

**WHAT DOES IT ENTAIL TO BE A SELF-MANAGING SCHOOL?
EVIDENCE FROM ONE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL**

BY

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DECLARATION

I confirm that this entire thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my original work.

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As the candidate's supervisor, I have approved this thesis for submission.



PROFESSOR VITALLIS CHIKOKO

December 2013

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my two children, KRENASHIA and THARUSHA, and my only grandchild REYAAN.

I hope this thesis serve as an inspiration to you to live your life with commitment, discipline and determination.

Strive to achieve your full potential and never give up until you reach your goals!

Remember that knowledge and wisdom does not lie only in the most brilliant of minds, but beneath every spirit of humility. “Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all” (Aristotle).

God be with you always.

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ABSTRACT

I embarked on this research journey with the aim of understanding in some depth, the work of a South African primary school through the self-managing lens. The journey was triggered by an apparent limited understanding in South Africa about what it entails to be a self-managing school despite the fact that the South African Schools Act, in keeping with developments worldwide, calls for schools to become more self-managing. In South Africa, the term ‘self-managing school’ has kind of been ‘hijacked’ and become restricted to refer to Section 21 schools that self-manage their finances. But literature unequivocally shows that the notion of a self-managing school is ‘pregnant’ with meaning, far deeper and richer than financial wellness. Thus the fundamental questions guiding this study related to how Acme Primary School fared as a self-managing school and what lessons could be learnt there, regarding what it may entail to be a self-managing school in the South African context. Couched within the interpretive research paradigm, the study adopted a single case study research design. A sample of ten participants comprising of the School Management Team and selected educators made up the main data source. Data was captured through a blend of four instruments, namely a transect walk, observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The study was informed by a two- pronged theoretical framework of the theories of capital and distributed leadership. Findings provided a complex and intricate web of factors which pointed to Acme Primary School being on course towards self-managing. The school’s success as a self-managing institution revolved around its ability to draw on all four forms of capital: intellectual, financial, social and spiritual. Intellectual capital was to do with knowledge production and utilization thereof in order to maintain a sense of renewal and inspiration within the school. Social capital related to the building of relationships and interactions among stakeholders. Financial capital was to do with the presence of the resources necessary to meet development needs. Spiritual capital entailed the bond created through shared beliefs, norms and values all of which developed a culture of self-belief and a drive to succeed. The school’s success was also informed by leadership that was distributed across the organization - a case of multiple leaders.

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CHAPTER ONE

MAPPING THE JOURNEY

1.1. Understanding the past for the present

This is a journey I have made to seek to develop some deep understandings of the phenomenon of a “self-managing school” at a South African Primary School. To understand the present, a trip into the past is necessary. South Africa’s history of Apartheid has made it difficult to comprehend the notion of a self-managing school without awareness of the extent to which apartheid practices have deeply inscribed and concretely shaped schools. Spillane, Halverson & Diamond (2004, p.22) argue that “the context of self-managing schools depends on the historical, cultural and institutional settings in which it is situated”.

The education sector in South Africa has, for many years, been in a state of turmoil. This has been marked by the inequitable distribution of access and opportunity for learners and staff along axes of race, gender, class and geographic discrimination. Between 1948 and 1994, the white minority National Party government organised society and public schools in accordance with apartheid legislation. The consequence of this has been that all aspects of South African education bore testimony to the apartheid ideology of white supremacy, and the country was perpetuated as “a society of inequality based on race” (Task Team Report, Department of Education, 1996, p.18). The National Education Policy Act of 1967, promoted inequality. This was manifested by centralised, authoritarian control of education located within the white Education Department (Christie, 1991). The apartheid ideology was characterised, inter alia, by the prohibition of diverse race-based enrolment at schools, differentiated administration, organisation, governance and funding of schooling, different curricula, examinations and educators salaries. An example of this was The Bantu Education Act of 1953, designed as it was, to reinforce passive acceptance among Blacks of perpetual servitude in a racist society. Thus Black education was poorly funded, often taught by educators with inadequate education and training. Schools operated in a bureaucratic and highly regulated environment. This led to education in South Africa being fragmented, unequal and undemocratic.

The consequence of the inequality in education and the attendant problems was that by the mid 1980s the Education Department was faced with an almost complete system breakdown. There

was an increase in children who were not functionally literate and numerate. Schools were also experiencing high drop-out and failure rates. By 1990 it was reported that 66% of the black youth and adults between the ages 16 and 34 were functionally illiterate (Hartshorne, 1992). The racialised categorising of South African people as Blacks, Whites, Indians and Coloureds, and its underpinning consequences of legalised inequality, led to the struggle against apartheid within education as much as in other sectors of society. According to Harber (1997), the outright rejection of Bantu education began to change from 1985, where an additional theme was added to the struggle of inequality, which was the need to educate for equality and democratic participation (Christie, 1998). Alongside this brief history, is the advent of democracy in 1994, which brought about pressures on schools to respond to and confront more to the call to self-determine, which is synonymous with the notion of self-managing. In this regard, Wallis (1989) describes self-managing schools as institutions where people should have the opportunity to participate directly in the affairs of the organisation, especially where they are affected by whatever decisions are made and implemented.

Hence from 1996, with apartheid schooling being legally abolished, the newly elected democratic South African Government introduced a flurry of both provincial and national legislation, with a view to transforming schools into self-managing institutions (Cross & Chisholm, 1990; Norval, 1996). All schools in South Africa were required to align themselves with the values and provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa which lays the foundations for democracy, social justice and fundamental human rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 108, 1996). One piece of legislation was *The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996*, (SASA) which was intended to make education equitable, and to instil democratic principles in schools and the broader society. SASA determines the architecture of the entire system of self-managing schools, including issues of management, finance, innovation, curriculum, teacher ratios, development and accreditation, admissions, learner discipline and support services. In terms of Sections 20 and 21 of *The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996*, many responsibilities have been devolved to the school level (SASA).

The intention of the introduction of self-managing schools was to remove most of the legal constraints of central control moving to the full participation of those at school level in productive activities. It was anticipated that local participation in decision-making processes to implement the school's own vision to promote culture and professional development would bring about improvement in education. Consequently it would create a sense of belonging

among the local community, parents and educators as well as the sense of school ownership. Supporting this view, the Department of Education (2000) claimed that each school contains a unique mix of learners whose needs, interests, aptitudes and aspirations are different. Hence each school is best suited to determine the particular mix in terms of all of the resources available to the school, to achieve optimal outcomes. The implication of the desired change to emerge from the promulgation of *The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996* is that effort is required from the ground level for people to take ownership of school improvement, for capacity building of local leadership and enhancement of people's participation in school affairs. The argument for self-managing schools is that this will improve accountability and effectiveness at school level, as compared to the general dependence syndrome of citizens looking to the state as the provider of everything. Many things have now changed within the context of education in South Africa. These include discrimination and segregation in education (prohibited since 1994) and the significant consideration for schools to become self-managing. Yet it seems that policy intentions alone may not have been sufficient in developing required outcomes, if not supported by transformation endeavours, the necessary resources and efforts of the people at the schools to implement change.

There appears to be limited understanding amongst South Africans about what "a self-managing school" entails, and how a school can bring that concept into reality. Despite a plethora of writings and research on the different principles of "a self-managing school", detailed studies of what entails a self-managing school and its relationship to teaching and learning are less forthcoming (Harris, 2003). Hence, the implications of this concept are often underestimated (Bauer & Bogotch, 2006). In South Africa the term 'self-managing school' has kind of been 'hijacked' and become restricted to refer to Section 21 schools, those that self-manage their finances (DoE, 2000). There exists a pressing problem in this country in that the apartheid and colonial-era education systems have resulted in a wide variation between high and low achieving schools, and a wide variety of resource levels existing amongst schools. The general impression is that the top of the range material conditions of the school represent a good self-managing school. This has also led to an assumption that well resourced schools are synonymous with self-managing schools (Caldwell, 2008; Bird, 1990). Such assumptions need to be challenged. The desire to align self-managing schools just to finance alone may represent a narrow perspective of the concept of a self-managing school. South Africa is not an exception to the line of thinking that a school's financial strength is the sole measure of what self-managing means. According to

Caldwell (2008), the drive towards self-managing schools in Europe, United States and Australia was also predominantly financially motivated.

This study hopefully provides a valuable lens through which to take a fresh look at this concept and develop a deeper understanding of what it entails in the South African context. The use of the word “understand” in the study is informed by West-Burnham (1992), who suggests that to “understand” is the cognitive exercise of grasping with the mind. In this regard, a conceptual understanding of a self-managing school would mean understanding the technicalities of the concept and having knowledge of the processes that enhance school improvement.

Hence, this study argues that there is a deeper and richer notion to the understanding of a self-managing school, than finances alone. The study was underpinned by the belief that attempts at achieving self-managing status should be premised on the understanding that a school should for example, capacitate its stakeholders, manage its learning site, monitor learner and teacher activities, market its proposed services to the community, generate revenue and possibly entrench teambuilding relations. These are some of the hallmarks identified in literature (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998; Chapman, 1990), that are powerful vectors in providing the road maps for developing schools into self-managing institutions. Through this investigation, I hoped to illuminate ways in which the School Management Team (SMT) and educators regulate, negotiate, contest and challenge issues of self-managing and from these discover what factors promote the progress of a self-managing school within the context of South Africa.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Government goals and strategies towards the development of self-managing schools have seen a range of projects initiated to raise school effectiveness, enhance professional capabilities of educators and support learning in South Africa (Naidoo, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo, 2008). Despite SASA so clearly stipulating that the SMT, educators, School Governing Body (SGB), parents and members of the community are to play a democratic and participative management role in ensuring quality education in schools (Mohrman, Wohlstetter & Associates, 1994), it appears that this has not translated into reality in most South African schools. In view of these factors I also took note of Coleman (1990) who posits that an important contemporary issue in terms of improvement in South African education is an investment in upgrading the

quality of educators. It has become obvious that “educational policy is easier to change than schools are” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p.1).

Academic results of external school assessments in Language and Mathematics, presented at workshops by the Umlazi District Office of the KwaZulu Natal Provincial Department of Education in South Africa, revealed high levels of underperformance and high learner failure rates. Schools tend to blame either the poor support from the Department of Education and/or the lack of finances as major reasons for their low performances. This is a matter of growing concern. A key feature of self-managing schools is the expectation that they should provide enhanced learning. Yet, there is an increasing realisation that not many schools are achieving such improved results or indeed the deeper sense of self-managing. There seems to be an ever growing gap between the expectations in legislation and actual delivery at schools.

There is an outcry of very low academic performance in this country which suggests that many schools are probably struggling in terms of becoming self-managing institutions (Thurlow, Bush & Coleman, 2003). This implies that schools are possibly not managing to mobilise their own people and the community to take the necessary steps to deal with their own challenges. In this regard, the general standard of South African education is well below parity with other developing countries. This is evidenced in some examples, such as the report on: The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, 1999), which indicates that when South Africa last participated in a particular international assessment exercise, it came last out of 39 participating countries. A second example was provided by the SABC News (9th September 2011), which reported that only 27% of learners who enrolled in Grade One reached Grade Twelve successfully, whilst the other 73% dropped out of the system for some reason or the other. In another example, Ndoye (The Teacher, February 2011) reports that from 1995 about 80% to 100% of children in South Africa attend basic education, but the quality of such education is far from satisfactory. The 2010 systemic evaluation of Grade Three learners in primary schools indicated that just half the number of children who wrote regional Literacy and Numeracy papers are achieving their learning objectives (The Teacher, February 2011). The stark reality is that some 60% to 80% of schools in South Africa today might rightly be labelled dysfunctional.

Funding shortages, attributable to various factors, are said to limit school improvement (Dalin, 2005; Hawk & Hill, 1997). Timperley, Smith, Parr, Partway, Mirams, Clark, Allen & Page (2004), report that parents and educators rarely participate in school issues. Their limited participation in educational matters could mean that they are unlikely to exercise their accountability roles effectively. There is also a great possibility that many South African schools are still adopting conservative organisational structures, such as top-down leadership and management approaches, without changing the culture of the organisation. Furthermore despite the devolution of significant authority to schools, such schools in their pursuit of improvement seem to disregard and/or fail to secure viable partnerships. In the same vein, Rae (2005) claims that educators are forced into administrative work overload, at the expense of their pedagogical functions; and role complexities have the potential to cause conflict among the staff. Such factors could disadvantage the development of schools (Dalin, 2005).

Despite the mass of legislation, policies and research, the above observations signify that the level of readiness for schools in South Africa to self-manage is generally still very low. This means that despite the intention of the government to transform the poor quality of education in the country with world class policies and legislation, the outcomes point to the fact that the notion of self-managing schools in South Africa has not really taken off the ground. This situation is not unique to South Africa; other countries, such as New Zealand (Wylie, 1997), Australia (Townsend, 1997) and the United States (Smith, Scoll & Link, 1996) are also experiencing similar problems with the progress towards self-managing schools.

After twenty eight years immersed in the school system as an educator (eight years of which as a SMT member), I developed an interest in demystifying the concept of “a self-managing school”, by pursuing an in-depth case study of one school. This study was devoted to understanding what a self-managing school entails. With the conviction that the value of both the members of the SMT and the educators can hardly be overemphasised in considering the success of any educational undertaking, the study focused on the understandings of the members of the SMT and educators of a self managing school, and how this may impact on all aspects of school practice. Crucially then, what became my two main motivating questions were: What is different about a self-managing school from any other school? If schools need to grow in self-managing, what is it that they should be doing? According to Caldwell (2002) the requirements for self-managing can no longer be readily attended to in conventional ways. Instead it calls for new

knowledge, and new ways of thinking and different skills. As such, I now move onto the research questions which guided this study.

1.3. Research Questions

- 1.3.1 How do the school managers (SMT) and level one educators understand and experience the notion of a “self-managing school” in the South African context?
- 1.3.2 What are some of the factors that promote the development of a self-managing school?
- 1.3.3 What can be learnt from the policies and practices in the selected school, with regard to “what it entails to be a self-managing school?”

The research questions were the vital tools that were used to gain the participants’ perceptions of what entails a self-managing school. By interpreting how the members of the SMT and level one educators understand and experience the notion of a “self-managing school” in the South African context, I hoped to investigate the creative and active ways in which these stakeholders think, feel and behave in practice, in relation to issues of self-managing. The purpose of these questions was to explore the features of a self-managing school through the ways in which these stakeholders engage with issues of self-managing. The study also aimed to trace the factors that contributed to the school’s success and how members of the SMT and Level One educators responded to challenges that have been fundamental to school development and improvement. The dominant issues that emanate from the study, with regard to “what it entails to be a self-managing school” might be the bases for shaping a self-managing school.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The rationale for undertaking this study was informed by my personal experiences. As a newly appointed Head of Department (HoD), I grappled with the many challenges of understanding and implementing the principles of this “monster” of a self-managing school; as my duties required me, for example, to develop skills of participative management, consultation and a democratic style of leadership. As a child I attended traditional schools, and later taught in traditional schools in South Africa. The schools that I taught in and was promoted to in 2005 seemed to be beset with problems such as autocratic leadership, limited accountability and ineffective use of resources. Effective skills are vital in the functionality of a self-managing school and as such, lack of skills could have contributed to the unsatisfactory levels of

achievements in these schools. Hence, the study identified a variety of strategies for school development and improvement. In this regard, Coburn (2003) claims that improvements are unlikely to be generated automatically but depend on the extent to which, and the manner in which, a programme is adopted by those it is designed to serve. Such understandings can provide the scaffolding for my and others' future career endeavours.

The poor academic results in South Africa, invariably compromise the quality of children's lives and learning experiences in schools. This indicates that official policy prescriptions are not enough to challenge or change strongly held beliefs about schools. This study contributes to knowledge regarding what goes on at 'ground level' in a school, in terms of focusing on the unique context and circumstances, real life management and leadership experiences with emphasis on tasks as well as people. This is underpinned by how members of the SMT and educators make meaning of and engage with issues of self-managing on a day-to-day basis. The business of operating a self-managing school is not an easy task to attain in totality; therefore the biggest challenge is "how do you manage everything?" From the reported success story of the case school, the implications of these participants' constructions of a self-managing school made success seem attainable and could motivate schools that are struggling to persevere towards greater achievement. In the same vein, challenges that act as barriers towards self-managing were brought to the fore.

Literature theorising and explicating spiritual capital for the development of self-managing schools has been paid scant attention to school space. In education research, leadership and management forms of discourse are usually given primacy; although it is noted that sound leadership and management draws on spiritual capital and these two are not and cannot be enemies. The spiritual implications on how self-managing schools can progress have largely been unrecognised and therefore under-researched. This is apparent in the *National Education Policy Investigation* (National Educational Policy Investigation, 1993), which is silent about the inclusion of spirituality in the education system and each structural and sub-sector focus. It is important that educationists begin to recognise spiritual capital as an important element for the development of South African schools. In this respect, while the study delves deeply on the four elements of capital, namely: intellectual, financial, social and spiritual, this study opened up a relatively unexplored terrain for theoretical analysis by examining how spiritual dispensations manifest in practice at the school.

I believe that this study is also significant in its focus on “multiple leadership” or “distributed leadership” as the main route towards driving the process of self-managing. Here, the work of Stoll & Fink (1996) recognises that there is connection between distributed leadership and schools that are described as progressing. In this regard, progressive schools create an environment in which people within are able to grow into leadership. While such a view of leadership may have been implicit for many years, it was not explicitly theorised for self-managing schools. Although the study viewed the task of the principal as one who was responsible for holding the pieces of the organisation together (Harris & Muijs, 2005), this study opened up a terrain for theoretical analysis by examining how distributed leadership manifested in the understandings and practices at this school. Such practices that were considered are those that are sufficiently robust and that conveyed meanings to such concepts as ‘participative management’, ‘equality’, ‘less-hierarchical’, ‘continuous learning’ and ‘empowerment’, and leadership which provides a safe environment, and which encourages openness and trust were brought to the fore. A culture of this kind is characteristic of an excellent school, which enables everyone to work constantly to establish new and better standards of performance in every sphere of school life. In the same vein, schools that are places of inequality, where the powerful dominate and deny others their voice, and their right to hold leadership positions, may hinder development towards self-managing.

1.5. Outline of the Report

At the beginning we need to have an idea of what to expect on this trip. This section signposts my route through the journey. The report is made up of eight chapters.

Chapter One introduces the problem. As such, it provides insight into the background of the study, statement of the problem, its focus, the critical questions and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two reviews literature. However, throughout the report, I still draw from literature to enable connectivity and deeper understanding of issues at stake. In this chapter I examined the concept of a self-managing school. I then unpacked and explored elements influencing the advancement of a self-managing school, such as decentralisation, autonomy to make decisions, participative management, responsibility and accountability, less hierarchical structures, equality, co-operation, networking, capacity, small size, school structure and culture. I also examined and developed an understanding of leadership and management and the roles of

leadership and management in a self-managing school. This was followed with broad discussions of international perspectives of self-managing schools in countries such as Australia, England, United States of America and New Zealand.

Chapter Three explains the theoretical frameworks guiding the study namely: capital and distributed leadership theories. For the purpose of this study the four elements of capital, and distributed leadership that formed the organising framework for understanding and developing a self-managing school were described as separate elements. However, it must be remembered that, within a school, these elements are interdependent in nature.

Chapter Four explains the research design and methodology I adopted. Through this discussion I located the study within the interpretive paradigm. I reported on how I used purposive sampling strategy to select the research site and participants. I identified and justified the data collection instruments used. I then explained the data analysis procedures and concluded with issues of trustworthiness. I justified these choices and their ethical implications in relation to this study. I then gave an account of the analytical frame I used to work towards answering the research questions.

The next three chapters namely: Chapters Five, Six and Seven present and discuss the findings. Given the depth and complexity of the data, I decided to present and discuss the findings in three chapters. Chapter Five presented the broad profile of the school context, emerging from my tour of the school through the transect walk. Chapter Six unveiled and discussed the verbal accounts of the participants' voices, emerging from the individual and focus group interviews with the participants. It projected ways in which the SMT and educators understood and experienced a self-managing school within the context where the study was undertaken. Chapter Seven presented and discussed key practices in the school in relation to the self-managing process. Photographs and tables were used to ground the findings. This section included the participants' voices; however the bulk of the findings came from observation and document analysis.

In Chapter Eight I concluded this report by summing up the main findings in relation to the research questions posed at the outset of the study. I reflected critically on my study and identified some limitations, before closing with what I considered to be my thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: EXPLORING THE NOTION OF A SELF-MANAGING SCHOOL

2.1. Introduction

On the basis of the problem stated in Chapter One, this chapter focuses on the related literature to bring forward an overview of the current theory base on the phenomenon of “a self-managing school”. This is a fairly lengthy chapter considering the number of aspects that the literature review explores, all of which are crucial to an in-depth understanding to what is meant by a self-managing school and the issues that shape it. Yet none of the sections positioned in this chapter is substantive enough to stand alone in a separate chapter; as the sub-themes are strongly interconnected.

The literature review:

- Commences with a discussion of the concept of “*self-managing*”. An in-depth understanding of “self-managing” is fundamental in my pursuit of an exploration of the phenomenon of “a self-managing school”.
- The second section of the review is an attempt to explore meaning rather than a definition of a “*self-managing school*”. Whilst there seems to be no model of a self-managing school readily available, to provide a clear definition of a self-managing school, there are some hallmarks and legal issues in literature that clarify how self-managing schools may be constructed and the implications for stakeholders. This is premised on the notion that although each school is unique with its own contextual issues, there are certain core values and principles that are common to all schools. Characteristics of schools discussed here concern: decentralization; the school’s capacity to lead and manage itself, active participation of various stakeholders, decision-making, the school as a learning organisation, commitment to teaching and learning, and sharing of knowledge and skills (DoE, 1998).
- Next I examine and develop an understanding of educational leadership and management, and the role thereof in a self-managing school. This study explores the type and quality of leadership and management in a school that is likely to have a strong influence on the success or failure of a self-managing school.

- Finally, I examine self-managing schools in countries such as Australia, England, United States of America and New Zealand. These are countries that are recognised as being successful in developing effective self-managing schools. In view of the complexity and depth of the concept of a self-managing school, I felt that working from this perspective would promote greater reflection on the concept, and an understanding of what influences participants' constructions of meaning and practice.

2.2. Understanding “Self-Managing”

It is only through identifying and examining the influential characteristics of self-managing that a deeper and holistic picture of a self-managing school could emerge. Influences flowing out of the nature of ‘self-managing’ tend to shape and structure what happens in a self-managing school. As the notion of ‘self managing’ is not localized to education, it is important to understand how it came about and where the notion of self-managing originates.

The origins of the self-managing concept lie in the late 1940's and early 1950's, emerge from efforts to find organisational forms that would help increase productivity in post-war Britain (Van Eijnatten, 1993). Researchers from the Tavistock Institute in London discovered coalmines in Durham in which miners worked in highly autonomous groups. The productivity of these teams was higher, while absenteeism rates proved to be lower than in the more traditionally organized mines. This discovery sparked the development of a new theory of organisation, labelled Socio-Technical Systems Design (STSD) which focused on optimising the technical and social subsystems within the organisation (Van Eijnatten, 1993). The first of these subsystems involved technical equipment and process layout, while the second refers to people carrying out the work (Cohen and Ledford, 1994). From these emerged a description of ‘self-managing’ as the ability to manage one's own affairs. This included becoming resilient in various complex and demanding circumstances such as management of the infrastructure, the equipment and human resources for optimal and effective use.

There are similarities and fundamental differences in each country that forced transformation towards self-managing. For example, in Western countries, the motive for self-managing has been linked to the recognition of long term macro-level economic and political change. In most Eastern countries on the other hand, the changes have been introduced during revolutionary

periods (Govinda, 1997). The most dramatic examples of revolutionary situations that led to large-scale self-managing are:

- Communes in Paris during the French Revolution in 1792-1793.
- The Paris Commune in 1871.
- Soviet Councils in the early stages of the Russian Revolution in 1917-1918.
- Workers' and soldiers' councils in Germany in 1918-1919.
- Factory councils in Italy in 1918-1920.
- Collectives throughout Spain during the revolution and civil war of 1936-1939.
- Factory committees in Hungary in the 1956 uprising.
- Action committees in France during the revolt of May-June 1968.
- Self-managing organisations in Chile in the early 1970s. (<http://libcom.org/library/lip-and-the-self-managed-counter-revolution-negation>).

In the above cases and others, major social, political and economic activities have been organised by the workers or population concerned, without the need for bureaucracies, managers or political elites to tell people what to do. Thus the body of literature on self-managing has its origins in revolutionary episodes; such as, workers that have taken over and run factories; self-organised groups that have handled distribution of food, goods and health care (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000).

In industry, 'self-managing' may imply that it is the workers who decide what direction the business should take, what products it should make and the prices to be charged. Similarly, in education "self-managing" would involve decision-making at the organisational level for improved accountability, whereby the stakeholders themselves agree on choices, for example educators take decisions on issues of improving teaching or division of tasks at school (DoE, 2000a). Using the idea of self-managing from industry, the more schools run on principles of choice and interconnections of various stakeholders, the stronger the capacity for self-managing becomes (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

It is through examining groups in industry that a resemblance to the practice of self-managing emerges. It is noted that the skilled and better educated workers tend to become representatives, while others may remain apathetic (Lenin, 1918). Self-managing is intended to promote

participation by, and the competence of its membership. However, given the opportunity to participate does not necessarily guarantee a wider spread of stakeholders. The claims by Lenin (1918) are reflected in the school environment where the skilled and better educated stakeholders tend to participate, whilst the less educated and socially disadvantaged may be reluctant to get involved. However, in terms of self-managing, participation in school affairs is central to the “core of schooling, teaching and learning..... supporting the development of human, social and financial capital for schools and their students” (Driscoll & Goldring, 2005, p.61).

Consistent with the relevant principles of self-managing, self-managing organisations are intended to promote independent decision-making, engagement, self-reliance, self- motivation and self-determination to increase their outputs (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988). To achieve these objectives requires a wide scope of activities, such as goal setting, focusing, planning, scheduling, task tracking, self-evaluation, self-intervention, self-development and much more. Combined, such factors in addition to a wide range of knowledge, skills, tools, techniques and strategies become the driving force of self-managing (Clarke, 2007). Thus Bordia (1997) supports the view that self-managing dispels the notion of strict hierarchical structures and values. He adds that the culture of self-managing requires flexible structures which allow people who are innovative, creative thinkers and those who make good decisions, to transform the organisation as compared to having members who simply follow instructions. Such values promote a spirit of self-managing.

Further to the above, self managing organisations have enabled people collectively and individually to take a great deal of control over the things that affect their lives (Stott & Walker, 1999). In this regard, Gordon (2002) argues that while no one is forced to participate, by adopting a self managing approach, stakeholders are given an opportunity to contribute toward decision-making. Within this frame, self managing involves a comprehensive and intensive approach to achievement at grass-root level. White (1989) qualifies the above views by saying that it is not necessary for each person in the group to be identical in personality or that they should agree with each other. He cited an example, where a member (Mary) of a singing group had suggestions or strong opinions about the interpretation of a piece of music. Although the group thought Mary's views were based on more experience and accepted her views for that reason, they did not give her any automatic or permanent control over all decisions regarding that issue. This example underlines the implicit principle of decision-making for self-managing,

which should be based on collective decision making, negotiation, consensus, and respect for each other's skills, views, experience and individuality. In this regard, Levin (2001, p.153) advises that a consultation decision-making approach can be useful in moving an organisation forward as it is a 'useful way to gather information and promote learning..... or may be simply a way of trying to defuse opposition" and conflict. Hence self-managing is a response to meeting individual, collective and systematic needs of the organisation, in ways that sustain equilibrium while moving in the direction of improvement.

Whilst it is considered important for people to get involved and take control over matters that affect them, in the same vein Brooke (1984) questions whether all of them have the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed decisions. In some cases people would rather prefer others to make decisions on their behalf, which does not promote accountability and responsibility for decisions taken. Whilst some people prefer that others make decisions on their behalf, Williams (1995) argues for decision making by consensus, where there is input from all concerned. Brown (1990) maintains that one of the factors that hinder the progress of self-managing is that it is difficult for those holding power to relinquish their authority. This suggests that decisions taken by consensus could be very difficult to achieve as it often creates tensions and conflicts amongst members. Thus in many cases self managing is associated with power struggles, which could lead to harassment and withholding of opportunities to participate in decision making (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). In such cases members may respond with infrequent, non-interactive or become limited in their participation in decision making.

Consequently decision making taken at all times from the same members, without much input from others, is contrary to the principles of self-managing. As such Fullan (2001) postulates that self-managing thrives in situations where bureaucratic or professional controls are flexible, where the stakeholders involved have something to contribute and the people working together are reasonably small in number. This means that for high performance of self-managing much attention should be given to selecting the right people for the job. Lee (2012), in the "Teacher" suggests that there has to be a great deal of skills training for effective, true and genuine self management to take place, as it is about people becoming engaged in learning conversations, coaching, developing, and having a clear picture of where they are going.

I would argue that while the origin of self-managing may have stemmed from revolutionary episodes, the most important driving force of self-managing in South Africa is the political and economic inequality which formed the landscape of this country for many years. The concept of self-managing signals a strong investment in the principles of democracy as a top priority, whereby it advocates removing strict hierarchy, bureaucratic rules and regulations, and suggests strategies for addressing issues of inequality. Guttman (2001) describes this requirement as the “democratic threshold” of self-managing which enables more people at grassroots level to make decisions over issues that affect them.

In this way self-managing can be likened to a journey that actually never reaches a destination. It is an evolving process (Caldwell, 2005). Like all journeys, the self-managing journey entails an understanding of where one is heading and what is expected of the people who are on the journey. Concentrating merely on certain aspects on the journey may mean that the real points of value and the myriads of experiences encountered along the way are missed. Therefore, it is important to consider and view the total journey and all that it entails. Since my study focused on exploring what it entails to be a self-managing school, I intended to explore the concept from various angles.

Next, using the literature review, I attempt to define a self-managing school and develop an understanding of the major characteristics of this complex phenomenon.

2.3. Understanding the Phenomenon of “a Self-Managing School”

This section begins with a broad outlook over the conceptual and theoretical perspectives, in an attempt to understand the phenomenon of a self-managing school. The word phenomenon, according to McWilliams (2004, p.1), is derived from the Greek word ‘*phainomenon*’ which in its verb form means ‘to appear’. Phenomenon has different meanings within various contexts. Within philosophy, phenomenon refers to any *perceived* event that may be experienced with a consequent conscious awareness through senses and minds. Phenomena from this perspective are understood to be interpreted subjectively in that our perception of events is influenced by individual, social, cultural and contextual factors. In social science, phenomenon may refer to individual and social behaviour. In my thesis the word phenomenon is used in the context of phenomenological social science field research and refers to the “lived experience” of a self-

managing school as perceived by the participants. In discussing lived experience within phenomenology Burch (1990, p. 1) draws on the work of Schutz (1967) and says:

Meaning does not lie in the experience. Rather, those experiences are meaningful which are grasped reflectively.... It is then, incorrect to say that my lived experiences are meaningful merely in virtue of their being experienced or lived through.... The reflective glance singles out an elapsed lived experience and constitutes it as meaningful.

In discussing the phenomenon an ontological framework was developed around which I have provided an overview of the nature of a self-managing school, its meaning generally and its application in practice. The discussion then narrows down to the examination of key concepts on self-managing schools, by establishing the meaning, the essence and nature of the concept. It further outlines key legislation that had been enacted to nurture and develop self-managing schools in South Africa. I now consider what is meant by “a self-managing school?”

Recently self-managing schools have become the focus of current reforms in education in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Canada. Worldwide in countries such as Britain, Australia and New Zealand, numerous terms found in literature are used to describe the concept of “self-managing schools”, which include self-reliant schools, school based management, site based management, local management of schools, school-based decision making and autonomous schools. In South Africa the term *self-managing schools* is commonly used. Transformation to self managing schools is promulgated by law. For example, in the United Kingdom the Education Reform Act of 1988 restructured the education system through grant maintained schools, local management of schools and open enrolments (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988). The 1989 Education Act in New Zealand established self-managing schools as Crown entities, and gave responsibility for the administration and management of schools to elected Boards of Trustees (Nusche, Laveault, MacBeath and Santiago, 2011). The South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) (SASA) is at the heart of transforming education in South Africa, promoting the design of a partnership between all people with an interest in education. Central to each of these acts is the suggestion that schools will be improved through the joint efforts of parents, educators, learners, members of the local communities and various education departments.

Self-managing a school proposes that the school community will “take charge” or “take ownership” of their school, by setting its own direction and adapting mandates to fit their school vision. It involves a system which is deliberately created to bring government to the local population as well as give its members a sense of involvement in the processes that control their daily lives (Reddy, 1999). According to Hambleton (1987), it provides an educational setting in which democratic habits are acquired, practised and advanced. In reality, however, such a view presents an oversimplified picture of what a self managing school is, and how each aspect impacts on the other.

Given the unique and highly complex nature of the concept of a self managing school, it is seemingly impossible to pin down the concept with one fundamental definition. Although there are various attempts by different scholars at defining the concept, the general sense of support for understanding the term in this study was largely influenced by Caldwell & Spinks. Caldwell & Spinks (1988, p.5) define a self-managing school as:

One where there has been significant and consistent decentralization to the school level of authority to make decisions related to the allocation of resources. This decentralization is administrative rather than political, with decisions at the school level being made within a framework of local, state or national policies and guidelines. The school however, remains accountable to a central authority for the manner in which resources are allocated.

Along the same lines Malen, Ogawa & Kranz, (cited in Abu – Duhou, 1999, p. 42) provide another view:

Self-managing schools can be viewed as a form of decentralization that identifies the individual school as the primary unit of improvement and relies on the redistribution of decision making authority as the primary means through which improvements might be stimulated and sustained.

The common understanding to be derived from these definitions is that power has been shifted from central control of the government to the authority and responsibility at school level. The main objective is to create an environment where the local people would be able to participate and take decisions in educational processes in order to make it more meaningful for them. The Central Education Department becomes more focused on defining policy and formulating

strategic plans than in the day to day administration of schools. In this regard Dalin (2005); Robinson, Ward, Timperley & Tuioti, (2005) and Leithwood, (2001) note that the transfer of responsibility to schools is generally accompanied by a strengthening of accountability to the school unit, so that decisions can be made relating to the allocation of resources.

With regard to decentralisation in South Africa, within the School Education Act No.6 of 1995 a most significant piece of the legislation was found in Section 3(j). This section of the act states that state involvement in school governance should be limited to the minimum level (SA 1995, sec, 3j). This trend towards devolution of power to schools, which made schools more accountable, was consolidated in the South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 (SASA). Even though it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of these structures, their presence created awareness, and prompted the forming of a School Management Team (SMT) and School Governing Body (SGB) to transform the school into a self managing community where the principal, deputy principal (DP), heads of department (HODs), educators, learners and parents could participate constructively in major decisions that affect them. In this country, by means of the SGB, parents are given authority in the governance of the school. A “self managing school” is formulated mainly in two sections of the South African Schools Act, 1996:

1. Section 20, which gives the school, amongst other important functions, responsibility for the development of its own governing body constitution, a mission statement, a code of conduct and to plan their curriculum within the national curriculum framework.
2. Section 21, gives schools extra allocated functions to control their own finances and extra-curricular functions (Department of Education, 2000).

At the heart of the SASA is the principle that each school should be on a path towards self managing if this has not already been established (SASA 1996, section 16). The Department of Education (2000b) provides that in order to ensure the move towards self managing schools, legislation and policies make provision for the improvement and growth of the school to be the responsibility and accountability of all stakeholders of the organisation. This includes the SMT, SGB, educators, learners, parents and the community, who are required to work in partnership with a number of delineated responsibilities. These include the maintenance of records of property, updating of records reflecting the academic, physical and financial status of the school and the implementation of necessary actions on school related problems. Partnerships with other schools, Non Government Organisations (NGOs), private enterprises, and local communities are

also encouraged. Whilst self-managing schools demand organisational structure, yet on occasion a more fluid structure is required, to allow for modification (Rosenbaum & Gajdosova, 2003). Consequently this places an emphasis on the management and leadership of the school. This is a significant change from an era in which the role of the school was to effectively administer the processes and procedures set out by the Department of Education.

The South African government has categorised self managing schools as both Section 20 and 21 schools. There exists, however, a misconception amongst many stakeholders, that Section 21 schools, which are bound by financial considerations, are in fact authentically self managing schools (Bisschoff & Sayed, 1999). What seems to emerge from my understanding is that schools that have limited finances are categorised as fragile and vulnerable; whereas schools with strong finances tend to find it easier to command respect as self managing schools. In this country, where schools demonstrated that they were capable of managing their school finances independently of the Department of Education, they are granted Section 21 status. Provision is made for those schools to be provided with a lump sum financial allocation, determined on the basis of per capita requirement. In this way they have greater control over the management of their own affairs. Caldwell (2006) referred to this approach as earned autonomy. My study is based on the presumption that all schools are self-managing to varying degrees. There could be Section 20 schools that are not financially secure, but better prepared than Section 21 schools in terms of self managing. In this regard, such schools set into motion the behaviours appropriate for self managing, create opportunities to use more of its power and control vested from central level, strengthen decision making skills on significant matters related to school operations and keep abreast of the new knowledge and understanding (Guskey, 2000). Seen in this light, the above aspects invite assertions that reform is applicable to every school. It would therefore be expected that all schools strive towards ‘earning’ the status of “self managing”.

Defining a self managing school is more complex than may at first be apparent. It is clear that a self-managing school is more complex than what it appears. It is not practiced as traditional schools were. As such, Harris (2004) argues that each school needs to embrace a structure and culture that promotes its development towards that of a self managing school. In this regard, the study leans on the views of Honing & Hatch (2004, p.17) who argue that self managing reforms should address coherence in both “inside the school out” and “outside the school in”. This implies that both the school and its various agents have important roles to play, and need to work together in helping to strengthen the school performance. Caldwell & Spinks (1988) identify

knowledge, time, money, technology and power as essential aspects in consideration and understanding of the concept of a self managing school. These issues inform a major part of my theoretical framework and consequently my data collection, where I sought to investigate how each of these issues are explicitly accompanied by efforts, if any, to develop the case school. I defer the discussion to Chapter Three where these aspects are dealt with comprehensively.

The next section determines some of the elements of a self-managing school.

2.4. Elements Influencing the Advancement of a Self-managing School

In order to understand the concept of a self-managing school, this study examined a number of issues, such as decentralisation, autonomy to make decisions, participative management, responsibility and accountability, less hierarchical structures, equality, co-operation, networking, capacity, small size, restructuring and marketing. I have also considered these issues in the South African context.

2.4.1. Decentralisation

Conyers (1983), like Rondinelli (1981), broadly defines decentralisation as referring to any transfer of authority in a state, to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from the national level to any organisation or agency at the sub-national level. Similarly, Dubois & Fattore (2009) define decentralization as the policy of devolving decision-making authority down to the lower levels in an organization, relatively away from central authority. In essence, decentralisation suggests that key resources are transferred to local organisations, which are then controlled by those who use them. For example, these could include a range of strategies used by a school aimed at improving their finances, increasing parental and community involvement and delivery of education services (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998). Literature refers to four major types of decentralization namely: De-concentration; Delegation; Privatisation; and Devolution.

De-concentration involves the handing over of some administrative authority or responsibility to lower levels within Central Government ministries and agencies. It involves a shifting of workload from centrally located officials to staff or offices outside the national capital. It allows the local staff some degree of decision-making discretion that can enable them to make routine decisions and adjust the implementation of central directives to local conditions (Harris & Spillane, 2008). *Delegation* refers to the transfer of managerial responsibility for specifically

defined functions to organizations outside the regular bureaucratic structure. It implies that a sovereign authority transfers to an agent specified functions and duties which the agent has broad discretion to carry out. This implies that such organisations or agencies to which public functions are delegated tend to have semi-independent authority to perform their responsibilities (Brown, 1990). *Privatisation* is a process through which governments have divested themselves of responsibility for functions either by transferring those to voluntary organizations or by allowing them to be performed by private enterprises. In South Africa 2.8% of the total school population is privately run, which means that it is self-funded. *Devolution* is the most extreme form of decentralisation which denotes the creation and consolidation of independent levels and units of sub-national government, whose activities are substantially outside the direct control of the Central Government (Brown, 1990). In this study, devolution implies the divestment of functions by the central government and transferring of ownership to those closest to the action. Increasing the process of democratic decision making closer to the service users, suggests improving and developing from within (Barth, 1990); hence there is a tendency to increase the relevance and quality of educational delivery.

The principle of devolution of education has most application to public schools in South Africa. In keeping with the principles of democracy, the responsibility for South African education is devolved to schools, with the belief that it would exercise the 'power of the people' to improve efficiency and bring greater effectiveness (Teichler, 1998). For example, the government uses a funding formula to allocate financial resources (such as non-staff items) to schools as laid down in financial regulations. Schools may spend these resources as they wish, however, the principal and the members of the SGB are held accountable for the management of the delegated resources. In this context central planning bodies increasingly concern themselves with providing broad frameworks and designs, but leave detailed planning to individual schools (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2003). Stakeholders through consultation with other players have the freedom to make their own arrangements according to the needs of the organisation which are not borne by the state (Harber, 1997); for example school fees, improvements to the physical plant and extramural activities. Thus, it can be argued that whilst devolution structures are set up granting schools authority to manage their own affairs, it does not guarantee self-managing schools. Without real involvement from the members, self-managing schools become a mere extension of traditional schools. Schools, therefore, have to invest in on-going advancements to cultivate the depth of culture necessary to support and sustain the reform

(Levacic, 1995). Thus this study wishes to probe this further by investigating the SMTs' understandings and experiences to participate in the day-to-day functionality of their school.

2.4.2. Autonomy to Make Decisions

Primarily what autonomy entails, as articulated by Hill, Smith and Spinks (1990), is that instead of having decisions imposed from a central body, members have the authority to make decisions themselves. The notion of 'autonomy' in this study refers to several different aspects of decision making, such as funding, allocation of resources, human resources, social services and the management of property.

Newmann, King & Rigdon (1997) identify varying degrees of autonomy within an organisation. These are categorised into four broad categories: i) *Full autonomy* – applies when decisions are taken within the limits of the law or the general regulatory framework, without the intervention of outside bodies. This would not preclude schools from consulting with higher authorities at times for support on decision-making. This challenges the stereotypic role of the Department of Education as primary decision-makers, and replacing them with a more supportive role for schools, and their decisions. In the context of South Africa, schools are granted full autonomy in certain areas such as the management of non-teaching staff, or SGB paid staff, fund raising drives, improvement on the infrastructure of the school, and co-curricular activities offered by the school.

ii) *Limited autonomy* – This is when decisions are taken within a set of predetermined options or approval is obtained for decisions from a higher authority. An example of limited autonomy can be found in Malta, where schools are quite free to raise funds whilst they do not have autonomy on how to spend this money. A fairly similar situation is to be found in Estonia and Spain, where only the purchase of movable goods is made at the discretion of schools (Fisman & Gatti, 2002). South African schools also share limited autonomy as education is governed by a system of cooperative governance, with power shared by the National and Provincial governments. The fourth schedule of the South African Constitution states that 'education at all levels, excluding tertiary education,' is an area over which National and Provincial governments have concurrent powers (RSA, 1996). This means that both National and Provincial governments can legislate on any matter concerning non-tertiary education (DoE, 2008). For example, the Constitution of South Africa, Section 29(2), grants each learner the right to education in any of the 11 official

languages of his/her choice in the name of equity and historical redress, however, realistically education can hardly be served in all official languages. Thus, Section 29(3) enables schools some authority to select their medium of instruction within the guidelines offered by the Department of Education. Another example is found in policy initiatives such as the National Curriculum (CAPS: Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement), which sets out the suggested approach to the curriculum in the country. However, power is devolved to schools, where schools have a significant say in how the curriculum can be used to suit the needs of the school and the learners.

iii) Organisations are considered to be *without autonomy* when they are prohibited from taking decisions in a given area. For example in South Africa, the National Educational Policy Act, frames the policy of open enrolment, which means that learners living outside the feeder zone are not precluded from seeking admission at whichever school he or she chooses, provided that the parents meet with certain condition such as payment of the fees. The school has no authority to prevent such an admission.

iv). The fourth category appears in the organisational structures of some systems; for example in some countries the administrative body and/or local authority *may choose whether or not to delegate* their decision-making powers in certain areas to the organisation.

Basically, the amount of autonomy allowed in schools does not provide for successful self-managing schools. The Department of Education draws attention to mandates, inducements, and changes in the system, that grant various degrees of autonomy to schools. Self-management is unlikely to generate automatically but depends on the manner in which the process is implemented at schools (Coburn, 2003). The position taken is that autonomy is useless to schools, as central players for self-management, unless they explicitly design efforts to develop the school. For example, schools should be able to solve ongoing challenges and increase their necessary resources for self-management. However, it seems that the process is “still not clearly understood” (Harris, 2003, p.371) and needs addressing.

2.4.3. Participative Management

Participative management is a democratic process, which relies on individuals or groups having the power of voice in decision making, sharing information, internal control and leadership (Banai & Katsounotos, 1993). Jagnnadhham (1979) adds that participative management implies to "share in". Analysis of participative management, as a concept is incomplete without reference to Freire (1972, p. 42), who warns that:

Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated.

These suggest that participative management is incompatible with bureaucratic principles which advocate dominance. Sarnoff (1979) argues that, in situations where plans are formulated centrally, and administrators dominate representative institutions, participation is seen as an instrument to instruct, guide and legitimise rather than to locate decision-making powers in the hands of local people. Traditionally, school principals have been the main decision-makers at school level throughout the world. This situation has been particularly evident in a number of countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, (Imber, *et al.* 1990; Griffin 1995; Jonston 1997), as well as South Africa. But it is argued that the shift to participative management in self managing schools is necessary (Gultig & Butler 1999; Mabaso & Themane 2002), as schools can benefit from representation and high levels of participation of all stakeholders.

In South Africa, for example, the democratic government aims to help foster participative management in schools by involving all of its stakeholders, including parents, educators, learners, non-teaching staff and those who are elected to serve on the SGB (SASA). Self-managing schools are introduced by a structure that involves all the stakeholders in active and responsible roles to encourage tolerance, rational discussion and collective decision-making. The term "stakeholders" is based on the assumption that certain groups and individuals have an interest, or a "stake", in the activities of an institution. According to Bush & Heystek (2003), stakeholders comprise all those people who have a legitimate interest in the continuing effectiveness and success of an institution.

Self-managing schools call for greater participation in decision-making. Caldwell & Spinks (1992, p.131) point out that securing a “synergy of communities” is the key to attainment of educational goals. It is also likely to contribute to a variety of potential benefits, such as increasing the stakeholders' sense of belonging, motivation, commitment and quality of decision making (Smylie, 1995). Participative management in practice has, however, taken some time to filter down to some schools, in terms of high levels of parental involvement and support, and collaborative collegial planning. Although collaborative processes are increasingly called for, decision-making is all too often limited to a few members at meetings, where for example a project is explained and the people are asked to give their comments. Waters, *et al.* (2003) warn that attempts to involve stakeholders should be geared beyond participation, towards meaningful involvement. If participative management is to really release peoples' own creative ideas, it would have to be much more than the mere coming-together of people, to hear about pre-determined plans. Ultimately all stakeholders involvement in participative management would be required to guarantee the success of the implementation process, and its efficiency. Research conducted in schools operating under participative management reveal that these processes cannot come about in an authentic form if the people involved do not trust one another (Blase & Blasé, 2000). This same research suggested that principals, who do not trust their educators, would not share authority and responsibility. Educators who do not trust one another would not collaborate with one another. School personnel who do not trust parents would guard against giving them a real voice in decisions affecting the school. It is expected that participative management should be adopted by all self managing schools. To investigate how participative management has practically manifested itself in the case school is a subject of discussion in this study.

2.4.4. Responsibility and Accountability

Accountability is a multi-faceted concept that may have several different interpretations. It is often used synonymously with concepts such as responsibility, answerability, enforcement, blameworthiness and other terms associated with the expectation of account-giving (Oxford Dictionary, 2005). Similarly Heim (1995, p.1) states:

‘Accountability’ has many meanings for political leaders, education officials, teachers, parents, community and business leaders, and the general public. Sometimes, accountability is used synonymously with ‘responsibility’. Other times, the term appears to refer to reporting to those with oversight authority or, more globally, to the general

public; or to demonstrating compliance with established laws, rules, regulations or standards; or to distributing rewards and sanctions tied to results.

The literature (Armstrong, 2006 and Candoli, 1995) suggests that responsibility and accountability are critical concepts to an organisation's short-term and long-term success. The demand for accountability ensures that some procedures have to be initiated for goals to be attained. For example, in South Africa the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) was introduced in 2003, in an effort to improve the quality of the teaching force using a process of evaluation. This has implications for accountability in terms of educator performance.

Therefore, cognizance must be taken of the fact that in a developing country like South Africa, accountability and responsibility of educators is of vital concern. A common practice revealed by Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn (2003) is that in many cases people relinquish accountability by blaming others for their lack of ability to overcome challenges. IQMS is used as a powerful instrument, where educators are expected to give an account of what school activities they engage in (Middlewood & Cardno, 2001), for example sports coaching, assigned duties or on-going professional development. The implication is that if self-managing is to be sustained and developed it involves moving away from the model of accountability which rests solely with management (Gamage & Pang, 2003). It suggests that individuals within the organisation need to take responsibility for empowering themselves, for example by giving attention to changes in his/her classroom practices. Hence, there is a possibility that IQMS may be combining the twin goals of highlighting the importance of creating an environment that fosters accountability and responsibility on the one hand, and empowering its membership on the other hand (West-Burnham, 2001). In view of this it seems that accountability and responsibility are intricately intertwined with the notion of building self-managing schools (Bartlett, 2000).

Accountability and responsibility are ongoing processes, where stakeholders have to work through organised participatory activities that endorse ownership and self-generation of the school. Thus a shift from schools that are government directed to more site based is not only about "pupils or good teaching' (Dalin, 2005, p.19), instead it is an important arena for a number of complex challenges for the SMT and educators to reach out and take accountability and responsibility for the development of the organisation. One of the aspects to be examined in this

study is the notion of accountability and responsibility, which are key issues of a self-managing school.

2.4.5. Less Hierarchy of Authority

A hierarchy is an organizational structure in which people or groups are ranked one above the other according to status or authority (Bush, 2003b). This means that the amount of authority increases with each higher level a person or organization occupies in the hierarchy. The ultimate power remains with the person at the very top of the hierarchy. The upper echelons of a hierarchical system are those in authority, with the position to make final decisions in all matters. The word *hierarchy* comes from the Greek words *hieros*, meaning sacred, and *archein*, meaning to rule. The invisible and predominant values of hierarchy are power and authority (Bush, 2003a). These are the engine driving the system.

O'Brien (2006) argues that efforts explicitly accompanied by social interactions based on positions in a formal hierarchy of power or privilege contradicts the principles of self-managing. Instead, people should be treated according to who they are as individuals. In this regard Caldwell (2008) maintains that systems that tend to be more flexible have a way of building and strengthening the organisation, as compared to strict bureaucratic, hierarchical and centralised control. This suggests that if self-managing schools are to be effective, stakeholders need to get actively involved in decision-making. This might explain why more horizontal approaches are advocated for the development of self-managing schools, where space should be created for the whole staff to get involved, be supported and make decisions together. For this to happen there needs to be as few layers as possible in the school hierarchy of authority, which challenges the stereotypic role of the SMT as policy makers and primary decision-makers.

Although South Africa has structures in place to replace hierarchical and bureaucratic systems in schools with more democratic principles of equality, it seems that this remains a challenge for schools to change culture. Where schools with strict hierarchical structures still exist, it seems that these would exert pressure on their development towards self management, for example, hierarchies can be at the root of a great amount of injustice in the workplace, which allows for the exploitation of workers or the oppression of women (Brian, 1999). This is the epitome of a non self-managing system (West-Burnham, 1992). In view of these challenges, the concept of flexibility was pursued by Conley & Bacharach (1990), where they advocate a more

participatory approach which embraces members planning and organising activities to suit their individual and group needs. Chambers & Jewkes (1995) maintain that a participatory social system resonates well with self management in that it serves to prevent ruthless people from climbing ladders of ambition by suppressing others. Furthermore, a participatory approach in turn allows for the emergence of educator leadership, which moves away from the premise of leadership in the traditional understanding of school leadership bestowed on one person.

Although self-managing schools do not have to be strictly bureaucratic, in practice however, every school is dependent on an efficient bureaucracy to function legitimately. Meire (2006), states that bureaucracy is an essential feature in all organizations, where complex and large administrative tasks need to be undertaken. However, there would appear to be a need for a rethink of beliefs on who is in authority and who is subject to authority. Here Newton and Tarrant's (1992) views have implications for the use of broad-based involvement in decisions in that it is underpinned by a great deal of team-building, where diverse groups work together drawing on a range of expertise. In essence they suggest that a flatter hierarchy implies that if people are working together, it is more likely that they can develop from within. Therefore a levelling of the plain of hierarchy may help foster a spirit of service and reduce the drive towards power which is consistent with the collaborative spirit of self-managing (Campbell-Evans, 1993). This study investigated these issues and how it impacted on what shapes a self-managing school.

