

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN SELECTED SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

By

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SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation has been submitted with/ without my approval.

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, **Manasse Mukeshimana**, hereby declare that this dissertation is my work and does not contain any materials which have been submitted before for any degree in any institution. Use of any published material has been dully acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my wife Claudine and my two little sons Praise and Victor.

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First, I thank God for bringing me this far, guiding me and giving me this opportunity of pursuing my M.Ed. studies.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to explore leadership practices in three successful schools each from rural, township and urban areas. Nine school managers reported their day-to-day leadership practices they believed enhanced their schools' success in terms of consistent outstanding matriculation results. In the study I used three data generation methods: semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis. The main research focus was to study what made these schools successful. The sub-areas of focus included the following: management practices, teaching practices, managing challenges, leadership styles, leadership skills and the school- community relationships. The findings revealed various ways in which success was achieved regardless of the schools significant differences in terms of socio-economic backgrounds. The most common leadership practices that brought successes in these three schools were the following: daily extra classes including weekends and public holidays; having visionary leadership that worked toward a common goals; having the right and committed staff who worked extra miles without expecting extra payment, ensuring quality tests, team leadership behaviours; effective planning and monitoring strategies to ensure curriculum coverage; having turnover strategies in place and using a mixture of tactical, strategic and democratic skills such as communication skills, performance management skills, analysis and judgment skills, coaching skills, empowerment skills; leading through vision and value; building trust; facilitating learning; building partnership; ability to lead participative meetings; listening skills; ability to handle conflict; group-centered decision-making skills, and team-building skills.

However, the study showed that in all the schools leaders did not only use one leadership style, but a combination of these such as team leadership, transformational leadership, African leadership, reflective leadership, relational leadership and dictator leadership(sometimes) as well. I recommend that motivational workshops and seminars for both teacher and SMT; acknowledgements and reward system for well performing schools, and educating the community about their role in education could be useful strategies towards schools' success.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SGB - School Governing Body

SMT - School Management Team

HOD-Head of Department

PPN - Post Provisioning Norm

USA - United States of America

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the research topic and the research problem of this study. The chapter outlines the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the critical questions, and the significance of the study, the research objectives and the context of the study.

1.2. Background and purpose of the study

Leadership is important in any organisation. It sets the conditions and expectations for excellent instruction and the building of a culture of ongoing learning for educators and for the learners in a school (Kyla & Karen, 2010). A growing concern is the persistent poor performance of South African learners, not only in international tests (where South Africa has twice come last) but also in national tests (Reddy 2006; Christie 2008). Educationists such as Taylor (2006) have estimated that 80% of schools are not functioning adequately, particularly in terms of performance in mathematics. Equally disconcerting are the patterns of continuing inequality through the system, with former white schools generally achieving the best results in the system, and former African homeland schools perform the worst (Christie, Hoadley & Ward, 2007).

Since I started teaching 15 years ago, I had opportunities to teach in different secondary schools (rural, urban, private and public schools). Each school had a different and unique way to realise its objectives, depending on the type of leadership approaches applied, the way rules and regulations (laws) are implemented, and the design and implementation of education policies. Learners' performances were an important matter to me. Some schools performed with outstanding pass rate in matriculation results (80% -100%), while others performed poorly or below average (5% -60%). Regarding achievement in all schools in which I taught, I noticed two categories of school achievement. The first included urban and private, and the second rural schools. Most of the time schools in the first category (Urban and Private Schools), seemed to produce outstanding results (with 90-100% pass rate). However, some of these schools achieved better than others. The fact that these schools achieved differently, suggested the type of leadership practiced therein. In the same way also,

schools in the second category (rural schools) did not achieve on the same level. Some rural schools performed very poorly, while others did very well or even far better than urban schools. Once again, this suggested to me that leadership approaches differ within rural schools. I thought that learners' performance may somehow be influenced by the type of leadership practices in place.

I have realised that schools display distinct differences in their leadership practices and management styles, the knowledge and application of education law, and in the way they design and implement a variety of policies in order to enhance learners' achievement. There also seems to be a strong, positive link between educational leaders, particularly principals and the student's achievement.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

As the topic of learners' achievement and test scores dominates policy discussions at local, provincial and national levels, schools and districts face mounting pressure to improve learners' outcomes. Principals' work is believed to have significant effects on learners' achievement (Begley, P. 2010). Knowledge of how principals and school management teams manage curriculum in school in South Africa is limited. Although there are detailed normative frameworks (often from elsewhere) on what principals should do, there is little consideration of the reality of their work in particular contexts and what they actually do (Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009). Against this background, in this research I sought to study leadership practices in successful schools.

There is a great interest in educational leadership practices in South African schools because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes significant differences to school and student success (Christie, Hodley & Ward, 2007). Schools need not only trained and committed teachers, but also effective leadership by principals and management teams (Chirtie, hodley, & ward 2009). The need for effective leadership is widely acknowledged but there is less certainty about which leadership practices are most likely to bring about success in school (Kyla & Karen, 2010).

1.4. Research objectives and aim

The objective of this research was therefore to investigate leadership practices in successful schools with the aim to contributing knowledge for the benefit of many other schools. Leadership and management are complementary terms. Thus one cannot function effectively without the other.

1.5. Research questions

Within the focus on leadership practices in selected successful schools, in the study, I sought to answer the following critical questions:

1. What leadership practices are evident in selected successful schools?
2. What do School Management Teams say are the factors that inform such leadership practices?
3. What can be learnt about the role of leadership in selected successful schools?

1.6. Significance of the study

The research hopes to provide vital information for school leaders, particularly principals and management teams, to help in learners' success. The focus was to gather detailed information of the reality of the work of principals and school management teams in particular contexts, that is, what they actually do in relation to improving learners' outcomes. This is important because there seems to be limited knowledge about what has been shown to be significant in terms of leadership and management variables in relation to improved student outcome (Christie & Catherine 2009).

The findings from this research could be useful to school leaders and their leadership styles with an interest in improving learners' achievement. The findings may also be useful to teachers, School Governing bodies (SGB) and school management teams (SMT) with reference to their role in learners' achievement, and also to the education circuits and district managers with an interest contributing to learners' achievement.

1.7. Context of case study

This research was a multiple site case study on leadership practices in successful schools. I conducted the study in three selected successful schools in the Pietermaritzburg region, with

a focus on the process or interaction within school leadership and management which explain the leadership practices in the schools.

1.8. Definition of key terms

Leadership by definition refers to practices that extend beyond the usual procedural context of organisational management (Begley 2001). Leadership can also be described as a form of persuasion, a process of exercising influence, a way of inducing compliance, a way of behaving, and a negotiation of power relations. Leadership consists of two functions: Providing direction and exercising influence. Leaders mobilise and work with others to articulate and achieve shared intentions. A shared leadership style is often observed in most schools, as it involves different stakeholders such as principals, deputy principals, and heads of department, school governing bodies and teachers. As a result, this study will focus on shared leadership practices in successful schools.

In this study ‘practices’ refer to a habitual or customary course of action or way of doing something (Collins & Clark, 2003). In the context of the study, successful schools refer to schools with consistent outstanding matriculation pass rates irrespective of their background differences.

1.9. Organisation of the research report.

The research report is composed of five chapters. The first chapter includes the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and the context of the study and the definitions of key terms. The second chapter focuses on the literature review. It includes the most useful theories related to the study and theoretical framework. The third chapter is about the research design and methodology of the study, including the research paradigm, participants and sampling procedures, data generation methods and data analysis.

The fourth chapter focuses on the presentation and discussion of data and seeks to provide answers to the research questions. The fifth and last chapter provides the summary of the four chapters, includes the conclusions of study, and recommendations of what could be done.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review related literature. The chapter consists of a review of international and local literature on successful in successful schools. The aim is to acquire insight from this literature into how a school's success is achieved and what factors enhance this achievement within the South African context. The review is based on research done on school leadership practices in general and on successful schools in particular. School leadership exists primarily to promote effective teaching and learning. I begin the chapter by defining leadership and management; and explaining why both of these are necessary for a school's success. I also explain the notion of a successful school in the South African context. Next, I discuss relevant perspectives and theories. Also, I discuss factors that enhance a school's success. I then examine the distributed leadership theory as the theoretical framework informing the study.

2.2. Key concepts: Leadership, Management and Successful schools

2.2.1. Defining Leadership and Management

As I reported in Chapter One, the term 'leadership refers to practices that extend beyond the usual procedural context of organisational management (Begley 2001). Naicker and Waddy (2002, p.17) define leadership as involving a "process of influencing group activities, setting goals and achieving these goals". They describe leadership as a form of persuasion, a process of exercising influence, a way of inducing compliance, a way of behaving, and a negotiation of power relations.

Leadership consists of two functions namely providing direction and exercising influences.

Leadership and management are linked and equally necessary if schools are to be effective and efficient and lead to school improvement. The principal and the school management team (SMT) work together in ensuring the school' success.

In a study on leadership, Bush & West-Burnham, (1995, p. 102) suggest that leadership should involve the following:

- Creativity

- Problem solving
- Vision
- A value-driven strategic view of the nature
- Clear decision-making
- Sensitivity
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Delegation and improvement

Naicker and Waddy (2002, p.17) define management as “realising goals and objectives in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organizing and controlling the process through and with people”. Leaders have to work with people and be able to influence them in order to implement their plans and achieve their goals, despite difficulties or setbacks that they may come across during the process. Leadership and management deal with two elements: planning, which is realistic or achievable, and implementation. Leaders mobilise and work with others to articulate and achieve shared intentions.

Looking closer at the concepts of leadership and management there are some areas of overlap, even though they are distinguishable from one another. Louis and Miles (1990) distinguishes between leadership and management but stresses that they are both important in achieving goals. They say leadership relates to mission, direction and inspiration while management involves designing and carrying out plans, getting things done and working effectively with people.

West Burnham (1992) also distinguishes these two concepts, inciting that leadership is concerned with values, vision and mission while management is concerned with execution, planning, organization and administration. Astin (2000, p.8) defines leadership as a “process which works towards movement and change in an organization and management as the process which works towards the stability, preservation and maintenance of the organization”. I agree with the thinking that these two concepts cannot function separately but are both equally important and necessary processes in ensuring a school’s success.

School leaders combine a range of various leadership styles to ensure success. However, through this study I discovered that most if not all leaderships styles practiced in schools

depend chiefly on the two major ones namely shared leadership and authentic leadership. Begley, (2001) describes authentic leadership as a leadership that is knowledge based, value informed, and skillfully executed, hopeful, open-ended, visionary and a creative response to social circumstances. It is also a form of leadership that acknowledges and accommodates an integrative way the legitimate need of individuals, groups, organisations, communities and cultures (Begley, 2001).The basic understanding here, is a sense of shared leadership practices within the school. School principals have to work together with other stakeholders, such as school management teams, to achieve the objectives and mission of the school. In line with this study, shared leadership practices between the principal and the school management team were investigated. The study also investigated the school leadership practices based on knowledge, values, skills, vision and creativity of school leaders, in relation to school success.

Begley (2001) discovered that the adoption and application of a value and valuation process perspective to educational administration makes the objectives of leadership more understandable, compelling and achievable. In this study I investigated among other things the effect of African leadership values namely respect for dignity of others, group solidarity, team work, interdependence and service in spirit of harmony, in relation to school success.

Values are generally acknowledged to be central to the field, because a significant portion of the practices in educational administration requires rejecting some courses of actions in favour of a preferred one (Parsons and Shills 1962:395). However, Leaderships and management practices work hand in hand to ensure success in schools. School leaders combine a range of both leadership and management skills in order to succeed. The principal and school management teams works together as team to ensure the school's success. This show a clear indication that leadership and management cannot be separated.

