal experiences as 'agents' structural

capacity'. Principals as agents of change need to use their structural capacity to the full in order to know what their staff must do and is capable of doing as participants in the act towards transformation in their schools.

The majority of the principals believed that policy was there as a framework and they had a right to modify it to suit their different and unique situations at schools. However, the modification of policy did not mean that the rules had to be broken, but could be bent. To some, like Mrs Mtolo, the modification was an option which could be used but they preferred to keep the rules or policies as they were despite the dissatisfaction from their staff. This led to some policies being forced down the teachers' throats or totally rejected by the teachers. At some schools, like Cato Crest Primary, the IQMS was not implemented because the teachers were against it, while at others it was not properly implemented; teachers either thumb-sucked or faked the scores in order to get increment. There were rules or policy, like the South African Schools Act of 1996 that were there to manage deviance and could therefore not be modified.

What also emerged from the principals' stories concerning policy implementation was that there were policies that even the principals were not happy about, but were too scared or reluctant to challenge. Mr Vezi of Sithembile High was not happy with the clause of the IQMS that said that the principal should also be evaluated teaching a lesson in class. He was only complaining while complying and did not make any indication that he had challenged it or was going to challenge it. Some of the principals complained about misbehaviour among the learners because of the abolition of corporal punishment,

yet they reprimanded the teachers if found administering it. It became clear to the researcher that the principals were sticking to the instruction from the education department which said ‘comply or face the wrath of law’.

A well-structured policy will guide the principals as well as the teachers in performing their roles, as long as everyone takes ownership of it. Principals therefore did not simply act in response to the situations at their schools, but drew on certain available rules, regulations, and resources which are structural properties of the education system (Porpora, 1989). However, the stories revealed that in drawing and/or modifying some of the policies for their schools, some of the principals did not consult all the staff members but only the SMT. This resulted in teachers not accepting or respecting the policies.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

My main aim in this study was to investigate and understand, through life stories, how the principals have dealt with the post-1994 changes and leadership issues at their schools. I am positive that this approach to leadership studies has provided rich information and opened a new means of accessing and analysing data on school leadership. Furthermore, the following are the recommendations for future studies and research of this nature:

A number of studies on school leadership have concentrated on the study of leadership styles or theories, like instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and recently distributed leadership, in isolation (Calitz, 2002; Frazier, 1997; KwaZulu-Natal DEC,

2002; Nxumalo, 2001). My recommendation is that these leadership styles should be studied together and be combined with the principals' interpretations of the influence of these leadership styles or approaches on their leadership roles and functions. This will bring about a new and fresh dimension on leadership studies.

More qualitative studies on school leadership, using the life-history approach should be conducted in order to provide school principals with a platform to tell stories about their lives from which their staff can learn about their past experiences and achievements or failures, and behaviours. The time has come for the principals' voice to be heard and not that of researchers who always produce statistical results out of their studies about effective schools and principals. According to Shamir et al (2005:25),

Life stories transmit not only individual but also social and cultural meanings.

This is because people construct their narratives from building blocks available in culture, and not only from their personal experiences, and because the stories are communicated to others, and therefore assume a network of meaning that is shared between the narrator and the audience. Therefore, by studying leaders' life stories, we can access cultural meanings of leadership and compare them across contexts. Similar comparisons could be employed to study historical developments in the meaning of leadership, as well as differences in the meaning of leadership in various contexts (for example, political, military, business).

The sociological aspect of leadership should be introduced where concepts like identity construction, structure and agency appear more in educational leadership studies or research. This idea is supported by Shamir et al (2005:26) when they say,

For many decades, the study of leadership in organizations has been dominated by a social-psychological perspective. The vitalization of the leadership studies in the last two decades of the 20th century can be attributed in part to the inputs from other disciplines: the House's (1977) theory of charismatic leadership developed on the basis of reading the political science and sociological literature; Burns' (1978) theory of transformational leadership imported from the fields of history and political science to the fields of organization studies.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter has been concerned with the findings and recommendations of the study. Generally, the researcher's findings revealed that the selected principals' behaviour and role interpretations were mainly influenced by their historical and cultural life experiences. Included in the experiences were values, beliefs, religious and cultural orientations, gender issues, commitments, and expectations. It also came out clearly that, although the selected principals were driven and inspired by the ideas of democracy and participative leadership in their roles and duties as professional managers of schools, they were still experiencing problems with the implementation of the democratic policies.

I can say that the study as a whole opened new methods in which a researcher and the interviewee can communicate and share knowledge, and also provided a new source of information from which the teachers and parents can learn about the principal's traits, behaviour, and leadership style. The use of the life-history approach made it easy for the researcher to collect data from the selected principals because they enjoyed giving accounts of their experiences as teachers and managers of schools before and after 1994.

Abrahao (2002:8) maintains that:

The life story method is a method with the greatest potential for interaction between the individual and social-cultural because only the story of a life can provide evidence of the way each person allocates their knowledge, values, energies so as to shape their identity in a dialog with their contexts.

The aim of this method in the present study was to follow the process, by the principals, of becoming professionals, and performing and interpreting their roles in the new dispensation. The objectives of the study were achieved; looking at the rich information that was obtained through the principals' stories, which included personal, professional, and socio-political dimensions of their experiences.

