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**Leadership learning: A case study of departmental heads from
two primary schools**

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of
Education in the discipline of Educational Leadership, Management and Policy,
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Date Submitted: May 2024**

Student's Declaration

I **Petunia Nokwanda Mavundla** declare that:

- i. This research titled, "Leadership learning: A case study of departmental heads from two primary schools," except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- ii. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- iii. All work that is not mine is acknowledged in in-text referencing and in the reference list.
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SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation is submitted with / without my approval.



Professor. I Naicker (Supervisor)

17 May 2024

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my grandparents Hilda and Alois Mavundla, and my dear father Siyanda Lucas Mavundla who all did not live long enough to be part of my academic support structure. However, their teachings guided me throughout.

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ABSTRACT

Departmental heads (DHs) in primary schools in the South African schooling system play vital roles in leading and managing teaching and learning schooling phases. Research indicates that the Department of Education does not offer them formal training aimed at equipping them for their complex roles, nor does it require them to have formal leadership qualifications prior to assumption of duty as DHs. This study sought to explore how these leaders learn to lead. Specifically, it asked the following research questions; what are the departmental heads' perspectives on leadership learning in the case study schools? How do the departmental heads in the case study schools learn leadership? What do the departmental heads in the case study schools view as effective mechanisms for leadership learning? Two theories underpinned this study, namely, the Adult Learning Theory by Knowles and the Leadership Development Conceptual Framework by Lyham. This study is framed in the philosophical dimensions of the interpretivist paradigm within the qualitative approach. The methodology applied to understand how departmental heads learn was a case study. Two schools of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education's Pinetown District were conveniently sampled, and four departmental heads were purposively chosen and interviewed. Document analysis was applied to supplement the data generated from the semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study revealed that departmental heads think it is very important for leaders to learn to lead and they understand that performing their core duties requires specialised guidance. Furthermore, leaders learn differently as driven by their goals. Their lengthy leadership experiences enabled them to recommend context understanding as a vital aspect of the leadership learning process accompanied by support largely from the principal of the school. This study concluded that departmental heads do not receive sufficient support from their school principals upon appointment and recommended that a collaboration between the departmental heads, leaders of Professional Learning Communities and the learned others be formed and a programme for newly appointed departmental heads be designed and shared with other schools in similar contexts.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACE:SL	Advanced Certificate in Education: School Leadership
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
BEd	Bachelor of Education
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DH	Departmental Head
Hons	Honours
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
QMS	Quality Management Systems

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I draw the research map of this study which is exploring the leadership learning of departmental heads in primary schools. I start by providing the background of the study as well as the research problem. I then proceed by giving the reasoning behind the study. Next, I present the objectives of the study followed by the key research questions. Furthermore, I provide the definition of key terms to be used in the study. After that, I give an outline of this study that will be split into chapters. I then conclude by giving an overall summary of this chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study stems from the researcher's interest in how departmental heads learn to lead in South Africa. Chikoko et al. (2011) present that the notion of leaders needing to learn to lead is normalised, however, there is no clear set directive on how this learning can happen or should be done. In addition, Naicker (2011) asserts that South Africa has programmes in place for school leadership development, but these are not accessible to all school leaders but a select few. The inaccessibility of these leadership development programmes does not stop policy, teachers, as well as school principals among others to have expectations of departmental heads. This research accepts that learning to lead is important and equally important is knowing how to learn and knowing when the learning is happening.

Departmental heads have to meet standards set for them by departmental and school policies even though they are not prepared on how to go about meeting and maintaining these expectations. Ogina (2017), argues that the departmental heads need to be able to apply instrumental leadership strategies in their schools as they lead their subordinates and as they also lead the teaching and learning process. According to Kjellström (2020), leaders need to be capable of leading themselves as individuals, leading colleagues and leading the workplace. These arguments raise a critical question of how the departmental heads are supposed to know this since they don't get training for this leadership position. These outlined expectations, on the other hand, are relevant for this study as they give an idea of the leadership mechanisms the departmental heads need.

There is a disjuncture between what the policy outlines as roles and responsibilities of the departmental heads and what these leaders understand as their job. A study on departmental heads by, Ogina (2017), found that departmental heads believe that they have a responsibility to manage the work of the teachers as well as monitor how their work progresses. Another study by, Tapala et al. (2021) found that the departmental heads thought they were appointed so they can raise the curriculum bar for both the learners and the teachers. In the South African context where there is Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) Document which clearly unpacks the duties of a departmental head, these findings should not be in existence. Policy and reality on the work of the departmental heads are not always in sync.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The departmental heads in South African Schools do not receive formal training that equips them for the leading role they have to execute. This factor has given rise to this study. Nxumalo (2021) asserts that departmental heads need to be instructional leaders to their teams and for that to happen they need to be capacitated. The absence of formal capacitation means compromised execution. Furthermore, Albashiry et al. (2016) state that in practice, departmental heads spend a fraction of their time performing curriculum leadership roles and most of the time on leadership tasks. This could be excused as a result of the absence of formal preparation. In agreement, Nhlumayo (2020) states that professional development programmes are designed to keep the teacher's skills updated for the production of competitive learners. The absence of formal training for departmental heads leads to a lot of problems that schools can avoid.

Lack of priority when it comes to the professional development of departmental heads leads to increased complexities in job execution. Naicker (2011) argues that apartheid negatively affected attitudes linked to teaching and learning in South Africa. Resistance suffered by the departmental heads could be stemming from negative attitudes linked to leadership. Among other challenges the lack of support suffered by the departmental heads hits deep as to their new role, support is a resource for facing new and varied challenges (Albashiry et al. 2016; Nxumalo, 2021). Some of the challenges departmental heads face are beyond their control.

Departmental heads as a part of the school leadership team do not only lead but also have teaching duties. Tapala et al. (2021) aver that the binary responsibilities held by the departmental heads of being both a teacher and a leader bring about complexities. These stem

from expectations the school community has on how the departmental heads work, Tapala et al. (2021). Furthermore, Tapala et al. (2021) add that the complexities lead to mishaps in the way the departmental heads fulfil their binary roles. This exposes the importance of understanding how the departmental heads deal with these issues and rise above them as they teach and lead in their schools.

The responsibility to teach and lead as an official member of the leadership team is not a light one; it is heavily contested. Tlali and Matete (2021), also add to the discussion on challenges faced by the departmental heads that, the magnitude of the challenges negatively impacts their performance. This makes way for the argument by Nhlumayo (2020) asserting that transformation in schools is driven by the increased leadership challenges experienced. Furthermore, Nhlumayo (2020) adds that schools need to develop their context-based leadership development programmes for teacher development. Having identified the importance of the leadership role the departmental heads play and the challenges they are faced with, it is necessary that the researcher looks at the suggested solutions, in practice.

Mechanisms with the potential to solve the challenge of trained departmental heads are there, but not applied. Leadership development programmes are not designed for them, rather more for the school principals (Naicker, 2011). The Personnel Administrative Measures document clearly delegates the principal with the duty to support the departmental heads professionally (Department of Education, 2016). However, this duty is not carried out as per the literature consulted (Albashiry et al., 2016; Dishena, 2014; Nxumalo, 2021).

In summary, departmental heads are important role players in school leadership and management. Their roles are not limited to leading the phases and teams but also extend to normal schoolteacher duties of teaching and classroom management among others. The role of leadership is not an easy one to carry out; departmental heads are faced with a variety of challenges as the first tier of school leadership and management. This study seeks to explore how these leaders learn to lead when they have such clear-cut duties to perform and no formal training on how to execute such duties.

1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The rationale for this study is presented in three folds; personal, professional, and theoretical.

1.4.1 Personal

During my first year of teaching, I saw departmental heads as puppets for the principal and conflict instigators among the staff. As the years progressed, I felt sorry for them for not understanding the important leadership role they have in the schools and how there is no hope for them because they are comfortable in holding onto the authority of disciplining the teacher subordinates. According to Chikoko et al. (2011), the success of a school is heavily dependent on the leaders being effective in their leadership. Interestingly this made me aspire to be a departmental head so that I can make a difference in the team that I will lead and, in the school, where I will be appointed. The sudden interest was sparked by my academic studies on education leadership management and policy. This study is important to me as it will help me understand how the departmental heads learn to lead because even though they do not need academic qualifications and lengthy experience for their positions, they do lead, and the phases they lead are operational.

1.4.2 Professional

As a teacher educator for the Department of Education South Africa for ten years, I have had enormous experience working with departmental heads. In the ten years, I have taught in two senior primary schools and two different provinces. The location of both my primary schools has been that of a township setting. My position in both the schools was that of a normal educator without any leadership role in the day-to-day management and running of the school. I have only been on the receiving end of the leadership and management side of the departmental heads. My observations over the years teaching at either one of these schools have been influenced primarily by my academic status. This is because I have been enrolled for a higher educational qualification for most parts of my service period.

As a new teacher in the school fresh from university, I was allocated a departmental head to mentor me. In the mentorship I received, there was no induction but a set of textbooks for the learning areas I was to teach, a schedule for the meetings I needed to attend for the discussion of assessments, and dates for my class visits. Then there was the issue of a teacher's file that the departmental head wanted from me and expected that it will be of a certain standard considering the prestigious university I was coming from. As the years progressed, I learnt that

when there is an issue with a teacher that needed the attention of the principal, the departmental head functions as a 'parent'. The nature of the meeting will determine whether the departmental head is a scolding parent ready to punish or a protective parent ready to burn the school down in defence of their offspring.

1.4.3 Theoretical

Learning about the current changes from literature about schooling and how things are happening and how they should be happening in schools influenced the way I look at departmental heads and the way they lead. Naicker (2011) explains that the education fraternity worldwide is moving towards contextualising the educational needs of their communities owing to the change in expectations of schools and school leaders. Furthermore, exposure to departmental policies that I have accessed in a personal capacity shocked me when I learnt of the roles and responsibilities of departmental heads. PAM Document by the Department of Education (2016) stipulates what is expected of the departmental heads in terms of roles and responsibilities. What has been a big shocker is the lack of academic qualification that is necessary for candidates to be considered for the positions of authority they hold as a component of the school leaders as well as the on-the-job experience. The lack of further education and formal training of the departmental heads in the schools I have worked in is the main contributor to my negative attitude towards their leadership role.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore how departmental heads from the sampled primary schools learnt to lead. This study has great potential to change the mindset of young teachers like me and learners in the working environment on how they perceive their leaders. Understanding how they learn without getting formal training on how to lead will earn them much-needed respect from their subordinates. Respect can lead to collaboration and improved teamwork amongst departmental heads and their teams. Furthermore, it can spark more debate on the leadership learning of the departmental heads and provoke more research in the field. The insight gained from the participating departmental heads through their experience sharing will assist in adding study content in education leadership and management policy discipline and enable other departmental heads to apply their strengths towards leadership learning programmes for the betterment of their leadership roles. This study can lead to the development of better leaders, committed teams, motivated learners and it could also add to the review of departmental head appointment policy.

1.6 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study explores the following research questions:

1. What are the departmental heads' perspectives on leadership learning in the case study schools?
2. How do the departmental heads in the case study schools learn leadership?
3. What do the departmental heads in the case study schools view as effective mechanisms for leadership learning?

1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

In this section of the research report, clarity will be provided on the key terms this study will keep referring to and those are namely, leadership, departmental heads, and leadership development.

1.7.1 Leadership

Leadership is an act where a leader motivates their team into working towards achieving the goal or goals the organisation has set, (Bush, 2007). In agreement, Hussain et al. (2018) define leadership as a manner in which a person encourages other persons to work towards a goal they are all interested in. Kjellström (2020) avers, there is no clear definition of leadership; the available definitions are confusing and ambiguous. For this study, leadership will be referring to skills possessed by teacher managers who have a responsibility to encourage teachers under their command to work hard at reaching goals they will set as a team and those set by the school.

1.7.2 Departmental Heads

Departmental heads (formerly known as Heads of Department) are teachers in the South African school context who hold the position referred to as post level 2. They are responsible for departmental functionality within their schools (Department of Education, 2016). Nxumalo (2021) defines departmental heads from a South African context as the teacher educators who are on the first level of school leadership and management. They work closely with the teachers to ensure school productivity. Tapala et al. (2021) further add that, there is an international concept of middle managers amongst other common concepts that are used to refer to a teacher in a departmental head position. In this research report, departmental heads refer to teachers at

the middle level of school management with the responsibility to lead their departments and help the principal in managing and leading the school.

1.7.3 Leadership learning

Leadership learning is a process where leaders are capacitated to lead, and the learning occurs within their work environment as well as outside their work premises by their superiors, (Naicker, 2011). On the other hand, Cardno (2007) describes leadership learning as a conscious decision a manager takes to assess their department and the leadership styles, they are employing in relation to the leadership theory that fits their context at that given time. Closely linked to leadership learning is the concept of leadership development this research report also discusses.

1.7.4 Leadership development

Van Velsor (2007) explains leadership development as a way an individual positively applies acquired leadership skills and knowledge learnt as a leader. Kjellström (2020), further adds, how one approaches the concept of leadership development guides how they see it, the value they place on it as well as the position of priority they align to it. On the other hand, Day (2000) asserts that management development refers to tried and tested solutions to problems that commonly arise in the workplace. In addition, Dragoni et al. (2009) clarify that management development focuses on a person in a position of a managerial title or in pursuit of being taught the necessary skills for the management role in the organisation. Making the distinction between leadership development and management development is important for this study because of the difference in qualities between a leader and a manager as the study adopts Van Velsor's definition.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organized into five chapters. Each chapter will address a specific aspect of the research process. In this section, I highlight the aspects to be addressed by each chapter starting from chapter one to chapter five.

Chapter One: Orientation and background to the study

In this chapter, I carefully plan out how I would go about approaching my study by looking at its background and orientation. Here I introduce that I will be researching the phenomenon of leadership learning for the departmental heads in primary schools. I present the statement of

the problem for the study and the rationale behind the study. The aim and objectives, critical questions of the study, and definition of key terms are presented. It is in this section that I also provide an outline of the chapters of the study that are to follow and conclude with a summary on the background and orientation.

Chapter Two: Literature review

It will be in this chapter that I provide evidence of literature reviewed on the phenomenon I have chosen to study as well as the current debates on how departmental heads learn to lead. This chapter will also bring about the theoretical framework that is underpinning this study so that the direction it takes can be academically justified. Knowles (1973) Adult Learning Theory as well as a conceptual framework by Lynham (2000) will be the theoretical framework unpacked as underpinning this study.

Chapter Three: Research methodology

Literature on how a study of this nature can be approached will be considered in this chapter and I will use the prescriptions to pave a step by step set of directions this study will take and provide justifications for the choices made. These choices will be along the lines of research design and methodologies adopted, paradigm the study will be grounded on, the methods used, data generation, the discussion of sampling, the analysis of data as well as the ethical consideration taken.

Chapter Four: Data presentation and discussion

This chapter will present the data I generated in the field and grant a platform for the data to be discussed concerning the aim and objectives of the study and the key research questions. The data will be presented thematically and the key findings that will emerge will be discussed and framed within the Theory of Adult Learning and the Leadership Development Conceptual Framework.