2.2.2 Defining a successful school

In most cases, a school can be classified as successful by looking at the high level of the matriculation pass rate. Stenger (2013) argues that a fairly clear picture of how well a school is doing its job can be obtained by looking at the results, such as the state test scores, student performances, retention and graduation rates. Sadker and Karen (2000) identify five characteristics that most successful school share, namely quality leadership, high expectations of students and teachers, ongoing screening of student performance and development, goals

and direction, and safety and security for students. West, Ainscow, & Stanford (2005) also identify more factors that describe a successful school such as frequent teacher feedback, data driven instruction, high-dosage tutoring, increased instructional time and focus on academic achievement. Based on the above understandings, I learn that there are a number of factors that describe a successful school. However, student achievement seems to be a major factor for a school to be classified as successful. Accordingly, in this study I focused on leadership practices in selected successful schools based on matriculation pass rates. I am aware that there is still some disagreement over what defines an effective school. Some researchers say high academic achievement indicates a school's success, while others define successful schools as those that foster personal growth, creativity and a positive self-concept (Stenger, 2013)

2.3. School performance

A number of school-level management practices that are associated with better than expected student performances in South Africa include: the regulation of time, the monitoring and support for planning and delivery in relation to curriculum coverage, the procurement and management of books and stationary, the quality assurances of tests and the monitoring of the results (Fleisch and Christie 2004). I found these management practices very useful to this study. In my investigation of school leadership and management practices in relation to the schools' success, I saw how the principals, school management team, teachers and school governing body ensured the schools' achievement in terms of time management, the monitoring, planning, resources management, quality tests, curriculum coverage, the procurement and management of books and stationary, the quality assurances of tests and the monitoring of the results.

In a study on school performance, Kyla (2010) found that the major challenges to effective leadership practices include: Firstly, the lack of district support for principals' professional development and a lack of regular contact between most principals and their district offices. District leaders also needed to increase support for principals to use data-driven decision-making. Secondly, the direct negative effect of principal turnover on student achievement due to disruptions in cooperation and shared leadership with teachers. Thirdly, a lack of real and sustainable leadership directed to improve instructions in high schools.

Fourthly, the absence of comprehensive approaches to education reform in most of the United States of America (Kyla, 2010).

Above findings raise an important question on how South African secondary schools cope with similar challenges in order to succeed. Thus in this study, I investigated how successful schools managed their achievement in relation to district support, the effect of principal turnover, a sustainable leadership and approaches to education reform.

Other researches findings revealed that the local educational leadership had employed multiple instructional, distributed, and transformational practices to improve student outcomes, and had established multiple formal and informal linkages with institutional entities outside of the school to accomplish their missions. Contributors to school-wide success in each case included: focus on instruction, standards and expectations, strengths of teachers, development of multiple support systems for students with varying needs, active involvement of parents and the mobilisation of other external and community resources (Masumoto, 2009). This was relevant to the present study as it sought to investigate how the above factors influenced a school's success in the South African context.

Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2007) constructed a study on curriculum management. The study aimed to reveal how school management might contribute to improved student achievement outcomes. They discovered that the new policies were designed to change the system from top to bottom met with mixed success. Christie (2009) argues that new policies set out an ideal-type vision for a new system for equal quality for all, but they did not speak to the conditions of the majority of the schools, or adequately address the deep historical inequalities and uneven quality that existed within and across the country's schools. The best functioning schools in the system were able to use the new management dispensation to raise fees, employ governing body teachers, provide salary supplements, and offer a broad curriculum with specialist support. Therefore, in this study I also sought to study how policies influenced schools' success.

Some studies show that most principals have not received adequate specialist training, especially in financial management and instructional leadership (Hoadley, Christie and Ward, 2009). Drawing from this assertion, I investigated the impact of instructional leadership, training for principals and school management team in relation to learners' achievement.

Studies show a number of school-level management practices that are associated with better than expected student performances in South Africa (Taylor & Prinsloo, 2005; Christie & Potterton, 1997). In Tylor's view, inefficient use of resources is a central problem in South African schooling and one which we know least about. Thus in this study I investigated a number of school resources and their contribution to a school's success. A study by Chisholm et al. (2005) shows how principals' time is largely consumed by administrative activities. There is consensus in the United States and European literature, and increasingly in South African research, that school managers play a crucial role in increasing the conditions for improved instruction (Spillane, 2004). This is only possible if they use their time well.

Stephanie, Angela and Shelby (2014) studied school leadership in relation to school success. Their study revealed the importance of strong principal leadership, to accompany teacher leadership, as well as the need for principals to actively direct teachers' activities. This seems to emphasise again the importance of both shared and instructional leadership in determining the success of a school

2.4. Some Factors that can enhance a school's success

2.4.1. Instructional leadership practices

Instructional leadership is commonly used by most successful schools and highly regarded as a key ingredient to success due to its main focus on teaching and learning. Hallinger's (2003) review of evidence concerning instructional leadership found that mission-building activities on the part of principals are the most influential set of leadership practices. Hallinger (2003) identified three categories of instructional leadership practices under the following descriptions:

- *defining the school's mission* includes framing and then communicating the school's goals;
- *managing the instructional program* includes supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress; and
- *Promoting a positive school learning climate* encompasses protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning.

According to Hallinger (2003) and Waters et al. (2003), this set of practices is included in both supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum and providing resources in support of curriculum, instruction and assessment activities. West et al. (2005) indicate that, for leaders of schools in challenging contexts, focusing on teaching and learning is essential. This includes controlling behaviour, boosting self esteem and talking and listening to pupils. It also may include urging pupils and teachers to put a strong emphasis on pupil achievement. Such an “academic climate” makes significant contributions to achievement (De Maeyer, Rymenans, Van Petegem, Van der Bergh, & Rijlaarsdam, 2006)

2.4.2 Building Collaborative Cultures

A large body of evidence has accumulated since Little’s (1982) early research which unambiguously supports the importance of collaborative cultures in schools as central to school improvement, the development of professional learning communities and the improvement of student learning (Louis & Kruse, 1998; Rosenholtz, 1989). Additional evidence clearly indicates that leaders are able to build more collaborative cultures and suggest practices that accomplish this goal (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Dart, 1990; Waters et al., 2003). For leaders of schools in challenging circumstances, creating more positive collaborative and achievement-oriented cultures is a key task (West, Ainscow, & Stanford, 2005).

Trust is increasingly recognised as a key element in encouraging collaboration and that individuals are more likely to trust those with whom they have established good relationships (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Louis & Kruse, 1995). Successful school leaders contribute to productive collaborative activity in their schools by being skilled conveners of that work. Leaders nurture mutual respect and trust among those involved. They ensure shared determination of group processes and outcomes. They help develop clarity about goals and roles for collaboration. They encourage a willingness to compromise among collaborators, foster open and fluent communication among collaborators. They also provide adequate and consistent resources in support of collaborative work (Connolly & James, 2006; Mattessich & Monsey, 1992).

2.4.3 Restructuring

Practices associated with such initiatives include creating common planning times for teachers and establishing team and group structures for problem solving (Hadfield, 2003). Hallinger and Heck (1998) identify this variable as a key mediator of leader effects on students. Restructuring also includes distributing leadership for selected tasks and increasing teacher involvement in decision making (Reeves, 2000). According to Reeves(2000), restructuring practices is proven to enhance significant success in all selected successful schools.

2.4.4 Building productive relationships with families and communities

This practice has to do with an increase in public accountability of schools to their communities through widespread implementation of school-based management (Murphy & Beck, 1995). There is a growing need for schools to actively manage public perceptions of their legitimacy (Mintrop, 2004). Informed by this literature, I sought to investigate various ways in which the surrounding communities contributed to the schools' success.

2.4.5 Connecting school to its environment

Connecting school to the environment is also one of the powerful practices most successful school leaders use to achieve best matriculation results. According to Leithwood, (2006), school leaders spend significant amounts of time in contact with people outside of their schools seeking information and advice. They should stay in tune with policy changes as well as anticipate new pressures and trends likely influence their institutions. Such purposes can be accomplished through meetings, informal conversations, phone calls, email exchanges and internet searches. Bringing in external support may also be a productive strategy schools engaged in significant school improvement projects may adopt (Reynolds, Hopkins, Potter, & Chapman, 2001). Schools also need to develop contacts with people who are sources of information and support, and maintain contacts through periodic interaction, including visits, telephone calls, correspondence, and attendance at meetings and social events. Such networking practices are likely to contribute significantly to a school's success mostly in the areas such as reduction of drugs and substances abuse.

2.4.6 Staffing

Among other things I sought to investigate any link between staffing and the a school's success. Staffing has proven to be a key function of any school. Recruiting and retaining staff is a primary task in leading schools in challenging circumstances (Gray, 2000). Gray (2000) found that all successful schools were staffed with effective leaders and teachers who had interest and capacity to enhance the school's success.

2.4.7 Monitoring school activities

In a study in poor schools, Stenger (2013) found that school success is not only evident in wealthy schools but also in schools known as high poverty schools. Some of the key findings in these poor schools included principals with clear and strong visions who encouraged staff to get involved in problem solving and decision making, as well as teachers who were committed to making a difference in students' lives and seeing their schools succeed. The study revealed that both principals and teachers had consistently high expectations for all students, both in terms of behaviour and academic success. Moreover, students from the poor schools reported that they felt valued, loved and challenged.

In a study on poor schools' success, Hagelskamp (2013) found that although there were common characteristics found in successful schools, it was important not to place too much emphasis on any one factor. She discovered that there was no one factor that made a school successful. In the successful schools she saw visionary leaders working side by side with committed teachers creating a warm, respectful, optimistic and achievement-oriented climate. She concluded that school success was not just a philosophy, but a deliberate, step-by-step approach the schools were taking. This was what she heard again and again from the teachers, principals and students she met (Hagelskamp, 2013).

In this study, I attempted to find out how schools with different backgrounds both financially and geographically became successful. Did school leaders work hand in hand with committed teachers who volunteer to work extra hours including weekends and public holidays without expecting extra payments? Was there a high level of teacher commitment and visionary leaders working together to ensure the schools' success. These and others were some of the questions I raised in conducting this study. Most successful rural and township schools

experience a shortage of material resources, but they may have reliable human resources who work tirelessly to ensure school's success and make effective use of the little resources available.

In a study on attributes of a successful school, Lynch (2016), highlighted five of them namely leadership, high expectation, ongoing evaluation, goal and direction, secure and organised. Lynch (2016) found that students performed better when the principal and school board members provided strong leadership. Effective leaders are visible, can successfully convey the school's goals and visions, collaborate with teachers to enhance their skills, and are involved in the discovery of and solutions to problems. Thus in this study I investigated how principals, school management teams, school governing body and teachers collaborated to ensure success in terms of matriculation results.

Lynch, (2016) reports that high expectations of students have repeatedly been shown to have a positive impact on student performance. Students are somewhat dependent on the expectations placed on them during that period of their lives, as they were still shaping their personal sense of ability and esteem. The study discovered that teachers in most successful schools teach at high levels of effectiveness and reach the level of expectations, geared toward improving instructional quality. Schools should use assessment data to compare their students with others from across the country (Lynch 2016). Such comparison is likely to allow successful schools to identify problematic areas of learning at the classroom and school levels, in order for teachers to generate solutions to address the problems.

Successful school principals actively construct goals and then effectively communicate them to all stakeholders such as students, teachers, and the community at large. According to Lynch (2016), School principals must be open and willing to incorporate innovation into goals for school processes and practices. It is therefore important to invite contributions from all stakeholders in the process of crafting school goals. Student performance has been shown to improve in schools where the entire school community works toward shared goals.