2.4.6. Equity and Equality

The concept of equality is premised on the notion, that since all men are created equal, they should also be treated equally before the law, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, economic, class or social stratification (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). South Africa's past history of apartheid classification of schools has made it difficult to discuss self-managing schools, in the South African context, without reference to equity and equality. In that respect, equality aims at creating equivalence of opportunity in education, and social justice for the oppressed, neglected and disadvantaged. This expansion of the notion of equality in schools is to ensure that each person has an equal opportunity to develop his/her naturally endowed potential to maximum capacity.

For many years South Africa had been rejected nationally and internationally for its gross violations of human rights, its inequality laws and discriminatory policies (Bray, 2004, p.1). The passing of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (hereafter the Constitution) committed the nation to a set of values and principles that unequivocally commits itself to the attainment of “an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom” (Govender, 2004, p.4). Equality manifests through benchmarks which include: the new Constitution, one unifying National Flag and one National Anthem, which became the building blocks of this important mission. Such inputs also had impact on schools in terms of the Constitution, the school vision and mission statements, good leadership, meeting ethnic diversity issues, participation by the people, freedom of expression, transparency, accountability, legitimacy, devolution of power and informed citizenry (Brian, 1990). The need for equity and equality extends enactment of equal learning opportunities to all South Africans. The South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) is a good example of national legislation that affirms equal access to schools, admission policies, language policies, rules regarding religious observance, a code of conduct for learners and the appointment of educators in public schools.

The spread of equality in self-managing schools also extends to the exercise of managerial authority, which needs to be legitimate, accountable, transparent, democratic and responsive to the critical needs of promoting human welfare (Alton- Lee, 2003). The aim of developing school practices that embrace values of equity and equality are intended to reflect the multicultural nature of South African society. Government policy expects schools to attend to cultural diversity, however without explicit guidelines and practical assistance, these complex issues of equity and equality could add to the limitations that schools face with self-managing.

The key issue in endeavouring to redress inequalities inherited from the past is that power which was previously vested in higher tiers of the structure needs to flow to all levels of the organisation (Robson, 1993). This suggests that the process is likely to expand broadly if the system engages in wider participation. Costea, Crump & Amiridis (2008) note that people can be quite different in personality, tastes, skills, friendship groups, personal possessions and activities, but these differences should not permit any individual or group to build positions of dominance over others. The differences most threatening to self-managing schools could involve individuals or small groups who have wealth, special skills or knowledge, and who tend to use it to control others. Differences need to be celebrated to generate processes that enhance development from within.

Findings from the New Zealand study, *Schools Support Project Evaluation*, conducted by McCauley and Roddick (2001), suggest that effecting positive change in schools is not clear-cut and a great deal of effort is still required to learn about the processes. For example, the question arises as to how the organisation would encourage participation of stakeholders. Opportunities for participation do not necessarily guarantee equality or a wider spread of participation amongst potential stakeholders. In addition the scarcity of people with the necessary skills and knowledge for participation in self management is a cause for concern. Such a situation was investigated and in Chapter Six I present the findings arising out of this case study.

2.4.7. Co-operation

Another feature of a self-managing school is that of co-operation; which is an orientation towards collaboration rather than competition. Brian (1999) claims co-operation to involve people working together, mutually supporting, learning and engaging in constructive criticism. This suggests that co-operation generates synergy, through the coordinated efforts of members working together as a team, helping each other realize their true potential. Cooperation is likely to create an environment that allows everyone to extend themselves beyond their limitations (Stashevski & Kowlowski, 2006). In this regard, Caldwell & Spinks (2008) point out that self-management warrant an attribute of people working in collaborative ways so that the organisation's individual strengths and expertise benefit each other. It is this sense of co-operation that is a significant lead towards self-managing schools.

However for this to happen, schools would need to plan strategically and have structures in place for mutual support and co-operative work. Candy (1991) explains that this is not easy to operate co-operatively and non-hierarchically when most of those involved grew up and lived in a hierarchical society. Schools are experiencing several problems in this regard. This could be due to any of several issues, including lack of knowledge, weak interpersonal skills, limited listening skills, the inability to share or be sensitive to the feelings of others, selfishness and difficulties with commitment to group endeavours. There is no doubt that conflicts will arise, but these can be addressed if learning and experience in co-operative group dynamics have been achieved in the school.

By contrast, competition amongst workers within the organisation could characterise the members of the organisation as apathetic, disillusioned, resentful, with the consequent wastage

of talent (Bergh & Theron, 2006). Competition thrives in hierarchical situations where people strive separately for privileges or a privileged position. For example, in South Africa, the IQMS system of educator evaluation and development calls for a joint collaboration between schools, districts and supervisory units with the overall aim of enhancing the quality of education (adapted from the IQMS Manual 2005). However, the hidden contradictions inherent in this policy are likely to create competition and stress amongst educators, such as financial rewards and higher salaries for ‘performing’ teachers. The attraction of higher salaries may mean enforced cooperation to comply with imposed norms rather than innovative performance as an individual. Another challenge experienced is competition amongst schools to attract higher enrolment of learners. Emphasis therefore is placed on school’s appearance, resources, activities, fund raising, academic and sports results and cost of school fees. Roll reduction leads to funding cutbacks which negatively affects staffing, resources and professional development. These factors can adversely affect the development of a self-managing school.

Yet, in a positive sense, competition within the organisation is likely to encourage people to work harder, try new ways of doing things and to improve the quality of its product. Seen in this way a constructive competitive spirit between individuals or groups in the organisation is good for the development towards self-managing. But contrary to this belief, co-operation is almost always a more efficient way of doing things than competition (Campbell & Southworth, 1993). It is against this background that the study investigated the SMTs and educators’ understandings and experiences regarding co-operation in their school and how these stakeholders responded to these challenges, if any.

2.4.8. Networking

Networking is a powerful developmental process for self-managing schools that has received strong endorsement in the international literature (Bush 2005). Networking is defined as a means to connect, communicate or to form common bonds with people of like interests (Oxford English Dictionary, 2005). The key idea of networking, which is best described for self-managing schools, according to Adler & Kwon (2000), is keeping continuous contact with people, reaching out to new people who have the skills and knowledge that is in need and recruiting their services so that the organisation can continue to develop in effective ways. Caldwell (1995) and Ndhlovu, *et al.* (2005) identified the following aspects of networking as important basis for the practice of self-managing schools:

- sharing of both human and material resources,
- enhancing mutual learning,
- access to a variety of support,
- relationships with other schools and the community,
- access to additional funds and professional advisors for guidance and support.

Hence the principle of networking operates on mutual support and guidance, which means that people receive as well as share what works for them. Examples of networking include home-school networks such as providing feedback to parents on children's progress, regular parent information sessions, school newsletters, class newsletters and reports to parents. Insight into this concept is captured by Potgieter (2007) who articulates that increasing networking is a means to encourage and sustain development, as it provides a catalyst for additional support to the school.

Networking is a significant tool for developing self-managing organisations, as the needs of different organisations are diverse and they vary. A premise of self-management is that where additional support is utilised more can be accomplished in the organisation through networking than through a single person's effort. Whilst these factors could positively impact on a self-managing school, my study incorporates Raudenbush's (2005) assertion that resources by themselves do not improve teaching and learning, where knowledge and proficiency on how to use resources in the development of self managing schools is the key. It is appreciated that such skills appear to be woefully lacking in this country. The capacity for self-management requires that all stakeholders should be seeking new ideas and skills.

The real character or essence of networking lies in the way the system uses it to satisfy individual, collective and systemic needs. The main aim should be to access as many networking leads as possible, by working within a cluster of similar organisations, following events in local newspapers and websites, by making contact with relevant people, or advertising what the organization is looking for (Dayton, 1995). The study explored how the case school aligned its practice to networking as one of the elements of a self-managing school.

2.4.9. Capacity to Self-manage

Alongside the movement towards self-managing is the question of capacity. “Capacity” involves learning, gaining information, training, education and resources to enable individuals or groups to carry out their activities (Campbell- Evans, 1993). As observed by Bush and West-Burnham (1994) the notion of self managing importantly centres on a sufficiency of trained personnel, sharing and drawing on the skills of people in, and outside, the organisation. This creates a powerful foundation on which to build a self managing school, as criticism is frequently directed at the inability of SMTs and educators to understand, undertake and fulfil their different roles effectively. Emphasis on formal positions and role demarcation does not imply shared understanding of role requirements. Indeed there are conflicting viewpoints regarding the nature of various school tasks (Watson, 2005).

A study by Ndhlovu, *et al.* (2005) in the South African context, found that there are significant obstacles to community contribution. One of the reasons is believed to be, decades of the “disempowering” strategies adopted by the government which has left poor communities handicapped (Chisholm, 1998). In this connection it may be safe to say that social conditions of a school and the community may strongly influence whether members can effectively contribute towards self-managing. There exists a question as to whether people in South Africa have the necessary skills to self-manage and get involved in capacity building activities to promote school development. Strict bureaucratic tendencies in the past, limited scope for authentic school-community partnerships and the articulation of “multiple” voices in decision-making procedures. Hence it can be argued that in order to keep in touch with current educational trends and to maintain a sense of renewal and inspiration, professional development is an important issue for the schools in South Africa. This is evident in policy developments such as the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education in South Africa and Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD). Implications for stakeholders are focused on democratic and participatory practices that are necessary in the building of capacity for self-managing schools. In the context of this framework on capacity building, the study sought to investigate the SMT’s and educator’s understandings and experiences.

2.4.10. Small Size Groups

Leeds (1981) observes that for democracy to be consolidated, the country should not be too large or populous, as there should be a wide distribution of wealth and property ownership, and the

electorate should be well informed. Similarly, Clarke (2007) postulates that one of the characteristics of self-managing is to involve all members of a team in the decision-making processes, therefore fewer people makes it easier for working in collaboration and for the adoption of a coherent approach to self managing.

Concerning learner-teacher ratios and class size, Brian (1990) agrees that small size groups are accompanied by more interaction between teachers and learners, resulting in better quality education. The recommended learner-teacher ratios and class size for primary schools in South Africa are 40 learners per teacher and 40 learners per class, respectively (DoE, 2010). Numerous studies have been done to assess the impact of class size on quality education. For example in 2007, the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ III Project) was conducted, which sought to examine the quality of education provided amongst 9071 Grade 6 learners, in 392 primary schools, in all nine provinces of the South African school systems. This study showed a relationship between small size groups of learners and increased learner achievement and behaviour; however reducing learner size will have little effect without enough classrooms and well-qualified, experience and well prepared educators in the classroom. Supports, such as the home environment of the learners, the leadership of the school, professional development for educators and a rigorous curriculum, enhance the effect of small size groups of learners on academic achievement and behaviour. Therefore it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about learner achievement based on size alone.

In consideration to the macro level of the self-managing system, schools are the smallest unit of the decentralised system, which makes a school appropriate for the study. My selected school of study employed forty members on the staff, comprised of smaller departments with various committees and sub-committees. The organisation structure was divided into working units or teams, which, by being smaller was likely to contribute to greater success with self- managing practices than if the school relied on the entire staff working on every project. In this way self-managing can be achieved in small or large organisations, if the work is conducted in ways that are consistent with the needs, context of the community they serve and the principles of self-managing.

2.4.11. School Structure and Culture

Structure refers to the anatomy of the organisation, the arrangement of lines of authority, communications, how the roles, power and responsibilities are assigned, controlled and coordinated, and how information flows between the different levels of management (Anderson, 1996). Structure depends on the objectives and strategy of the organization. In a centralized structure, the top layer of management holds most of the decision making power and has tight control over departments and divisions (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994). In a decentralized structure, the decision making power is distributed, and departments and divisions may have different degrees of independence. School culture may be considered as a pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by the school's members, who produce norms that powerfully shape the behavior of individuals and groups in the organization (Schwartz & Davis, 1981). To this end, Daft (2002, p.516) advises that when an organisation's culture is still aligned with the "ways of doing things that may reflect what worked in the past" cultural gaps may occur. This means that structures are basic arrangements, but only part of what assists an organization to function. Cultural gaps make enactment and actualisation of self management uncertain. Researchers have emphasised that both organizational structure and organizational culture are necessary and must be in alignment for schools to move towards self-managing (Stoll, 1999; Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1994).

The government in South Africa has developed the structure and scope for self-managing schools, propagated through the SMT, SGB, Level One educators and the community to exercise their power on a day-to-day basis, to promote quality education for all learners at the school (SASA, sec 20(1)). However, in practice there may exist schools which have the structure but not an understanding of the prevailing culture and awareness of how best to self-manage and move the organisation forward. Culture is situated in practice. This entails multiple forces occurring simultaneously within the school, such as members' ascribing to common beliefs, values and assumptions that they use to guide their regular, daily actions and interpretations (Hill, Smith & Spinks, 1990). Brown, Halsey, Lauder, Stuart & Wells (1997) assert that there are various cultural factors which could promote self-managing principles such as: the school vision and mission statement acknowledges other cultures, school signs and symbols reflect cultural diversity, barriers to learning are identified, participation by all members, sharing work equitably, support is provided for non English speaking learners and a wide range of activities intertwined in the curriculum. This assertion indicates that, for an organisation to transform to self managing, it needs to be supported by a culture that emphasises a restructuring effort. It

follows that self management is likely to flourish in schools that demonstrate a commitment to restructuring and re-culturing.

A major problem, according to Brown, *et al.* (1997) occurs where the broad goals of self - managing is overlooked, where many individuals focus on their own little tasks without a picture of where their efforts fit into a broader picture of the organization. This equates to schools having little sense of overall coordination or strategy guiding the actions of the school. It is also problematic that many groups keep to informal contact with each other, with little effort to jointly assess goals, methods and coordinate campaigns (Potgieter, 2007). In addition conceptualisation of culture is far from simplistic. As explained by Rogoff (1990), culture is constantly being formed by people working together, reconstructed, renewed and created as members enter and leave the organisation. As a result many self-managing schools may struggle as they find themselves without ideas or support to operate in effective ways.

Reflection on restructuring and re-culturing seems so enormous and remote. This inquiry into what entails a self-managing school sought an understanding of not only the structure of a self-managing school, but how the structures and culture are linked. For example how do the structural arrangements serve to promote elements of culture? How does culture influence the development of a self-managing school?

2.4.12. Marketing

In describing recent trends, and in discourse on self-managing schools all over the world, the term ‘marketing’ has been frequently noted. The debate suggests that as conditions in education change rapidly, the most significant element to improve and sustain schools is in the implementation of marketing strategies. According to Mohan (2005) key marketing strategies include planning, knowledge, analytical skills, leadership, vision, judgement, organizational ability, commitment and communication. Thus the marketing strategies that he proposes could produce a useful underpinning for this study; as noted by Codd (1990, p.194), “increasingly, schools have become commercialised, functioning more like small business firms and less as institutions with an educational mission”.

The primary goal of any school is the provision of education, but there is increasing pressure now on schools to strive for targeted objectives in teaching and to deliver economically valuable and socially 'relevant' results. Self-managing schools have become commercialised for the reason that they need to raise funds in order to survive. This has the consequence that as with any organisation, they require appropriate skills, resources and support, not only in raising monies to survive, but also to achieve their objectives.

Certainly, the business side of self-managing schools will become more akin to private enterprises. Through effective use of marketing research strategies the school should be able to identify the needs and wants of customers and potential customers (parents, learners, external partners and the community) and try to deliver benefits that will enhance, or add to their lifestyle, while at the same time ensuring that the satisfaction of these needs results in a healthy financial benefit for the school. Kotler (2008) argues that the fundamental function of schools is usually not based on money only, which means they have choices about how they will meet their customer's needs. It follows that self managing schools would have to be designed to create activities by responding to local community needs.

Kotler (2008) contends that several elements have come together in describing the concept of marketing. While South African schools are still grappling to attain skills in self management; it seems that marketing strategies are unlikely to have really been taken seriously. An example of such a marketing strategy would be found in the mechanism of an advertisement. Advertisement of the school in a marketing context is used to determine what products or services may be of interest to customers to build strong customer relationships, and create value for their customers and the school. It is assumed that in marketing, something needs selling, however part of marketing entails organisations undertaking a needs assessment which is based on knowing and understanding the community so well that the product or service fits them well and that it sells itself (Ogilvy, 2009). Hence knowledge of the school community, and how to effectively use the knowledge to self-manage, seems to have become increasingly important as a basis of production, and the rendering of services to the parents, learners, external partners and the community.

The literature on marketing (Kotler, 2008; Ogilvy, 2009; Michael, 1998), suggests a strong link between marketing concepts and self-managing schools, in terms of benefits of increase in

public and private financial support for co-ordination of interrelated activities. This enhances overall quality and productivity. Such practices, over time, can be used as a way of advancing organizational accountability, with a shift from inputs and procedures (money spent and processes employed) to outputs (service) and outcomes (results) (Leithwood, 2001). This equates to the utilization of a school culture where members work together to restructure time, resources and responsibilities to all aspects which are deemed necessary for the development of the self-managing school programme.

Having explored the concept of marketing in relation to a self-managing school, I next move on to understanding the school as a learning organisation.

2.4.13. The School as a Learning Organisation

Dalin & Rolff (1993, p.5) provide this description of a learning organization: “a learning organisation is one that has learnt how to learn”. West- Burnham (1992, p.89) describes a learning school as one, which is "restless, constantly questioning, never satisfied, and believing that things can always be better". Rosenholtz (1989) contends that a learning organisation is where the excitement and motivation to learn forms part of daily life; such as working with others, networking, self-directed learning, monitoring or “shadowing” a colleague in their daily work. These definitions suggest that learning is not a once off activity, but a process which has no end (Donaldson, 2006). O' Donoghue & Clarke (2010, p.87), pursuing this notion with regard to educator learning, maintain that once-off workshops, visits and external courses for educators complement and enhance learning; but are also associated with educators' learning that is “individualized, episodic and connected to the priorities of the school”. Through the lens of this construct, this study argued that self-managing schools necessitate on-going learning. Undoubtedly, self-managing schools are linked with learning as both are defined as continuous and evolving.

Indeed, the linking of self-managing schools as a learning organisation confirms that professional development should be identified to sustain a sound capacity base for ongoing improvement. However, one of the challenges of professional development to schools is that external workshops are discreet experiences that fail to provide ongoing support and continual feedback to individual school issues. Using the views of Timperley and Robinson (2001) to support this argument, they contend that schools should stop blaming parents and children for

low academic results, and focus instead on the internal conditions, for example, by providing professional development that deals with more effective learning strategies in order to improve teaching practice. A review of research by Hawk & Hill (2000) conducted in New Zealand confirms that the connection between the poor academic achievements of many students is related to the gap in teachers' knowledge and success or failure of measurements used to gauge progress. At the same time these educators experience feelings of alienation and isolation, and patterns of stress and coping. Hence, the underlying principle and practice that proves particularly relevant for this study is that the school should be able to find ways of providing effective, continuous learning and development for its members. This means that continuous professional development appears unavoidable on self-managing schools becoming learning organisations.

It has now become one of the core responsibilities of school leadership and management to guide the process of continuing professional development of educators (Steyn, 2002). To this end, many researchers believe that the SMT has to "step up" on professional development in schools, which helps to foster all round development of the school and consequently, improve the quality of human life. On the other hand Stoll, Bolman, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas (2006) talk about educators' individual and collective efforts that are driven from within the school context using internal or external expertise. Schools should therefore develop a culture that claims ownership for more "home-brewed, school-based" learning programmes, "for which they should be accountable" (Chikoko, 2008, p. 83). It is this merging of different types of professional development learning programmes that can be used to re-build learning communities and reposition educators as leaders for school development and improvement in South Africa.

Senge (1990) identifies five learning disciplines that form the bedrock to building a learning organisation. These enabling conditions include: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and systems thinking. Personal mastery involves the expansion of personal professional capacity. Moloi (2005) claims that this could occur, by engagement with new knowledge and new skills - by acquiring, by doing, by reflecting, by questioning and clarifying and by agreeing and disagreeing. Leaders can create and manage a learning culture by embedding professional development in practice and creating learning situations. Senge (1990) maintains that if there is commitment to continuous proficiency development, performance will improve. But it seems that learning for most educators in South Africa remain modest in many

schools; for example professional development is mostly limited to district workshops which have little value except in the transmission of information about new policy initiatives (McLennan, 2000). Thus, it seems that schools that invest in a learning culture equip themselves with the ability to develop much better towards self-managing. If school leadership and management are undertaken by poorly qualified SMTs and educators, who do not have the necessary skills, knowledge or attitude for self-managing, this could result in widespread dysfunction in the school's potential to improve.

The concept 'mental models', refers to a continuous questioning of a prevailing situation, so that stakeholders do not remain static or limited in their way of thinking (Senge, 1990). This approach is similar to Moloi's (2002) view of a "self-renewal" strategy which enables a fundamental shift of our mindset, in order to be able to think, plan and operate differently. Caldwell & Spinks, (2008) call for stakeholders to think "out of the box" and prepare to adopt new mindsets in order to foster and reproduce *mental model* in our schools. This serves to usefully consolidate and embrace the concepts of "learning" and "working" which cannot be separated from growth. The sentiments of Moloi (2005) are illustrative where he advocates that schools should be continuously improved at deeper levels in order to maintain and develop as self-managing schools.

With regard to the third learning discipline, which is 'team learning' partnerships to promote collaboration are advocated. In the case of schools this will involve close co-operation with parents, the SGB, service providers and businesses. Collaboration in a school context is a systemic process in which stakeholders work together, to analyse and improve results in the learners, their team, and the school. In an era of self managing schools, learning occurs in multiple ways and collaborative approaches hold appeal. Research shows that development and improvement is bound to occur in a learning environment that is collaborative and collegial; which allows for ongoing sharing and learning (Lieberman, Saxl & Miles, 1988; Muijs & Harris, 2003). Fullan (2007) continues to expound the significance of team learning as essentially schools supporting interpersonal skills; for example, members having the courage to take risks, engaging in shared decision-making and networking with other educational leaders. There is a growing consensus that successful schools practice team work where people are continually learning from each other and working together (Senge, 1990). Grant & Jugmohan (2008) paint a picture of a learning organisation as building a nation of empowered people, rather than one that depends on the individual skills of the principal or the SMT. Implied in this view, is that the

learning opportunities for schools can be maximised, by combining the collective talents, skills and knowledge of all the stakeholders, working in collaboration. A team learning approach is supported by the Tirisano plan (meaning working together), a concept which harnesses school's ability to work collaboratively with the parent community, sharing resources, expertise and skills. It is clear that self-managing schools cannot function in isolation, therefore it is important to build support and collaboration between the internal and external environment.

Findings from Fitzgerald & Gunter's (2006) qualitative research project note that leading learning at any level in the school involves the act of influencing and working with others in a highly collaborative, collegial and supportive environment. This implies that leadership of learning is not necessarily undertaken solely by those with formal responsibility that is denoted by a title or position on the hierarchical structure. In understanding the notion of a self-managing school in the South African context, this study investigated stakeholder's ability to work collaboratively and taking up "leadership learning" in developing the school towards self-managing.

The next area of discussion, important in creating a context for understanding each other's way of thinking and together striving for school success, is 'shared vision'. Stoll, *et al.* (2006) argue that shared vision is not just about creating a learning community, but also engineering conditions where people participate in the learning process and exercise their voice. Community learning is centred on shared norms, beliefs and values. In the South African context, a variety of government initiatives for schools that have been introduced are consistent with the democratic values of the equal citizenship of all South Africans, the protection of human rights and participation in decision-making. Fundamentally, these values should be shared, understood and used as a framework by schools to design their school vision and mission. The implication is that these values should permeate all their learning experiences, such as the way educators teach, the way the school is developed, managed and appraised. It is possible to suggest, from the literature reviewed, that educators' practices are not narrow and restricted to the classroom, but rather open to opportunities created within the school for inclusion and acceptance (Jackson, Joshi & Erhardt, 2003). Thus the central feature of shared vision is that the school advocates the development of a community of differences; which suggests working within a paradigm of acceptance and differences. Working in more inclusive learning organisations legitimises school space as encouraging hybridity, diversity and unique identity of cultures.

Finally, the discipline of ‘systems thinking’ teaches that in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of a self-managing school, it is necessary to consider the whole picture; where all aspects of school life, intellectual, financial, spiritual and social, are in continuous interaction and interplay. Any attempt to understand the notion of a self-managing school, needs to be in relation to its interwoven counterparts. In this regard, Smylie (1995) argues that it may be difficult to develop one aspect of a school without it affecting its counterparts. This study took cognisance of these five learning disciplines, with regard to how educators could extend their sphere of influence beyond the classroom and into school-wide development (Wenger, 1998).

2.5. The Role of Leadership and Management in a Self-managing School

In attempting to understand what entails the notion of a self-managing school in the South African context, reference to the profuse extent of information on the various hallmarks and indicators of leadership and management is possible. Sergiovanni (2006, p.2) refers to this as a “concept boutique” where it is seemingly impossible to identify leadership and management of a school by any one definition. Scouring the literature relevant material had to be aligned to the aims of this study and specific to the South African context. In this regard, Mintzberg cited in Fullan (2007, p. 300) states that, “leadership is not about making clever decisions. It is about energizing other people to make good decisions and do better things’. This suggests that a leader is someone who has the ability to obtain followers. In South Africa leadership finds its origin in African culture and experiences, where community chiefs in African villages often adopted what could be called a “participative style” of leadership. Working from this premise such leadership style embodied the spirit of *ubuntu*, where leaders engaged in dialogue with the villagers, which helped to foster and develop mutual trust and respect in the community. Hence to help frame an understanding of a self-managing school, leadership is the crucial variable affecting instructional quality and learner achievement. Astin & Astin (2000), and Fullan (2002) argue that leadership in schools should focus on the development of educators’ knowledge and skills, empowering stakeholders for participative decision-making, building partnerships with communities, using information to improve the school and maintaining coherence in the organisation. School leaders play a crucial role in ensuring success, fostering partnerships, developing effective teaching strategies and using information to improve the school. Leaders play a crucial role in ensuring success, encouraging partnerships, developing effective teaching strategies and using information to improve the school. Whilst leadership entails exerting a powerful force to mobilise all stakeholders toward the achievement of the vision, mission and goals of an

institution, providing direction and exercising influence, management on the other hand is the 'sister' to leadership (Fullan, 2002).

The classic definition of management, by Fayol (1949) still remains, which is to plan, organise, co-ordinate and to control. Planning entails deciding what needs to happen in the future and generating plans for action. Organising is about making optimum use of the resources required to enable the successful carrying out of plans. Co-ordinating determines what needs to be done in a situation and getting people to do it. Finally control aims at ensuring that all planned goals and objectives are attained (Cohen, 1995). Such functions are necessary to achieve school objectives (Dalin, 2005). Although each of the above functions of management are signalled as an important part on the journey towards self management. Self-managing schools are so complex and diverse that they cannot operate on the simple management of these routine processes. The complementary roles of leadership and management are the driving force of a self-managing school, as both needs to be played out on a daily basis.

Over the past twenty years, several writers have moved in favour of more comprehensive perspectives of management to ensure that schools run efficiently (Bush, 2003). These would include structural, social, environmental, as well as human relations issues. This would involve reconciling the diverse responsibilities and interests of people involved in the education of learners; such as the distribution of funds to various departments within the school, the allocation of time and staff resources, and finding solutions to major disciplinary issues. Balancing all these pressures, setting direction, and ensuring that everything synchronises involves "working with people to make things happen" (DoE, 1996, p. 27). The line that separates leadership from management becomes increasingly blurred when consideration is given to the tasks to be undertaken.

While leadership is something more than management, management skills are essential in meeting such needs of the organisation as organisational stability. Leithwood (2001) has offered another perspective on leadership which warrants consideration in the context of a self-managing school. He links leadership and management to approaches of accountability, marketing, decentralization and professional development. Marketing assumes leadership skills in marketing the school by developing good "customer" relationships and monitoring "customer" satisfaction (see section 2.4.12 marketing). Decentralization requires leaders to empower others

by encouraging stakeholders to be team players and participate in decision-making so that better decisions are made in the interest of the learners and the school (see 2.4.1. decentralisation and 2.4.3. participative management). Self-managing schools demand that school leaders stay abreast of best practices and assist the staff in professional development to improve work outputs. In this regard they are expected to take the lead in achieving professional standards and keeping parents updated on professional expectations (see 3.2.1.1. knowledge and skills and 3.2.1.2. professional development).

Management approaches demand of leaders the ability to collect, interpret and utilise data to improve outcomes. In many ways leaders require management skills to cope with the work environment that is administratively more demanding. For example, constructing strategic plans, by assessing the school's current position in relation to its strengths and weaknesses, requires both management and leadership skills to meet organisational goals. Management is also concerned with inspiration, intellectual skills and personal consideration to an African-community style of leadership, which comprises dialogue and human talent so that people are willing to participate beyond their normal levels of contribution. In the light of my study, the line that separates leadership from management is increasingly blurred. Thus the position taken in this review, confirms Leithwood & Jantzi's (1999) stance, that leadership and management are both crucial in securing commitment to achieving systemic stability and growth in a self-managing school.

Shields & Sayani (2005, p.385) argue for "a more robust way of thinking about educational leadership in the context of diversity". The various leadership and management models do not seem to fully address the complexities of meeting either diversity or the heavy workload that self-managing schools face on a daily basis. Therefore it seems that for South African schools to develop on the route to self-managing, relevant authors claim that leadership which involves working with people and teams are needed (Fullan, 2002). A model that fits well within the school where people work co-operatively, which reflects a shift from leadership conceptualised as an individual endeavour, is distributed leadership. Basically, while the traditional theories of leadership are premised on one leader, with emphasis vested in formal positions that was historically assigned to males (Muijs & Harris, 2003); distributed leadership suggests that in an organisation, there may be many different leaders for different activities and situations.

This study follows the views that while the principal is the overall leader of the school, he/she should be able to create an organisational culture that supports collaboration and a welcoming climate that makes everyone feel part of the school (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010). This is an attractive concept for a school context, in that it describes leadership as an activity that is more than just influence, restructuring leadership by creating additional levels and space for the commitment of all stakeholders to move the organisation towards improvement (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2006). According to SASA (No. 84 of 1996) those entrusted with the role of leading the school should distribute their power across different stakeholders to ensure joint responsibility of the school. Unlike autocratic leadership approaches, where attempts are made to suppress or eliminate the leadership of others, this study aligns with the view that leadership and decision-making on issues that affect the school should no longer be centralised to one person or group, such as the principal or the SMT.

A leader can be described as “one who knows the way, shows the way and goes the way” (Harling, 1984, p.39). In this regard, Kydd, Crawford & Riches, (1997, p.15-19) argue that leadership capability is exemplified in “three distinct but interrelated areas of intelligence, namely: professional intelligence, personal intelligence and managerial intelligence”. In terms of their potential application to a self managing school, this implies that leaders need the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to be team players who encourage participatory decision-making by motivating and inviting distributed leadership in the school. I support Hall’s (1980) argument that principals as leaders have a strong influence in inviting collaboration and the active participation of stakeholders.

It is necessary to espouse a few definitions and a deeper discussion to explain what is meant by the term “distributed leadership”, as it is also through the lens of a distributed leadership theory that I sought to explore the role of leadership in the development of the school. However, I defer greater discussion on distributed leadership to the next chapter (Chapter Three, the theoretical framework).

As mentioned in Chapter One, South Africa is following the trend of other countries in terms of self managing schools. In the next section, I discuss the concept of self-managing schools as developed internationally, where it is reported to be successful.

2.6. International Country Perspectives of Self-managing Schools

Currently greater self-management for school is in vogue around the world. Management and leadership thinking have turned in favour of self managing schools in many parts of the world, such as Australia, England, United States of America and New Zealand. Self managing schools in these countries are discussed as they have by now accumulated significant degrees of experience because they have been in use for longer than most countries in Africa. Literature on self-managing schools in the international arena is briefly discussed in the study to provide a macro perspective on the topic under discussion.

This section is divided into two parts. The first begins with a brief outline on each country's (Australia, England, United States of America and New Zealand) schooling system, as educational models cannot be understood out of context. Secondly, I have highlighted the different, but equally valid ways in which the four countries address the issues of self management in schools. This literature could be particularly helpful to position South African schools, as the country sets out in the direction for greater self-managing schools. However, it is important to note that while there are very similar features in terms of structures of self management in different countries, each school setting is unique and will certainly differ in degree from other schools. Moreover one has to bear in mind that the countries under discussion are 'first world' countries. Little has been written about self managing schools in developing countries. To mechanically copy models from widely different circumstances would be an irrelevant exercise. Self-managing schools are not something that can be transplanted from one setting to another, as each one is intricate and unique (Hallinger, Murphy & Hausman, 1993); this has been taken into consideration in my discussion. Weber (cited in Giddens 1971, p. 211) termed this 'elective affinity'. In other words interests to promote a subject are seen to 'fit' with one set of ideas. This study, therefore, asserts that while all schools should be involved in the 'business' of education, they need to adapt to the changing environment in which the school operates (Whitty, Power & Halpin, 1998).

2.6.1. Victoria: Australia

Victoria is the most prominent Australian state in so far as the practices of self managing schools are concerned. Developments towards decentralization in Victoria were shaped by a series of ministerial papers which signalled: devolution and responsibility to the school community, collaborative decision-making processes; a responsive democracy; effective educational

outcomes; and the active redress of disadvantage and discrimination (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988). Successive governments have continued this development. Victoria commenced the move towards self-managing and school formula funding in the mid 1980s. However the central system remains the chief source of funds. A budget is handed down to schools, and decisions on how funds are allocated rest with principals in consultation with school governing bodies and educators. Currently Victorian and English schools have the most extensive coverage of resources in the school global budget of any educational jurisdiction in the world. Not only is this proportion high (94 per cent) but equally important is the flexibility with which it may be applied to the educational process (Co-operative Research Project, 1998). With such a constitutional framework, government expects the current decentralisation process to lead to massive improvements in education and allocation of resources, while at the same time strengthening local democracy.

Devolution within the government education system is not represented merely to the school, but leans more and more towards the school working with the community in taking increased responsibility for its operations and outcomes (A Research report, 2012). Every state school in Victoria denotes a system of government that meets essential conditions for the formation of a school-site council, consisting of parents, educators and for secondary schools, students. Central administration identifies national and state goals for learning, but fundamentally at local level these councils together with the educators share responsibility to set educational policies for the school, approve the budget and evaluate the education programme, have responsibility for the management of major operations like finances, personnel, staffing and facilities. Strategic and annual planning involves charter writing, long term strategic planning and policy making, approval of annual plans (including resource allocation) and school review. The curriculum is still determined centrally, with tight control exercised through inspection (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988). The principal and staff work within the frameworks provided by the government and the school council to design, deliver and monitor student performance and ensure effective and efficient use of educational resources (Caldwell & Roskam, 2002). This suggests that self-managing in Victoria involves far more than financial control.

Self-managing schools in Australia are based on three key components, namely: core needs, needs-based and priority programmes. Core needs refer to schools having a good teaching staff, where teaching and learning is supported. Schools determine their own staffing profile to best suit the requirements of the school. They also use “premises funding” for cleaning contracts,

utilities and maintenance for the grounds and minor works. With regard to needs-based funding Victoria has, from 1998, focused on the development of needs-based provision which is in line with policies of inclusion of learners with disabilities and impairment and special learning needs in ordinary schools, rural schools and the isolation of schools. In terms of priority programmes, an additional 16 programmes are provided to the specific needs of individual schools. This includes language background other than English, indigenous education, professional development and special initiatives. Schools receive money to compensate for the extra cost of learners with learning difficulties who may need to be taught in smaller groups. Hence the system of education in Victoria is recognised as more complex than the South African system, as the funding seeks to take into account differences in children's' learning needs, and structural factors, such as time become crucial variables which affect school learning. Funding operates as a compartmentalized formula in which there are allocations for different types of resources. What is of significance is that schools are free to allocate the budget as they choose. This can also be contrasted with South Africa, for instance, where appropriateness of resources is a matter of constant negotiation with the Department of Education. Moreover in South Africa, matching learner development at different levels are issues of crucial concern, where the curriculum (CAPS) is set within finite time to be completed at a particular stage (Bennet, 1995). In other words, by contrast, this country does not focus on combining pacing of content coverage with the conceptual level of instruction. Opportunities to learn from Victoria remain an option for South African schools.

In the Australian schools, principals, business managers and other school leaders are expected to develop a full understanding of the Victorian model. Principals in particular are in the forefront of the process of self-managing schools. Victorian schools are very strong on establishing outcome targets, monitoring target indicators very closely, as well as linking learning outcome targets closely with the use of school resources (Gurr, 1999). Hence, comprehensive information is readily available to parents and members of the Victorian community at large. Victorian School councils are recognised as a key element of devolution (A Research report, 2012). This requires members of these councils to undergo substantial initial training programmes. Once operational, school councils have a critical role in schools, which includes identifying learning outcome targets, monitoring performance and aligning resources allocated to learning needs and priorities. Collaborative learning processes are very empowering of local communities as they increase levels of information gained, skills acquired and most importantly, the development of confidence in problem solving and the acceptance of responsibility for their own actions. This is

experienced not only in Victoria, but in other similar countries, such as Indonesia and Thailand in recent years. It appears that empowered communities in education are closely linked to a great amount of resources possible, which could stimulate and support self-managing initiatives linked to learning.

Studies in Victoria (OECD, 2006) identify an 'efficiency drive', which is in 'search of excellence' and an orientation towards public service. The study shows that the drive for educational reforms in the last decade was driven by an unrelenting focus on learning outcomes. This may be due to the fact, for example, that in Victoria it was found that students who leave school without completing matric were four times likely to be unemployed two years later than those who completed matric. Likewise similar ideals will be prevalent in South Africa where an unacceptably significant proportion of students fail grade twelve. Reducing the large failure rate in learner achievement has significant consequences for self managing schools in South Africa.

2.6.2. England

The decentralization plan in England is called Local Management of Schools (LMS). Although all schools follow the same GCSE curriculum, there are subtle differences in the way in which the schools are run, and extra-curriculum activities offered. Children attend primary school between the ages of 4 to 11 years. At this stage, a broad range of subjects are taught to all children, and there are often after school clubs which extend the curriculum further such as specialist sports, music and languages. It is now clear that with the establishment of free schools and academics, there is a push towards school based management which ends up becoming self-managing schools.

Almost all state schools in England are maintained and funded by Local Education Authorities (LEAs). Levačić (1995) discussed past practices as embedded with unfair and unsustainable features and it had been a matter of time for the derivation of funding allocation formulae to develop. The LEA funding scheme distributes money to schools, predominantly according to the number of learners enrolled, weighted according to their age. Additional money is allocated for small school size or premises costs such as swimming pools or age of the school buildings are considered. The LEA also provides for cleaning, maintenance services as well as the cost of insurance. The formula for funding allows for the number of learners in the pre-school, primary and secondary age ranges, indicators of social deprivation related to learning needs with a

further adjustment for parents who earn above average wage levels. Local authorities receive grants from central government that finances around 75 per cent of local service expenditure; the rest being raised mainly from 'council tax', which is a residential property tax (Glennister, *et al.*, 2000). These factors highlight a context, or a situated practice, which while integral to learning in England, could make a significant difference to the success of South African schools as well, where the low quality of teaching and learning is exacerbated by the cumulative effects of home background and poverty levels. There has been a tendency to de-emphasize the quality of educators and number of learners in a class (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), especially in the Foundation Phase. These generally affect classroom interaction patterns. It is important to appreciate that education in England is not a standalone service based on finance alone, but embedded in a framework where a package of services is administered by the local government to make learning relevant.

The decentralization of responsibilities in England mainly concerns human and physical resources (including finances), to be routed directly to individual schools, and managed by the principal and School Trustees (Bullock & Thomas, 1997). Together they determine how monies are spent to meet the specific needs of their clients, make decisions on the appointment of personnel and the buying of equipment for the school (Williams, Harold, Robertson, & Southworth, 1997). For example, money received by the school can only be deployed according to the priorities of the school judged by the principal, educators and GB (Governing Body). As mainstream funding is not earmarked, schools may employ different numbers of educators, support staff, technicians, administration staff and learning materials. This has resulted in schools adopting a new culture of values, new programmes and a progressive leadership, which puts pressure on the schools to be accountable and responsive to their people's interests and demands. This requires schools to engage in aggressive marketing and image projection in order to recruit more learners, balance budgets and raise funds. The consequence of these factors for self managing schools is fierce competition among schools to attract learners. In the process it may keep any school in check, and responsive to people's demands, needs and interests.

England educational reform is driven by the need for all learners to perform to their maximum potential. Schools are annually reviewed to enable the achievement of learner potential. Schools are therefore free to plan and deploy resources, by matching their resources to priorities for achieving higher quality learning. Evidence of resource allocation is sought through a focus on how people and the programmes contribute to learning and teaching and not through simple

financial analysis. The literature indicates that educational funding has shifted from funding schools, to funding the learners, and relating that funding to the nature, needs, aptitudes and aspirations of the learners. As a result increased attention is given to those learners most at risk; so that they can receive appropriate support to take their place as successful participants in society. Likewise in South Africa, deep analysis of schools needs to take place to identify those factors associated with producing better results in learner assessment scores. This tradition has been less prevalent in South Africa, given the general lack of learner achievement data (described in Chapter One). Based on the example of self-managing schools in England, learners in South Africa could be funded and taught according to their needs. The country should alter its way of doing things, because the most significant factor on quality education is more than attendance to school, or actual physical resources.

Thody (1998) states, that most schools have a “leadership team”, comprising the head teacher, deputy, and assistant head teachers; where it is usual for at least two members of these team members to develop special expertise in financial management. As a vast majority of teachers are too occupied with their day to day classroom performance to worry much about financial matters, GBs have teacher representatives who need to understand details of financial decisions and can report back to the rest of the staff if there are any matters of concern. This applies in South Africa too, to maintain self-managing schools at current levels, this level of expertise is needed. However this is generally more effective in primary schools because of the closer identification between parents and smaller schools.

Sources such as The Blueprint for Government Schools and Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners cited in Caldwell & Spinks (2008), state that educational reforms in England is a high priority, and is being vigorously pursued through a comprehensive range of strategies encompassing all factors known to drive school improvement. This includes strategic planning, close monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, the use of the curriculum to cater for the needs of the school, effective leadership and management, and having the necessary resources to achieve all of the above (Kelly, 2005). All these features of self-managing stand to increase local influence over the stability and growth of the school, in ways that respond to the needs of local communities.

2.6.3. United States of America

The mid to late nineteen seventies marked the peak of interest in self managing schools in the United States of America (Candoli, 1995). According to Caldwell & Spinks (1988) the term school-site management (self-managing schools) was originally used by a New York State reform, to cover a comprehensive approach to decentralization, with resources defined broadly, to include matters related to the curriculum and personnel in addition to financial control being devolved to the school level. The 1990s saw a clear shift from state to district level and, more importantly, to school level. While each state in America still sets its own broad goals for the education system in the form of objectives for achievement and student accomplishment, there has been a shift towards local school systems developing specific objectives with which to meet broad state goals.

Bullock & Thomas (1997) maintain that some form of self-managing principles are widespread in America, and although the practice varies from state to state, its major emphasis throughout America is with respect to the choices of resources, and much less on the curriculum. As in the case of the other countries, decentralization in America is more geared towards financial delegation to schools, with the district curriculum guidelines produced at regional level. The responsibility of the school is to modify, supplement and deliver the curriculum with the emphasis on determining how, rather than what, to teach. In America this is considered an essential component of school improvement. In all systems, everything depends on people's participation, which can enable the most inept structures to succeed.

Mohrman, Wohlstetter & Associates (1994), state that self managing schools in America are aimed at improving academic performance by means of a budget mechanism. Schools are provided with a lump-sum financial allocation determined on the basis of per capita requirement, with weighting factors varying according to the level of schooling, and category of educational need. Caldwell & Spinks (1988) add that support for self managing schools is very high in America because it is believed that they will bring about school improvement, based on the belief that teacher learning or professional development is inextricably linked to learner achievement. This suggests that a scrutiny and understanding of learner needs is extremely important. Moreover, self managing schools are powerful in America because of a combination of teaching and learning factors such as planning, reflection, exploration and research. Hence, power is dispersed throughout sub-committees in the school for these issues to unfold, with sufficient time and support provided for implementation.

A different argument presented by Wohlstetter (1995) is that there has been scant evidence that schools get better just because decisions are made by those closer to the school. He adds that changes and improvements in the school depend on how schools are managed and led. This suggests that in order for schools to change and improve, there needs to be a passionate quest for improvement on the part of every stakeholder. Wohlstetter & Odden, (1992) recommended that through active engagement with the activities, such a system of school management can help foster an improved school culture and higher-quality performance. In South African schools this appears to be a relatively new field for educators who are used to being class bound.

2.6.4. New Zealand

Caldwell (1988), who is regarded as perhaps the original ‘expert’ in the development of self managing schools travelled around New Zealand at the outset of that country’s educational reforms, providing consultancy services to those implementing their new policy. His espoused principles included quality in teaching and learning, school effectiveness, improvement, equity and excellence, efficiency, accountability, and adaptability. Perhaps, this affirms that stakeholders who are knowledgeable about current educational policy and practice, and who are competent in planning, and working collegially and collaboratively are able to engage meaningfully in a self managing school.

The literature on self-managing schools in New Zealand points to principals, educators and parents who have worked tirelessly, from 1988, to keep the momentum of self management going. The reform brought about an increased administrative workload which necessitated a delegation of added duties to all staff members. There was a strong interest in on-going professional development and a growing focus on integrated school development. School governing councils were becoming representative of the parents, with women making up 52% of the members. For the first time women were as likely as men to chair the council and class sizes decreased.

New Zealand has a national curriculum for which schools are responsible to implement. Conversations on learning and corresponding shifts in thinking stopped educators from blaming the external environment for low learner achievements, which led to schools questioning their own strategies at school level. For example the study by Symes, Jeffries, Timperley & Lai (2001) evaluated a school-based approach to literacy professional development. This programme

involved an expert employed to work with educators on a structured programme of increasing more effective teaching in order to improve literacy results. After two months improved learner achievements in reading were measured and noted. In another study by Phillips, McNaughton & MacDonald (2001), they reported on an expert who was appointed to focus on developing discussions with educators regarding the teaching of reading and writing. This was followed by structured in-class support. Shifts of attainment were noted in learners reading and writing from well below national average to close to national average. These studies provide material for consideration in my study regarding self-managing schools in South Africa, where stakeholders can learn, understand, grow and be inspired to improve the practice.

Strict central control of the curriculum and assessment limits autonomy in New Zealand. But the New Zealand model, allows schools greater discretion in determining how their progress, in terms of curriculum delivery, is to be identified and measured. Schools that analyse, evaluate and challenge their teaching practices on learner outcomes create more effective practices than ineffective ones. To this end, Annan, *et al.* (2003) note that most schools base their decision making on programmes associated with management processes and not on teaching practices and learning. They caution that such issues need addressing to pave the way for professional development, and are subsequently attempts to raise all round achievement levels. Similar comments can be applied to the South African practice of self-managing schools, in reference to the importance of feedback in supporting the quality of work and ways to improve it.

2.7. Implications of International Contexts to the South African Context

This section has provided a brief overview of self-managing schools internationally. It has identified a number of central features that enhance the development of self-managing schools in England, New Zealand, parts of Australia and certain school districts of the United States of America. In these examples a decentralised financial management has replaced a centralised system in which all, or most, of a school's resources are provided directly by the education authority, including costs of education staff, support staff and books and equipment. Previously central authorities had also exercised direct control over school buildings, maintenance, and repair of the buildings and the supply of a labour force to carry out the work. Now state funded self managing schools have the freedom to use the resources allocated to them as they see appropriate for their school context. For example, some schools may decide to spend less on educators and relatively more on support staff; while another school may invest in their

buildings to market their facilities to the local community in order to increase income for the school.

The literature review also identified a number of factors associated with improved school functionality. What emerged as significant are the many programmes that are being introduced that seek to improve the quality of education, such as developing educators to improve productivity in schools. This implies that a well-trained teaching force, systems to support educators, as well as on-going professional development can increase relevance and quality of educational delivery in schools. This suggests that educator development is linked to school development.

A comprehensive picture as possible is gained relating to the concept of continuous improvement and accountability, which makes state schools more independent and self-sufficient (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988). Accountability is ensured by a highly inclusive level of participation through all stakeholders, consisting of parents, educators and significant others from the community who are represented on decision-making bodies of the school. Schools have to operate within a framework of state policies to generate their own school policies. There is now a consensus view in South African schools too, that decisions should be made by those who have access to the best local information, and that they are responsible and accountable for those decisions and have to bear the consequences of the decisions (DoE, Task Team, 1996). Yet insights into the schools of this country show that schools are still adopting authoritarian roles and SMTs doing most of the talking, with few learner initiations and most of the learner responses taking the form of group chorusing (Chick, 1996).

In terms of priority programmes in Victoria, special focus is provided to the specific needs of individual schools such as language background other than English. Likewise, children of South Africa experience language and learning difficulties in school when they change from their mother tongue to English as a medium of instruction and learning. Furthermore, learners do not have sufficient grasp of the linguistic structure of the English language. One of the most notable studies (MacDonald, 1990) showed that learners were able to use about 700 words, the most in English in the Foundation Phase, when the curriculum required at least 7000. Also emerging from this literature review (Teese & Polesel, 2003) was that learners needed to master the discourse of schooling in their home language before transferring to a second language; and that

very little time was spent on reading in South African schools compared to other countries (PIRLS study, Howie *et al.*, 2007). This study reviews how the experiences of other countries can be used as a guide to restructure weak forms of learner assessment in South Africa, lack of feedback on learner responses, curb rote learning because children do not understand and the very high drop-out rate of learners in the early years of schooling.

Based on the literature review, it is clear that the international accountability agenda for self-managing schools and the legislative directives linked to the practice of the school varies from country to country. In some cases it was carried out by head teachers, in others by line managers or by external inspectors and supervisors. In UK and New Zealand, for example, there were formal performance management schemes and educators' career structures that were formalized. The OFSTED method of inspection of school's results and the pupils' achievement used in the UK exert powerful influences on what happens in schools. After inspection of schools, a detailed report is provided to each educator, to the head educator, to the school board and for all parents. In some cases, if the school is underachieving, or has some serious weaknesses and requires special measures, an action plan has to be approved by the Secretary of State, and the school has two years to become acceptable. A school may have to close if it is unsuccessful after the intervention (OFSTED, 2000). The objective of this form of school evaluation is to identify constraints and opportunities that schools face when dealing with issues of self management in the current education climate. This type of government evaluation of schools points to control of the "centre" for delivery of service; while the basis of self managing schools is to give the school leaders the freedom to respond to the needs of the local community (Leithwood, 2001). However while satisfying the government's policy requirements for accountability, formal evaluation of educators and systemic reviews may clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, which seem to be confusing at times. It is also considered a powerful means of promoting self-managing schools in terms of educator professionalism and school growth.

Educator performance and the management thereof had been translated into practice for New Zealand educators by two autonomous bodies of the state. The Education Review Office (ERO) set the required performance expected of educators, while the Ministry of Education had made explicit the requirements for the management of educator performance. The ERO sought to define a 'capable teacher' in terms of teacher competencies and capabilities which include a set of 100 behaviours that teachers are expected to demonstrate grouped under four headings: professional knowledge (25); professional practice (38); professional relationships (20) and

professional leadership (17) (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2006). These core competencies are generic enough to apply to any educator in any school. Hence, this suggests that the construction of a self-managing school is a formidable task which requires leaders who have an understanding of the staff, with an ability to see them, not as they are, but as they would like them to become. In this regard Barth (1990) argues that such formal evaluation procedures have a limiting influence on educator development as it heightens anxiety and could create competition among educators. Therefore, I have selected another country to highlight an alternative method of educator evaluation.

Japan, demonstrates a method that can also work where performance management focuses on advice from 'master teachers' or visiting supervisors but without formal assessment. The requirement is for educators to rotate to demographically different areas which roughly correspond to major socio-economic divisions. It appears that there is no need for a national appraisal scheme to manage performance in this case, as educators are regarded as high status employees and prestige is given to people who teach, which is high in comparison to other jobs (Lewis, 1995). In countries such as East Asia, religious and cultural traditions "place high value on learning and educational achievement" (Middlewood & Cardno, 2001, p.185).