Chapter Five: Summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations

This is the chapter that will bring the study together in a summary through highlighting each of the study chapters, the discussion of the conclusions drawn from each research findings and recommendations made and conclude the study.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced the study on leadership learning of the departmental heads, provided the background, statement of the problem, rationale, significance of the study, key research questions as well as the definition of key concepts used. In South Africa, there is no requirement for formal academic qualifications related to leadership as well as the experience necessary to qualify one as a departmental head. It is interesting to note that departmental heads do execute their leading roles and responsibilities without any qualifications or experience. The following chapter will discuss literature reviewed in relation to leadership learning of the departmental heads in South Africa, Africa, and the globe.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter introduced this study through explaining the research problem, providing its background, explaining its significance, providing the main research questions, and defining key terms to be used in this study. This chapter is divided into section A and section B. In section A, I review the literature I consulted on the phenomenon of leadership learning. To do this I discuss the debates I found in the literature I reviewed and related them to this study. In section B, I review the literature on the complementing theoretical framework. This study is grounded on Knowles Adult Learning Theory (1973) and the Leadership Development Conceptual Framework by Lynnham (2000).

SECTION A: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2 PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP LEARNING OF DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

To formulate an understanding of the existing perspectives of the departmental heads on leadership learning this study reviewed existing literature. The recurring debates from the literature are the following: leadership development is a global professional concept, there is limited research on how this learning occurs, learning happens over time, and leadership learning should not be generalised. These debates will be discussed in detail below.

2.2.1 Limited research on how the learning occurs

There is limited research on how leadership learning occurs but there is research that addresses certain parts of the leadership learning process. Robertson (2009) presents that a burning desire to break through the limits within the education sector such as those between research and practice is essential for leaders such as departmental heads who want to learn about leadership. Robertson (2009) also adds that the limits have a great potential to hinder leadership learning through experience and creativity. Furthermore, a research study by Robertson (2009) found that leaders do not have the knowledge and skills they could have learnt from their peers because they do not converse about what they are learning and the value thereof. In the same breath, Kakabadse et al. (2009) state that there is limited research on the purpose of leadership rather research focuses mostly on how leaders go about achieving the purpose of leadership. The limited availability of research on leadership learning makes it difficult to plan how the

learning process is going to happen. Therefore, this study on leadership learning for departmental heads may narrow the gap in the education research space.

The absence of a step-by-step learning process opens up room for varied debates. Du Plessis and Eberlein (2018) contend that departmental heads do not get professionally developed to perform the duty of developing their subordinates and members of their teams however, when they receive support from their principals, professional development is prone to happen. Du Plessis and Eberlein (2018) also add, district officials only focus on the aspect of curriculum delivery when hosting training sessions. Tapala (2019) avers that the departmental heads do not get appropriate training on the new curriculum, as a result, they are not equipped to be prepared. This constant remodelling of the curriculum in South Africa heightens the need for the departmental heads to be trained to lead as they are the link between the teachers and the curriculum (Tapala et al., 2021). In addition, Kjellström et al. (2020) argue that it is not easy to understand how leadership development happens. Departmental heads from a South African research study associated the availability of teaching aids as well as the unavailability thereof with quality learning (Tapala, 2021). Furthermore, a study by Tapala et al. (2021) found that the departmental heads revealed that the resource management role they have to execute requires technique and context background, therefore training and development programmes are essential. Despite the departmental heads not getting formal training to perform their critical roles the business of the day carries on. This forward movement creates a need for this study to understand how departmental heads learn to keep operations running without formal training.

2.2.2 Leadership development is a global professional concept

Leadership learning programmes are increasingly being established in countries all over the globe as means of catching up with the constantly changing demands of the education systems. Naicker (2011) presents that the education fraternity worldwide is moving towards contextualising the educational needs of their communities owing to changes in expectations placed on schools and school leaders. Chikoko et al. (2011) add that leadership development has captured global interest and make reference to Mathew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance nationally and The National College for Leadership of Schools and Children Services in Canada. Both institutions although continents apart are existing to develop leaders in the educational sector. Countries have their educational systems, and they change constantly

which influences the need for leaders who are capable and efficient, hence this study seeks to understand how departmental heads learn to lead.

To catch up with the current educational trends, schools need to focus on the gaps in their context since the gaps are contextual. Nhlumayo (2020) emphasises that teachers need to keep up with the teaching and learning trends to remain relevant, and competitive, and produce learners likewise. Departmental heads need to keep abreast of educational changes for their competency and therefore need to learn how to lead. Furthermore, a way of ensuring this is participating in in-house professional development programmes as they are designed to keep the teacher's skills polished for the production of quality learners. In the same breath, Tapala et al. (2021) point out that insufficient support, motivation, preparation as well as resources for departmental heads is a common problem in developing countries. Additionally, Tapala et al. (2021) subsist that, the constant remodelling of the curriculum in South Africa heightens the need for the departmental heads as links between the teachers and the curriculum. Schools need to have professional development programmes that address their need. It is imperative to explore how the departmental heads catch up with the trends and learn to lead despite the varied challenges.

2.2.3 Learning happens over time

Leadership learning like any other learning is a process that happens over time. Robertson (2009) points out that when leaders have good learning relationships with their teachers and mentors they will reflect those relations in their leadership roles and can impact the culture of the school. Furthermore, Robertson (2009) states that when leaders during the learning process are given a chance to add to the new knowledge they get encouraged to voluntarily introspect. For the relationship to be either good or bad, it needs to have had a chance to grow and time is the often-used measure for the process.

A process has highs and lows as it unfolds, and the learning process is no exception to that. Stephenson et al. (2018) argue it is not an easy task to lead the teaching and learning processes. To offer a solution to some of the challenges, Berry (2019) states, that the support departmental heads receive from their superiors grants them the strength to take on new prospects and acknowledge their weaknesses. This enables them to work with their weaknesses while capitalising on their strengths. Furthermore, Berry (2019) adds that a turnaround strategy in the approaches used in development programmes for departmental heads is essential. This means

a shift from individual teacher focus to a merge of skills from different aspects of the job, social and professional spaces is needed. Imparting leadership skills to the departmental heads is a process that takes time and also considers other aspects of their job and school context.

2.2.4 Leadership learning should not be generalised

There is a variety of ways in which people learn and not all leaders learn the same, therefore leadership learning should not be generalised. Kakabadse et al. (2009) outline some of these differences by emphasising the difference between leading and reacting to organisational situations. In addition, Robertson (2009) stresses that conforming to hierarchical traditions leads to dependency on the part of the leaders and a negative impact on their leadership practices. Furthermore, Robertson (2009) opines, that the educational space has a wide range of limits both formal and informal. These range from cultural diversity, the difference between research and practice, to principal and subordinate relations. Robertsons (2009) adds that on the other side of these limits lies great potential for leadership learning, however breaching the boundary is the challenging part. Each organisation is different and leadership needs are contextual therefore generalising leadership learning methods is not in the best interest of the learning process.

The process of leadership learning has to have positive outcomes for its context. Research findings by Robertson (2009) reveal that leadership learning should be a productive exercise and should be context driven. Support structures play a vital role in this process. Du Plessis and Eberlein (2018) found that departmental heads receive very limited support from the district officials. To support their findings, Du Plessis and Eberlein (2018) reported that school visits by the department officials are a fruitless exercise for development as they are focused on monitoring structures within the school. Recent research by Ezeonwuachusi (2020) on principals and desired leadership pathways revealed that school leaders need to see the need for leadership development in their practice. Furthermore, the initiative may be by external stakeholders however, it should be context considered for it to be effective. It is therefore important that a school identifies its needs and support structure for its leadership development programmes to yield anticipated results.

Defining the need for development is imperative as it shapes the direction of the development and consolidates the perspectives of individuals and forms a school perspective. According to Berry (2019), teacher leadership development need is increased by educational changes in the

standards of education the school produce. In addition to that debate, Kjellström et al. (2020) found that employees have a different understanding of leadership development, therefore have certain expectations from leadership development programmes.

In conjunction, the findings by Tapala et al. (2021) reveal that the departmental heads thought they were appointed so they can raise the curriculum bar for both learners and teachers. Furthermore, Tapala et al. (2021) sum up the argument by stressing that the leadership role is challenging and the challenges stem from expectations the school and the stakeholders place on the leaders. Schools need to craft a voice and a perspective of leadership learning for departmental heads within their context that will be synonymous with their entire school team.

2.3 HOW THE DEPARTMENTAL HEADS LEARN LEADERSHIP

The literature was used to understand the various mechanisms and approaches employed to assist leaders to learn leadership. The following learning methods are discussed: coaching, mentoring, monitoring, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), induction, reflective practice, and formal leadership programmes by Higher Education Institutions.

2.3.1 Coaching

Coaching is one of the mechanisms used to facilitate the leadership learning process for school leaders such as departmental heads (Albashiry et al., 2016; Robertson, 2009; Stephenson et al., 2018; Vanblaere & Devos, 2018; Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). Naicker (2011) argues that coaching is a support mechanism for school leaders learning to lead. This means that the principal can delegate a coach to develop the learning departmental heads needs as means support. Furthermore, Naicker (2011) avers that it is a different form of mentorship. It focuses on the skill development aspect of leadership and management, and it is applied as a support mechanism for school leaders to reach the goals they set to achieve (Naicker, 2011). In addition, Ngcobo (2020) explains that coaching is a strategy based on observation and working together in coming up with mechanisms that can enhance the teaching and learning process for the improvement of school performance. In the same breath, Zepeda et al. (2014) stress that the focus areas for coaching are determined by the need of the school and departmental head. Naicker (2011) highlights that several countries are adapting mentoring and coaching approach for leadership and management development purposes. Coaching allows departmental heads to learn to lead in their context while receiving support from the coach and working with them towards achieving their leadership goals.

2.3.2 Mentoring

Educational leaders learn to lead differently through different mechanisms and mentoring is also a mechanism for leadership learning (Albashiry et al., 2016; Chikoko et al., 2014; Naicker, 2011; Stephenson et al., 2018; Vanblaere & Davos, 2018; Zepeda et al., 2014; Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). Ngcobo (2020) describes mentoring as when a colleague guides their fellow by providing them with resources such as policies, and they also help them find weaknesses in their practice and suggest solutions. Naicker (2011) postulates it is a favored approach based on positive results it yields on leadership preparation of leaders in positions as well those who are wanting to lead. Receiving guidance from a more knowledgeable other from within the fraternity on how to be better at the job as a leader is a means of learning.

The approach mentors use in leadership learning sessions plays a big role in influencing how learning leaders learn. Robertson (2009) argues that learning facilitators need to create an environment for learning, and the learning experiences of others should be topics of dialogue in the sessions. Robertson (2009) elaborates that during these dialogues' issues of beliefs and practices in education, and how values are justified should be deeply articulated. Chikoko et al. (2011) elaborate that in their approach mentors should widen the lens through which leaders view their jobs and their challenges as well as capacitating them to handle these work situations. Chikoko et al. (2011) further state that mentors need to assess if the learnt principles are put into effect in the school by the mentee. The way mentors execute the mentoring is crucial for the direction the leadership learning process will take.

Mentors' perspectives on the leadership development process and their positions are vital for the success of the leadership development programme. Findings from a study on leadership development by Chikoko et al. (2014) disclose that mentors view strong leadership as a crucial principle to have as a school leader. In a different study, Chikoko et al. (2011) found that mentors believe they offer support and avail themselves to hold the leader's hands during the leadership development programme. A further finding is that mentors check their duties against the programme directives to ensure that they are in line with the leadership development programme plan and objectives (Chikoko et al., 2011). As a mentor of a leadership development programme, it is imperative to understand the characteristics leaders should possess and know the importance of the role one plays in the learning process of these leaders.

2.3.3 Monitoring

Among other mechanisms for leadership learning in the education sector monitoring is on the list (Albashiry et al. 2016). Ngcobo (2020) describes monitoring as a gatekeeping measure for departmental heads to ensure that teachers perform their duties and see that everyone is accountable. However, Ngcobo (2020) clarifies that monitoring is not an exercise where the departmental heads scrutinize the work, skill, and character of their subordinates to correct it, but it is for development purposes. Therefore, it is important that the departmental heads as monitors guide and support their team subordinates, Ngcobo (2020) explains. This monitoring process requires that the departmental heads know what it is they are looking for from their colleagues to correctly monitor them. For the support to be provided for developmental purposes, the departmental heads need to be knowledgeable about the content and the needs of the school and the affected teachers. Therefore, the initiatives the departmental heads take towards understanding their roles as monitors and support providers, help them learn to lead their departments.

The departmental heads according to the duties laid out in the PAM Document (2016) are the gatekeepers that must monitor the teachers within their departments. This responsibility requires that the departmental heads check the work of their team members to see if they are in line with policy and identify gaps and needs for professional development. A study by Ogina (2017) revealed that departmental heads participating in the study believe monitoring is a way for the departmental heads to control teachers' work. The leadership learning models are perceived and received differently by different learning departmental heads and monitoring is one model received both positively and negatively by the educational leaders.

2.3.4 Professional Learning Communities

Professional Learning Communities are a common approach for leaders to learn to lead (Berry, 2019; Naicker, 2011; Robertson, 2009; Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). Du Plessis and Eberlein (2018) opine that communities of practice allow departmental heads a chance to gather, share knowledge, and even partner with other schools. Naicker (2011) explains that leadership practice communities are groups of school leaders, that help each other with ideas and strategies to advance the teaching and learning in their schools. To that explanation Chikoko et al., (2014) add that in a community of practice people with similar interests meeting frequently share ideas about how they do things to find better ways to excel. Also, communities of practice make use

of external experts (Chikoko et al., 2014). Educational leaders gather and discuss matters in their work and share information that can better their practice and therefore form communities.

Within the umbrella of communities of practice, members find others in similar positions and with similar interests within the educational space and form alliances called PLCs. Buthelezi (2017) opines that PLCs promote teamwork within the school environment. Vanblaere and Devos (2018) add that PLCs lead teachers in learning by following the coaching, mentoring, and support models. Buthelezi (2017) further clarifies that although leading, the PLCs individual departmental heads cannot claim the credits for the results achieved by the group because in PLCs tasks are delegated. The nature of PLCs requires that all departmental heads who are members be active participants. This taps on the duty of a teacher as a lifelong learner (Buthelezi, 2017). PLCs promote learning together and enable the teacher to perform some of their out-of-the-classroom roles. The departmental heads through the delegated tasks learn to lead their teams as they work together during the interactive content-sharing sessions.

There are some grand advantages of PLCs as a leadership learning mechanism. In the view of Robertson (2009) when a leader elects to use the PLC partnership as the primary source of leadership, learning changes the learning process and dilutes the power dynamics between the knowledgeable and the learning. To elaborate, Brown et al. (2018) add that the duties of facilitating the PLC are fluid and do not rest on an individual but each member of a PLC gets a chance to facilitate a PLC session. This is a strong advantage of the PLCs as it provides a platform for members who have the same interests to come together and share progressive knowledge without focusing on their leadership ranks. In the case of departmental heads learning to lead through a PLC, means they are not just knowledge recipients but active learners who also take the lead in the learning process.

PLCs offer a give-and-take learning platform. A research study by Naicker (2011) on the professional development of school principals found that the principals from a variety of schools enrolled were led by a tutor in leadership and management development sessions. Furthermore, Naicker (2011) presents that these sessions allowed for information sharing amongst the school leaders about what they had been learning. Robertson (2009) opines that the PLC approach prescribes that the learning leader be willing to run with the leadership role while they learn and be an active partner to the mentoring associate. The process follows a learn, test, and give feedback pattern which means the departmental heads learn in practice and

have the support of their teams for strength. Research by Robertson (2009) has disclosed that a leader's personal experience combined with reciprocal learning relations, influences their leadership practice which in the long run contributes to the shaping of the school culture. From this we can infer that the departmental heads as they learn can modify the school culture, so it remains in sync with the organisational changes.