2.5. Theoretical framework

This study was informed by two main theories namely, shared leadership and instructional leadership. According to Kyla's and Karen's (2010) study, student achievement is higher in schools where principals share leadership with teachers and the community and also where

principals play a key role in encouraging others to join. Higher performing schools generally ask for more input and engagement for a wider variety of stakeholders. District support for shared leadership fosters the development of professional communities. Where teachers feel attached to a professional community, they are more likely to use instructional practices that are linked to improved students' learning. In a district where levels of student learning are high, district leaders are more likely to emphasise goals and initiative that reach beyond minimum state expectations for student performance. This was important for this study, because as a teacher I have observed shared leadership practiced in most successful schools, where principals and other stakeholders such as school management team members, teachers, and school governing bodies share responsibilities to ensure success in the school. The principal as a team leader takes responsibility to: develop a shared knowledge between team, provide information to the team, instruct and monitor performances, facilitate group process and provide open communication, provides goals and allocate resources effectively. This study investigated the shared leadership practices in successful schools. Begley (2010) proposed three leadership challenges namely, the pursuit of personal sophistication, sensitivity to others and the promotion of reflective professional practices. This study investigated how these challenges were handled to ensure success in schools. Over the past couple of decades, leadership styles such as transactional, transformational, instructional and shared instructional leadership, have been used to define differences in school leadership practices (Robinson, Birdi, Clegg, Patterson, Stride, 2008 & Hallinger, 2003). School leadership has transitioned from the more traditional, top down, heroic principals to restructured schools with collective decision making and responsibilities distributed to teachers (Edmonds, 1979; Marks and Louis, 1999). Shared instructional leadership has the largest effect on student achievement (Heck and Hallinger, 2009; Mark and Printy, 2003; Robinson, Birdi, Clegg, Patterson, Stride, Wall & Wood (2008). Shared instructional leadership styles, such as shared decision making, a sense of teacher community and principal instructional direction and support, may also influence teachers' retention (Dorman, 2003; Loeb, Lankford, Boyd & Wyckoff, 2005). Thus, in this study I investigated how instructional and shared instructional leadership practices influenced schools' success in the form of learners' performances.

2.6. Conclusion

There are a number of literatures about successful schools. Most successful schools worldwide focus on instructions, standards, expectations, strengths of teachers, development of multiple support systems for students with varying needs, active involvement of parents, mobilisation of other external and community resources (Masumoto & Brown-welty, 2009).

In South Africa, most successful schools use the new management dispensation to raise fees, employ governing body's teachers, provide salary supplements, and offer a broad curriculum with specialist support. However, what is less understood is how the principal contributes.

The next chapter will therefore develop the exact roles of the principals and their management team to ensure school's success in South Africa.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the leadership practices in successful schools, with the aim of contributing knowledge for the benefit of many other schools.

In this chapter I explain the research design and methodology of the study. I begin the chapter with the research paradigm, followed by the research design. Then I move on to discuss participants and sampling procedures. This is followed by a discussion on the data generation methods namely semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis. From there I continue to explain the ethical and trustworthiness considerations I put in place. Finally, end the chapter with a section on data analysis procedures.

3.2. Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of researchers which are adhered to by a group of researchers, condition and patterns of their thinking that underpins their research actions (Bassey, 1999). Positivist, critical and interpretive paradigms are used by researchers to explain social reality and other phenomena in the world (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, Neuman, 2000). The interpretive paradigm advocates that knowledge is socially constructed. For the interpretivists, knowledge is constructed from the descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and self-understanding (Henning, 2004).

In this study, I adopted the interpretive paradigm. I found this paradigm appropriate for this study as I sought to find out from the 'players' themselves, leadership practices in the three selected successful schools based on their knowledge, intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and self-understanding.

3.3. Research Design

This research was a multiple-site case study involving three schools, focusing on leadership practices in successful schools. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), a case study is a technique the researcher uses to observe the characteristics of an individual unit, for example a school or a community. Supporting this viewpoint, Cohen, Manion & Marrison (2000) describe a case study as an approach in the field of research which seeks to provide a unique example of real people in real situation, and it enables readers to understand how ideas and practices can be incorporated to make living meaningful.

The study therefore aimed to provide detailed insights of the goings-on in the three successful schools in Pietermaritzburg district. The common issue I studied in the three schools were the leadership practices. Each school was a study site because the practices therein may differ from those of another. The advantage of a case study design is that it is “a step to action”. Its approach may be directly interpreted and put to use for staff or individual development, for within institutional feedback, for formative evaluation and in educational policy making (Cohen et al. 2000).

However, the case study approach is criticised for its dependence on a single case and therefore of its being incapable of providing a generalizing conclusion. In this study, I averted this by investigating leadership practices across multiple schooling contexts such as rural, township and urban schools.

3.4. Participant and sampling procedures

Sampling refers to the process used to select the participants of a study. I conducted semi-structured interviews with members of school management team (SMT) namely principals, head of departments (HODs) and members of school governing bodies (SGB) from three different successful schools from different geographical location areas such as rural, township, urban, and with different background such as private and public schools. The reasons for selecting schools in different geographical areas and background was that as already discussed in chapter 1, some rural and/or poor schools produce 100% matriculation pass rate, while others in their neighborhood obtained 0% matriculation pass rate. The same scenario is also observed in township and urban schools where one school produces far better results than its neighbouring schools. An interesting part of this study was that some

poor schools in rural and township contexts produced far better matriculation results or at same rate as urban and/or financial stable schools. Based on above scenarios, it was crucial in this study, to have a sample of three successful schools from different background in order to get the reliable results that will benefit other schools.

Therefore, the selection of school leaders was based on school performances in terms of consistent matriculation pass rate. Only three participants per school namely principal, one head of department (HOD), and one member of school governing body (SGB) were interviewed. This sample formed a total of nine participants from three selected schools.

Purposive sampling is a technique by which groups of informants are determined before being chosen (William, 2010). The three successful schools were based on school performances in consistent matriculation pass rate. For school shared-leadership, I ensured that the principals, head of department and school governing body's members within each school were included in the study. The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth (Patton, 2002, p.53). Cohen, et al. (2000) recommends the strategy of targeting participants of particular purpose. In this case, successful schools were selected as suitable for the purpose of this study. For gender purpose, I ensured that both men and women are included in each category of participants for this study.

Convenience sampling technique, requires the researcher to choose any persons who happen to be around at the time (Hall and Hall, 1996). Convenience sampling, was used to choose any members of the school management team (SMT) who was available and willing to participate in the study. Thus participants such as principal or deputy principal or any head of department (HOD) or any school governing body members (SGB) were selected depending on who is available at that particular time. The research was announced to schools leaders, inviting them to participate in the study.

In summary, schools and the participants were chosen using the following criteria:

- Easily accessible
- School leaders: such as Principals, HODs and SGB member.
- Successful schools from different geographical areas: rural, township and urban areas.
- School from different background: public and private school.
- They were willing to participate

- A consistent outstanding records of matriculation results

3.5. Data generation methods

In this study, qualitative data gathering and analysis techniques were applied. Three instruments were used: interviews, observations, and documents. This is a feature of a qualitative approach “which place an emphasis on explaining and understanding the unique and particular individual cases rather than the general and universal” (Cohen, et al. 2008, p.8). The qualitative approach stresses the importance of subjective experiences of the individual, hence semi-structured interviews were utilised as was also successfully done by other scholars such as Ngcobo (1996), Leedy and Ormord (2001), Nail (2003), Madlala (2007) and Zwane (2008).

The main data generation method used was the semi-structured interviews; observation and document analysis were supplementary. The participants were interviewed once, on agreed times. McMillan and Schumacher (2000, p.478) explain triangulation as a cross-validation among the data sources, data generation strategies, time and theoretical schemes. In reference to the above statement, the study used three instruments to generate data as it needed to verify data. It is important to check the truth (validity) and accuracy (reliability) of the findings and explanation offered. The interview came first as I assumed that for the researcher to fully understand the leadership practices in successful schools I needed to speak to the school leaders and managers. Goodson (1992) indicates that it is imperative to listen to the voices of leaders because they carry the exact tone and feelings of their daily leadership practice. Second and third were observation and documents analysis respectively as they verified and substantiated the data that the researcher generated during interview. Each of these instruments is described below.

3.5.1 Interview

In this study , I conducted a semi- structured interview with nine school leaders, namely three principals, three heads of department and three school governing members from three selected schools. I chose semi-structured interviews because they allowed me to probe for more interesting information that could be relevant to the study while being guided by the interview schedule. One of the greatest advantages of semi-structured interviews is flexibility (Patton 1989, p. 57). Jegede (1999) advocates that the semi -structured interview is one of the best instruments for data generation that could provide valuable data that could not be

obtained by any other means. Semi-structured interviews are sometimes referred to as guided interviews. The guides allow the researcher to develop an area of inquiry during the interviews and to probe initial responses. The interviews provided the most direct evidence of leadership practices in successful schools; and also allowed the researcher to get reliable and useful information on effective school leadership practices, for future use by the rest of other schools in their different locations and background.

In this study, I interviewed each participant (individually) in order to ensure confidentiality and to give free opportunity to articulate his/her leadership practices without being influenced by others. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with each of them lasting for about half hour. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) assert that it is crucial for the researcher to understand the meaning people make about their experiences and the interviews are the best instrument for this objective.

The second type of interview was a focus group one. This I did with teachers and required information about teaching practices, management practices and leadership styles in relation to the school's success.

In the interviews we discussed different leadership styles such as team leadership, reflective, distributed, transformational, instructional and self leadership. Leadership skills such as tactical and strategic skills were also investigated in the study. We also discussed tactical skills practiced in three successful schools such as communication skills, performance management, analysis and judgment, coaching, championing continuous improvement, empowerment skills. Strategic skills such as leading through vision and values, building trust, facilitating learning, building partnerships were also evident in successful schools and has been discussed in the study

3.5.2 Observation

Observation is an organised method of recording the behavioural patterns of participants without questioning them. Observation was appropriate for this study as it enabled me to gather data on physical and human settings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). A copy of observation schedule is given in Appendix B. I had the opportunity to gather information that participant might have been uncomfortable to discuss during interviews. During an interview, the interviewee has a luxury to choose what to tell or not, however with observation, the researcher can find valuable information for the study. Through observation, a researcher has

an opportunity to gather the first information in the real life situation. Observational data according to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000) afford the researcher the opportunity to gather “live” data from “live” situation. The observational data is recommended by Patton (2000) as it enables the researcher to enter and understand the situation that was being described.

Through the observation schedule I gathered information on school infrastructures and organization and this enabled to understand the kind of relationships and attitudes that existed in the schools. I observed such event as the nature of school building like mobile classrooms, the environment in which the school is situated, the classroom situation in terms of the kind of technological devices available, sitting plan, the magnitude of learners per class and after hours teaching sessions.

3.5.3.Document analysis

Documents analysis is an instrument which a researcher studies written communications of an institution that are related to the study in question. Document analysis is used because some incident may have happened before the study took place therefore it is not easy to remember exactly how it happened. Hence, analyzing written information is more reliable. In this study, I analysed time tables, duty rosters and record of policies. The analysis of document enabled me to find out how the school management team (SMT) ensured the school’s success. The rationale to analyse time tables was to find out how the SMT managed their teaching time including extra classes.

The analysis of the duty roster assisted me to find out how various duties were distributed among the staff. Each individual had his/her own duty in terms of leadership and management and teaching. For example, the extra classes’ duty roster clearly showed the name of the teacher in charge, the subject name, the duration of the lesson and class’s name. The analysis of policy document assists me to understand how discipline is maintained and also how each school overcomes various challenges through policies that are in place. This kind of information assists the researcher to understand how success is achieved in schools.

3.6. Access to school and participants: Some ethical considerations

I was granted ethical clearance to conduct the research by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Each school principal granted me permission to conduct the research in their school. Participants signed the letters of informed consent. I used pseudonyms to protect the identity

of both the schools and participants. Clarity on what the study entailed and how it benefits all the stakeholders in education was given. All participants were made aware of their voluntary status in participation in this study. Cohen , Manion & Morrison (2000) state that the research participant has the right to refuse to take part or to withdraw once the research has begun (see Appendix C for details).