New concepts like self-categorization, identity construction, structure and agency, were borrowed from sociology and introduced to the study of school leadership. However, the researcher had to stay focussed on the central aim of the study and not to be side-tracked by the sociological ideologies and thinking. While structure and agency sounded interesting, and also exciting to include as a new dimension in school leadership studies,

it was not easy for the researcher to fit them perfectly in the interview process, and make or convince the principals to use and build conversations around them easily.

There were a few limitations though when this study was conducted. The use of the life-history approach required me to pay not less than three visits to the selected principals, which was sometimes disturbing because they had very busy schedules especially towards the end of the school terms when tests and exams were written. Two principals who were initially identified bluntly refused to take part in the interviews when they were told about the duration of each interview session. Some principals also did not honour the appointments or had to cut short the interviews which were later continued at their homes, because of other commitments. There were also a lot of interruptions at the principals' offices: ringing phones, official visitors, parents, teachers, and more, which made the transcription of the tapes a difficult task.

In closing, it is assumed that this study will contribute positively to the body of professional knowledge for future research. It is further assumed that as many people as possible will be exposed to parts of the principals' life stories as they are told by the principals or by others, and that these stories will convey messages that might influence their identification with the principals, trust in the principals, and accept the principals' behaviour and influence (Shamir et al, 2005:24).

REFERENCES

- Abrahao, MHMB (2002). Brazilian Teacher Education Revealed Through the Life Stories of Great Educators. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 28 (1): 7-16.
- Andras, P. and Charlton, B.G. (2005). *A systems theory interpretation of leadership*. Retrieved on December 21, 2005 from <http://www.liv.ac.uk/ccr/2005>.
- Antikainen, A.; Houtsonen, J.; Huotelin, H. and Kauppila, J. (1996). *Living in a Learning Society: Life-Histories, Identities and Education*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Archer, M.S. (2000). *Being Human: the Problem of Agency*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- (2003). *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Atkinson, R. (1998). *The Life Story Interview*. California: Sage Publications.
- Ball, S.J. (1987). *The Micro-Politics of The School: Towards a Theory of School Organization*. London and New York: Methuen.
- Ball, S.J. and Goodson, I.F. (1985). *Teachers' Lives and Careers*. London and Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.
- Banathy, B.H. (1991). *Systems Design of Education: A Journey to Create The Future*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Educational Technology Publications.
- Bass, B.M. (1981). *Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of Theory and Research*. New York: Free Press.
- Bass, B.M. (1985a). Leadership: Good, Better, Best. *Organizational Dynamics*, 13(3): 26-40.
- Bass, B.M. (1985b). *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*. New York: The Free Press.
- Bass, B.M. (1990). From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, Winter.
- Bassey, M. (1999). *Case Study Research in Educational Settings*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

- Bassey, M. (2002). Case Study Research, in Coleman, M. and Briggs, A.R.J. (eds) *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Bauman, Z. (2004). *Identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Becker, H.S. (2002). The Life History and The Scientific Mosaic, in Weinberg, D. (ed) *Qualitative Research Methods*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers.
- Bertaux, D. (1981). From the Life-History Approach to the Transformation of Sociological Practice, in Bertaux, D. (ed) *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in The Social Sciences*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications.
- Betts, F. (1992). How Systems Thinking Applies to Education. *Educational Leadership*, 50(3): 38-41.
- Bhaskar, R. (1989). *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*. New York: Harvester, Wheatsheaf.
- Bhindi, N. and Duignan, P. (1997). Leadership for a New Century: Authenticity, Internationality, Spirituality, and Sensibility. *Educational Management and Administration*, 25(1): 117-132.
- Blake, R.R. and Mouton, J.S.(1964). *Managerial Grid*. Houston, TX: Gulf.
- Bolam, R. (1997). Management Development for Headteachers: Retrospect and Prospect. *Educational Management and Administration*, 25(3):265-283.
- Bloom, L.R. and Munro, P. (1995). Conflicts of Selves: Nonunitary Subjectivity in Women Administrators' Life History Narratives, in Hatch, J.A and Wisniewski, R. (eds) *Life History and Narrative*. London: Falmer Press.
- Boles, H.W. and Davenport, J.A. (1975). *Introduction to Educational Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (R. Nice, Trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bromley, D.B. (1977). *Personality Description in Ordinary Language*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Brott, P.E. and Kajs, L.T. (2001). *Developing the Professional Identity of First-Year Teachers Through a "Working Alliance"*. Retrieved on March 3, 2006 from www.alt.teachercert.org