As a leadership learning mechanism, PLCs are not without disadvantages. Robertson (2009) argues that capitalizing on the use of relationships from the PLCs to guide and lead educational leadership goes against the traditional ways of leading. Departmental heads as leaders in the learning process need to be aware of the effects of their chosen learning models to be able to prepare themselves for possible changes. For the departmental heads learning to lead, this disadvantage has the potential to discourage them from participating in PLC and learning at their own pace from and with their colleagues. Antinluoma, et al. (2018) argue that the concept of PLCs has been modified rapidly to fit into the educational context as a result, different studies place different emphasis on the dimensions required for the initiation and evaluation of the PLCs. Furthermore, Antinluoma et al. (2018) state that PLCs are difficult to measure. This means it is difficult to determine how effective and not effective PLCs are for the departmental heads' leadership learning. The established difficulty in measuring the success of the PLCs leave a gap for principals to judge PLCs as not effective for departmental heads' leadership learning and as a result bar departmental heads from attending the sessions which will inhibit them from using PLCs as a leadership learning approach. Finally, Prenger et al. (2018) opine that learning through PLCs is a long-term process that allows members to grow from starter to developer and end at the mature member stage. The challenge with this growth process as per a study by Prenger et al. (2018) reveal that schools do not afford teachers enough time to form PLC and therefore it becomes complex to initiate and sustain PLCs. Departmental heads need good sources of knowledge as well as time to learn how to lead to improve their work skills and contribute to school improvement.

2.3.5 Induction

School leadership roles are vital for the smooth running of the schools, especially now with constantly changing global trends. Researchers on induction programmes argue that leadership positions in schools have always been part of the structure, however, due to the advancement of the education curriculum for the teachers the leadership roles are changing (Gehrke, 1991; Kutsyuruba, 2015). Furthermore, Kutsyuruba (2015) notes that global education structures

require formal leadership structures to be created at all school phase levels. School leader expectations keep on being remodeled but support mechanisms do not improve to meet the remodeled expectations, (Pannel and Sergi - Mc Brayer 2020). This finding adds to and reiterates the importance of having departmental heads who are equipped to lead so they don't only lead and support their phases but can also be globally competitive. Global changes in the education fraternity demand that school leaders lead in line with the trends, but do not offer how school leaders like departmental heads should learn to lead in the changing times.

Induction programmes are an essential initiation process for novice departmental heads. According to (Gehrke, 1991; Gilles, 2018) departmental heads like other teachers learn through induction programmes and as they perform their duties, they learn the specific details of their jobs. Adding to how vital induction programmes are, Kutsyuruba (2015) stresses that when induction programmes are effective, they will indirectly prepare the new teachers for future leadership positions within the school environment. Well-structured induction programmes for departmental heads do not only help them settle into their jobs but also teach them some skills they will need in the future as they lead their phases.

2.3.6 Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is one of the mechanisms departmental heads use to learn to lead. According to Slade et al. (2019), reflective practice is a practical act of frequently scrutinising one's conduct and infusing theories learnt into practice. Klentschy (2005) highlights that there is an increasing need for reflective practice in society currently. Day (1999) points out that adults mostly learn through reflective practice. Day (1999) adds that for teachers to learn effectively through reflection, they need to expose themselves to new and different ways of doing their jobs by working with other people. Klentschy (2005) stresses that reflective practice should be context structured, it should be consistent, and its focus is on stimulating prior knowledge to enable learning to occur. Klentschy (2005) clarifies that prior knowledge includes skills the adult learner has already. Departmental heads taking on new roles and responsibilities without training, apply the reflective practice mechanism in their handling of new tasks and work challenges as leaders.

When the departmental heads think about active situations and try to find theoretical solutions to those problems, it does not mean they are applying reflective practice. Day (1999) states that for reflective practice to be an effective learning mechanism, the learning departmental heads

need to have a good understanding of the nature of the relationship with their mentors. They need to know the limitations that come with reflective practice, and they should always demonstrate professionalism (Day, 1999). Slade et al. (2019) argue that teacher preparation for the job happens in two folds namely, theory and practice. Slade et al. (2019) also add that critical thinking is a crucial element in infusing theory into practice and thereby creating a strong learning experience based on reflective practice. Reflective practice should be applied correctly for it to yield positive results.

2.3.7 Formal leadership programmes by Higher Education Institutions

To address the challenges of school leadership, formal leadership programmes offered by higher education institutions are gaining popularity, however, their effect is questionable. Tingle et al. (2019) present that university leadership programmes for principals do not always address all the developmental needs of the enrolled participants. Tingle et al. (2019) add that the focus of the university programmes is not in line with the needs of the participants. Finding from a study by Pannel and Sergi - Mc Brayer (2020) revealed that, the tasks from the university leadership programmes are not in line with the leader's context. This detachment from the context could have ripple effects on the leader's attitude toward the learning programme, (Pannel & Sergi - Mc Brayer 2020). The provision of leadership programmes by institutions of higher learning is a step in the right direction for school leaders. Although the focus is still mainly on the principals the departmental heads can learn to lead from these programmes through their principals.

2.4 SOME EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS FOR LEADERSHIP LEARNING

There is a variety of mechanisms that leaders learning to lead can apply in their professional development process, but it is important to choose a working one. Chikoko et al. (2011) argue that the idea of a leader needing to learn to lead has become a standard expectation however, there are no clear and set directives on how this learning can happen or should be done. In the view of Stephenson et al. (2018) leader's context determines the strategies to be employed. The environment should be conducive for leaders to positively impact the teaching and learning in their leadership. In agreement, findings from a study by Albashiry (2016) exposed that the manner of approach to the curriculum- leadership tasks as well as the problems the leaders came across was influenced by a variety of factors. Understanding one's context and the need for development is the compass needed to navigate through the learning models.

Learning to lead through a mechanism that focuses on the needs of the leader and their context is important. Equally important also, are the aspects that the learning models should have. Robertson (2009) postulates that trust is a vital aspect of the learning process meaning that for the learning leader to show their vulnerabilities to the mentor, they need to feel safe around them. Robertson (2009) adds, should the trust not be there, the new leaders will not be confident to ask for help in an area where they need development. Furthermore, a partnership is vital in the current context of education (Robertson, 2009). In support, Duke (2014) is of the view that collaborating with institutions of higher learning contributes positively as a support mechanism for the learning leaders. Trust and collaboration cannot stand in isolation, but they are aspects each leader, teacher, and learning model should acknowledge and value.

Findings from previously conducted studies offer insight into which aspects of the learning process are important and account for those identified. Dishena (2014) describes induction as a process in place for the betterment and retention of the practices each individual possesses for the benefit of all. A collaboration of induction programmes and the culture of the school with a specific focus on the element of support can lead to an improved quality of teaching and learning, (Dishena, 2014). Findings from a study on heads of departments leading curriculum development by Albashiry (2016) reveal that heads of departments valued the support they received and considered it valuable. Du Plessis and Erberlein (2018) maintain that support was praised as an effective instrument by departmental heads in schools where distributed leadership was applied which led to departmental heads being proactive. To concur, Albashiry (2016) raises that the support learning leaders received helped them look at their job portfolios from a different angle which was positive. A study by Chikoko et al. (2011) found that portfolios provide rich data coupled with evidence of what has been learnt. A distinction between individual learning and group learning was made and leaders need to know so they can apply appropriate measures when capacitating their teams on different aspects of their roles. The portfolio can be a product of leadership learning and a process at the same time. Compiling the tested and proven facts about the leadership learning process helps to create a reference book for effective mechanisms for leadership learning.

It is important to know where the departmental heads need to start when introspecting for gaps that need filling for leadership learning to be effective. In the view of Stephenson et al. (2018) the classroom is the starting point for leading progressive changes in the school and in the way teaching and learning occurs. Kjellström et al. (2020) argue that the one-size-fits-all leadership

development programmes do not work, and they lead to participants distancing themselves from the programmes. Further finding by Kjellström et al. (2020) observed that participants welcomed the development programmes however they had concerns when activities were not accommodative to their contexts. Knowing where to start helps shape the plan and identify which models have the potential to work and which do not stand a chance.

The literature proposes suggestions on mechanisms to be employed going forward based on the studies that have been conducted on leadership development for departmental heads. Du Plessis and Eberlein (2018) recommend that departmental heads be trained on role execution and suggest that the minimum requirements for this position be re-looked at. Tapala et al. (2021) suggest that clear policies on leadership development should be compiled and made available for consumption by aspiring departmental heads. Nxumalo (2021) also adds to the discussion, that departmental heads need to be instructional leaders to be able to execute their role of capacitating teachers to produce quality learners. However, Nxumalo (2021) further highlights that research has not documented how departmental heads learn to be instructional leaders. Tapala et al. (2021) state that the task of developing departmental heads' training should lie in the hands of the principal to implement and oversee.

SECTION B: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework is an integral part of a research process as it is the base that provides guidelines for interpreting and analysing the data generated (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). To understand how departmental heads learn to lead this study adopted the Leadership Developmental Conceptual Framework by Lynham (2000) and the Adult Learning Theory by Knowles (1973).

2.5 KNOWLES'S ADULT LEARNING THEORY

This study employs Knowles Theory of Adult Learning formulated in 1973. Knowles (1978) credits the scholar Alexander Kapp for the term 'Andragogy' as he explains that adult education is different from child education and it needs a particular type of teacher, focused methods, and a special philosophy. As this study looks at departmental heads as learners, they are not the same learners as the students in the school systems they are part leaders of. There are other theorists focusing on adult education as Knowles (1978) refers to Lindeman's scholarly work on adult education as the foundation for understanding adult learning. To expand on the relevance of the adult learning theory, Knowles (1978) points out that

Lindeman's systematic theory only focused on adult education in comparison to conventional education. As a result of the focus on only conventional education, a gap in knowledge was created which his theory on adult learning fills, thereby making it ideal for this study.

Knowles theory suggests that adults who actively acquire new approaches, skills and knowledge to better themselves and their work are adult learners (Knowles, 1973). The Adult Learning Theory suggests that adults who learn have five characteristics, goal oriented, relevance oriented, self-directed, motivated, and problem centered (Knowles, 1973). This means the departmental heads who want to learn need to have the need coming from within them and driven by a goal which is a desire to be leaders. They need to want to learn so they can improve their leadership skills. They need to want to learn as leaders and improve themselves and the departments they are leading. They need to be encouraged by their leader responsibilities and able to see encouragement coming from their colleagues and environment as well as having a leadership goal they are focusing their learning on. Knowles (1978) argues that the characteristics of learning strictly associated with adults, dates to after world war I. This means that the need to understand how adults learn is not a new concept and this study's interest in the phenomenon is evidence that overtime the angles of learning change hence the need to understand its occurrence.

Knowles (1978) stresses that the starting point of the adult learning is the learner's existing knowledge. What the departmental heads know when they assume leadership roles is vital for their learning journey. Knowles (1978) stresses the importance of learning rather than teaching where education is concerned. As the departmental heads learn leadership, it is imperative that that they understand what they are learning, prior to attempting to apply the new knowledge onto their team members. Knowles (1978) explains that the theory is based on principles made in Andragogy. The principles of learning are phase-based which means different learning principles are applied to learners as they grow older. How the departmental heads of certain age and experience are taught and learn varies accordingly.

Alongside the five characteristics of adult learning, the Adult Learning Theory has four main presumptions; self-concept, experience, leaning, and orientation to learning (Knowles 1978). To unpack the presumptions, Knowles (1978) argues that self- concept refers to the stage where a learner transforms themselves as a result of new knowledge, approaches and skills learnt. The transformation leads them to independence especially when it comes to their thought. This

ability to have independent thoughts is what the theory calls andragogy (Knowles, 1978). When departmental heads assume their roles these adult learners rely on themselves and as they work, they learn more and gain some confidence to have their own thought about what and how to do things.

As the learning continues, experience is gained leading to the second presumption termed experience. Experience is an essential part of the learning; this is because of the rich knowledge learners gain as they explore new and unfamiliar avenues through the learning journey (Knowles, 1978). As adult learners, the departmental heads use the knowledge they have to try and interpret the new and unfamiliar contents and contexts they come across. They rely on what they know, what they have seen, and heard of until they have figured what works and what does not work. Knowles (1978) stresses the importance of being able to link previous experience with new knowledge and call this a crucial learning point.

The third presumption is learning, and it is a critical presumption because it is influenced by other factors. According to Knowles (1978), learning does not happen due to time and place. It happens when the adult learner wants it to happen, and the want is influenced by the new duties they have to carry out. In agreement, Lindeman (1926) argues that adult learners are conscious beings who participate in the learning process as reaction to their varied situations. As professional teachers before the role of departmental heads, the learners do not concern themselves about learning how to lead their departments until they have to because of their positions and role requirements.

The fourth and final presumption is orientation to learning, Knowles (1978) adds that as adult learners encounter new challenges and changes at work about work, they grow the need for learning (Knowles, 1978). In support, Lindeman (1926) claims that adult learning happens in line with life activities, and it is a life-long process. The transformation from being a subordinate to a leader who is expected to be an expert, the departmental heads develop the need to learn about their roles.

In the context of this study, this theory is instrumental in making meaning of how adults learn but it does not explain fully how they learn to lead. Therefore, it is important to mention that I engage a conceptual framework to bridge this gap.

2.6 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A Leadership Development Conceptual Framework by Lynham (2000) is applied in this study to understand how the departmental heads learn leadership. The framework has eight components: leadership development occurrence, formal education, on-the-job experience, specialised leadership education, leadership education focus, barriers to effective leadership development, leadership learning as a lifelong process and leadership development versus management development (Lynham, 2000).

The first component of the framework is leadership development occurrence. This is concerned with how socialization from childhood to adolescence influences leadership traits that children will adopt as they grow up and apply in their own professional settings (Lynham, 2000). These can be observed from the high academic levels upheld by the family, professional commitment set forth by family members, all the way to responsibility-filled duties a child has to perform in the home (Lynham, 2000). In the context of the departmental heads, this means that traces of leadership from their personal background need to be evident. The next component centres on formal education. Lynham (2000) presents that there is limited research on the effects formal education have on the individual's leadership learning experience. Lynham (2000) clarifies that although there is a positive link between formal education and leadership based on the few studies conducted, there is no evidence to support that positive leadership traits are a result of formal education. Departmental heads' academic qualifications are important, but they cannot in isolation provide leadership learning.

Another component is on-the-job experience which relates to the manner one responds to and solves challenging situations and learning how to lead as they work (Lynham, 2000). Observing how co-workers execute their duties and how one borrows those and applies them including making mistakes, is how they learn to lead on the job. As the departmental heads execute their daily activities, they are bound to come across challenges, the approaches they use to solve those challenges, help them learn.

Specialized education is the next component of the conceptual framework. According to Lynham (2000) leadership programmes make a positive difference to how leaders learn. Lynham (2000) further explains that these have been the programmes aimed at specific aspects of the leader's development. The longer the programme, the better, as they yield continuing results. To measure the leadership learning of the departmental heads, looking at the leadership

development programmes they have participated in, and their durations will give an indication of learning depth.