3.7. Trustworthiness

In this study , in order to ensure that the findings were credible, I tape recorded all the interviews. According to Patton (1989, p.137) the tape recorder is indispensable to increasing the accuracy of data collection and allow the interviewer to be more attentive to the interviewee. During the interviews, I ensured that all the participants had a clear understanding of the questions I asked, for example if the participant was unclear of the meaning of certain words, I went out of my way to explain. I used triangulation (more than one method of data collection) to allow comparison of information from the three data sources. Denzin and Lincoln(1989, p.7) state that qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus and the use of multi-method data collection was an attempt to add richness and dept to the inquiry of this study.

3.8. Data analysis

The purpose of data analysis is to make sense of the accumulated information. I explored and analyzed all responses from school leaders and managers on leadership practices in the selected schools. First, I analysed data according to the data source, by way of generating themes. Next I compared the data from different sources and constructed new themes. Thirdly I categorised the data according to the research questions. Through this process I was able to interpret and write about the data.

3.9. Summary

In this chapter I described and explained the research design and methodology of the study. I argued that the qualitative approach was the most suitable for the nature of the study. I reported that I adopted a multiple site case study design. I then explained the methodological approaches I adopted. In the next chapter I present and discuss the data.

CHAPTER 4.

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the data generated to investigate the leadership practices in three successful schools. I begin the chapter by describing the details and attributes of the three successful schools. This will be followed by a section on leadership practices in these three successful schools. To do this, I present and discuss the leadership practices from each of the three different school leaders, whom I interviewed. These school leaders were: The principals, the heads of department (HOD) and the School Governing Body (SGB). Next I move to the aspect of teaching in successful schools. From there move on to managing challenges in the successful schools. In order to ensure the privacy of the participants, I used pseudonyms as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Names (pseudonyms) of participants per school

	School A	School B	School C
Principal	<i>Mr. Ngcobo</i>	<i>Mr. Zulu</i>	<i>Mr. Daniel</i>
HOD	<i>Mr. Khumalo</i>	<i>Mr. Musa</i>	<i>Mr. Victor</i>
SGB	<i>Mr. Zondi</i>	<i>Mrs. Govender</i>	<i>Mr. John</i>
Deputy principal	<i>Mrs. Zuma</i>		

4.2. Description of the three selected successful schools

4.2.1. School A

As already reported in Chapter 3, this study focused on three selected successful schools. The criteria for selecting these schools were based on consistent outstanding matriculation pass rate. Schools were selected based on their environmental location such as rural, town ship and urban.

School A, is a rural school and with very little infrastructure such as buildings, desks, chairs within the school. Resources are limited: classrooms are not enough with broken

windows and ceilings, looking very old and with no sign of renovations. In this school they used mobile classrooms as supplements to the classrooms. Learners shared textbooks. I asked Mr. Khumalo (HOD) to describe the condition of the school and how they coped under such circumstances and he said:

We are very under- resourced, starting from the classes, look at the kids, look at the states of the classes....We have stationary but in certain grades they have to share... sometimes it is very difficult to work under those difficult conditions; However we have to adjust.

According to the Principal (Mr. Ngcobo), the community is very poor and most of learners come from poor families where they entirely depended on their grannies' social grants. Mr. Zondi (SGB) described the state of the surrounding community, as one of the major challenges to the school's success, saying:

Learners come from far, they have to take buses at 15h00 after school; Teaching environment is not conducive especially in winter seasons, most of kids are poor and struggling at their home; As results, Some do not come to school to attend extra classes .

However, the SMT in school A had strategies in place to ensure safety and learners' academic success. I asked Mr. Ngcobo (Principal) about some of their strategies in place and he said:

“safety-wise is not 100% , no transport; That is why we encourage parents a lot, so that these learners can spend a day during weekend and go home safely”..

Despite the community challenges related to poverty, school A received several awards of good performances in terms of consistent matriculation results ranging between 90 to 100% pass rate for over 10 years. School A is a public school and is no-fees school.

The total school enrolment for the year 2016 was 1080 learners. The school had 32 teachers of which 30 have teaching degrees and 2 with teaching diploma. Learners were distributed into 18 classrooms from grade 8 to grade 12 with a maximum of about 70 learners per class. Table 2 shows further details.

Table 2: School 'A' - Enrolment

Grade/Class	Numbers of learners	Number of classrooms
8A	64	1
8B	67	1
8C	64	1
8D	64	1
TOTAL	259	4
9A	66	1
9B	70	1
9C	67	1
TOTAL	203	3
10A	56	1
10B	52	1
10C	57	1
10D	57	1
10E	56	1
TOTAL	278	5
11A	64	1
11B	54	1
11C	62	1
TOTAL	180	3
12A	63	1
12B	38	1
12C	59	1
TOTAL	160	3
GRAND TOTAL	1080	18 (+ 3 mobile classes) =21

4.2.2. School B

School B is a township school and it had modernised infrastructure in terms of buildings. It had three tall buildings and each block is three levels high. It had enough and neat classrooms, laboratory, well fenced with a remote control gate and there was evidence of regular renovations taking place. There was no sign of broken windows or desks, unlike in school A. It is also a public school and a no-fee school.

The matriculation pass rate in school B ranged between 87% to 95%. In comparison to the matriculation pass rate from other neighbouring township high schools, school B results were regarded as the best results in the entire township. School B had been identified as one of the successful schools in the area due to its consistent good results for over five years. The majority of the learners come from disadvantaged families with very little or poor family care and this make difficult for school in terms of discipline. Mr. Zulu (principal) explained a challenge the school faced:

Children look after themselves, no parents to look after them. We try hard to show them the way forward.

The total school B enrolment for the year 2016 was 863 learners. The school had 31 qualified teachers with teaching degrees. Learners were distributed into 20 classrooms from grade 8 to grade 12 with a maximum of about 53 learners per class. Table 3 shows details of school B learners' enrolment; while Table 5 shows the number of teachers and their qualification levels for year 2016.

Table 3: School B - enrolment

Grade/class	Number of learners	Number of classrooms
8A	50	1
8B	49	1
8C	44	1
8D	50	1
TOTAL	193	4
9A	48	1
9B	49	1
9C	47	1
9D	52	1
TOTAL	196	4
10A	33	1
10B	7	1
10C	42	1
10D	35	1
10E	36	1
TOTAL	153	5
11A	37	1
11B	51	1
11C	44	1
11D	43	1
TOTAL	175	4
12A	44	1
12B	49	1
12C	53	1
TOTAL	146	3
GRAND TOTAL	863	20

4.2.3. School C

School C is private and well established in terms of infrastructure and resources. Learners pay school fees. The school has no other financial revenue except school fees. Mr. Daniel (Principal) explained the financial state of the school saying:

No other resources of revenues except school fees; no subsidies.

The school had an outstanding record of 100% matriculation pass rate for over five years. The school is situated in an urban area . It is a multi-racial school and learners come from various communities. However, The SMT had strategies in place to ensure success of all students regardless of the mixed races, cultures and background. I asked Mr Daniel (principal) about how they ensured success of all students and he said:

..We have a wide range of pupils from very weak pupils to seven distinctions; we can only make two or three classes per grade. We have remedial class for Isizulu, Mathematics and Afrikaans especially in our juniors”.

The total school C enrolment for the year 2016 was 254 learners. The school had a total of 35 qualified teachers with teaching degrees of which 31 were full time and 4 part-time. Learners were distributed into 14 classrooms from grade 8 to grade 12 with a maximum of about 20 learners per class. Table 4 shows details of school C learners’ enrolment; while table 5 shows the number of teachers and their qualification levels for year 2016.

Table 4: School C - Enrolment

Grade/class	Number of learners	Number of classrooms
8A	23	1
8B	21	1
TOTAL	44	2
9A	16	1
9B	17	1
9C	17	1
TOTAL	50	3
10A	18	1
10B	17	1
10C	18	1
TOTAL	53	3
11A	20	1
11B	18	1
11C	17	1
TOTAL	55	3
12A	17	1

12B	17	1
12C	18	1
TOTAL	52	3
GRAND TOTAL	254	14

Table 5: Teacher’s Qualifications

Name of school	Number of qualified teachers	Number of unqualified /or part-time/or volunteer teachers	Total
School A	30	2	32
School B	31	Null	31
School C	31	4	35

In summary, there were marked differences between the above mentioned three schools in terms of infrastructure, resources, and status and enrolment levels. However, “ success” is what they have in common. Each school had a unique leadership that operate in unique ways under different circumstances to achieve the outstanding matriculation pass rate each year.

In the next section I discuss more about the various leadership practices that ensured success in the three successful schools.

4.3. Leadership practices in the selected schools

This section will explore the leadership practices in three successful schools under the following headings: Management practices, aspect of teaching, managing challenges, leadership, school and community.

4.3.1. Management practices in the schools

4.3.1.1. Time management

Time regulation, has been highlighted in a number of studies over a period of time (Taylor ,Prinsloo,2003 & Gustafsson, 2005) as an important matter in the functioning of a school. In

particular, a study by Chisholm et al. (2005) shows that principals' time is largely consumed by administrative activities. In this study, it is evident that all three successful schools leaders worked hard to manage time effectively. According to the Education Department, the official time for teaching and learning is seven hours per day from 7h 30 to 14h30. However, the principals reported that the 7 hours was insufficient to succeed. All three schools worked 4 to 6 extra hours every day including weekends, school holidays and public holidays. Some schools started very early in the morning and finished late in the afternoon. For example, school A sometimes commenced activities at 6:30 in the morning and finished at 17h30 in the afternoon, which make a total of 11hours per day and may even go beyond that during revision and examination times. I asked Mr Ngcobo (Principal) how he managed time to ensure success and he said:

Teachers go extra-mile in afternoon, holidays, Saturdays, Sundays classes..we do extra lessons for grade12; Weekly: we work 7h00 -17h00,with one subject per week; we have Saturday lessons for grades 10,11,12 from 8h00-13h00. Mathematics and accounting: Sunday 8h00-11h00 (but not all Sundays) and also we teach during holydays” we have evening classes commencing 18h00 to 22h00 depending on the time table, especially when exams are due.

Regarding how time was managed in ensuring success, all participants in school B responded that time was not enough. I asked Mr. Daniel (principal) about time management, he said:

Time is not enough, we teach Saturdays and Sundays

The HOD (Mr. Musa) had the following to say:

Learners are asked to stay behind or come on Saturdays to cover the curriculum; our learners are second language speakers, they do not understand, we have to go slowly; during holidays we teach three , four or five hours depending on public transport availability.

The SMT and teachers worked hard day and night to succeed. I asked the HOD (Mr. Victor) to explain how time was managed in school C and he said:

...Our time management include taking the work home, waking up early in the morning to do marking; ... Most of the work we do, we do after hours.We stay after hours, e-mail each other ideas of how to improve things .

In terms of teaching and learning, school C had various strategies to ensure that time was managed effectively. The time allocation on the school time table was being adjusted according to the nature of the subjects and taking into account practical lessons that usually take longer time than other subjects. The duration of lessons varies between 45 and 50minutes each. The principal (Mr. Daniel) explained:

We changed timetable. We were having longer lessons almost one hour and changed to shorter and more lesson in a day. Where subject teacher need more time like biology and sciences if they are doing practical, we gave them double lessons, We take the lesson and put it at the end of the break, so that if there is a need of extra 5 or 10 min they work , and it seem to have worked very well .

Based on the above revelations, it seems that most school leaders found the time allocated to them to be too little. All school leaders confirmed that that they are required by the national department of education to work 7 hour per day , which they all argued to be insufficient in order to cover all academic work and ensure optimum school success. As a result, teachers in some schools chose to extend the working hours and also continued some of their work at home in order to meet the departmental deadlines and to ensure the full coverage of the school work. They woke up early in the morning , had early morning classes, afternoon classes, weekend classes and sleepless nights. These has become the key ingredients to the schools' success , but at the same time very stressful to both teachers and school leadership. Therefore I discovered that each school had two separate teaching time tables namely, the normal (official) time table for all educators and extra-classes time table for specific educators per specific classes. Both time tables were well structured and followed accordingly.