- Bruner, J.S. (1991). The Narrative Construction of Reality. *Critical Inquiry*, 18: 1-21.
- Bryman, A. (1986). *Leadership and Organizations*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Burke, P.J. (1980). The Self: Measurement Implications from a Symbolic Interactionist Perspective. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 43: 18-29.
- Burke, P.J. and Reitzes, D.C. (1981). The Link between Identity and Role Performance. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 44 (2): 83-92.
- Burke, P.J. and Tully, J.C. (1977). The Measurement of Role Identity. *Social Forces* 55 (4): 881-897.
- Burns, J.M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper& Row.
- Burns, R.B. (1982). *Self-Concept Development and Education*. London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Bush, T. (2002). Authenticity – Reliability, Validity and Triangulation, in Coleman, M. and Briggs, A.R.J. (eds) *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Bush, T.; Coleman, M. and Thurlow, M. (2002). *Managing Schools in South Africa*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Caldwell, B.J. (1999). Reinventing School Leadership for Lasting Reform in the Third Millennium, in Day, C., Fernandez, A., Hauge, T.E. and Moller, J. (eds) *The Life and Work of Teachers: International Perspectives in Changing Times*. London: Falmer.
- Calitz, L. (2002). Leadership for Change in Education: The South African Perspective, in Calitz, L.; Fuglestad, O.L. and Lillejord, S. (eds) *Leadership in Education*. Sandown: Heinemann Publishers.
- Callero, P.L. (1985). Role-Identity Salience. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 48 (3): 203-215.
- Caroselli, M. (1990). *The Language of Leadership*. USA: Human Resource Development Press, Inc.
- Carver, F.D. and Sergiovanni, T.J. (1969). *Organizations and Human Behavior: Focus on Schools*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (1994). Qualitative Research in Work Contexts, in Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (eds) *Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage.

- Certo, S.C. (1980). *Principles of Modern Management: Functions and Systems*. Dubuque, Iowa: Brown Company Publishers.
- Chamberlin, C.R. (2002). "It's Not Brain Surgery": Construction of Professional Identity Through Personal Narrative. *Teaching and Learning*, 16(3): 69-79.
- Claxton, G. (1990). *Teaching to learn: A direction for education*. London: Cassell.
- Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1994). *Research Methods in Education*. London: Routledge.
- Cooley, C.H. (1902). *Human Nature and the Social Order*. New Jersey: Transaction Books.
- Cresswell, J.W. (1994). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*. Thousand Oakes, CA and London: Sage.
- Crombie, D. (1996). A Structuration Theory of Organization. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 19:197-211.
- Curry, B.K. (2002). The Influence of the Leader Persona on Organizational Identity. *The Journal of Leadership Studies*, 8(4): 33-42.
- Daft, R.L. (1999). *Leadership, Theory and Practice*. Fort Worth: The Dryden Press.
- Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. (1997). *The Learning School: An Organization Development Approach*. Kenwyn: Juta and Company, Ltd.
- Day, C.; Harris, A.; Hadfield, M.; Tolley, H. and Beresford, J. (2000). *Leading Schools in Times of Change*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Denzin, N.K. (1989b). *Interpretive Biography*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Department of Education (1996). *Changing Management to Manage Change in Education*. Report of the Task Team on Education Management Development. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Dill, W.R. (1972). Administrative Decision-Making, in Golembiewski, R.T.; Gibson, F.K. and Cornog, G.Y. (eds) *Public Administration: Readings in Institutions, Processes, Behaviour*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Dollard, J. (1949). *Criteria for the Life History*. Magnolia, MA: Peter Smith.
- Dopson, S.; Risk, A. and Stewart, R. (1992). The Changing Role of the Middle Manager in the United Kingdom. *International Studies of Management and Organization*, 22(1): 40-53.

- Duke, D.L.; Showers, B.K. and Imber, M. (1980). Teachers and Shared Decision-Making: The Costs and Benefits of Involvement. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 16 (1) Winter.
- Eisner, E.W. (1998). *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Elkins, T. and Keller, R.T. (2003). Leadership in Research and Development Organizations: A Literature Review and Conceptual Framework. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14: 587-606.
- Fiedler, F.E. (1967). *A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Fiedler, F.E. and Chemers, M.M. (1984). *Improving Leadership Effectiveness: The Leader Concept*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Flynn, M. (1995). Social Phenomenology and Education, in Higgs, P. (ed) *Metatheories in Philosophy of Education*. Johannesburg, SA: Heinemann.
- Fogelman, K. (2002). Surveys and Sampling, in Coleman, M. and Briggs, A.R.J. (eds) *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Foskett, N. and Lumby, J. (2003). *Leading and Managing Education: International Dimensions*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Frazier, A. (1997). *A Road Map for Quality Transformation in Education*. Boca Raton, Florida: St Lucie Press.
- Fuglestad, O.L. and Calitz, L. (2002). Culture as Process: Leadership Challenges in the Construction of Productive Learning Cultures, in Calitz, L Fuglestad, O.L. and Lillejord, S. (eds) *Leadership in Education*. Sandown: Heinemann Publishers.
- Gergen, K.J. (1971). *The Concept of Self*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Gergen, K.J. and Gergen, M.M. (1986). Narrative Form and the Construction of Psychological Science, in Sarbin, T.R. (ed) *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct*. New York: Praeger.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (2005). The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration, in Spiegel, G.M. (ed) *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn*. New York and London: Routledge.

