School Principals' Perceived and Desired Leadership Development Pathways: Evidence from One District of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

By

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ABSTRACT

The quality of school reforms and learner performance are integrally linked to school principals' leadership development, which elicits both anxiety and concern, as evidenced by studies on educational improvements which emphasise the impact of school leadership on learner performance. Thus, how best to prepare school principals as school leaders and determine their leadership development pathways are concerns that continue to be on the education agenda of many countries.

Using the context of one school district in South Africa, this qualitative study explores school principals' leadership development, looking at their understanding, experiences and conceptions of desired leadership development, and drawing on the perspective of practice context.

The study applied a complementarity of framework made up of three theories, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory focusing on the concepts of Zone of Proximal Development and more knowledgeable other, Knowles' (1980) Theory of Adult Learning and Assets-Based Theory by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993).

The study was positioned within the interpretivist paradigm, adopting a qualitative approach and a case study design. The data generation methods were semi-structured individual interviews and focus group interviews.

Major findings revealed that firstly, school principals' understanding of leadership development involves training and supporting them in relevant, not just generic, leadership skills and knowledge. Secondly, targeting the school principals' development training should include programmes that aim to meet individual and unique needs. Thirdly, their desired leadership development included individualised leadership training, and leadership training using inputs from the experiences of the school principals.

The study concludes by highlighting on the lessons learnt, including:

1. Leadership development of school principals needs to be contextually problematised and understood.

2. School leaders desire to take responsibilities for their own learning; setting the objectives and determining what to take away from the learning.
3. Varying approaches to school leadership development provisions including on-site training are desirable to school principals.
4. While school leaders' desired areas of leadership development conform to what is commonly outlined in the literature, what is at variance is not the "what", which is the subject of their leadership development, but the "how" – the processes of providing the leadership development.

DECLARATION

I, Ezeonwuachusi Nnenna Fidelia declare that:

- The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from another person.
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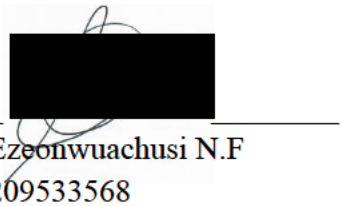

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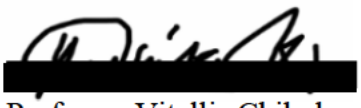
As the candidate's supervisor, I have approved this thesis for submission.



Professor Vitallis Chikoko

ETHICAL CLEARNCE

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16 April 2015

Mrs Nnenna Fidelia Ezeonwuachusi 209533568
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Ezeonwuachusi

Protocol reference number: HSS/0289/015D
Project title: Possibilities for an 'organic' leadership development for South African school principals: A case of eight principals in KwaZulu-Natal

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 07 April 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

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The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