4.3.1.2. Resources management

In terms of resources, school A did not have much. From my personal observation, school A did not even have enough classrooms. They made use of mobile classrooms and each

classroom accommodated up to 70 learners (see table 2). I asked the SGB member (Mr. Zondi) how resources contributed to school success and he said:

We don't have enough resources, we take care of few resources we have. Learners are sharing text books; we keep the lists for text books records and ensure that they are returned back at the end of the year.... We make worksheets. Regarding Technology, we use projectors and white boards to improve the results because learners get interested in what you are doing. Even though we do not have enough projectors and white boards, but we try and use what we have as an advantage.

In terms of financial resources, school A relied only on government subsidies to purchase various teaching resources. However, the school had effective management plan in place to ensure that all purchased resources were distributed equitably, safely maintained and used appropriately to ensure school success. The school principal expressed his unhappiness on the way the Education Department gave allowances, which he viewed as inadequate to cover all the resources needed, but he said that he made sure they managed what they had .

Resources are important, but it is ‘not only the presence of school resources but how these are used which contribute to learning differentials’ (Taylor , 2007 p.536). In Taylor’s view, the efficient use of resources ‘is a central problem in South African schooling and one which we know least about’ (2007 p. 536).

The principal (Mr. Ngcobo) explained how resources were managed to ensure success as follows:

“We make sure we manage what we have; Money for books are spends on books only, nothing else. Teachers select best books, so they don't have to change books every year, we only top up. Devices like printers, computers are all covered. Each department has own computers, printers, photocopier; and office also has theirs.”

The school management team (SMT) in schools A and B had other various resources and various ways to access extra ones that would ensure school’s success. One of the important resources is human beings. Initially both schools had no functioning laboratories or libraries, but the SMTs partnered with outside individuals and private organisations that came to their assistance in this regard.

I asked the deputy principal (Mrs. Zuma) to explain what other resources the school had and how they acquired them in relation to school success, and she said:

“Our main resources is educators, because we don’t have a library, science lab ...we do have ‘Vula project” from Hilton college, they come and do experiments with learners, and train educators with their kits. We bring newspapers and magazine; We cut and paste them because we don’t have readers. Like in English grade 8 where we have more than 200 learners, but you find that only four learners has readers; so we rely on newspapers and magazine to help them to read. We try all ways possible to improve where we can and to expose them to different learning strategies” .

Regarding the human resources practices, the HOD (Mr Khumalo) explained why teachers were regarded as the main resource saying:

”The most important resources we have are the teachers; a teacher who is well equipped; a teacher who will make an environment in the classroom to be more conducive. If there are 70 learners in the classroom, the teacher must make sure that he maintain discipline “. ... The way discipline is maintained are the key to the school’s success.

In terms of how discipline was maintained, the SMT in school A ensured a high level of maintaining discipline for both teachers and learners which became a major contributing factor to school success. Teachers were disciplined in terms of being punctual to class and well prepared. Mr Khumalo(HOD) explained:

We make sure that every time we go to the class, we go there well prepared. If you are well prepared the learners will listen to you. We have to group the learners according to their abilities. Those who are excelling, we put them together, those who are in middle, we put them together; those who need special attention we make sure that during those extra lessons they get something. ... We try with all means to use the little we have successfully.

The SMT in School C, which is an independent school, had several resources needed for teaching and learning. When I asked the principal (Mr Daniel) how resources enhanced success, he said:

“Some learners have every technological devices they can get, others got nothing. We buy a hard copy for them . . .if they have device they can get e-book, so that they can get that

text book on line. They can use e-book or hard copy... if you don't have it onto your computer and get a hard copy, you not going to lose anything in terms of standard of education we give, it just make life easier . We have a portal which is a "student-teacher corporate" where you can give assignment and submit electronically,.. We have data projectors in each class and other technologies ".

I asked the HOD (Mr Victor) how resources were managed and he said:

" Each department is responsible for their resources and textbooks;... Each department has different system. In terms of budget, we have a policy where one person own all textbooks. We are moving from hardcopy looking to digital textbooks as soon as possible because we find that it easier to manage them and carrying around .

These responses show that having various and quality resources create a conducive teaching and learning environment, which enhances school success. However, poor schools also like school A with limited resources used various strategies to ensure that they were not left behind and became successful. Success in poor schools was made possible by effective leaders and managers who valued the little resources available and made sure they took care of them responsibly. Schools A and B were poorly resourced in comparison to school C which is highly resourced, however they all shared the same status of being successful schools due not only to the amount or quality resources each school had but to the various leadership styles and strategies of school leaders.

4.3.1.3. Financial management in schools

All schools need financial stability in order to function effectively. However, this study showed flexibility of financial related matters in relation to the school's success. For instance, Schools A and B are classified as "no fee schools". However, despite that, their performances were almost equal to school C which totally depended on school fees. I asked the Principal (Mr Daniel) of school C whether financial resources contributed to the school success and he said:

" No other resources of revenues except school fees; no subsidies". We make the staffs that are reliable;... It is easy to make right staff if you have money".

It is not surprising that school C needed money because it had to pay its staff's salaries and purchase quality resources, but the SMT did not view financial resources (or fees) as a key

ingredient to school's success. I asked the HOD (Mr Victor) to explain how fees contributed to school success and he said:

“ I don't think fees help us much in our success, our fees are in line of what we can pay for teachers; ... I am not sure what fees enables us for success”.

Similarly, Mr John(SGB) member also responded on fees issue, saying:

“I think, fees does not contribute much to the Student performance, unless if the parent can't pay fees, then the child can be sent home; This can develop stress to the child which can mess up the students' results and affect the performance of the child psychologically.

The above responses show mixed reactions about financial resources in relation to the school's success. There is a need for a basic supply of financial resources for a school to exist and perform well. The role of funds in schools, whether in form of school fees or donations or fundraising or Government subsidies can never be ignored, so that at least some basic services like water bills, electricity usage ,photocopying ,etc can be paid and sustained without any interruption. However the ' no fees' schools had a different view on fees issues in terms of overall success of the school. I asked the principal (Mr Zulu) of the school B the effect of fees on school's success, he said:

“ Fees impact us negatively, because Teachers volunteer for extra classes, teachers are not paid for extra work they do”.

The HOD (Mr Musa) also responded to the same question saying:

”Fees do not help us, instead it affect us negatively in that , the fact that we are no fee school, learners do not feel losing anything, they don't put much effort; This affect our results; Even parents do not take their education serious because they know that they don't pay any cents.

Based on these responses it is noted that insufficient funds negatively affect the school's success in terms of resources. Poor schools rely on government subsidies as the only sources of income which is not enough to cover all the school's expenses. The no-fee schools use subsidies to pay for limited services and general maintenance of the school properties. Money is strictly used for specific budgeted items and nothing else.

In terms of academic work, poor schools, like schools A and B, built a good partnership with specialist teachers and private companies from outside who voluntarily came to schools to conduct workshops with teachers and do some scientific experiments with learners for free. Teachers also sometimes used their own funds for transport during weekends extra classes, and sacrificed their time for extra hours teaching, unlike school C where extra teachers are hired and paid to help learners with learning problems or conduct extra classes in specific subjects like mathematics and languages. According to the SGB representative, the SMT in most successful schools does have time for fundraising projects to top up government subsidy; and the money raised is used to buy extra resources like computers, projectors and other useful items for teaching and learning purpose. In some cases like in school A for instance, the parents willingly contributed money as a donations to assist in transportation cost for teachers who travelled long distances while coming to teach during weekends and public holidays.

4.3.2. Teaching.

4.3.2.1. Planning and monitoring strategies to ensure curriculum coverage.

The SMT in School C had various approaches that worked best to ensure curriculum coverage. One of the keys to curriculum coverage was planning ahead. I asked the HOD (Mr. Victor) how planning was done and he said:

"...most of what we teach has been organised before hand, before the term start; I know exactly what I will be dealing with this week; I know exactly what I am going to do next week and making sure that I prioritize them.I don't have to think every single day of what I am going to teach.

School C also enjoyed some benefits of being a member of IEB (Independent Examination Board) schools. Some of these benefits included planning, monitoring and curriculum coverage. When I asked the principal (Mr Daniel) to explain about the IEB schools planning and monitoring strategies to ensure curriculum coverage, he said:

"All IEB schools in the area have clusters; ...for each subject, there is the cluster;... They have meetings and discuss the curriculum and how to go through the syllabus.

Besides being a member of IEB schools, school C also had its own internal planning and monitoring strategies to ensure curriculum coverage . The principal (Mr Daniel) explained these strategies as follow:

...our academic head(deputy principal) has a once week meeting with HODs, and the HOD give feedback of what they are doing; then the HOD will have a meeting with the subject teachers, monitor what they are doing and making sure we have our lessons planned ahead of time, ...having a timetable of what to be done ahead of time.

There were however other planning and monitoring strategies within the school C to ensure curriculum coverage. When I asked Mr John (SGB member) to explain what those strategies were and how they were practiced, he responded by using the English subject as an example saying :

There is one English teacher who is in charge of specific grades; ... we discuss which novels , poem, or grammar to be done, ... we decide one plan of the year; and that strategy make it very clear to other teachers who are teaching those grades; It is nice because we have one teacher in charge of the grade and that teacher coordinates all other teachers about teaching grade 9 for instance;... That teacher does not have to worry about grade 10,11 or 12, because another teacher is in charge of grade 10; ... it is a very useful strategy for mastering what we cover; ... We make sure that we follow on reliable ones and our head of department is able to oversee and make sure that we are doing what need to be done; ... there are regular discussions and there is an agreement on topics, books and poems; and it is very important that everyone is on board. When it come to teaching the content for instance, if one teacher choose a movie and that nobody else want to teach it, it is very difficult; So we put other teachers get on board to decide on that and agree on one and good one.

The Mr Victor (HOD) also expanded on curriculum coverage strategies saying:

Each head of department is responsible for the subjects and the teachers; At the beginning of the year, we need to submit our term plans ; Our term plans has guidelines that reflect

the curriculum coverage plans . We moderate each other to make sure everything is on track; There are other system in place to make sure that we cover all the curriculum; We use CAPS documents and it has all that need to be covered, and our HOD make sure everybody cover the right material at the right time and assessed at the right level.

Schools A ,B and C had almost similar strategies when it came to curriculum coverage. However school A and C seemed to focus more on target setting, extra classes and preparing learners to work an extra mile. The principal (Mr Khumalo) explained how the curriculum was covered in school A, saying:

We set targets; ...for every quarter, everyone must be there..; If not covered, they sit to see if intervention is needed. Duty load are given before school close;...we have classes very early in the morning . By June, we make sure everyone is done; by August 31, all syllabuses must be completed, before learners sit for their preliminary examination, everything must be properly done. Extra-mile start with FET phase: all grade 10,11,12 learners are prepared to work extra-mile, and there is ample time with teacher and learners to make sure learners are doing the right things.

Based on the above responses, curriculum coverage was one of the keys to school's success. All three schools used various strategies to ensure that the right materials in the curriculum were covered at the right time. Some of these strategies included target setting, having a clear year plan, regular discussions and agreement on various topics and content to be covered, regular moderation and assessment in all subjects to ensure that right materials are covered and assessed at the right levels, and conducting extra classes to ensure there is enough time for revision. In all the schools, an especially school A and C, curriculum coverage was not applicable only for grade 12 learners, but instead to the entire school starting from grade 8 to grade 12. This was achieved through whole school extra classes sessions. All school leaders in this study put more emphasis in GET phases (grades 8 and 9) because they strongly believed that if the work is properly done in these junior grades, it will minimize the amount of time to be spend when they reach the FET phases (grade 10-12). The main focus here was to train learners to work hard so that by the time they reach (grade 12), they will be used to the system without being forced. As a result, the majority of grade 12 learners attended extra classes on regular basis voluntarily; and this has significantly increased the number of matriculation pass rate in all three schools.

4.3.2.2. Quality of test and results

The schools had various ways to ensure the quality of tests and results. When I asked the Principal (Mr Ngcobo) to explain how quality tests and results were assured in school A, he said:

There is an exchange of test and examinations within IEB schools. Often , if you are part of the cluster, one person in the cluster will set end of term exam and all schools in the area will write common exam...