After examining the framework of managing school and educator performance in other countries, these features can significantly impact on the development of self-managing schools in the South African context. With regard to accountability, the EMIS data reveals that there are a number of untrained, poorly trained and under-qualified educators currently operating in South Africa. The government has a management structure (IQMS) to advance accountability at the school level. Within this formal assessment of educators, three programmes are aimed at enhancing and monitoring the performance of the education system. These are: i) Development appraisal: to appraise individual educators in a transparent way with a view to determining areas of strength and weakness and to draw up programmes for individual development. ii) Performance Management: to evaluate individual educators for salary progression, affirmation of appointments and reward and incentives. iii) Whole-school evaluation: to evaluate the overall effectiveness of a school as well as the quality of teaching and learning (Collective Agreement 8 of 2003, p.7-8). My argument, therefore, is that South Africa has the appropriate structures in place for educational attainment; however, the lack of capacity throughout the education system, including regional staff, district staff and staff in schools seems to cripple developmental aspects.

In other words, the route to self-managing schools needs the required knowledge and skills that unlock the synergy that it takes to drive the practice. Just as the ERO in New Zealand sought to build competent educators, structures were designed which focused on professional knowledge, professional practice, professional relationships and professional leadership. These factors clearly show that unless whole school management evaluation is prioritised and restructured to reach operational depths, the chances of creating successful self-managing schools are likely to fail in South Africa. Indeed, leadership, understanding and motivation do not go far enough to explain the alignment between restructuring of processes and the practice.

2.8. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to interrogate literature to explore what shapes a self-managing school. This literature review represented an important and integral contribution to the research as a whole. The review has explored multiple conceptual understandings of a self managing school and the scope of the inquiry has been made clearer. The purpose of the review was to inform my research, the focus of which was the concept of “*self managing*” which was fundamental in my pursuit of exploring a self managing school. Self-managing in this context was described as the ability to manage the school’s own affairs, such as the infrastructure, the equipment and the human resources. The review highlighted in particular that central to the core of self-managing were a wide scope of activities, such as goal setting, focusing, planning, scheduling, task tracking, self-evaluation, self-intervention, self-development and much more. In order to realise these functions, capacity building in a wide range of knowledge, skills, techniques and strategies is required to drive the process of self- managing. I then moved on to the characteristics of a self managing school; some of which involve decentralisation, autonomy to make decisions, increased responsibility and accountability, less hierarchy, increased equality and co-operation, networking, small size organisations and restructuring. Each of these factors was discussed as separate elements of a self-managing school. For example the notion of ‘autonomy’ was discussed in respect to several different aspects of decision making, such as funding, allocation of resources, human resources and the management of school property. The review was grounded in a framework that all the elements of a self-managing school do not act in isolation, but intersect with one another, and are nested within the various layers of school functionality and practice. These factors tend to shape and structure what happens in a self-managing school.

From the literature review, it is established that “a self-managing school” is a very complex concept to define; which is also not an easy task to attain in totality. The complexity of the phenomenon is compounded by its multiple goals, limited skills and knowledge of stakeholders, lack of participation and the lack of personal skills. The biggest challenge for schools it seems, is the management of everything. There is no “one size that fits all” approach, nor one strategy that is a best bet in all contexts. In this regard the study examined another primary element of a self-managing school, which is the role of leadership and management in the school. The literature review highlighted the strong influence of the principal who, together with the SMT, should set the lead in pushing the boundaries of existing practice to lead and manage the school. The literature review drew attention to distributed leadership. It suggested that despite the fact that the principal is still accountable in the school, there may be many different leaders for different activities and situations. In this way, more stakeholders will take control over various issues in the school, conjuring an image of participative leadership and management.

Finally, as stated in the introduction, the depth of understanding of a self-managing school can be deepened by exploring internal and external determinants of the context that influence its construction. In view of this I examined self-managing schools in some major international countries, such as Australia, England, United States of America and New Zealand, and explored what shapes their schools and what this means for the SMT, educators, parents, and children within the schools in these countries. The issues that came up from external schools not only focused on identifying similar challenges of self-managing schools, but also identified how the government worked with schools to come up with strategies to cope with certain issues; for example the medium of instruction or strategies undertaken in raising poor levels of reading in schools. To this end, greater parent involvement was introduced as one of the important components for the development of a self-managing school.

The next chapter outlines the theoretical framework that frames this research study.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1. Introduction

In the preceding chapter I examined the literature to understand constructions of the notion of a self-managing school. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the theoretical frameworks that assisted me to understand the same notion, of what it is that enables a self-managing school to develop. Underpinning the study is a two pronged theoretical framework that provides a powerful basis upon which the study is premised (Guba, 1990). The first, capital, is made up of four forms namely intellectual, financial, social and spiritual capital (Caldwell & Spinks, 2008). The second is distributed leadership. The rationale behind the use of these theories was to sharpen my awareness to the multiple and rich ways through which issues of a self-managing school are constructed.

In this chapter I:

- Firstly examined the theory of capital by exploring the broad concept of capital, as this would lend itself to a deeper understanding of the four categories of capital, which if strongly interlinked should maximise action in a self-managing school.
- Then I moved onto a detailed investigation of each of the four elements of capital, intellectual, financial, social and spiritual capital, to establish the roles that each one plays in shaping a self-managing school. I have located this discussion through the lens of intellectual capital. Although, Bisschoff (1997) argues that there is no ranking of capitals in terms of their importance to self-managing schools, I chose to explore the intellectual element of capital first, based on the argument that knowledge and skills are at the forefront of all school development. Two sub-themes have been identified in this section: i) knowledge and skills, and ii) professional development. These could be utilised to enhance the participation of stakeholders in contributing to and executing effective strategies in an effectual, enthusiastic and motivated manner.
- Discussions on financial, social and spiritual capital follow. They were presented in this order for no particular reason of importance. The finance lens assisted with an understanding of the notion of a self-managing school, enabling me to generate deeper insights into the claims related to finance in Chapter One of the study. Financial capital

in this study is used in a broader sense than money, to include materials and time management.

- Thereafter I explore elements of social capital, such as partnerships, teamwork and networking and consider their value in the practice of a self-managing school.
- To have embarked on this study without knowledge of the spiritual capital, would have left the reader with a flawed conceptual understanding of a self-managing school. Spiritual capital is pregnant with possibilities, subsequently the next section attempts to form a framework for understanding spirituality as one of the pillars of a self-managing school. I draw attention to what is meant by spirituality and issues that relate to it. Emphasis on human values opens the flow of discussion on spiritual capital, followed by building a spiritual culture.
- The complexity of these various forms of capital has heightened the need for effective leadership as a vital component of successful organisations (Brundrett, Fitzgerald & Sommfeldt, 2006). The second theory explores the notion of a self-managing school through the lens of distributed leadership, which encourages the hallmarks of self-managing, such as active participation, articulation of “multiple” voice, and distributed leadership responsibilities and accountability.

3.2. Exploring the Theory of Capital

In a commercial or business context, capital refers to assets which are used to fund a business, by profitable operation of its activities (Becker, 1976). For example, it is the money that a business spends to hire employees, pay rent, buy machinery; it is what keeps the core purpose of the business alive and functioning. The same conception applies in a school context; however, capital is not used for the sole purpose of finances or making a profit.

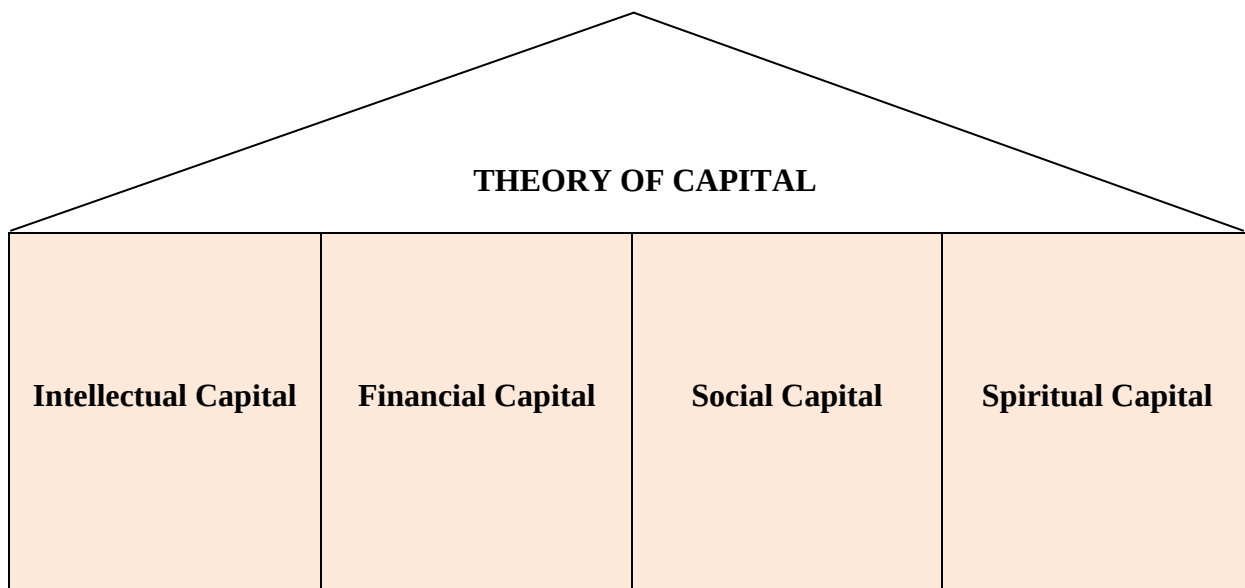
Central to the understanding of this study is that capital is the network of assets, individuals, their capabilities, relationships and motivations that are available for the functionality of any particular school (Stevens, 2000). Bourdieu’s (1986) concept of ‘capital’ has been significant in the understanding of self-managing schools. He maintains that an accumulation of capital can actively be used to an organisation’s advantage, such as the intellectual growth and development of its members. Similarly, Becker (1976, p.15) claims that capital “yields income or other useful outputs over long periods of time”, which might account for the reason why some self-managing schools are perceived as being able to achieve stability and progress. On this basis, capital can

incorporate wider frames of self-managing principles such as planning, leadership, professional development, training, teamwork and spiritual development. The concept of capital is loaded in meaning.

William (1999) highlights how vast and complex is the understanding of the mother issue - capital in a self-managing school. Schools are likely to have different amounts of capital of various forms available to them (Grossman, 2000). It is fair to assume that different forms of capitals will have different values, depending on the school's goals and aspirations. Bisschoff (1997) argues that there is no ranking of the various types of capital in terms of their importance to an organisation such as a self-managing school. This study has not taken the stance that capital must be of any particular kind. However, it is accepting of the assertion that a school's capital needs to be built and drawn upon continuously in a range of ways; with an understanding that building capital in certain settings may be difficult. For example, poor socio-economic school communities can be particularly demanding and this could contribute to additional pressure on the performance of the school. However, as has been noted above (see 3.2. paragraph two), literature does not seem to suggest that better financially capitalized schools are successful in terms of the performance of their learners. But in successful schools, drawing from the overall capital is likely to be relatively high. Moreover in this study capital determines both the scope and nature of a self-managing school. In the competent hands of an organisation that is well managed, it is seen as a source of strategic investment that could be especially influential in moving the school towards self-managing (Caldwell & Spinks, 2008).

What emerges from Woods (2004) is that the more schools engage with these different forms of capital, they may begin to have broader currency which could connect to better learning outcomes and a better chance of becoming more self-sufficient and less dependent on the government. Viewed in this way, several scholars (William, 1999; Kaplan & Norton, 2006; Caldwell & Spinks, 2008) argue that the lack of, or limited use of any one of these elements of capital can be a barrier to investing in better performing schools. One of the core challenges facing self-managing schools is the investment in, and merging of its various types of capital to achieve value added status. Following this relatively brief discussion on capital, I dissect the concept of capital into the following four pillars: financial capital; intellectual capital; social capital; spiritual capital, in the forthcoming sections for a more detailed understanding of each pillar.

Figure 3.1: Created for this study. A Self-managing School: Aligning the Four Forms of Capital



3.2.1. Intellectual Capital

Intellectual capital was first conceptualised as a result of knowledge management and human capital becoming acknowledged as an important element of an organisation (Ulrich, 1998). In the simplest of terms, Ulrich (1998, p. 125) defines intellectual capital as “competence multiplied by commitment”. This implies that intellectual capital is made up from the knowledge, skills and attributes of each individual within the organisation enhanced in value by those persons’ willingness to work with dedication and loyalty. Klein & Prusak (1994, p.67) posit that intellectual capital refers to the “material that has been formalised and captured to produce a higher valued asset in the workplace”. Stewart (1997) a pioneer in the study of intangible assets, credited the term intellectual capital as the collective brainpower of an organisation. Edvinsson & Malone (1997, p.40), on the other hand, have identified intellectual capital as “the possession of knowledge, applied experience, organisational technology, customer relationships and professional skills”. The underlying concept of intellectual capital is that knowledge, skills and abilities increase human productivity, which is necessary to activate what is necessary to achieve the self-managing school’s vision. Intellectual capital enhances stakeholders’ readiness to take “charge” of the school, which in turn “strengthens the school’s capacity for managing change seriously” (Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1994, p.3).

Elements of intellectual capital include knowledge, capacity building of the workforce, working in collaboration and shared learning between the school and the community to enhance the

quality of learning. As Stuart (1998) says, “knowledge is power”. This suggests that the more knowledge, expertise, and partnerships the school has to draw on, the easier it is to make successful choices. York-Barr & Duke (2004) describe how such measures as embracing all members as contributors in decision-making, developing new learning and increasing self-efficacy could increase the growth of self-managing schools in a variety of ways. In addition, Bush (1999) posits that intellectual capital is the core value and the total performance of the organization that engenders empowerment. An expanded conception of a self-managing school was noted in Chapter Two, where the school is seen as a learning organisation. In this regard, it was suggested that knowledge management activities are deployed and expanded with a view to leverage the creativity of all the people in the organization.

Knowledge and skills, as elements of intellectual capital, are discussed next.

3.2.1.1. Knowledge and Skills

This section will focus on the questions: What is knowledge? What is its purpose in a school? How could it be developed within the context of a self-managing school? In reference to, “What is knowledge?” Khavandkar & Khavandkar (2009) contend that knowledge refers to the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. Drucker’s (1995) contribution is that within the education framework of self-managing schools, knowledge includes descriptions, facts, information and skills acquired through experience or education. These suggest that knowledge describes access to as wide a range of information as possible, through as wide a range of media as possible, as well as possessing the ability and the tools to process this information critically and intelligently.

Given the complex terrain of a self-managing school, one person is not expected to lead and manage the school effectively. Structures within the school now have to allow stakeholders the opportunities to share knowledge and test new approaches. Management and leadership in schools should be seen as activities in which all members of the education organisation engage (DoE, 1996). This requires that schools should continuously nurture a culture of new knowledge. In this regard Fullan (1993) notes the importance of knowledge for self-managing schools, because it necessitates learning and improving internal conditions for progress with performance. This promotes intellectual leadership, through staff development, collaborative planning, collaborative decision making and ongoing reflection as a promising construct for sustainable development in a school.

Hatcher (2005), drew on an extensive review of literature and a synthesis of findings in more than half a million studies and reached a conclusion, that schools should focus on the greatest source of variance that can make the difference - *the people*. I use Finland as an exemplar to highlight the quality of its educators. Finnish educators are highly valued, and well paid professionals, who are expected to have advanced levels (master's degree) of pedagogical expertise in order to achieve success in schools (Harris, 2004). This cited as one of several factors accounting for the country's success. These research findings and the example of Finland are appealing in that they confirm the importance of building and sustaining the intellectual capital of a school; as much of the work in school is led and driven by the professionals in the school, namely the SMT and educators. It would theoretically follow that if self-managing schools continue to move in the direction of training their people, it will become possible to create, develop and draw from an intellectual capital environment. Organisations that continue to invest in its intellectual capital, "will be optimised to have powerful positive effects" (Cited in Rowe, 2004, p12–13). However, knowledge needs to be constantly re-activated to make the school more successful (Edvinsson & Malone, 1997). The extent to which the school is able to exercise and manage its intellectual capital, will affect the extent to which the SMT and educators position themselves in their role, and how the school is positioned as a self-managing school. With time, such a culture can produce confident, effective, inquiring and empowered stakeholders, as by enriching the individuals, so too is the community enriched. This supports and illustrates the Latin maxim *scientia potentia est* (sometimes written as *scientia est potentia*) to mean "knowledge is power" (Francis Bacon).

Given that traditional schools were premised on the narrow restrictions of a job description, describing teaching within the confines of the classroom, it makes sense to suggest that self-managing schools require more knowledge and skills than the earlier more conventional models (Fullan, 1993; Waghid, 2002). Self-managing schools are characterised by stakeholders becoming more involved, more participative, competitive, flexible and innovative in leading and managing the school. To lend weight to this argument Bruyn, Erasmus, Janson, Mentz, Steyn & Theron (2002) state that the main driving force for schools in South Africa, is to build the capacity of its people with knowledge and skills so that they can learn their way out of problems, or respond quickly and flexibly to opportunities or recessions as they arise, instead of continuously seeking guidance from a central source. The consequence of this would be that initial teacher preparation and occasional professional development opportunities would be insufficient for a self managing school organization to function effectively. An underlying

notion for this new vogue of schooling proposed by Edvinsson & Malone (1997) requires the preparation of a new generation of highly-talented professionals at the forefront of knowledge, with modern skills, knowledge, expertise and tools. Thus in order to understand what constitutes a self-managing school, the study investigates how professionals in the school keep abreast of new knowledge and skills, as this would be an enabling factor in the development of the school towards self-managing.

In South Africa, as noted in Chapter One, under-performance in schools is a widely acknowledged problem (Department of Basic Education, 2011b). One of the reasons is believed to be insufficiently trained staff members. There are some schools that are continuously managing their learning, but too few schools in South Africa have developed a systemic approach beyond the selection of qualified teachers (NAPTOSA KZN, 2010). The reality is that a large number of educators did not receive proper teacher training. From my experience, many schools employ Governing Body paid educators, and their basic qualifications are matched with their basic salaries. Many educators attend occasional in-service training, or are exposed to the cascading model of receiving information. This does not constitute the kind of knowledge that is required for success in self-managing schools. Success in developing self-managing schools requires that schools should move towards learning, enriched schools (Rosenholtz, 1989). This can be achieved by schools investing more on the development of their intellectual capital by means of skills building, professional development workshops, reading and discussing educational journals, training courses and the up-dating of vocational qualification. Thus the study aligns with the view that self-managing schools would need to become learning organisations, in order to deliver value by delivering quality service.

Jansen (2001) argues that the lack of knowledge or the mismanagement thereof, usually explains the incapacity of a school to translate vision into reality. Knowledge management refers to an understanding of the organisational information flow, which often relates to personal and contextual information, and the implementation of these for the benefit of the organisation's practices (Brown, Halsey, Lauder & Stuart Wells, 1997). Hill & Bonan (1991), however, argue that knowledge management is more than managing information flow. They maintain that it rests on two foundations: i) it points to social and cultural changes in the organisation which make explicit use of key aspects of its knowledge base; and ii), it involves the application of peoples' competencies, skills, talents, thoughts, ideas, intuitions, commitments, motivations, and imaginations for improvement and development. Organizations which understand the

importance of knowledge management have a vision to lift its people out of a “dependency culture” (Berkhout & Berkhout, 1992). This means that stakeholders should be more prepared to take on their rightful roles in the school. But South Africa has a long distance to cover before becoming a country with a real and powerful knowledge economy (Davies, 1997).

Caldwell & Spinks (2008) argue that the notion of ‘dialogic space’ is a useful tool for schools to improve their knowledge base. Such a culture of dialogue and debate would be absent or discouraged in schools where principals perceive a difference of opinion as undermining their authority. The challenge for many schools, therefore, would be to open up channels of dialogue between SMT members, parents and educators in such a way that mutual respect develops between them, with a realization that each has something to offer. The culture that this requires for the development of self-managing schools demands specialised knowledge that would enable the effective mobilisation of people in nurturing communication and participation in the school (Johnson & Pajares, 1996). However without the necessary knowledge, it would be impossible to participate effectively in debates regarding decisions for the school. This is supported by the view that knowledge provides a practical framework for instilling and reinforcing a culture of participation in the leadership and management of the school. Developing this kind of capital therefore requires careful planning and nurturing (Werner, 2003).

The next section discusses professional development for self-managing schools, as one of the ways to maximize stakeholders’ knowledge and skills.

3.2.1.2. Professional Development

Professional development is a broad term that refers to formal and informal types of education, undertaken for personal and group development, and individual career advancement (Wylie, 1997). Professional development encompasses facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conferences and informal learning opportunities situated in practice (Speck & Knipe, 2005). Professional development may also occur on the job to develop or enhance curriculum skills, leadership skills, as well as task skills (Jasper 2006), and could include:

- *Consultation* - to assist an individual or a group of individuals to clarify and address immediate concerns by following a systematic problem-solving process.

- *Coaching* - to enhance a person's competencies in a specific skill area by providing a process of observation, reflection, and action.
- *Communities of Practice* - to improve professional practice by engaging in shared inquiry and learning with people who have a common goal.
- *Lesson Study* - to solve practical dilemmas related to intervention or instruction through participation with other professionals in systematically examining practice.
- *Mentoring* - to promote an individual's awareness and refinement of his or her own professional development by providing and recommending structured opportunities for reflection and observation.
- *Reflective Supervision* - to support, develop, and ultimately evaluate the performance of employees through a process of inquiry that encourages their understanding and articulation of the rationale for their own practices.
- *Technical Assistance* - to assist individuals and their organization to improve by offering resources and information, supporting networking and change efforts.
- Professional development may also occur *on the job to develop* or enhance curriculum skills, leadership skills, as well as task skills.

The above factors of professional development when combined generate collaborative professional development that leads to purpose driven learning.

Professional development is critical to the advancement of learning and service delivery in certain specialized fields. For example, in the United States, in the state of Arkansas, educators are required to be involved in 60 hours of professional development activities yearly (Johnson & Pajares, 1996). In addition, an engineer may have to undergo career development to stay abreast of new technology and practices. Similarly in South Africa, all educators who are registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) are required to earn professional development points by attaining a prescribed number of professional development credits in order to maintain their professional standing (DoE, 2002b). Educators meeting this legislative requirement could be seen to have a traverse positive influence across the school system, structure and curriculum delivery, hence providing positive effect on the development of schools.

This study associates staff development initiatives with self-managing school issues, where the aims of professional development would be linked to whole school development. However, what

seems to occur in South African schools is that development of human resources is targeted for improvement in the classrooms rather than influence whole school development (Glazer & Hannafin, 2006). For example, The Department of Education has instituted staff development programmes such as the current training of educators for the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). One of the problems associated with the staff development programmes stems from their generic nature, namely a one-size fits all approach, which does not take the needs of the particular school into consideration and where workshops have been associated with learning that is not “individualized and is weakly connected to the priorities of the school” (O'Donoghue & Clarke, 2010, p.87). In addition these specialised development programmes are externally organised, are once-off workshops, and are without any follow-up support. This indicates a need for an effective staff development culture to emerge in schools, which promotes both individual as well as group professional development needs. This process requires much more intensive and effective skilled learning than has traditionally been available.

Each school has varying requirements for professional development, it is therefore important that development of staff development programmes should adapt to the context, and suit the individual needs of the school (Poskitt, 2005). Given that skills and strategies simply do not transfer well when they are not learned in situated contexts and the potential weaknesses associated with general professional development programmes, the key to the way forward would remain with each school providing their own human resource learning development programme in addition to any departmental support. The aim would be to ensure that all SMT members and educators have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to meet the diverse learning needs of the organisation, in order to maintain and improve professional competence. This further suggests the need for people to grow in a supportive environment for the development of the school, failing which it is likely that professional development could remain at a personal level and be restricted to individual classrooms. Therefore the implementation of new learning needs to occur at individual as well as a whole school initiative. The claims by Poskitt (2005) informed my semi-structured interview schedules as I sought to explore the features of a self-managing school and the extent to which professional development contributes to the growth of the school.

In this study I worked from the premise that at the heart of a self-managing school is the need to set goals that improve the teaching and learning culture. However, whilst organisational development initiatives are linked to issues of teaching and learning, equally important is the

focus on promoting the school to self-manage, which extends beyond individual classrooms. Hence improving the content of professional development learning is a crucial step in transforming schools towards self-managing. It involves an inclusive approach that integrates self-managing issues with teaching and learning issues. In this way the school workforce development initiatives and support processes would consciously address issues such as collaborative working, participative management, redistribution of power and leadership. To this end, Wylie (1997) argues that it is critical for veteran SMT members and educators to have ongoing and regular opportunities to learn from each other; keep members up-to-date on new research on how children learn, how the school can develop, emerging technology tools for the classroom, new curriculum resources, and much more. An additional benefit of proficiency development is that it gives educators and SMT members a chance to work closely with, and to network with stakeholders from other schools.

Professional development learning in schools needs to be organised regularly so that all SMT members and educators could engage in these activities (Elmore, 2002). To accomplish this, schools need to make sure that professional development is explicitly designed, where the SMT and educators are accorded the opportunity, the resources and the time to participate and practise new knowledge in their schools (Adler, 2002). In South Africa, this reform could fail in most schools in the face of resistance to capture the time for professional learning for all SMT members and educators and a belief in the ‘cascade’ method of professional development learning. In some schools there exists a belief that it is the sole job of educators to be in the classroom and deliver, and that it is Grade Leaders or the HoDs who may be permitted to go to workshops, only to cascade the information to the rest of the staff upon returning. The “cascade model” of professional development is a model which dominated educator competence development in South Africa during the last decade. According to Jansen (2002) a use of the cascade method is not always effective as much information could be lost along the way. This practice is against the principles of self-managing which calls for the participation of all stakeholders in professional development and contribution to the development of the school.

Professional development initiatives would best be promoted at school level where cognizance is taken of the school goals and the needs of individuals in that school (Ash & Persall, 2000). They assert further that organisational development is most effective when learning is ongoing, where the school assesses needs and educators identify areas for their own learning. From this we learn that strategies to address professional development are not enough as educators must become

learners, be knowledgeable and know enough in order to make changes at their school. If this is the case, then it follows that continuing professional development of SMT and educators is a crucial element of self-managing schools.

Harris & Muijs (2005, p.120) posit that a cultural norm of professional development needs to be “facilitated and ongoing” suggesting that for self-managing schools to develop, certain structural and cultural conditions would become necessary. Such change calls for strong leadership in the school. Leaders will need to recognize the value of high-quality knowledge and skills development at school level, encouraging and facilitating educator participation in professional development. Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001) confirm that in so doing, self-managing schools must be understood as a shared activity, with stakeholders engaging in decisions together so that there are clear expectations for what people should know and be able to do to develop the school and their learners. This requires building a culture of communication and collaboration where educators and SMT grapple with the new learning, share ideas and critically reflect on the process with a view to ongoing improvement. The interconnectedness between the various forms of professional development proceeding over time, need to be integrated within the school context, and focused on helping stakeholders not just to acquire new behaviours but change assumptions and ways of thinking. New practices would come about as these stakeholders reflect on, and systematically test, what works in their own context (Richardson & Anders, 1994).

It is within a learning environment that professional development can flourish and self-managing schools can grow (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). This study explores the view that in this country professional development holds the key for self-managing schools, in that it opens up a variety of possibilities for educators and the members of the SMT to participate in different activities in the school. However such development would need to be of the kind that would focus on broader organisational goals to target not only the individual educator, but the school as well (Wenger, 1998). Although intellectual capital is very important when discussing self-managing schools, it alone cannot support the success of a school. In this regard, my discussion next turns to another pillar of my theoretical framework, which is financial capital.

3.2.2. Financial Capital

Bisschoff and Mestry (2005) identify finance in a school context to include a combination of material and non-material resources, for the performance of tasks which are aimed at achieving

effective education. I position myself alongside those researchers, for example Davidoff and Lazarus (1997); Bisschoff & Mestry (2005) and Anderson, Briggs & Burton (2001), who contend that finance is an essential requirement –*sine qua non*– in every organisation, since money is needed for the organisation to function. In the school context such needs include –*inter alia* - : payments to staff, for use of water, electricity, electronic communication, teaching aids, professional development, knowledge and skills development. Such commodities are essential to the functional strength of the school, without which it may make the goals of a self-managing school difficult and unrealistic to attain. Given the current ability of South African schools to self-manage and the heightened need for preparation, planning, organising, evaluating and controlling the school's financial operations, and the need to manage the multiple layers of internal demands, this section on financial capital is subdivided into the following three themes: money, materials and time management.

3.2.2.1. Money

The South African Schools Act embodies a shift from “supply driven service delivery in schools, to a more demand driven mode where communities have a greater say in how they would like service delivery to be structured in their school” (SA Report to Minister 2003, p.39). Schools receive funding from the government according to a formula based on learner numbers, and the area in which the school is situated (schools in low economic areas will receive more funding). Schools granted Section 21 status is given financial autonomy, in terms of maintaining and improving the school building, property and other resources (Department of Education and Culture, 2002b). The funding provided by the government only makes up a small slice of any school's budget and is therefore inadequate in sustaining operational costs, not to mention the development needs of the school. Hence, self-managing schools have to establish how best to plan and invest in new ways of procuring funds so that they can supplement the state's contribution of finances to the school. This suggests that there is a call for schools to increase their tempo of fund raising to maximize their funds.

In the traditional approach to schools, fund-raising, budgeting for school fees and donations were infrequent events, and the utilisation or administering of funds was considered outside the purview of the financial function of the school. Schools were also not involved in competition with other schools for more learners, to gain an increase in government funding as a result of greater numbers. According to SASA, stakeholders are now responsible for shaping the financial fortunes of the school. This has a ripple effect on all the activities of the school. Failure to

effectively manage funds may result in schools struggling, or even sinking (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). However, heeding the warnings of Ladd (1996), the raising of money, alone, is dealing with just one part of the challenge of financial management. Its utilisation to its utmost advantage is as important. This endorses the importance of strong financial management, professional leadership and effective supervision of resources for the development of a self-managing school.

The management of school finances is not an easy task. Some schools are in more challenging circumstances than others. Thousands of South African schools, especially those in the rural areas still do not have access to basic necessities, such as power, water, telecommunications or sanitation (Smyth & van der Vegt, 1993). Government classification of schools into quintiles according to the levels of wealth or poverty in their communities also bears testimony to the implications of a supply of financial capital. Conditions in schools are therefore not always conducive to developing into authentic self-managing schools. Raudenbush (2005) claims that, finance has an indirect influence on teaching and learning, for example, by providing resources, professional development and improving teacher learner ratio. However, empirical research in countries such as United States indicate that such inputs have only a marginal impact on improving the quality of classroom learning (Raudenbush, 2005). Thus simply investing in new resources does not mean that self-managing schools will progress.

This thesis argues that merely according Section 21 status to schools does not mean that the schools have capacity to manage all financial business decisions. Money by itself does not develop a self-managing school. NAPTOSA (2010) dispels the notion that an abundance of money makes for quality self-managing schools; as there is evidence that there are numerous wealthy schools that are plagued by bullies, disharmony in the staffroom and parent communities that are in total conflict with the school. Similarly, studies by Hanushek (2004) in Melbourne, found, with few exceptions, that increasing funding for schools had little impact on educational outcomes over many decades. The argument therefore is that it is likely that schools that are financially sound may have a head start chance of developing towards self-managing. However, even where there is sufficient money in a school, if its people do not offer the right vision and do not have the capacity to manage funds competently, the school will not be classified as an effective school (Thurlow, 2003).

It is clear that financial management is the key to shaping a self-managing school. This requires ongoing special knowledge and skills. It involves a link amongst leadership, the knowledge, attributes and skills required to lead, and an ability to effectively manage the school finances (Campher, du Preez, Grobler & Looock, 2003), yet woefully lacking in many South African schools. In this regard, Kumar & Ghosh (1991) argue that in an industry there are various people employed with specific financial skills, for example, auditing or marketing; but in the school context educators are employed to teach. Of particular concern is that there are few people in the organisation who have professional skills, experience and training in financial management. In fact very few SMT members have management experience and expertise in all areas of self-managing. It becomes clear that management of funds is not a simple task for schools, but involves an integration of skills and knowledge derived from diverse fields (Teichler, 1998). The ability of the school to exercise flexibility, and draw from people's expertise, both internally and externally, is what heralds the development of a self-managing school. Creating such levels of participation and empowerment, calls for the adoption of a programme of distributed leadership.

Financial management may be one area where work could be distributed from the principal to individuals or groups because of their skills, knowledge and personal attributes. Gunter (2005) refers to this as "authorised" distributed leadership. This may explain why some schools have more coinage than others, in terms of the way they take appropriate measures of accountability in managing their funds, effectively distributing tasks and relating their finances to the overall goals of the schools. A self-managing school is more likely to manifest in organisations where school autonomy is intricately linked with bottom-up approaches, where the relations are unstructured and fluid. In this regard, du Preez (2002) stresses that deliberate measures must be made to manage the school money as this does not happen by chance. Hyman (2005, p. 390) provided a powerful perspective on developments in Britain. He maintained that "for lasting change to occur in public services, schools must take the lead to let go of the dependency culture, to empower the frontline and bring on board the professionals".

This study investigates the need for a radical re-conceptualization of self-managing schools in the South African context, where financial capital, as indicated by Caldwell & Spinks (2005) can be viewed as one of the important characteristics necessary to create a self-managing school. A school desires funds to enable it to meet expectations, and thus requires that parents become involved in supporting and building financial capital (Bisschoff, 1997). With heightened expectations for the success for all schools, potential money management issues are vital. The

issue of finance has multiple layers of hidden challenges for schools, which are demanding on the stakeholders. An inability on the part of the relevant stakeholders to understand and undertake financial and decision-making roles effectively, without assistance, may hinder the development of the school. However, financial issues are just one piece of the total puzzle of understanding a self-managing school.

‘Material’ as a sub-theme of finance is the next focus of discussion.

3.2.2.2. Materials

Schools need a combination of human and material resources, made possible through the availability of finance, to effectively realise their objectives. Materials are resources that are required to deliver educational services such as stock, classrooms, equipment, textbooks, computers and laboratory equipment, along with technical support. Self-managing schools have autonomy over the acquisition and management of tangible materials such as facilities, supplies and equipment that enable the school to develop its own environment for learning (Drury, 1999).

A self-managing school is one that should be concerned with the materials and equipment that they need, which would be necessary for strengthening the core task of teaching and learning, and for creating a resource rich environment within which learning can take place (Anderson, 2000). However, it is abundantly clear that a large majority of South African schools are struggling as a consequence of material shortages to varying degrees, more so in poverty stricken societies. The review of relevant literature shows that lack of material resources could hamper successful implementation of self-managing schools; for example shortages of material for education, lack of qualified teachers and a host of other problems (Caldwell, 2008). These are the realities that challenge many schools on a daily basis. Yet, in this era of self-management, schools are expected to “take charge”, develop ownership of their schools, set their own direction and design and implement policies to fit their organisational vision. Such points present an oversimplified picture of a self-managing school. However, in spite of the most disenabling realities, many educators have managed to achieve remarkable successes by being innovative with almost no resources (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997). Materials as a resource have a role in promoting self-managing schools; however the importance of materials on their own may be less than other forms of support that may be required.

Davidoff & Lazarus (1997) are adamant that the best material in the school may go awry if they are not properly allocated and managed, so as to enable good teaching and learning to take place. Self-managing schools imply a delegated responsibility for financial and resource management. According to Levacic (1993, pp. 11-13) the process of resource management in schools can be conceptualised as a “cycle”. He identifies four distinct elements that collectively form the resource management cycle: i) obtaining resources; ii) allocating resources, iii) using resources; iv) evaluation and review. In reality this process is not circular, but interconnected to move the school towards greater clarity, coherence and effectiveness.

It may be safe to assume that the management of material resources and strategies need to be integrated into any existing instructional policies and strategies for the improvement of schooling. Harris & Lambert (2003) explain that this process does not occur naturally. Barth's (1990) perspective is that learning from experience, reflecting on actions, understanding what materials work and which do not, are all elements of effective school management. These are linked to issues of "empowering the school staff by providing them the authority, flexibility, and materials to solve the educational problems particular to their schools" (David, 1989, p. 52). As mentioned earlier, the design of any school initiative should include time allocated for the SMT and educators to participate in such activities.

Emerging from resource theory is the notion that individual schools could experience difficulties in meeting the needs of learners in the complex environment of self-management without help from other sources (O'Neill, 1994). Assistance could come in the form of gifts, voluntary contributions, support and sponsorships. Therefore, schools will need to play a proactive role in linking up with other organisations, leading to the self-managing schools evolving into an open system. An open system can be viewed in terms of the resources it receives from or shares with its community, as opposed to a closed system which has rigid boundaries between the external environment and itself. Harris (2003) says that with material resources flowing in both directions, a two-way benefit is established for the school. This equates a self-managing school to a living system, where different parts or elements of that system are interdependent. If one part is not working well, for example if the human resource element is not equipped to analyse the resource budgets and financial statements, this will affect the entire system (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997). This suggests that factors that shape a self-managing school do not occur in a piecemeal way, but are linked to all aspects and touch every aspect of school life.

I turn my attention next to time management, which relates to all other elements of capital.

3.2.2.3. Time Management

Time management in the school context is conceptualised as a set of principles, practices, skills, tools, and systems working together to help obtain more value out of time with the aim of improving the quality of the school (Farrar 2006). Drawing from Benjamin Franklin (1748), who argued that "*time is money*", I elected to discuss time under the theory of financial capital. By means of a case study Benjamin Franklin has demonstrated the use of integrated approaches to time and finance. His argument is that in work related situations time wasted is actually money wasted. Schools have to assure the optimal use of its time and be accountable for the way it is used (Anderson, 2000). In this regard it has become crucial for self-managing schools to structure their time, and make decisions to use their time, like money, more effectively. Time requires explicit budgeting and management. Careful allocations with timetabling, specific time slots for the numerous different activities and optimum use of facilities and classrooms, enables the generation of more effective work and productivity fundamental to a self-managing school (Hoadley, 2003). Said differently successful accomplishments are likely to occur when certain structural and cultural conditions are put in place.

Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001) noted that the use of time needs to be designed to increase the potential for the implementation of new strategies. This involves planning specifically around school goals, by breaking large goals into daily or weekly priorities. More crucially, it is linked with the arts of arranging, organizing, goal setting, policy making, planning, budgeting, evaluation and complying with due dates, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively. A time schedule would, for example, hold all the pieces of the organisation together (Harris & Muijs, 2005). This requires the SMT to support educators' efforts by providing the time and resources for their continuing development (Muijs & Harris, 2003). Closely connected to scheduling a range of activities is time management that will promote the organisation to be more organized and more productive. If productivity and quality are the aims of a self-managing school, then time management needs to be prioritised. Without addressing issues of time, the school day may be spent in a frenzy of activities, with not much accomplished. Caldwell & Spinks (2005) maintain that effective time management would help schools feel more in control of their school organisation, which could help relieve stress, and actually save time in the long run. However, time management is not just about noting appointments on the school year plan, although this is an important component. Rather, it is a detailed account of what needs to be done, who is responsible and when it needs to be done. It is a method of needs analysis, prioritising and organizing each day so that nothing important is

forgotten (DoE, 2006). This involves a careful time “budget” programme that should involve the entire staff supporting, planning and participating in what it is they want for the development of the school.

Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001) call for schools to become professional organisations where they choose to focus and plan their time doing a few vital projects that will really make a difference to the development of the school, rather than spending all their time doing many trivial things that just keep people busy. Harris & Lambert (2003) maintain that the school should create the time and environment in which all people can spend time doing the things that they enjoy and thereby reach their full potential. This suggests that time management requires an approach where self-managing schools must be oriented towards flexibility and performance. Using multiple sources of guidance such as delegating tasks, working in teams and taking advantage of outside support, resources can save the organisation time and energy (Ash & Persall, 2000). This is characteristic of a self-managing school, where individuals or teams pool their expertise (Bennet, Harvey, Wise & Woods, 2003). Hence, one of the most enduring qualities of the capital theory relevant to self-managing schools is that time, when used in more effective ways by people at a grassroots level, can make the biggest difference to learning outcomes in terms of activities that fit in with their needs, as compared to initiatives imposed by the central office. In this way schools would have a better chance of achieving their goals.

This theoretical overview suggests that effective time management assumes a place of cardinal importance in South African schools. It sets direction and guides the school in achieving its core functions. The theory proposes that it is those schools that are able to implement time management strategies successfully, are able to control their workload, rather than spend each day in a frenzy of challenges, reacting to crisis after crisis. Where time is planned and managed well, stress could decline and productivity of the organisation can soar. Time management is therefore deemed a necessity in the development towards self-managing schools as it determines the scope of projects and alerts people when a task is to be done. It de-emphasizes the importance of squeezing every minute of an individual’s time. Although schools have made progress at varying levels regarding time management, it seems that they still have a long way to go with regard to time as a variable in school effectiveness, productivity (achieving of objectives) and efficiency. The study explored these issues.

Building on the discussion of intellectual and financial capital, the next section explores issues of Social Capital theory.

3.2.3. Social Capital

Keeping in mind that schools are by nature social entities, I begin with Hanifan's (1920) definition that the notion of social capital is concerned with explaining a wide variety of social relationships between members of the organisation, both internal and external. Caldwell (2008) affirms social relationships in the school context as being the relationship of formal and informal partnerships, teamwork and networking with the parents, community, other schools, business and industry. He further adds that this includes all individuals, agencies, organizations and institutions that have the potential to support and, where appropriate, be supported by the school. Social capital, then, suggests the cultivation of interconnectedness of people through sharing and social interaction among people who interact continuously with each other, towards achieving certain common goals (Coleman, 1988). Similarly, Fukuyama (1995, p.10) defined social capital, as it relates to schools, as: “the ability of local councils, schools and adult education providers, to work together for the common purpose of providing many forms of education to the community”.

These definitions emphasise that self-managing schools are social structures that do not function in isolation, but are constantly influenced by the people within and out of the organisation. “Self”, as in self-managing schools seems to imply that the practice starts from “the self”, that is, within the school. According to Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) “beginning from within”, means that the school uses the skills and resources available within the school first. This idea is also supported by Khanare (2009) who believes that whilst self-managing schools call for internal and external partners to network, to work together as sources of support for the school, schools should not become totally dependent on outside communities. This suggests that the school should firstly utilize the assets within the organisation and thereafter empower its people. These are vital characteristics that have a direct affect on moving the school towards self-managing.

Putnam (2000) points to some of the benefits when work is conducted from within the school in ways that are consistent with their own aspirations: i) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; ii) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding; iii) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed; and iv) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back to attain success. These claims underpin a number of characteristics of a self-managing school, such as: school improvement, a focus on enhancing the quality of learning, the school vision embracing all members and learners, and schools

developing structures that address external pressures for change; while acknowledging that important opportunities to internal capacity exist.

Whilst I have noted, that self-managing schools should start by using assets within the school first, I have also considered the views of Fullan (1992) who states that to establish social capital in schools, there needs to be a plan in place making provisions for the participation and contribution of stakeholders, with the release of time and some resources. Schools are therefore challenged to manage time, plan, implement, support, negotiate and engage with many partnerships, so that they may be able to secure higher levels of success. Some practices that highlight the drive for improvement of the school's social capital include the infusion of distributed leadership, collaborative planning and school wide co-ordination of activities (Hopkins, *et al.*, 1998), so that schools can develop more widely.

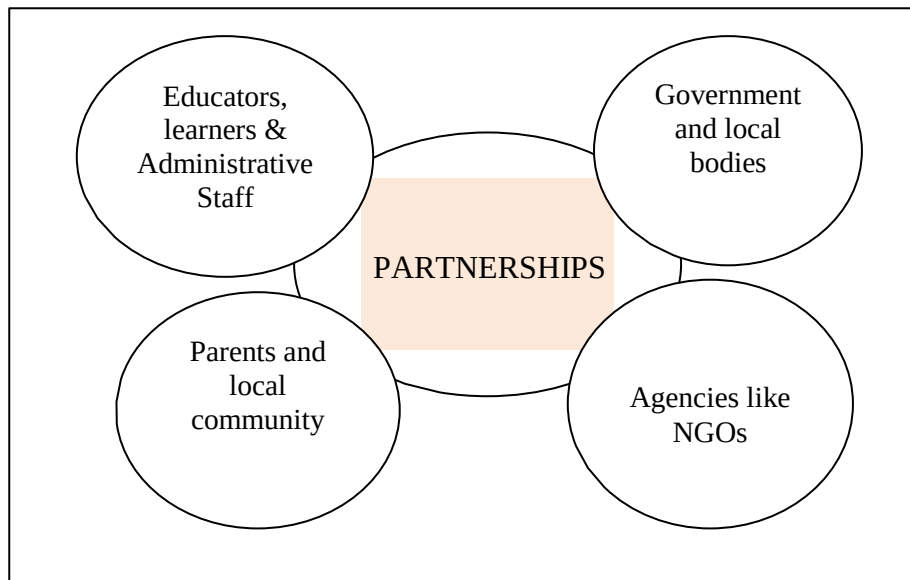
Successful self-managing schools have a tendency to do well if there is an apparent pool of social capital, with good leadership (Harris & Lambert, 2003), however, school leadership shortages in many countries have been well documented in literature. Coleman's (1988) contention is that openness and critical engagement amongst participants, which encourage horizontal approaches to leadership, seem to be more consistent with the development of self-managing schools. However, developing a self-managing school seems to remain a socially complex challenge for schools in South Africa. One of the reasons could be that these schools continue to retain their rigid bureaucratic structures, and that principals perpetuate the status quo by controlling the school in autocratic ways (Moloi, 2002). Many South African schools remain unresponsive to the call for self-managing as they are characterised by the absence of dialogue and social participation, which can be problematic for school development. School leaders, who dominate stakeholders and deny them their right to speak, could also hinder their participation and involvement in the school (Grant & Jugmohan, 2008). This study notes that the link between social capital and achievement is particularly strong in schools that have strong community networks, where active engagement of stakeholders is necessitated.

Caldwell (2008) calls for strong leadership of schools, which demonstrates knowledge and skills, and a commitment to building learning, while Field (2003) pleads eloquently for social networks. Linking these two aspects, self-managing schools would be conceptualised as places of shared leadership, where people forge relationships, interact, trust and support each other,

share knowledge and pool resources (Field, 2003; Malloch, 2003). This further suggests that social capital is multifaceted. As each capital is multi-layered, it seems that the merging of school leadership with the various elements of capital is the glue that holds the school together.

3.2.3.1. Partnership and Networking

Figure 3.2: Created for this study - Partnerships in Education



From a business perspective, partnership can be defined as a contractual relationship between two or more people, characterised by shared goals (Du Toit, Erasmus & Strydom, 2010). Naidu, *et al.* (2008), define partnership between the school and its stakeholders as reciprocal, as the provision of mutual services. Bray's (1999) views on partnership are:

When we speak of an expanded vision and a renewed commitment, partnerships are at the heart of it (p.1)..... "Education is, and must be, a societal responsibility, encompassing governments, families, communities and non-governmental organizations alike; it requires the commitment and participation of all, in a grand alliance that transcends diverse opinions and political positions (p.8).

These definitions highlight the many facets of social capital that need to be focused upon, such as the interrelationships within the school. In the context of this study, partnership will be subdivided into two sub-themes. Firstly, there is the internal partnership which refers to the relationship between staff members (educators and non-educators), learners, parents, SGB and

the parent community. The second sub-theme refers to the external partnerships, which include the extended community, different bodies that have an interest in what the school is doing, regardless of their geographic locations, such as religious based organisations, political organisations, research based organisations, local profit and non-profit organisations and government agencies (Sanders, 2006). The concept of partnerships, therefore, is rooted in an understanding of interdependence among different people within the organisation and outside the organisation. This concept seems germane to understanding the factors that shape a self-managing school.

In discussing internal partnerships, I draw from Putnam (2000) who argues that in every organisation there are skilled and knowledgeable people. But these isolated individuals do not on their own, necessarily, make the school rich in social capital or intellectual capital. Effective schools use participatory methods to identify possible partners in as many activities as possible. In this connection, Myende (2011) maintains that schools should firstly find out what local people can do within the school before assistance is sought outside the school. Basically this suggests that assets are available in the school and that there is a need for schools to access the reservoir of strength of the people within the school and the community. According to Kretzmann & McKnight (1993), using people in the organisation and community appropriately, allows them to identify their strengths and build within their own field. Such elements, it can be argued, require strong and adequate communication going back and forth between members, so that all relevant parties have an understanding of what they should be doing. These factors underpin important attributes of a self-managing school, which enable stakeholders to solve their own problems.

Just as it is necessary for schools to engage with internal partners, schools need to invite and network with external partners as well. Schools may not have within them all the necessary resources to meet organisational demands. In this regard, Sanders (2006) pointed out that the need for extra resources is one of the crucial determinants for networking. This view is encapsulated in a large scale study conducted by the Human Social Research Council for Nelson Mandela Foundation in 2005, where the findings revealed that businesses can assist schools with resources and in turn depend on schools for the production of a skilled workforce. The purpose of networking with businesses may be directed towards the economic and social actions of the school and not directly to academic effectiveness. Increased growth can be sustained in all forms of capital: intellectual, social, financial and spiritual capital, by drawing on the expertise, skills

and knowledge of people outside the organisation (Sanders, 2007). To lend weight to this argument, Section 36 of the SASA (1996), states that the school governing body must take all reasonable measures to supplement the resources supplied by the state in order to improve the quality of education provided. A detailed understanding of the importance of interrelationships between stakeholders is an area with which all schools need to be familiar.

A case study conducted by Sanders & Lewis (2005) in USA, reflected that the primary goal of networking with different organisations and partners was to improve learner performance and school success. The findings were that through networking with businesses, organisations and communities they strengthened the school programmes, without sacrificing academic time and this in turn strengthened the school's capitals (Bojuwoye, 2009). Literature carries examples of schools networking with State departments to deal with some of the challenges experienced. For example, the South African Police Services department has assisted many schools in their *Safe Schools* programmes, and the Department of Social Development assists with issues of abuse, HIV and AIDS. Although it is clear that different partners can contribute to the success of the school, external assets cannot be utilized if they are not invited as partners (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). There appears to be a strong connection between inviting and influencing people to get involved, and to distribute leadership with the improvement of learner results and the development of the effectiveness of the school as a whole. Neglecting to tap into all these resources may be regarded as a shortfall in the move towards self-managing schools.

In countries like Australia and the United States of America partnerships between schools and external communities has existed from the 1970's (Bosma, Sieving, Ericson, Russ, Cavender & Bonnie, 2010). Thus, schools in South Africa can learn from these countries on how to invite parents, community leaders, government organisations and businesses to forge partnerships with schools. According to Fullan (2007) the concept of leadership is crucial in ensuring strong school partnerships, as real leaders should have the ability to motivate and enthuse others. Considering that working in partnerships, more especially external partnership by schools, appears to be limited in South Africa, this study explores the possibilities of partnership and networking, in understanding the notion of a self-managing school.

This study works from the premise that self-managing schools emerge from organisational needs and not simply individual needs. As the majority of partnership activities in a school involve

working collaboratively, the next section discusses the effectiveness of teamwork in self-managing schools.

3.2.3.2. Teamwork

A suitable definition that encapsulates the meaning of a ‘team’ is provided by Everard & Morris (1996) who see a team as a group of people or a number of partners who come together, to work co-operatively on a common task and a common purpose. According to Coleman and Bush (1994) team-work is much more than the meeting of the members. Team members need to have a clear sense of purpose about their work, actively co-operate in decisions affecting the team and be able to achieve agreed plans that is connected to the school goals. Productivity and morale are more likely to positively affect the growth of the school, when people are committed to the decisions and goals of the team.

Each member of a team possesses different areas of expertise, skill, personalities and abilities that complement one another. These qualities brought together offer greater opportunities for the generation of creative ideas and solutions to problems. Teamwork is grounded on the understanding that each member possesses something to contribute towards the achievement of the goal. The importance of stakeholders’ involvement and participative management in schools has increased the trend towards more teamwork (Steyn, 1996). According to Katzenbach & Smith (1994, p1), “it is obvious that teams outperform individuals”. In the same vein, Leithwood (1996) rightly argues that working through teams, which are effectively managed, provides a powerful opportunity to meet some of the challenges which South African schools face, such as turning away from hierarchy and individual autocracy. A team-based approach is surely something that all self-managing schools cannot ignore.

All team members are accountable for maintaining and improving the process for which their team is responsible. In this regard, there are clear arguments by Handy (1993) that teams offer many advantages over the more traditional ways of organising a workforce, as each member in the team contributes skills and tasks that may be widely distributed amongst all team members. Pil & MacDuffie (1996, p. 343) provide two decades of research which provide:

Considerable evidence that workers in self-managing teams enjoy greater autonomy and discretion, and this translates into intrinsic rewards and job satisfaction; teams also outperform traditionally supervised groups in the majority of empirical studies.

Hence the notion of managing schools through teams, equates itself with collegial approaches to decision making, which in turn leads to a sense of ownership and has been recommended as an appropriate way of managing the work of professional staff in educational institutions.