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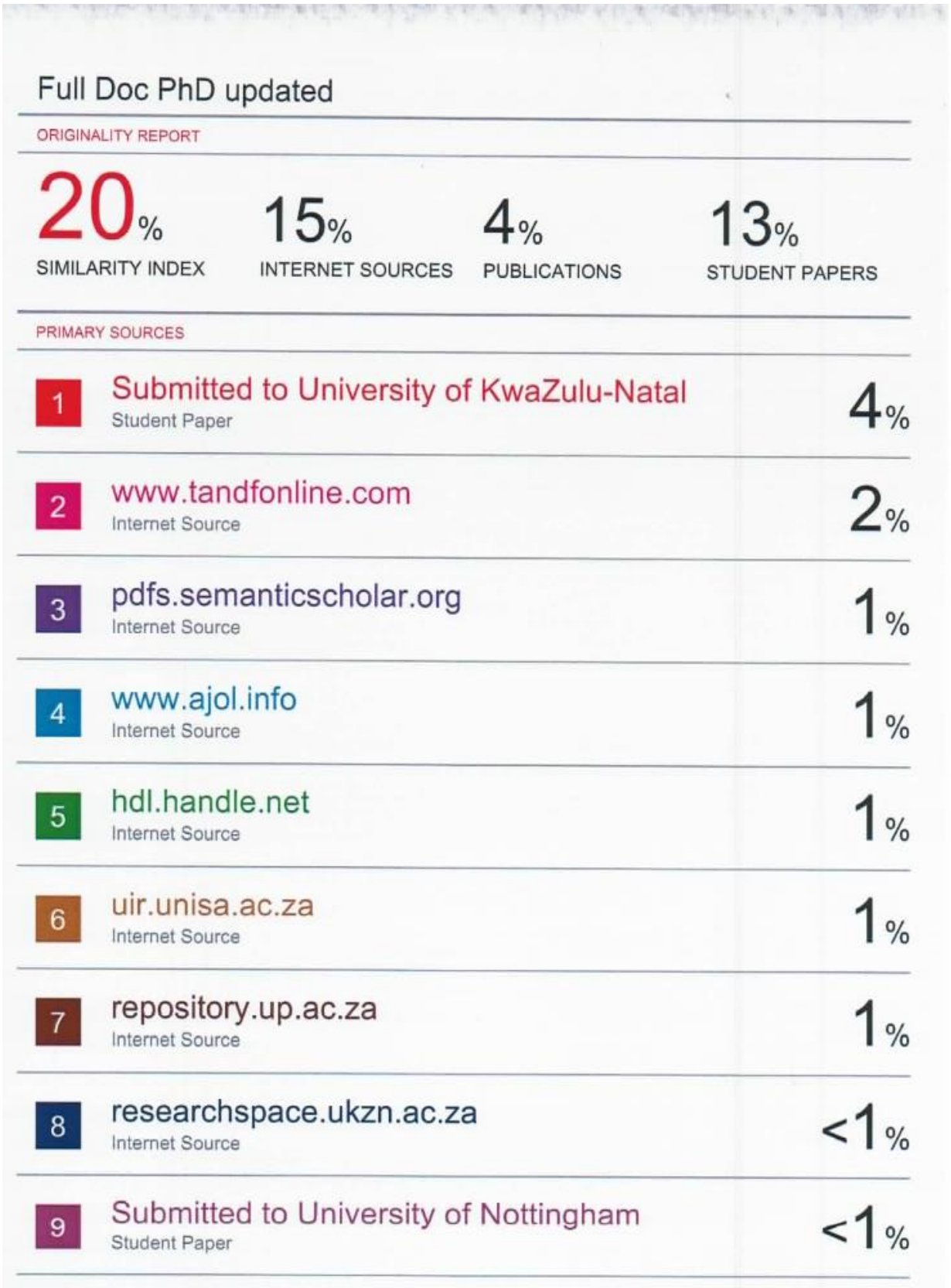

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A big thanks to all the principals from the district of choice in which I did my research. Thank you for creating time to tell me your stories and trusting me with your concerns. The courtesy and patience extended to me made my task pleasant and gratifying. This research would not have been possible without you.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research, firstly to God Almighty who gave me the strength, wisdom and inspiration to carry out this research. I am honoured to dedicate this thesis to my late father Anene Sunny and mother Mrs. I.B Obiora, who nurtured in me the real value of love and respect as well as imbibing the values of hard work. I also extend my thanks to my husband, Dr. I.P Ezeonwuachusi for your constant belief and freedom to pursue my own dreams, your love and encouragement to have an inquiring mind as well as unbiased critic kept the lights on. And finally, to my lovely kids, I hope the efforts you saw me put in this document serve as a constant motivation and reminder to the realities of life with commitment, discipline and determination to set a goal and work towards it in order to achieve your full potentials.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABCD	Assets-based community development
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
ADV DIP	Advanced Diploma
B COM	Bachelor of commerce
B Ed HONS	Bachelor of Education (Honours)
B Prim Ed	Bachelor of Primary Education
B Sec Ed	Bachelor of Secondary Education
CDEB	Chinese District education bureau
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
CoPs	Communities of practice
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DoE	Department of Education
EMS	Economic Management Science
GPLMS	Gauteng primary language and mathematician strategy
HDE	Higher Diploma in Education
HONS	Honours degree
JPTD	Junior Primary Teachers Diploma
LD	Leadership Development
MKO	More Knowledgeable Other
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
PGD	Post Graduate Diploma
PLC	Professional learning communities
QLP	Quality learning project
SASA	South African Schools Act
SASSL	South African Standard for School Leadership
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
SEED	Systematic enhancement for education development
SP	School Principal
STD	Secondary Teachers Diploma
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE
ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Chapter One introduces the research study. The study examines school principals' perceived and desired leadership development pathways within a district in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. The discussion on the background and context of the study follows the introduction. It moves on to outline the statement of the problem, the rationale for the study, the objectives of the study and the critical research questions that guided it. Chapter One further presents the structure and organisation of the research report and ends with a summary of the chapter.