I also wanted to know how the SMT in school A ensured the quality of tests and results. Mr Zondi (SGB) had to say the following:

Grade 10-12 writes national paper set by the provincial /national education department. Informal tests: we take questions from previous provincial or national papers. We do not set our own question papers because they are low standard , we want learners to get used to the departmental papers ;...We are always worried about the standard of test.

What I found to be common in all three successful schools in terms of quality tests and results, were the moderation procedures involving various stakeholders within the school such as HOD, subject teachers, subject heads, and principals. The HOD moderated both formal and informal tasks before and after writing.

The SMT in school A motivated learners to get higher results. The principal (Mr Khumalo) explained how the SMT managed the average pass rate requirement throughout the year without compromising the official department guidelines, to ensure success by the end of the year, saying:

According to the Department of Education system, requirement to pass in FET phase is 3 (40%),3(40%) and 1 subject must fail; We don't do that during the course of the year; we talk about bachelors(home language 50%,language of instruction50% and , any two core subjects like physics, mathematics, life sciences, agriculture;.. They must pass 4 subjects with 50% and three subject with40%; Although we are flexible toward the end of the year about

progress/ promotion, but during the course of the year, they know, if a learner get less than 40 or 50% is out/failed; that is how we motivate them.

The deputy principal (Mrs. Zuma) also expanded on how the school A ensures a continuous success through quality tests and result, saying:

I think the continuous success relies on formulae, principles and policies that you stick to. ...we designed a formulae that we are going to use, ... a formulae that is going to be responsible and we stick to it; ... We add rather than taking away, and add things that will help us to succeed;nothing will happen by chance.

Quality test and results in all three successful schools was achieved through exchanging of tests and examinations with other neighbouring schools . Test and results underwent rigorous internal and external moderations involving various stakeholders such as teachers, HODs, principals and clusters and subject advisers at the district level to ensure that they are at the right standard. Most of the tests and examinations were selected from the previous past papers from national and provincial levels so that learners get skills on various forms of questioning and answering system. These strategies developed confidence among learners especially during final examinations, and have contributed significantly to the schools success

4.3.3.Managing challenges in schools

4.3.3.1. Dealing with challenges that the school faced.

One of the barriers to success in most schools is learning in English. Teachers struggle to get messages through to Zulu speaking learners. Some learners answer in isiZulu instead of English. When I asked Mrs. Govender (SGB) how school B overcame such situation to ensure success, she said:

We go through sections and select those big words, difficult terms or concepts, then ask learners to use their dictionaries.

The HOD (Mr Musa) also emphasized how school leaders and other educational stakeholders assist the school B in overcoming everyday challenges, saying:

Our leaders are able to accommodate all those challenges; As staff, they will guide us about how to go through those challenges; We call our superintendent if there challenges beyond us; SGB always is in school to assist us.

In some cases, the SMT mostly from rural and township schools often had to deal with social challenges among learners to ensure success. The Principal (Mr Zulu) explained how they try hard to overcome social issues saying:

Children look after themselves, No parents to look after them. We try hard to show them the way forward.

Too much workload for both SMT and teachers was also evident in all three successful schools and needed to be managed effectively. During the group interviews, teachers in school A explained how they managed their workload saying:

“So all of us are overburdened by the workload’. We have to sacrifice, not sleep, to mark. “ .

Teachers in school B had the following to say:

We manage workload through extra-classes, weekends lessons and give different types of assessment. We use forecast books: it help us to know what is done or what still to be done and it designed in the table format with date, lesson, grade and activity, like this:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Lesson</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Activity</i>

According to the SMT in (rural) school A, challenges came from learners, not from teachers. Teacher’s initiative was voluntary, but all learners did not attend the extra classes. Some learners live a bit far away from the school so safety-wise it was not advisable for them to come. I asked the deputy principal (Mrs. Zuma) how the SMT ensured success for all learners including those who were unable to attend extra classes and she said:

We encourage parents a lot, so that these learners can spend a day during weekend and go home safely ;...We are a rural school, learners do not attend extra classes because of lack of transport .

Another serious challenge in school A was that , most of learners came from homes headed by grannies. In those cases, there is not much control and strictness. Some of learners you can see that the only time to be controlled is only when they are in school. Some of them were causing chaos, but through the school policies in place and code of conduct, the SMT tried to bring them on board, making them realize that the school can help them . According to SMT, school A environment had a lot of gangsters, and some of learners were part of those gangsters. Learners were involved in drugs, sometimes they took them in school. The issue of dagga was very serious in school environments and it affected learners' performance. As a result, some learners came to school late and others absconded from Saturday extra classes.

I asked the deputy principal (Mrs. Zuma) how they managed success under such circumstances and she said:

Through our teamwork, we try our best; because I think that SMT does not do half of the work done by educators; most of the work is done by educators and they are committed to their work; And we have been helped by a number of Non-government organisations(NGO), that comes to school to influence these principles in some of our learners in taking the ownership and dealing with these social ill .

Mr Zondi (HOD) also emphasized how school A policies helped both staff and learners to engage themselves when faced with challenges, saying:

Since we have policies, whatever we are doing we try not to move away from policies; If there is a problem we refer to the policy; And the principal will tell you that “according the policy this what we supposed to do .

The SMT in school C on the other hand faced a big challenge of having a wide range of pupils from very weak pupils to of seven distinctions, because they had to keep everything together in class.

I asked the principal (Mr Daniel) how the SMT overcame this challenge to ensure success for all students and he said:

We only make two or three classes per grade. We looked at our subjects, English and mathematics and we have a remedial English teacher, especially in our juniors, so all the kids we see battling with English and battling to pass, because a lot of kids come with a home language isiZulu, and teachers does a remedial class for English and is really successful. With mathematics, we have a teacher who is available every day. Kids go to do their homework somewhere, when there are stuck, they can ask the teacher, So there is a mathematics support school. With Afrikaans, most our learners struggle with Afrikaans, So we have remedial class for isiZulu, mathematics and Afrikaans .

School C also had some students with learning disability and student from different backgrounds both economic and educational background. This becomes a challenge when trying to bring the weaker up .The HOD (Mr Victor) explained how they managed such differences to ensure success saying:

A lot of our teaching styles we try to make them different, not just only me talking all the time or testing one level, but testing on all different levels. So the way we deal with that is with help of our innovative leadership. Our deputy and headmaster are well focused, making sure that we are innovative, we don't repeat same stuff, making sure that we personalize. I know that I have a physical disable learners in my class, I make sure I give full attention and in line with the curriculum. It takes a hard work but is a challenge, trying to meet them all with their different needs. The main things: being more creative and innovative helped us to be more successful.

Workload and having to deal with changes were also common challenges found in these three successful schools. I asked Mr John (SGB) how he overcame these challenges and he said:

Our leaders, whether is the head of department or deputy principal or the principal, they always guide us, they make clear what issues are, and they offer ways to go through those issues. So the guidance is very clear. They don't just say" this is what is happening, deal with it, instead, they experiences the situation with us and help us through it. It is a very caring act.

The above responses suggest that “success” requires a lot of hard work and determination. Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009) suggest that some contributors to school-wide success such as focus on instruction, standards, and expectations; strengths of teachers, and development of multiple support systems for students with varying needs. It is true that successful schools face a multitude of challenges. Some of these challenges include, language problems in the majority of learners especially in school A and school B, teachers’ heavy workload, safety, drugs abuse in schools, child-headed family problems , dealing with orphans and disabled learners, etc. However, the school leadership used various strategies and skills to overcome those challenges and become successful. Thus the school leaders were innovative and creative which helped them to become successful.

4.3.3.2. Staff Turnover strategies to ensure schools’ success

In terms of staff turnover strategies to ensure schools’ success, the SMT in school C had regulated strategies to avoid any form of interruption in terms of teaching and learning. When I asked the Mr John (SGB) to explain what turnover strategies were in place to ensure success, he said:

School has regulated temporal teachers, and we also have interns that are able to fill in for teachers that are away. And those interns are very easily put on to speed our terms plans. Other teachers also understand the curriculum because of regular discussions. In those discussions we make sure that the interns are able to fill the gaps if there is a need. So they do make sure that the work is done and also in terms of deadlines.

The HOD (Mr Victor) also in his responses on turnover strategies , he said:

Sometime we have kids who are weak in a particular subject, so we do have summers school where some kids come back here at school during holidays, or during sport activities(sometimes) we arrange special time for them to cover the work. We try to use new technology classrooms. If a learners is sick, I will collect the work, send to the parents and ensure that learners does not stay behind; and when he comes back, that learners have to attend extra-classes after school to try to catch up the work. We have a lot of extra lessons.....

Based on the above responses and observation, it is noted that extra classes played a key role in these three successful schools. The SMT in School C had a well -structured system,

teachers who run extra classes were paid for their work. In the other schools, teachers volunteered to teach extra hours without expecting any extra payment. However, success does not depend only on having money to run extra classes, but also on having the right staff. The principal (Mr Daniel) in school C expressed his concerns about turnover strategies, saying:

“Two or three teachers (out of 30) a year runs a turnover , which is very low. All is done through faith that God will bring the right people here. We are very thorough with our process of appointing people’.

Regarding the turnover strategies in School A, the SMT shuffled within the school if a teacher is away for two weeks, to keep learners busy. Although the duty load might be a problem because everyone had his or her own load, learners were asked to come over the weekend so that a particular teacher could help them, and not necessarily during the week because everyone had his/her own duties as well .

Another turnover strategy in school A was team teaching. Once the results were released, the SMT did statistical analyses each term end and (tried to)identify the weakness in learners. Then after that , they would start team teaching, and sometimes invite experts from outside for help. I asked the deputy principal (Mrs Zuma) to explain how team teaching worked, and she said:

We start within the school , then we utilise all subject teachers within the subjects to help those in weaker areas. Also in fourth term, we invite other subjects specialist from outside; We go to other schools, we invite other specialists and we ask them to come and help.

Extra classes in school A were regarded as a most effective turnover strategy to ensure school success . When I asked Mr Zondi (SGB) to explain how extra classes were organised and managed to ensure optimum success , he said:

“We teach them on weekends , Sundays and school holidays; For example if we have three weeks holidays, we teach one week and have two weeks holiday. We separate learners in their performances as follow: High standard (flyers) on one Saturday; average standard on other days, and below average on other time”.

Beside extra classes, there were other strategies such as homework, writing tests on Saturdays, teaching learners the skills on how to approach exam questions, etc. Other strategies included: leaving the learners with work if the teacher is not around and asking a colleague to give work to learners and making worksheets. The turnover strategies were administered not only among learners but also among staff members. Mr Musa (HOD) in school B explained the nature of turnover strategies needed on staff side saying:

We have to submit our improvement plan to the principal about how we intend to improve; we set target for the term; For example, term one was not good enough, we have already identified strategies to improve results”.

The SMT analysed the year results, monitored learners’ performances and identified social problems in order to decide which strategy is effective. Turnover strategies played a crucial role in the school’s success. Each school in this study had turnover strategies in place to prevent any form of interruption that might occur during teaching and learning. Some of these strategies included: sending school work to sick learners at home, having regulated temporary teachers to help struggling learners, shuffling within the staff if a teacher is absent, team teaching, seek help from private specialist and conducting extra classes.

4.3.4 .Leadership styles and skills in the selected successful schools

4.3.4.1. Leadership style(s) that enhance school’s success.

In terms of leadership styles and skills, all three schools used a combination of leadership styles and skills. The most common leadership styles included: transformational leadership, team leadership, instructional leadership, African leadership, authoritarian leadership and reflective leadership. This is consistent with what Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009), found in their study, that local educational leadership employed multiple approaches such as instructional, distributed, and transformational practices to improve student outcomes, and established multiple formal and informal linkages with institutional entities outside of the school to accomplish their missions. I asked the principal (Mr Daniel) of school C to describe the leadership styles that worked best for him and he said:

Instructional leadership: The Aim of the school is to transform our young gentlemen and ladies of the school through technological innovations; African leadership (empathy, listening);Transformational leadership: we do a lot to transform our school; Instructional

leadership: we focus on pupils, what we are doing is really working for the pupils. Authoritarian (sometime) as well: We make decisions and peoples says “no, why’ and I say, ‘because I say so.