This notion has support in the literature:

"You cannot just wave a magic wand and say that you've got teams. It doesn't happen that way. You have to do everything you can to create as much of a team as possible"
(Wallace & Hall, 1994, p. 43).

Research has further shown that an essential characteristic for the development and success of teamwork is leadership (Gretz, 2003). There are team needs that necessitate a leader's attention and intervention so as to ensure that these needs are continuously met. Similarly the task for which the group has come together spawns a range of task needs that need to be fulfilled; such as the task must be clearly defined; the objectives need to be articulated and accepted; planning and organising for successful completion of the task has to be performed; subsequent activities need to be implemented; conflict to be managed; the performance of the group to be evaluated with feedback and support provided. Ultimately, this implies that effective teams do not develop by accident. It takes time, skills, and knowledge for teams to be successful. This is another area where distributed leadership, based on peoples' skills rather than power and status, may be evident. Distributed leadership requires a willingness by the designated leader to 'stand back' and allow other team members to assume control according to the needs of the situation. The principal cannot be directly involved in all team work therefore there is a greater need leadership to be devolved more widely to different individuals across different teams (Spillane, 2005).

In this way teamwork creates opportunities for different stakeholders to lead in different situations (Steyn, 2002). Hierarchical structures are prevalent in schools in this country; however principals will need to acknowledge the leadership skills of other stakeholders within the hierarchical system of relations for the system of distributed leadership to operate. School hierarchical structures can consequently be altered to become increasing 'more flat' by the use of teamwork. As the school moves in the direction towards self-managing, the leadership base can become more evenly distributed between members of the SMT, educators and other stakeholders (Gunter, 2005). For teamwork to grow certain structural and cultural conditions are necessary. For example, the type of leadership in the school should be based on cooperation at all levels, such as: those within schools, their community, by all parties at national level, and by

international co-operation. Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines (2010) advise that strong leadership of the school should encourage team work and devolve leadership across the teams. Exploring the notion of a self-managing school in the South African context is therefore begging further investigation to gain a better understanding of how issues such as teamwork are practiced in schools.

Although the success of self-managing schools is usually attributed to astute management and leadership in the growth of teamwork, self-managing schools may also benefit from an additional source of inner guidance, creating both tangible and intangible value to the organisation (Robertson, 2005). This study identified one such source as spiritual capital, which incorporates the juxtaposition of personal spirituality and workplace dynamics. The next section covers the theory of Spiritual Capital.

3.2.4. Spiritual Capital

Shields (2005, p. 15) states that:

If we ignore the issues of spirituality, we are abrogating our responsibilities as educational leaders to provide the spiritual care that constitutes one of the essential moral rights of an individual who comes to our public education system.

3.2.4.1. The Phenomenon of Spirituality - What Does This Mean?

The term ‘spirituality’ is derived from the word ‘spirit’ which comes from the Latin word “spiritus”, meaning breath (Tisdell, 2003). This suggests something elusive, yet vital. Literally, spirituality refers to a person’s spiritual life or the lived reality of what is perceived to be spiritual. However spirituality needs further clarification in terms of understanding the fundamental characteristics of what a person’s spiritual life might consist. There are important questions that this sections attempts to explore, namely “how can we make visible or perceive something that is by nature elusive? How does the ‘spirituality’ of its people shape a self-managing school?

Spiritual capital in the context of this study refers to various understandings of spirituality that integrate people’s beliefs, moral-values, attitudes and actions within everyday life. De Souza (2004) believes that spirituality is about enhancing and transforming lives. For the purpose of

this thesis I found Tisdell's (2003, p. 28) approach to the meaning of the phenomenon of spirituality helpful. She emphasizes that spirituality is understood to refer to individual and social behaviour, including beliefs, values and attitudes that are perceived by participants to describe the lived experience of a person's spiritual reality. In relation to education, spirituality and religion are not the same, but for many people they are interrelated. Spirituality is about awareness and honouring wholeness and the interconnectedness of all things. Fundamentally it is about the making of meaning. Spirituality is always present (though often unacknowledged) in the learning environment. It constitutes moving towards greater authenticity, to a more authentic self. Spirituality is about how people construct knowledge through largely unconscious and symbolic processes, often made more concrete in art forms such as music, art, image, symbol, and ritual which are manifested culturally. A perception of spirituality is subjective and is shaped and re-shaped by life experiences, social, cultural, economic, political, educational and religious ideologies and practices. This initial understanding of spiritual capital allowed for a better understanding, and appreciation of other scholars' perspectives on this concept. It has also influenced my research intention to inquire into the lived experience of the phenomenon of spirituality in a self-managing school as the participants perceive it.

Wealthy schools and schools operating in poverty are virtually the same in one crucial aspect - all schools are supposed to run according to basic sets of core values; which is termed "spiritual capital". Spirituality is complex because it can be perceived and experienced in a range of ways - cognitively, intuitively, emotionally, behaviourally, culturally and socially (Groen, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2000). There exists a mistaken belief that spirituality is only to be found in faith based schools. Religious based schools, such as those of the Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths might have an initial advantage, because they teach moral codes. Yet any school, whether or not it has a religious base should be grounded in sound spirituality, as it empowers the individual to cope with and resolve life-world issues, while demonstrating virtuous behaviours such as humility, compassion, gratitude and wisdom (Sergiovanni, 1992).

Bohlin & Ryan (1999) have shown that spiritual assets, often called inner qualities or abilities, are far more powerful and valuable than material assets, which benefit something other than the self. These inherent characteristics of ethical and moral salience, a call or drive to serve, ultimately goes beyond competencies, knowledge and skills. It becomes the soul of the school's currency. It takes the form of the stakeholders being cooperative and sometimes volunteering to

do things that are regarded as important in their school and community, which have a number of benefits for the development of a self-managing school.

The Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education, (1977, p.35) suggests that schools should foster pride in heritage, in the growth of self-identity, and in seeking purpose and meaning in life. Ultimate concerns should be “Who am I? Why am I here? Where have I come from? Where am I going?” The report also explains that schools should be able to incorporate some of this dimension in their teaching because ‘a spiritual dimension... is part of being human’ (ibid, p. 35). Using this lens, this study investigated how spiritual capital describes the type of school involvement that is envisaged for a self-managing school.

3.2.4.2. Emphasis on Human Values

Many of our schools in South Africa are multi-cultural providing a necessary challenge for a broad-based education in human values, which is urgently needed to foster harmony in diversity. In this study “spirituality” will be taken to mean ‘honouring human values’. Human values are those attributes and qualities that are the essential elements of all important decisions in the human arena. They are innate in all people and include: i) *a deep caring for all life*, which is the basis for all the other human values, ii) *non-violence*, which arises from an awareness of the sacredness of all life; iii) *compassion*, characterized by the desire to eliminate suffering and misery for all life; iv) *friendliness and cooperation*, which comes with an awareness that we belong to one family; v) *generosity and sharing*, awareness that true prosperity is the result of giving, not of hoarding; vi) *a feeling of belonging and oneness with all life*, awareness that we are all part of one universal spirit; vii) *service to society*, rooted in the awareness that we are here to contribute something of value to society, not to get something for ourselves; ix) *a sense of commitment and responsibility*, ultimately extending to all of society and all life; x) *peace and happiness*, is a product of all positive values working together sufficiently (Baker, 2000). The values outlined above are not independent, separate principles or categories but are mutually interrelated while having an inter-dependent essence in each case. They are universal, inherent in everyone, but if they appear to be latent, the intrinsic nature of these characteristics propels stakeholders to think and work towards efforts that promote stronger principles of a self-managing school. For example, generosity and sharing, service to society, peace and happiness can ensure success when developing effective partnerships among educators, parents and communities.

South Africa has followed international trends by including human values, beliefs and attitudes in education. The Department of Education envisioned for South Africa, an education system that is democratic, literate, and free from discrimination and prejudice (DoE, 1996). Despite the Department of Education's commitment to redress past injustices from the apartheid era to the new democratic era, tragically, this vision is far from being realised in our schools. Mitroff & Denton (1999, pp. xiii-xiv) in their study on the role of spirituality in the workplace asserted that:

Over the years we have tried all of the conventional techniques known to organizational science to help organizations change for the better ... After years of study and practice we have come to a painful conclusion: that all of the conventional techniques in the world will not produce fundamental and long lasting changes... We believe that today's organizations are impoverished spiritually and that many of their most important problems are due to this impoverishment... We believe that organizational science can no longer avoid analysing, understanding, and treating organizations as spiritual entities.

There is a shift in perception towards understanding how important these invisible assets become when applied to learning organizations in general. Deepak Chopra (1994) describes in his book *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* how, as humans, we are taught to fear our differences rather than to celebrate them. Yet, it becomes apparent from scholars such as Fullan (2002) and Christie (1998) that by earning people's respect, and working together with people and teams it becomes possible to generate a greater capacity for the development of self-managing schools. In South African schools "the community" concept of "*ubuntu*" would be seen as appropriate. This concept has a strong African philosophical base which upholds the belief that a person is a human only because of other people (Ndebele, 2007). Hence, living in harmony, compassion and kindness is a reflection of the spiritual assets that should become the foundation of our world. This would render the incorporation by South African schools of the principles of *ubuntu* (including the principles of love, truthfulness, to be helpful, caring and considerate of others) as most necessary. Ubuntu further creates a framework for dialogue, to discuss both the school's and community's needs, to utilize human talent and potential, so that people can meet organisational aims beyond their normal contribution in the classroom. The African principles suggest trust and consultation, which form the basis for negotiations and resolving conflicts. Today's legislative demands require skills that are defined by networks of support and collaboration, people working together, distributing tasks and responsibility (Ndebele, 2007). Thus the roots of Africa's principles, sit well with the principles of a self-managing school,

which embraces the deep seated belief of promoting the interests of the whole community and broad-based involvement. When members come together, speak about and demonstrate the merits of their values and beliefs, they gradually become shared norms and values, as opposed to a hierarchical decision making processes which tends to stifle communication and initiatives of members (Alvesson, 2002). Successful self-managing schools would appear to fit these criteria. Moreover, schools are not homogenous entities, so the different and hidden aspects of school life must be allowed to emerge and be given voice (Bohlin and Ryan, 1999). In this regard, Zohar & Marshall (2004) explain that some of our most powerful resources may be laying fallow and little used. Therefore the more frequently and consciously schools draw from spiritual assets, the richer life will become and more commitment is displayed in transforming schools (Basson, *et al.*, 1995, cited in Bruyn *et al.*, 2002). This enables a more rigorous examination by this study about the richness of ideas and views which could have implications for a particular school context and the strategies that could be unearthed to address different perceptions.

Theories on spiritual capital reflect that spiritual assets, often called inner qualities or abilities, are far more powerful and valuable than the material assets, such as buildings or equipment. If good ideas emerge from talented people working together; it must follow that unity in diversity is a key to the development of a self-managing school. This implies showing tolerance for the differing views and beliefs of others, their needs and their individuality. This is one way of upholding an important characteristic of a self-managing school. However Kung (2002) argues that despite differences, the school culture should permit common expectations and collective understandings of the organization. The absence of consensus on values, unconditional standards and personal attitudes can hinder the development of the school as it can lead to either chaos or dictatorship.

If schools are really to progress, the spiritual aspects needs to be incorporated into the school programme in a wholesome way. Studies (Shields, Edwards & Sayani, 2005) reflect that whilst some schools are striving to succeed academically, overwhelming evidence indicates that moral and value degeneration is increasing exponentially. Education in schools has reached an impasse. It therefore seems that advancement in financial capital, technology and implementation of the new curriculum alone are inadequate in addressing these issues. Society at large does not seem to be reaping the benefits of this academically accentuated education. In the quest for competition, schools have forgotten the fundamental values of caring and sharing. The focus on education is on acquiring knowledge and training the mental and physical aspects. As a

result schools may have acquired factual knowledge and skills but not necessarily virtue and wisdom (Shields, Edwards & Sayani, 2005). Schools need to continually challenge traditional practices as the concept of self-managing resonates strongly with the notion of schools meeting needs. This implies a willingness to act for the benefit of others. In the context of a self-managing school this would refer to stakeholders being committed to serve the school's best interests.

Hargreaves (1998) posits that spiritual capital is about the connectivity of one person with another, and is about creating a safe and secure space in which collaboration can flourish. This approach augurs well for self-managing schools, as opposed to stakeholders working with strict rules and regulations administered from the principal. Fiszbein (2001) advises that for an organization to generate spiritual capital for democratisation, it must instill open and inclusive attitudes. This will require that schools closely examine and revisit their strategies to nurture an environment that would equip people to contribute positively to the prosperity of mankind. Schools in which old dogmas and doctrines are adapted to formulate new sets of values that are meaningful and applicable to schools of today, are more likely to succeed in self-managing. Some schools fail in this regard as they practice closure and exclusion. For example, IsiZulu speaking learners are prohibited from communicating in IsiZulu in an English medium school. This highlights that for self-managing schools to work it is premised on the view that it is a process where all tangible and intangible factors must be in line with the principles of inclusion, equality and respect for diversity. Schools are now required to transform themselves from organisations which were historically, tightly controlled and move towards democratic self-managing organisations (Senge, 1990). The above discussion has provided a clearer framework of spiritual capital and direction for my exploration of the role and experiences of the SMTs and educators in this regard.

Schein (2004) claim that values, beliefs and attitudes of members guide their behaviour in the school. Shared values and beliefs are essential characteristics of a self-managing school, as they underpin the behaviour and attitudes of individuals within the school, thereby providing the foundation for the ethos of a school (Janson, 2002). Members of a school community who share a school's values are more likely to participate in school activities (Van Galen, 1997). When they share the school's beliefs about life and learning, parents are more likely to feel a connection with the school and, based on this connection, have been found to be more active in advocating for school improvement and promoting school achievement. Furthermore, Van Galen

(1997) found that when the school and school community are shaped by shared norms and values, the feeling of belonging is strengthened; there are fewer discipline problems and higher levels of achievement for learners. But in practice, as schools are moving towards self-management only limited versions of these changes are noted as taking place (Dimmock, 1993). Bourdieu (1986) claims that if individuals are spiritually impoverished, leaders need to step in, take charge and inspire people's deeper-levels of spirituality. This involves working on the perceptions, values, beliefs and attitudes of stakeholders in the organization, that consequently shapes the mind-set of individuals and influences the manner in which they approach their work. The principles of self-managing suggest a move beyond command, control typified by the thinking that one person or a group of people know what is best for the school.

It is immensely difficult to change existing cultures in an organisation. In a sense it demands a transformation of the "soul" of the organisation. The discussion that follows turns to the building of the desired spiritual culture for a school.

3.2.4.3. Building a Spiritual Culture

Appropriate structures are in place in South Africa for schools to transform into self-managing schools. However literature suggests that structural changes alone do not create an effective school (Morgan, 1986). This view is advanced by both Miles (1998) and Sergiovanni (1991) who argue that a desired culture for self-managing schools has to be built. Smylie (1995) argues that it may be difficult to develop a self-managing school to its fullest, without developing its culture. In giving substance to this view, within the context of the South African education system, Miles (1998) proposes that considering the specific differences that exist between traditional schools and self-managing schools, re-culturing should be 'built' into the life of the school, so that it is compatible with the principles of democracy, and becomes part of the school's ordinary life. Mullin (1996) warns that re-culturing is not a simple matter, as it is concerned with altering how things are done in an organisation as circumstances in the wider environment change. Culture re-building requires leaders to work with other stakeholders to find collective ways of doing new things. Fullan (2002) raises the notion of re-culturing as transforming culture and changing what people in the organisation value and what they do to accomplish their goals. For example, attention could be given to the intangible and invisible characteristics of the organisation; such as the multi-sensory amalgam of symbols, routines and procedures, values, attitudes and beliefs which affect the behaviour of organizational members (Cheng, 1993). Re-culturing concerns inventing what amounts to a new way of life. This can be

a threatening experience, however it is considered “an honourable moral objective in any education system because it facilitates growth of individuals as human beings” (Schechter, 2004, p.173).

It is of interest to note Caldwell’s (2008) contributions regarding the framework of spiritual capital, which led to a clear understanding that the strength of moral purpose and the degree of coherence among values, beliefs and attitudes play a significant role in providing a supportive environment for the development of a self-managing school. Also clear in this is the overlay of spiritual capital in understanding both social and intellectual capital. For example, in the case of school systems, high levels of social capital would not be achieved without shared trust and other moral characteristics. Similarly, intellectual capital cannot be effectively implemented without a strong moral purpose and shared values. The influence of spiritual capital on social and intellectual capital shows the need for alignment between all types of resources. The views of Malloch (2003, p.8) explain this more clearly:

The often used terms social capital and intellectual capital themselves are based to a large extent on the existence of good faith, trust, stewardship, a sense of purpose and other moral characteristics which cannot persist in the absence of piety, solidarity and hope that come from religious and spiritual sentiments. When this is lost, societies and economies often decline rather than grow. When this abounds societies and economies prosper.

Thus it is recognised that, spiritual capital is about entrustment of responsibility, care for the organisation, sources of moral teachings and experiences that may motivate, channel, and strengthen people to reach particular goals of inclusion, participation and transparency (Woods, 2007). However, within this frame of reference, development towards self-managing schools can be seen as a process which encapsulates the other three elements of (intellectual, financial and social) capital as well. Given the demands of a self-managing school, Calhoun & Joyce (1998) suggest that it is when all elements are pulling in the same direction, that there are more chances of the school developing towards effective self-management. These fundamental characteristics in themselves do not provide answers for developing our schools; however the point to be emphasised here is that for self-management to be successful, leadership styles should be determined by a range of factors to sustain the organisation. To this end, Fullan (1993) contends that even in self-managing schools, a certain degree of central control and co-ordination is necessary within the organisation. A self managing school may run the risk of becoming disorganised with various sub-systems moving in different directions, following different

priorities or producing incompatible outputs. It seems obvious that successful schools would spend considerable time building their school culture, since nothing can be accomplished if the culture works against the reform (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993). Badat (1995) cautions that this process should not be rushed; it is a long-term process that develops as people engage in action. Therefore the need is for schools to clearly articulate a set of values and a purpose, which all members understand. These become key reference points for directing the move on the path of self-managing.

3.3. Exploring the Notion of a Self-managing School through the Lens of Distributed Leadership

Calls for schools to be learning communities that are self-managing, democratic, participative, and empowered have heightened the link between schools and distributed leadership practices (West-Burnham, 2004; Fullan, 2002). If SMT members expect optimum levels of performance from staff, they would need to understand what is meant by distributed leadership and how the factors thereof affect staff members. There have been numerous attempts to define the concept – distributed leadership, and of these, this study was framed by the following scholars. As has been explained in Chapter Two, section 2.5., Gunter's (2005, p.6) view is that leadership applies to "social and socialising relationships" which moves an individual to lead. It involves motivating, channelling and directing behaviour, the strength of responses, and persistence of behaviour, for a particular activity. Also framing this study was Gronn's (2000) and Harris's (2004) view of 'distributed leadership' as embracing the principles of participatory and inclusive styles of leadership. Gronn's work elaborates on distributed leadership as a network of individuals interacting as leaders, which contrasts with leadership by one person. This suggests that conceptualising a self-managing school as an individual or senior management endeavour negates the existence of shared leadership or of partnerships with all members of the organisation (Muijs & Harris, 2003).

Barth (1990) claims that it is impossible for one person to lead and manage an organisation as complex as a self-managing school, because it is seemingly impossible for one person to fully address the complexities of diversity or the heavy workload that is demanded from SMTs and educators on a day to day basis at the school. The uniqueness of each person makes it easier to adopt an ethical stance of absolute regard for individuals; honouring their differences in knowledge, skills and cultural traditions (Furman & Shields, 2005), which collectively could set into motion the behaviours appropriate to achieving a self-managing school. Authors such as

Harris & Lambert (2003, p.4) claim that leadership in today's complex environment requires the efforts of "many rather than a few" to bring about progress. Simply stated a self-managing school is concerned with less control and uniformity, but more support and empowerment, with open dialogue and critique. Hence this study notes the importance of distributed leadership to the development of self-managing schools. Both are complementary concepts of incorporating self-management.

Distributed leadership is grounded within the paradigm of "division of labour" (Gronn, 2002). It attests to collective task accomplishment, where two or more people team up, pool their resources, relying on each other for the completion of the task as a shared practice. Chapman, Boyd, Lander & Reynolds (1996, p.103) assert that to practise self-management of schools mean "learning to be responsible for freedom", and most importantly to accept the fact that self-managing is possible only when all participants in the organisation share the process. In this regard, The South African Constitution presents an interesting challenge in attempting to create a new landscape for schools, based on stakeholders' participation where they have a significant say in decision-making. Whilst the schools in this country have undergone extensive structural transformation, many schools have yet to move in the direction of sharing leadership. So whilst there is evidence of greater participation in schools today than perhaps there was prior to 1994, this is not enough to improve the quality of our schools. Therefore, I deduce that while school structures have changed, there is still a profound need for change in the culture and practices of schools towards a more distributive form of leadership.

Two studies that attest to the benefits of distributed leadership are the 1999 National Association of Head Teachers' (Harris, 2004) research, and the 2001 National College for School Leadership research. The latter found that low socio-economic schools exhibited distributed, less directive and more successful practices (Muijs & Harris, 2003). In both studies emphasis was on collective involvement, and consultation was distributed. These practices pave the way for discussion on the impact this has on the development of self-managing schools. What emerges from these studies is that a collective form of leadership is advocated, in which stakeholders work and develop together. The adoption of a system of distributed leadership suggests that the space has been created for all role players to contribute to the effective management and leadership of the school. It highlights their accountability and ensures greater sharing of responsibility in developing the school as a self-managing school. This suggests that schools

should not depend on government leadership but use the profound opportunities available from the leadership that each of the members brings to the organisation.

“Parallel leadership” is an expanded conception of educator leadership advocated by Andrews & Crowther (2002). By this, they explained that principals develop meaningful relationships with the staff in “parallel” with one another, where there is mutual respect, trust and allowance for individual expression. This point is particularly important with reference to educator leadership as noted by Barth (1990, p.61), who comments that:

(W)hen teachers have legitimate authority, sanctioned by the principal and faculty, they find the courage to make demands on their colleagues in one instance and to comply with their colleagues’ demands on them in another.

In this way, through participation stakeholders are empowered and educators’ work practice appears to be conceptualised to operate as a community. As such it sharpens the focus of self-managing practices by creating the foundations for understanding the role of all stakeholders in building a collaborative culture.

The concept of distributed leadership holds appeal for the development of a self-managing school. Its key component requires the relinquishing of structure as control, and replacing it with a structure for empowering others and collective involvement. While sharing leadership for learning is a promising construct to achieve for the progress and sustainable development of a self-managing school, it does not mean that the role of the principal becomes obsolete. Self-managing schools necessitate motivation and improvement on a daily basis from within. It is not about what the principal knows and does, or how he/she gets others to do the work. Instead, the underlying question is: how can everyone in the school become serious, committed and co-operative leaders? As Harris (2004, p.14) notes, the principal’s responsibility is “primarily to hold the pieces of the organisation together.....maximising the human capacity within the organisation”. This implies that the extent to which the educators are able to exercise degrees of leadership within the school is affected by the extent to which the school enables this positioning to occur. Confronted with such challenges, schools in South Africa have to reposition educators not only as leaders of the learning institution, but also as leaders to “create and manage” (Stoll, *et al.*, 2006).

In the discussion of the theory of capitals, the space for differing degrees of participation across the school activities has been identified. This provides an image of joint participation in action. It further illustrates how distributed forms of leadership can be developed and enhanced to contribute to school improvement. In this regard I explored distributed leadership style and the activities that the SMT and educators would be involved with, and have determined how decisions would be taken at the case school.

3.4. Conclusion

The chapter had introduced the theory of capital, and distributed leadership as the guiding theoretical framework for the study. Through the theory of capital, I unearthed an understanding of how the four elements of capital can stimulate and support site-based school initiatives. Firstly I explored the broad concept of capital, which embraces the connectedness of assets, human resources, their capabilities, relationships and spirituality that shape any particular school. I reported that at the heart of the theory of capital lie the intellectual, financial, social and spiritual aspects. For example, intellectual capital emphasised that a self-managing school should focus on enhancing the quality of the organisation, which is inextricably linked to knowledge and skills, achievement, developing structures that engender collaboration and empowerment of stakeholders. In this regard professional development was framed as extremely important for improving internal school conditions. With regard to financial capital, the theory highlighted the active and vital role that finance plays to either inhibit or facilitate processes of self-management of a school. The element of finance opened broad debates about time management, money and equipment as critical for schools to attain their objectives, however it was noted that finance was closely linked to the other forms of capital. I then explored dynamics around social capital, by discussing sub-themes such as partnerships, teamwork and networking and argued its value in the practice of a self-managing school. This theory suggested that schools should draw from and enrich their internal sources, but also importantly, that they should reach out externally for support in terms of personnel, support activities and relationships. This was followed by an understanding of another pillar of a self-managing school through the adoption of the spiritual lens. The theory identified the main features of spiritual culture which involves the interconnectedness of human values, beliefs and purpose. This equates to the provision of organisational support and stakeholders to work together for a common purpose. The discussion on these theories offered important insights into the functionality of a self-managing school, which could help to conceptualise better what it is that a self-managing school should do.

Despite the importance of these well intended capitals, I argued that strong leadership, but more particularly distributed leadership, draws to the surface a deeper and richer meaning of participative management, of working in collaboration, of empowerment and of shared leadership. Distributed leadership can be identified as one of the main tools driving these different forms of capitals. According to distributed leadership theory, formal leaders are likely to provide significant influence upon the development of leadership in others in the school. As such the theory was useful in understanding the nature, type and delivery of leadership, seen as a joint activity in which all SMT members and educators are involved in. This provided fresh insights that guided this investigation.

Although I touched on the theory of capital and distributed leadership theory on its own, to identify its contribution to shaping a self-managing school, its interpenetrative nature and interdependence as they manifest themselves in schools came forth (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005). The notion of a self-managing school is not simply about the presence of a variety of capitals, neither will distributed leadership suffice on its own. A combination of these theories adds to the plethora of knowledge on what it takes to make sense of the notion of a self-managing school as a whole. This view is endorsed by Bagraim, Cunningham, Potgieter & Viedge (2010), who claim that an organization should be viewed as a “whole”, rather than simply the sum of its various departments.

In the next chapter I discuss the methodologies for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

A central premise of this study is to explore what it is that constitutes a self-managing school. Therefore, efforts to explore a self-managing school as an active site, for the understanding of what self-managing schools entail, should be informed by participant understanding and practice at school level. The main questions driving this study were: i) to understand how the SMT and educators make meaning of, and engage with issues of self-managing in their daily schooling encounter; ii) what are some of the factors that promote the practice; and iii) what can be learnt from the policies and practices in the selected school, with regard to “what it entails to be a self-managing school? The lived experiences of the participants are placed at the forefront to present the “multiplicity of complex conceptual structures” that constitutes reality (Geertz cited in Denzin & Lincoln 2003, p.150).

This chapter begins with an explanation of the research paradigm within which the study is located. From there I move on to the methodology, starting with how I gained access to the research site and why I selected this site and these participants for the study. The chapter then makes explicit the data collection and data analysis procedures that I adopted. The chapter concludes with a short discussion on issues of trust and ethics regarding the study.

4.2. Interpretive Paradigm

This study is located within the interpretive paradigm. Interpretivists posit that there are multiple realities. Further to understanding a particular social reality, people must engage with, and actively participate in, actions that underpin their individual experiences resulting from their involvement in the object of inquiry (Locke, 2001). In this case it is concerned with a self-managing school. There are two essential elements in this inquiry which dictate an interpretive approach. Firstly, it is important to explore a self-managing school through the eyes of the participants. As discussed in Chapter Two, the concept of a self-managing school is a very comprehensive and equally complex one. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine the

phenomenon, by observing and asking participants the ‘*what*’, ‘*how*’, ‘*when*’ and ‘*where*’ questions (Patton, 1987), and to learn about their everyday schooling experiences. For this to happen, the research was conducted in the natural setting of the problem, shared by the members of the school, which are sustained by their actions and interactions (Clark, 1997). From the detailed accounts of the participants’ understandings and experiences, I wanted to achieve understanding of the processes, motives, beliefs, values and attitudes of the participants; and to try to obtain a rich and detailed picture of the composition of a self-managing school. It is understood that with subjective meaning there is no “correct way” of perceiving reality, nor is there an absolute truth; different interpretations provide multiple views of reality (Neuman, 2006).

I was guided by Guba (1990) who describes the role of the paradigm as a basic set of beliefs that guide the nature of the world. Such beliefs led me, as the researcher to look at multiple realities in the school site: in different places, at different people, the internal and external factors that underpin it, and different documents in the context, in order to interpret and understand the phenomenon (Henning, Rensburg & Smit, 2004). Positioning the research in the interpretive paradigm is considered to be congruent with the aim and focus of my study; which is to explore, interpret and seek an understanding of the characteristics of a self-managing school in the South African context.

4.3. The Research Design: A Case Study

As this inquiry concerns understanding what self-managing entail in one school, this study adopted a single-site case study design within an interpretive approach. Bassey (2003) notes that a case study is a collection of sufficient data which enables the researcher to explore significant features of the case, create plausible interpretations, construct a worthwhile argument or story, relate the argument or story to existing literature and convey the findings to an interested audience. Creswell & Clarke (2007) define a case study as an explanation or in- depth analysis of a ‘bounded system’. In this study, the bounded unit of the case is a school, in the Umlazi district, within the Province of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa.

A single-site case study design was seen as the most appropriate method for this study, as its value deepens crucially with one school under the microscope. This approach enabled me to seek a deep and rich understanding of a self-managing school, reinforcing sufficient data to

explore significant features of the case, thereby increasing confidence in the overall findings and conclusions of this study (Bassey, 2003). It is also explanatory as I asked ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions related to the operation of the school (Stakes, 2003). A central feature of a case study is that the case is approached and studied as a whole, as a system. I used multiple sources of evidence from different activities and triangulated the data to provide a holistic picture of the school functionality and processes (Cohen, *et al.*, 2001; Maree, 2007; Hakim, 2000; Merriam 1998). This characteristic ties in with the systems theory, which states that the study of each part in an isolated fashion will not yield the same understanding as would a study of the total number of parts in a dynamic relationship to each other. Hence a strong argument for the adoption of the case study method is that by incorporating a chain of evidence, internal validity was secured (Anderson, 1990). Furthermore, satisfying the tenets of qualitative research by describing, understanding and explaining, this case study tells its own story (Stake, 1994).

The story of this case school begins with the research process.

4.4. The Research Process

In this section the following aspects of the research process are discussed: choosing the research site, an explanation of why I selected this site, how I gained entry for this research and the selection of the participants.

4.4.1. Access to the Research Site

The University of Kwa-Zulu Natal requires that researchers submit proposals in order to obtain ethical clearance to carry out the intended research. Clearance was granted to me subject to a set of conditions with which I had to comply before going into the field (see Appendix A for details on the ethical clearance granted for this study). Some of the ethical issues ensured that I follow proper procedures for gaining access to the school. This required that I submit a letter to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions, to request permission to conduct research in schools (see Appendix B). Although I had in mind the one school in which I wanted to conduct my study, I had requested permission for three schools. The reason was that if the first school of choice declined my request to participate in the study, I still had a choice of two other schools. Written consent to go ahead with the studies was provided, nine months after the request was made (See Appendices C).

4.4.2. Why this School?

For the selection strategy I used purposive sampling. This means that the school of first choice was targeted because of its particular features (Lincoln & Guba, 2000), which was the meritocracy of this school. I chose to focus on a high performing school because too much attention is given to poor performing schools, deficit situations and underperforming schools, in the media, as well as students' research topics. For the purpose of this study the terms 'high-performing schools' and 'successful schools' will be regarded as synonymous. Bergeson (2007) listed the following nine characteristics of high-performing school as:

- o A clear and shared focus
- o High standards and expectations for all learners
- o Effective school leadership
- o High levels of collaboration and communication
- o Curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned with state standards
- o Frequent monitoring of learning and teaching
- o Focused professional development
- o A supportive learning environment
- o High levels of family and community involvement

Of the fifteen primary schools within the same geographical location that I teach, I selected one school that displayed a number of these characteristics. For example, the school had a history of notable success or high-performance in inter-class, inter-school and inter-regional competitions in a number of Olympiads and benchmarking assessments (Cluster Tests and National papers) sports and co-curricular achievements. It may be noted that due to the prolonged teacher strike in 2011, ANA papers (the Annual National Assessments that is written by all primary school learners in the province, from Grades 1–6, to measure performance levels in Literacy and Numeracy) were not written. The 2010 ANA statistics provided by the Department of Education reflect the following results for this Province:

- Percentage of learners reaching the 'achieved' level of performance varied from 12% to 31%;
- a 'partially achieved' level of performance varied from 30% to 47%;
- few schools in the area were classified as "intensive care" schools.

These results highlight that the quality of basic education is still well below what it should be in South Africa. The sample school was the only one in the district to be declared as “a school of excellence”. I have selected, for the purpose of this study, the name Acme Primary School for my case study sample school. Acme means “peak” or “height”. Chapter 5 provides a more detailed description of the school site.

It is no hidden fact that the case school is widely recognised as being in a favourable financial position; however the literature review and theoretical framework emphasised that finance alone is not what privileges a school as an effective self-managing school. Thus, over and above Acme’s excellent learner-performance results, I was mindful of Bergeson’s (2007) three critical questions, namely: “*what are they doing?*”, “*how are they doing it?*” and *why are they doing it in that particular way?* Answers to these questions may illustrate why the quality of teaching and learning at this school appears to be of excellence.

Despite reports of achievement gaps and low test scores, “many schools have shown sustained progress in self-managing” (Bergeson, 2007, p.1). Framed within Bergeson’s (2007) views there is no single factor that accounts for the success or improvement of the school. This study argues that each school can develop in its capacity as self-managing. This means that all schools can be “successful” in their own right and that high-performing schools tend to demonstrate a particular combination of characteristics. Although, in my study, the sample school’s outstanding academic and sports records are raised as one of the criteria for selection, I assert that there are other contributing factors that could have great influence on how the school operated. In this regard I concur with Smylie (1995) who argues that it may be difficult to achieve good results without simultaneously developing the school to its fullest.

4.4.3. Gaining Entry into the Selected School

Regular physical access to the site required permission from the school Governing Body and the principal. In 2010, I made an approach to the principal, indicating my interest in conducting my study at Acme School (see Appendix D). I was then referred to the Deputy Principal (DP). On both occasions I had made it clear that I had selected a “high performance” self-managing school to conduct my research, and explained the classification of what I considered as a self-managing school. As I explained my reasons for selecting this school, I was also given the opportunity to present the purpose of my research and answer all the queries. The principal and the DP

indicated that they were delighted to have been selected as such a school of study. I was granted permission by the principal to conduct my study at this school (See Appendix E for Permission Granted to Conduct the Study at this School).

4.4.4. The Selection of Participants

In selecting the participants, I used purposive sampling. Determination of the sampling frame for this study was guided by the need to obtain a sample that was, as far as possible, a reasonably accurate representation of the state of affairs in any public school. Hence, the primary sources of data that were chosen for this study included:

- The principal,
- The deputy principal (DP),
- The two HODs (heads of department)
- And six level one educators.

I am aware that the role of the SGB is of great significance in the effort to understand a self-managing school. I have, however, excluded the members of the SGB as study participants, as the aim of my study was to gain evidence from the SMT and the educators who are trained professionals, when taking into consideration their qualification, experience, skills, and knowledge of work in a school context. The members of the SMT and the educators are responsible for driving the process of self-management in the school. In fact it is the school's internal force that helps to drive and shape a school. Moreover, the Education Law Amendment Bill of 2007 precluded the SGB from involvement in the professional management of the school (DoE, 2000). The sample of participants included representatives from a variety of positions or posts within the school, in order to elicit data that provided a broad picture regarding the phenomenon under study. With the support of the SMT, I selected two educators who were the most senior in years of teaching experience in the school. The two educators in my sample that were the youngest, each had more than 5 years of teaching experience. I also included two educators who were SGB appointees, as their contributions further added to the richness of the data (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993), in terms of having their voices heard and engaging in participative management.

Selecting participants from the various levels in the school enabled me to gain a more varied response to my critical questions, as opposed to focusing on just the SMT or the educators (Moser & Kalton, 2003). All information was triangulated, which involved collecting material in as many different ways and from as many diverse sources as possible. I cross checked that the data accurately reflected the participants' views. I was guided by Bassey (1999) who proposed that the sample size in qualitative research should not be too large that it becomes difficult to extract data or too small that it leads to informational redundancy or becomes difficult to achieve data saturation. Hence, a total of ten participants had been selected for this study as this appeared to be a reasonable number to address my research questions in a focused way; however I did remain open to including more participants if the data did not prove rich enough.

Armed with permission to conduct the research from the Department of Education institutions, as well as the SMT and educators of the school, my next task was to inform all participants of what was expected of them through a detailed explanation of the approach and its implications (Babbie, 1995). Careful attention to such matters at an early stage was time consuming but essential for ensuring that participants understood their roles and what was expected of them during the study. To perform this task, the principal invited me to a staff meeting where he introduced me and explained the purpose of my visit to the school. I then addressed the staff and explained the purpose of my study and what I would expect from the participants. My next step was to hand the "prospective" participants a letter "of informed consent", which explained the intentions of my study, outlining the nature and scope of the research, with a fair explanation of the procedures to be followed and formally inviting them to be a participant in the study (see Appendix F).

It was not difficult to get consent from participants for they seemed interested in the topic and were very willing and proud to talk about their school. In addition it could be that my status as an "outsider" at this school made it easier for the participants to respond to my study, especially in cases where their reflections were critical of their school initiatives as a self-managing school. The participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study, for whatever reasons, once the research had begun. Their objections would be duly respected; however it would set me back in my research to replace those who had left; especially if it were the SMT members. Denzin & Lincoln (2003) and Cohen, *et al.* (2001) regard such withdrawal as natural rather than as a problem. All aspects of importance were given due consideration when addressing ethical issues in the research study. For example, the issues of risk and vulnerability

to participants were addressed, issues of embarrassment, or those with participants having their reputations or creditability undermined publicly (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Once I had procured informed consent of willingness from all the participants to take part in the study (see Appendix G for sample of the form signed by participants consenting to participate in this study), I changed the names of the participants for the purposes of anonymity (see Chapter Six, Table 6.1).

I then began the process of full scale data collection and production. The days, times and venues for the data collection were negotiated, and a plan was drawn up. Once the data collection plan was confirmed I made copies of the plan and issued these to each participant as a reminder of their appointments. However, these were open to further changes, due to unforeseen circumstances in the field.

The next section describes and explains the instruments of data collection for this study.

4.5. Instruments of Data Collection

In accordance with the interpretive paradigm, four data collection tools were employed. These were: i) the transect walk, ii) observation, iii) document analysis and iv) in-depth interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This approach to the data collection for the study was informed by Glaser and Strauss (1999) who argue that using more than one instrument is highly beneficial for the study because it yields more insights or understandings into the practice that would not have been accomplished with one instrument alone. Apart from the data collection instruments, I adopted a flexible stance where everything that provided insight on this school practice as self-managing was considered a source of data. I spent as much time as possible getting involved in the communal life of the school; for example, I lent a hand in many school activities, such as serving refreshments for parent meetings and the seating of parents for the school concert. My intention was to develop a relationship of trust and to take advantage of opportunities to learn from the practice, by becoming fully immersed in the setting provided. I made field-notes and took photographs. Photographs were another way of capturing what had been observed revealing something about the school without the use of words. I had obtained the necessary permission from the principal to take these photographs (see Appendix H for permission granted from the principal for the use of photographs).

My research stance had been succinctly described by Patton (1990, p.62), “to report fully on what was done, why it was done, and what the implications are for the findings”. Hence the subsequent sections discuss the instruments that were administered in the following order: first the transect walk, followed by the semi structured in-depth interviews. Participant observation and document analysis were on-going during my data collection period. In the discussion of each instrument I explained why and how I administered these instruments.

4.5.1. Transect Walk

A transect walk is a systematic walk along a defined path (transect) through a cross-section of the site which is being studied (Creswell, 1998). This takes place together with the local people, to explore the conditions of the site by observing the people, surroundings and resources, asking questions, listening, looking and producing a transect diagram if need be (Schurink, 1998). Babbie (2001) explains that a transect walk is an ideal point of departure for a research process in a school, which is normally conducted during the initial phase of the fieldwork because it entails an information-gathering exercise from the school participant/s. This method was beneficial to my study as exploring the situation and the context of the school was critical to understanding and describing the phenomenon of “a self-managing school”.

Initially I had not planned the transect walk, but requested the DP to provide me with a sketch so that I could easily find my way around the school. Fortunately, the DP suggested that we go on the tour of the school where I could familiarize myself with the environment. As defended by Leedy (1997), it was necessary to be accompanied on the tour by an expert on the working conditions of the school and one who had access into all the areas that I did not have. Consequently it was a matter of importance that the DP accompanied me on the transect walk, and pin pointed various physical aspects of the school. This method of data collection only took into account the existing “observable” situation and features of the site, which served as an entry point for more in-depth analysis (Creswell, 1998).

The transect walk provided me with a rich overall view of the school. By observing, asking questions, listening to the environment, looking at the various things that the DP pointed to and discussing them, and stopping to talk to the local people we met along the way provided additional information and it helped to identify issues that warranted further exploration. I further made mental notes of my observations of different aspects of the school (Neuman, 2003);

such as the warm, yet strong teaching and learning culture that prevailed at the school. As supported by Berg (2001), I used this opportunity to make informal contacts with a wide range of people, for example, I was introduced to the school security officer at the gates and the school secretary, with both of whom I had developed strong bonds during my data collection.

The transect walk was invaluable to the study as I could have missed important information about school practices that were observed and discussed during the walk. Due to the importance of this experience, and the rich information that I gathered, I have dedicated an entire chapter (Chapter Five) to present and explain the findings. The transect walk, in addition to observation and data analysis, was a significant tool through which I used to describe and explain the insights gained on the practice of a self-managing school.

4.5.2. Interviews

One of the main data collection instruments was the use of interviews. In this section, I define, analyse and reflect on the usefulness and challenges of conducting research using the method of interviews. An interview is a face-to-face interaction between two or more people (Oxford English Dictionary, 2005). Anderson (1990) claims that interviews are a form of conversation between individuals, so that a research problem can be brought into focus, and points worth pursuing are suggested. This is reinforced by Kvale (1996) who states that the importance of conversation in a social research is:

Conversation is a basic mode of human interaction. Human beings talk with each other; they interact, probe and answer questions. Through conversation we get to know other people, learn about their experiences, feelings, hopes and the world they live in.

Interviews for this study focused on individual and group experiences, behaviours, actions and activities to define the concept of a self-managing school, and to establish a deeper appreciation of the practice of self-management in a school context. Central to this was the participants' conceptual understanding of a self-managing school. In this inquiry, two types of interviews were conducted: individual semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews (see Appendix I for semi-structured schedule for interview questions). The questions in the semi-structured interview schedule were intended to guide the interview, but were flexible so as to be modified or rephrased. Responses were probed to gain more information and clarity in order to enrich the research.

It was important to provide participants with an opportunity to express their views on how they perceived, experienced and understood their world and the society that they work in (Maree, 2007). Interviews went beyond the bonds of a written questionnaire with limited space (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). In addition, as argued by De Vos (2002), emotions expressed during interviews added to the richness of the data. Similarly, as maintained by Bogdan & Biklen (2003), what happened beyond the spoken word was also essential information for the study, for example I noted gestures and non-verbal expressions as they occurred during the course of the interview. However, I found that this activity interrupted the rapport I had with the participants during the discussion. The length of each of the interviews was approximately one hour. If we went slightly beyond an hour, this was done in consultation with the participants so that it did not tire them. All interviews were tape recorded with the consent of the participants.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study I remained aware of my own presuppositions and theoretical conceptualisations. I paid careful attention to what the participants were saying and used their verbatim accounts of the discussion. The majority of the interviews were conducted in comfortable areas with as little disturbance as possible (Cohen, *et al.*, 2005). However, this was not possible during one of the individual interviews. The participant was away from school for a number of days and due to time constraints, I interviewed the participant in the car-park, whilst she was waiting for her transport. It turned out to be a very relaxed, informal interview, where the participant felt very free to respond. Interviews also allowed me the flexibility to discuss new aspects, and to probe interesting areas that may not have arisen during the transect walk, observation or document analysis (Seale, 2001).

With regard to the interview schedule, a pilot-test was conducted as try-out of the procedures to be followed in the main study. I wanted see how it worked and whether the semi-structured questions for the main study were suitable, valid, reliable, effective, and that all possible precautions were taken to avoid any problems that might arise during the study (Yin, 2003). Every effort was made to ensure that the ten participants interviewed under the pilot test exercise were similar in characteristics to those who were interviewed in the final study, namely, I selected the principle, DP, 2 HoDs and 6 level one educators. After each interview, participants were asked what difficulties they experienced in replying, what further ideas they had that were not brought out by the question, how they would ask the questions themselves, and what feelings they had about the questions they had answered. Following this dialogue some imbalances and loopholes were observed in the interview schedule and adjustments made accordingly; such as

phrasing and sequence of the questions, the length of questions, the need for additional questions or elimination of others. Vague or confusing questions were corrected before the main inquiry started (Bless & Achola, 1990). Due to time constraints I did not pilot test the other three data collection instruments concerned with the transect walk, observation and document analysis. The principal of the pilot school had stated that he was not comfortable with me “*digging up old records*”. I did not pursue the matter.

4.5.2.1. Individual Interviews

A semi-structured interview refers to a method of engaging participants in a conversation through a series of pre-determined questions ((Benyard, *et al.*, 2000). I prepared a semi-structured interview schedule which was conducted with the principal and DP individually. My ultimate goal with these interviews was to obtain information on how each participant makes meaning about their experiences of a self-managing school.

In the quest for trustworthiness and comparability of the responses, I asked the same questions to all the participants (Cohen, *et al.*, 2005). Initially, I used a semi-structured interview schedule, but it soon became apparent that such questions deflected participants from talking about their ideas and what was of interest to them. At times there was a need for participants to elaborate on some of their responses, which I requested through questions such as: “please explain?”; “tell me more about...?”; “Can you explain in a different way?”; “Give me an example?”; “Describe that a little more please?” (Bruce, 1994, p. 219).

4.5.2.2. Focus group interviews

Semi-structured individual interviews were followed by two focus group interviews; one with the HoDs and the other with the six level one educators. These focus group interviews commenced with a clarification of group rules that were consolidated to encourage freedom of expression and the sharing of thoughts. Grouping the participants provided a means of collecting data from a small formal group, about several perspectives on a series of semi-structured questions to cover the following themes: financial, intellectual, social and spiritual capital, and distributed leadership (Benyard & Grayson, 2000). These interactions stimulated lively discussions and the data becomes richer as one group member reacted to comments made by another.

The group interviews presented several advantages. The main purpose of focus group interviews was to yield insights that might not otherwise be available in individual interviews or observation (Cohen, *et al.*, 2005). It is through the interactions as a group that I was able to gain a larger amount of information in a shorter period of time. The topics seemed of interest to the participants and important contributions surfaced, at the same time individual voices emerged (Patton, 1990).

4.5.3. Observation

Observation has been defined as a matter of watching behavioural patterns of people and the environment to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). As indicated earlier, this study fore-grounded the significance of understanding the everyday experiences of the SMT members and educators in the school, as a basis for exploring what a self-managing school entails. Such experiences can only be elicited by flexible and reflexive approaches, which included spending time with the SMT and educators in the school. In order to achieve this, I planned an observation schedule (see Appendix J) to observe issues relating to the manifestations of a self-managing school, and jotted down notes and reflections throughout the day. This reduced the risk of omitting crucial data where the transcriptions were prepared at a later stage (Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Without being intrusive I interrupted some activities to seek clarity from educators on certain issues. My observation schedule was used merely as a guide as I was not always able to distinguish in advance what would be of interest for me to document.

My aim in using the observation method in this study was to record actual behaviours in consideration of the physical settings in which peoples' activities took place. This approach sets out to determine exactly what people are doing rather than to rely entirely on a participant's interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Hence, observation remained purposive and appropriate in the natural context, as I found myself observing various things at the same time. For example, if I sat observing one participant, I still observed and listened to what was going on in the broader environment that we were in. I found myself capturing various issues simultaneously.

Participant observation was ongoing therefore I was able to base some questions for the interviews from the observation. This provided opportunities to clarify the participants'

intentions and to further draw out the participants understanding of a self-managing school (Dey, 1993). Observations were also conducted to triangulate the emerging findings. They were used in conjunction with the findings from interviews and document analysis to substantiate the conclusions (Smit, 2003). Whilst theories guided me to understand the way things should be at the school and the meanings that people live by, it was only by being immersed in the school setting, by spending time with and observing the participants that I was able to capture their experiences for myself (Cohen, *et al.*, 2005). This is aptly described by Maree (2007, p.27) as “it is through his/ her eyes and ears that data are collected, information is gathered, settings are viewed, and realities are constructed”.

This method of data collection enabled me to study the natural and everyday experiences of the participants, rather than reports of their behaviour (Schurink, 1998). Through this approach I was witness to important actions in the practice of a self-managing school as it unfolded, which participants could have ignored willingly or unwillingly in an interview. I was further guided by Denzin & Lincoln (2000) in selecting this method, as they posit that only by getting close to the participants and becoming an insider that the researcher can observe and interpret the activities of the participants. Some of the school activities I observed included the assembly, parent participation in out-door activities, staff meetings, professional development sessions, sports activities, school concert; in fact it was anything in the school that contributed to the school functionality (Valdez, 2004; Patrick & Middleton, 2002).

4.5.4. Document Analysis

Knowledge recorded and stored in the school in the form of documents is a ready source of information. Document analysis describes the analysis of any written material, whether old or new, in a printed, handwritten or electronic format that contains information about the phenomenon that is being researched (Henning, *et al.*, 2004). I analysed documentary materials and tried to identify salient issues relating to self-management within various school documents (See Appendix K for document analysis schedule). I used Neuman (2006, p.322) as a guide, who directed me to the following classified examples of documents, which included: school magazines, school pictures, school newsletters, policy manuals, strategic plans and official documents. Official documents included copies of the agenda of meetings, minutes and financial records, which had been made available to me as a researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Relevant documents were analysed on an on-going basis. Throughout my data collection period, I covered a diverse range of documents that had existed at the school prior to my research. For example, the school's Vision and Mission Statement, staff development policy, minutes of staff meetings, subject meetings and phase meetings, letters that were sent from the school to parents and other partners in the community, the school's improvement plan and the school log book. This method of data collection was important because it provided valuable information that might not be accessible by other means (Valdez, 2004). It provided me with information about aspects that I could not observe because they took place before I began my research in the schools. Each document analysis was like a small study, where I attempted to understand the notion of a self-managing school, by trying to unravel, or explain the text as it was written. In many cases there were no explanations to the "how" or "why" questions from the data in the documents, to assist me in a deeper understanding of the concept of a self-managing school. But combining document analysis with other methods such as in-depth interviews created opportunities for me to probe further and try to ascertain answers to the "how" or "why" questions (Babbie & Mouton, 1998, p.271).

I found document analysis to be beneficial for the study because it added information that provided a clearer picture of how things were done at the school and the way in which needs were being identified and met. In addition, these documents provided answers to my second and third key questions, regarding some of the factors that promoted the development of a self-managing school; and what can be learnt from the policies and practices in the selected school, with regard to "what it entails to be a self-managing school". Combining document analysis with interviews ensured a more comprehensive picture (Patton, 2002), of a self-managing school in the South African context.