- Gingras, J.R. (2003). *Dietitians' Experience of Their Education: The Identity and Socialization of "Nutrition Experts"*. Doctoral Research in Progress. Retrieved: December 6, 2005, from <http://www.jacquingingras.com/pdf/research>.
- Goldring, E. and Greenfield, W. (2002). Understanding the Evolving Concept of Leadership in Education: Roles, Expectations, and Dilemmas, in Murphy, J. (ed.) *The Educational Leadership Challenge: Redefining Leadership for the 21st Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Goodson, I.F. (1991). Teachers' Lives and Educational Research, in Goodson, I.F. and Walker, R. (eds) *Biography, Identity and Schooling: Episodes in Educational Research*. Lewes: Falmer.
- Goodson, I.F. and Sikes, P. (2001). *Life History Research in Educational Settings: Learning from Lives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Green, Z. (2001). Group Process, Identity, and International Leadership. *Academy of Leadership*. Retrieved on March 29, 2006 from www.academy.umd.edu/publications/global_leaders
- Gronn, P. (1996). From Transaction to Transformation: A New World Order in the Study of Leadership. *Educational Management and Administration*, 24 (1) : 7-30.
- (2002). Distributed Leadership as a Unit of Analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13: 423-451
- Gunter, H.M. (2001). *Leaders and Leadership in Education*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Gunter, H and Ribbins, P. (2002). Leadership Studies in Education: Towards a Map of the Field. *Educational Management and Administration*, 30(4): 387-416.
- Hall, V. (1996). *Dancing on the Ceiling: A Study of Women Managers in Education*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Hartley, J.F. (1994). Case Studies in Organizational Research, in Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (eds) *Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London: Sage.
- Hatch, J.A. and Wisniewski, R. (1995). Life History and Narrative: Questions, Issues, and Exemplary Works, in Hatch, J.A. and Wisniewski, R. (eds) *Life History and Narrative*. London: Falmer Press.
- Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K.H. (1993). *Management of Educational Behaviour: Utilizing Human Resource*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

- Hollander, E.P. (1964). *Leaders, Group, and Influence*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Horner, M. (2003). Leadership Theory Reviewed, in Bennett, N.; Crawford, M. and Cartwright, M. (eds), *Effective Educational Leadership*. London: The Open University.
- Hoyle, E. (1986). The Management of Schools: Theory and Practice, in Hoyle, E. and McMahon, A. (eds) *The Management of Schools*. London, Kogan Page.
- Hughes, M. (1985). Leadership in Professionally Staffed Organizations, in Hughes, M.; Ribbins, P. and Thomas, H. (eds) *Managing Education: The System and the Institution*. London: Holt, Reinhart and Winston.
- Ibarra, H. (1999). Provisional Selves: Experimenting With Image and Identity in Professional Adaptation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(4): 764-791.
- Jardine, N. (1977). *Leadership and Management in the School*. Tape Recording of the NTS Conference (July), Durban.
- Jedwab, J. (2001). *Leadership, Governance and the Politics of Identity in Canada*. Paper Commissioned by the Department of Canadian Heritage for Ethnocultural, Racial, Religious, and Linguistic Diversity and Identity. Retrieved on December 21, 2005 from www.metropolis.net
- Jennings, A. (1975). 'The Participation of the Teaching Staff in Decision-Making in Schools' in McHugh, R. (ed) (1976) *A Case Study in Management*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Kaagan, S.S. (1997). *Leadership Lessons: From Life of Character and Purpose in Public Affairs*. New York: University Press of America, Inc.
- Kamler, B. (2001). *Relocating the Personal: A Critical Writing Pedagogy*. New York, State University of New York Press.
- Kast, F.E. and Rosenweig, J.E. (1996). General Systems Theory: Applications for Organization and Management, in Shafritz, J.M. and Otts, J.S. (eds) *Classics of Organization Theory*. New York: Harcourt Brace, pp. 302-315.
- Katz, D. and Khan, R.L. (1969). Common Characteristics of Open Systems, in Emery F.E. (ed) *Systems Thinking*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, Ltd.
- Keith, S. and Girling, R.H. (1991). *Education, Management, and Participation: New Directions in Educational Administration*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- Kincheloe, J. and McLaren, P. (1998). Rethinking Critical Theory and Qualitative Research, in Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds) *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oakes, California: Sage.
- King, A. (2004). *The Structure of Social Theory*. London: Routledge.
- King, Nigel (1994). The Qualitative Research Interview, in Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (eds) *Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London: Sage.
- Kouzes, J.M. and Posner, B.Z. (1993). *Leadership Practices Inventory: Trainer's Manual*. London: Pfeiffer and Company.
- Kvale, S. (1983). The Qualitative Research Interview: A Phenomenological and Hermeneutical Mode of Understanding. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 14: 171-196.
- KwaZulu-Natal DEC (2002). *Towards Effective School Management, Manual 1*. USAID/South Africa: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Lamont, C. (1965). *The Philosophy of Humanism*. USA: Barrie & Radcliffe.
- Lashway, L. (2003). 'Distributed Leadership'. *Research Roundup*, 19 (4).
- Leithwood, K.A. (1992). The Move Toward Transformational Leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 49 (5): 8-12.
- Leithwood, K.A.; Jantzi, D. and Steinbach, R. (199). *Changing Leadership for Changing Times*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Lessard, C. (1986). The Teaching Profession: Multiplicity of Professional Identities and Common Culture. *Essais en Education*, 8: 135-190.
- Loock, C. (2002). *Effective Education Management Series: A Guide to Educators and Managers in Education*. Module 3 Education Leadership.
- Lussier, R.N. (2000). *Management Fundamentals: Concepts, Application, Skill Development*. USA: South-Western Collage Publishing.
- MacBeath, J. (1998). *Effective School Leadership: Responding to Change*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing, Ltd.
- McGeown, V. (1984). Selected Leadership Functions of the School Principal, in Harling, P. (ed) *New Directions in Educational Leadership*. London: The Falmer Press.