1.2 Background and Context of the Study

School leadership has become an important area of research (Bush & Heystek, 2006). The discussion of school leadership and leadership development highlights the significance of development of school principals in terms of leadership pathways and development programmes that equip them for their roles. In both developing and the developed countries, effective school leadership and management are increasingly becoming vital for successful provision of learning opportunities for students and for school improvement (Boerema, 2011; Bush, 2011; Marginson & Sawir, 2006). The way to best prepare school principals as school leaders and what their leadership development pathways should be are concerns that continue to be on the education agenda of many countries. School principals' leadership development is also an important item on the agenda for most local and global education stakeholders (Odhiambo & Hii, 2012). The concern and interest that school principals' leadership development elicits are perhaps not unexpected, particularly given the growingly link between school leadership and quality of school reforms (Drysdale, Goode & Gurr, 2009), learner performance (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008) and school improvement (Marks & Printy, 2003). Studies on educational improvements have also emphasised the impact of school leadership on school academic performance (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Bush, 2009). Moreover, as Fullan (2008) rightly suggests, the school leadership role has continued to change

over time. For instance, the roles of school leaders have become more demanding, requiring them to become inclusive educational leaders compared to historically being just school managers (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011; Naicker & Naidoo, 2014). This observation, according to Mestry and Singh, (2007, p. 478), implies that "school principals are to foster staff development, parent involvement, community support, student growth, and respond to major changes and trends". Accordingly, Bush (2008) contends that leadership preparation and development for school principals cannot be left to generalised leadership training; instead, there is a specific need to consider the role of school principals as leaders who have a major influence on intended educational outcomes in schools.

In South Africa, poor learner achievements coupled with the desire of the Department of Education (DoE) to increase the numbers in terms of performance of learners and increasing the capacity of schools for successful outcomes has led to the critical scrutiny of the performance of school principals themselves as school leaders (The Star, 2007). This scrutiny prompts ongoing discussions on what leadership development pathways school principals should follow, given the backdrop of concerns that the practice of appointing school principals purely on the basis of educational qualifications and classroom teaching experience is deficient (Naicker & Naidoo 2014). There is an argument that notwithstanding the efforts to cope in the role, experience and excellence in teaching, academic and professional qualifications are neither valid indicators of ability of school principals to successfully deliver on school management and leadership tasks, nor predictors of their effectiveness through leadership development (KwaZulu-Natal DoE, 2008). Increased concerns and anxiety to improve the school principals' effectiveness and ability to achieve expected outcomes as school leaders, probably account for school leadership development programmes mushrooming across provinces and districts in South Africa with myriad provisions and providers, leading to school principals' leadership development being many things at once (Ibara, 2014).

Yet studies suggest that school principals tend to perceive the school leadership development programmes being provided as not focused on their leadership development needs (Mathibe, 2007). In order to be relevant and outcome based, school leadership development needs of school principals, probably need to be further explored to understand what school principals see as leadership development and their desires for school leadership development. Nonetheless, there

is also the need to contextualise school principals' leadership development based on local situations (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2014; Piggot-Irvine, Howse & Richard, 2013).