4.6. Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis began in the early stages of data collection, when I began reading the literature and deciding on the appropriate theoretical frameworks, methodologies and the methods utilised in this study. This proceeded throughout until I wrote the final chapter of this thesis. But for the convenience of writing this section I have categorised the data analysis into three phases as explained below:

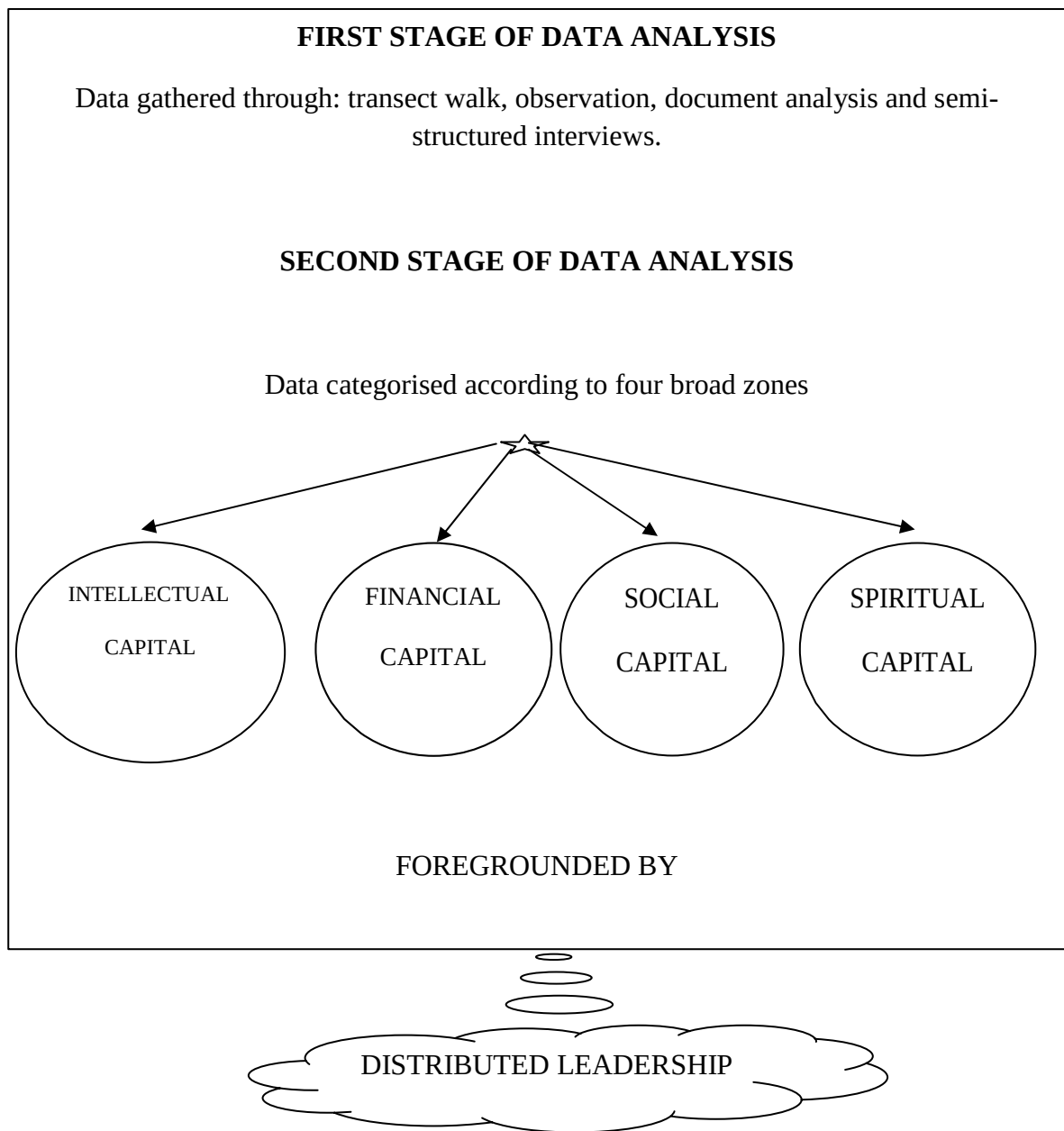
Phase 1: The data analysis commenced as the data was generated using the four data collection instruments, at the selected school, which is typical with qualitative research (Cohen, *et al.*,

2005). At the end of each day after the school visits, I tried to translate data produced for the day. For example, summaries of what I had observed were compiled. The purpose of doing this was to be able to look at and consider the data to establish what key issues emerged. In addition certain issues unfolded which informed me of what I needed to pursue further, in the subsequent collection of data (Cohen, *et al.*, 2005). These key issues directed me on following days. This phase of the data analysis became a long tiring procedure. In most cases it was not possible to complete the transcriptions at the end of each day.

Phase 2: This stage involved many rounds of close reading and study of the variety of data collected from the mosaic of methods to make sense of it (Farraday, 1979). During the readings, my initial aim was to familiarize myself with the key elements of the phenomenon as seen or reported by the participants. I did this by focusing on the data from each method separately, before attempting to portray the collective experience of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants of the study (Trigwell, 2000). I paid careful attention to the data by underlining key words, as noted by Bowden (2000), that participants may say similar things but often their underlying meanings may be different. To assist me in the organisation of the data, selected quotes from the different methods I used were narrowed down into categories and patterns, and then categorised according to four broad themes (zones), which emerged from the theoretical model, namely: intellectual, social, financial, and spiritual capital. Within each zone, sub-themes emerged, with the concept of distributed leadership running across all four zones. Later, I coded the data according to sub-themes which I identified for each form of capital. Miles & Huberman (1994) noted that in a coding system, codes represent key concepts and ideas in the text, which enable the researcher to make sense of the data.

Eventually all the information was systematically sorted into four files on the computer, according to salient issues or themes (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Figure 4.1 is a diagrammatic representation of Stages One and Two of my data analysis procedure.

Figure 4.1: A Diagrammatic Representation of Stages One and Two of the Data Analysis Procedure.



Phase 3: My aim at this stage was to analyse the data, and write a connected story of the case; which I gathered from the transect walk, observation, document analysis and the interviews. Data collected from each of the sources was triangulated and the findings were merged according to the significant themes (Valdez, 2004). From the analysis of the data, the main proposition of the theories was identified, which involved explaining processes as the phenomenon was reasoned out and argued (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). When all the data was finally collected and analysed, the question I asked myself was, “so what”? What new knowledge will I be adding to the topic? My intention was to use the theories, explain the

findings and come up with new knowledge regarding understanding the notion of a self-managing school.

The next section of the chapter concludes with a short discussion on issues of trustworthiness of the study.

4.7. Trustworthiness

“It is easy to think of ethics being important in natural sciences, such as medicine, but even in the social sciences, it is difficult to conduct research without running into ethical arguments” (Coolican, 1992, p.249). Given this reality a number of different ethical issues had to be considered. Of critical importance was the promise of confidentiality and anonymity. In qualitative research trustworthiness of the study can be regarded as the degree of accuracy and the comprehensiveness of coverage (Cohen, *et al.*, 2001). Thus issues of trustworthiness were considered from the very outset of the study, as it enabled me to proceed ethically (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000).

To ensure trustworthiness of the study I set out to accurately observe, describe and explain the phenomena in a neutral way without personal interests, prejudices and emotional preferences having any influence (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000). In coherence with these views I worked to ensure the trustworthiness of the study by avoiding the selective or unrepresentative use of data, for example accentuating the positive and neglecting or ignoring the negative. I took note of plagiarism possibilities and requirements (See Appendix M: Turn it in, Plagiarism report) and recognised the importance of choosing appropriate research methods, data collection strategies and data analysis techniques.

In qualitative research, a member check, also known as informant feedback or participant validation was used, where a report was given to participants in order to check the authenticity of the outcome of any data transcription. In my study, member checking followed after I had completed transcribing the interview data collected. This process provided an opportunity to correct errors and challenge what was perceived as wrong interpretations. However, it must be noted that the DP who assisted me the most during my data collection, took early retirement at the end of 2012 to live overseas with her children. As a result she did not have an opportunity to read the end result of this study.

Triangulation remained the principle strategy which ensured for trustworthiness in my research study. Cohen & Manion (1994, p.233) define triangulation as “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour”. Thus the trustworthiness of the information was quantified by taking several measurements on the same subject, to ensure that the information from various sources (interviews, focus groups, observations and document analysis) were cross-tabulated and yielded the same research facts or findings (Patton, 2002).

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter specifically dealt with the research design and methodology applied, and the general paraphernalia that underpinned the entire research process. It highlighted the key features of the research design, which is a single case study within a qualitative research framework. The selection of the research site was based on a “high performance” school in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa, and I reported on how I gained access to the research site. Ten participants were purposively selected for the study. The topic demanded a depth of data to address the complexity of a self-managing school. To comprehend this notion of complexity, different data sources, such as the transect walk, semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis were undertaken to obtain maximum information and deep coverage of the school practice and events. In practice this involved being fully immersed in the setting which provided opportunities to learn about a self-managing school, till data saturation was reached. While I had devised plans for observation, interviews and document analysis, the actual design unfolded as the fieldwork proceeded. To cope with the numerous complex issues, I kept detailed records of ongoing data and took photographs as part of my fieldwork records. The three phases of the data analysis procedures that I adopted were also discussed. Finally, the chapter concluded with a short discussion on issues of trust and ethics of the study. These included the ethical procedures that I undertook particularly for gaining access to the schools and procuring informed consent from the participants. All experiences had generated a wealth of knowledge in the composition of understanding what entails a self-managing school.

What follows in the next three chapters to come is the analysis and interpretation of the data, starting with Chapter Five, which focuses on salient issues emanating from the transect walk.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TRANSECT WALK: A LANDSCAPE OF ACME PRIMARY SCHOOL

5.1. Introduction

This chapter makes up the first of three data presentation and discussion chapters. In this chapter I describe the data using the transect walk technique, which is a departure from the conventional means of data presentation. I call this chapter “the transect walk” because through a cross-sectional walk of the school, I built up a gallery of images featuring the wonderful landscape of Acme Primary School. ‘Landscape’ in this study denotes an overview of the physical and non physical aspects of this school. The data formed the ground work underpinning an understanding of the context in which the Acme School functions.

The chapter describes a tour of the school, which includes the car park, administration block, library, computer room, school safety and security measures, school hall, swimming pool, school tuck shop and uniform shop, care centre, classrooms and the playfield. While Iris (pseudonym given for the DP, see Table 6.1) and I walked from one section of the school to another, I used this opportunity to observe the people on site, the surroundings and resources, ask questions about what we saw, and listened to the environment. I did not prescribe to Iris what I wanted to see. I wanted the walk to be as natural as possible. In addition, as I was shown around the school I had informal conversations with some of the school staff and occasionally I requested verbal clarification about the things I saw. This is in line with Apple’s (1995) view, that meaning is not intrinsic to the physical objects but it becomes invested with meaning in the way they are deployed. The data indicates the places I saw on the tour, with complementary photographs, and the conversations I had with participants and staff members brought thematic unity to the structure of the three data presentation chapters. In addition, I use these representations to provide evidence of the practice, and at times it was used to express the quality, character or existence of the issue under discussion. In this way I learnt about the configuration of the school and this added value to my journey towards understanding what it entails to be a self-managing school.

I now take you through the transect walk.

5.2. Acme Primary School

5.2.1. The Face of Acme

Image 5.1: The face of Acme Primary School



The tour began at the main gates of the school, which I presume was a suitable choice for Iris to guide me methodically, from the entrance to the rear end of the school. As Iris and I walked from her office to the school car park, I asked her about the history of the school. She explained that:

The school was opened in January 1970, with 11 staff members comprising the principal, the DP, 7 teachers and 2 cleaners.

This means that the school celebrated 52 years of practice in 2012. The school was built and opened well before the passing of the *South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996*. This implies that Acme was not self-managing prior to 1996, but was controlled by the Department of Education.

The DP continued, telling me that:

At the time of its opening the school had been provided for the White population of South Africa. Since 1995, after South Africa became a democratic country, there was an influx of Indian learners and a few black learners from families that had moved to live in the area around the school. A large number of learners that currently attend the school come from this area but learners are also transported to the school from other areas. The

school population includes learners from all races, with the majority of educators being white. Most of the educators lived in the surrounding areas.

We then arrived in the school car-park. It was neat, with clearly marked parking bays for staff vehicles (as seen in image 5.1). Alongside the car-park were beautiful and well maintained flower gardens, which proudly represented the school surroundings. The automated steel gate graced the entrance of the school, with an intercom for visitors at the gate. Access by car was only possible through this main entrance. The school is surrounded by a fence which controlled free movement of the public into the school yard. Immediately outside the gate was a signboard announcing the name of the school and showing the school emblem. Near the main entrance is a separate gate for learners to enter and exit directly into the corridors of the classroom section and school grounds. Iris pointed out and discussed certain aspects, for example, she showed me where the electronic button for the school gate was located; which I needed to know, for easy exit out of the school, in the event of the security guard being occupied with other matters. I was then introduced to the school security guard, who was stationed at the gate. What I learnt from the security officer was that *‘visitors had a designated (word substituted) area for parking, outside the school gates’*; however he allowed me space into the staff parking area whenever I reported to the school. This attribute of fostering an invitational attitude, interpersonal relationship and quality care provided a glimpse of an attitude embedded in this school context.

The visit to the car-park area left me with an impression of a positive image and an invitational atmosphere in this school. Creating an invitational school culture and harmonious work relationships continues to be emphasised as fundamental to the development in all schools (Anderson, 2000; Brinson, 1995). It suggested that Acme Primary School takes remarkable pride in giving attention to little things that contribute to upgrading the school image. It further suggested that there was purposive planning, leading and a deliberate programme that was put in place. Moreover it created the impression that time and place was created for everything at this school, including school rules about separate entrances for learners, staff and visitors, places for walking and prohibiting learners from the car-park. This gives credence to Iris’s statement that the principal and herself are *“seen everywhere on the school premises”*, checking for things that need improvement or development.

5.2.2. The “Nerve centre” of the School

The car-park led into the administration block. I refer to this area as the nerve centre of Acme School because I found this area of the school space to be the busiest; it was like the nerve control unit that provided information and the control of the activities of the organisation. When we walked into the school secretary’s office, Iris introduced me to her and explained the purpose of my visit. The secretary was found to be attending to many administrative matters all at the same time, and she was continuously disturbed by the telephone ringing. Yet she remained very cool, appeared to be very friendly and confident.

In my approach to gathering data at the site, I developed a warm friendship with the school security officer and the school secretary. I worked closely with the secretary, who communicated my telephonic messages to the participants, responded to my e-mails so that I could adjust my schedule to the school’s activities for the day, and who always promptly directed me to the participants whenever I had an appointment to see them. Such respectful negotiation with the secretary and the collaboration that it yielded built trust from her, that I would not cause any harm or loss of teaching and learning time. To a certain extent she became a personal liaison secretary for the school.

Leading from the secretary’s office was the reception area where I observed a very neat area with comfortable lounge chairs. On one of the walls was displayed a huge framed version of the school’s Vision and Mission statement. Table 5.1: is a copy of the school Vision and Mission Statement.

Table 5.1: The Vision and Mission Statement of Acme Primary School.

OUR VISION To be a leading and preferred primary school, providing the best possible, most relevant, balanced education, with equal emphasis on character development and academic achievement. To ensure that we have an ideal teaching/learning environment in terms of well-motivated, high calibre staff and quality facilities. OUR MISSION Through a differentiated programme that fully involves pupils, parents and staff, we aim to educate children by providing them with the opportunity to acquire values, knowledge, skills and a positive self-image that will enable them to become happy, successful, responsible adults of value to society.
--

Close to the vision and mission statement was a chart (see Table 5.2) separated into two sections. Iris drew my attention to this by explaining that:

On the left is the ten core values of the Constitution and on the right are some of the values designed by the staff for Acme Primary school.

Table 5.2: The Core Values of Acme Primary School

The core values of the South African Constitution (James, 2001, p. 13 -20)	Core values of Acme Primary
• Democracy • Social justice and equality • Equality • Non-racism and non-sexism • Ubuntu • An open society • Accountability • The rule of law • Respect • Reconciliation	• Unity Friendship • Peace Tolerance • Happiness Responsibility • Patience Respect • Caring • Humility • Trust • Co-operation • Honesty • Love

The South African Schools Act (SASA, 1996) is clear on the issue that it is important for all schools to have a Vision and a Mission Statement, as these provide an overall sense of direction for the school. They form part of the school's mantra. They communicate the ultimate purpose of the institution, what it stands for and give clear direction for the present and the future (Sallis, 1993). The framework of the core values (in Table 5.2.) displayed a clear link between the core values of the country and that of Acme Primary. This suggests that policies at Acme appear to not have been created in isolation, but that the authors worked within the broad framework of the

country. A challenge of the study to investigate how these core values proved crucial in developing the school as self-managing emerged with the discovery of this document on the wall in the reception area. I inquired from Iris to what extent the Vision and Mission Statement acted as guide to the activities in the school. She explained that:

Our Vision and Mission Statement gives people an overview of what to expect of us. We are committed to these values; it drives the organization and provides the staff, learners and community with direction. Each class also has a copy of School Mission Statement displayed. It is articulated to the staff, learners and parents whenever the need arises and at parent functions the principal makes reference to it.

Also in the reception area was an upright book stand where well bounded booklets of the school policies were displayed. Policies that were exhibited included: i) school admissions, ii) HIV, iii) excursions & sports, iv) safety and security, v) religion, vi) attendance and vii) late coming, viii) a policy for each subject of the school curriculum and ix) the school code of conduct. I asked Iris why the school policies were displayed and she responded that:

It is one way of marketing the school. People wanting to know more about our school, can get a broad idea from these policies. The school is accountable in visible ways to the learners and the community.

I probed further to find out who drew up these policies. Iris replied that:

It was the SMT and educators, and sometimes the SGB (the parent component) who worked together in drawing up the school policies.

Central to the purpose of the reception area, space was used to artistically exhibit the school's motto for the year, which was "one school one family". In this space the school showcased some of the creative efforts of its learners' achievements and staff initiatives depicting the theme. Table 5.3 is a copy of an example of some of this creative work.

Table 5.3: Poster from theme display "one school one family"

<i>Intelligence is not enough</i> <i>Intelligence plus CHARACTER</i> <i>That is the goal of true education.</i> Martin Luther King
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Image 5.2.



Image 5.3



Images 5.2 and 5.3, learners spending time, chatting with and comforting senior citizens at an old age home.

These images (5.2 and 5.3) are few examples that show case the values of caring, loving and respect that are linked to the school practice. Other examples include Images 5.4; 5.5 and 5.6.

Image 5.4



Image 5.5



Image 5.6



Iris explained the context of Images 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 taken at a restaurant where the school staff rendered community service. She reported the details as follows:

A learner in the school has leukaemia, and had to undergo an operation that is beyond the affordability of the parents. The principal and other staff members convinced not only parents but the whole community to become involved and participate in a project to raise funds for this child. The staff had taken a decision to work daily for a month, on a rotational basis, at a restaurant daily, from 16:00 to 19:00. A percentage of their takings were donated to the school. Image 5.4 shows the crowd that gathered at the restaurant every evening, because fliers went out to parents and the community to support this drive. Images 5.5 and 5.6 are pictures of the staff members serving the customers and preparing the orders respectively.

This scenario conveys a strong message on the theme “one school one family”. It denotes an identification of shared goals and strategies based on a needs analysis of the school.

Continuing with the tour, I then had the privilege of meeting four educators who were on duty, who had been tasked to change the creative display of learners’ efforts, and include the latest photographs and captions of current events. I chatted informally with the educators who explained that they were members of the Marketing Committee. This is what Gail, the leader of the committee, had to say:

The marketing committee plans projects at least once in six weeks. The entire staff is briefed in on it. The staff then fine tunes the idea and put it into action. Parents and learners are involved. Form teachers select one learner’s effort per project, for display in the reception area and other parts of the school. The committee then has the pleasant task of putting up their hard work for display.

Iris then added that:

Every year our school decides on a motto. This year (2011) the motto is: “one school, one family”. Some of the objectives that we wish to achieve are: politeness to people, more especially to our colleagues and classmates. Do we watch the effect of our tone of voice? Do we praise or give credit where it is due or do we resort to constant criticism, sarcasm and petty fault finding?

I probed to find out more about the purpose of this theme “one school one family” and how it impacts on the development of the school. Iris responded that:

(T)he aim of this theme is to strengthen the expansion of love, everywhere. Character education is a DELIBERATE effort by the school to help children and young people to understand, care for and act upon core ethical values.

From her response I formed the impression that Acme School focused on spiritual and social aspects of development.

The setting and use of the school reception area space was in keeping with Lefebvre’s (1991) view, in that it captured the value that the school assigned to its image, as well as the respect it accorded to visitors and parents. On the transect walk thus far I had observed posters and photographs that pronounced the values of “one school one family”, which could encapsulate the collective entity of this school. In regard to this, Townsend (1996) argues that in certain schools

the influence of a vision can be traced to all the other aspects of the school. For example, where people take the initiative, contribute to decisions for the school, plan and solve problems. Examples of these can be seen in images 5.2 to 5.5, which highlighted one of the programmes that the school embarked on. These images seemed to portray a very exciting journey of character building at the school. They reflected learners eagerly participating in interesting activities which show them striving to become more caring, respectful, fair, responsible and trustworthy citizens. According to Gail, this programme contributed to building a strong and caring culture of the Acme family. In this regard she had this to say:

Our school climate has improved dramatically - we have noted a decrease in negative peer pressure, a decline in aggressive and antisocial behaviour and a remarkable increase in the number of pupils who are developing to their full potential.

Iris and I continued on the tour of the administration block, which included separate offices for each one of the SMT members. None of the SMT members was in office at that point. However Harry (HoD) was in his counselling room, which is adjacent to his office. Iris explained:

Harry is appointed as the school counsellor, after the school identified that social challenges, such as bullying, issues of discipline and absenteeism for long periods, were noted as some of the barriers to the learners' performance. The school appointed Harry, because he had the skills and expertise in Education Psychology to counsel learner and parent. He was willing to take up the appointment. Time was made available to him on the school timetable for counselling.

I then informally chatted to Harry to find out what his job as the school counsellor entailed. He replied:

I have discussions with the learner who need counselling. Sometimes professional staff, as well as parents or guardians are called in so that I could get to the bottom of the problem, so that the child can be assisted, particularly where academic and/or disciplinary issues are concerned.

He added:

I enjoy my job, although I find that the task has added to my teaching load. But it is so rewarding to see that after many counselling sessions with the children, sometimes with their parent and teachers, there is slow, but steady improvement in their results.

The discussion about the school counsellor pointed to the complex blend of leadership and management at this school. For example: the motivation, skill and knowledge usage, the infrastructure of support to the learners and parents tended to give the whole school the power to get involved and learn.

Iris and I then walked to the last room in this block, which was a huge office shared by two finance clerks. Iris introduced me to the two clerks, and explained:

The finance clerks handle all the school's finances; the educators do not collect any cash. The school is attempting to become a cash free zone, which means parents are urged to make use of stop order facilities, direct banking, cheques and credit card facilities.

Finance practices at Acme appeared to be different from the majority of public schools in South Africa, where educators are involved in collecting school fees which are thereafter handed to the school secretary for banking. Schools that arrange for all their financial transactions to be administered through bank accounts reduce the workload of educators. Moreover, opportunities for school level personnel to embezzle money are reduced. I asked the clerks if this school was also passionate over fund-raising activities to supplement the school fees. One of the clerks replied:

Yes we are involved in fund raising activities, but on a very small scale. Some years ago, at the request of our parents, our SGB took the decision to determine school fees that would cover running costs, without having to resort to too many fund-raising activities for survival. The school fee is an inclusive one, covering the full educational package for the year. The school is involved in fund-raising drives to support specific projects, for example the CHOC foundation.

I asked Iris to tell me more about the meaning of the phrase “the full package”. She responded:

The issue of “full package” school fees came about as we were concerned over the negative effect of ‘voluntary’ payment of fees. The impact of parents paying fees for on-going activities is that some of the children have been prevented from involvement in certain activities, due to lack of finances.

One of the major strategies at Acme Primary School towards self-managing was the school's decision to set the school fees as a 'full package'. This means that the school fee was set taking into consideration all internal costs and the cost of co-curricular activities for the particular academic year. Some of these activities included: school photographs, field trips, excursions, specialised sports coaching and the Maths Challenga which was externally organised. "Structuring the school fees as a package' relates to the requirements of SASA, Section 21, Function (b), which states that all learners in the school must have *equal access* to all co-curricular activities offered by the school. This suggests that with a full package school fee no learner at Acme Primary was excluded from participating in any activity because of non-payment of fees by parents. However, the general practice at many other schools is to charge a lower basic school fee, with parents paying extra for co-curricular activities according to their preference and affordability, as the academic year progresses. In this latter method although the learners may display an interest in the activity and would like to participate, many learners are excluded based on parents' inability to pay.

With regard to fund raising activities, Iris added that the school did organise a few fund-raising activities during the course of the year, but these were relatively low keyed as the aim was not to take the focus out of teaching and learning. Fund-raising events that were planned for specific purposes, included:

1. To raise funds that will assist the charity programmes that the school decides to support, for example, CHOC- The Cancer Association.
2. To involve the learners in a learning exercise using an entrepreneurial skill.
3. To enable talented learners to raise funds for representation at regional, provincial or national level. However this programme is reviewed annually and parents are invited to comment.
4. To raise funds for a special project. An example of which was this retaining wall, as evidenced in image 5.7, which was pointed out to me by Iris.

Image 5.7: Evidence of a Fund Raising Project



Iris then escorted me to another block of the school building, where the concrete retaining wall was shown to me. It seemed that this project was a product of investment in various capitals, for example it shed light on the skills required for planning and decision-making, finance and people working together; all of which seemed to give this school a collaborative outlook. This led to our visiting the school library.

5.2.3. The School Library

The library contained state of the art media facilities and technological equipment, diverse types of resources and equipments, a vast book stock covering fiction and non-fiction titles, and audio-visual materials. I observed recent publications on display as we entered the library. Here I met the full time teacher librarian, who was busy with a class. As we chatted, she indicated that:

Each class has a library period once a week. During this lesson I give them information relating to a Media Centre, they borrow books for information and recreational reading and I also read stories to the younger children. The children bring costumes from home and we dramatise scenes from these stories.

I observed a few ladies working in the far end of the library. Some ladies were arranging books on the book-shelves, others were covering and cataloguing books, while the rest were repairing damaged books. Iris introduced them as parents, who came in to help the librarian. The librarian indicated:

Library monitors also assist in the library during the lunch breaks.

At the core of every school is a pedagogic mission and the most important places for the achievements of that purpose are the classroom and the library. To this end, Acme Primary was fortunate to have a library that was a treasure-house of learning materials and which was functional with a full time teacher librarian. In this school's media centre learners and staff came in and appeared to "switch on to learning". Such favourable conditions are in contrast with schools in which I have taught, and other schools in my area - where form educators teach library activities integrated into the English period. This occurs without the assistance of a permanent, specialised library educator and there is a tendency that this subject could be ignored due to other pressing matters which often take precedence over a library period.

My visit to the library indicated that learners and parents were motivated to provide support with the management of the school library. I got the impression that parents cared about the school and that they contributed to the promotion of learning. In this connection this observation further endorsed the school's ability to plan and utilize the assistance of the community and the learners, which is important to the agenda of a self-managing school. This could, therefore, capture a glimpse of the culture of the school. Further, by providing learners who are library monitors, with opportunities to lead, is likely to inspire them to be responsible and it further develops them as true leaders to serve other people and the organisation. Decker & Decker (2000) argue that the drawing in of many stakeholders has always been recognised as an improvement in the school, especially where educators invite the learners and the community into school programmes and activities. This confers with Gultig & Butler (1999), and Mabaso & Themane (2002) (see pg 25), who argued that self-managing schools can benefit from high levels of participative management. According to these authors, school and community collaboration is not only destined for the benefit of learners at the school but also becomes a means and a way for the development of the school as a learning organisation. The data seemed to capture the role of social capital for this school functionality, for example parents and learners were seen taking more of a "hands on" partnership in assisting the school.

Our next visit was to the computer room.

5.2.4. The Computer Room

The computer room was equipped with 30 'state-of-the-art' work stations, each with internet access, and using up-to-date software. The computer teacher was supervising Grade Seven learners. He indicated:

I teach all learners from Grade 1 to Grade 7 for an hour of specialised computer instruction each week. The senior learners have access to internet in a controlled environment for research purposes.

I encouraged the computer educator to tell me more about the computer lessons. He responded:

We follow the Knowledge Network Curriculum, which is an accelerated learning programme used by leading schools throughout South Africa. This programme encourages active learning and stimulates the development of problem-solving ability, creativity, lateral thinking, time management and planning, logic and reasoning, listening, memory and concentration skills. Each session is project-based and fun-filled. Pupils from Grade 4 to 7 complete an external practical assessment at the end of the year.

The computer lessons offered at this school appeared to follow a structured, intensive programme. The educator seemed to be very passionate and motivated to share his knowledge about computers. He invited me to visit the computer room on another occasion, to look at their programmes. His positive attitude to his work espoused and enacted a calling that represents one of the many factors that could promote the development of a self-managing school.

Attached to the computer room, was a small “open plan” room, where worksheets were duplicated and stapled by an SGB appointed member of the administration staff. I noted the contrast in this facility with the majority of public schools where educators are under pressure to produce their own worksheets. Such simple, administrative and academic expectations placed on educators in many public schools add pressure to their educators’ workload. At Acme Primary I noted how the outcomes of self management, which related to staff stakeholders’ needs being met, and could generate greater commitment to the school by the staff. In this regard, Haefele (1993) cited by Wagner & Hill (1996) believed that if educators are satisfied with their job, it can be linked to opportunities for learning and career development.

5.2.5. School Safety and Security Measures

As we continued the walk from the computer room to the next block, where the classrooms were situated, I asked Iris what safety and security measures were in place at the school, because I had noticed that they had a lot of expensive resources, and furthermore the staff as well as the

learners needed to be working in a secure environment. Iris described the school's security measures in detail. A security guard was posted at the school gate during and after school hours, and on weekends the security guard patrols the entire premises. The school premises were fenced. The school operated an alarm system. In addition a security company patrolled the school during the day and night. In addition a security company patrolled the school during the day and night. The school was connected to the nearest police station and there was one police officer who worked in partnership with the school. The school has a detailed discipline, safety and emergency policy, for example, visitors were required to report to the office first and indicate the purpose of their visit in a register before meeting with staff members (which was only by appointments). Other safety and security measures included First Aid courses and professional development workshops conducted with the educators, in relation to school safety and security topics.

From this I learnt that the school had developed a strong culture of security and safety practices. This would enable the people of Acme Primary to work in a safe and orderly working environment. Furthermore, working in partnerships with the police officers provided additional security, but was also significant in terms of the school inviting external partners to develop the school. This further shed light on Acme exercising autonomy to self-manage, positively.

We continued with a visit to the school hall.

5.2.6. The School Hall

The foyer to the school hall displayed various sections of the learner's work in curriculum and co-curricular activities. Image 5.8: are pictures displayed in the foyer of the hall, showing learner prowess.

Images in 5.8: Depict Learner Prowess

 Participated in the Karate Championships	 She won at the KZN Irish Dancing Championships	 Medals received at the Hindu South Coast Regional Eisteddfod.
 Received Gold Medal at the KZN Stillwater Lifesaving Championships	 2nd - SA Kids Golf Tournament Mount Edgecombe Country Club	 Player of the Day Toti United Football Club

When we entered the school hall, I was warmly greeted by the school principal and the Speech and Drama educator. Both were busy coaching a group of learners on a choral verse. The principal displayed a confident stance giving the impression that he too, was comfortable and immersed in actual teaching and learning activities. I left the school hall thinking how active learning took place in various sectors of the school, not confined only to the classrooms or the sports field. This was confirmed by Iris:

The school hall is where the hub of school activities takes place, such as rehearsals, parent meetings, school concert and exhibitions. During the lunch breaks children who sing in the school choir normally gather here with the music teacher to rehearse for on-going school functions. The school is famous for choral music. In 2010 we won a prestigious trophy, and were ordained the best primary school in choral music in the district.

Aligned to the principles of self-managing, the school encouraged the use of their facilities, such as the hall, the swimming pool and the sports field, to the community at a minimal fee. This

brought in additional income to the school, for the up-keep and maintenance of these facilities. To frame my research to explore what it entails to be a self-managing school, multiple discourses were beginning to surface thus far from the transect walk. For example, an existence of a structure that opened up some space for participation of the different stakeholders, such as parents and members of the community, and the level of resources suggested the practical support in meeting the learning programmes happening in the school.

5.2.7. The swimming pool

Image 5.9: The Swimming Pool



We passed by this huge swimming pool with change rooms, shower facilities and a shaded spectators' stand. As we walked, Iris spoke about their water sports. She stated:

Acme Primary School is located at the coast, so swimming plays an important part in our summer sports' programme. We cater for all levels of proficiency, from beginners and novices to those who compete at provincial level. The basic skills, along with water safety and rescue techniques, are taught to all during Physical Education lessons.

I also learnt from Iris that many of their learners participated in the local Nipper life-saving, surfing, canoeing and open water swimming events. The school held an Inter-house gala each year. The Inter-house gala followed the format of the Inter-school gala into which Acme Primary entered a school team of over 60 swimmers. The team also participated in various friendly and inter-school galas against schools from the greater Durban area, and the upper and lower South Coasts. These are some of the pictures on display on the sports notice board.

Images 5.10: Swimming Gala



Water Polo was recently introduced, and had fast grown from a Physical Education pastime of "Splash" polo, to formal 6-a-side games against three High Schools in the area. Teams had played in the "beginners" and "advanced" sections with excellent results. The 2010 squad had played in several tournaments and had enjoyed a successful term of challenges, winning many of their games. But the highlight of the sport was when two girls were selected for the Kwa-Zulu Natal Under13 Water Polo squad and participated in the Inter-Provincial trials held at St Stithians College in Johannesburg.

The variety of water sport activities at this school, and the results of the participants demonstrated the multiplicity of inputs from the various stakeholders. The practice could not have happened from the effort of only a single person. This indicated teamwork in the school's functioning. The excellent results obtained by the learners gave the educators a positive feeling about their engagement in activities, as was expressed by a participant (Fiona), who stated this in an interview:

Our children are making us very proud. We feel appreciated and trusted. Our job is never mundane, dull or boring.

McGinn & Welsh (1999), argue that where learners are not doing well and results are not improving in a school, such a school would fail as a "high performing" school. Evidence from the transect walk in terms of the positive school image, learner centred activities and inclusion of the families in the learning process, provided a glimpse of the prevailing situation at this school. Chapter Seven presented a more detailed examination of these attributes and practices at this school, which formed the basis of a substantive theory of self-managing at Acme Primary School.

5.2.8. The School Tuck-Shop and Uniform Shop

Making our way towards the school tuck-shop and uniform shop, I noticed that the school tuck shop was closed during the time of my tour. Iris informed me that the Tuck-Shop was out-sourced, meaning that it was managed by a parent. In this regard, I asked Iris the motive behind the out sourcing of the tuck-shop. Iris explained that a needs survey had been conducted to establish what learners and parents preferred to be sold at the tuck-shop. After much deliberation on the matter, the school decided to lease the tuck-shop to external partners because they did not have the time and manpower to manage the Tuck-Shop on a daily basis. The school charged rental and supervised the items that were sold. The four capitals - intellectual, financial, social and spiritual, connected with distributed leadership outcomes seemed to be demonstrated here. For example, decisions about the type of food sold at the Tuck Shop were initiated by an educator who revealed skills in the management of good health and economic practices.

Attached to the tuck-shop, was the uniform shop, where new and used uniforms were sold. The shop was opened for sales for just two hours per day (12:00 to 14:00). I met the lady employed by the SGB to work in the uniform shop. It was a curious matter for me to understand more about the “used uniform” so I asked her to clarify. She explained:

Learners who have no use for their uniform, especially those who are leaving the school at year end can sell their items that are in a good condition to the school. The school has a policy on used items (which she explained) and more parents tend to purchase the used items because these are in a good condition and sold at half the price or less than the new item.

Here I learnt about how the school made decisions to help parents sell items of school clothing that was of no further use to them. The school made bulk purchases of uniform that were sold at cost price to parents. Another reason for the uniform sale at school was to promote learners coming to school dressed in the correct uniform. Although it may seem of little importance, learners coming to school in school uniform has a considerable impact upon the general tone of the school. The following comment by Iris typifies what educators do:

They check that the children are clean, as well as neatly and correctly attired in their school uniform.

With regard to the choice of the uniform, she stated:

The school uniform is determined by the parents and supported by the school. We have a different set of uniform for the Winter and Summer seasons.

Image 5.11 shows the uniform for the different seasons and the different coloured T-shirts that are worn for the different codes of sports. And Image 5.12 shows some learners dressed in their summer uniform.

Image 5.11



Image 5.12



Initially I felt that having different sets of uniforms for the two seasons was a costly business for parents, but the parents considered the comfort of the learners in designing the uniform for the hot summer months (see image 5.12); and the cold weather experienced in Durban (see image 5.11). This is contrary to Bush & West-Burnham (1994), refer to page 35 of the thesis, who stated that in a centralized structure, senior management holds most of the decision making power and has tight control over departments and divisions. The issue of school uniforms suggested strategic planning through the collective participation of the parents and the school.

5.2.9. Care Centre

Leaving the tuck-shop and uniform shop we then approached the Care Centre. Iris explained that while it may be a general practice in many schools that the school accepted responsibility for the care of each child from 07h30 until the end of the academic day, and for the duration of co-curricular activities, parents at Acme Primary took a decision to run an after-care service. It accommodated children whose parents were unable to collect them within 10 minutes of the end of each school day. The stated purpose of the care centre was to provide a safe environment for children until their parents could collect them. However, those who used this facility paid

monthly from 1 February to 1 November each year. Casual users paid a much higher daily rate. I enquired from Iris as to what the children do at the Care Centre. She replied:

The school's Care Centre offers the following: individualised Reading & Spelling homework for Grades 1, 2 & 3 pupils. We provide the venue and some assistance but not individualised homework classes for pupils from Grades 4 to 7. A free service is also offered to pupils returning from excursions and sports trips after school hours, until 5:30p.m. This service is extended to those pupils whose co-curricular activities have been cancelled at short notice and where the school's co-curricular programme can only accommodate them later in the afternoon.

I asked Iris who was responsible for the care centre. She replied:

It is a group of parents, who are paid by the SGB, and the SMT oversees the work.

My observation of the care centre reflected that it offered much more than concern for the safety of the children until their parents collected them. In addition to this, it provided a structured, stimulating environment, which included activities such as free-play, educational games, videos, art and project work. Free choice of activity was encouraged. It was clear that the managing of the care centre did not happen by chance. For example, Iris mentioned:

Parents were interviewed and then employed to supervise the after care centre. They work with the educators and HoDs in planning and consultation. This results in revision and extension of what was done in the curriculum programme.

In this example, I recognised a more “hands-on” role of the parents in the running of the school. Inviting parents to get more involved with their child’s education and school activities, is the backbone of the principles of a self-managing school.

Towards the end of the tour, we approached the classrooms in the Foundation Phase and Senior Primary block, I enquired from Iris about the composition of the staff and learners. She replied:

The teaching staff consists of thirteen department based educators, ten SGB appointed educators and there was also thirteen non educators (which included the administrative clerks and cleaners), some of who are state paid and others are employed by the SGB.

For a small school such as Acme Primary this was a relatively favourable number of staff members. This could be seen as a contributing factor to the improvement and quality of the education at the school.

5.2.10. The Classrooms

We walked past most of the classrooms because we did not want to disturb the lessons in process. However, at one stage I requested of Iris that I would like to see what the inside of a classroom at this school looked like. She granted me an opportunity to go into the classroom that was closest to us; so no particular classroom was selected. The Foundation Phase classroom we entered was well lit, with a carpeted story-telling area. The classroom was not over-filled with desks. It was colourful, had many resources, objects, posters and books that could stimulate interest and be used in diverse learning activities that could extend beyond the chalkboard. These resources further implied the school's ability to afford such acquisitions.

Image 5.13: An Inside View of a Classroom.



Inside the classroom the learners' desks were arranged in rows. However, I did notice that the majority of learners were seated next to learners of the same sex. I did not have a chance to enquire from the educator if there was a particular significance to this type of seating arrangements. In this class, learners were not separated, nor were they seated according to race. However in this regard, Iris mentioned that on rare occasions they did receive requests from new parents, appealing for the child to be seated next to a child of their own race, as the child may not be comfortable. The school did not accede to such requests. All the learners were dressed in their school uniform, thus I did not see a variety of coloured jackets and jerseys which is normal in many of the schools in the area that I teach. On one wall of the classroom appeared a complete

list of the learners' names with each learner's date of birth adjacent. Table 5.4 is an example of the classroom rules which the educator stated that she developed with her learners. It seemed that the practice of PEACE was highlighted. I observed that a positive reinforcement was made with each letter of the word. I took note of the positive tone of each rule. The educator avoided the use of the word "don't", hence the learners were forced to focus on the expected positive classroom behaviour. In order to improve teaching and learning, it seemed that learners were groomed to behave in a particular way that was accepted as the culture of the classroom, which could further extend to promoting the culture of the school.

Table 5.4: The Classroom Rules.

OUR CLASS RULES
P – PLEASE BE POLITE
E – ENSURE THAT ALL WORK IS DONE
A - ACCEPT OTHERS AS THEY ARE
C- CHOOSE TO BE POSITIVE
E – EAGER TO LISTEN

I found through the literature review that these are some of the elements that link with spiritual capital. For example, Liu (2007) suggested that one way to promote the culture of the school is by motivation, where the focus is on doing things for others in a small group, which leads to an enhanced practice of purpose and belonging.

As we continued with the transect walk, Iris and I discussed matters of general information regarding Acme Primary. Of interest Iris mentioned:

The school caters for learners from Grade 1 to Grade 7, with small classes (of approximately 28 to 30 learners per class). Those classes with a roll of 25 and below do not have teacher aides, whilst those classes with a roll of 26 and above have teacher aides.

Teacher aides are not privileged to all schools, therefore I enquired about the role function of these teacher aides. Iris explained:

Teacher aides work for half a day. They are employed by the SGB, to assist the educator with group reading, remedial work and other aspects of teaching in the classroom. Some of the classes share teacher aides.

We stopped the tour to enable me to meet with some of the educators who I had identified as participants for this study. Iris explained to them the purpose of my transect walk. Each of them appeared to be happy to participate in the study.

During the transect walk, I observed that the tone of the school was one of ‘a working buzz’. Educators in all the classrooms with the learners appeared to be engaged in their lessons. Even this was different to my experience in many schools, where learners may be left unsupervised if the educator was attending to another school issue outside the classroom, or educators who spend up to five minutes either finishing their tea after the ending of the break or chatting to their colleagues before they go into their classrooms. The transect walk provided a first glimpse of Acmes work environment, which appeared to be based on the ‘principle of performativity’. In this regard Thrupp & Willmott (2003) state that the organization should optimize performance by maximizing outputs and minimizing inputs (costs). Educators reporting to their duties on time and proceeding with their business illustrate some powerful influences enabling a school to provide education that is ‘value for money’. This lends itself to a better understanding of Benjamin Franklin’s (1748) argument that time wasted is money wasted, based on the theory of capital (see Chapter Three).

5.2.11. The Playing Field

From the end of the Senior Primary block, we had an over view of the school playing field. I was able to watch a class having a lesson in Physical Education, involved with Hockey skills. The learners appeared to be happy on the field.

Images in 5.14: Learners on the Hockey Field.



Once again it was noted that this school was well provided, in terms of financial capital. Other factors that seemed to surface which demonstrated, what happened in this school, are for example, the school had a variety of learning programmes to cater for different learner needs, stakeholders appeared to be working in teams and stakeholders had ensured that the school was operating in a safe and secure environment. The school grounds looked like a happy place where learners were engrossed in play. These factors could help to understand the way this school functions as a whole, supplying the children with a satisfactory environment in which to play and learn (le Roux, Nel, Hulse & Calderwood, 1956-7).

5.3. Conclusion: Reflecting on the Transect Walk

This chapter provided a descriptive analysis of my transect walk in Acme Primary School. This created an overall insight and understanding into the culture of this school. The school buildings such as the administrative block of the school, library, computer room, school hall, swimming pool, tuck shop and uniform shop, care centre, classrooms and the playfield were in good condition, suggesting that this school has the ability to offer learners optimum levels of education. The mural of the theme “one school one family” is the first thing that greeted visitors when they entered the school, and this communicated, propagated and endorsed messages of building unity, getting along, caring and sharing. It captures a positive ethos of the school. The children appeared to enjoy the variety of sports and learning facilities that seemed to cater for their diverse interests. Using the various posters and notice boards around the school to highlight my point, I received a fairly good idea of the various activities that were offered at this school.

It was apparent that this school had the financial means to progress in terms of resources and materials. This might explain the diverse learning opportunities that this school could provide

because they were able to obtain the necessary tools to attain their goals. Parents were seen to be actively involved in assisting the school. This is in line with the principles of a self-managing school, which calls for parents to support and assist the school. Display of learners' efforts and photographs could have motivated, involved and inspired learners and educators in doing their best at all times. This claim may be substantiated by Caldwell (2008), who is of the view that involvement of the learners, educators, parents and the community will have a positive influence on improving the results of the school. The principal also appeared to exert a strong influence in the school by "walking the talk". I got the impression that he adopted a "hands on" approach in school leadership and management; and was not just managing from the office. The implications emanating from the transect walk were that this school must have developed strategies to deal with the self-management of the school, such as leadership, goal setting, planning, task tracking and self-evaluation; as they could not have performed their expected functions if they were not in possession of such knowledge and skills (Clarke, 2007). This provided a basis on which to ground strategies for understanding what is entailed in a self-managing school. I return to some of these issues in Chapter Seven, where I presented and discussed data on "evidence of the school in practice".

The next chapter examines participants' understandings of a self-managing school.

CHAPTER SIX

EXAMINING PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF A SELF-MANAGING SCHOOL

6.1. Introduction

This is the second chapter on the findings of this study. The purpose of this chapter is to unveil and examine participants' understandings of a self-managing school, based on the conviction that people's understandings would have some implications on how they perform in practice. To do this, I turn to the memory accounts of the ten participants (the SMT members and educators), who would have had a chance to implement the principles of "a self-managing school". Because the focus is on the verbal understandings by the participants, the chapter brings together the data gathered by means of the two individual interviews with the principal and DP, and the two focus group interviews: one with the HODs and the other with the six educators.

The chapter unfolds as follows:

- I firstly signpost my route of presentation and discussion through one broad, mother question, "what is a self-managing school"? These perceptions of a self-managing school had implications for instance, on how these stakeholders perceived the phenomenon, and had a huge influence on what they encouraged or discouraged in the development of the school. So, SMT's and educators' perceptions of a self-managing school played a significant role in shaping the school as self-managing.
- I expand my scope of understanding by further breaking down this question into sub-themes, to make explicit the issues that needed to be tackled in a self-managing school. In the first sub-theme I discuss how the participants understand a self-managing school from a financial perspective. I asked questions related to finance because as argued in Chapter One, a self-managing school is richer and more loaded than a Section 21 school, in the South African context.
- The second sub-theme relates to the participants' perceptions on the role of professional development as an important component for the sustained improvement of a self-managing school. I justify this choice based on the theoretical framework, which

suggests that an in-depth understanding and practice of ongoing professional development is fundamental to the development of a self-managing school.

- In the third sub-theme I examine data in regard to the role of partnerships in developing the school. It is expected that greater cross-school and community interaction, sharing and learning brings several benefits for a self-managing school. Here I wanted to learn if different stakeholders worked together in practice, how this can play out in varying ways in the school context in promoting goal achievement.
- The fourth sub-theme focused on the participants' perceptions of the spiritual culture of the school. My interest in including this theme to the study stemmed from the growing body of literature which claims that spirituality can positively influence both quality and professional competence in the school.
- In the fifth sub-theme I considered the role of management and leadership (more especially distributed leadership) in meeting the school goals, in view of its being a substantial thread that runs across all the themes in this section.
- Finally the chapter closes with a discussion of the issues that emerge from the mother question, as well as from all the sub-themes.

It becomes necessary here to introduce the participants through pseudonyms, in keeping with research ethics, as explained in Chapter Four (Methodology Chapter). The purpose of this introduction is to make explicit which of the participants' views that was being unveiled, for example, was it a member of the SMT or a level one educator? Moreover, how participants perceive a self-managing school could be intricately linked with their position in the school.

6.2. Introducing the Participants

Table 6.1: reflects the names that I allocated to each of the ten participants.

Table 6.1: Pseudonyms given to the Participants.

Participants	Sex	Pseudonyms
Principal	male	Richard
DP	female	Iris

HOD 1.	male	Harry
HOD 2.	female	Jane
Educator 1	female	Ann
Educator 2	female	Bernie
Educator 3	female	Carol
Educator 4	female	Debbie
Educator 5	female	Evelyn
Educator 6	female	Fiona

These pseudonyms are used for the SMT members in this chapter and for all participants in the subsequent chapters. In this chapter educators' names were not used, as the focus was on what the overall group said and not individual participants' perceptions. Throughout the chapter I have used extracts from the participants, presented in italics, to set them apart from the other literature used.

6.3. Participants' Perceptions of the Question: "What is a self-managing school?"

As explained above the central question of this section is, "What is a self-managing school"? In this regard Richard (the principal) said:

A self-managing school is required to be more accountable and approachable to local people in the community. Within the organization we have the authority to take decisions and set the direction of work. We can do this by drawing from the network of different abilities, skills and knowledge being available.

I probed further to find out how Richard views his role as principal of this school.

Well, I'd say my role has changed from the first time that I was appointed a principal of this school. Now I rarely teach. My time is taken playing more like a leadership and management role, supervising, getting work done and promoting the school. I seek for sponsorship, getting all stakeholders involved in the functionality of the school..... and I

need to keep the ship afloat amidst constantly threatening seas. I have to lead and motivate the educators, learners and parents; therefore I have to be more responsible than for just ensuring that policies are implemented.

I asked Richard to tell me more about the other tasks that his role entails besides policy implementation. He added:

I ensure that there is continuous self-development and professional development going on, to empower the staff so that the quality of the whole school improves. We have to stay focussed on and connected to the school Vision.

Regarding the participation of parents and educators in decision-making, Iris (DP) had this to say:

We must realize that we are equal partners in moving this school forward. We need to strengthen the participation of the SMT and educators in decision-making..... (Pause). But even in self-managing schools, it is necessary that there is a certain degree of central control and co-ordination from the SMT, as the principal is still accountable for the overall operation of the school.

I enquired from Iris why it was necessary for the SMT to have control. She replied:

The SMT cannot be blind to what is happening in the school. Every school has a Mission and a Vision that drives the school. It is the responsibility of the SMT to ensure that every person is working towards the same goals, is using resources and techniques to the maximum. We have to motivate each other to ensure quality and success.

Richard's views and Iris's views were consistent with the principles of a self-managing school, to promote the practice by inviting educators and parents to get involved and support the school. Furthermore, they understood a self-managing school as intricately intertwined with increased accountability and responsibility on the part of individuals as well as the school collectively. The message continually reinforced was, *"the school was striving to be the best in promoting learning"*. This further highlighted Richard's comment that: *"the school is accountable to the parents, educators, learners and the community, therefore we have to remain focused and keep looking at where we are heading"*. Iris indicated a belief that there were many elements that

played a significant role in organisational success, an example of which was parents and educators having greater participation and decision-making power. However, she added that because the dynamics of self-managing schools are complex, the SMT should operate from a position of ensuring that the different parts of the whole are working towards the key goals of the school. In this regard, major transitions towards self-managing schools in South Africa have been in disorder because too few schools are prepared for the challenge of active participation of stakeholders balanced with the SMT maintaining overall control (Bagraim, Cunningham, Potgieter & Viedge, 2010). In a sense, schools seem to find it difficult to separate stakeholders' participation from management control. In the past, many South African schools were over managed and under led. Successful schools are those that find a balance between organisation and control, and leaders that advocate developing more leaders within the institution (Grobler, 1996).

In the focus group interview with the HoDs, Harry and Jane had this to say with regard to the concept of a self-managing school. Harry said that:

The school has to manage by itself, therefore the workload has increased. But there are various committees that assist with the smooth running of the school. This means that people will need updated information to enhance what they are doing. As a SMT member my role is to co-ordinate these committees effectively, to provide support, encouragement and guidance so that the school can improve and run efficiently.

And Jane added:

Responsibility has definitely increased as the school developed into a self-managing school. For example, we are under a lot of pressure to provide lots of different opportunities for the learners other than to just focus on what's happening in the classroom. We are also expected to get more involved in meetings and school activities. The principal repeatedly makes it clear at staff meetings that this is our school and that each one of us needs to make a contribution so that our school goals are achieved. He has indicated that if we do not want to work, we should inform him so that we can be replaced.

The next question I posed was: "Has your role as a HoD changed in any way under self-managing"? Jane's view was:

Yes, my role has changed, but the hours of management duties for HODs have not changed. Before our school was declared as Section 21, we had to merely check that the educators were implementing policies set out by the education authorities. I felt like a supervisor. It was about quality and control. Now I feel more like a manager and leader. Our task areas extend far beyond the conventional teaching situation and the tasks require skills and knowledge of a different nature.

Harry interjected:

We are more involved in the decision-making process at school. I think it is important to expect some sort of academic-professional management qualification from HODs. If educators are expected to be academically and professionally equipped before they can teach, the same requirements should be set for promotion positions. As HODs it is very difficult to do the work if we don't have support systems in place. It is important to have sound relationships with the educators because we need their support in order for all of us to work well together. We cannot instruct the educators to do certain things. In fact, leading, sharing and planning are a whole school initiative here.

Jane supported Harry by saying:

Our responsibilities have increased. Self-managing means more administrative work. So we try to make the educators understand that they got to meet certain standards and do certain things, that will make the whole system run more easily. So I think, to that extent, we have become more organised, more accountable for what we are doing. But it is a little easier now to manage, since both of us are non-form educators. We have more time to focus on our management roles.