- McGowen, K.R. and Hart, L.E. (1990). Still different after all these years: Gender differences in professional identity formation. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 21: 118-123.
- McMillan, J.H. and Schumacher, S. (1993). *Research in Education: A Conceptual Introduction*. New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.
- Mead, G.H. (1962). *Mind, Self, and Society: From a Standpoint of a Social Behaviourist*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Miller, R.L. (2000). *Researching Life Stories and Family Histories*. London: Sage.
- Mintzberg, H. (1973). *The Nature of Managerial Work*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Moneyhon, J.; Jolly, N. and Deo, S. (2004). Distributed Leadership in a Global La Leche League. *LEAVEN*, 40(5): 98, 118.
- Morrison, K. (1998). *Management Theories for Educational Change*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Mpungose, J.E. (2004). *The Principal as a Leader: A Life History Approach*. Paper Presented at the Kenton Kahlamba Conference, September 30th – October 3rd, 2004, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.
- Mullern, T. and Wahlin, N. (2005). *Leadership and the Identity-Alterity Interface: Tensions in Middle Management Positions*. Paper for the 18th Scandinavian Academy of Management (NFF), Track: Leadership in the Northern Light. Aarhus School of Business, Aarhus, Denmark. August 18 – 20, 2005.
- Munro, P. (1993). Continuing Dilemmas of Life History Research: A Reflexive Attempt of Feminist Qualitative Inquiry, in Flinders, D. and Mills, G. (eds) *Theory and Concepts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives from the Field*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Musolf, G.R. (2003). *Structure and Agency in Everyday Life: An Introduction to Social Psychology*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- National College for School Leadership (NCSL) (2002). *Distributed Leadership: A Review of the Literature*. A summary of the main report. www.ncsl.org.uk
- New, C. (1994). Structure, Agency and Social Transformation. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 24(3): 187-205.
- Nxumalo, J.D. (2001). *Leadership as a Key Responsibility of the School Principal*. Unpublished PhD. Thesis. Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit.

- Oplatka, I. (2001). Building a Typology of Self-Renewal: Reflection Upon Life-Story Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 6 (4): 1-16. Retrieved on August 26, 2004 from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR6-4/oplatka.html>.
- Patton, M.Q. (1980). *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Phendla, T.S. (2000). “*Musadzi u fara lufhanga nga hu fhiraho*”: *Black Women Elementary School Leaders Creating Socially Just and Equitable Environments in South Africa*. Michigan State University, USA: Unpublished PhD Thesis.
- Pittaway, L.; Rivera, O. and Murphy, A. (2003). *Social Identity and Leadership Development in the Basque Region: A Study of Leadership Development Programmes*. Working Paper: Lancaster University Management School, UK. Retrieved on December 6, 2005, from <http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/publications>.
- Porpora, D.V. (1989). Four Concepts of Social Structure. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 19(2): 195-211.
- Plummer, K. (1995). Life Story Research, in Smith, J.A.; Ron Harre, and Luk van Langenhove (eds), *Rethinking Methods in Psychology*. London: Sage.
- Plummer, K. (2001). *Documents of Life 2: An Invitation to a Critical Humanism*. London: Sage Publications.
- Polkinghorne, D.E. (1995). Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis, in Hatch, J.A. and Wisniewski, R. (eds) *Life History and Narrative*. London: Falmer Press.
- Razik, T.A. and Swanson, A.D. (1995). *Fundamental Concepts of Educational Leadership and Management*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Reddy, V. (2000). *Life Histories of Black South African Scientists: Academic Success in an Unequal Society*. Unpublished Dissertation Submitted for the Doctor of Education Degree at the University of Durban-Westville, Durban.
- Republic of South Africa (1996). *South African Schools Act*. Cape Town: Government Gazette.
- Rosenthal, G. (1993). Reconstruction of Life Stories: Principles of Selection in Generating Stories for Narrative Biographical Interviews, in Josselson, R. and Lieblich, A. (eds) *The Narrative Study of Lives, vol. 1*. London: Sage.
- Rost, J.C. (1993). *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Praeger Publishers.