Furthermore, Lynham (2000) expands on leadership preparation focus and argues that the three core areas that need attention are learning leader's perspectives, improve their comprehension and mastery, develop them on accomplishment and persuasiveness as well as improving their administration styles. Lynham (2000) further argues that positive outcomes have been recorded in studies where leadership training was focused on specific roles. As the departmental heads learn to lead through various mechanisms, the focus of each mechanism determines which area of leadership expertise they are developing as they learn to lead. Then there are barriers linked to effective leadership learning and they include; measures applied to assess the effects of the learning, the type of leaders enrolled for the training programme, the skills of the trainer, learning monitoring process, as well as the quality of the training in relation to leader's context (Lynham, 2000). Departmental heads will not all learn from the same mechanisms, the same way. Their different personalities, backgrounds and expertise, drive and hinder their learning. The acknowledgement of barriers leads me to the next component which focuses on the duration of learning.

According to Lynham (2000) leadership learning is a life-long process; a leader cannot learn and complete the learning involved in leadership due to the changing nature of the leadership roles and work situations. For as long as the departmental heads work with different stakeholders, lead, and monitor changing curriculum and have to uphold evolving policies, they will always encounter different scenarios in their line of work. As a result, they will keep on learning and that is why the learning process is lifelong. Lynham (2000) stresses the differences between leadership development and management development. To elaborate, Lynham (2000) presents that their skills and knowledge possessed by leaders are different from those of managers. Lynham (2000) further points out that one can be a manager but not a leader and also one can be a leader although not in a management position.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed the literature on leadership learning and discussed the recurring debates. Understanding the perspectives of the departmental heads through literature has been structured into three themes. The first theme is limited research, there is not enough literature on how departmental heads learn to lead and there is no evidence of how the learning process takes place. The second theme is globalization; leadership learning is a global professional concept. School leader roles including those of departmental heads are remodeling across the globe and schools need to keep up with the changes to remain competitive. The third theme is generalization; educational contexts are different and therefore departmental heads need to learn to lead from people within their context for easy application of skills and knowledge learnt. To summarise how departmental heads as school leaders learn, this research discussed six mechanisms namely, coaching, mentoring, monitoring, professional learning communities, support, induction, reflective practice, and formal leadership programmes. All these mechanisms cannot work in isolation; they need components from the other to be effective leadership learning mechanisms for the departmental heads. While the Adult Learning Theory will assist in addressing the persons the learning departmental heads are and how to identify them concerning the theory and their interests and behaviours towards learning, the conceptual framework will assist the researcher to understand how departmental heads learn. Understanding the departmental heads' learning is imperative for this study as it seeks to make meaning of the 'how' part of the learning and seeks to get recommendations from the participants.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter detailed the literature reviewed and highlighted recurring themes in literature relating to leadership learning. Furthermore, the dominant concepts of this study were discussed as the theory framing this study. This chapter begins by unpacking the research paradigm underpinning this study and discussing the research design applied. It then continues to discuss the methods employed in participant selection, data generation as well as data analysis. Furthermore, the issues pertaining trustworthiness of the data generated are discussed and followed by ethical considerations applied when this study was conducted. In the end, this chapter presents the limitations of this study and the chapter summary.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A paradigm plays a big role in crafting the direction the study will take from the onset. A paradigm is a research framework made of principles that guides the researcher on the study they are to embark on (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maree, 2007; Wahyuni, 2012). Wahyuni (2012) presents four research paradigms and their ontologies; positivism sees reality as external and not influenced by social factors, post positivism sees reality as not influenced by human thoughts and objective, interpretivism views reality as socially constructed and prone to change and pragmatism which sees reality as external and multiple. This study is framed in the philosophical dimensions of the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivist researchers engage in studies that allow the participants a chance to speak up about their thoughts, experiences, ideas, and feelings to name a few. (Maree, 2007; Nguyen & Tran, 2015; Wahyuni, 2012). In addition, Nguyen and Tran (2015) point out that the interpretivist paradigm is gaining popularity since it acknowledges the presence of different truths, it deems vital the context where data is interpreted which leads to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Furthermore, Nguyen and Tran (2015) assert that the interpretivist paradigm welcomes change, it also accepts that human behavior can be studied and does not give pre-determined strict procedures to be followed in the study of human behavior. To understand how departmental heads learn to lead, I listened as they shared their experiences and analysed documents, they use to execute their duties using the interpretivist lens.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study on how departmental heads learn to lead falls within the qualitative research approach. Qualitative researchers are most interested in gathering information that uses personal experiences to represent certain people in certain positions (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Stake, 2010). Qualitative researchers are interested in non-numeric data and participants' perspectives as they see reality as unique to the person experiencing it and not universal (Stake, 2010). In addition, the variety of participant perceptions of a situation and experiences helps the researcher understand the reality in question better (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Stake, 2010). Learning how each departmental head from the study learnt to lead will furnish me with their realities which will help me understand if their individual truth is not similar to other's truth. This study uses the perceptions of four departmental heads and a variety of documents to understand the phenomenon of leadership learning for the departmental heads in the case study.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As a novice researcher making decisions on how to navigate this study was not a simple task, however, decisions on what data to be generated and how to generate that data needed to be made. Stake (2010) points out that a researcher cannot rely on their expertise when conducting a research study, but they need to engage with those knowledgeable in that field. The literature reviewed in preparation for this dissertation influenced the choice of a case study as a methodology this study will apply, to try and understand how departmental heads learn to lead.

A case study is an old research method that has been in the research circles for decades. Kerlinger (1973) explains a case study as a non-experimental research technique of exploring and analysing the life of a social unit, be it a person, family, community, or any other social condition. Furthermore, a case study is an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon set within its real-world especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear (Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2009). To elaborate, Ratil and Aditya (2020) explain that case studies allow for a deep understanding of a single phenomenon and are best suited for understanding new phenomena. Furthermore, case study research allows for multiple case study designs, meaning the study can have multiple sites and it can have multiple methods of data analysis (Ratil & Aditya, 2020; Wahyuni, 2012). This flexibility helps the researcher to better understand the phenomenon through in-depth data generation.

According to Yin (2009) there is a difference between a case and a case study. Yin (2009) further explains that a case is a phenomenon, and the case study is the research method used to understand the phenomenon. In this study the case is leadership learning, and the focus will be on departmental heads from two primary schools. The documents sampled are those from January 2018 to December 2022 and this case study has a single holistic which according to Yin (2009) means it has one unit of analysis.

3.5 RESEARCH SITE SELECTION AND PARTICIPANTS SELECTION

Research corroborates that there are two main measures of sampling, and they are probability and non-probability sampling (Grant, 2018; Ratil & Aditya, 2020; Wahyuni, 2012). According to Grant (2018) probability sampling is a method of selecting the research sample that is random and gives each unit in a sample an equal chance of being selected. On the other hand, non-probability sampling is a method of sample selection that bases the selection of a research sample on criteria set by the researcher (Grant, 2018). Daymon and Holloway (2010) clarify that when choosing a sampling procedure, the researcher is guided by the nature of the study as sampling methods are designed for different types of studies. This study will apply non-probability sampling because the researcher does not have access to all the departmental heads in the province of the study nor does the researcher have all the documents of the departmental heads as they carry out their leadership duties.

This study used convenient sampling to select the research sites. Yin (2011) argues that convenient sampling is a form of non-probability sampling used in qualitative research although time-consuming, it is cost-effective. Wahyuni (2012) elaborates that the sample is chosen by the researcher because of its suitability to the case and research questions for the study. Patten (2016) stresses it is not feasible for the researcher to study the entire population, therefore, there is a need for choosing a study sample.

To select the research sites, I looked at the schools that were going to be within in my reach in terms of proximity. I then investigated their accessibility both physically for visit purposes and technologically for communication purposes. I then reached out to the schools by telephone and the first two schools I was able to reach became my research sites. Therefore, the site sample of this study was conveniently chosen based on my convenience in accessing the research sites.

The criterion for the study participants was two departmental heads per school who have been departmental heads for ten years and above. According to Yin (2011), only a representative sample is needed for the study and not the entire population. These departmental heads were purposely chosen based on their level of experience because the study seeks to find effective strategies for leadership learning. The researcher believes seasoned departmental heads may know the effective strategies of leadership learning because of their experience. The sample chosen for their expertise then defines the inclusion and exclusion of the population for the study.

To recruit the participants for the study, I consulted the school principals about doing research in the selected schools. Daymon and Halloway (2010) stress the importance of ensuring that participants chosen for the study want to be in the study. During recruitment, I explained to the principals the nature of the study and shared the characteristics of the desired participants. The principals agreed to have their schools as the research sites and recommended departmental heads who have ten and more years of experience. The departmental heads were used to the concepts of research from previous experiences, and they used smart phones, familiar with email technology. I obtained permission from the departmental heads to include them in the study and they agreed and gave their written consent.

The documents sampled for the study were selected because they met the criteria of being tools the departmental heads use as leaders in their departments. These tools affected the professional development of the departmental heads as they prescribed how they should lead, how they measure professional development of their team members and how they plan to lead their departments as school leaders.

3.6 METHODS OF DATA GENERATION

To understand how departmental heads learn to lead, this research generated data from the departmental heads. The researcher chose to use semi-structured interviews and document analysis as methods for generating data for the study. Prior to data generation I conducted a pilot interview to test the functionality of my interview schedule.

3.6.1 Semi- Structured Interviews

The researcher interviewed the participating departmental heads to generate data on leadership learning. According to Stake (2010) attests that interviews enable the researcher to generate data from research participants that reveal specifically the participants' truth. Furthermore, Stake (2010) elaborates that the interview process should be relaxed and allow the participants to speak freely while also enabling the researcher to ask clarity-seeking questions during the interview. Directly engaging the participants on the phenomenon assists the researcher in better understanding how departmental heads learn to lead.

The researcher approached the interview sessions with pre-planned questions for the participants, and this type of interviewing is called a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews are a popular research method in qualitative studies, and they are conducted in a conversation style that offers the participants a chance to speak without any prejudice or pressure (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Wahyuni, 2012). In contrast, structured interviews are mostly suitable for quantitative data collection and the interviewer uses the predetermined questions only, they do not allow for probing (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). To elaborate on semi-structured interviews Nieuwenhuis (2007) states that researchers prepare specific questions to ask the participants about the phenomenon during the interview. In support, Stake (2010) states that preparing questions that will lead the interview session benefits the interviewer by directing the interview process to generate the needed level of data because it is difficult to generate the kind of needed data from the main research questions. In agreement, Wahyuni (2012) raises that the format of the interview questions should be qualitative and in-depth due to the nature of deep answers these types of questions generate as they encompass more explanations and examples. As means of guiding the direction and the depth of the answers, the researcher prepared probing questions for the interview sessions.

To generate data using the semi-structured interview approach, I needed to have pre-determined questions for my participants, so I prepared these questions ahead of time. Preparing the interview schedule (See Appendix A, Page 77) was a process that was guided by my research phenomenon and the three research questions my study answers. I used these and insight from the literature review to frame my semi- structured interview question. Once the interview schedule was complete, I used it on a pilot interview to assess its applicability and I learnt of its shortfall. I made some edits and added prompts that would be necessary at the field.

My semi-structure interview schedule was then ready to be applied in the field for data generation.

3.6.2 Pilot interview report

I conducted a pilot interview with a departmental head who is not my study participant to test if my interview schedule was feasible for the focus and purpose of the study. Majid et al. (2017) put emphasis on the importance of conducting pilot interviews when conducting a qualitative study to assess the suitability of the instruments chosen for data generation. Majid et al. (2017) further explain that the pilot stage enables the researchers to make necessary amendments to their data generation instruments ahead of going to the field. The interview was fifty (50) minutes long which is a bit short compared to the maximum duration of ninety minutes as mentioned by Wahyuni (2012). This factor did not bother me at all because the departmental head I interviewed has a few years of experience in the position, which led her into not having a lot to say on the second and third questions as these are focused on an individual's professional experience. According to Wahyuni (2012), the purpose of a pilot interview is to provide the researcher with a chance to familiarize themselves with the interview process. After having concluded the pilot, I then anticipated that my interviews with the participants will meet the stipulated time frames.

The way the departmental head responded to the questions with ease, I did not even ask the probing questions because she went on and shared information which made me judge that the interview questions were easy to understand. However, I noted that there were other probes that I could not have prepared for, but I had to ask during the interview sessions. For example, with the first interview question when the participant explains why they thought it was important or not important to learn to lead, their reasoning determined the probing questions to follow. How the participant expressed themselves influenced the probes that could be used to better understand the information they were sharing. This aspect of the trial interview helped me learn that I did not need to stick to the schedule as it was when it came to the probes, but I needed to guide the interview while it progressed and ensured that my participant was relaxed.

The order of the interview questions progressed well however, the questions about leadership learning mechanisms sounded as if they were asking for the same information when they were not. To ensure this confusion did not happen during my actual interviews, I clearly explained my questions and used guiding scenarios and examples when needed. The interviewee provided

responses that were personal, and she kept on referring to incidents and examples from her own experience. The information she shared did not have inconsistencies. In instances where she was not clear, I would rephrase the question, or the probe and she would give more details and sounded clearer without changing the narrative.

I did not have a question that I thought I need to change however, I needed to be mindful that with interview questions 1(a) and (c), there was a possibility of both YES and No answers. I needed to be mindful that I could not force the participant to choose but I needed to let them explain why they were saying 'yes' and unpacked the reasons for the 'no'.

Going forward to the field, I reminded my participants that I was looking for information based on their experiences and there were no right or wrong answers. I asked if my participants understood the question and rephrase if there was a need. As much as I timed the interview, I did not let the issue of time take precedence, I let my participants take their time for as long as they were sharing relevant information. I listen carefully and took notes during the interview so that if I needed them to expand on a thought later, I was able to accurately point them to that point of the conversation.

3.6.3 Document Analysis

This research study generated data by also applying the document analysis approach. According to Anderson and Arsenault (1998), there are four main approaches for data generation, and they are document analysis, interviews, observations, and surveys. Document analysis involves studying written material within the research context to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Document analysis is a popular method within the qualitative research framework (Bowen, 2009; Stake, 2010). Documents officially published for use by the school leaders and those the departmental heads compose for use in their daily leadership practices were analysed in this study.

A selection of documents the departmental heads use as they lead their departments was analysed as secondary data alongside data from the interviews. The selected documents were the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM Document), Departmental Head File and Journal, Staff Development Team Meeting Minutes, Departmental Head Meeting Minutes, and School Management Team Meeting Minutes. Nieuwenhuis (2007) asserts that it is vital that

researchers bear in mind that not all documented information reflects the truth. This research upholds this view hence the documents studied were carefully selected and they assisted the researcher assess the truthfulness of data generated during the interviews. Equally important to note is that documents may be used to corroborate data generated from another source (Bowen, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Document analysis alone cannot help the researcher understand how departmental heads learn but they can add value to perspectives and experiences shared by the departmental heads during the interviews.

I drew up a document analysis schedule to help guide my document analysis process (See Appendix B, Page 78-79). To do this I made a shortlist of the documents the departmental heads use and created a criterion using my research questions and interview questions to ensure the relevance of documents is maintained. I then looked at each document and formulated questions for each document in line with my research phenomenon. During research tools pilot I learnt that some of the questions I had included in my document analysis schedule were not enabling me to generate data that corroborated with the interview data, so I edited these until I had a final document analysis schedule.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Once the data is generated for research purposes it should be analysed as means of assessing its relation to the research questions. Swanborn (2010) opines that research questions are a key guide to analyzing data generated for a case study. In agreement, Grant (2018) argues that the method of data analysis should be decided before the data is conducted and adds that it is important to know the steps involved in the data analysis process as this adds to the rigor of the study. This study used thematic analysis to analyse the data as influenced by the research questions. Naeem et al. (2023) explain that a thematic analysis as a method in research enables the researcher to pinpoint and make sense of the themes imbedded in the data. Data analysis is guided by principles that also make it easier for a researcher to work on their data. As I was generating the data during the semi-structured interviews, I was able to identify some recurring patterns as I made notes when similar examples were shared by the participants. Once the data generating process was complete, I organised my data into the themes that were recurring. I used literature to unpack the themes and interpret the data.