Rae (2005) maintains that self-managing schools could create teacher overload and excessive paperwork. In this regard both HoDs found their role to be more challenging in terms of work load, and reflection on the practice meant more concerted attention to various issues in the school. Harry commented that:

Higher number of meetings, professional development sessions and networking with other schools are now held, where more people are talking, discussing and trying things out. It also involves setting the budget, managing resources and evaluating new things to see what works.

Consequently, Harry conceptualised a self-managing school as a whole school initiative. He indicated that work, such as planning, leading, decision-making and organizing, was shared

through the formation of various committees. Similarly, Jane stated that everyone made a contribution to enhance the efficiency of the school. Hence, both believed that ‘sharing’ chores and responsibilities was a marker of what shapes a self-managing school. Fullan (1992) acknowledges that schools should be developing stakeholders’ potentialities to support the system. In addition to reducing educators’ workload, maintaining strong on-going networking with outside agencies is necessary for assistance and support. The school must be aware of what is on offer in the community, so that quick responses are able to be made in ways that benefit the school. Fundamental to the success of the school is that the SMT must lead the process and as such accept responsibility for departments and the overall functionality of the school.

Neither of the HoDs at Acme Primary were Form Educators. This impacted positively on their work as HoDs. This is a rare practice in most of the primary schools in the Umlazi area, as HoDs normally have to manage a form class, with a full teaching load, and perform management duties in their respective departments as well as perform their SMT roles. Being a non form HoD is considered an ideal situation, where more management time is devoted to motivating, monitoring, mentoring and developing educators. These are important duties and roles in the school that promote achievement of vision and goals. What is emerging from the data is that leadership and management are recognized as an important element for success in organisations. It implies that self-managing schools are not only “about pupils or good teaching” (Dalin, 2005, p.19). One of the chief responsibilities of the school is to make time available for SMT members for personal growth and the effective execution of their duties.

In the focus group interview with the educators, one participant stated her belief that, now there existed greater competition amongst schools. In this regard, she explained:

The staff seems to be more interested in our school competing with other schools. This adds value to our school because the harder we work, the greater the positive effect on our learners in the school. We are now providing a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. On a positive note everyone is given an opportunity to empower themselves and lead various activities. In this way we can say that we are effectively contributing to the functionality of the school.

Another participant affirmed the above and added:

This means that each school should have the right people and the money to plan the way it runs its own business.

I asked the participant to describe a little more what was meant by “right people”. The participant replied that “they” referred to hard working, skilled and dedicated people who are needed in every school. She accepted that the best qualifications are important in recruiting staff, but added that academically qualified people are not necessarily committed to the organization. Her comments suggested a view that highly qualified people may not necessarily equate to providing good quality education and service. Schools tend to absorb highly qualified educators when recruiting new educators, to uphold their intellectual investment, but hardly invest in professional development to optimize the staff capabilities. This links to Chapter Three, where I noted Fullan (1993), who argues that the entire concept of self-managing focuses on performance improvement. The implication for the study is that it becomes necessary for stakeholders to engage in on-going professional development which would enable them to have a wide range of information, skills and the ability to process this information critically and intelligently in support of the process of self-managing. An important feature of a self-managing school is the link between the growth and development of the staff related to the growth and development of the school.

Another participant in the focus group was of the view that:

In the traditional approach, we focused on the children in the classroom. But with the new way of self-managing, there are too many things to do. The SMT and educators are expected to be a Jack of all trades. This means we have to be highly organised and manage time well. I prefer to focus on the learners directly.

I enquired from the participants how they coped with these feelings of overload. One participant responded that:

We cannot change the policy of schools becoming self-managing. But in order for our school to be effective it is important that we all continue to be friendly, support and help each other. We respect each other as individuals, because we are all members of a team in this school. No one is more important than the other in terms of position. We have to be open to different ideas and opinions.

A different participant elaborated:

The principal comes on strongly that we all have to contribute to the school functionality. This got me out of my comfort zone. Now I do get involved more often and have gained much experience. I also feel appreciated for my work.

Some important principles of a self-managing school that emerged from the question on participants understanding of a self-managing school included increased accountability and responsibility. For example, Richard believed that “in this setting” there was a great deal of accountability in all aspects of the school, expected from all members in the school. This view suggested that making people accountable for their work, is one way of strengthening the school.

The majority of the participants agreed on the view that the principal was still accountable for the overall operation of the school, and as a consequence he should be the main decision-maker in the school. However, this study found that at Acme Primary School all stakeholders were collectively involved in decision-making and that the principal at times made final decisions based on the recommendations of the stakeholders and the needs of the school. Another issue that arose from the remarks made by the participants was the possible use of power and threats from the principal, to force stakeholders to contribute to the core business of the school. This was illustrated by Jane (the HoD) who stated that “*if they did not want to work the principal could have them replaced*”. In this regard Bank (2003) states that principals may possess substantial resources of authority and influence, which could be used to dominate people and determine their behaviour. People would likely not challenge such threats, but invariably revert to adhering to them to gain or retain acceptance in the school. This matter tends to operate against the core elements of a self-managing school, which seeks a “softer”, more empowered style of leadership, providing support and encouragement to the stakeholders, inviting and democratizing local decision-making of all stakeholders. Although South Africa is moving towards greater and wider adoption of the principles of self-management in schools, there still appears to be substantial ground to cover in terms of bridging the gap between a hard, controlling approach to leadership and a communicative approach. Ideally the “doors should be left open”, the staff must feel willing and be able to talk openly with each other, sharing problems, ideas and learning (Fullan, 2002). This issue will be explored further in the next chapter (Chapter Seven).

While most of the SMT members and educators showed a common understanding of increased participation in leadership and management duties, yet not all participants had the same understanding of their formal involvement in such duties. This is implicit in the contribution of two educators’ response regarding issues that concern their roles and responsibilities. One participant stated:

As an educator I could also mentor and support other educators, a role that was previously restricted to the SMT.

This participant, whose teaching experience exceeded 20 years of service, perceived her contribution as a healthy source and beneficial to the school, yet the lack of the title as a SMT member, did not deter her from the unlimited involvement in the affairs of the school. In fact the educator was unaware that she did indeed display leadership skills in the school. Although based on the views of one participant, her perception calls into question Sarnoff's (1990, p.523-524) remarks that when the concept of a self-managing school is not understood and does not correspond with the interests of those who have to apply it, it is not well practiced.

Participants also reported that their functions have changed with self-managing, leading to increase in workload, where participants felt burnt out with teaching, coordinating professional development activities, organizing a variety of sports and cultural activities, and the management and leadership duties. The implementation of self-managing meant that the school was tasked to come up with ideas and action steps towards the achievement of goals. Other participants felt that self-management gave stakeholders many opportunities to become empowered, and engage in activities where people got more involved in values of caring, sharing and participation in decision making. Such perceptions highlight the need for organizations to move away from the traditional hierarchical design, to flatter, leaner structures that support a more empowered, team based work force (Horner, 1997).

According to SASA (1996), it is expected that schools should operate in participative ways that promote the development of a self-managing school. While issues of different opinions and tensions infuse the data, the extracts above denoted one common feature, that of participants' contributions to the school and the value of these contributions to the success of the school. Such perceptions suggest that the contributions of the human force were the order and priority of the school (see Chapter Seven). Denying people the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions and decision making carries the prospect of limiting stakeholders' human potential to take an active part in issues that affect them. The data on stakeholders' participation illustrated that it is not something that should be taken for granted, or that it will happen naturally. It is possible that the contextual factors, such as the collaborative leadership style and the availability of resources at Acme had an effect on educators' engagement in school activities and the performance thereof, which are strong features pointing to the overall direction that a self-managing school should take. This also suggests that holding schools more accountable for their

performance will only work if there are people in schools with the knowledge, skill and judgement to respond appropriately to the challenges to improve. On the basis of participants' perceptions this study deduces that a readiness for implementation or understanding ensures that the school processes and structures are primed to meet new demands. Such qualities are crucial for making schools more self-managing and more efficient.

6.3.1. Perceptions Regarding the Role of Finance in a Self-Managing school

In the individual interview with Richard, I asked, "how he could explain or account for the "importance of finance for the day to day functionality of the school?" He responded:

Finance is crucial to the functionality of any school, but so is the hardworking staff; which is the key to the success of this school. But with good finances the school is able to do things without much dependence on the Education Department.

I asked Richard to tell me about some of the challenges he experienced with financial management. He cited the following:

We have to manage large sums of money that the school never managed before. This demands strict financial management and control. We have to be cautious when spending. We have to be innovative and creative in managing our finances. For example we involved the learners in decision –making by asking them for suggestions on what healthy items should be sold to them at the school tuck shop. The results were amazing. We are under constant pressure to improve in terms of organizational knowledge, including budgeting skills. There is greater demand on me as the principal, because of my position as Chief Accounting Financial Officer.

In response to the same question, "how can you explain or account for the importance of finance for the day to day functionality of your school?' Iris responded strongly:

We are a Section 21 school and this was largely determined by the financial status of the school. The financial resources in the school are crucial for us to function. Without the necessary financial support, schools are not likely to succeed.

She continued:

Most people on the staff do not have the necessary qualifications to audit books or discuss the finer details of finances. Educators' involvement in decision-making with regard to finances, at this school is limited. Finances become challenging especially

when it comes to employing skilled people to audit our financial books, which also extends to other financial projects of the school. We are forced to hire external people with the required qualifications and skills.

The central issue emerging from this discussion appeared to be based on earlier perceptions (see Chapter One), that the school cannot rule out the importance of finance. Richard maintained that there are other components in the school system that adds to the total value of school success. But Iris claimed that while other assets are important, everything hinges on finance.

In the focus group session with the HoDs, Harry explained the importance of finance for the day to day functionality of the school:

There is no way that a school can self-manage with limited or no funds and resources. Our school is successful and is improving because the school is based in an advantaged economic area. Parents can afford to pay high school fees.

Jane had this to say:

Each school designs its school programme according to its budget, needs and plans. The quality of the school resources are determined by the school's financial resources. Therefore, marketing the school, striving for high standards from learners and parents are some ways we recruit more learners. When more school fees are collected, self-managing becomes easier.

Jane also spoke about the benefits of being financially independent of the Education Department.

We do not look to the department to support us financially. This is an advantage because we do not rely on the department and find excuses for the schools poor performance. We go to high levels in planning and delivery. Educators and learners are happy here and we enjoy both the intra and extra-mural activities that the finance enables.

Harry raised an important issue based on the school fees. This is what he had to say:

All extra and co-curricular activities are built into the school fees. Therefore no child is omitted from any activity because of non-payment. We have the best resources one can expect. Our school is successful, based on its capacity to finance a number of activities.

I asked the HoDs if they would like to describe a little more about the importance of finance. Harry responded:

Schools that are financially secure have a head start to self-managing and this can be sustained and improved with a committed and capable staff. I taught in schools that are financially deprived. These schools generally are struggling. The staff becomes demotivated to work because they don't have the facilities and sufficient resources to perform their tasks adequately.

Jane added:

Such schools may also not deliver better academic performances if the matriculation (school leaving examination) pass rate and the literacy and mathematics tests in grade 3 and 6 are used as criteria. So I think that finance is the most important factor in a self-managing school.

Harry's comment reinforced the earlier comment that all children are involved in co-curricular activities. Both HoDs found agreement on the issue of finance being a key ingredient in building a self-managing school.

The views of the educators in the focus group interview to the question: "How can you explain or account for the importance of finance for the day to day functionality of your school" stimulated the following comments: One participant stated:

Our financial situation has privileged us in many respects. For example our school's financial situation has enabled us to employ extra teachers, who are SGB paid. Therefore the educator: learner ratio is 30:1 to 35:1 learners per class. Educators are able to provide individual attention which the children need, especially in grades 1, 2 and 3. So, my point is finance has enabled us to improve our results.

Another participant's view was:

Educators are paid by the SGB for extra or co-curricular duties that extended beyond the normal school hours of duty. This does not apply when all staff members are involved in duties after school hour, but is applicable when the odd one or two educators are on duty. The payment for extra hours of duty is an incentive that increases our month's salaries. Educators were willing to work after school hours.

A new participant added that finance had created a comfortable work environment for the staff and learners. She stated:

I enjoy my job because we work in a comfortable environment. Parents also state that their children love to come to school because every day they are involved in different, creative

and fun-filled activities that cost money....I network with educators from poor socio-economic areas and in those schools, they struggle to survive. Their goals are different. Here we have the necessary resources that enable us to focus on the quality of teaching. Finance is the glue that holds all the key elements together.

A different educator agreed with her colleagues by stating:

Our school is located in an advantaged area. Parents pay high school fees which have allowed us to purchase resources that we need. We are well resourced. We can address children's needs here and tend to use the best of everything. Children are given lots of different learning opportunities.

Then one educator responded:

Schools are experiencing numerous financial challenges. I think it is a major reason why it is taking longer for most schools to succeed.

Another participant stressed:

In poor areas, schools are claiming that parents do not pay school fees. And the department is saying that the child cannot be denied an education if fees are not paid. Schools are confused because they cannot function with the funds that the department provides. Therefore schools have now become like a business where they have to think of resourceful ways to bring in money to pay the bills.

I probed to find out how the school functioned like a business. One educator said:

We adapt leadership and management practices from businesses, for example the principal told us about Toyota starting from a small manufacturing company, and now Toyota is famous for its focus on quality, based on team work approach. So we took some important lessons from that story.

I asked the participants to please explain exactly what they learnt from Toyota, and one educator responded:

It is the people in the organisation who bring the system to life: working, communicating, resolving issues, and growing together. But Toyota goes well beyond this; they encourage, support, and in fact demand employee involvement. From the look at excellent companies, we understand that theirs is a system designed to provide the tools for people to continually improve their work. So what I understand is that Toyota is dependent on people like.....working in teams, supporting and helping each other,

inviting external expertise and always making people feel welcome, adds to the quality of the business.

And other comment to this question was:

Like a business, as a self-managing school we have the freedom to choose our own suppliers and materials according to the needs of the school. Our direct negotiations with suppliers give us an opportunity to negotiate prices and look for quality.

My final question on the issue of finance was: “What are some of the benefits of your school self-managing their finances?” One perspective was:

We get limited response, if not no response from the department on certain issues. Furthermore, I think that if schools are over dependent on the government, it suppresses the school’s initiative to plan, improve and develop according to the needs of the school. At our school we do not have to wait for the Education Department’s approval to plan and put our business plans into action.

Another participant went on to say:

If the Education Department is funding our schools, they may have more say in the running of our schools, their interference increases. More often than not, they do not understand the context of the school and come with standardized suggestions, which may not necessarily work in all schools.

Following on this, the next participant stated:

The Education Department has a number of schools to respond to. Very often there are delays in department response and often there are times when the responses arrive after the matter has been dealt with at school level or forgotten about.

Being aware of the context of this research site and the community added to my understanding of how finances were interpreted and expressed in this school. In the post apartheid era, South African schools were classified as either advantaged or disadvantaged according to a set of norms and standards, which were based on finance. In many instances the social, economic and cultural background of the school has evolved with the new quintile classification of schools (Vally, 1998). This means that schools such as Acme Primary that could have their needs met in terms of the availability of water, electricity, proper sanitation and the general maintenance and conditions of the buildings are predetermined as advantaged schools to a certain degree. But this leads to asking the “so what” question. So what if Acme is geographically located in a “middle class” suburb, with beautiful school buildings and equipment, and low learner: teacher ratio.

These factors were perceived to be some of the factors that supported the classification of this school as an advantaged school, which is assumed to be the basis for effective schools. It became apparent from the data that the participants tended to focus on how the financial benefits played out as pervasive in all activities of the school. Such perceptions of finance have the potential to inequitably under rate the importance of the amount of time and effort it takes in planning, organizing, leading and managing a school. This could imply that the participants did not consider the needs, management and specifically good leadership as fundamental in the assessment of an effective school. As discussed in Chapter Three, a school can have the finances but above all, the management thereof is also important.

Regarding the participants' understandings of the financial aspects of a self-managing school, the majority of the data showed a much higher level of awareness to be skewed towards the importance of the financial role in a school as compared to the intellectual, social or spiritual capital. The majority of the participants, with the exception of Richard contended that self-managing schools are shaped largely by the school's financial status, which takes centre stage on the agenda of successful schools. They argued that funding cutbacks can negatively affect staffing, resources and teacher professional development, thus impeding attempts for school improvement. For example, one response was that *"some schools are struggling with self-managing because of the lack of finance"*. Another response was that, *"finance is the glue that holds all the key elements together"*. Evidently, the participants' perceptions are that the requirements of school functionality are challenging and seem to demand a long list of variables that are financially based. Hence an examination of the school in practice, in the next chapter (Chapter Seven), explored how the school puts these various elements together.

It is not being suggested here that Section 21 schools are advantaged to some degree and that it is problematic for schools to function without finances. Acme Primary School seemed to have had the financial strength to be able to employ a growing number of SGB paid staff. Consequently, it seemed that their dependence on the government was minimised. Indeed, the way the school had structured their collection of finances (see Chapter Five, 5.2.2) may be a classic example of their decision-making and intellectual skills. For instance, participants claimed that with a special committee handling the school finances they were not stressed like other school educators, who spent much time becoming either over-active or trying to do too much with regard to financial management and fund raising activities.

With regard to the school finances Richard (principal) seemed to have a broader view on the role of school finance. He accepted the important role of finance, but added that, *“every time the school entered a new stage of development, we were required to adjust what we were doing to accommodate new ideas. Sometimes new leadership was needed”*. His view illustrates that there are other factors that shape a self-managing school, such as visionary leadership, vision-led activities, planning and systematic processes and structures that needs to be put in place. Hence, the central finding of this study is that one characteristic alone, namely finance does not define a self-managing school. Clearly then, the fact that participants suggest that finance is the priority in the functioning of self-managing schools, confirms the extent to which they are unaware of a number of the major principles that govern the operation of self-managing schools, despite that they are key stakeholders.

6.3.2. The Perceived Role of Professional Development

This section is presented in two parts. Firstly working from a premise that all schools in South Africa should be moving towards becoming self-managing schools, I wanted to explore whether the SMT and educators were continuously developed through professional development, and if so what methods of professional development were used to develop them? These factors are significant to the study because the influence of professional development promotes growth and facilitates improvement of the school. My second focus was on the ways the SMTs and educators were using their knowledge and skills to contribute to the organization; for example, were they able to make more knowledgeable and informed decisions.

In response to the first question, which was: “Are you continuously empowered through professional development at the school?” Richard indicated the following:

Professional development is not a once-off activity at our school. It forms an integral part of our school programme. We see the importance of continuous learning to improve and update our knowledge and skills in everything we do.

I asked Richard to tell me how he was developing professionally. Richard very passionately replied:

I keep myself-abreast of the changes by reading all the time; I subscribe to educational journals. Being the chairperson of a professional body that focuses on school leadership and management, I network with other principals in the area and down-load information

from the net. I share this information with my staff to empower them, and I further use this knowledge whenever possible for daily school functionality.

Then he added:

Every year that I taught a subject, I presented the topics in different ways to my learners. I try to do that in all aspects of my school work. I look for creative ways of doing routine things. My point is that opportunities for professional development arise all the time and educators must use every chance to grow in their profession.

Iris had this to say about the SMT's and educators' continuous professional development:

In order for it to be effective, educators need professional development over an extended period of time, not once-off workshops. At Acme we engage in various forms of professional development, where we address the needs of the individuals and the organisation to improve our efforts.

I asked Iris to explain some of the methods they used to develop educators, and in this regard she had the following to say:

An example of one method would be the use of grade meetings, where educators of the various grades meet to discuss subject numbers of relevant issues such as: content of learning areas, lesson planning and assessment, instructional strategies and actual teaching/delivery of lessons, skills in mapping, curriculum and classrooms management and discipline. We also discuss issues such as recording and analysis and reporting on learners' progress. These meetings may be chaired by the Grade Leader or the HoD. Other examples are mentoring new teachers, student teachers and teachers needing guidance in specific areas. Educators also coach their peers.

It was very clear from the interviews with Richard and Iris that professional development was regarded as important to the development of Acme Primary School and its people. However, it was not just identification of areas that required development that resulted in success. It seemed to be combined with certain actions, such as goal setting and led by vision, to be effective.

Next I explored the views of the HoDs, with regard to the following i) Are you continuously empowered through professional development at the school? ii) Explain some of the methods used to develop educators professionally?

Harry reported:

At our school we strive to decide our own fate. Our professional development is organized into two broad categories: long-term and short-term. The aim is to provide tools that will enable the staff members in continuously solving problems, to produce better results and add value to the organization.

I asked the HoDs to explain how professional development workshops were planned and conducted at the school. Jane stated:

Firstly a needs analysis is done once a year. The topics come from the staff. At a staff meeting early in the year we prioritize these topics according to the most urgent needs. Members of the staff may volunteer to research the topic and make a presentation. Handouts are sometimes given. Occasionally we may invite professionals, as guest speakers to address the staff.

Harry added:

Short, professional development topics are also presented at our staff meetings. Our agenda is normally divided into two sections. The first section involves general matters that require staff decisions on school functioning, and the second part relates to professional development.

With regard to how the staff members were using this knowledge, Harry stated:

It depends on the nature of the topic, for example the Senior Primary educators wanted to know how to teach a child basic skills in reading. Teaching basic skills of reading is not part of their syllabus, but they experience problems with new learners coming from other schools, who struggle to read. Hence the Foundation Phase educators conducted a workshop on teaching reading. Senior Primary teachers are now trying out these methods with learners who are struggling.

The outcomes from the interviews revealed that Acme Primary had shaped the professional development programme through formal and informal types of educator development (Wylie, 1997) (see Chapter Three 3.2.1.2.). This included staff members' presentation of a topic, professional speakers addressing the staff, and "in fact every opportunity is used for professional development, to improve the institution" (was stated by Jane in the interview).

I proceeded with the focus group interview with the educators, on the questions: "Are you continuously empowered through professional development and if so what methods of professional development are used?" This was one view:

Professional development in the school occurs through continuous learning. Through professional development we learn from our people from within, rather than getting them from outside the organization. We try to adopt what we learn and improve ways of doing things. We learn from others through workshops, working in teams and networking with educators from other schools.

Developing this idea further, another educator's views were as follows:

Other methods of professional development include classroom visits and lesson observations by SMT members. These can also be seen as opportunities for professional growth. At least once a term, SMT members observe educators teaching a lesson, observing the classroom environment and supervising learner records and learners' exercise books. This is followed with a discussion and a written report, comprising of positive comments and suggestions for improvement.

Another participant indicated that professional development was not just for educators. She elaborated:

Parents are also invited to our school development workshops if the topics are relevant to them, especially when we have guest speakers.

A further contribution was:

I think we need to invite more guest speakers to address us. It is always good to hear a different voice and these professional people get direct to the issues of the problem.

In agreement with the last two educators, another participant had this to say:

I had issues of coping with ADD children. I was becoming frustrated because these children were not making much improvement. So we invited a trained educational psychologist to school to give us information on ADD children and how to treat such children. Parents were also invited to the workshop. We were allowed to ask questions and I now have a better understanding of how to help these children with their learning disabilities.

The last participant in this interview had a slightly different perspective. In this regard she stated:

I agree that the SMT gets all of us involved in the process of professional development. We are invited to offer our suggestions on topics, get opportunities to present topics and recommend guest speakers. Our suggestions are considered for future planning..... But I feel that more people should be allowed to attend external capacity building

workshops, maybe on a rotational basis, as compared to only the HODs attending and cascading the information to us.

When I probed further to ascertain why this was the practice, one educator responded that:

In the majority of cases, external workshops are conducted during school time and HODs have less teaching time. Therefore their attendance at workshops will not affect the functionality of the school as compared to when level one educators attend.

The final item for discussion on professional development was: “Discuss some of the responsibilities that you have been entrusted with, which has enabled you to use your renewed knowledge and skills to contribute to the development of the organisation”. Harry explained:

I have pursued my studies in family guidance and counselling and this came in good stead as I am the guidance counsellor for the school. The school subsidises external courses that I attend so that I can keep abreast of new knowledge.

One of the educators added:

I am passionate about “soft-ware” developments on the computer. I spend endless hours on the computer discovering different programmes. On numerous occasions I was given the opportunity to share my knowledge with the staff at professional development meetings. My skills are put to good use in the school as I frequently assist in the design of programmes, for example the Mathematics challenge.

The data from the educators on the professional development programme at Acme added to the examples expressed by the SMT, which included learning from others through workshops, working in teams, networking with educators from other schools, classroom observation and lesson observations by SMT members, followed with discussions and written reports. The willingness of the SMT and educators to contribute to professional development tasks was noted. For example, participants indicated that they chose professional development topics which were mostly determined by the needs of the school. In addition the school had invited external speakers, who were professionals in specific fields, to address the staff and parents on pertinent issues. Members of the staff also researched pertinent issues and work-shopped the staff. Although in most cases guest speakers were once-off speakers who were invited to the school for a specific task, they could be used in the future as powerful links to guide the success of the educational development at Acme.

Complexities of the context demanded that professional developmental actions not only encompassed catering for the diverse professional needs of the educators, but also involved parents being invited to some of the workshops, so that they too could be empowered. As such, strategies were aimed at supporting and encouraging all stakeholders to develop what they were able to do to their best potential. This practice was in keeping with Harris's idea (2008), where he asserts that if the goal is to have a supporting impact on the whole school development, professional development initiatives should be linked to issues of relevancy to the school. In this regard, Fullan (2009) adds that, the most powerful learning always occurs in the context of where action is taken. Meeting this challenge at Acme necessitated, "*getting the balance between loads of new learning, the workload and the existing practice*" (Iris). Therefore, while participants acknowledged that professional development occurred at their school, there was a need to examine the school in action (see Chapter Seven) to see how such processes and procedures were implemented in practice.

6.3.3. The role of SMT and Educators in Building Partnerships

The literature review and theoretical framework have provided an understanding that individuals acting alone in schools cannot change or transform the school into becoming a self-managing school, nor can the school succeed or survive if they endeavour to play a lone hand (Harris, 2004; Hopkins, *et al.*, 1994). Hence it seems necessary to this study to understand how team work and partnerships are used for the success of the organization, especially when it comes to reaching goals. I have organised the findings into two parts - internal partnerships (teamwork), and external partnerships (networking).

6.3.3.1. Teamwork within the School

When I asked Richard to what extent educators are given the opportunity to work in teams and to explain the main functions performed by teams, his views were as follows:

Yes, working in teams or committees is highly operational (sic) in our school. Self-managing schools require creative, problem solving and collaborative work processes. So working in teams became necessary.

I asked Richard about the activities in which teams were involved. He replied that:

Teamwork is evident in almost every activity in the day-to-day-business of the school. Educators are involved in teamwork in curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Examples of these can be found in the various codes of sports, school concert, clubs and community driven activities. Educators are given the opportunity to operate as leaders such as curriculum leaders, grade heads, and as leaders of various committees. Team work involves for example planning projects, providing the resources and evaluating the results of the activities.

In my interview with Iris I asked her how team work was organised in the school. She replied:

New team members are allocated to different teams once in two years, but the team leaders change every year. A SMT member is also distributed to each team. Twice a week we have briefing sessions in the morning where all teams are brought together, and the leaders explain the progress of their team work.

I enquired why SMT members were distributed to different teams, to which Iris responded:

SMT members do not co-ordinate the work of the team, but they oversee the process. They guide, support and provide resources if necessary for the team.

I then probed further to find out why team members remained the same for two years. And Iris replied:

Some members are in certain teams for the first time. They have indicated that they need more time to learn from mistakes and gain expertise with a particular activity. Therefore team membership for two years was introduced.

Regarding the benefits of teamwork, Iris stated the following:

With people operating in teams we get more work done in less time. There is more brainstorming of ideas which adds to the quality of our discussions. The team is a platform where even the shy people feel heard. Through these small groups working together, issues of trust, safety, and respect are developed.

The findings reflected that teamwork played a significant role in the management of the school. This dimension is framed by Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) in Chapter Three, where it was stated that people in the organisation and community should be appropriately used for their strengths as a means to improve the practice. Such a view departs from traditional perceptions of stakeholders working in isolation which could separate peoples' abilities into oppositional attributes instead of working towards a common goal. SMT members facilitated the bringing together of the efforts of the teams to provide continuity for the total functionality of the school.

This is consistent with the views of Johnson & Johnson (1994) who state that for organisations to be productive, teams must be individually accountable, yet the integration of each other's success and well-being must be merged and promoted.

The responses also revealed the importance of every member serving their team. In this regard, the HoDs had this to say. Harry's view is that:

Teamwork has many advantages. Even the reserved educators get an opportunity to participate in activities because they feel less intimidated in smaller groups. Some educators are very active members and they come up with creative ideas to overcome the group challenges, whilst some team members take longer to adjust and work with each other. But we have to work around the challenges and try to motivate team members so that they can get on with the work.

Jane further emphasized the following:

I think everything we do in our school has a purpose because it involves much thought and planning before we put it into practice. So yes, team work is a good way of giving everyone a chance to make decisions and to work together. But, asking a group to work together does not mean that they will. It has to be organised, structured and supervised, even though members know each other.

Harry's and Jane's views reflected consensus on the benefits of working in teams. Jane agreed with Iris that team work, like any other aspect of self-management, if it is not planned deeply, could cause additional problems such as irregularity in the school. This is consistent with the views of Thompson (2004) who argues that it is possible for teamwork, despite its many advantages to lead to confusion, conflicts, delay, and poor communication.

In the focus group interview amongst the educators, I asked them about their experiences as team members and team leaders. In this regard one participant expressed her views on the practice of members within a school team changing on a regular basis:

It's good that SMT changes team members every alternate year. In this way we are able to work in different teams with different people as each one has different strengths to offer to the group.

Another participant had this to say:

When a team works together for a longer time than one year, we develop a bond and there is a greater sense of team spirit. It gives one a feeling of security..... I think teamwork can be effective, depending on the partners. Some members do not offer as much support and assistance to the team. As a result other people have more responsibilities. Sometimes it gets frustrating.

To fully understand teamwork I also wanted to explore participants' views on how leadership operated within teams. Hence I asked, "Tell me about the leadership of teams". In this regard, the first response was:

Some members are very reluctant to take on leadership of the team. Although our school policy is that everyone should be developed, they prefer to be members because it does not involve coordinating the business of the team. Sometimes there is tension and debate when there are no volunteers for team leadership. When a team leader is eventually elected it seems that people are forced to take on this role. It could be that they don't give of their best.

Another perception was:

Generally teams are well managed. Leaders display different leadership styles. They have a sense of responsibility and encourage sharing of ideas. There is interaction that allows for giving and receiving. We explore ideas, debate difference of opinions, but speakers are respected.

I encouraged participants to talk more about the leadership styles of the team leaders. In this regard one participant stated:

Some teams are more productive than others because of the leadership. Leaders need to have adequate skills and knowledge to lead the project and know how to improve performance of the team. Some leaders tend to take more of the decisions and force educators to do certain duties, without much discussion on the matter.

Another participant came in with this response:

Others can be over appreciative, thanking you for every little thing that is done. Sometimes at the end of the team project, the team leader gives each team member a token or a reward of appreciation.

Then the next participant stated:

Some leaders involve others to be “sub- leaders” within the team, if they show expertise in certain skills that are required of the team. This leadership style is substantial because it allows members to take on significant ownership of the work that they enjoy and are willing to share with others.

Then there were instances, where participants indicated that although team leaders were the driving force of the team work, performance was improved with the presence of the SMT member on the team. One participant’s experience on this issue was:

It is good that the SMT is also part of team work. They do not take over the duties of the team leader but very subtly, they evaluate the progress of the team activity, offer support, ensure that each team member has a duty, that we are achieving our goals, and so forth. We do not get the feeling that we are doing the work and they get to sit back. When team members notice that SMT members are not very supportive of the project, their interest and commitment seems to waver too.

Another participant had this to say:

The principal may attend few meetings too, however he has an overview of what is going on in the team, because leader has to give regular feedback to the rest of the staff, at briefing sessions, which we have twice a week.

Then there was one participant who preferred not to be a team leader. She had this to say:

I do not have good experiences with leadership. At times I have no choice but to accept, but I don’t really like it. I don’t have the personality, knowledge and skills for it. I think that it should not be forced upon us.

In delving deeper into understanding the participant’s concerns, I probed further to ask what distressed her regarding leadership roles. She responded:

A leader has to direct and coordinate the activities of other team members, assess the team performance, be well organised, provide support and encourage others to do the work. I can support others informally, but I find it difficult to be in a formal leadership role like a team leader and check if the work is done. I don’t like to be in control of what others are doing. Sometimes I tend to allow team members to work at their pace; then it ends up with too much work at the end of the project and the work is not of a very good standard.

On the other hand some team members expressed a view that they felt fortunate to be given the opportunity to facilitate a team and that they enjoyed the experience. One such participant shared her view:

I enjoy working in teams. I have good human relations. It is good that leaders change all the time, because it gives all of us an opportunity to become empowered. The experience that I gained as a team leader has given me the confidence to take on bigger responsibilities as a leader in other activities of the school, which requires me to be supportive, make judgements and direct the team.

Participants held the view that generally teams were well managed at Acme Primary School, where members displayed a deep sense of responsibility and shared ideas. Although participants viewed team work to be equitably distributed, it was obvious that individuals in each team differed in terms of their contribution, where the active members took the lead in getting the work done while some members were slow in executing their tasks. Such perceptions support the views of Campbell & Southworth (1993), who suggest that team work thrives when people work in a collegial environment, supporting and assisting each other.

There was also an indication of poor leadership and management of the team in terms of directing and coordinating the activities of team members, assessing the performance of each team member and more so in the setting of due dates with the team (Wheelan, 1999). This was indicated by one participant who stated that “*sometimes it gets frustrating that some members are slow in completing their work; as a result other people have more responsibilities in assisting them*”. In another example, one of the educators indicated that “*some team leaders take most of the decisions*”. If team leaders tend to over control teamwork, it can be negatively affected. This correlates with MacGregor’s (1960) views, where he states that when leaders take decisions by themselves, the information flow is downwards, hence upward contributions are distorted. In this regard, Marks, *et al.*, (2001), argue that effective functioning of formal teams, places significant emphasis on the role of the leader within the team. This suggests that team leaders need to be visible, yet allow team members the space to accomplish their tasks to the best of their ability. Chapman, *et al.*, (1996) also contends that the progress of self-management could be hindered if not all participants in the team are committed to the process. The practice of team work is explored at greater length in the next chapter (see Chapter Seven).

6.3.3.2. Networking with External Partners

I asked participants if the school sought the support and guidance from external partners and if they could explain how this occurred.

Richard had this to say:

Networking is important to the school. We receive remarkable moral support and assistance from external sources. Sources of support include workshops provided by NAPTOSA (a Union) and equipment and material sponsorship by parents. An example of the latter is the sponsorship for the purchase of library books for the school library by a parent. Thanks to neighbouring businesses we have the trendiest sports kits. We work like business partners, as the German's say "when one hand washes the other" (laughs).

I probed deeper to find out what Richard meant by "one hand washes the other". He replied:

Networking can become a two way benefit. The school benefits in terms of funds, materials and general upkeep of the school. The service providers benefit from the promotion we provide for their business. We express our thanks to them, in our newsletters, issuing them with letters of appreciation and certificates from the school. Accomplishments of the school appear in the local newspaper, and if external partners are directly responsible for these achievements, they are mentioned by name. This is good advertising for the company.

Iris had this to say regarding the support gained from some of the external partners:

We network with community workers and local organisations, such as SANCA, Lifeline, the Police Force and Childline because they are professionals and they add value to the quality of service we provide. They assist the school with skilled resources to deal with specialized cases.

These responses from Richard and Iris suggest that the school engaged in school-business partnerships with professionals and business leaders in the community to improve the education experience. The school built partnerships that fitted their unique needs, and which encompassed a wide variety of activities such as presentations for staff development, donation of goods or services, manpower, guidance and financial resources. They reported on how in most cases, networking provided a win-win situation for all involved.

The HoDs' perceptions on external partnerships were as follows: Harry stated:

The SMT and educators work together in identifying areas where skilled people are needed. One of the areas we tap on is former students.

I asked them to explain how *former students* formed partnerships with the school. Harry responded:

The school goes back many decades. There are former students who had happy days at Acme Primary School, and many of these students are skilled workers or professionals. They respond to our appeals for help. All we have to do is ask.

I probed further to enquire what sort of help former students rendered. Harry once again responded:

They assist with coaching sports on a Saturday, financial assistance such as purchasing refreshments for a parent function or sponsoring plants for the school. They provide on-going support to the school, if we tell them what we need.

In this regard, Jane spoke about a recent project that they had been working on. This was what she said:

We are always appealing to the community for help. For example we now need the skilled services of people to help us find more support for our young children coming from homes with single parents, who are working until late in the evening. In some occasions these young children are left unattended. Ideas for supporting these children are rolling in, but we need more concrete help from the community. This is a project in progress.

Implied in Jane's view was that the extent to which Acme stretched to work in partnership with various stakeholders to meet the needs of its learners. In the educators' focus group interview, most of the participants painted a positive picture of the community providing the school with support and guidance. One perspective was that:

Schools have to work consciously at drawing in external partners, because some tasks are very challenging and we do not always have people at the school with the appropriate skills and talents to undertake such tasks. Parents have many talents and much expertise to offer the school. Many of them feel a sense of belonging and want to help. Maybe it is a matter of tapping the right people at the right time.

In this regard, another view was that the school worked with external partners when problems are detected and corrective measures need to be taken. The participant reported that:

External partnership is about seeking the type of help you need. Working with external partners adds value to any school. I found it to be especially beneficial when a child in my class complained of being “sexually abused” (words changed). The principal contacted professional people to attend to this sensitive matter. The principal, my HoD and I worked together with the parents, the medical team, child welfares, the police officer and our school guidance counsellor, to assist the child and the family.

Another participant stated that:

The principal has immense power and authority over every aspect of school management including the management of external relationships. He invites people to the school. He talks to the people in the community about how well the school is progressing and what the school needs. He's a good P.R. man. He knows the right people to contact.

Then another participant added that:

When the school identifies a need, which requires the services of certain service providers, the principal encourages stakeholders to suggest names of people or organisations that the school can contact. The members of the staff show keen interest in identifying people who can assist the school.

New light on this matter was thrown by the next participant who felt that the community was less collegial in their approach when providing support and guidance to the school without payment. In this regard, this was what she had to say:

Despite rich people residing in the area, their support is not readily forthcoming all the time. We try to invite the community, but they do not respond if they do not get paid for their services. The response is best when payment is paid or if the activity directly involves their child.

Another participant had a similar response and she stated:

There are a small percentage of parents who have the time to assist the school. But generally people prefer payment for their services, especially maintenance done for the school.

A few participants tended to believe that the local people were not always willing to participate in activities for which there was no monetary gain. Despite this perception by a few, the group perception appeared that in this school there were noticeable ways in which the school had been improved, as a result of the assistance and support of different sources of external partners, such

as the parents, the extended community, local organisations, local businesses, community workers and ex-scholars. The support provided to the school beyond the educator's expertise came from professionals such as those working at SANCA, the Police, Lifeline and Childline. This support illustrated some principles of self-managing, as exemplified in the theoretical framework, for example, a sense of community belongingness, team effort, cooperation, positive attitude and above all, the purposeful tendency to build a healthy learning environment for the learners. With the focus on networking, Katiza (1995) argues that external participation in school developmental programmes could be an empowering experience, because participation and empowerment are two sides of the same coin.

Whilst the reported discussions from the interviews displayed the benefits of working with external partners, Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) in Chapter Three, caution that schools should not be too aggressive in networking with their local business community. They explain that schools should find an appropriate balance to be developed from within, in solving their own school problems. Building from within implies, firstly drawing on the existing knowledge and skills of the people at the school (Eloff & Ebersohn, 2001), and then adding on the expertise and support from the outside.

6.3.4. Perceptions on Spirituality in Shaping a Self-Managing School

Studies on self-managing schools traditionally focus on leader traits, intelligence, finance, social behaviours, beliefs, task functions and styles of stakeholders (Bush, 1995; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). However, discussions on the theme of spirituality were introduced to gain understanding on how spirituality and spiritual learning could promote a self-managing school.

At the outset the reader should be informed that at the beginning of my interviews on the question, "What is your understanding of spirituality in schools?" participants' understanding fostered traditional views equating spirituality with religion, faith based schools and religious convictions. For example, my conversation with Iris illustrated that:

Spiritual values are associated with faith. They are the foundation on which certain organisations are based.

An educator's understanding was:

Spiritual capital refers to faith based schools such as the Christian based school or the Sathya Sai School.

All the participants were able to talk about spirituality as necessary in developing the school, but it did seem that it was not a familiar subject. Several participants found it difficult to express themselves because of the diverse and complex meanings associated with the term (see theoretical framework in Chapter Three). However during the process of the interviews associating values of personal and cultural beliefs that encouraged moral behaviour came forth. Such responses were as follows.

Richard mentioned that:

It is evident from the media that there is expanding pressure on schools to produce better results. But we will be abrogating our responsibilities as educational leaders if we ignore the issues of spirituality. We need to provide spiritual care to those who come to our public education system.

A self-managing school is a training ground where members practice service to others; it is an instrument for the transformation of our schools. Richard expressed this as:

Spirituality has always been part and parcel of the schooling experience for our learners. We make space in our school for spirituality to be discussed, and particularly, for spiritual knowledge to be taken up as part of the school's curriculum. We emphasize connectedness, belongingness, identifications, well being, compassion, love, and peaceful co-existence with nature and among groups.

It seems that emphasis is now on a paradigm shift from thinking about education as a separate entity to thinking about learning as a lifelong process. On addressing the issues of values building, Iris indicated that:

Spirituality is not taught in the context of subscribing to any higher moral or religious order. I mean we teach general human principles to strengthen the spiritual sense of self, which is not necessarily in association with any religious denomination or particular dogma.

Iris added:

The educators are attentive to and respectful of the different religious faiths, traditions and cultures of others in the school. We consider the value of the spiritual and emotional development of the learner.

During the focus group interview with Harry and Jane, we also engaged with the questions: "how is spirituality practiced and in what ways does it manifest itself in the school?"

Harry suggested that:

Diverse knowledge is needed in order to develop our schools and education. Education should not be disconnected from the life of the community of which the learners are members. We teach our learners that schools are not only about what they take from the organisation but what they give back too. Each one of us has some valuable contribution to make to the school and to our country.

This suggests another possible interpretation of spirituality. The participant believed that school context was influential on their integration of spirituality into the life of the community and learners. As such the school values systems, programmes and cultural practices are some of the contexts that afforded the school and the community opportunities and expectations to express tolerance, care, generosity, compassion, joy, and giving back to the organisation. School contexts called forth appropriate spiritual behaviour in the school and the community should also contribute to the development of spirituality in the school practice.

And Jane said:

The individual has a responsibility to the community and it is through spiritual education that the connection between the person and the community is made. In this sense we teach sacredness, respect, and compassion, the ability to relate to others and to act without any ulterior motives.

Jane spoke further regarding the way in which Acme Primary School recognizes and drives a programme that re-enforces knowledge, skills and attitudes on a wide range of activities to develop the spiritual assets of the school. This was what she had to say:

It is through our curriculum that we teach kindness and caring for ourselves and other living beings. Our kindness must be reflected through our actions, words and thoughts. Well, to put it simply, it means going out of one's way to help others. The majority of people we work with go the extra mile to help others.

Spiritual assets of the school include people acting in good faith, trust, stewardship, a drive to serve, their sincerity, commitment, zeal, convictions, a sense of purpose and other human and morals values. Although these characteristics are not peculiar to the development of self-managing schools, they can make a difference to teaching practices and self-management through greater awareness of moral-values, attitudes and actions. Such outcomes would relate to

issues such as personal resilience, interpersonal relationships, job satisfaction and organisational performance.

In the educator group interview, a participant had this to say:

We tell our learners success stories, as well as stories about the failures and disasters of others. We learn from these stories, success cases and how these characters grow and develop themselves through their own creativity and resourcefulness.

She explained:

Too many schools are violent places where learners brutalise or bully each other. Such schools are lawless and dysfunctional. Adherence to core values either provides strength or it can hinder the development of the school.

Another participant explained her views from a practical, values-based philosophy, built around her sense of importance of the value of interpersonal relationships. This is what she had to say:

I believe that before we start teaching maths, reading and writing, the children need to develop a value based school culture. They've got to know what the school stands for, and then the learning can occur... Part of this spirituality is tied up with just the value of life. For example, I love my school and I enjoy what I'm doing.....What I am trying to say is we teach children to value life. So part of spirituality is the importance of life; your life and other people's.

It was implied in the participants' understandings of spirituality, that it might have practical application in self-managing schools. Spirituality is woven into each person and the style or approach taken in their behaviour displays this. For example, spirituality is in the performance of daily tasks and responsibilities, implementation of educational policy, enhancing and sustaining school climate and culture, and the management of learners and personnel. This illustrates that spiritual capital is therefore comprehensive and intensive. It can be used as a moral fibre in schools to better equip learners and stakeholders to contribute effectively to their tasks, their relationships with each other and in daily life. Participants recognised that without common spiritual values in place the journey to quality self-managing schools cannot progress. In this regard, the next participant expressed her views as follows:

As educators we have to model what good interactions look like, what good people skills look like, what good interpersonal skills look like. This includes a strong sense of positivity and a love of life, which in turn is intended to develop good people. We teach

the difference between right and wrong behaviour, how to treat people and interact with people, then real learning can happen after that, not before. Part of spirituality is tied up with just the value of life.

For most of the participants, spirituality was linked to the value of life, a deep sense of commitment to the children and trying to make a difference in their lives. The sentiments of one participant were illustrative of this:

To me spirituality is to help others and to bring out the best in others ... that's why teaching is my calling... ... hopefully my aim is to get the children to think about other people in this world. I go the extra mile to care about the learners, their family and everything about them.

Another participant explained that spirituality helped her to think about the learners' holistic development. She expressed that:

As educators we need to contribute to the common values of the school and help our children by directing their choices to develop strong values and a strong sense of identity. This will help them to define their role in life. One of our school values is that we really have to make people feel good about themselves and anything they do.

In this regard, another participant responded:

I think learning to read and write is secondary. If educators and children are troubled they cannot give of their best. They maybe at school, but they cannot do much. This becomes a serious barrier to working or learning. If no relief is offered to them, then it could lead to deeper seated problems. In this school there is no place for condemnation of our learners. We use every opportunity to make children feel worthy to succeed.

Several participants conveyed a belief that spirituality is connected with personal identity and helping children to understand who they are. The identity aspect of spirituality could help children to develop a sense of belonging, in terms of their cultural identity, relationship with the school and connectedness to the universe. One example of such a view expressed by a participant was as follows:

I think children should know why we are on this land, and things like that. I suppose that part of spirituality is being proud of oneself, who they are and why they are here.

Another contribution was:

It can be stated that prior to 1990 the school system was characterised by a uniform and predictable curriculum policy which can be described as racist. But presently at Acme there is respect for the diversity of cultures. In all our activities we make a conscious decision to embrace all cultures. It adds to the richness of our lessons or activities.

In exploring the extent to which spirituality is inter-connected with what they understand about self-managing schools, this is the perceptions of the next participant:

I think spirituality is so integral to the way we live and do things...and everything that happens daily... It's not something we can separate out easily. It is an on-going process.

The literature review did not affirm that spirituality would be a panacea for the challenges in self-managing schools, but what it did indicate was that spirituality may provide another source for understanding the context and the ability to work through the dilemmas in the school in relational, moral, and authentic ways. Statements such as “*spiritual knowledge has been taken up as part of the school's curriculum; we teach general human principles to strengthen the spiritual sense of self*”, suggested that the SMTs and educators' spiritual knowledge complemented their professional experience and behaviour. In the context of a self-managing school, participants seem to accept that spirituality had personal and professional relevance for quality education and care of children. It was something that informed their professional behaviour and teaching. Statements that bear relevance to these are, “*we learn from these success stories and how these characters grow and develop themselves; we use every opportunity to make them feel worthy to succeed*”.

The participants described how this particular school context and the different daily situations provided opportunities for their spirituality to be included into their professional practice. For example one participant stated that situations arose that required of them “*to model what good interactions look like, what good people skills look like, what good interpersonal skills look like*”. It is suggested that this urges educators to be caring, show empathy, manage stressful situations calmly and show moral responsibility. Furthermore, in these ways the participants associated the positive attributes of their school context as influencing their understanding and application of spirituality into their daily functionality. One participant's perception was that the school and the community should not be “disconnected”. As such, this includes the daily task of the community to reinforce and promote the core values of their school and to work collectively to instil values of justice, peace and harmony. Perhaps, the participant's perceptions were

informed by the school having a Vision and Mission in place for the guidance of the behaviour of staff, learners and parents.

Participants expressed that Acme was attentive to and respectful of the different religious faith and traditions; they showed “*respect for the diversity of cultures*”. Acme’s school systems, their curricular and co-curricular programmes and cultural practices, were some of the contexts described by participants that afforded them opportunities to express tolerance, empathy, care, generosity, compassion and joy. For example, (see Chapter Five, Images 5.4; 5.5 and 5.6.) where spirituality was filtered and fitted into significant events. This was particularly noticeable to participants during tragic events in people’s lives and that of the school community. For example, in the case of the learner in the school who had leukaemia, and had to undergo an operation that was beyond the affordability of the parents. In this regard, Gibbs (2006), states that spiritual values need to be woven into the professional tasks of educators, ensuring that the school climate and culture is safe, relational, life-skills based and focused on a positive vision.

6.3.5. The role of Management and Leadership in Shaping a Self-managing school

The interviews based on this section addressed the questions: i) “What are your perceptions of the leadership and management roles at your school? ii) How do these roles meet with the vision and operational matters of the school?

In response, Richard felt that it was firstly necessary, to tell me about the Vision of the school. He stated:

We endeavour to be a leading primary school in terms of providing the best possible, most relevant, balanced education, with equal emphasis on character development and academic achievement.

He continued:

To ensure that we meet this challenge, we strive to provide an ideal teaching and learning environment in terms of well-motivated, high calibre staff and quality facilities.

I followed this up with the question: “So how is the leadership and management style aligned with the school vision? Richard’s response was as follows:

We encourage an inclusive and participative management style. I do not make all the decisions. We try to delegate work evenly across the staff, so that different people lead and manage different aspects of the work. So we are not only developing learners, but our staff as well. The atmosphere at the school is not tense. The participation of the educators is spontaneous. People seem to be motivated to work.

The willingness of the staff to work with the school vision was illustrated when Richard portrayed some of the key values of the staff such as:

(P)ositive attitude, task commitment, and team pride.

Perhaps the most significant factor was the human interaction, as was further noted by Richard:

There is a culture of co-operation, respect and sensitivity towards others. Ultimately we attempt to create a stimulating environment and support the conditions under which the educators and the learners are able to achieve effective teaching and learning.

And in response to the same question, Iris stated:

The educators are happy that the teaching load is equitably spread. Educators are motivated and happy to work here. The educators are now more involved in the school functionality. They share in decision-making. I feel that there is a strong bond between the educators and the SMT members at the school.

In the interview with the HoDs, Jane spoke about factors that encouraged educators to become more involved in the school functionality. She claimed that:

We have high calibre educators. We respect them, and give them the freedom to be innovative in their approach to their work. The principal supports decisions and the participation of the staff in all matters pertaining to the effective functioning of the school.

In addition, Harry had the following to say:

The participation of educators in decision-making, planning and organizing activities is encouraged at the school, as different people have their own areas of expertise. Their active involvement in these activities has improved the efficiency of the school. All events are regarded as opportunities for learning.

Educators claimed that a collegial leadership and management style was fostered at Acme. One perspective was:

The principal does not simply transfer his own beliefs and opinions onto the staff. He encourages meaningful participation in decision-making. The emphasis is not only on academic work. Our planning involves the shared decisions by the staff. By sharing expertise, we are able to offer more to the school.

The next participant qualified this by saying:

The principal is not the sole owner of the school's vision and goals. Neither does he coerce us to support his wishes. If he did, this may have a negative influence on the collaboration and collegiality in the school.

Then another participant pointed out that:

Our principal leads by example, which demonstrates an approach that contributes to SMT members and educators wanting to get more involved in the school.

Another participant added:

Decisions are not forced onto the staff. There is great emphasis on teamwork. Although educators help to make decisions, the senior management makes the final decisions. The SMT listens to our complaints and queries, for example overload of work, and they have a strong sense of trust in us.

A contribution from a different participant was that:

Educators, who have specific talents, are given the opportunity to manage a portfolio that is within their level of expertise. In this way educators are able to produce high levels of performance.

And the last participant gave the following response:

Educators are encouraged to take risks rather than fear failure. We do not feel that we are being left on our own. In this way more is learnt, and ultimately improvement is noted in the school.