- Rousseau, D.L. and van der Veen, M. (2001). *The Emergence of Shared Identity: A Simulation*. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 30th – September 2nd 2001. San Francisco, CA. Retrieved on December 6, 2005, from: www.psych.upenn.edu/sacsec/
- Runyan, W.M. (1982). *Life Histories and Psychobiography: Explorations in Theory and Method*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Shamir, B.; Dayan-Horesh, H. and Adler, D. (2005). Leading by Biography: Towards a Life-story Approach to the Study of Leadership. *Leadership*, 1 (1): 13-29.
- Shamir, B. and Eilam, G. (2005). What's Your Story? : A Life-Story Approach to Authentic Leadership Development. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16(3): 395-417.
- Schein, E.H. (1992). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Schon, D.A. (1984). Leadership as Reflection-in-Action, in Sergiovanni, T.J. and Corbally, J.E. (eds) *Leadership and Organizational Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 36-63.
- Schwier, R.A.; Campbell, K. and Kenny, R. (2004). *An Investigation of the Change Agency and Professional Identity of Instructional Designers*. Paper Presented at Ed-Media 2004, World Conference on Multimedia and Hypermedia Lugano, Switzerland, June 25, 2004. Retrieved on March 24, 2006 from www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet.html
- Senge, P.M. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Currency Doubleday.
- Sergiovanni, T.J. (1992). *Moral Leadership: Getting to the Heart of School Improvement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Silverman, D. (2001). *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analyzing Talk, Text and Interaction*. London, Thousand Oakes, New Delhi: Sage.
- Smith, J.A. (1995). Semi-Structured Interviewing and Qualitative Analysis, in Smith, J.A.; Ron Harre and Luk Van Langenhove (eds) *Rethinking Methods in Psychology*. London: Sage.
- Spillane, J.P.; Halverson, R. and Diamond, J.B. (2001). 'Investigating School Leadership Practice'. *Educational Research*, 30(3): 23-28.
- Spradley, J.P. (1979). *The Ethnographic Interview*. London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

- Stets, J.E. and Burke, P.J. (2000). Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63 (3): 224-237.
- (2003). A Sociological Approach to Self and Identity, in Leary, M.R. and Tangney, J.P. (eds) *Handbook of Self and Identity*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Stryker, S. (1980). *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version*. California: Benjamin/Cummings Publishing Company, Inc.
- Symon, G. and Hornby, P. (1994). Tracer Studies, in Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (eds) *Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage.
- Tannenbaum, R. and Schmidt, W.H. (1958). How to Choose a Leadership Pattern. *Harvard Business Review*, March – April: 95-102.
- Thorp, J. (1985). Accountability versus Participation?, in Hughes, M; Ribbins, P. and Thomas, H. (eds) *Managing Education: The System and the Institution*. London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston
- Thurlow, M. (2002). The Management of Schools, in Bush, T.; Coleman, M. and Thurlow, M. (eds) *Managing Schools in South Africa*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Turner, R.H. (1978). The Role and the Person. *American Journal of Sociology*, 84:1-23.
- Tyack, D. and Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Vandenberg, D. (1995). Phenomenology in Educational Discourse, in Higgs, P. (ed) *Metatheories in Philosophy of Education*. Johannesburg, SA: Heinemann.
- Van Knippenberg, D.; Van Knippenberg, B.; De Cremer, D. and Hogg, M.A. (2004). Leadership, Self, and Identity: A Review and Research Agenda. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15(6): 825-856.
- Van Maanen, J. (1983). Reclaiming Qualitative Methods for Organizational Research: A Preface, in van Maanen, J. (ed) *Qualitative Methodology*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Watson, T.J. and Harris, P. (1999). *The Emergent Manager*. London: Sage.
- Webb, P.C. and Lyons, G. (1982). The Nature of Managerial Activities in Education, in Gray, H.L. (ed) *The Management of Educational Institutions*. England: The Falmer Press.

- West Chester University (2004). *An Introduction to Distributed Leadership*.
<http://www.wcupa.edu>.
- White, J. and Moss, J. (2003). *Professional Paradoxes: Context for Development of Beginning Teacher Identity and Knowledges*. Unpublished Paper for the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Unit, of the University of Melbourne. Retrieved on March 24, 2006 from www.aare.edu.au.
- Widdershoven, G.A.M. (19). The Story of Life: Hermeneutic Perspectives on the Relationship Between Narrative and Life History, in Josselson, R. and Lieblich, A. (eds) *The Narrative Study of Lives, Volume 1*. London: Sage, (1-20).
- Wilshire, B. (1982). *Role Playing and Identity: The Limits of Theatre as Metaphor*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Winkley, D. (1984). Educational Management and School Leadership: An Evolutionary Perspective, in Harling, P. (ed) *New Directions in Educational Leadership*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Woods, P. (1987). Life Histories and Teacher Knowledge, in Smyth, J. (ed.) *Educating Teachers: Changing the Nature of Pedagogical Knowledge*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Wragg, T. (2002). Interviewing, in Coleman, M. and Briggs, A.R.J. (eds.) *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Wynn, R. and Guditius, C.W. (1984). *Team Management: Leadership by Consensus*. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.
- Yukl, G.A. (1989). *Leadership in Organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall.
- Zaleznik, A. (1977). Managers and Leaders: Are They Different? *Harvard Business Review*, 15(3): 67-84.

APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

RESEARCH ON SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

Purpose of the study

- To establish the extent to which school leadership is determined by personal values, interests and beliefs of the principals.
- To investigate each selected principal's views or perceptions about what is expected of them as leaders and professional managers of schools, and to determine whether they still have a crucial role to play in schools within the context of current policies and legislative frameworks.
- To examine the transformation process among leaders of democratized public educational institutions.