3.7 ISSUES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

Ensuring that the data generated during the research process has value is an important step in the research process. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain trustworthiness as the efforts by the researcher to convince themselves and others that their study findings should be read and understood. Anderson and Arsenault (1998) stress the importance of observing and recording research data in a way that makes it trustworthy and add that the instruments and approaches used play a vital role in the trustworthiness of the data. Stake (2010) asserts that qualitative research involves the interpretation of participants' meaning and since humans conduct the research, they are bound to make mistakes in their interpretations. Therefore, to ensure that the meaning is interpreted correctly, it is important that steps to assess the trustworthiness of data are undertaken.

To ensure that trustworthiness is achieved and maintained in qualitative research, there are procedures to be followed. Lincoln and Guba (1982) suggested four concepts that are currently widely used as benchmarks for trustworthiness and those are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This study adopted the concepts to ensure that the data generated meets the trustworthiness standards of qualitative research. To unpack these, Lincoln and Guba (1982) explain ensuring data credibility as that moment when the researcher asks the participant if they have been interpreted correctly. During the interview sessions with the departmental heads, I rephrased what I thought they were saying and asked them if I am understanding them correctly or if that is what they meant. Assessing transferability is when the researcher tries to relate the participant's truth to other humans with similarities to the participant, (Lincoln & Guba, 1982). I measured the transferability of the data by trying to make sense of the realities of my colleagues who are departmental heads through reflecting on the data from my research participants. To measure if the data is dependable, the researcher can perform the same study on the participants and get similar results (Lincoln & Guba, 1982). To assess if my data was dependable after the first interview session with the first participant, I scheduled a session with the second participant and used the same interview schedule to generate data and repeated the process until I had met with all my participants. Confirmability of data according to Lincoln and Guba (1982) means that if the researcher would conduct the study again on different participants with similar characteristics the result would not be too different since they cannot be the same. In this study, I repeated the investigation four times as I studied four different participants who held the same position in different schools with the

same experience and similar data was generated. This study adopted these concepts to ensure that the data generated meets the trustworthiness standards of qualitative research.

3.8 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical considerations are a big concern in qualitative education research and as a result, there are processes to be followed to ensure that ethics are upheld. Research studies in the past including those in educational research have been reported to be harmful to participants in different ways therefore, all research studies must be guided by ethical codes, (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). The research participants cannot protect themselves, therefore the responsibility for their protection lies with the researcher (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998; Stake, 2010; Walford, 2001). Furthermore, Stake (2010) adds that since harm to the participants cannot happen in physical form but in psychosocial form then bodies that regulate research ethics were formed and their main purpose is to scrutinize research applications to ensure that all harmful elements are identified and retracted. In addition, Grant (2018) points out that in most cases, documents do not require ethical procedures but that does not exempt them from causing harm to the participants.

Ethical considerations were a vital part of this research study and great effort was put towards ensuring that research ethics were upheld, and this study did not harm participants in any way. The process of ensuring that my study considered the ethics of my participants was in three folds; procedural ethics, ethics in the field and ethics in report writing. Firstly, I followed procedures outlined by the University of Kwa Zulu-Natal to obtain ethical clearance to conduct the research study and generate data. This meant I needed permission to do research from the gate keepers who in this respect were the principals from the two schools I sampled as sites for my study, I wrote letters to the principals detailing the nature of my study and asked for permission to have their schools as my cases to be studied. The principals granted my wish and sent me letters authorizing me to select the study participants from their school and carryout my research (See Appendix C, Page 80) and (Appendix D, Page 90). The next step was to get permission to conduct the study on the sampled sites from the department of education. Upon getting the permission letter from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (See Appendix K, Page 88), I applied for permission to use the data generating tools I had designed as well as apply the methods I had planned on using during my data generation process. The Ethical Clearance Committee of the university then scrutinized my data generating tools, consent letter

templates and permission letters to ensure that my methods would not be harmful to my participants (See Appendix J, Page 87).

Secondly, I went to the field to generate data, and during this phase I needed to uphold procedural ethics. It is at this stage that I used my informed consent letters approved by the university's ethical committee to give to my participants asking for their consent to be part of my study in writing (See Appendixes F - I, Pages 83 - 86). The consent letters informed the participants that their participation was voluntary, their identities will be protected, and they were not going to be remunerated. The third and final phase of ethical consideration was ensuring that my report writing was ethical. This stage started when I got back from the field. I kept the data records in a safe when not engaging with it and used pseudonyms to write up the report and saved my progress in a password protected folder on my laptop.

3.9 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Conducting research comes with challenges that a researcher can overcome and those they cannot overcome; the latter is widely known as research limitations. Price and Murnam (2004) argue that limitations in a study refer to biases that the researcher cannot do anything about, and these have the potential to influence the results of the study.

As a researcher of this study, I acknowledge that there are some limitations to this study which are particularly related to the sample size. To understand how departmental heads learn to lead, this study focused on departmental heads from only two primary schools. In each school I selected two departmental heads who have been in this leadership role for more than ten years. The four departmental heads cannot represent the circuit in which these schools are located. This study's findings are therefore not representative of all departmental heads in primary schools in the circuit or departmental heads in primary schools but only those participating from the case study schools.

Case study research revealed is not generalizable, and this element of qualitative case study research makes it open to scrutiny (Ratil & Aditya, 2020; Wahyuni, 2012). The findings remain relevant only to the departmental heads studied from the case study schools as they are drawn from the departmental heads' different realities. However, these findings can be taken into

consideration when larger studies on the phenomenon of leadership learning is pursued amongst departmental heads in primary schools.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has unpacked the methodology of this study. It has distinguished the type of data generated as qualitative because human experiences and information from documents are the data generated. The nature of data has located this study within the interpretivist paradigm and a case study has been pronounced as a method suitable for data generation. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis are the tools used to generate the needed data due to their flexibility and the depth of data they can reach when applied correctly. The next chapter discusses the data generated from the interviews and document analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the research design. It unpacked the research paradigm underpinning this study and discussed the research methodology applied. It then presented the methods employed in participant selection, data generation, data analysis, ensuring trustworthiness as well as observing ethical considerations.

This study asks three research questions to try to understand how departmental heads learn to lead. The first question wants to know, what are the departmental heads perspectives on leadership learning in the case study schools. The second question is concerned with finding out, how did the departmental heads in the case study school learnt to lead. The third and final question seeks to find out, what do the departmental heads view as effective mechanisms for leadership learning.

This chapter focuses on presenting the data generated, analyzing the data, and engaging in a discussion of the data. This chapter begins by introducing the profiles of the participants. thereafter present and discuss the themes that emerged for each of the research questions.

4.2. PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

This study generated data from four participants who are departmental heads at two schools in the Pinetown District of KwaZulu-Natal. To protect the identities of the schools and participants, pseudonyms are used. The following table presents their biographical information.

Name of Participant	Age Category 1= 25-35, 2= 36-45 3= 46-55, 4=56-65	Gender	DH Experience (years)	Formal Qualifications
Ms Green	3	Female	18	B.Ed Hons, Higher Diploma in Education. Project Management Certificate.
Ms Blue	4	Female	28	Project Management Certificate, Teachers' Diploma.

Ms Orange	3	Female	18	B.Ed Hons, Higher Diploma in Education. Teachers' Diploma.
Ms Purple	2	Female	11	B.Ed Degree, B.Ed Hons.

4.3 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

I present and discuss the data using each of my research questions as an organizing framework.

4.3.1 What are the departmental heads' perspectives on leadership learning?

To understand what perspectives, the departmental heads have on the phenomenon of leadership learning, three themes emerged. The themes are presented and discussed below.

4.3.1.1 Leadership is important for setting direction

It is important that departmental heads as leaders learn to lead so they are able to 'steer the ship' which is the departments under their control. Bennis and Goldsmith (2010) state that a leader's role is to help the team members execute their roles to the best of their abilities. In agreement, Lindval (2019) explains that leadership dictates that individuals shift their attention from themselves toward the team they are responsible for and ensure that they provide guidance that will benefit the organisation. Knowles (1973) presents that adults who learn are active participants of the learning process as they choose content that is relevant to their learning needs. The departmental heads in the case study schools explained that they feel that it is important to learn to lead because of the professional nature of the job and the diversity of the environments they lead. Ms Green had this to say:

It is a position where you need to be specialised in a certain field of study. So, when you lead your team, they have expectations that you know everything. So, you need to give them direction and you need to lead by example.

The above statement is further supported by Ms Orange, who points out why it is important to learn the finer points of leading the curriculum:

.. when you check the teacher's file for curriculum coverage, you must know what is in that ATP. You have to check if the teacher is on track, is the teacher doing what he or she is supposed to do in class.

Gaining knowledge and understanding of the ATP is an example of preferred content to learn for the departmental heads as it is directly related to their work. This relevance of the piece of knowledge qualifies the departmental heads as learning adults as per claim by Knowles (1973). To elaborate on the importance of learning to lead the curriculum, Ms Orange made an example of how she provides advice to her team members on how to improve their task execution on curriculum coverage by saying the following:

..take this particular topic and put it in week 4 so that when you start teaching you start by this before you come to this one so you can be on par with the ATP

The responses from the departmental heads are consistent with the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM Document, 2016), which stipulates the responsibilities of the departmental heads. All the departmental heads from the case study schools had this document in their possession during the time of the interviews. The departmental heads mentioned that the PAM document is essential as it provides them with the job description. The departmental heads' responses to the research question allude that they value the importance of providing the leadership required in leading their departments. Learning to lead is vital because they lead specialised departments made up of specific grades and subjects, and members of various ages, attitudes, and backgrounds. The dynamics of their work environment need them to be well-informed about their roles, content, and context of engagement.

The perspectives and attitudes of the departmental heads around wanting to learn to lead so they can lead their teams well in the right direction are in line with the Knowles Theory of Adult Learning. Adults who are learning are goal and relevance-oriented (Knowles, 1973). This means that the departmental heads are willing learners because they have identified an area in their leadership that needs to improve and are taking steps towards improving themselves so that they can carry out their roles as expected by their employer and outlined in their job description. A recent study by Lovett (2023) found that leadership learning is important for teachers in leadership roles because their primary duty is to improve school outcomes. This is important because to make improvements the leaders need to be knowledgeable about the curriculum, they are leading.

4.3.1.2 Not everyone is born a leader

Departmental heads need to have the desire to be leaders for them to learn as they lead their phases and learning areas. Bennis and Goldsmith (2010) attest that leaders are constructed by personal desires and the environments around them. Furthermore, individuals who decide to become leaders are influenced by their life experiences. In collaboration, Wiltshire (2012) adds that for individuals to take the initiative towards expanding their expertise and becoming leaders they need to first understand why they want the role and have the will to learn to carry out the role. In Knowles (1973) Theory of Adult Learning knowing why the departmental heads need to learn to lead is the first of five characteristics adult learners have. The departmental heads expressed that as important as it is to learn to lead, opportunities for leadership learning in schools should be given to departmental heads to have been officially appointed into leadership roles. This should be because the aspiring departmental heads have shown their desire to become leaders and have taken the initiatives necessary to learn and become leaders. Ms Purple strongly expressed herself as she said:

I think it can be much better if they can be trained after they have the position. I am saying that because, training all level one educators, will lead them to assume they are leaders.

Sharing the same sentiments Ms Blue said:

The individuals wanting to be departmental heads take their time, they apply, they get shortlisted, they prepare for the interview. In the interview, they explain why they think they are the best candidate for the job. If they get trained before they are appointed, then everyone will say the same thing in the interview, and it won't be clear who is trying their luck and who really should be appointed.

Ms Green also added to the theme by saying:

It starts with a person. I would say that's an intrinsic process, it's something that starts with a person, what is it that you want to achieve. Do you have a sense of making a difference in your school? Do you have the ability to guide others in doing what is good for the school?

Ms Orange expressed an opposing view regarding leadership learning. She said:

.. you must be teaching that particular phase for three years...there is no need to be taught what you must do...like I said, if you are born with this thing of teaching you know what is expected of you, as you are promoted, your work now is to check what you were doing.

The majority of the departmental heads strongly believed it is not necessary and practical to provide leadership learning prior to appointment as a departmental head. This perspective aligns with some scholars who argue that leaders are motivated to become leaders. This means a leader needs to see themselves as a leader before being certified by others. Knowles (1973) stresses that adults who are learning are motivated. There is however a contradiction between the findings by Sihame and Moyosolu (2021) and the views expressed by Ms Orange as she claims that teachers born with the passion for teaching do not need to be taught what to do. Bennis and Goldsmith (2010) point out that leaders are not born but they are made. Findings by Sihame and Moyosolu (2021) reveal that personal character does not offer a substantial value to leadership, but efforts are a vital element. In rejecting the concept of born leaders this study draws on the claims by Lynham (2000) about an individual's socialization journey playing a vital role in their desires to becoming leaders. Also, in disagreement with the notion of 'born with it,' Ms Purple emphasised the importance of leaders needing to learn about leading in particular contexts. She said:

*Yes, you can be a born leader, but you need to be equipped with knowledge.
You can have leadership skills like on how to interact with people and stuff, but you need to be knowledgeable in that specific context you are leading.*

A valuable point around the issue of context in leadership is raised by one of the departmental heads. Fancera (2022) advocates that it is vital that school leaders are knowledgeable about the context they lead as this assists them to appropriately apply their leadership skills for attainment of educational success. Knowles's (1973) Theory of Adult Learning is upheld by the departmental heads of the case study schools by sharing their perspectives based on their individual experience as leaders who are still learning to lead. In affirmation, Lynham (2000) adds that providing specialized leadership education is the key to supporting-to-supporting departmental heads learn. The departmental heads' perspectives reveal that individuals who become leaders need to want to be leaders and be willing to learn to lead their specific departments. Their grouped responses build the perception that not every teacher is a leader.

4.3.1.3 Leadership learning is an ongoing process

Departmental heads get appointed as leaders at different times in their teaching careers. The basic requirements for the position are phase and subject experience. The duration of three years is deemed enough to expose aspiring leaders to the environment they can lead in. Bennis and Goldsmith (2010) stress that being a leader is not an overnight journey, but it is a process that needs commitment, willingness to learn from mishaps, and correction of identified faults. In agreement, Bélanger (2011) adds that as humans go through different stages of life, different types of learning needs are activated, and the new knowledge has to be consumed for successful social participation. Leadership learning is a process that happens over time, reaping its rewards requires that one learns from their own experiences as learning occurs (Lindval, 2019).

The departmental heads from the case study schools concur with the practice of ongoing learning. Ms Orange shares how learning keeps on happening whilst already in a leadership position. She further explains that learning occurs as the teacher's experience grows, and as the education systems change. She also highlights that the act of furthering studies positively impacts a teacher leader. She said:

...you get experience in teaching as you move along. You get information about the education system that you are in as you are registering to improve the way you teach, the teaching methods..