The HOD (Mr Victor) explained how the SMT in school C worked as a team towards the same goal of enhancing success saying:

...Our core values to transform young lives’ is based on Christians values. The leadership delegates a lot of us, but our focus is “ to transform young lives socially, academically, holistically;.....Our headmaster and the deputy headmaster mentor to us and we mentor others in our clear structures. ...We are very much relational, working on same vision and goal,... It is a relational leadership.

Mr John (SGB) explained the benefit of various leadership styles and skills:

...We often have in-service training where basically we are taught; .. everyone take responsibility; ... each of the staff has a portfolio that they are responsible for; ... I am happy to adapt to new things;African leadership styles are good as well, they speak of dignity, team work and idea of spirit of harmony, that is what we strive for here;we discuss in group the context and make sure that everyone is heard and understoodEveryone feel as part of the team and there is no negative atmosphere; ...team leadership and instructional leadership are our cornerstones .

The SMT in school C also emphasized that the school did not have one leader, but instead, many leaders and also explained the importance of having many leaders in terms of school success . Mr John (SGB) had the following to say:

We have many leaders, obviously there are different levels and is so really important that people feel responsible for something in the school. It gives them a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose. And if somebody is at school and do not have a purpose, it will not make the school successful. But if someone have something that they agree to do and happy to do it; that gives the sense of purpose.

Team leadership was practiced in such way that the SMT involved various stakeholders like community leaders to ensure safety, discipline and motivation of the learners and staff. Mr Zondi (SGB) in school A explained how such partnership worked:

We work as team; the community ensure safety for learners, especially at 22h00 when learners returning late to their community. The principal motivate both staff and learners; The principal also assist in class discipline, talk to learners often and ensure that things run smoothly .

The principal (Mr Ngcobo) in school A also described his own leadership style that worked best as follows:

What I think to be done, I go to the HOD, SMT and say “ guys, this is what I think we can do, but let talk about it, what do you think about this issues? Then we discuss, we argue, but at the end we must come out with a solution/decision; Then I ask them: “ this thing is going to be done this way”; Then they seat with their department and they come up with one thing; Whatever we are doing , I need respect even if you are young or old, a leader or not a leader, you must have an ear to listen, so that at the end of the day, we own what we are talking about, not something from one person; ...the spirit of harmony and empathy or for instances put yourself into somebody’s shoes) are important to me. .. we discuss issues and come up with solutions.

Mr Ngcobo described the types of leadership styles that enhanced success in school A as a mixture of various leaderships:

It is a mixture of authoritative, liberal, African leadership; ... I believe that if there is a respect, love will be there... Discipline and love goes hands in hands;... if I am disciplining you, I want to make sure you understand what I don’t like and what I like... .

The deputy principal (Mrs. Zuma) of school A described the leadership that enhanced her success as follows:

It’s a combination of transformational leadership, team leadership and consultative leadership ... leadership in not about being boss, instead, is about guiding, providing support to the team; ...I think ,other stakeholder’s opinions are important.so I don’t believe in top-down leadership whereby you don’t view people’s ideas We mentor them ...so that there will be people who will take the work forward

Mr Khumalo (HOD) described his leadership styles in school A as follows:

Professionalism leadership, I think is an umbrella that is under it “ this is how we maintain discipline, this is how we are good coaches, whatever we are doing, we are leading by example. And there are times that we need to go close to a learner to find out exactly what is happening in this person’s life, and try by all means to meet him/her halfway;.... For example the issue of coming early, this is how we supposed to do it as educators first, and a learners will know and follow the pattern .

I also asked the principal (Mr Zulu) of the school B to explain how the SMT combined various leadership styles to enhance school success and he said:

We delegate tasks and guide; we focus on vision,ensure that everybody realize the direction we should take; .. We follow the code of conduct and policies. We make decision by consulting SMT and school heads.For discipline, we exercise no fear, no favor....; we explains to others what has been said .

From the above responses, it is noted that all the SMTs in each school worked as a team. The school Leaders believed in their teams, trusted people, mentored them, delegated some of the responsibilities to the team, empowered them and they all worked towards the same goal.

If a leader delegates some of the responsibilities, the team members will be motivated and empowered. So staff were geared toward the same goal. One of the SMT members described some of his responsibilities saying:

I act as counselor, I look sponsorship for grade10 to apply for university applications; I represent SGB and teachers give me concerns that need to be discussed in the SGB meetings; I coordinate ‘eco-club’’: pick up litter and clean up town.

Mr John (SGB) in school C also expanded more explaining how reflective leadership enhanced success saying:

I personally, try to think about my lessons afterwards at the end of the day, end of the week, what I didn’t feel very much comfortable that I should change next time to enhance the atmosphere of the class. And also in-service training that we have at school, they ask us to reflect on certain aspect of our teaching, how we are dealing with certain students with learning difficulties. ... What can we do to help them. We work on those teaching strategies

and also reflect on what to do to try to improve...; because you can't improve unless you look back on what you were doing.

Leadership styles such as shared leadership, instructional leadership and self-leadership were practiced in all three schools and regarded as the key drivers towards success. Self-leadership theory concerns the strategies that individual and groups can use to improve their own leadership capacity (Markam, 1998). Each leader has his or her own leadership styles, own practices and operates under different circumstances to enhance their school's success. The principals, SMT, SGBs and teachers in each school worked together harmoniously towards common goals and visions.

4.3.4.2. Tactical skills, strategic skills and democratic skills in relation to schools' success.

4.3.4.2.1 Tactical skills

The SMTs in the three schools used some tactical skills to assess staff members to ensure success. Some of the common tactical skills in all three schools included assessing teachers' files, peer assessment, and self-assessment. The principal of the school C (Mr Daniel) explained how these tactical skills were used to assess teacher's work, saying:

... HOD assesses teachers in their subjects. ...We have peer assessment, where teachers assess each other and look at the lessons. People learn stuff from each other's lessons. We have a self-assessment at the end of the year and set goals; ...and when I meet them I test how they see themselves and where they going.

Another important tactical skill in used in the schools was communication. Mr John (SGB) from school C explained how communication skills were applied to ensure success, saying:

... Communication skills are the main tactical skills. ...we have consistent communication from the head of the school down to the teachers, whether is a meeting, e-mails, sms and reminders. ...There is too much going on; ... we need to have these reminders from those people that are managing us just to check if we are doing ok". .. and we need to develop skills to listen to those things. ... I think if there is no communication, people will not remember what happening tomorrow... .

Ability to communicate is an undeniably important and powerful skill (Hellinger, 2003). Communication skills were evident among staff members in the three schools, where for instance teachers guided each other and supervised each other's classes when one was absent, which was a true reflection of team work. Mr Zondi (SGB) described how communication between school leaders and staff members and learners in school A contributed to the school's success saying:

Everybody is here not just to teach, but to change the life of the children. So, when you (teacher) bunk classes, you know that you are destroying a family; We all focus on one goal; ...This is the principal emphasis: "focus on one goal" . Learners comes to school willingly, no punishment or shouting is required....

The Deputy Principal (Mrs Zuma) of school A had the following to say :

... You have to respect them;..When you show respect to your subordinate, you show that you trust them and that you believe in them, they will respect and listen to you as well. I know we all need help in that, because that is one of the thing we short in; because sometimes we are overwhelmed with some circumstances, and sometimes you can feel yourself that my tone is not right. And when the tone is not right, you don't get people attention. ...Show approval where it deserve, praise them where needed".

Mr John(SGB) also elaborated a bit on "trust" practices in school C, saying:

There is a trust in the school and in the leaders as well, I really trust the leaders. If I have a problem or an issue I can voice that and trust that they will deal with it in the best way possible.

Based on the responses above, it is evident that school leaders used various tactical skills to enhance the schools' success. Ones included: communication skills, performances management skills, analysis and judgment skills, coaching skills, championing continuous assessment skills and empowerment skills.

4.3.4.2.2 Strategic skills

There were also strategic skills in place in terms of planning and communication to ensure success. Mr Victor (HOD) in school C elaborated on some of these strategic skills saying:

We have a lot of strategic planning, we often meet as team and talk about how we can go forward, we believe in transforming young lives, we have connection with parents and this makes our success.

In terms of managing change, the SMT used various strategic skills to ensure that change was managed. Mr Zondi(SGB) from school A explained some of these strategic skills saying:

The principal emphasis is that we should change something if it is going to work for us. Sometime we don't change but we have reasons for that; We have school policy; Most of the changes appear to us as just theories, but practically no working for us...

The principal (Mr Ngcobo) in school A, also shared his personal skills saying:

I don't hide emotions; if I am happy I don't hide it; I give credit where it deserves. I reprimand if someone did something that I am not happy about; I am open person, I love myself; ... If you confront me and say: " Mr. principal, you say so and so , I see this way, Let me discuss with you, sometime you find that you change my mind... ... I love my kids/learners, this is what I can guarantee... but if you don't do any work, I ask you:"This is what we are here for; you are here to do your work; if you are not doing your work, you are failing...

In terms of empowerment and staff development procedures in the schools, the principal (Mr Ngcobo) of the school A said:

I spend most of time seating in the office. I give instructions to the deputy. But I do the follow up if she/he is doing it correctly; Some meetings I don't attend them, I send them and comes back and give me feedback; This is part of self-development .

In terms of listening skills practiced among staff, the deputy principal (Mrs Zuma) explained how listening skills contributed to the school's success saying :

..You need to be sensitive to the subordinate. ... listen to them and get to know what is happening in their lives, so that you offer them support; ... if they are frustrated and carrying things, definitely those things will affect their work; ... you cannot turn a blind eye and pretend that things are fine, while things are not fine;... sometimes you need to listen and even if it requires you to lose your time to listen to personal things as long as they are going

to help your colleagues in dealing with them. I usually talk and intervene in some private colleague’s lives; they have my trust because I tell them that “ this is between me and you; and they will never hear them from somewhere else. ... listening is very important, because for you to be listen to , you need to listen to others too .

Teaching skills also played a crucial role in the school success. Mr John (SGB) elaborated on the teaching skills issue in relation to the school’s success, saying:

There are two side of it. You have to have skills and you also have to have the right fit for the school. ... the interview process of jobs are open up, is not very much strange but at least the principal and other teachers are able to see whether this person, firstly, has skills and secondly, do they fit in the school environment. ... Our school is a Christian school and obviously we need teachers that fit in the environment of the school ... If they will not going to agree on some conditions, it will be difficult for them as well as the environment and the school ; ...But the teaching skills are obvious....

The above responses suggest that the school leaders used a combination of various strategic skills to ensure the school’s success. The most common strategic skills practiced in all three schools included: Leading through vision and values, building trust, facilitating learning and building partnership.

4.3.3.2.3 Democratic Practices

Conflict management skills were also important and practiced effectively, because some people were very quick to get offended and others were very quick to criticise . It was therefore important for the leaders to have democratic skills, to not suddenly fight back. Leaders needed to be quiet, a kind of listening, have democratic listening skills and processing what the person was experiencing and know what the really problem was. Mr John (SGB) elaborated some democratic practices used in school C to handle conflicts , saying:

... the dealing with conflicts have to be handled gently and with a lot of listening than talking; and I think the leadership here is very good in doing it. If you have anything or issue, they are very approachable and that is a part of it, the democratic side of it. If someone has a problem, the SMT approach the guys for help or for answer or something like that. That is how we manage conflicts .

The SMT used democratic practices to solve problems in amicable ways. The principal (Mr Ngcobo) of school A explained how conflict was resolved amicably saying:

I don't take part or side; I look at the matter, look at the rules/laws, seat down with both guys and say: " this is what we supposed to do'. We reconcile because if there is no harmony at work, no job is done.