A collegial management and leadership style was seen as the foundation of the positive work ethos of the SMT members and the educators in the school. It seemed that this approach helped to extract the best from people, as “*the atmosphere at the school is not tense. The participation of the educators was spontaneous. People seem motivated to work*”. Educators seemed happy to

work at Acme and this gave them the incentive to go the extra mile and offer inputs at the school that were beyond the expected norm. Perhaps this might justify why educators played participatory roles in the management of the school. The implications for self-managing schools, was that such encouragement had the potential to strengthen the educators continuing involvement in the school activities. The strong relationships between the SMT and educators extended beyond their academic work, as was stated by Richard, *“educator attendance is good, educators are happy to come to work, which results in higher motivation to give of their best”*.

Indeed, it was noted that the educators were given many opportunities to be developed at Acme Primary. All the educator participants were in agreement that the SMT members provided support and guidance to them to fulfil their duties. *“We encourage an inclusive and participative management style”*, suggests that it was not the sole responsibility of the SMT members to lead and manage that school. Part of the school vision was getting stakeholders involved. Sergiovanni (1991) supports this view by stating that enabling or empowering educators is an important aspect in establishing a collegial management style. To this end, Bailey & Adams (1990) assert that schools that demonstrate participative leadership styles support educator innovation, promote staff co-operation and initiate staff development programs, are bound to develop and improve.

I asked participants questions to ascertain a deeper understanding of whether they distributed leadership within the school by engaging different people in leadership roles. Richard said:

We all play a leadership role sometimes, depending on the situation or the organisational needs at that time. Each one has expertise in some field and they give the others directions about the activity. So the individual would then lead, guide and support the others; which means that roles of leadership are exchanged for roles in membership.

Richard then added with pride:

It may be difficult to develop a self-managing school to its fullest without developing a shared culture of leadership. Although educators spend most of their time in the classroom teaching, they are valuable assets to our school. They have the expertise to make decisions, lead and guide others.

Implied in Richard’s view is the assumption that he had an understanding of distributed leadership. Iris drew attention to the intellectual capital of leaders when she said:

At our school different people lead different activities. A person who leads often has some skills and qualities that other members can benefit from.

The HoDs had similar perceptions. Harry said that:

We are all invited to become full partners in decision-making, leading and managing different tasks. But no final decisions are taken without discussions with the principal or the SMT.

This was the response from Jane:

The school has been qualified as an "effective school" based on the strong leadership in the school and not forgetting the principal as the driver of this ship. He allows educators the responsibility to lead whenever the situation arises. But he does not give the leaders total reins. From a distance, he is monitoring, supporting and guiding the staff to ensure that the work is effectively done.

The SMT's notion of sharing their role function, as well as providing leadership to others illustrated their perception of leadership where each person feels a sense of value. This means that leadership was not necessarily relegated to the level one educators, but the focus was on expertise and what each individual could offer the school for growth. In exploring the understanding of the educators' role in the leadership of the school, this was one participant's response:

The SMT and educators should be the major role players in leading and managing the school. Although we are given numerous opportunities to lead and manage various activities in the school, I still tend to look up to the SMT as the people who are designated to do these tasks. It is just my way of looking at things.

The next participant begged to differ; she stated that:

In order to ensure that the school functions successfully it is important that all SMT members and the educators become familiar with the leadership functions. In this way we use the particular strengths of each person to bring about changes in the school. I think the success of a school is achieved through different people's contributions in the school.

The next educator perceived leadership to be particularly challenging, especially when people occupy such positions without knowing what their role functions entail. The comment below illustrated this participant's position:

Leadership is not about control. A leader is one who knows the way, shows the way and goes the way. To be a good leader one must learn to be a good follower as well. It's a give and take situation.

In what follows, the participant gave attention to the sensitive understanding of staff needs and aspirations. In this regard the participant stated:

As colleagues we are continuously leading, motivating and encouraging each other. This culture at our school contributes to our success and the quality of the service that we provide. It encourages a sense of unity and team effort.

I asked the participants: "In which areas are educators involved in leadership"? An educator responded as follows:

Educators chair learning area meetings, present workshops, and network with educators from other schools. Staff development programmes are organised by educators such as, the workshop in isiZulu and Computer Literacy. Peers are allowed to observe colleague's lessons for new ways of teaching certain aspects of the curriculum.

The next participant brought up the issue of the educators' role in leading in-service educators and assisting novice educators. In this regard, the participant had this to say:

Educators often provide in-service training to student teachers, colleagues and novice teachers. I was instrumental in organising a parenting workshop on a Saturday afternoon, which a student teacher had to complete as a community project.

Another participant added:

I think we utilise our leadership expertise in a number of ways on an ongoing basis.

From these perceptions I learnt Acme adopted numerous strategies to address the notion of "shared or distributed leadership". The school had created an enabling environment which acknowledged and supported the contributions of different educators to lead and manage in different situations. SMT members were in control, but they worked with the educators. Perhaps this could have contributed to fostering a sense of belonging and commitment amongst the individuals. This is in line with Chikoko's views (2008, p. 83), where he asserts that "shared leadership is more significant than the extent of strong leadership vested in one person".

Similarly, Nkomo & Kriek (2004), state that good leaders draw from the staff talents, as leadership in schools is about using the reservoir of leadership capabilities and potentials of their people. Such good leaders identify other potential leaders at an early age and create opportunities for these future leaders to grow and prove themselves constantly. They mentor them, stretch them, provide feedback on performance and give them an opportunity to grow quickly. Organizations with such good leaders have a depth and breadth of leadership capacity to perform effectively, irrespective of who is at the helm. In particular they are able to identify the challenges ahead and ensure that the right leadership competencies are grown in time to meet those challenges. This suggests that multiple strong leaders who may be skilled in one or more areas are required for an effective self-managing school. It appears that distributed leadership, which draws from the strengths of multiple leaders, could create an ideal environment for collaborative problem solving in addition to decision-making, which is relevant in the South African context.

A participant's negative experience of her leadership role, had led me to ask the question: "Should leadership duties be distributed to people who do not have the capacity to lead?" Some participants had indicated that they lacked confidence and leadership skills to lead and guide others, yet they were coerced into leading in the name of "empowerment". Such participation in a leadership role may not necessarily translate into full engagement. For example, participants indicated that they were less motivated to lead the activity; when they chaired meetings, their "own thoughts" were seldom heard because they actually expressed the views of the SMT member, whom they consult with, prior to the meeting. In essence, it is most desirable for a school leader to get commitment from staff that enables the achievement of great things. Certain situations might call for particular skills that would allow inexperienced leaders to gain self-confidence and self-reliance.

6.4. Conclusion: An Overall Picture of the Sub-themes

This chapter discussed various perceptions that the SMT and educators used to describe a self-managing school. Participants' perceptions of the mother question: "*What is a self-managing school*", enumerated for the development of a self-managing school. These included participation by parents and educators in decision-making increased new ways of doing things at Acme. The SMT was described as adopting a stance of appreciating what others had to offer. However, overall control and co-ordination were maintained by the SMT members. The

interconnectedness amongst the educators illustrated the importance of support and working in teams in the school. These had positive implications for collectively shaping a school as self-managing.

With regard to finance, participants indicated strongly that finance was the most important factor in the promotion of a self-managing school. They stressed that due to the case-study school's healthy financial position they were able to provide a good learning environment. Such perceptions illustrated their surface understanding of the concept of a self-managing school. For instance the culture of wellness, and the friendly environment created by the people working there could not be compensated with finance. These created the energy, altruism and the essential qualities that facilitate improvement of the school.

Discussions over professional development in the school revealed tangible evidence of ongoing experiences of professional development. The position was justified on the basis that professional development was both internally and externally sourced, in an attempt to counteract some of the barriers that self-managing schools face. These perceptions implied that while the staff members participated in school activities, they also reached out to external partners, creating conducive structural and social climates for community members to take part in the schooling processes.

The fourth sub-theme addressed the participants' perceptions of the spiritual culture of the school, such as values of life, a deep sense of commitment to the children and trying to make a difference in their lives. The school made a conscious decision to make these aspects of spirituality their mission and vision for the school. Participants' understandings of spirituality seemed to encourage good inter-relations. Consequently, hardly any incidence of violence was reported in the school. A blending of spirituality to the intellectual, financial and social capital, created a fertile ground at Acme. This could enable the stakeholders to construct and enact processes that would have positive implications for shaping the school as self-managing.

In the fifth sub-theme I considered the role of leadership and management (more especially distributed leadership) in meeting the school goals. The data captured essential hallmarks of leadership and management in a self-managing school, for example participative management. The belief was that, given the structural and social relations within Acme, stakeholders were able

to perform their duties beyond the limits of pre-conceived rigid boundaries. This might mitigate any negative consequences of current dominant perceptions of leadership that stakeholders suffered in the context, which could be present but did not feature in the study.

I observed intellectual, social, financial and spiritual capitals emerging to create the data of this study. Such capitals were perceived as profoundly essential to the development of self-managing, in the sense that it was used to alleviate challenges and dilemmas that the SMT and educators faced in trying to improve and develop the school. With this extent of the necessary capitals, Acme Primary school should now be well on the road to being a self-managing school.

This chapter illustrated how the participants' experiences and understandings of a self-managing school informed their ways of engaging with issues of self-management in a real life schooling context. Practices are presented in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EVIDENCE OF ACME SCHOOL IN PRACTICE

7.1. Introduction

This is the third and last chapter on the findings of this study. Chapter Five centred on the transect walk and Chapter Six examined the participants' verbal conceptualizations. The SMT's and educators' experiences and meanings of a self-managing school largely informed how they actively engaged with issues of self-management in their school. As such, the purpose of this chapter is to extend the discussion on the practice at Acme. Practice refers to what people do "to matters that are open to observation by the researcher" (Miller & Goodnow, 1993, p.6). As I indicated in the methodology chapter (Chapter Four) the bulk of the information for this chapter derived from observation and the transect walk, although I have also drawn from document analysis and to a lesser extent on interviews for the presentation of this chapter.

This section presents the road map of the chapter, which aims to illuminate how Acme represented action central to ongoing self-managing practices. I begin this chapter by explaining how this school used its Vision and Mission statement to address education goals through various school activities and settings. Next, I consider the areas of the school, such as curriculum & co-curricular activities, sporting activities, clubs and community work; where I hope to unveil and discuss how the SMT and educators engaged with issues of self-management, such as knowledge production and knowledge utilization. Leadership and management enveloped various realms of school's functionality, and are also included in the discussion. Although each practice is presented separately for the purposes of logistics, it is assumed that one aspect is not disconnected from the other. All practices represent the whole action that is central to shaping a self-managing school.

7.2. Examining Acme's Vision and Mission Package

Vision is the core of a self-managing school. While on the transect walk I saw enlarged copies of the school vision and mission statement posted at various points around the school (see Table 5.1). The high priority that Acme Primary had given to their school vision is aligned with the

view expressed by Sergiovanni (2001), where he argues that vision is the core category underpinning the development of a school. When I was on the transect walk I reported on the school vision only on what I saw explicitly in documentation form. In Chapter Five (see Section 5.2.2.) I indicated that this issue had provided a springboard for discussion and would be given attention in this chapter, because I want to discuss how the vision was reflected in the actions and behaviour of stakeholders that characterise the practice of the school. Hence, this section attempts to illustrate what I believe were some of the creative and meaningful ways that Acme Primary School engaged with the tenets of the school's Vision and Mission statement. Moreover, it showed the link between the abstract and the concrete (their performance).

A common set of values is important for every school to remind stakeholders of where they are going, as well as to unite stakeholders in their efforts to achieve the school goals (Sergiovanni, 2001). Failing which, different people with different and conflicting interests and values could be pulling forces in different directions and chaos could prevail in the school. The school Vision stated: *“to strive to be the best in everything that we do and say”*, which might be the mantra at Acme Primary School. The school vision was transmitted in a variety of ways. Some examples for discussion in this chapter, of the collective activities that the staff, parents and learners had been engaged with included: a beach clean-up; school posters, parent functions such as the Open Day, painting of a mural on the school walls and collecting five cent coins for “Save the Crane” project. Newsletters promoted the vision to the parents and community enforcing the message that parents were welcome in the school. Table 7.1: is an example of the invitation to Open Day.

Table 7.1: Invitation to Open Day

OPEN EVENING THURSDAY 14 March 18:00 to 19:00 We invite all interested parents to attend an information evening. Find out why our current parents say: “We chose Acme Primary School because of its academic record, variety of activities, discipline and small classes.” Every day is Open Day at Acme Primary School. For a guided tour, contact Mrs X on xxx xxxxxxxx. For a guided walkabout, collect a visitor's card from Reception and see for yourself why Acme Primary is the school of choice.

Staff members voiced concerns over the possibility of visitations affecting their teaching practice. As a consequence visitation times were structured (see Table 7.1). To this end, the school had budgeted time, by respecting the need for an environment that was engaging and stimulating for the learners and educators, as well as opening its door to the community. The motto of “*striving to be the best in everything that we do and say*”, was evident in the Open Day programme. During the course of the Open Day programme I observed values of care, understanding, and praise for the staff and team work; which could have contributed to effective work performance at this school (Morrill, 1970). Richard commented on this: “*it reminds me every day that, working together is our goal; where we beat up all the ideas and come up with a plan together*”.

My observation during the transect walk and during the data collection phase in the school, suggested the preparedness of the school to push the boundaries of the existing practice to instil and strengthen in learners and parents greater awareness of the school Vision and Mission statement. To highlight this point, I use as an example the school assembly, to show how the school vision was considered. It appeared that the school had established a structure for the assemble routine that was conscious, deliberate and a result of continuous reflective practice.

I observed that a school song was sung every morning at the school assembly, as opposed to reciting a school prayer. I questioned Richard on this. His response was:

We feel that songs and rhythms are at the heart of communication with children. They find it appealing and tend to remember the words more easily. They really enjoy it. While a prayer is said at certain functions, the song could be sung at any period of the day. Perhaps it is a constant reminder of what we stand for, and for us not to stray from our course. Singing the song increases our sense of ownership of the school.

Table 7.2: Acme’s School Song.

Nestling in close to the sea
Is our school, so proud are we
Innovators we strive to be
Acme Primary you set us free.

	Free to learn and be our best
	We aim high, that is our quest
	Acquire knowledge, skills, and success
	We are not content with anything less.
A rainbow nation, a lovely hue	
Building friendships that are new	
The future is ours rings out so true	
Acme Primary is here for you.	
	Take from life what you receive
	Use it wisely and then perceive
	Together we can all achieve
	The future is ours so we believe.
Acme Primary, our goals are high	
We will conquer and touch the sky	
The future is ours if we but try	
And the dream will never die.	

The message of the song enforced the key goals of the school vision to provide a balanced education, with equal emphasis on character development and academic achievement. For example the statement: “be proud of who you are”, conceives ideas of taking pride in moving in the direction of personal improvement. Consequently this could lead to the SMT and educators taking steps in broadening ideas and strategies that meet the collective needs of the school. One way to achieve this was through setting up an environmentally friendly school by understanding that different people influence the culture of the school, and this included the school personnel themselves who represent different ethnic backgrounds. This diversity added richness to the school. “*The diversity of our rainbow nation*”, which involves “*building friendships*” (see Table 7.2 words from the song) and negotiating social relationships with all learners and adults within the school is of particular significance in the South African context which is inclusive of the different racial groups attending one school. The emphasis on “*building friendships*” is widely

perceived as more necessary in this country than in other countries, given the South African legacy of Apartheid and racial segregation.

The words in the song *“Acme Primary is here for you”* tend to create a sense of belonging and address concerns of sharing and the provision of community spirit and support to manage challenges. In this way, in symbolic form, the school song was a representation of what the school stood for. This was further endorsed by the music educator who stated that: *“by singing the Acme song every day at assembly or in the playfields, “you have it in your head and it was a constant reminder of where the school was heading”*. The significance of the school song was more likely to lead towards continuous team building and togetherness in living the school Vision.

Another aspect of the school vision which was highlighted in the school song was academic achievement. Acme Primary aimed to increase their academic achievement levels. Words from the school song such as: *“strive”, “learn”, “be our best”, “innovators”, “aim high”, “acquire knowledge, skills and success”*, suggest the need to step up action so that people do not become *“ content with anything less”*. The school song was constantly driving awareness toward an improved mindset of *“striving to be the best in promoting learning”* suggesting that a sense of character and raising achievement should be reflected in practice, by working hard and assisting others to achieve success. The school Vision and Mission statement was therefore seen as purpose-driven towards action, which are crucial components of a self-managing school.

The principal and the DP worked together on monitoring practices associated with learning. This offered opportunities for praise and reassessment of practices that were not working. They frequently reported on progress and achievements, which in turn reinforced positive behaviour connected to the vision. Very often praise and recognition are given to academic and sporting achievements. However at Acme Primary, in addition to academic and sporting achievements, learners of outstanding character were also acknowledged at assembly and parent functions, through the pledge, badges, certificates, scrolls, trophies, gold stars and the like. Recognition for spiritual values may have been overlooked in the past, due to what some academic researchers refer to as the prevalence of academic hegemony operating in certain educational institutions (Denton, 1996).

Table 7.3 is an example of a “quality child badge”. Each badge has one of the following qualities inscribed, as indicated.



A quality child badge is awarded to children (1 per class) at assembly, once a week. The class teacher, with the learners, selected particular criteria for the week. The award was prized by the educator and children. The recipient of the quality badge wore the badge for a week. The purpose of using extrinsic motivation –such as the Quality Badge and other achievement badges, was to encourage children to strive, achieve and excel in their individual learning. In an informal chat with Bernie (an educator) about the awarding of badges she expressed the view:

The aim of instilling these values in learners is not simply to please parents, peers and educators, but to make the practice of these values a way of life. The children know that their practice is monitored and that we know what's happening.

The vision was transmitted in a variety of ways. For example, the slogan (see chapter 5, Table 5.3, poster from display) “one school one family”, was designed to promote this ideal. The slogan was the first thing that greeted people when they entered the reception area. It openly endorsed messages of unity, building confidence, people standing together, getting along and persistence in the organisation. It is these practices which could have increased the positive ethos in the school; as indicated by one staff member who remarked: “This slogan motivates the staff and learners to respect one another”. Announcements made and activities conducted at assembly are aligned with human values that encouraged better learner results, school improvement and future planning – these provide a further example of such practices. Situational

factors at the school were also connected with vision tenets. Time management, as an example, was mentioned by Debbie who, noted that *“on a daily basis we have to “budget time, prioritise, fit things in and consolidated new learning’.*

It was interesting to see how Acme Primary designed and planned school events that linked the Vision and Mission Statement with whole school development. For example, I observed parents assisting at school (see Chapter 5, sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.8) as support workers, in-class assistance and on school trips. Such relationships could maximize the bridging of the home school divide. In this way, it seemed that the Vision and Mission were part of the everyday functional culture of the school. I found the school Mission Statement to be a “living document” as it affirmed what the school was about and for what they were striving. Furthermore, I believed that the school Vision and Mission Statement appropriately strengthened the collective view of how the school was functioning, where the school wanted to be in the future and how they planned to get there. Also embedded in the school culture were aspects of intellectual, financial, spiritual and social capital flowing from one aspect to another, incorporated into the daily functioning of the school.

7.3. The School Programme

In this section I have isolated examples of the school programme where practices of self-management predominated, as it is not possible to discuss every single detail of the school on a day to day basis. However I had noted that similar attention had been given to other areas of school functionality not covered by this section of the study. Attributes selected for discussion are: the school curriculum & co-curricular activities, sporting activities, clubs and community work.

7.3.1. Broad-Based Curriculum

At Acme Primary the core curriculum was no different to that followed by most public schools, where all teaching and learning takes place through the medium of English, with the exception of IsiZulu and Afrikaans being taught as first and second additional languages respectively. However, when I began looking at the school curriculum, I identified some key features relevant for discussion. In my exploration of the school timetables, for example, I found that as is the practice at most South African Primary Schools all subjects taught in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1, 2 and 3), are taught by the form educator to the class. However at this school learners

go to specialist educators to the respective rooms designed for activities such as Computers, Music, Dance and Drama, and Library activities. This was premised on a number of factors, as claimed by Iris:

Aesthetic subjects are considered just as important as Maths and Languages, and Foundation Phase Educators did not receive specialised training in ancillary subjects. People who have specialised education in these areas, have subject specific knowledge of how and what to teach and of how children learn, are employed by the school for this specific purpose.

In most cases, the practice of teaching within the field of specialisation could help transmit the Vision and impact positively on the quality of education provided. As expressed by Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff (2009), specialist educators engage with the subject by establishing certain attitudes that shape learners in a particular way. In exploring this issue further with Iris, she informed me that “*although these are not core subjects, it is very important as it contributes to the holistic development of the child*”.

Through document analysis, reports on consecutive strategic plans and other school documents, it was indicated that introducing learners to specialist educators involved a number of initiatives that had to be undertaken by the school to build these subjects into the school programme. At the same time such actions affirmed the management and leadership capability of the staff in achieving their purpose. Drawing on school capitals and making sense of learners’ and parents’ needs, developing and planning the learning programmes, making decisions about who to appoint, and compiling subject policies were some examples of the unraveling of the many complexities of this education scene. Documents revealed that many meetings were held for the purpose of selecting and employing the best qualified educators who could impact positively in the school. In the interviews, this was illustrated by a participant (Bernie), who had this to say:

I think we pride ourselves on having a good academic standard. If a vacancy comes up, then we choose from a pool of highly qualified educators. It’s not a case of just filling up the post.

This meant that there were increased financial challenges for the school to have specialist educators for the teaching of aesthetic subjects. Keeping the views of Bisschoff & Mestry (2005)

in mind (see Chapter Three, 3.2.2., Financial Capital), a combination of material and non-material resources, were undertaken for the performance of this task. For example, since central government has now devolved financial responsibilities to the school, the complex nature of financial issues had to be managed by the school. The school had to bear the cost of salaries for the additional educators, the learning material and resources, and the learners contact time was extended each day by half an hour. The entire process of “specialising” these subjects proved to be time consuming and all stakeholders were involved in decision-making. The minutes of a meeting provided an example of the reflection on the practice where the following view was expressed: *“it is about trying out something new, to see if it works”*. This is a key feature of a self-managing school. The strategies used by Acme Primary in their practice, stemmed from the school performing outside its traditional role function of simply teaching and learning (Herman & Herman, 1994). It also highlighted the central tenet of this school’s Vision in striving for excellence. The practice discussed above illustrated the enactment of the school Vision of creating an ideal teaching and learning environment in terms of high calibre staff.

Whilst on the transect walk (see Chapter Five 5.2.6., image 6) and during the course of the year I had seen photographs of learners, and of presentations at assembly of those who had produced outstanding results in a number of Olympiads and benchmarking assessments, such as: Cluster Tests and National papers. I also reported in Chapter One that according to the Provincial Department of Education statistics Acme Primary school is the only school in the District to be declared as a “school of excellence” based on the 2010 ANA results. In this regard, the learners’ good results could be linked to the action steps taken towards their achievement and the culture of developing and nurturing the learners. A strong focus on the possession of knowledge, technology and professional skills (all forms of intellectual capital) are important attributes here. Such qualities are crucial in the building of a self-managing school, where the organisation is frequently challenged by maintaining equilibrium, improvement and alterations of site conditions.

At professional development meetings, as described in Table 7.4., opportunities were provided to build knowledge on health matters and on positive parenting.

Table 7.4: Notice to parents regarding a Professional Development Programme.

ACME PRIMARY SCHOOL We would like to invite you to a talk by Sally Carstens, from Arctic Healthcare. Date: Tuesday, 10th May 2011 Venue: Acme Primary School Hall Time: 19H00 Sally will be talking on the following topic: “ADHD, the Good, the Bad and the Brilliant”. Coping with children with dyspraxia, Dyslexia and Autistic spectrum children.

In a lively atmosphere, I observed people ask questions, seek clarifications and make valid contributions to the topic. Such a programme draws from the various capitals for its coordination. For example, distributed leadership was evident when one educator took the initiative to get the staff working together to discuss the need for the workshop on “*Coping with children with Dyspraxia, Dyslexia and Autistic spectrum children*”. This topic was not randomly selected. Once the merits of the topic and the presenter was finalised with the staff, the professional development topic and name of the presenter featured on the school management plan, long term bookings were indicated on a school year plan and short term planning was reflected on the term plans. A small committee of four members had been created to plan, organize and lead all professional development activities convened in this school. I witnessed members of this committee use their legitimate leadership positions to delegate leadership to people whom they saw fit for a particular role, while various non committee members who had expertise in certain areas of interest took the leadership reins at times. Finance was also one of the factors that contributed to the flow of events, for example refreshments and cost of reading material handed out. Most presenters did not charge a fee, however a token of appreciation was presented on behalf of the school. These observations suggested that structures, a business plan and systems were in place for school functions. The principal exercised guardianship over all systems, processes and structures, which could have ensured that all stakeholders were drawn in the same direction, which facilitated a unified approach to the accomplishment of tasks and activities.

In order to achieve high levels of systemic functioning, various strategies were employed. I observed supervision and management of the curriculum, and educators' record books appearing on a regular basis in term planning. Although supervision of educators' records is a normal practice in schools, what I learnt from Jane, that "*further developmental topics were drawn out of these supervision exercises*". For example a workshop was held on "*writing reports to parents on learners' progress in school*". This professional development meeting was aimed to assist educators to improve on their report writing, where this had been identified as a need from the supervision exercise. In the theoretical framework (see Chapter Three, for example: Alton-Lee, 2003), professional development and the initiation of systematic reforms in the school were highlighted, which required educators to engage in professional development so that the school's enormous capacity could be fully utilized. Professional development aligned with the school's systemic needs was clearly considered as a powerful means of promoting educator professionalism and growth.

The extent and the diversity of learning activities offered at Acme would have helped learners to make more sense of the curriculum, as opposed to the use of only a "chalk and talk" approach. Through my observation of activities, and analysis of official documents, such as newsletters to parents, timetables, minutes of meetings, school photographs and learners' items that were displayed, it was evident that Acme Primary School planned the curriculum in diverse and personalized ways. For example, learners at Acme Primary were extensively involved in learner action projects, experiential learning and self-discovery through their participation in the Eco School programme. Through this programme the school aimed to promote values in environmental education and learning, stimulate environmental sensitivity and awareness, and encourage responsible environmental choices and attitudes which are linked to the National Curriculum. Parent leadership was also exercised in assisting educators with cultural group activities. The school had established creative ways that helped motivate learning, for example much excitement was created in naming the Eco project. *Eco-Owl* had been adopted as the mascot for Acme Primary School for 2011 (when the data was collected). Image 7.1: is a picture of Eco-Owl, which appeared on all school correspondence with regard to environmental issues. Posters concerned with environmental issues also bear the same picture.

Image 7.1: Eco-Owl, the School Mascot.



I was curious to know why an owl was selected as the mascot in the context of the school. While I chatted with a staff member about this issue, she claimed that “*owls have long been associated with wisdom and learning. They are keen-sighted birds and swift to respond*”. As such one of the central arguments for the Eco-Owl project was the importance of understanding and applying education to everyday life situations. All learners and educators endorsed these values verbally, in documented form and through their actions (see Image 7.2). As a result the school was buzzing with structured activities to commemorate the Eco-Owl programme. For example, there were learners’ projects and written efforts on display, huge charts with lovely captions were posted at prestigious areas in the school. All of which served as a constant reminder to everyone at school, throughout the year, of ‘eco-wise’ behaviours, encourage ‘eco-smart’ habits, identify ‘eco-opportunities’ for participation, and prompted them to be ‘eco-friendly’ in action. Image 7.2: is an area in the school which was allocated to the display of the Eco-Owl projects.

Image 7.2: The Various Activities in Celebration of the Eco-Owl Programme



The school had also received the prestigious *Gold Award* in recognition of the responsible environmental practices implemented and sustained in the school over the past three years. In 2011 Acme Primary school was also awarded *The Flag* (see Image 7.3), for their outstanding environmental initiatives. Some of the vision ideals and strategies for their achievement

included: removing alien vegetation and establishing indigenous gardens throughout the school in order to encourage nature back to their grounds. Educators made use of the 'outdoor classroom' learning experience by conducting experiments in various sectors of the school, and setting up field trips and excursions to work towards their goals. Numerous other activities in the programme included a recycling routine which focused on alternative energy sources and electricity economisation. These were some of the networks of opportunities for building a learning culture and for people to engage in learning activities. Success in this regard, relied on establishing and maintaining positive relationships with outside agencies, community groups and businesses.

Image 7.3 Acme awarded “The Flag” for Outstanding Environmental Initiatives.



These awards are evidence of the high degree of functionality of programmes in the school. The school was rewarded for excelling in their experiences, in comparison to all the participating schools. The Eco School project displayed the schools' ability to strategise for environmental learning, as environmental education was successfully incorporated into all subjects, across all grades. Steps taken by this school towards achieving their goals in the Eco School project, based on systematic reviews of the staff's collective perspective on relevant issues, were articulated by one of the participants:

We had to keep abreast of changes to the curriculum, but keep the programme exciting at the same time.

Another participant said:

There were frequent checks by committee leaders to ensure that implementation did happen according to our plans.

Observation and overall supervision at environmental team meetings was recognised as having facilitated collective knowledge production, and utilisation of knowledge, skills and resources.

The significance of this practice was that it could lead to claims that the school was progressing towards self-management; for example, the school assessed their strengths and areas for

development, they ensured support and opportunities for continuous growth and development, accountability was promoted and the institution's overall effectiveness was monitored. Within the context of Acme Primary the differentiated programme of implementation of the curriculum, which fully involved the learners, parents and staff, was reinforced. Together they worked towards a vision, which translated into discussion and strategic planning. Collective stakeholder's inputs towards setting goals and action steps towards their achievement were noted on the school year plan and term plan. Strategic plans not only recorded future directions for the programme, but certain tools provided evidence on the progress made at Acme, such as "*the Flag*" and the *Gold Award*. This suggests that things did not happen by chance at this school, but deliberate attempts were fed into the school system to harness, manage and monitor the "innovation, creativity and empowerment to generate greater identification and commitment to the success of the organization" (Exworthy & Halford 1999, p.6). Such qualities are crucial in building capacity for self-managing schools, in contrast to schools that are characterised by bureaucratic, inflexible management, and whose leadership is mainly concerned with control. Turning challenges to advantages at Acme Primary required dynamic leadership in all sectors of the school.

7.3.2. Co-curricular Activities

7.3.2.1. Maximizing Sports Activities

In my experience as an educator, schools that I have known tended to focus on academic progress. Yet at Acme Primary school, the sporting activities were considered as an integral part of the education programme offered to the children. As such, the timetable revealed that children in all grades, including the Grade 1, 2 and 3 learners, received coaching in various codes of sports at different seasons of the year. These included swimming, tennis, cricket, hockey, netball and soccer. Many sports coaches with special skills were employed to supplement the coaching provided by the staff of the school. This suggests awareness on the part of the school leadership of the needs and desires of the learners and the parents. Plans of action were consequently formulated that were specific to these needs and wants. To offer a variety of codes of sports required time for planning, design and construction, and was also dependent on the availability of funds. Meeting such demands and addressing challenges required knowledge and skills to render change in the functioning of the school. This drew on the four forms of capital, for example social capital where contributions from internal and external people required their working together. Debbie explained the importance of a positive mind set being displayed by stakeholders, where she said: "*Staying positive is important as it carries you through*" (spiritual

capital). This example demonstrated how elements of each capital were best informed by the other and how together they produced a clearer conception of an activity that was self-managed by the school.

The employment of sports coaches affirmed my assessment that Acme Primary possessed the necessary ability and finance to be able to implement this improvement. It was noted that the school adopted superior entrepreneurial skills in order to raise the finance required for the project. It appeared that the school had been managing their finances well, with the advantage of dynamic leadership present in all sectors of budgeting. This in turn led to a positive influence throughout the school, which enabled stakeholders to push the boundaries of existing practice, to improve and manage changes. Some examples that illustrated this include salaries for extra educators, equipment for sports and transport for learners to be able to participate in games and activities at venues outside the school premises. Both the principal and DP were seen as “growth promoters” of the school; to this end Richard commented that they “*inspired educators to initiate ideas and drive processes from the bottom rather than the top*”. This is supported by Anderson (2000), (see Chapter Three), who comments that a self-managing school is not only about having the finances, but also about assuring that the finances are put to optimal use, being accountable for the way they are used and the creation of meaningful work relationships that create synergy.

The Grade 1 timetable, for co-curricular activities for the fourth term from 8 October to 23 November 2011, revealed the following (see Table 7.5 below):

Table 7.5: Grade 1 Timetable for Co-curricular Activities

day	Activity	Time	Information	Co-ordinators column	Venue	Kit
Mon	Cricket	13:15-14:00	Pupils may attend on ONE day only		Sports field	PE kit
Tuesday	Swim Squad	13:30-14:00	This activity is for selected pupils only. See attached notice.		Pool	Costume, cap and towel
	Chess	13:15-14:00	Pupils may attend on ONE day only		Room 2	Uniform
Wednesday	Discovery Club	13:15-14:00	Pupils must select either Discovery Club		Room 7	Uniform
	Drama/Dance	13:15-14:00	or Drama/Dance		hall	PE kit
Thursday	Swim Squad	13:30-14:00	This activity is for selected pupils only. See attached notice		Pool	Costume, cap and towel

The timetable (Table 7.5) shows that cricket skills are taught to all Foundation Phase learners in the Integrated Sports period. Details of all activity times, venues and attire were clearly communicated to learners and parents. This reinforced and demonstrated that Acme Primary accorded much importance to sports and co-curricular activities; indicative that these codes of sports were promoted and integrated into the school timetable. Another point to be noted was that, SMT, educators, sport coaches and parents working together in connected ways created a culture of collaboration that enhanced the development of the school. The offering of such extra sports and activities does not happen to such an extent at all primary schools in South Africa. The national allocated time for Foundation Phase children is four and a half hours per day, with stipulated times for subjects such as Mathematics, Language and Life Skills. Normally skills in sports are taught by the class teacher, during the Physical Education lessons, which is allocated two hours per week.

I was keen to find out more from Iris, about how the extra time had been organised for the provision of the extra activities. She explained:

Due to the decision by parents and staff to include sports on the timetable, the school day was extended by one hour each day for sports and aesthetic subjects.

This illustrates where the school has been proactive in dealing with daily challenges, going beyond the minimum time expectations in order to achieve more, and accommodate the vastly diverse needs of the school. This was a shift from the control, and bureaucratic procedures, exercised by the Education Department. Acme Primary exerted a powerful force in maintaining a sense of direction. This could be characterised by stakeholders as using their knowledge and skills to put plans into action, with committed people who are willing to go to extreme lengths to fulfil their responsibilities. In view of regular meetings and discussions on issues, everybody in the organisation had an understanding of the organisational goals and policies and what was expected from each individual. Deliberate actions were taken where the individual contributions of every employee, and the things that they did ensured that the organisation moved towards its goals. From data such as these, it seemed that the staff possessed a clear picture of where the organisation was going.

Another example of sports that highlights the quality of professional behaviour vested in this school is that learners frequently compete at District, Provincial and National events, with outstanding results. This was confirmed in an interview with Iris:

Children are selected to compete in local, provincial and national events. This is where we give the talented children the opportunities to perform at the highest level. Parents support their children; they are very keen to attend these tournaments.

All learners who played well in District, Provincial and National teams were given praise and recognition at assembly, in the school newsletter and pictures of them were posted on the sports notice board. Image 7.4: is an example of a picture on the sport notice board, which displays a picture of four of the seven girls in the netball team, who had been selected to represent the school at local district level. They received gold medals and the floating trophy for winning the tournament at the end of the season.

Image 7.4: Girls Selected to Represent the School for Netball.



Acme Primary had extended their learners in a variety of activities, where they featured well at District, Provincial and National events. These results displayed the skills and abilities of some of the coaches who were not educators and the participants of Acme. One coach stated that “*training learners for these competitions took much time and energy, and was demanding on us*”. Through stakeholders’ participation in vision led activities, I got a sense of the extent to which Acme used the autonomy given to schools to self-manage. This is in keeping with what autonomy entails, as articulated by Hill, Smith & Spinks (1990), on page 23 of this thesis, namely that instead of having decisions imposed from a central body, members have the authority to make decisions themselves.

I also found that sport was not always about competition at Acme. Players with outstanding potential, who were given the opportunity to compete at District, Provincial and National level, made up only a fraction of the learners who played in sports teams at the school. In addition to learners with great potential, I found that other learners arrived at the school grounds to participate in sports practices. On one occasion I chatted with the educator (Gary) who was coaching cricket and he explained:

Selected Grade 3 learners are invited to join the Under10 age group practices. They are introduced to playing with a standard cricket ball, a year in advance, in order to develop their potential. We have decided to offer as many learners as possible the opportunity to play. So there’s always an 'A' and 'B' side to field in each age group.

This was one example of the organisational structure at Acme that can be described as promoting development. Taking cognisance of Bailey and Adams (1990) and the arguments made by Caldwell & Spinks (1988), self-managing schools should be uniquely designed to serve the needs and growth of everyone. By allowing as many learners to develop and participate in these games, Acme acknowledged the principle of promoting participation. Although learners were not interviewed for this study, I observed how learners were making decisions, such as the

selection of the captain and the rotation of positions in the game. Involvement of learners in some decisions could enhance in them a sense of valuing hard work to be on the team, loyalty and school pride. Team members working together, the sharing of skills, and the development of leadership could make learners feel important, in contrast to feelings of apathy; disillusionment, resentful and wastage of talent (see 2.4.7). This could be, in great measure, due to visionary leadership with educators working together to build capacity for improvement.

Having a number of sports teams added to the collaborative culture of sharing, learning from each other and supporting those who may need some encouragement. According to Gary (Coach), parent support at the games had definitely increased and several team members had been awarded 'Player of the Match' for the year. Community participation in all school activities has always been a dilemma faced by schools. In this regard, I observed parents of Acme, getting involved making and serving refreshments on tournament days, and managing and assisting with the maintenance of school resources. Parent volunteers were highly praised for what they did. Seemingly the attempts to forge relationships with the parents were to promote a greater chance of establishing a strong knowledge base and shared responsibilities aligned to the school. If parental support is lacking in schools, it could result in the under utilization of the community's assets and skills of members in the community lie dormant. This could be problematic for self-managing schools, based on the argument that if educators are spending less time on teaching, and more time on management aspects of school functionality, then this can, over time, lead to poor learner results.

Images 7.5 and 7.6 show evidence of parental response to notices which were sent to them, encouraging attendance to the cricket matches to help to make fun days for their children. The mini-cricket games were held on a Saturday morning.

Images 7.5 and

Image 7.6 Mini-cricket Games



The data also illustrated the positive influence of sport on parental participation in the term practice of cricket that culminated in the greatly anticipated Mini Cricket festival. The highlight of the Cricket Festival was where parents were put together in teams and they played against their children. This serves as an example of a creative method that Acme used to maximize parental support and connectedness among stakeholders. It also demonstrated that deliberate attempts were made to draw from its capital by creating a positive learning environment for the children, which included the co-operation and support of the parents. This is noted by Carvalho & Jeria (1999) who state that, contributions from parents and the community are likely to improve the quality of educational services.

Parental enthusiasm for sport activities led to their commitment to advancing other initiatives in the school. Opportunities for working in collaboration and teamwork were woven into the day to day functionalities of the school life. Examples of parental assistance was noted during my transect walk (see Chapter Five, section 5.2.3.). Image 7.7 provides another example of a parent, with his son, who was instrumental in securing the sponsorship from Nashua to kit out all the junior and senior rugby players for the season. The rugby jerseys were specially designed by a sportswear company.

Image 7.7: A learner with a Parent who Procured Sponsorship of the Rugby Jerseys



Image 7.7, is one example that demonstrated that the parent had developed his understanding of becoming a school partner and who had assisted the school in seeking other external partnerships so that the school can effectively meet their goals. In support of this, Wallis (1995) argues that the objectives of community participation should be viewed as beneficiary capacity-building, empowerment and increasing school effectiveness. This also reflects one of the components of a self-managing school, as empowering the local community and parents with a motivational attitude so that they can become more involved in the school activities (Sergiovanni, 1991).

While examining the record of school sport timetables, I discovered that rugby was never offered at the school until 2009. Similarly the timetables showed that soccer skills for Grade 4 - 7 girls were introduced for the first time in 2010. I asked Richard about this. His response was:

In 2009 a group of boys who showed interest in rugby were given the opportunity to learn the basic skills of the game with a qualified coach. The boys met at a venue outside the school for two afternoons per week and enjoyed a short game of touch rugby after their skills training. During 2010 the programme was extended to include full contact rugby and games were arranged with other local schools.

With regard to the girls' soccer skills he added:

Soccer for girls has been very well supported. In fact, the girls proved to be a very competitive team during inter-house and inter-school matches. The girl's team faired very well and ended up narrowly losing in the final round in the inter-school matches. This was a fine achievement on their part.

Iris confirmed that:

Key stakeholders, i.e. the staff, learners, SGB and the parents were included in discussions about codes of sports. There were a number of factors to be considered such as management of these codes, creating the time, personal, finance and so on.

Further investigations into these two new codes of sports offered at this school revealed that the school had conducted a needs analysis amongst the parents and learners before they were offered. With reference to my second critical question: “What are some of the factors that either promote and /or hinder the development of a self-managing school”, Acme saw the need to satisfy their ‘customers’ and, drawing from their intellectual capital, they began to think of ways to meet these identified needs better. In so doing it seemed that they slowly attempted to change the structural arrangements of the school. For example they interviewed coaches, re-budgeted the school fees to accommodate a salary for the coaches, arranged sponsorships for equipment and organized the timetable. All Acme’s plans were seen as prioritising learners’ outcomes, empowering stakeholders in decision-making and encouraging the community to get involved.

With reference to my third key question: “What can be learnt from the policies and practices in the selected school, relating to what it entails to be a self-managing school?”, I learned that some of the factors that shape a self-managing school include collaborative interchange from the different views of the staff and parents, reflection on the school’s progress, networking to gain support, and in the process stakeholders were empowered. Such practices encouraged and facilitated change. All these factors flowed into each other and had relevance to the on-going planning and organisation of the school activities. To make this happen, the SMT and educators showed positive signs of readiness to get involved in the business of self-managing, being innovative and effectively tailoring programmes to meet needs. Parents also displayed a sense of responsibility by involving themselves in the school, which led to better quality programmes for the learners. I also learned from the data that the school did not make decisions that were static, but things changed as the school evolved. In this way a self-managing school does not remain static, but evolves as changes are made on a day-to-day basis.

As this study has noted improvements to the learning practice at Acme were also related to finance. In addition to collaborative interchange, reflection, networking and empowerment, processes involved financial management. Finance became a motivational force that sustained

and reinforced plans and ideas to be implemented, and was closely aligned with knowledge production and knowledge utilization. The data gave an impression of a careful application of the various forms of capital. For example: there were lots of “parent chat” meetings to make parents aware of what was happening and providing a platform to hear their views. Leadership skills and knowledge emerged from these meetings and social relationships were ably practised. Spirituality too was experienced in a range of ways, where through activities the spiritual views of participants influenced how they made sense of their cognitive, intuitive, emotional, behavioural, cultural and social experiences (Groen, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2000). Harry, when he stated that “*issues of worthiness and loyalty to the team are prevalent here*”, proved an example of spirituality in action as a personal commitment to participate in and complete certain group tasks that ultimately realize the interconnectedness between self and others.

7.2.3.2. Pursuing School Vision through Clubs

Good schools are often as much about the holistic development of the child as they are about what happens in the classroom. In this section I chose to examine how Acme pursued their School Vision through participation in clubs. In line with the views of James, Jenks & Prout (1998), groups or clubs are usually regarded as an appropriate way of teaching children. In this regard Richard stated that the motivation to introduce “clubs” at Acme Primary School came from the staff. He added:

Our observation of learners at school showed that those who aren't motivated academically will stay in school and complete tasks because of their involvement in club activities. This lays credence to the cliché that,” all work and no play too often makes little Johnny a dropout.

Harry reported that after much deliberation amongst the staff and the parents, the school offered a selection of clubs as part of a co-curricular programme. These varied from term to term and from Grade to Grade. The timetable reflected a programme that included non-academic clubs for those learners with extra-curricular interests. The following clubs were offered in the fourth term of 2011: Creative Craft, Drama and Dance, Discovery Club, Enviro-Kids, Enviro-Club, Mini-Cricket, Needlecraft, Girls Cricket.

Image 7.8: A Grade One Club, Engaging in a Creative Craft Activity.



Timetables (for example see Table 7.5) were designed with the purpose of integrating clubs into the day-to-day operation of the school. In addition to the timetable, discussions with club facilitators, analysis of minutes of club meetings and correspondence to parents, confirmed that club activities had been purposefully planned, organised and supervised. Looking at the record keeping of the clubs, namely the policy of the club, preparation of work, and the samples of activities completed by these clubs it became evident that Acme was striving towards the purpose of providing a context for positive youth development, teaching and learning of practical skills, practice in formal leadership roles, shared values and commitment to team work (for examples see images 7.4. and 7.6). There were lots of opportunities for the promotion of discussions among club members, and the development of team spirit. During observation it became obvious that learning took place with appropriate equipment and materials that were supplied by the school. This enabled club members to learn and participate in all activities as opposed to a situation where only certain learners participated if they had the tools. Financial management ensured that funding was available to cover costs, such as personnel (salaries of teacher aids), resources and other items such as a visit to an old age home. This visit had provided a good example of stimulating decision-making that encouraged valuable learner debates on “should parents and grandparents be sent to an old age home”.

During professional developmental sessions I observed how the HoDs showed appreciation for what was working well during “club” periods, and made suggestions to make the tasks more interesting. They drew the attention of club educators to the official curriculum documents where ideas for activities could be found. In this way continuing support, planning and creating opportunities assisted to modify and adapt the curriculum in line with the different development needs of the child in each age groups, and learner interest area. As such these activities had far-reaching impact on learners, such as the sharing of common experiences and lending each other

support through group work. Participation in club activities also provided socially, as well as intellectually, stimulating interaction for the learners.

Reflecting on the practice, the School Vision and Mission was supported by the school curriculum, creative co-curricular programmes and sports programmes. Anderson (1996) noted that schools that create and manage learning opportunities for the learners, educators and other stakeholders, helped to create higher performing schools. Creating schools in which individuals are provided with lots of opportunities to grow and develop is a defining characteristic of a self-managing school.

7.3.2.3. Teaming up in Community Work

Acme Primary School embarked on many community projects, such as beach clean-ups, Save the Crane project and The CHOC (which is the acronym for Children's Haematology Oncology Clinic- Cancer Foundation for children in Pretoria). Images 7.9 and 7.10 illustrate examples of children involved in the Beach Clean-Up Project.

Image 7.9.



Image 7.10.



Beach clean-ups involved collecting material for recycling such as paper, cardboard, plastic and glass. This was collected and weighed by the 'Keep Durban Beautiful Association'. The accumulated weights of the recycled material were recorded as part of a competition amongst participating schools in the larger Durban area. This activity reinforced the vision to improve children's holistic development as well as care of the environment.

The CHOC (Childhood Cancer Foundation, is a non Government funded organisation which deals with children) committee co-ordinated the project and the message of "*caring and*

sharing” were repeatedly reinforced. Processes of knowledge production and knowledge utilization were embedded in these situational contexts, which were purpose driven. The staff met with the SGB to voice their ideas and concerns; parents and organisations in the community were informed accordingly to take direct action to support the school. In this way the school expanded their existing pool of knowledge. Stakeholders swapped ideas, information and effective strategies to raise funds for CHOC. One such idea that emerged was to allow learners who paid for the privilege, to wear red, white and green civvies to school on Valentine Day. A fun-walk was arranged for parents with a pledge for an open amount as an entry fee. After the fun-walk tea and coffee was provided, however parents purchased snacks sold at the school tuck-shop. A family day was arranged with many activities such as clown show, face painting and a jumping castle, just to name a few. All funds collected for this project were donated to CHOC. The school received a certificate of appreciation for their efforts. It seemed that this was a special way to celebrate *‘thinking of others before ourselves’*.

Images 7.11 and 7.12 are Fund Raising Activities in aid of the CHOC Project.



Image 7.11: learners serving tea and coffee. Image 7.12: learners in casual dress on Valentine Day.

Through this community based projects there were many factors that accumulatively reflected that the school was moving towards self-managing. Benefits recounted were: funds collected in support of these projects, promoting the image of the school, helping the needy and networking for support of these projects. Characteristics of spirituality overlap with these projects because their value system embraces humility and strengthened peoples’ values and identity. This was reinforced by different leaders in different situations, working together with a contribution of external and internal skills. With regard to these motives, the importance of self-managing comes in, as Decenzo & Robbins (1993) state, the school had the ability to exercise control over the learning sites which enhanced its professional autonomy. Acme displayed the drive to excel,

to strive to succeed, and the need to make others behave in a way that they would not otherwise have behaved.

Acme's preparedness to push the boundaries of the existing practice to improve teaching and learning allowed learners to peep into the world of the ill and the less privileged. Given this, learning, engaging in co-curricular activities and even competing on the sports field became meaningful. Nevertheless, what I frequently observed was that it was not only the educators that were motivated to take over the responsibility of projects and activities, the learners too were constantly showing positive leadership signs (as indicated in Images 5.2; 5.3 and 7.11). There was evidence of "hands on learning" by doing.

All projects were detailed strategically in the year and term plans. There were, however, times when amendments and additions were made to suit needs, illustrating that processes necessitated flexibility and adjustment from stakeholders. I observed the influence of SMT members and educators all over the school during my fieldwork, suggesting a display of passion for their job as agents of a self-managing school. An additional aspect of their layered, planned approach to their leadership was the use of new knowledge from sources outside the school. For example, looking at the CHOC project analytically, sound implementation decisions and practices displayed a notable combination of management and leadership skills, both structurally and behaviourally, as well as efficiency in service delivery. Good management and leadership skills were seen as important elements to transform the school into a self-managing school. The issue of finance came in repeatedly in most of the day-to-day activities of the school; which highlighted that financial forces revolve around schools functionality. Here, the school had the finance to put their plans into action; in addition to, in-built systems of capital, for example collective knowledge and infrastructures of support were used.

7.3.2.4. Drawing the Curtains of the School Concert

I was privileged to be invited to the 2011 Acme Primary School Concert. The primary purpose for holding this concert was entertainment. However, I am using it in my discussion, for purposes of showing how the school planned, prepared and presented this function.

Firstly a concert meeting was scheduled on the year plan and term plan. The concert committee comprised four educators, one HoD, five senior learners and five parents (three of which were not SGB members). The minutes of the meeting reflect that: “*Lisha (an educator) was nominated as the leader of the concert committee, based on her leading capacity, characteristics, and skills. She willingly accepted this position*”. Lisha explained to me that learners and parents were brought in to work with this committee because they wanted different perspectives from different sources to infiltrate decision-making with diverse ideas. Through their engagement in activities such as strategic planning, it openly advocated and transmitted messages of empowerment and “*together we can make it better*”. The minutes of the staff meeting, regarding discussions on the concert, serve to reinforce and clarify aspects of working together: “*I find that this works*” and another said, “*I will do that*”. These contributions are products of collaboration. The distribution of work showed that functions were not left in the hands of a few.

This affirmed the earlier claim made this study (see Chapter Two), that it will investigate stakeholder’s ability to work collaboratively in developing the school towards self-managing. Thus, in connection with what entails a self-managing school, I found that through Acme’s organisation skills, demonstrated by functions such as the school concert, the power of partnerships among key internal and external stakeholders were recognized. In this regard the contributions of Little (1993) are significant, who stated that involving the staff in decision making processes would make them feel party to the activity. The concert was an indication of the staff and other stakeholders taking responsibility for their school. It also implied that the educator’s responsibilities extend beyond their own classrooms to include the responsibility for the functionality of the whole school (Coleman & Early, 2005).

The minutes of the concert committee reflected that planning and progress of the concert was monitored, without interference in the normal curriculum programme. It was noted that amongst other, discussions took place on: “*how to fit in daily times of training with the curriculum demands, roles and responsibilities associated with finance, marketing and stage decor*”. This revealed the important facet of planning evident in the work of this school committee. The committee, overseen by the SMT, ensured that there were systems, procedures and structures in place that exerted a powerful guiding force in maintaining a sense of direction for the concert. It guided people on what to do, where to go and of stakeholders’ official roles and responsibilities. It was also noted in the minutes that educators asked for help, as noted by one educator, “*I feel like I’m not doing justice to the Indian aspect of the dance fusion, but the IsiZulu part of it is*

going well". Statements such as these meant "extra work" for others, but it affirmed dominant values of the school as a family where people contributed to the well-being of others. Featured in the minutes were comments such as: *"How can we improve things that are not working so well?"* *"Our job is not easy, but thank you to everyone for the progress made thus far. Everyone is trying to give off their best"*. Such reinforcement, ongoing support and regular reflection on the practice meant new adjustments were made in practice. These positive procedures reflect the working of an effective self-managing school.