Ms Blue also added to leadership learning being an ongoing process by reflecting on when she thinks she started acquiring leadership skills by saying:

I started learning to lead from a very young age and if you never encounter such things and you are willing to learn, teach yourself to listen, teach yourself to be stretched, accept to be stretched...

This reflection is aligned with the notion that leadership is learnt and links with the behavioural leadership theory. According to Sihame and Moyosolu (2021), the behavioural leadership theory focuses on the actions done by the leader as actions are learnt. Ms Blue's willingness to be stretched and acceptance when stretched are behavioural traits measured through actions.

Ms Purple concurred with all views by saying:

*when you lead for the first time, yabona uma u (you see when you lead the staff)
lead I staff, ekuqaleni (at first) you were leading learners, now you are leading
I staff so it's not easy*

The conceptual framework adopted by this study stresses on the importance of learning leaders' understanding of that leadership learning is a life-long process (Lynham, 2000). For the leaders to have this understanding they need to be motivated to learn (Knowles, 1973). The perspectives shared by the teachers on their leadership learning journeys support suggest that leadership learning is an ongoing process with challenges along the way that turn into learning curves when addressed accordingly. The participation of departmental heads' team members is vital in this learning process as they help shape the learning process. According to Kvam (2021) to effectively lead and improve the quality of teaching and learning, departmental heads need to learn from their colleagues. The departmental heads from the case study schools expressed how when they were still aspiring leaders had superiors they did not aspire to be like as well as how they are still learning from their colleagues both subordinates and superiors. The Quality Management Systems (QMS) document validates this argument for all personnel in the school environment as each year everyone needs to be evaluated as a means of measuring their learning abilities in six months intervals.

4.3.2 How did the departmental heads learn to lead?

While exploring the mechanisms that enabled the departmental heads to learn to lead, four themes emerged. The themes are presented and discussed below.

4.3.2.1 Being part of communities of practice

Departmental heads work with different school stakeholders and, therefore, need to be competent leaders willing to learn from others. Du Plessis and Erbelein (2018) opine that communities of practice are a platform for departmental heads to engage, enquire, and cascade knowledge with their colleagues on-site and off-site. As schoolteachers, departmental heads learn through initiating, participating, and engaging in conversations with their colleagues in different positions (Clarke & Dempster, 2020; Edward-Groves et al., 2019; Kvam, 2021; Lovett 2023). These engagements include topics related to their past experiences. Ms Blue explained why she thought it was important for departmental heads to learn to lead by saying:

It is very important to learn...as a departmental head. One learns through seeing; one, learn through listening; it is important to listen to and take advice from other people because no one knows everything.

When teachers support each other, they learn from one another. Naicker (2011) advises that in communities of practice, school leaders work collectively to enhance the teaching and learning processes in their schools. Providing support to colleagues is one of the operational measures of professional learning communities (Vanblaere & Devos, 2018). Clarke and Dempster (2020) highlight that learning through conversation is not a new concept. However, some leaders still find this new, and for it to be effective, the leaders as learners must be open-minded and have the aspirations to learn. All the departmental heads in this study repeatedly mentioned the value of having the desire to be a leader and leading well. Their participation in communities of practice enables them to learn to lead while getting support from their colleagues. Lovett (2023) affirms that colleagues who are deemed good and trustworthy can be a great source of learning. Naicker (2011) explains that in communities of practice the school leaders have an appointed leader who guides the leaders' contact sessions. This research found that the departmental heads learnt to lead through watching and engaging with their colleagues who were more experienced leaders and who understood their roles better. To give insight on how being a member of a school leader's community of practice helped her learn to lead Ms Purple said:

..five months later, a new deputy principal at my school was appointed. She was a deputy principal dealing with curriculum issues, and she knew her story in such a way that she would push us, wanting submissions. That's when I started learning to do my job as a departmental head. When I reached out to my PLC mates about the challenges I was having since I initially did not understand what the deputy principal wanted from me. I had senior departmental heads explaining to me what I needed to do and how I should do those tasks so I could be competent in my leading role.

Adding to the significant role communities of practice play in helping departmental heads learn, Ms Orange said:

As a teacher even before you get promoted you need to understand that it is important to network. As a departmental head, you need to ask how this is done,

and how you do this. You've got people who were promoted before, talk to them, ask them questions.

Emerging from the evidence generated during the interviews is that the departmental heads value the existence of communities of practice as a platform for leadership learning. They accepted them as a source for their learning and appreciated how these structures were safe spaces for them to open up about skills and knowledge they lacked. Acknowledging their shortfalls and knowing when to ask for help makes the departmental heads learners. Lovett (2023) stresses that to be effective leaders, teachers must start by being learners and hold on to their learning goals as they progress. The professional learning community structure is designed to uphold the goals of the members and each member joins as a willing learner (Vanblaere & Devos, 2018).

Professional learning communities are a leadership learning mechanism that encourages teachers to work together so they can learn from one another (Buthelezi, 2017). Ms Orange further contextualised this by giving a background of how she used her yard mates as a resource for improved leading strategies as she was staying in a teacher's cottage when she got the promotion as a departmental head.

Collinson (2012) stipulated that as teachers acquire leadership knowledge, they improve their demeanor and as time passes, they impart knowledge learnt to their colleagues through various mechanisms. The emphasis as explained by Collinson (2012) is the realization that leading exposes an individual to a wide range of chances for learning. In practice, Ms Green applies this, and it became apparent when she said:

As a leader, I just believe in uplifting other educators. Those I see are educated I bring close to me so that they can learn. I expose them instead of saying I am the departmental head and only I can do that. I want to delegate as much as I can to other teachers who are willing and have the potential to lead so that they are exposed. This helps me learn as well because I get to see how they do things differently from me and expose me to ways I can change some of my daily doings.

The shared experiences by the departmental heads on their participation in communities of practice reveal that they learn to lead on the job. Communities of practice help them measure their leadership growth through their more knowledgeable peers. The support and guidance they receive motivates them to want to nurture other learning peers and enhance their own learning in the process. Clarke and Dempster (2020) opined that when ordinary teachers and their departmental heads participate in learning programmes and initiatives together, fully considered techniques of work management that allow for fair delegation of duties are developed. This means that it is vital that the departmental heads work with the teachers closely as partners if school academic visions are to be upheld. This research found that by participating in communities of practice the departmental heads learnt the importance of identifying willing learners in the teams of teachers they lead and furnishing them with knowledge they need.

All the departmental heads from his study had positive narratives about working with colleagues in communities of practice structures. Knowles (1978) in his Theory of Adult Learning suggests that adults who want to learn have a goal and they participate in learning programmes so they can develop certain areas of themselves. The acts of the departmental heads from this study of participating in professional learning communities are in line with Knowles's theory as they are members of communities of learning so they can learn to lead their departments. Furthermore, professional learning communities expose the departmental heads to the notion of on-the-job experience which is a component that Lynham (2000) argues is evidence of leadership learning.

4.3.2.2 Learning to lead through reflective practice

Departmental heads applied reflective practice in their daily roles as they were learning to lead especially when faced with challenges. According to Serge and Kweku (2000), the deep thinking practiced by departmental heads through reflective practice paves the way for them to navigate through the job challenges they encounter. Clark and Dempster (2020) pointed out that as leaders in school environments, departmental heads experience challenges. To give reference to some of the challenges conquered after applying reflective practice as leadership learning was occurring, Ms Green said:

I'd say that I was in a position of leadership but the challenge that I had initially as a departmental head was that I found myself wondering if I lacked confidence. When I was appointed to that school, I came as an outsider. There

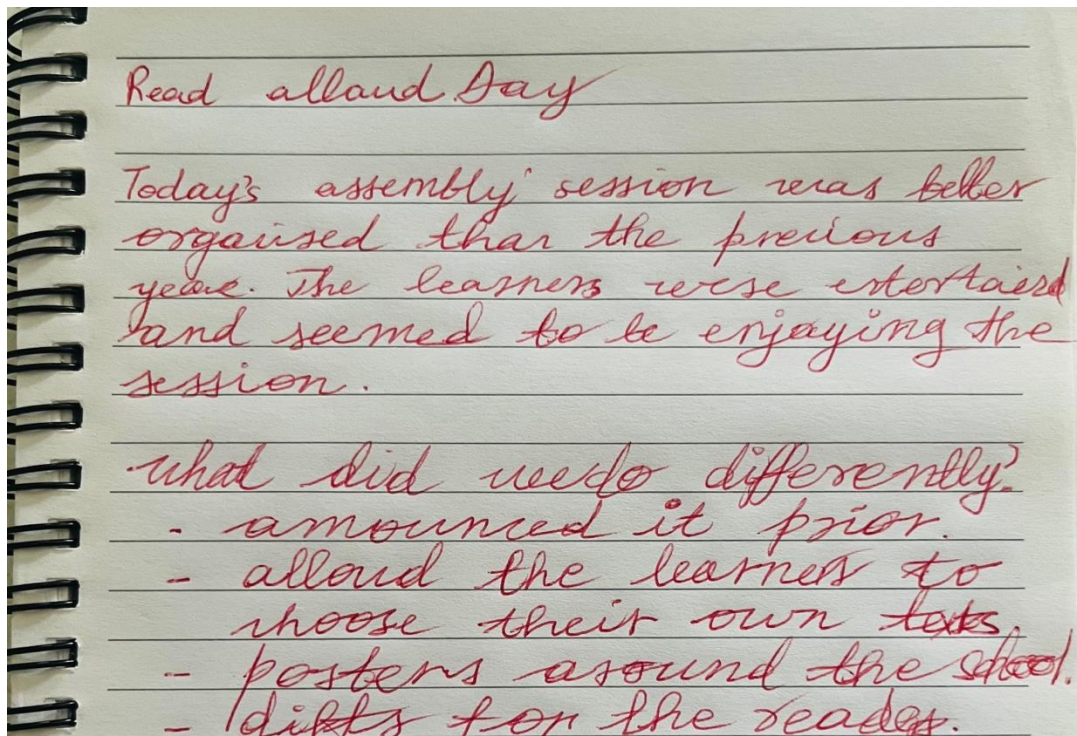
were people from the school who had applied but did not get the position. As a result, I didn't know whether I was able to lead or not but when I transferred to another school, I told myself that I wanted to be a different person where I was going, I wanted to be a different and a better leader.

This verbatim quotation from the interviews with the departmental head reveals that reflective practice plays a significant role in the leadership learning process. The on-the-job experience the departmental heads gain, occurs as they make mistakes and learn from them. The learning becomes evident when they retrieve information from their memory from past experiences to address present challenges and maneuver. Knowles (1978) outlines the presumptions in line with his Theory of Adult Learning founded in 1973. The fourth presumption stipulates that as adults encounter challenges at work they are motivated to learn. In agreement, Lindeman (1926) states that life activities influence adults learning. This means that the departmental heads will resolve to apply reflective practice because of situations they are attempting to solve as they are challenging their leadership. To elaborate, school policies alone are not sufficient to support the departmental heads in their leading role, therefore there is a need for pliable approaches to leadership that will give rise to new learning mechanisms for learning to work with different personalities and behaviors (Clark & Dempster, 2020; & Edward-Groves et al., 2019). This study found out through the participants that communities of practice are a productive approach that school leaders can apply to help departmental heads improve their leadership skills and learn to become better leaders. To add on how reflective practice taught her some valuable leadership strategies this is what Ms Orange had to say:

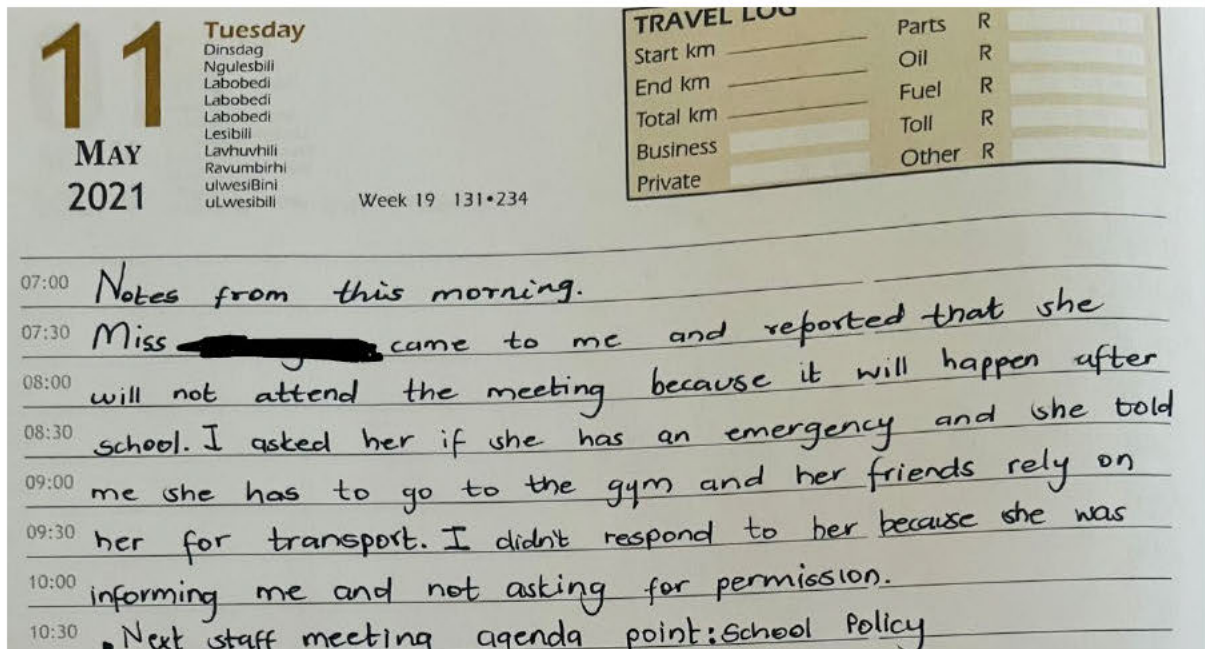
When I was in my previous school, I sat down with the teachers from my phase, and we decided when they were going to submit their files or when was I going to check their work. Then this teacher would be absent from work whenever they had to submit their files, she was rude. Sometimes there are educators that undermine you as a departmental head. She did it for the first time, second time, and third time and I did not worry myself. If there were files on the table, I would just check and make a note on my recording book that so-and-so did not submit her file, and this went on until the end of the year.....The incident report thing I learnt from a workshop but it was not for this I thought since she was doing like this I was not going to handle her, she was older than me so I had to be strategic. Thinking back to workshops I had attended and conversations I

had been part of about difficulties departmental heads have, helped me come up with this recording book solution for my problem with this teacher. Even now as I am working towards retirement, I still think back to my early years as a leader, I still sit back and think about the strategies I used to do that worked and how I can apply them to the problems I get now.

Reflective practice enables departmental heads to learn to lead through thinking about their actions, aspirations, and duties as leaders of their departments. When confronted with insubordination Ms Orange explained that she thought about her responsibilities, the challenge she faced and the consequences for both her and the subordinate in the long run and possible solutions to the problem she had. The participant's ability to take the lead in introspection and application of reflective practice is a learning mechanism that according to Lynham (2000) is evidence of learning. It is a lifelong process that departmental heads from the study engage in effortlessly. Ms Orange reflected on the success of the event they had in the school in her personal journal and the image below is evidence of such a reflection.



Also keeping a diary and recording data about work is Ms Purple. In the picture below she is reflecting on an incident that had taken place at work and she notes a possible solution to be applied to avoid a repeat incident.