Confidentiality Pledge

- The identity of the principal and his/her school will be protected at all times.
- All information will be treated with confidentiality and will only be listened to or viewed by the researcher.

School: _____

Place of Interview: _____

Date: _____

Name of Principal: _____

Qualifications: _____

Experience: _____

Introduction

Today is April ____ 2004 and I am interviewing _____ in
his/her office at _____ school. My name is Jabulani
Mpungose and this is tape number 1/4/04.

A. Family Background and Cultural Traditions

1. What can you tell me about the place where you were born and brought up?
2. What was growing up in your house or neighbourhood like?
3. How would you describe your parents' personalities and emotional qualities?
4. What was their educational and financial status?
5. What did you like most about them?
6. Do you still have any memories of family or cultural celebrations, traditions, or rituals that were practiced at you home?
7. Do you think that they had any influence on the way you grew up, and how?
8. Was your family different from other families in your neighbourhood?
9. Was religion important in your family, and how?
10. Did you attend and observe religious services and ceremonies as a youth?
11. Do you still do now?

B. Socialization

1. How would you describe your childhood?
2. How many children were there in your family?
3. How was your relationship like with your brothers and/or sisters?

4. Did your parents spend enough time with you, and how?
5. How was discipline handled in your home?
6. Did you ever struggle as a child, and how?
7. In your community, were you encouraged to try new things or you were always told to follow what was done by your leaders and elders?
8. Was it easy for you to make friends?
9. Did you experience any pressures as a teenager, what were these pressures and where did they come from?
10. Were you a member of any youth club, group or organization?
11. What role did you play in your groups?
12. Who can you say were your heroes who shaped and influenced your life, and how did they do that?
13. Have you experienced any social pressures as an adult, and what were these?
14. How have you contributed to your community from what you have learnt in your life?

C. Education

1. What memories do you have about your primary school days?
2. How would you describe your parents' attitude towards education?
3. Who were your favourite teachers and why?
4. What were your positive and negative experiences during your primary and secondary school years?

5. How did these experiences motivate and challenge you to become what you are today?
6. What do you remember about college?
7. Did you take part in any organizational or group activities at college?
8. What lessons did you learn from such activities?
9. What is your view of the role of higher education in the life of a teenager?

D. Career As a Teacher

1. What were your wishes and ambitions when you were at high schools?
2. Did you achieve them or there was a change in your plans?
3. Was teaching always your dream career, if not, how did you end up in the teaching profession?
4. How would you describe your experiences in your career as a teacher from the time you took up teaching?
5. What were the stages, training, and tests you had to go through to reach the position you are holding now?
6. What is important to you about teaching?
7. What is most difficult about teaching?

E. Management and Leadership

1. When were you appointed to the school principal position?
2. Did you receive any special training before or after your appointment as principal?

3. How has this training helped in becoming the type of manager and leader you are today?
4. How has your upbringing and early socialization helped you in your career as school principal?
5. The introduction of the democratic educational policies brought about a number of changes in the way in which the schools are run, compared to what things were in the past. Some school principals feel that their powers have been curtailed, which led to their authority being undermined by teachers, the unions and the parents. They find themselves locked in with less room to manoeuvre. Others, however, think that participative management of schools is the way to go. How do you feel about this?
6. What do you think is your management role in your school within the context of such policies?
7. How have you introduced the new policies in your school?
8. Have you experienced any problems or difficulties in implementing these policies in your school?
9. You have two roles to play in your school: being a professional manager and an executive member of the governing body. How do you make sure that there is no overlap and/or contradictions in these roles?
10. Regarding the employment of educators, what has helped your school to avoid and overcome the frequently experienced problem of appointing unsuitable candidates?

11. In your view, can leadership be regarded as a human quality, and why?
12. If you were to choose, would you prefer to be a school principal in the period before 1994 or after, and why?
13. It has become common understanding that the leadership style of the principal is determined by his/her personal values, interests and beliefs. What is your feeling about this?
14. The new education policies, among other things, suggest that stakeholder involvement in the school matters help in creating an environment of support and commitment in which people see problems as issues to be solved. How has your school moved towards the implementation of this idea, and how have things worked out?
15. Would you consider changing the existing norms, values, interests, beliefs and relationships in a school one of the new ways of encouraging participation or working together among staff members, and why?
16. What have you done to empower your staff at your school?
17. What have been the most difficult times of your life as the school principal?

F. Closure

I think that we have come to the end of our interview, but before we close, there are three things that I would like to hear from you:

- If there is anything that we have left out of your life story?
- If you feel you have given a fair picture of yourself?
- What your feelings about this interview and all that we have covered are?

SCHEDULE B

1. Could you please give me an account of your entry into school management?
2. How were you appointed to the level of HOD, Deputy Principal, and Principal?
3. What was the response from the teachers in your department and school when you were appointed as HOD, Deputy Principal or Principal?
4. How has the relationship been like between you and your subordinates?
5. How has the treatment you received from your teachers and parents influenced your leadership and management of the school?
6. How is your involvement in the community's activities and celebrations?
7. Has this participation helped you in understanding the community's cultural values?
8. How have your personal values, interests and beliefs that you came with to this position as principal influenced your leadership style?