Lisha stated that much thought was put into the selection of items for the concert. She reported that *"each grade had selected a theme and items were designed on the theme. An audition panel was selected to ensure that the items were of a certain standard, this meant supervising progress and providing weekly updates of latest developments."* The principal too, was observed on several occasions, supporting and encouraging educators and learners (an in example see 5.2.6.). A flow of information encouraged a professional work practice. My observation on the concert itself was that all items had merit; some were artistic as they show-cased the learners talent and fostered an appreciation for music, encouraged young musicians, and created a connection between cultures and races where music was vividly experienced. Image 7.13 is one example of such talent, where a young learner played a harmonium (a musical instrument). Other items had historical significance, and some could be perceived as influencing moral conscience and lifestyle in tangible ways; for example, image 7.14 shows the two characters that played the role of Hansel and Gretel, a Fairy Tale with a moral.

Image 7.13: learner playing a harmonium.



Image 7.14: learners playing Hansel and Gretel.



The items at the concert displayed diversity, but it sustained inter-group connectedness.

Different methods were used to advertise the concert. I saw placards, posters at the local shops, adverts in the local paper and parents invited their extended family members to the concert. Initially the concert was scheduled to run over three days, but due to the large number of people who were turned away because the hall was filled to capacity, the programme was extended to a fourth day. I observed parents visiting the school during the period of the concert, to enquire about certain issues, costumes and so forth. There was great enthusiasm associated with children learning their parts, educators putting the function together and parents trying to sell tickets and get the costumes ready. Utilizing outside expertise in, for example, the printing of the tickets and the making of posters, eased the workload of the committee. These factors demonstrated how the committee co-ordinated the concert, with the strong support of the staff, which kept the school linked to the vision in meaningful and focused ways. An ethos of self-determination and self-management portrays the way things were done at Acme, as the planning and implementation of the concert proceeded.

Numerous examples of collaboration amongst the staff were observed during my observations at the school. However, by using the school concert as an example, I also wanted to draw particular attention to the staff unity and collegiality that prevailed at this school, during the period of the concert. This issue can be spotlighted by reflecting on the finale item of the concert, which was an item produced by the staff members.

Images 7.15 and



7.16 are items by staff members.



Educators performing in this last item looked comical, adorned in wigs and ribbons, heavy make-up as they danced to a rock 'n roll style of music. Looking around the hall I could see that this item was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. All the educator participants described how positive and rewarding this experience had been, depicting a sense of social bonding. Core

values embracing, for example, participation, commitment and social cohesion of educators, were paramount in building the school's unity and could sustain inter-group connectedness. The healthy work environment reflected expansion of outcomes and maximised delivery. The strong team spirit of cohesiveness and collaboration that prevailed amongst the staff during the concert shapes practices that build capacity for self-managing schools.

I considered the issue of the school concert as one way of linking the school's curriculum, and co-curricular activities to the school goals. The educators wanted to promote learning by making it fun. The concert further provided an opportunity to inform parents and the local community of what was happening in the school and to market Acme Primary as an attractive place that encouraged learning. My observations of people putting this programme together illustrated a lengthy and advanced training programme. The concert also provided examples of how those involved balanced the teaching programme and took leadership of situations with regard to the production. Connecting this section to Chapter Two, it is noted that Dalin (2005) asserted that self-managing is not only about good teaching. The data pointed to the following issues outlined in the literature review (see Chapter Two): effective teamwork that created a synergy, a willingness to perform duty, remaining true to a vision, making maximum use of autonomy, practicing a distributed leadership style, as well as collaboration and partnership from within and outside the school organization. It was clear that all involved made a contribution which provided a fertile ground within which the practices were enhanced. Hence, the school concert could be considered as an important arena for bridging self-managing activities with teaching and learning.

Working within the framework of distributed leadership (see Chapter Three) the principal seemed to behave outside of stereotypic perceptions of leadership. Although he was immersed in the processes of daily leadership, he allowed different leaders to take charge of different activities of the concert. In a sense, he exercised guardianship over all systems, processes and structures, and ensured the link between all the structures and activities of the school. This illustrated a healthy school culture, which opened up space for all stakeholders to participate and become empowered. This was the practice despite some participants' perception of leadership being reserved for the position of the principal and the SMT (see Chapter Six). This also foregrounded Chikoko's assertion (2011) that no school can improve in the absence of a good leader; a claim which reiterates that strong leadership is critical for the development and improvement of schools. What emerged from my observations of the organisation of the school

concert was that consistency, systematic coherence and practice of almost any activity in the school is achieved by a strong leader and collective production. These observations further aligned with the statement made by The Department of Education, (1996, p.27), which declares that the move towards self-managing schools should be “seen as an activity in which all members of the educational organization engage”.

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter presented a descriptive analysis and a discussion of Acme Primary in practice. Thus the key questions for this chapter were “*where and how*” self-management occurred in this school. Most cases of self-management were found to emanate from attempts of “*anytime, anywhere*” learning that encouraged what was best for the school and its stakeholders to promote the School Vision. It was no surprise therefore, that the vision was enhanced by collaborative decision making, debate, the monitoring of quality, accountability and an ethos of a working community. The vision was embedded in the school culture, which generated connectedness amongst stakeholders to work towards a common purpose.

In making sense of what shapes a self-managing school, I considered for example, activities and incidents of the school curriculum, extra & co-curricular activities such as sporting activities, clubs and community work. Through these topics a connectedness to vision was accounted for in the day-to-day functioning of the school, with dominant values of self-management hallmarked (as explored in the literature review and theoretical framework). For example, incidents of knowledge production and utilization appear to have enhanced learning and achievement, empowered stakeholders and encouraged community involvement. Opportunities and encouragement to get more involved in school affairs made stakeholders advocates of collaborative practices. This was illustrated, for example, when the team leader of the concert actively sought the opinion of all educators in constructing items for the programme. The chapter captured shared involvement in task accomplishments, which included openness to new ideas and as expressed by Richard, “*making learning fun and vibrant*”.

The role of leadership and management enhanced the various realms of the school’s functionality. Power structures tended to be more horizontal in practice and less hierarchical. Members of the SMT, the educators, support staff and parents worked together for the betterment of the school and its stakeholders. This had the potential to encourage sharing of roles

and responsibilities, where everybody became involved, although people were held accountable for their delegated duties. This was one of the ways to motivate stakeholders to engage in the school activities. So the tendency at Acme Primary for those involved to help without being asked, and having an expectation that support would be available should the need arise, ordained a culture of collaboration at this school. In Chapter Two, see page 28, Conley & Bacharach (1990), advocate a more participatory approach where members get more involved in organising activities to suit their individual and group needs. Such a culture formed part of the social and spiritual glue that bound people together, and which had the potential to promote democratic ways of working within the management structures of the school.

CHAPTER 8

MAKING MEANING OF THE STUDY

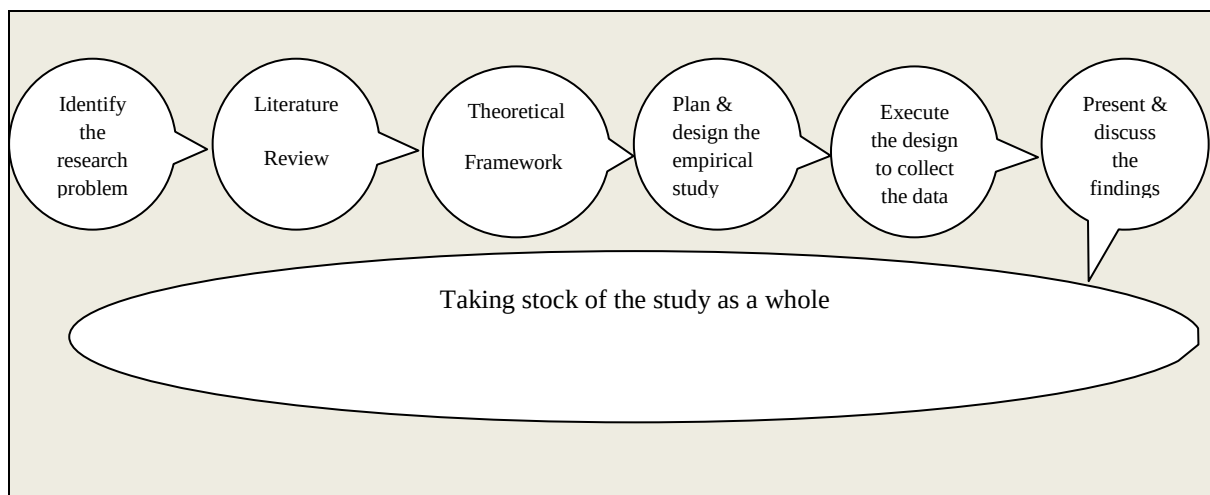
8.1. Introduction

The journey undertaken for this study has explored what it entails to be a self-managing school in the South African context. In this chapter, I seek to make meaning of the research journey I undertook. I now stand back from the close analyses of the three data chapters (Five, Six and Seven), and take stock of the study as a whole. I begin with an overview of each of the stages of the study. I will then draw from the data to develop a response to the three critical questions posed in Chapter One. From there I attempt to make meaning of the study drawing from all the constituencies of this work and hopefully communicate my thesis. A journey of this magnitude cannot be without “potholes”, hence, I also present key limitations thereof. And in conclusion, I end this journey with a few final words about my study at Acme Primary with regard to what entails a self managing school.

8.2. Looking Down the Road Travelled: Overview of the Study

Figure 8.1 represents all the stages, in order, of the research process I followed.

Figure 8.1: Flowchart of the Research Journey



In Chapter One I reported that South Africa’s history of apartheid has made it difficult for the majority of schools to earnestly take the self-managing route. I contended that South Africa’s decision, as contained in the SASA (1996), for all schools to move towards becoming self-

managing is commendable, as the move is in keeping with current international educational trends and is ideal for developing educational solutions to existing challenges. But I also indicated that even after over a decade of freedom many schools still seemingly appear to be struggling to understand and be party to the business of self-managing (Thurlow, Bush & Coleman, 2003; TIMSS, 1999). Hence, while there are examples of path-finding schools which are coming to grips with the notion of being a self-managing school, it is of concern that the majority seem to still operate behind the traditional walls. Subsequently such schools have contributed to shaping the state of education in this country as being extremely low.

Informed by Caldwell (2008) and Bird (1990), I argued that too often the layperson naïvely accepts the physical and material well-being of a school as indicators of a self-managing school. I indicated that in South Africa this understanding is often reached on the basis of finances available to a school, with Section 21 schools passing as the typical example. But based on a protracted review of literature on the principles of a self-managing school, and by drawing attention to South African education practices, I have argued that the notion of a “self-managing school” is much richer and that understanding this notion requires deeper investigation. I thus set out on this journey to gain new insights in that regard. The research was guided by these three key questions:

1. How do the level one educators and school managers (SMT) understand and experience the notion of a “self-managing school” in the South African context?
2. What are some of the factors that promote the development of a self-managing school?
3. What can be learnt from the policies and practices in the selected school, with regard to “what it entails to be a self-managing school?”

In Chapter Two I forayed into the sea of related literature on what is already known about developing a self-managing school. This process enabled the identification of the hallmarks of a self-managing school which provided me with insights into what an ideal self-managing school should look like. I reported that the notion of ‘self-managing’ is informed by the broad reform agenda of the *decentralization of education* where the focus is on fundamentally altering the political and educational landscape. Decentralization is used as the vehicle to gradually *transfer power, responsibilities and resources* from central government to local structures such as schools (Caldwell, 1988). This idea positions schools as places where local people are given the *authority and responsibility* to make their own decisions and resolve their own problems, within

a centrally determined framework of direction and support (Department of Education, 2000). Hence the implications are that local people can become *empowered* to voice their concerns and take direct action to achieve their ends. The trend to the development of self-managing schools strongly favours a more *participatory style of management* (Certo, 2003; Bray, 1999). In this regard, Fullan's (1993) work reported in Townsend (1996) lays the base for arguing that top-down decision-making alone does not work anymore, for it challenges widespread and broad-based involvement in decisions and diversity within the school. The implications of having less hierarchical structures for self-managing schools, is that it would increase *team-building*, diverse groups working together, and a range of expertise to flourish (Newton & Tarrant, 1992). In essence this approach tends to undermine inequality in an organisation, because if the powerful dominate and deny others their voice and their right to speak, this may hinder development towards self-managing. Then moving onto another concept of *marketing*, borrowed from the corporate world, certain policy trends such as rights of parents, competition, educator competence and raising standards of achievement were identified as important features of self-managing. These and other hallmarks relate to the ability of the SMT, educators and other staff members within each school to use their autonomy, be accountable, and develop knowledge and skills to bring about improvement and development therein. In this regard, *professional development* emerged in the literature as most relevant for self-managing schools because it shapes staff member's competencies, skills and experiences (Guskey, 2000; Speck & Knipe 2005; Golding & Gray 2006). Hence using the literature review as a base, I sought to examine how Acme Primary School was progressing as a self-managing school.

In Chapter Three I couched the study within a two pronged theoretical framework namely: "capital theory" and "distributed leadership theory". The theory of capital is made up of four forms: intellectual, financial, social and spiritual. The underlying idea of *intellectual capital* is that schools should be establishing, searching and using networks of skills and knowledge to improve their practice. This resonates with the argument advanced throughout this report, that self-managing schools are about on-going knowledge production and utilization thereof, in response to challenges and developments in the school. From a *financial perspective*, the essential requirements of funds, materials and time management were explored. Deeply implicated is the importance of finance to the functionality of a self-managing school. However, literature clearly shows that schools that are in good financial stead may not necessarily be more effective as self-managing schools and vice versa. The implication drawn from this is that efficient leadership and management of funds, materials and time remains an important issue in

the quest for successful self-managing schools. The ***social capital*** sub-framework advocates that everyone has something to offer the school, hence working as individuals, collectively as partners and team members in a systematic approach should all be considered. The concept of ***Spiritual capital*** refers to the need for schools to move towards living their beliefs, moral values, attitudes and actions. It emerged that spirituality can be integrated and fitted into a range of school activities and leadership styles; contributing to a school's resilience to the challenges of self-managing. Each of these individual sub-theories of capital added to the collective understanding of what it entails to become a self-managing school.

The second frame focused on Distributed Leadership Theory. Research explicitly showed that the role of the school principal, as the leader of the school, is crucial to holding the pieces of the organization together (Harris & Muijs, 2005). Distributed leadership does not lessen the role of the principal, but promotes multiple leaders in an organization. This is considered as a desirable form of educational leadership that is required for self-managing schools (Hudson & Parish, 1994). In the past the principal was the one central person as leader of the school, however, in self-managing schools leadership is shared amongst a group of people working closely together.

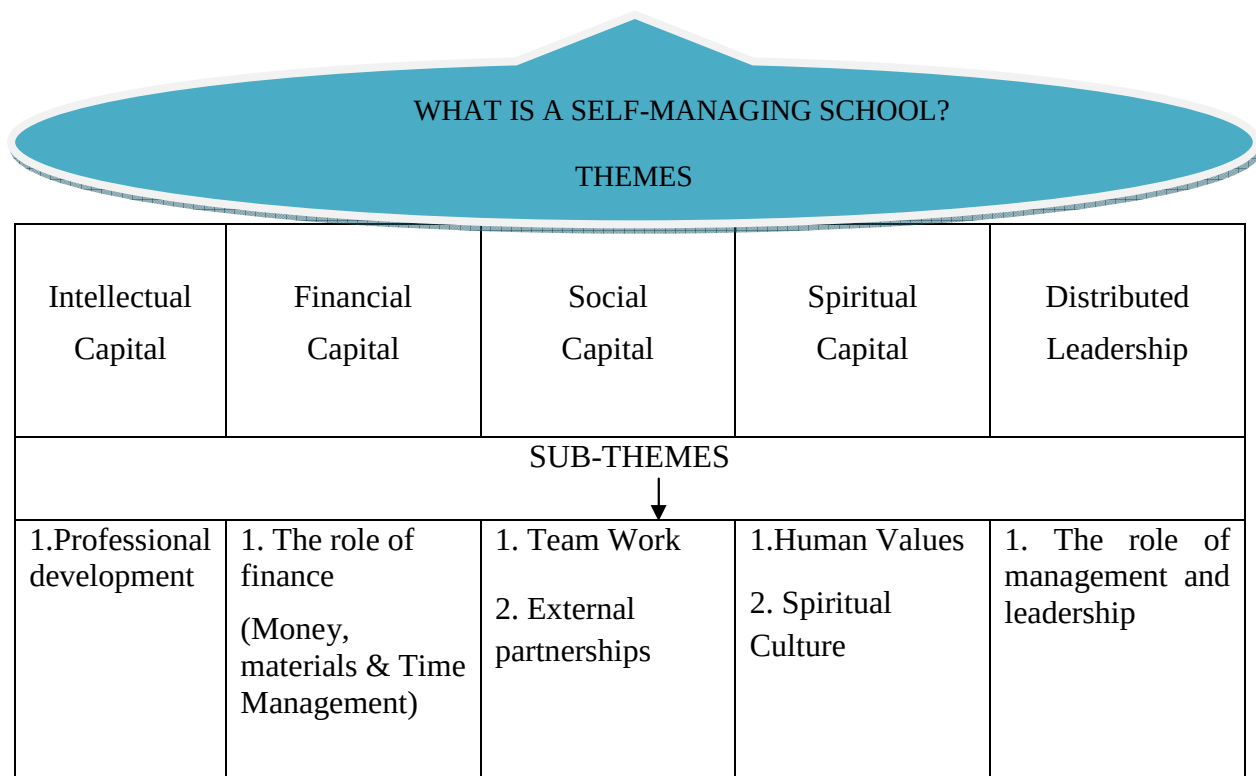
Linking the theoretical framework with a characteristic of a self-managing school, I for example drew attention to the premise that the SMT as well as educators are expert educators who spend much time in the classroom, however, they should participate in leadership roles and decision making (Harris & Lambert, 2003). Literature further showed that distributed leadership is not reserved for those in designated positions. It spreads across the entire organisation with people sharing and working together in collegial and creative ways (Grant, 2006).

In Chapter four I explained the research design and methodology. Through the lens of a qualitative approach, I adopted a single case study design. The data was captured through a blend of four data collection instruments: the transect walk, observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Through the transect walk I provided initial insight into the profile of Acme Primary, which contributed to an overall understanding of the school context. This experience was important as it outlined the social scenery under which data for this study was produced and constructed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten selected participants who comprised of the SMT and level one educators. The SMT and educators were directly involved in shaping the selected school towards becoming a self-managing school, in

terms of participating in decision making, developing, and leading and managing the school. Furthermore, the focus group interviews awakened dormant awareness and encouraged vibrant discussions on a variety of issues related to a self-managing school. Using the observation approach in this study I was able to obtain ongoing information of the context and the behavioural patterns of the participants in certain situations. This method provided opportunities that contributed to the collective understanding of the practices at Acme Primary School. Document analysis enabled me to unveil the discourses and practices of what happened in the past and a “behind the scenes” look at what was not observable or what I might not have asked in the interviews.

Data is presented in three consecutive chapters (Chapters Five, Six and Seven). In Chapter Five I presented and discussed data from the transect walk. This provided some overall understanding of Acme school. A full understanding of the research site was significant to this study, as an understanding of a self-managing school is situated in activity and embedded in context (Smylie, 1995). Thus building on the data and insights from the transect walk, in Chapter Six I presented and examined data from the in-depth semi-structured interviews with the SMT and level one educators regarding their understanding of, a self-managing school. The data was presented and discussed through the mother question: “What is a self-managing school?” The data was further divided into five themes and sub-themes, related to the theoretical framework. Figure 8.2 captures the themes and sub-themes that formed the basis of the findings and discussion of this chapter.

Figure 8.2: Themes- Conceptualizing a Self-Managing School



In the third and final data chapter (Chapter Seven) using all four data collection instruments, I presented and discussed the dynamics of Acme Primary School in practice. This was done through a discussion of themes and sub-themes (see Figure 8.2) that emerged from a detailed examination of the findings. Firstly data on Acme's vision and mission was examined. Secondly through the school programme such as the curriculum, sporting activities, other co-curricular activities and community work; issues of knowledge and skills, finance, meaningful relationships, spiritual development and distributed leadership emerged. This symbolized the way things were done in this school. For example, the school's invitational approach to parents and the team spirit of the staff contributed to the achievement of the vision and shaping the school culture and the practice. This suggested that a self-managing school is the result of connectedness. The connectedness of activities, tasks and meaningful relationships at this school were enhanced through knowledge production and knowledge utilization, and at times finance was necessary to achieve goals. The school processes and systems were also achieved through the connectedness involving the internal and the external stakeholders working together and this involved the effective leadership and management of the school.

8.3. Crystallizing the Findings

In this section I scrutinise the findings with the aim of unearthing what it entails to be a self-managing school. In doing so I developed a response to the three critical questions of the study. The first question, sought to determine how the school managers (SMT) and level one educators understand and experience the notion of a “self-managing school”. It emerged that the school principal had the deepest sense of what a self-managing school entails. Overall, attributes inherent in participants’ construction of a self-managing school included that: the school vision drove the programme, a school culture of connectedness, stakeholders’ active participation in decision making, and professional development intended to grow knowledge and skills. Working in teams and with external partnerships displayed the school’s ability to recognize that there was a need to access resources from within and outside the school, while moving in the direction of self-managing. Division of labour reduced workloads, and in the process Acme Primary School’s staff looked for ways of supporting and assisting one another. This was reflected by a comment by Bernie, *“there is a very strong bond between the staff. Our job is very challenging. We support each other a lot”*. The culture of collaboration, learning and professionalism was prevalent in this school. There were many opportunities for taking leadership and management roles on the part of educators, but the principal’s role as leading the process of self-managing was clearly visible. Regular communication brought stakeholders “on board” and provided opportunities for them to air their views. These attributes, understandings and practices highlighted that a self-managing school is one embedded in setting, which suggested that issues that influence participants’ thinking and experiences were context dependent. This means that a self-managing school is unique to its setting.

The second question concerned some of the factors that promote the development of a self-managing school. It emerged that internal school factors such as the importance of a vision, cannot be overemphasized. The school’s vision was at the core of all practices. It was the blueprint that guided and directed the school mission and created a bond among stakeholders to “strive to be their best” in promoting teaching and learning. Hence, the school’s curriculum, extra-curricular and assessment activities seemed to have had a unifying purpose, expressed through the school vision and mission statements. The values, beliefs, and attitudes of the participants were continuously driven by a belief in “improvement from within” (Barth, 1990). This type of culture and the diverse activities added to the richness of this school, where support and team building had a reciprocal influence on the practice and development of the school as self-managing.

The availability of funds was a major enabling factor in the school. The two way flow of funds, inward and outward is a real necessity for the development and ongoing sustainability of a self-managing school. In this regard, the inward flow of finance was collected from fee-paying learners, fundraising, donations and another source of income for the school. Outward flow included disbursements for property maintenance, school running costs, wages of all SGB paid staff, resources and materials, purchase and depreciation of capital items, leases and rentals and staff professional development. All this required proper management of funds, which meant that the money and money processes were managed so that the budget and the school's strategic plan were aligned. The staff, parents and community had put in efforts to develop and sustain the school. This suggests that the schools' vision, finance and the contributions of the stakeholders contributed to and created the practice of a self-managing school.

The culture at Acme Primary rendered a major impact on the people and the related school activities. In this regard cultural norms of target setting, achievement, monitoring progress and accountability were taken seriously. Stakeholders were continuously motivated towards promoting learning, raising the quality of education through professional development and taking leadership of activities in the school. The school offered rich, relevant and effective educational opportunities for professional development, which was aimed at more knowledge, skills and expertise to extend educators or to be used to overcome challenges in teaching certain subjects. The SMT and educators took advantage of the opportunities being opened up to them to learn, which gave expression to '*anywhere, anytime*' learning. Hence one of the factors promoting the development of this school was that the school managed and maintained quality by providing on-going, productive learning opportunities for the staff and when appropriate, to the community (for example see Chapter 7, Table 7.3., invitation to parents to professional development). This is consistent with the Report on Teacher Development (2005), where professional development is regarded as a pivotal issue in South African education. In this regard Acme Primary created layered opportunities which sought growth and development in everybody as contributing towards increased knowledge, improvement in teaching and learning and ultimately towards the accomplishment of the school goals.

While in pursuit of attaining its educational goals, Acme Primary School was influenced by issues of accountability, improvement and compliance. Meeting such demands is now, in South Africa, left to the school's responsibility (SASA). This involved complying with the country's statutory requirements and fitting it in with the needs of the school. This promoted a safe school

ethos. I regularly observed Acme Primary meeting learners' and educators' needs, in most instances very ably, and with the desired effects. This demonstrated skills that promoted learning by making it fun with different learning opportunities for the learners. For example, the school identified the needs of the learners who showed an interest in playing rugby and girls who wanted to play soccer. In view of developing the school and meeting learners' needs, Acme Primary tailor made the whole administration and structured a programme to accommodate the learners. My exploration revealed that Acme used its power of autonomy to discover what its people needed and got stakeholders aligned to make decisions and strategised for the accomplishment of these goals.

The school as a learning organisation lends structures that improved the mindset and empowered the staff, parents and the community. Through practice of a range of activities, the hallmarks of self-managing such as working together and participative decision-making were clearly discernable. For example working towards a common activity such as the beach clean-up proved to be a binding element that drew internal and external stakeholders to work together. It demonstrated the ability of the school to market itself and create a positive profile. It is through activities such as these that the school increased connectedness with more stakeholders, sharing ideas and gaining support for the school. Findings from the study confirmed that much planning, time and effort was involved in activities such as these, but it also contributed to creating a positive school image where learning was the hub of all activities. This raises awareness to a positive degree of self-managing, where those involved with the organisation were passionate about what they were doing and continuously worked hard to achieve their goals.

There was consistency and ample evidence of planning, assessing and evaluation of the school activities. Planning was not only done before the event, but was on-going. Recalling some examples, the activities based on the broad curriculum, sports events incorporated into the programme and the school concert illustrated that this was the case. Once achieved, new outcomes were planned and implemented to ensure the occurrence of ongoing cycles of development in the school. Participants claimed that their involvement in the planning and leading of activities enhanced in them a sense of loyalty and school pride. This suggests that this school provided space for the participants to feel sufficiently secure to express themselves, in contrast to feeling exposed, powerless and alienated. Such a display of more collaborative and less hierarchical management style of planning and leading tended to be infectious to all areas of this school. This necessitates that the stakeholders worked from a position of knowledge, had the

social, financial and spiritual capital to translate the plans into practice. Hence, it can be noted that a blended approach of directly relating the school vision to the various capitals defined Acme School.

The issue that emerged with regard to leadership, namely distributed leadership, resonates with a view expressed by Bennett, *et al.*, (2003) who suggests that leadership rests on the expertise of the person who is leading rather than their position or seniority. The findings suggest that school leadership was shared with the staff based on their expertise, as compared to the traditional practice, where leadership was reserved for males or for one central person such as the school principal (Gultig, Ndhlovu & Bertram, 1999). The principal practised distributed leadership. He was aware of stakeholders' strengths and participants mentioned that he encouraged "giving off one's best" in every situation. Stakeholders were given opportunities to lead situations or activities, felt inspired to innovate and lead the process. These were seen as tangible benefits to the organization in terms of increased levels of staff engagement; parental involvement and stakeholders' involvement and leadership in community wide initiatives (see Chapter Seven, Images 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6). This collective approach of bringing people together by spreading leadership has offered a new challenge to schools as opposed to the challenge of leadership by one person. It lends credence to the African proverb "it takes a village to raise a child". To achieve this, people have to work together and help one another to overcome their fears and concerns, and to experience the partnership of self-managing as a mutually beneficial occurrence.

8.4. Understanding Acme Primary School through the Self-managing School Lens: Towards my Thesis

An analysis of the findings of this study provides a view of the phenomenon of "a self-managing school" as one that is set within a context of multiple influences. The data pointed to Acme Primary as a school that had been continuously growing and utilizing all the various forms of its capital. In this regard Fullan (2005, p.4), describes such schools as "developing the collective ability of the organization, such as, dispositions, skills, knowledge, motivation and resources to bring about positive change". Acme Primary progressed beyond planning, organizing and record keeping to having structures infused with action, such as participative decision-making and professional development. This positioned the school as one moving in the right direction towards self-management.

As I entered this journey I reported on the power finance has, as one of the most important means of promoting school development, which caused self-managing schools in South Africa to be understood as Section 21 schools that are financially secure. The apparent tension on this issue also surfaced at Acme Primary where participants' verbalized contributions supported the belief that self-managing schools are swayed towards Section 21 schools. However, findings from the other sources of data analysed revealed that there is no single factor or recipe that can be used to build a self-managing school. It is when all forms of capital blend, and is drawn into action, driven by sound leadership distributed across the school that self-management works. Sound leadership, which in turn enables the maximum use of capital, is the fundamental building block in constructing a self-managing school.

There is no doubt that Acme School was rich in resources. School fees were well planned to cover recurrent costs, to enable all learners to participate in all extra-curricular activities, to pay SGB-employed educators and coaches salaries, and maintain the school, among other responsibilities. The school successfully raised funds to supplement schools fees through partnerships with the community and the corporate sector. Thus Acme School was able to effectively draw from its financial capital to create an enabling environment for self-management. However, with due respect to the role of finances in any organization in general and a school in particular, this study has revealed that the notion of a self-managing school is far more complex than attaining Section 21 status.

It is important to draw attention to the interconnectedness of the various forms of capital demonstrated at Acme Primary. To illustrate, the school improvement plan was not an isolated school venture. Support and assistance from external agencies contributed to its success. The school drew from its social and spiritual capital, such as stakeholders working in partnership, and networking with other schools and organizations. This permeated all realms of school space such as in curriculum matters, sports and community related work. In particular this raised the issue of collaborative interchange that facilitated planning together, sharing knowledge, collective learning and shared responsibility. Effective systems of communication, such as the briefing sessions in the mornings, weekly SMT meetings and staff meetings facilitated a managed, structured approach at this school. Clearly this had implications for practitioners in terms of bringing people together and building cohesion. Literature suggests that such a collaborative organisational culture is very important in pushing the boundaries of resilience, which enables the organisation to handle any challenge or task. This augurs well for the

development of a self-managing school where a connected approach to people working in partnerships, teamwork, networking and risk taking builds self-efficacy.

In the spiritual capital realm, I observed needs being met, affirmation of people as individuals, commitment to the personal growth of learners, as well as inspirational and nurturing behaviour. Respect, pastoral care and gratitude appeared to sit comfortably alongside many spiritual perspectives of this school (Lashway, 1996). One way in which Acme Primary did this was to give high priority to establishing a core message such as, “striving to be the best in promoting learning’ which was reinforced by examples of caring for others and providing motivation towards accomplishments. For example, when new staff, SGB members or parents “came on board” the school enabled them to learn about the school with assistance from others. Ultimately a collective form of capital fosters higher levels of organisational commitment and productivity in practice (Dantley, 2005; West-Burnham; 2003).

My position with regard to what makes a self -managing school, is therefore one of **balance**. The notion of self-managing is a multi-sided concept. Limited use of any one element of capital would indeed restrict the potential for self-managing. The more the school draws on its capitals, the greater the opportunities to improve its practice. A self-managing school entails, for example, knowledge and skills for growth and development, finance for resources, effective inter-relationships and attributes of love, trust and caring to mobilize people to deal with their day- to- day issues. Evidence from the study has consistently revealed that a blending of distributed leadership with these various capitals. Thus, all forms of capital are pathways that shape a self-managing school in a connected and focused way. Hence, hand in hand, capital with distributed leadership, form a school culture that supports the development of a self-managing school. See Image 8.1.

Image 8.1: A Self-managing School as a Product of Capital and Distributed Leadership



This model of CAPITAL hand in hand with DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP (Image 8.1.) opens the door to re-conceptualising the phenomenon of a self-managing school, with further consideration on “switching off” a mentality that the construction of self-managing schools is based on finances alone. Schools that try to manage one capital at the expense of the others may not succeed in their endeavours to self-manage. In the South African context, categorising schools rigidly into Section 20 or 21 may undermine the school’s capabilities to perform beyond the limits of preconceived financial boundaries. In this regard, my thesis is this: the challenge for South African schools is to have in-built mechanisms at the site, aimed at developing and drawing on all forms of capital and distributed leadership for their practice.

8.5. Some Limitations of the Study

This study is a documented journey of my exploring how one school was improving and developing as a self-managing school. Any such study is not without limitations.

An obvious limitation of this study is that it was grounded in one particular school. A single case study approach lacks representativeness of the wider population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001). Initially I planned to include more schools to get a better representation of Section 21 schools. However, with the onset of fieldwork at Acme Primary, I realised that conducting a qualitative study of this magnitude in more than one school was overly ambitious for the time and resources available. As a part time student, I could not afford to take long term leave from my duties of teaching, as leave would have been granted without pay. Therefore my data collection phase extended from February to November 2011. I conducted the study at a school in the neighbouring area where I am currently employed and this was for approximately ten hours per week, excluding my observation of activities conducted in the afternoons and weekends. Time constraints limited the continuity of the data collection process, as my appointment schedules did not play out according to my plans as either the participants or I were caught up in unforeseen circumstances. Very often, interviews had to be rescheduled which put pressure on the time frame I had allocated for this stage of the research, and this created a fair amount of anxiety for me as researcher. Furthermore, a self-managing school is a complex business in practice, which required a reflection of interconnecting factors and situations. Thus I limited the scope of study to just one school as I found it to be a reasonable approach for me to draw meaningfully from the corpus of data and to address my research questions in a focused way.

Similarly, the decision not to include the SGB (the school governing body) directly in the study, but to observe their contributions at school functions and meetings, meant that the concept of a self-managing school was limited to certain perspectives only. Limiting the study to a specific group of participants, namely the SMT and educators in one primary school, was deemed appropriate for both the size and scope of the study. Through careful selection of the school, the participants and the activities, and through interweaving theory, literature and analysis, the study explored many layers of a self-managing school. However adding another school context and the SGB could have enriched the study.

Belatedly I came across the term “self-transforming schools”. Understanding the notion of a self-transforming school would have added more value to the study, as a self-managing school is not just about managing but transforming. Management has an element of transformation. However given the youth of South Africa as a democratic country, many schools are grappling with self-managing, therefore this aspect was the focus of my study.

I lean on the views of Bassy (1999), who claims that not all studies see generalization as an essential outcome. At the heart of applicability expressed in this study are specifics to this group of participants and this school context. Thus one cannot generalize the findings to all other schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal; for other participants in other contexts, different attributes of self-managing might vie for priority. However, although the study was limited to one school, it did allow me to describe the understandings and the practice of self-managing in this school and also identify with relative confidence a number of factors which impacted on the improvement and development of the school. I have presented a picture of the dominant principles of a self-managing school from which other educators can learn and that researchers may pay attention to in any future larger-scale studies.

8.6. Calling It A Day

I set out in this study to explore what it entails to be a self-managing school in the South African context. I found this study to be an interesting story of the journey participants in this school had taken on their path of self-management. Capitals are deeply embedded in self-managing schools, driven by shared leadership, informed by a shared vision and demanding connectedness for improvement. In practice a self-managing school entails meeting diverse and numerous individual, collective and systemic needs.

In closing, it is clear from the findings of this research that the phenomenon of a self-managing school is not easy to define and even more complex to practice. I left Acme Primary School thinking about the significant events, activities and practices in the day-to-day life at this school. It was a life signalling the steady growth of a South African school, on the route towards self-managing. Metaphorically speaking, these findings of what it entails to be a self-managing school were like woven threads forming patterns of relational connections. What became quite evident was that the participants in this study were committed educators determined to persevere and to make a success of their school. It led credence to the saying that: “excuses are after all tools with which people with no purpose in view build for themselves great monuments of nothing’. Underpinning this statement is that things don’t just happen in a school without a vision. This study illuminated that self-managing is not the end point, but the journey; a journey that continues for Acme Primary School.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE GRANTED FOR THIS STUDY



**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**

Research Office, Govan Mbeki Centre
Westville Campus
Private Bag x54001
DURBAN
4000
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609
Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

26 November 2010

Mrs. S Pillay (203512583)
School of Education and Development

Dear Mrs. Pillay

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/1335/010D

PROJECT TITLE: Investigating the notion of "self-managing school" in the South African context.

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process:

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

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

Yours faithfully

Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor – Prof. V Chikoko
cc. Mr. N Memela

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

**APPENDIX B: LETTER APPLYING FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT
RESEARCH AT SCHOOLS OF THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE, SOUTH AFRICA**

15 Silvergull Drive

Lotus Park

Isipingo

4133

05 September 2010

Superintendent General

Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education Institutions

Dear Sir Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KZNDEC SCHOOLS:

My name is (Sarasvathie) Saras Pillay. At present I am a PhD student in the School of Education of the University of KwaZulu Natal. The title of my research is: **“What does it entail to be a self –managing school: evidence from one South African school”**”. My supervisor is Prof V.Chikoko.

In fulfilment of the requirements of the said degree, I am planning to conduct my study in one school in the Umlazi district, in the province of Kwa- Zulu Natal. However my application is for three schools; the first one is the selected school of study, the second is for the pilot study, and the third one will be used in the event that either one of the schools decline to participate in the study. I hereby request your permission to carry out this study at the following schools under the authority of the KZNDEC (The names of the schools have been withheld to ensure anonymity).

The aim of my project is to explore how the SMT and educators understand a self-managing school and the ways in which it is practiced in the school.

- I would talk to the SMT and educators about issues relating to self-managing at the school. This includes holding interviews/discussions, observations of some school activities, attending some staff meetings, as well as reading the school documents.
- I would take account of the day to day functionality of the school, to explore how the school is developing as a self-managing school.
- And to identify what are the challenges that the school is experiencing and how are they coping to overcome these challenges.

There is no possibility of discomfort or any possible danger that I think would be involved in my research. I will keep the identity of the school and the participants confidential.

I look forward to your response and hope to receive your written permission shortly, so that I can approach the District office and school managers to conduct the study at the selected schools.

Sincerely

Sarasvathie Pillay (Mrs)

Tel No : 031 9027080

Fax : 031 9021477

Cell No: 082 5741 769

Work : 031 9023102

Supervisors details:

Prof. Vitallis Chikoko

Faculty of Education

School of Education and Development

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Edgewood Tel. No: 031-2602639/ 0763767836

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION GRANTED TO UNDERTAKE THE STUDY AT 3 SCHOOLS OF THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE.



MRS SARASVATHI PILLAY
15 SILVERGULL DRIVE
1 BELLEVUE MEWS
LOTUS PARK
ISIPINGO
4133

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Date: 01 June 2011

Reference: 2/4/8/11

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

PROPOSED RESEARCH TITLE: Investigation the notion of a “self-managing school” in the South African context.

Your application to conduct research in the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, educators, schools and institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Head of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period: From 01 June 2011 to 31 June 2012.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Superintendent General. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s) contact Mr Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Address to: The Director: Resource Planning; Private Bag X9137; Pietermaritzburg; 3200

The Department of Education in KwaZulu Natal fully supports your commitment toward research and wishes you well in your endeavours. It is hoped that you will find the above in order.


Nkosisinathi SP Sishi, PhD
Head of Department :Education

1/06/2011
Date

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa
PHYSICAL: Office G25; 188 Pietermaritz Street; Metropolitan Building; PIETERMARITZBURG 3201
TEL: Tel: +27 33 341 8610 | Fax: +27 33 341 8612 | E-mail: sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za



kzn education

Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

MRS SARASVATHI PILLAY
15 SILVERGULL DRIVE
LOTUS PARK
ISIPINGO
4133

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Date: 01 June 2011

Reference: 2/4/8/11

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

PROPOSED RESEARCH TITLE: Investigating the notion of a "self-managing school" in the South African context.

Your application to conduct research in the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The research and interviews will be limited to the following Schools and Institutions:

1. Primary
2. Primary
3. Primary

Regards,


Nkomo Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education

21/6/2011
Date

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.

KWAZULU-NATAL
POSTAL: Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa
PHYSICAL: Office G25, 188 Pietermaritzburg Street, Metropolitan Building, PIETERMARITZBURG 3201
TEL: Tel: +27 33 341 8610 | Fax: +27 33 341 8612 | E-mail:

**APPENDIX D: E-MAIL SENT TO THE PRINCIPAL, INDICATING MY
INTEREST TO CONDUCT MY STUDY AT THE SCHOOL**

15 Silvergull Drive

Lotus Park

Isipingo

4133

20 October 2010

The principal

XXX Primary School

Private Bag XXX

Umbogintwini

Dear Sir Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL:

My name is (Sarasvathie) Saras Pillay. At present I am a PhD student in the School of Education of the University of KwaZulu Natal. The title of my research is: **“What does it entail to be a self –managing school: evidence from one South African school”**. My supervisor is Prof V.Chikoko.

In fulfilment of the requirements of the said degree, I am planning to conduct my study in one school and I have strategically chosen your school in the Umlazi district. Attached please find a letter from the Department of Education Institutions granting me permission to Conduct Research at this school.

I humbly request your consent for my PhD research to be conducted at your school. The aim of my project is to explore how the SMT and educators understand a self-managing school and the ways in which it is practiced in the school.

- I would talk to the SMT and educators about issues relating to self-managing at the school. This includes holding interviews/discussions, my observation of some school activities, attending some staff meetings, as well as reading the school documents.
- I would take account of the day to day functionality of the school, to explore how the school is developing as a self-managing school.
- And I also wish to identify the challenges that the school is experiencing and how the school is coping to overcome these challenges.

There is no possibility of discomfort or any possible danger that I think would be involved in my research. I will keep the identity of the school and the participants confidential. And please note that participation in this study is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason.

I look forward to your response and hope to receive your written permission shortly.

Sincerely

Sarasvathie Pillay (Mrs)

Supervisors details:

Tel No : 031 9027080

Prof. Vitallis Chikoko

Fax : 031 9021477

Faculty of Education

Cell No: 082 5741 769

School of Education and Development

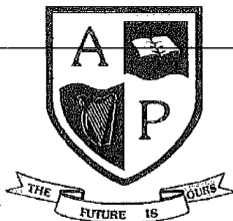
Work : 031 9023102

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Edgewood Tel. No: 031-2602639/ 0763767836

**APPENDIX E: EMAIL SENT BY THE PRINCIPAL GRANTING
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THIS STUDY AT THE SCHOOL**

Telephone :
Fax :
E-mail :
Website :



Primary School

3 November 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that Mrs Saras Pillay has permission to conduct surveys and collect data at , Primary School during 2011, as part of her studies towards a PhD in Education Management at UKZN.

Principal



APPENDIX F: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

15 Silvergull Drive

Lotus Park

Isipingo

4133

1 August 2010

XXX Primary School

Private Bag XXX

Umbogintwi

Dear Principal , DP , HoD and educators

RE: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

This letter invites you to participate in my research. My name is (Sarasvathie) Saras Pillay. At present I am a PhD student in the School of Education of the University of KwaZulu Natal. The title of my research is: **“What does it entail to be a self –managing school: evidence from one South African school”**. My supervisor is Prof V.Chikoko.

I humbly request your consent to participate in my PhD research to be conducted in your school. The aim of my project is to explore how the SMT and educators understand a self-managing school and the ways in which it is practiced in the school.

- I would talk to the SMT and educators about issues relating to self-managing at the school. This includes holding interviews/discussions, my observation of some of the school activities, attending some staff & committee meetings, as well as reading the school documents.

- Throughout the research process I will take written field notes of the day to day functionality of the school, to explore how the school is developing as a self-managing school.
- I also wish to identify the challenges that the school is experiencing and how the school is coping to overcome these challenges.
- Once the project is finalised, and the findings made accessible to you only then the data gathered may be disposed of.

There is no possibility of discomfort or any possible danger that I think would be involved in my research. I will keep the identity of the school and the participants confidential. And please note that participation in this study is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason.

I look forward to your response and hope to receive your written permission shortly.

Sincerely

Sarasvathie Pillay (Mrs)

Supervisors details:

Tel No : 031 9027080

Prof. Vitallis Chikoko

Fax : 031 9021477

Faculty of Education

Cell No: 082 5741 769

School of Education and Development

Work : 031 9023102

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Edgewood Tel. No: 031-2602639/ 0763767836

APPENDIX G: SAMPLE OF FORM SIGNED BY PARTICIPANTS CONSENTING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

Dear Participant: _____

I wish to thank you in advance. Please sign the declaration below if you are willing to participate in this study.

DECLARATION

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

I understand that participating in this study is voluntary, and I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

.....

DATE

.....

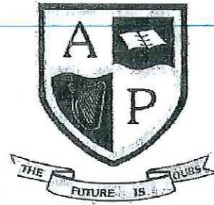
I, Sarasvathie Pillay, the researcher, undertake to treat all the information provided by the participant in strict confidence and for the sole purpose of this research.

Signed:

Date:

**APPENDIX H: E-MAIL FROM THE PRINCIPAL GRANTING
PERMISSION FOR THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS IN THIS STUDY.**

Telephone : 0
Fax : 0
E-mail : 0
Website : 0



Primary School

15 November 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Primary School hereby grants Saras Pillay permission to have access to and use of the school photographs, for inclusion in her PHD thesis on self-managing schools.

PRINCIPAL

APPENDIX I: SEMI-STRUCTURED SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS.

TITLE: What does it entail to be a self-managing school?

2 Individual interviews: Principal

DP

2 Focus group interviews: 2 HoDs

6 Level one educators

INTRODUCTION AND WARM UP (5 mins)

1. Thank interviewees for participation
2. Personal introduction: I introduce myself and we share information such as post level, number of years of teaching experience, qualifications, etc.
3. Explain the purpose of the interview, which is, to generate information of how the participants understand the notion of a self-managing school and how the school is self-managing in practice on a day to day basis, in the South African context.
4. Stress CONFIDENTIALITY and anonymity of the school and interviewee.

KEY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

1. What is your understanding of “a self-managing school”?
2. In your opinion what are some of the important principles of a self-managing school?

FINANCE

1. How can you explain or account for the importance of finance for the day to day functionality of your school?
2. What are some of the challenges you experience with financial management?
3. How do you contribute to formulating the school budget?
4. Are the staff and the general public informed of the details of the budget?
5. Has the school been able to generate its own funds? How is it generated?

INTELLECTUAL

1. Are you continuously empowered through professional development at the school?
2. Share some of your experiences on how your school has continuously empowered you in your work through continuous professional development.
3. How often does professional development occur?
4. How has time been managed for professional development to flourish at this school?
5. Discuss some of the responsibilities that you have been entrusted which has enabled you to use your renewed knowledge and skills to contribute to the development of the organisation.
6. To what extent are HoDs and educators involved in contributing to decision-making in the development needs of the school?

SOCIAL

1. To what extent are educators given the opportunity to work in teams?
2. Explain the main functions performed by your teams or committees?
3. To what extent is collegiality implemented in order to meet the development needs of the school?
4. Are there any services rendered to the community by your teams/ committees?
5. Talk to me about the external partnerships that prevail at your school.
6. Does the community make a contribution to the school? Are they willing or are they coerced?
7. In what ways does the community contribute?
8. Briefly outline those services rendered by non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

SPIRITUAL

1. What is your understanding of spirituality in schools?
2. What values, characteristics, behaviours and beliefs best help to describe spirituality in this school?
3. How does your spirituality help you in meeting the developmental needs of the school?
4. In your opinion why is spirituality important in your role as an educator in this school? In other words if you didn't exercise spirituality in the school what might happen?

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

1. How would you describe your role in the school to school improvements and developments?
2. What are your perceptions of the management and the leadership roles at your school?
3. Can you describe special skills or expertise that educators are equipped with and have they been given the opportunity to share their expertise with all stakeholders?
4. In your view how has this been accepted by the SMT?

CLOSURE

Do you have other suggestions or comments on what you think your school (SMT and educators) need to do both in and outside the school in order to enhance the process of self-managing?

1. Thank the participants.
2. Request permission from the participants for further contact to clarify certain issues if necessary.

APPENDIX J: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

The following school events will be observed throughout the research process, and notes will be taken on how issues relating to self-managing manifest.

NO	AREAS OF OBSERVATION	PURPOSE
1.	Contextual factors that influence the performance of a self-managing school.	1. Taking care of the environment 2. The assistance and co-operation of colleagues. 3. Availability of resources and facilities 4. Learner discipline. 5. Support and mentoring to educators /learners 6. Planning for the following year 7. Is it a learning organisation? 8. Delegation of tasks 9. Are the stakeholders prepared for their role functions?
2.	Minutes of staff and other committee meetings	1. Who is chairing these meetings? 2. What dominates the agenda of such meetings? 3. Is there high enthusiasm for people getting involved and discussing matters that affect them? 4. How are females participating at such meetings? 5. How are decisions taken? 6. How does planning occur? 7. What are the developmental areas that

		they focus on? 8. Do they set target dates for completion? 8. Do they monitor progress?
3.	Professional development activities	1. What types of development, support and mentoring is given to educators? 2. Approach of person providing the support 3. Approach of person receiving the support. 4. How does it help the educators to improve?
4.	School assembly	1. Purpose of assembly 2. Nature of announcements 3. Who conducts assembly
5.	Parent participation in school activities.	1. Links with outside school context 2. Utilizing outside expertise 3. Encouraging parental participation
6.	School activities / Sports	1. Team approach 2. Commitment to school vision 3. Adds value to the school environment 4. Cultural activities balanced with sports activities 5. Do the stakeholders have the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed decisions?

APPENDIX K: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

NO	DOCUMENTS	PURPOSE OF ANALYSIS
1.	School vision and mission statement	How is the school vision and mission used to identify and meet the developmental needs of the school?
2.	Minutes of staff and other committee meetings	1. Who is chairing these meetings? 2. How often do they meet? 3. Evidence of nature of issues that are discussed. 4. How are decisions taken? 5. Planning 6. What are the developmental areas that need improvement 7. Target dates for completion 8. Monitoring progress
3.	Staff attendance registers	capture educators' attendance
4.	The school curriculum schedules	To establish how the school uses the national curriculum to suit the needs of the school
5.	The school timetable	1. What programmes are built into the timetable? 2. Evidence of how the school manages their time to put their timetable into operation. 3. Flexible to accommodate learner needs. 4. Changing timetables to suit the circumstances
6.	School photographs	Portray messages about issues of self-managing
7.	Academic and assessment records in the last five years	1. Evidence of the progress of the learners 2. Areas for educators to exercise self-improvement. 3. Areas that the mentor or manager provides guidance and support.

8.	School policies	1. Who draws up these policies? 2. What are the criteria used to draw up policies. 3. Steps taken to meet those criteria 4. Use of internal and external expertise
9.	School planning (year plan)	1. Who is party to the school year plan? 2. Does networking happen by chance or is it part of the school year plan?
1	News letters to parents	1. Who writes the articles or messages for the newsletters? 2. Who edits it? 3. What information is given to parents?

APPENDIX L: EDITORS' NOTES

25 Maple Crescent
Circle Park
KLOOF
3610

Phone 031 – 7075912
0823757722
Fax 031 - 7110458
E-mail:
webanksec@telkomsa.net
sathsgovender4@gmail.com

Dr Saths Govender

31 JULY 2013

THE EXAMINING PANEL

LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

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

**WHAT DOES IT ENTAIL TO BE A SELF-MANAGING SCHOOL? EVIDENCE
FROM ONE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL, by SARASVATHIE PILLAY.**

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

Yours faithfully



DR S. GOVENDER

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

Dr. R. D. FORDE

19 BALMORAL DRIVE, COWIES HILL 3610, SOUTH AFRICA

PHONE 031 - 7093088 fax 0866127059.

E-MAIL: forde-ch@mweb.co.za

This is to certify that I have read and edited the draft doctoral thesis:

WHAT DOES IT ENTAIL TO BE A SELF-MANAGING SCHOOL?

EVIDENCE FROM ONE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL

Submitted for my attention by Saras Pillay.

This edit was completed on 17th July 2013.

R. Dudley Forde.

17th July 2013.

APPENDIX M: REPORT- TURN IT IN

7/28/13

Turnitin

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Dissertation Saras Pillay

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☐	Author	Title	Similarity	web	publication	student papers	Grade	response	File	Paper ID	Date
☐	Saras Pillay	Chapter 7 and Chapter 8	2% 2%	2%	0%	0%			download paper	342672592	28-Jul-2013
☐	Saras Pillay	Chapter 5 and Chapter 6	3% 3%	3%	0%	1%			download paper	342672411	28-Jul-2013
☐	Saras Pillay	Chapter 3 and Chapter 4	9% 9%	6%	3%	5%			download paper	342672304	28-Jul-2013
☐	Saras Pillay	Chapter 1 and Chapter 2	11% 11%	8%	4%	4%			download paper	342672237	28-Jul-2013