Departmental heads' documents studied for this research served as evidence of that reflective practice is a timeless exercise that departmental heads do without thinking about it. Although the participating departmental heads all had been holding this position for over ten years, they still keep personal journals for individualized reflection sessions.

4.3.2.3 Engaging in formal leadership studies at higher educational institutions

Institutions of higher education are becoming a popular support structure for leaders wanting to improve their knowledge, skills, and expertise through academic programmes. Tingle et al. (2019) point out that university school leadership programmes are largely designed for school principals and not departmental heads. Acknowledging the prescriptions of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document, Tapala et al. (2021) stress that the responsibility to capacitate departmental heads is on the school principals. The participants of this study revealed that departmental heads can learn about leadership through engaging in formal leadership studies from institutions of higher learning. However, for the learning to be in line with the needs of the school, the departmental heads need support from their principals. Ms Purple expressed this when she said:

Enrolling for honors did not help me because we were just given documents to read...there was no learning for application, we learnt so we could pass the examination and get the qualification.

In contrast to this idea of needing a principal to mitigate the learning from educational institutions Ms Green said:

I enrolled for a B.Ed honors in Leadership and Management. It contributed a lot to helping me learn to be a better leader. When you study, you become a better person in the way you view things.

In support of the idea of formal education from institutions of higher learning for leaders wanting to learn to lead, Ms Blue said:

After being promoted, I decided to do a project management course. After that I was fine because I could manage myself, I had learnt a few skills about managing people. Those were the basics I needed to lead my phase and I still draw from that course even now.

The experiences of the departmental heads from this study reveal that formal and specialized education is necessary when departmental heads are learning. The need for standardized leadership programmes for South African school leaders was identified and after a series of engagements an education programme was formulated and piloted with positive results in 2007 (Naicker, 2011). Duke (2014) points out that when institutions of higher learning collaborate with the department of education on courses they offer, the enrolled learners will receive the specialized education they need for their leadership roles. Although a school leadership programme like the Advanced Certificate in Education: School Leadership (ACE:SL) is offered and open for enrolment to qualifying learners it is not compulsory. Departmental heads have a choice to enroll for any courses they want and often choose post-graduate programmes over certificate programmes. Lynham (2000) argues that leadership education that is focused on aspects of leadership is vital for leaders learning to lead as it focuses on a specific area of the leaders' profile. In line with this thinking, Knowles (1973) stresses that self-directedness is a characteristic of learning leaders. The experiences of the departmental heads concerning their

engagements with formal education focused on leadership and management reveal that their self-motivation and dedication are the influencing forces of their engagement. The participants of this study all have multiple academic qualifications but none of them have the ACE:SL and it could be argued that the participants who explained how they did not learn anything from their post graduate qualifications could have different narratives if they had enrolled for ACE:SL.

4.3.2.4 Attending workshops conducted by the Department of Education and other stakeholders

The Department of Education provides a variety of workshops aimed at addressing certain school needs as a means of providing support to school leadership. Providing support to departmental heads is essential for leadership learning, especially when departmental heads are novice leaders (Nxumalo, 2021; Vanblaere & Devos, 2018). Furthermore, Tapala (2019) points out that the quality, frequency, and content relevance of the training workshops as key factors in ensuring that departmental heads learn from the workshop sessions. The participants of this study expressed their views on the quality, frequency, and contents of the workshops they have attended as departmental heads. Ms Blue expressed her satisfaction with the content as well as the timing of one of the workshops she attended organized by the Department of Education when she said:

After the promotion, the department took the position to say we are going to mentor these people on how to lead. Then they took us on a course. We went for about two weeks, and the schools were closed....It was successful because it was not only about leadership at school but leadership in totality- at home, at work, and in business. Stretching the context helped us learn the difference between leadership and management as we were trained to become leaders managing the school phases and the curriculum.

A contrasting view on the timing and duration of a workshop by the Department of Education for new departmental heads was shared by Ms Green when she said:

..after some time maybe you will find that after 3 months you will be invited to an induction workshop at the district level. That is after a long time you have assumed the position. ..usually, it is two days long, it is not enough because

when you go for two days, you are bombarded with a lot of information that you cannot grasp within that short space of two days.

A similar view of discontentment with the duration of the Department of Education's departmental head induction workshops was expressed by Ms Purple when she said;

At my school, there was nothing done to prepare me for the position when I started, but a few months after I attended some sort of a workshop, a weekend workshop that was dealing with leadership of departmental heads. It was coordinated by the Department of Education, that's where I can say I got some leadership content. It was a once-off thing though.

The shared experiences of the departmental heads from this study reveal that the workshops conducted by the Department of Education are mainly a once-off activity that does not have continuity. Furthermore, their timing and depth are not suitable for leadership learning of newly appointed departmental heads. On the positive side, the content of these workshops is valuable and provides the departmental heads with some key knowledge relevant to their roles. Induction programmes and initiatives by the school and school stakeholders play a vital role in helping departmental heads learn to lead as they are grounded on their specific roles (Gilles, 2018; Gehrke, 1999). Although this research found inconsistencies with the departmental workshops they still count as vital induction initiatives for the departmental heads. As learners who are enthusiastic about their learning the departmental heads should be able to find value in the departmental workshops. According to Knowles (1973) adult learners who are learning need to be relevance-oriented and problem-centered. Based on the departmental heads' experiences, it takes a focused and committed learner to be able to see past the induction workshop experience glitches, find the gist, and dwell on it.

An observation by Pannel and Sergi - Mc Brayer (2020) is that as things change in the schooling systems globally, the expectations placed on departmental heads also change but supporting measures remain the same. This is true in the context of this research; the participating departmental heads assumed the leadership roles at different times, but their induction workshop experiences are similar. However, it is important to note that the departmental heads goals of learning to become a better leader surpasses the monotonous nature of the departmental workshops. In addition, Lynham (2000) explains that a learning

departmental head will be able to tell leadership development from management development. The departmental heads' abilities to reflect on and assess their workshops is evidence of leader qualities as opposed to manager qualities. Upon further prompts, the departmental heads from this study mentioned other workshops they have attended and benefitted from but for this section, only the induction workshops were the focus.

4.3.3 What did the departmental heads view as effective mechanisms for leadership learning?

While determining what the departmental heads viewed as effective mechanisms for leadership learning three themes emerged. The themes are presented and discussed below.

4.3.3.1 Learning through Mentoring

Departmental heads learn to lead more effectively when they receive support from a mentor. Leadership learning can be achieved through different strategies and mentoring is one of the effective strategies (Stephenson et al., 2018; Vanblaere & Davos, 2018). This study revealed that mentoring was vital in all the participants' learning journey. When engaged about leadership learning mechanisms that she recommends to aspiring and novice departmental heads Ms Purple suggested mentoring as she said:

...you need to be trained to know your story, you need someone who knows more than you about the role, and they need to always be there for you to guide you and pull you up when you fall....it can be a veteran departmental head within the school or a person from outside the school.

Also recommending mentoring was Ms Green when she had this to say:

As you get exposed to different groups of people because of the promotion and interactions related to the job, you start to notice people you want to associate with. You need to attach yourself to those people or that person so that you can learn more from them. When you are a leader in a school you are directly involved in improving teaching and learning. As a departmental head, you must always try to bring as much knowledge to your team. When you have someone, you look up to because they know more and they are willing to help, you learn to be a good leader and your team respects you.

In the same breath, Ms Orange argued for mentoring as she said:

When promoted as a departmental head most teachers don't know where to start. It is important to be workshopped and taught what is expected of you and what to expect from your colleagues. Departmental heads need someone who will explain and direct them what they are supposed to do, and how they are supposed to do that. When you are leading in an institution it is like you are leading in a company, you are accountable. Having the right people with more knowledge than you whom you are comfortable talking to about your weaknesses and fears of your role helps you get guidance and lead teachers correctly.

People learn differently and respond to learning mechanisms differently however, this study revealed that mentoring as a mechanism applied when leadership learning is taking place results in learning. Research by Naicker (2011) revealed that mentoring is a preferred mechanism when leaders in leadership positions are being prepared to lead because it generates positive leadership learning outcomes. To validate the claims made by the participants in this study, research by Chikoko et al. (2011) concluded that mentors in leadership learning play a vital role in offering support to the learning leader during their learning journey. Robertson (2009) stresses the importance of mutual trust between the departmental head and their mentor for the mentorship to be successful. Ngcobo (2020) explains that mentorship can be formal and offered in a mentorship programme set up and it can also be informal and occur daily when insights, advice, and resources are shared by the learning leader and their experienced colleague/s. How the departmental heads in this study were motivated to learn so they could be better leaders and how they were willing to learn from their learned others confirm the claim of the adult learning theory. The Adult Learning Theory (1973) claims that when adults are learning they focus on a goal and are open to learning from other people. Lynham (2000) suggests that when adults are learning, they use the challenges they face as motivation to learn so they can be better-prepared leaders in the future. Mentoring then becomes a recommended mechanism for leadership learning for departmental heads.

4.3.3.2 Learning through Specialized Leadership Programmes

Departmental heads assume their roles in different schools with different contexts and different needs. It is therefore important that as they learn to lead, they also learn to lead for their context. The duties of the departmental heads include managing their departments and professionally

developing their subordinates as needed (PAM Document; 2016). As a result of the varying nature of needs each school has and the professional development needs of the staff per department, leadership learning for the departmental heads should not be generalised. Kjellström et al. (2020) argue that leadership learning programmes that are not context focused have proven to fail because the learning leaders struggle to associate them with their realities. This research found this to be true when the departmental heads expressed themselves about what works and what does not work in their contexts. Recommending specialized leadership programmes Ms Orange said:

If you are in a senior position, you don't only think for yourself, but you go all out to uplift your people. You want the teachers in your phase to be the best, you want the learners to compete with other schools. When attending workshops, you want to say my teachers do that this way. You go all out looking for ways to make your department better and the teachers must have faith in you, they must believe you will come up with good solutions. You won't wake up after the promotion knowing all these things, you need to learn how to gain your teachers' confidence, how to motivate them, and how to solve your department's problems.

Agreeing that specialized leadership programmes are an effective mechanism, Ms Green shared her thoughts about training duration as she said:

The department could solve a lot of incompetency cases by constantly capacitating departmental heads. Say, for example, three days of the June and December holidays can be reserved for departmental heads training sessions. These could go on for about three years as they will focus on different aspects then each term they could hold a virtual session.

The departmental heads from this study revealed that getting the promotion is the very first step to leadership learning. They revealed that refresher courses on different aspects of the job are a necessary support mechanism in the leadership learning journey. According to du Plessis and Eberlein (2018), departmental heads must be trained on how to enact their roles. Since aspects of their roles are context driven it is then also noted as vital by this research that specialized programmes be put in place for departmental heads learning to lead. Stephenson et al. (2018) explain that for leaders to affect any mechanisms during their leadership roles, they

first need to understand their contexts. Understanding the contexts enables the departmental heads to know which areas of their expertise need development. Tapala et al. (2021) stress that the principal should take the lead in the development of departmental heads in their school and suggests that clear policies to guide the process need to be formulated.

If the departmental heads are promoted to meet the needs of the schools, it is then relevant that the principals because they know and understand the school's contexts better are the ones that lead the specialized leadership learning programmes. Lynham (2000) argues that leadership programmes designed to address specific leadership components are beneficial and lead to positive outcomes. In corroboration, the Theory of Adult Learning suggests that when adults learn they focus on specific goals. This means they decide on what they want to learn about because they require it and that need must be in line with being better at their roles (Knowles, 1973). Providing leadership learning programmes that tackle different aspects of the departmental heads' responsibilities, challenges and contexts leads to productive learning sessions.

4.3.3.3 Learning through learned others

Learning to lead through observing, imitating, and scrutinising others in the school environment is another mechanism the departmental heads in this study learnt to lead. According to Lundqvist et al. (2022), leadership learning also occurs informally in the workplace while leaders are performing their duties. Furthermore, a study by Kouzes and Posner (1995) revealed that studying how other leaders lead is one of the effective mechanisms through which leadership learning happens. The PAM Document (2016) stipulates that departmental heads must monitor the teacher's work and afford teachers needed professional development. This responsibility prescribes what is expected of the departmental heads and does not dictate how this monitoring is to be done. This study found that this is a frustrating factor that challenged the departmental heads to enlist support from their superiors. Sharing insight on how observing her deputy principal helped her learn to lead her department, Ms Purple said:

The arrival of our new deputy principal was a turning point for my leadership career as I said earlier. It shook me out of my comfort zone and made me go out and find help. It made me think deeply because initially, I didn't understand if she was being mean and trying to show us that she had a senior position or

what. After speaking to people I trust, I learnt how much I had been slacking as a leader and picked myself up and caught on.

The responsibility of gatekeeping teacher performance was a challenge and a learning curve for Ms Green as she explained:

Leading teachers who were older than me and who did not take me seriously affected my confidence. So, when I changed schools, I strategized well, and I worked in my favor. I stuck to my subject advisor like glue. I made use of her well and we had a good working relationship. I asked what she expected from me when she came for her visits and asked her for ideas on curriculum delivery strategies and so on. Then, I would apply the same strategies with my team, we would sit together, plan together agree on expectations and delivery methods. I tried to get them on my side by offering ideas they could apply in their classes and giving them resources my subject advisor would give me.

Ms Blue gave a personal recount that added an interesting angle to the theme when she said:

My school was small so, we did not have a deputy principal, and my principal didn't have time to check my files and so on. He would just tell me to check that the teachers are doing what they are supposed to do. However, because of my background with teachers at home, I knew that I had to be accountable so I would ask my father's friend what is expected of me, and he would give me direction. HHayke, ngazithulela nami ngenza tonke into ngendlela kanti sizothi singalindele nje, qham' thushu umhloli omusha esasingamazi! Amatata kuthisha omkhulu wawungabona, laphuma kanjalo-ke ikati esakeni. (So, I prepared my work and kept quiet until we had an unexpected visitor from the new circuit manager. My principal was in a frenzy and was quite shocked that I had been doing my paperwork behind the scenes).

This research revealed that having colleagues who are experienced in the role of leadership within a school environment is vital for leadership learning to emerge. Although the role comes with various challenges at different times, the challenges provide a learning opportunity for the departmental heads. Brown et al. (2018) argue that when leaders are challenged, they model the others they find inspiring as they address their challenges. Lundqvist (2022) stress that the

workplace has challenges and learning leaders look up to their colleagues especially when faced with the challenges and this enables them to learn. Although learning through observing others and borrowing some of their tactics is an informal way of learning leadership, this study has confirmed that it adds to leadership learning and recommends this mechanism.