A combination of democratic skills and strategic skills was also practiced in other various areas of management such as managing change, leadership and conflict management. The principal (Mr Ngcobo) in school A summarised this combination of skills saying:

... We involve more leaders,... we have SGB members who represent learners, non-teachers, teachers. ... Everyone feels involved in everything, we incorporate everyone even though there are not parts of our leadership. ... We work as team.Each school decision affects the learners, not me as teacher.... No conflict when we know the goal.

The above responses suggest a relationship between mission- building activities and democratic practices on the part of school leaders to enhance a school's success. Hallinger (2003), in a recent review of evidence concerning instructional leadership found that mission-building activities on the part of principals are the most influential set of leadership practices. The most common democratic principles practiced in all three successful schools include: ability to lead participative meeting,, listening skills, ability to handle conflict, measurement skills, group-centered skill, decision making skills, teaching skills and team building skills.

4.3.5. School and community

4.3.5.1. School relationship with the community

The Community (School A) was very supportive towards the school's success. I asked the principal (Mr Ngcobo) of school A to explain how the community contributed to the school's success, and he said:

There are some of the things that the department ask me not to do, but because of the support of the community, I am able to do it, because, if not them, we wouldn't be here.

Mr Khumalo (HOD) in school A had the following to say :

The community assists us a lot, especially during evening classes. ... whenever we are in classes , we ask the community to look around, making sure that there no learners moving around; The community must also ensure that our learners are safe whenever they are moving from school going back to their homes where they live; ... Whenever they see something that is not right , they come and report.

According Mrs. Govender (SGB) of school B, parents were concerned about their children's education. Higher-performing schools generally ask for more input and engagement from a wider variety of stakeholders (Kyla, 2010). The community itself is concerned about being a semi-rural school and also some private projects like “ Maykethele” comes every Thursday for inspiring talks , teenage pregnancy, drugs abuse, etc. Mrs. Govender also emphasised the role of the community and SGB to ensure the school success saying:

The community is very supportive , they dealing with bad behaviors with learners, they come to school during break time and go to the toilet to see those who are smoking drugs. In the morning, they stands by the gate and check learners who comes late and find out why they come late; Some learners make excuse of bus delay, then the community will go to the bus companies to find out why buses come late; Now the SGB is the one helping the school so much, Every week, SGB attends several cases of earners....

Mr Musa (HOD) in school C on also explained how the school and the community interacted to ensure success saying:

Students do 20 hours per year for community services; That is where we build relationship with community; We are connected with several local churches, police service.

The principal (Mr Daniel) of the school A added:

The community bring kids here, we have big mix races ,40% blacks, white, colored and Indians. Local primary school supply learners for us, it is a sign of support. We support community through outreach; there is quite a lot of interactions.....

Based on the above response, it is evident that the community played significant role in the schools' success. Kyla (2010) advises that where teachers feel attached to a

professional community, they are more likely to use instructional practices that are linked to improved student learning. Some of the common community contributions to the schools' success included: ensure learners and teachers 'safety, dealing with bad behaviours with learners inside the school premises , and sending children to school.

4.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented and discussed the data in order to describe and explain leadership practices in the selected schools. I reported that the three schools were situated in three different geographical settings, namely: School A which is a deep rural school, school B which is a township school and school C which is an urban school. School A ensured success through the use of a combination of leadership practices such as opening early in January, going an extra mile, opening early in morning and finishing late in the afternoon, working sometimes on Saturdays, Sundays , school holidays and public holidays, and taking care of few available resources. Morning classes started at 06h00 to 08h00, and the afternoon classes started 15h00 to 17h00, and sometimes went up to 22h00 especially during revision and exam times to ensure the coverage of the curriculum and to ensure that learners are ready for examination. Thus the school worked more hours than the official ones prescribed by the education department.

The success in school B, relied on a combination of working together with stakeholders, staff, teachers, parents, and working and extra hours of teaching. The SMT in School B also conducted classes on Saturdays and Sundays to ensure that learners were well prepared for examinations and the curriculum was covered.

The success in School C relied mainly on having the right staff that was reliable and qualified, because the school had money. According to the school principal, it was easy to make the right staff if you had money and the SMT was very thorough in the process of appointing staff. School C was good at testing and assessment. It had enough resources such as technological devices, e-books and text books and these were made easily accessible to all students. Classes were small (see Table 4). There was a good relationship between students and teachers. The SMT also stayed after hours and e-mailed each other's ideas in order to improve things.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I summarise the research report, draw conclusions from the study and suggest some recommendations, in that order. I draw the conclusions from findings and recommendations out of the conclusions. In the study I aimed at investigating leadership practices in three selected successful schools. Through the study, I hoped to contribute knowledge for the benefit of many other schools.

5.2 Summary of the research journey.

In Chapter One I reported the purpose of the study namely, to explore leadership practices in three successful high schools in uMgungundlovu district in Pietermaritzburg. The study was motivated by the need for knowledge about how leadership in a school influences school performance. I indicated that, among others, leadership practices under scrutiny included the following: management practices, aspects of teaching, managing challenges, leadership styles, as well as community involvement in relation to the schools' success. In the study I investigated school management teams (SMTs)' the management experiences and practices.

In Chapter Two I reviewed literature. In that chapter I defined key concepts. I also explored some evidence from other studies. I also identified two theories: shared leadership and instructional leadership as the theoretical framework of the study.

In Chapter Three I described and explained the research design and methodology of the study. Therein I reported that the study was a qualitative case study of three schools in different geographical areas.

In Chapter Four I presented and discussed the data. The chapter unfolded through themes that emerged from the data analysis. Some of the themes were: how they managed time, how they managed resources, how fees influenced a school's success, planning and monitoring strategies to ensure curriculum coverage, how they ensured quality tests and results, how they dealt with challenges to ensure success, the turnover strategies in place, the leadership styles and skills they used to enhance the schools' success, the tactical and strategic skills in

place in relation to the schools' success, as well as the schools' relationship with the community.

The results from this study show that all the three successful schools did the following:

First, School leaders and teachers worked beyond the normal working hours due to time constraints in the normal day. The SMT oversaw a practice of going an extra mile by opening early in the morning and closing late in the afternoons everyday including weekends and holidays, in order to ensure the curriculum coverage and ample time for revisions. Teachers and SMT members took most of their work home and sacrificed their night sleep in order to meet the target deadlines.

Second, School leaders used resources responsibly whereby each department managed their own resources and put one person in charge to ensure that all resources were maintained and returned in good condition. Text books were managed in such way that books borrowed by the learners were all returned for the next academic year use, especially in the “no-fees” schools.

Third, School leadership had the right staff that was committed to their work and willing to work extra-hours without expecting extra payment. This commitment had been also instilled among learners who attended extra lessons willingly and regularly, with a clear understanding of why they had to attend these extra classes.

Fourth, School leaders used their fees sparingly. The money was spent on the specific budgeted items only and nothing else.

Fifth, School leaders planned ahead of time and had monitoring strategies in place to ensure that everything was running smoothly according to the plans set.

Sixth, School leaders strived for quality and results through strict moderation of various stakeholders within and outside the school. Quality tests and results were always the focus in these schools. As a result all tasks, activities, tests and exams were being moderated before and after being written. Moderators ranking from the principal, HOD, teachers, cluster and subject advisers were being utilised to ensure the quality of products.

Seventh, School leaders overcame challenges through the use of various policies in place, such as school and government ones, in democratic and amicable ways.

Eighth, school leaders had turnover strategies in place to reduce interruption. Some of these strategies included extra-classes, reshuffling within staff, inviting experts from outside, and hiring temporary teachers.

Ninth, School leaders used a combination of leadership styles, tactical skills, strategic skills and democratic skills to ensure success. The SMTs combined various leadership approaches such as instructional, transformational, dictator, team leadership, African leadership and reflective leadership. Their tactical skills included: communication skills, performance management skills, analysis and judgment skills, coaching skills, championing continuous assessment skills and empowerment skills. Their strategic skills included: leading through vision and values skills; build trust skills, facilitating learning skills and building partnership skills. Their democratic skills included: ability to lead participative meetings, listening skills, ability to handle conflict, measurement skills, group-centered decision-making skills, teaching skills and team-building skills.

Tenth, School leaders had healthy relationships with their communities. Members of the community contributed to the schools' success by ensuring safety for staff and learners, contributing donations, sending their children to school, monitoring the late-comers, dealing with substance abuse and managing disciplinary cases.

However teachers in these schools were rather overworked. The schools tried to manage address this through extra-classes, weekends lessons, giving different types of assessment, using forecast books and worksheets. On the basis of these findings, the following conclusions can be made.

5.3. Conclusions

The schools work very hard in order to ensure success. The key ingredients to success include staff commitment, working an extra mile, effective leadership and community support.

Successful schools have staffs that are committed to work together toward the common vision of the school and even willing to sacrifice their time and sleep in order to ensure success. Teachers in successful schools, willingly conduct extra lessons everyday including holidays and week-ends, without extra payment. Curriculum is covered through extra lessons, planning is done ahead of time, resources in place are maintained and managed

responsibly, tests and results are thoroughly monitored and moderated by various stakeholders, challenges are dealt with in a democratic and amicable manner, turnover strategies are in place and being implemented effectively.

The two major challenges experienced in the successful schools were shortage of time and high workloads.

Leadership styles and skills in successful schools are practiced in such way that all stakeholders such as staff, students and community feel involved with clear understanding of the overall school management system. Instructional leadership, team leadership and distributed leadership styles are the most common leadership styles practiced in the successful schools in this study.

5.4. Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, school success can be achieved through:

- The establishment of motivational workshops and seminars to encourage both the SMT and teachers about their commitment to school work in relation to the school's success.
- Teachers and SMT members whose school performed well should be acknowledged and rewarded for their hard work and commitment in the school's success. This can be done for instance in the form of individual prize giving, or a gift like a 'projector' presented to the school that achieved best results; or an open project programme like a laboratory renovation, or financial assistance to cover transport costs during extra lessons and week-end teaching, or a word of appreciation from individuals in higher offices.
- Members of the community should be sensitised about their crucial role in education of their children. This will assist the SMT, teachers and learners to work towards a common goal and achieve best results. Community members can contribute to the school's success in terms of sending learners to school, ensuring safety for everyone in school, monitoring the late coming, get involved in disciplinary measures, dealing with issue of substance and drugs abuse in schools and also being concerned about their community's future as whole.

- There is a need to organise workshops and seminars on leadership practices in schools with SMT, teachers and communities to explain how their schools can be successful in terms matriculation results. Many schools achieve below average, therefore there is a need to help them achieve their full potential.
- Large scale studies is needed to inform us more about leadership practices in successful school.
- Research in leadership practices in schools should be encouraged and supported so as to investigate the effectiveness of the SMTs' leadership styles and their management approaches.

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APPENDIX B

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

To observe and take field notes of leadership practices in three selected successful schools.

For example observe the organisation of the school, the school environment, teaching and learning programs, teaching time tables , actions of students, and action of school leaders such as principals, head of department and members of school governing body.

As a participant you will be expected to do the following:

- To participate in a tape-recorded interview which will take about 20 minutes.

I will be asking you a few questions and request that you be as open and honest as possible in answering these questions. If possible, I intend to share results of the study with the staff without revealing your identity. My supervisor is professor Chikoko Vitalis, who can be contacted on 031 260 2639/ 0763767836 Faculty of education, School of education and development, University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood campus . My contact number is 0723437494.

Yours faithfully
Manasse Mukeshimana

DECLARATION

I.....(full names of the participant)
hereby agree to participate in the research on “leadership *practices in selected successful school*”. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should I not want to continue , and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively. The purpose of the study has been explained to me, and I understand what is expected of my participation. I know the person to contact should I need to speak any issues that may arise in this interview. I understand that my answers will remain confidential, unless I specifically give permission to use my names.

Signature of participant

Date