SCHEDULE C

1. When you were appointed as the principal, what were your goals and objectives?
2. Have you achieved those goals and if not, what do you still want to achieve?
3. What would you consider to be the major challenge in your job?
4. How did your previous working experience with your subordinates or colleagues influence your present position?
5. How do you as the school principal respond to the daily demands and expectations from your staff, learners and parents?
6. What impact do you think your personal knowledge has on the way you make policy decisions at your school?
7. How do you view the aspects of policy change, like R&R? Have they brought positive or negative concerns among your staff?
8. How do you balance what you are expected to do according to policy with your actions or decisions resulting from the situation existing at your school?
9. How does your staff respond to your leadership style?
10. What is your definition of good leadership behaviour and role performance?
11. How has working with and among your staff influenced your professional identity or the way you define yourself and your role within your school?
12. Speaking of your role, what determines your role as the school principal (where do you get direction of what you should do to lead the school successfully)?
13. How has knowledge sharing or networking with other principals helped you in managing or leading your school better?

14. What major changes have you noticed in the way you have managed and led your school in the past four to ten years?
15. Could you briefly describe to me the kind of interaction that takes place between yourself, the SMT and staff at your school? Do you view yourself as belonging to the staff social group and how?
16. What have you learnt about leading an organization through your work as a principal?
17. What keeps you going in your daily leadership duties and how do you make sure that you are always on track with your responsibilities and changes in education?
18. How do you keep a good relationship between yourself and your staff and parents?

APPENDIX 2

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

DOCTORAL RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

SURVEY ON SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN SELECTED KWAZULU-NATAL SCHOOLS

A. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. What is the name of your school? _____

2. Name of the circuit: (Mark with an “X”)

Lower Tugela

Maphumulo

Ndwedwe

3 Rank: (Mark with an “X”)

Deputy Principal

Head of Department

Level one educator

4. Gender: Male / Female

5. Age: (Mark with an “X”)

20 – 29 30 – 39 40 – 49 50 – 59 60+

6. Level of education: (Mark with an “X”)

<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Diploma	Junior Degree	Honours	Masters_	PhD
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

7. Number of years teaching:

<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<5	5 –9	10 – 14	15 – 19	20+
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

8. Number of years in management position:

<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
0	1	2	3	4	5+.	
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

9. Race: (Mark with an “X”).

<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Black	Coloured	Indian	White .
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

B. POST 1994 EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

1. Since the introduction of the governing body in your school, the quality of governance, leadership and management has:

Improved	<u> </u>
Remained the same	<u> </u>
Became worse	<u> </u>

2. Does your school governing body receive training: _____
- Once when it is newly selected? _____
- Continuously every year? _____
- Not even once _____
3. How has this training helped your school governing body in terms of financial management? (Status of the school according to norms and standards)
- _____
- _____
- _____
4. The introduction of the school governing body has: _____
- Increased the powers of the principal _____
- Decreased the powers of the principal _____
- Encouraged participative governance _____
- Given all the power to run the school _____
- to the parents _____
5. Regarding the employment of staff: _____
- Only the HODs should be involved in the selection _____
- and interview of educators _____
- The selection and interview committee must include _____
- the relevant stakeholders and the subject head or HOD _____
- The selection and interview committee must be made _____
- up of the governing body members only _____

6. Has the introduction of the OBE curriculum influenced the administrative, leadership and management duties of your school principal in any way?

Yes/No _____

7. If yes, state how _____

8. Was the appraisal system introduced and conducted at your school?

Yes/No _____

9. If no, what do you think was the reason for that?

C. LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

1. Would you define your principal's ability to take the initiative and to act decisively as:

Poor?

Satisfactory?

Good?

Excellent?

2. When it comes to decision-making, does your principal:
- Make a decision on his own? _____
- Consult the staff before making a decision, but
do not use their ideas? _____
- Consult the staff with a decision? _____
- Allow the staff to make a collective decision? _____
- Only make decisions with the governing body? _____
3. Would you consider your principal as: (Mark more than one response)
- An autocratic leader? _____
- A transformational leader? _____
- A motivational leader? _____
- A visionary leader? _____
- A laissez faire leader? _____
4. Are the human relations between your principal and the staff:
(Mark more than one response)
- Strictly professional? _____
- Personal and professional? _____
- Too personal? _____
- Based on trust, respect, openness and honesty? _____

5. How many times does your principal meet with the school management team (SMT)?

Once a week

Once in two weeks

Once a month

Once a term

Only when there is a crisis

6. How many times does your principal meet with the staff?

Once a month

Twice a month

Once a term

Once a year

When the staff demand a meeting with him/her

7 Is your principal's involvement and participation in the community's meetings, workshops, activities and projects:

Often seldom never

8. Over the past four years, the principal's attitude towards the school has:

Remained positive

Remained negative

Improved positively

Changed for the worst

9. Do you think that your principal possesses good management and leadership skills? Yes/No _____

10. Should prospective principals undergo training on management and leadership? Yes/No _____

11. If yes, why? _____

12. Is the knowledge of values and customs of the community important to the principal? Yes/No _____

13. If your answer is yes, explain why? _____