The different acts by the departmental heads when they went all out trying to understand how they should monitor their teams, and how to prepare for sessions with their seniors is all in line with Knowles Adult Learning Theory. According to Knowles's Adult Learning Theory (1973) when adult learners consciously engage in activities for the purpose of getting new skills and learning other ways of doing their jobs so they can improve their competency, they are learning. The learning according to Knowles (1978) presumption of self-concept becomes evident when the learner applies the knowledge they have acquired, to better execute their roles. In this research, the narratives of the departmental heads about what they learnt as monitors and being monitored, how they used their knowledge to improve relations with their colleagues, lead their teams well, and even get a step ahead of their seniors, corroborates with this presumption.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the data generated through semi-structured interview responses and documents analyzed from the participating departmental heads from the two case study schools. The data was presented thematically, key findings that emerged from the data were discussed and located within the framing Theory of Adult Learning and Leadership Development Conceptual Framework. In summary, the data revealed that departmental heads place high value on leadership learning. Furthermore, leadership learning occurs differently for different departmental heads but there are standard effective mechanisms. The following chapter presents the summary of the study, the recommendations in relation to the findings and the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter thematically presented, discussed, and analyzed the findings generated from the participants' responses. This chapter presents the summary of the study, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and the recommendations emanating from the study. This chapter commences by providing a summary of each chapter of the study, then it discusses the conclusions in line with the research questions and ends with the recommendations.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study explored the perspectives of departmental heads on leadership learning from departmental heads from two primary schools in the Pinetown District, KwaZulu-Natal. The study is organized into five chapters as summarized below.

Chapter One presents the background of the study which focuses on my personal and professional interests on how departmental heads in South African Primary Schools learn to lead. The Department of Education does not require departmental heads to have formal academic qualifications to qualify for the job. Furthermore, the PAM Document prescribes the roles of the departmental heads however it does not guide how these roles will be learnt. This study focuses on understanding how the departmental heads learn to perform their roles. The significance of the study, the main research questions of the study, and the definition of key terms related to the study are presented. This chapter exposes that there is a disjuncture between the policy and practice of the departmental heads in South African schools.

Chapter Two is made up of the literature that was reviewed about the three main research questions. The literature focusing on leadership learning is not limited to the South African context only, but it extends to the international context as well. To ensure that current debates and literature are considered only literature published within 5 years of this study was reviewed and referred to. Coaching, monitoring, mentoring, and PLCs are among the commonly applied leadership learning mechanisms worldwide. Challenges faced by the departmental heads range according to context but the most important factor in the leadership process for the departmental heads is understanding one's context. The Adult Learning Theory by Knowles

(1973) alongside the Leadership Development Conceptual Framework by Lynham (2000) are discussed and justified as the theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter Three details the research design and methodology for the study. This study is qualitative and framed in the philosophical dimensions of the interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm is best suited to understand the many realities of the departmental heads in this study. It follows the methods of a case study that generates data using semi-structured interviews and document analysis to generate data. Convenient sampling was used to choose the schools that are convenient to access, and a purposive strategy was applied to choose the suitable departmental heads. Generated data recordings were listened to and turned into transcriptions for the analysis stage of the process. This chapter ends with detailing ethical considerations applied in the process of data generation and handling.

Chapter Four presents the data, discusses, and analyses the findings generated by the data. Verbatim quotations from the interviews are used as reference points in a thematic analysis. To measure the learning of the departmental heads the theoretical framework is applied when sorting the data. The findings are presented without distortion or bias.

Chapter five presents an overview of all the chapters, the conclusions drawn from the research findings as well as the recommendations for further studies on leadership learning.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

This section presents and summarises the findings of the study in line with each research question to which the study replied. The summary of the findings is influenced by the literature reviewed and the data generated for the study.

The main research questions of the study were as follows;

- What are the departmental heads' perspectives on leadership learning in the case study schools?
- How do the departmental heads in the case study schools learn leadership?
- What do the departmental heads in the case study schools view as effective mechanisms for leadership learning?

5.3.1 What are the departmental heads' perspectives on leadership learning in the case study schools?

The findings of the study revealed that departmental heads place great importance on the notion of leadership learning. They expressed it is important that learning is provided to departmental heads to guide them on role execution. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the departmental heads understand that leading their teams and curriculum delivery in schools is not an innate skill, but it is a skill that has to be learnt. The study has shown that the context where departmental heads lead may differ and also change over time but the principles of leadership, they should exude remain the same across the board as guided by the PAM Document. It also emerged in the findings that leadership learning is not an overnight process, but it happens over time and continues as contexts change. These findings shine the light on the intricacy of leadership in the schooling environment and advocate for more carefully thought-out initiatives aimed at helping the departmental heads learn to lead. Leading a school phase and the teachers in that department need a special kind of person who has a goal and is willing to ask for and accept support.

5.3.2 How do the departmental heads in the case study schools learn leadership?

The research findings revealed that departmental heads as individuals learn differently. Their learning is influenced by their different goals as adult learners. Their contexts, challenges, and successes affect the way they respond to learning programmes and initiatives. The findings revealed that they learn through immersing themselves in opportunities provided by the school stakeholders, they learn as they go, through reflecting on their past experiences. Departmental heads also learn from self-initiated activities requiring commitment outside of working hours like enrolling in academic programmes. These findings on how the departmental heads in the case study schools learnt to lead offer an insider perspective on how a willing adult learner is motivated by their goal, strengthened by their challenges, and guided by their context during their leadership learning journey.

5.2.3 What do the departmental heads in the case study schools view as effective mechanisms for leadership learning?

The study found that support is a crucial element when leadership learning is to occur. The departmental heads revealed that support needs to be part of any learning mechanism offered or explored. The findings revealed that apart from the leader's context there are some mechanisms that have been tried and tested and still come highly recommended when applied

correctly in any context. Furthermore, the principal of the school is a vital resource in the leadership learning journey of the departmental heads. These findings on mechanisms considered effective for leadership learning expose the importance of knowing and understanding yourself as a departmental head wanting to learn to lead. For the leader to be able to learn they need to know which areas of their leadership they need to improve, they need to acknowledge their weaknesses and take into cognisance that their development will positively affect the school.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions reached have influenced the recommendations I present in this section. These recommendations are directed to the participants of this study and the research community.

5.4.1 Recommendations to the participating schools

Among other findings, this study found that the majority of the departmental heads are in schools they were not initially promoted in. That means they have changed schools after they were initially promoted as departmental heads for various reasons. A further finding is that they were all not pleased with the lack of support they received from their school principals when they initially assumed their roles. However, the support and learning they are still gaining from their learned colleagues, communities of practice, and reflective practice. I, therefore, recommend that a collaboration between the departmental heads, leaders of PLCs, as well as the learned others be formed and a programme for newly appointed departmental heads be designed and shared with other schools in similar contexts. My next recommendation is that as departmental heads you work collaboratively with the principals and devise an induction plan, especially for the members of the management team using the PAM Document as a guideline to ensure that all the leaders know their roles and assist them learn to execute them.

5.4.2 Recommendations to the research community

A study exploring the perspectives of departmental heads leadership learning in a different setting would be interesting to explore. The departmental heads from these two primary schools are effectively executing their leadership roles despite the challenges they have gone through and those they still face. This study's findings cannot be generalised to all other primary schools in South Africa, a private school environment might generate different findings. This recommendation is made with the participating departmental head's past experience in mind.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented an overview of the study by highlighting the key aspects of the previous chapters. The conclusions drawn from the research findings from the previous chapter were discussed and recommendations to the participants and the research community were made and justified. To conclude, the data from this study adds content to the research space as it has limited literature about leadership learning for the departmental heads in South Africa.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

Semi- Structured Interviews

Biographical information of the participant

1. **Age:** 25-35 ----- 36- 45 ----- 46-55----- 56- 65 -----
2. **Gender:** Male / Female
3. No of years as a departmental head:
4. Formal Qualification/s:

Research Question One: What are the departmental heads' perspectives on leadership learning in the case study schools?

- a. Do you think it is important for Departmental Heads to learn to lead? (Tell me why).
- b. Has your employer provided sufficient opportunities for leadership learning? (Explain).
- c. Do you think it is important that leadership learning takes place prior to appointment as a Departmental Head? (Why?)

Research Question Two: How do the departmental heads in the case study schools learn leadership?

- a. How were you prepared as a Departmental Head to lead a department? (Please tell me more. Was training provided before you became a Departmental Head?)
- b. How have the mechanisms/ methods used to prepare you helped you learn to lead? (Which leader qualities have you developed based on mechanism/ methods used? What misconceptions have been addressed by the way you were prepared to lead?)

Research Question Three: What do the departmental heads in the case study schools view as effective mechanisms for leadership learning?

- a. Which leadership learning mechanism/s/ methods do you consider effective for your leadership learning? (Why?)
- b. Based on your experience, what leadership learning mechanisms/ methods would you recommend to aspiring and novice departmental heads?
- c. What would you say the DoE has to do differently when it comes to mechanisms/ methods of leadership learning for Departmental Heads? (Why?)

APPENDIX B: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

This schedule will be used to analyse the documents mentioned below between the periods 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2022.

Organisational Document	Yes	No	Comment
Personnel Administrative Measures (2016). Evidence of the following:			
Does the document address leadership learning for Departmental Heads? (How?)			
Does it mention who should provide leadership learning to Departmental Heads? (If yes, who?)			
What forms of leadership learning (if any) are mentioned in the document that are relevant to Departmental Head?			
What guidelines (if any) in the document help Departmental Heads learn leadership?			
Participant Created documents (e.g File/ Reflective Journal/ Record book)			
Is there evidence of leadership development courses/ meetings attended by the Departmental Head? (If yes, mention details).			
Does the Departmental Head have personal notes made during Departmental Head course sessions? Are the notes indicating some leadership learning occurred? (If yes, describe).			
Are there any reflections that allude to leadership learning of Departmental Heads? (If yes, describe).			
Based on the reflections and notes from over the case duration, what is the impact of leadership development courses on leadership learning for the Departmental Head?			
Organisational Document			
	Yes	No	Comments
Staff Development Team Meetings Minutes (IQMS & QMS)			
Is there evidence of leadership learning by Departmental Head? (If yes, explain).			
Is there evidence of staff appraisal sessions shaping leadership learning of Departmental Heads? (Provide details?)			
From the document is the application of IQMS and QMS policies proving to be			

an effective mechanism for leadership learning of Departmental Heads? (List the evidence).			
Organisational Document			
	Yes	No	Comments
Departmental Heads Meetings Minutes			
What leadership learning has the Departmental Head achieved from Department/ Phase leadership learning needs identification sessions? (Provide evidence).			
Is there evidence to show how the professional development application sessions as per IQMS and QMS sessions facilitated leadership learning for the Departmental Head? (Provide details).			
As per the meeting minutes, have the departmental and phase meetings helped Departmental Heads learn to lead? (If yes, explain).			
Organisational Document			
	Yes	No	Comments
School Management Team (SMT) Meetings Minutes			
What details from the School Management Team meeting minutes can help a departmental head learn leadership? (Provide details).			
Do the SMT meeting minutes show how the application of professional development plan/s by the principal can affect leadership learning for Departmental Heads? (Provide Details).			
Do the SMT meeting minutes have details that can help Departmental heads learn to lead? (Provide details?)			

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER FROM SCHOOL PRINCIPAL ONE

[REDACTED] SCHOOL 3700
Telephone: [REDACTED] E-Mail: [REDACTED]

1 December 2022

I, [REDACTED] the Principal of [REDACTED], hereby grant permission for the study titled 'Leadership learning: A case study of departmental heads from two primary schools' Conducted by Petunia Nokwanda Mavundia to be conducted at my school.

[REDACTED]

Principal

School Stamp
[REDACTED]

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION LETTER FROM SCHOOL PRINCIPAL TWO

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] SCHOOL

[REDACTED] 3702

01 December 2022

I, [REDACTED] the Principal of [REDACTED] School hereby grant permission for the study titled 'Leadership learning: A case study of departmental heads from two primary schools' Conducted by Petunia Nokwanda Mavundla to be conducted at my school.

[REDACTED]

Principal

[REDACTED]

School Stamp
[REDACTED]
HAMMERSDALE 3700
Email [REDACTED]

APPENDIX E: DEPARTMENTAL HEAD PARTICIPATION REQUEST LETTER

1 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Pinetown
3600
Date: 21/04 /2023

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Dear: Departmental Head,

My name is Petunia Nokwanda Mavundla from Universtity of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education. I am a Masters Student in the discipline, Education Leadership Management and Policy.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on how departmental heads learn to lead. The aim and purpose of this research is to understand how departmental heads learn to take on leadership roles. The study is expected to enroll four departmental heads in total, from two primary school with two departmental heads in each school. It will involve the following procedures, semi- structured interviews and document analysis. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be a month long.

The study will not involve any risks or discomfort since it will only be focused on your experiences on how you are learning to lead as a departmental head. The study will provide no direct benefits to participants. However, the aspiring and novice departmental heads will gain great insight on how to go about learning to be leaders. The experienced departmental heads and other school leaders and relevant stakeholders will gain deeper understanding of how crucial their roles are in contributing to departmental heads leadership learning.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee HSSREC/00005340/2023.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher; PN Mavundla, [REDACTED] or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

It is important that I highlight that, participation in this research is voluntary and should you feel the need to withdraw from the study at any point, you are welcome to do so. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation as the participant you will not incur any penalty and there will be no repercussions. There are no costs involved in this study so you will not be expected to pay any money and you will not receive any money for your participation.

Your personal details will not be disclosed for any reason you will be given a pseudonym that will be used in place of your name and place of work. The data generated during this research will be stored in a password protected file and will be deleted in due course.

APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT ONE CONSENT LETTER

Pinetown
3600
Date: 26/06/2023

I [REDACTED] have been informed about the study entitled *Leadership learning: A case study of departmental heads from two primary schools* by Petunia Nokwanda Mavundla.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at tuniem@me.com [REDACTED]

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

[REDACTED]
26-06-2023
Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

[REDACTED]
26-06-2023
Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

APPENDIX H: PARTICIPANT THREE CONSENT LETTER

[REDACTED]
Pinetown
3600
Date: 27/06/2023

[REDACTED] have been informed about the study entitled **Leadership learning: A case study of departmental heads from two primary schools** by Petunia Nokwanda Mavundla.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at tumiem@me.com [REDACTED]

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:
Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

[REDACTED]

27-06-2023
Date

Signature of Participant
[REDACTED]

27-06-2023
Date

(Where applicable)

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

APPENDIX I: PARTICIPANT FOUR CONSENT LETTER

[Redacted]
Pinetown
3600
Date: 28/06/2023

I [Redacted] have been informed about the study entitled Leadership learning:
A case study of departmental heads from two primary schools by Petunia Nokwanda Mavundla.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at [Redacted]

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:
Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

[Redacted Signature]

28/06/2023
Date

28-06-2023
Date

(Where applicable)

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

APPENDIX J: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



20 April 2023

Petunia Nokwanda Mavundla (205514972)
School Of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear PN Mavundla,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005340/2023

Project title: Leadership learning: A case study of departmental heads from two primary schools.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 09 March 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 20 April 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,


Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

APPENDIX K: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SAMPLE SCHOOLS



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: 033 392 1063

Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Ref.:2/4/8/11

Miss PN Mavundla
117 Crompton Street
Pomona Court
PINETOWN
3600


Dear Miss Mavundla

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: “**LEADERSHIP LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF DEPARTMENTAL HEADS FROM TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS**”, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 06 February 2023 to 31 January 2026.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

PINETOWN DISTRICT


Mr GN Ngcobo
Head of Department: Education
Date: 06 February 2023

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

APPENDIX L: TURN IT IN REPORT

4/21/24, 1:25 PM

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APPENDIX M: LANGUAGE EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

25 Maple Crescent
Circle Park
KLOOF
3610

Phone 031 – 7075912
0823757722
Fax 031 - 7110458
E-mail:
dr1govender@telkomsa.net
sathsgovender4@gmail.com

Dr Saths Govender

15 MAY 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

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

Leadership learning: A case study of departmental heads from two primary schools by Petunia Nokwanda Mavundla, student no. 205514972

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.(2003)