South Africa is a country of historical complexities, manifested in its uneven school system (Bush, 2011). South African schools still reflect pre-1994 vestiges of good and poor models, often expressed in the form of ex-model C schools, which means performing schools (most commonly found in previously "whites only" suburbs and with a relatively affluent parent community), and township schools, which means underperforming, and other labels (Coetzee, 2014; Roodt, 2011). Disparities exist not only in the structure and administration of schools but also in the domain of practice (Msila & Mtshali, 2011). These historical reflections also speak to the school performance of these schools as categorised, reflected most strongly by the contrasts in national matric exams results (Coetzee, 2014; Roodt, 2011). It is perhaps not surprising, that while school leadership is significant to school improvement and performance, the context of a school, whether it is dysfunctional and under-resourced, or ex-model C that is functional and well-resourced, or schools between the two extremes, determines to a large extent how leadership is problematised, understood and enacted.

Research on school leadership development in South Africa tends to suggest three important facets: 1) School leadership development programmes are fragmented across provinces and between providers (Mathibe, 2007; Van der Westhuizen, 1991), which underscores lack of coherence in understanding of school principals' leadership development; 2) a need for school leadership development to draw on practice experiences and use communities of practice (CoPs) that involve making use of district support and carefully selected mentors to help achieve desired objectives (Mathibe, 2007; Naicker, Chikoko & Mthiyane, 2014), which imply understanding school principals' perceptions of their need within their own context; and 3) current approaches and content of school leadership development programmes are heavily influenced by international literature that stresses generic and standardised methodologies that might not be attainable in the complexities of South African schools (Bush, et al., 2011; Ngcobo, 2012). However, while there is concern and interest, both in practice and research, among school stakeholders and school leadership scholars in improving school principals' leadership development in South Africa, it is necessary that the voices of the school principals themselves are not missing from the discussion.

It is equally necessary to see in the literature that context characterises the school leadership discourse (Christie, 2010). Context is perhaps a critical factor that cannot be overlooked in understanding the school principals' perceptions and desires for their leadership development. In the context of the school policy framework in South Africa, the management roles and responsibilities of principals are clearly defined, as described below. However, school leadership remains a challenge given that it needs to be understood in terms of how school leaders experience and respond to the day-to-day running of their schools. But, in order to do so, it is important to also ask what their desired leadership development pathways are.

School policy documents like White Papers 1 and 2 (DoE, 1994 and 1996a), the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) and the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) (DoE, 1996b/c), as well as provincial legislation, have been in existence and have created an agenda for a school-based system of management. However, these policy instruments primarily dealt with issues of core curriculum and assessment, norms and standards for funding (DoE, 1998), high-quality assurance to ensure redress of past practices, and improved access to quality schooling for all. Yet, according to Moloi (2007, p. 470), the National DoE, in response to school leadership development needs, acknowledged that the "existing management and leadership training has not been cost effective or efficient in leadership development management and leadership capacity". The acknowledgement further conceded that school leadership "skills and competencies for the transformation process or in enabling policies to impact significantly on the majority of schools" were lacking (Moloi, 2007 p. 470). Whereas this acknowledgement was made about 14 years ago, whether it can be assumed that it clarifies what exactly the education system now expects of school principals in terms of their role in management and leadership of schools is unclear. However, what remains clear is that at the time of the first democratic elections, the government did not prioritise the professionalisation of school principals, but instead focused on governance in schools. Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (1997) explained that issues of governance and management started to become an issue for educational policymakers and administrators when they were about questions around the qualification base of positions. Although there was no formal qualification for principals at the time, most principals chose to do a postgraduate programme to raise their basic qualifications in view of their position and role. Yet there was growing recognition that beyond scaling up academic and professional qualification of school principals, skills training that focused on improving school practices was needed. Despite this

recognition, it is significant to note that even now there is still no formal training for the leadership development of school principals.

In 2015, the professionalisation of principalship policy known as the South African Standard for School Leadership (SASSL) was approved by the Council of Education Ministers (CEM). The policy was submitted to the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation unit in the Presidency to undergo a Socio-Economic Impact Assessment and Quality Assessment, and subsequently gazetted on 18 March 2016. The aim was to provide a detailed and well-described role for principals, establish what is expected from principals, and establish key areas of the role of a principal (Moloi, 2007). According to Sullivan, (2013, p 31) this policy

> suggests the need for an adjusted set of knowledge, skills and competencies for school leadership, away from the bureaucratic post-box orientation of the apartheid system, towards a more active, engaged role in securing developmental outcomes and accounting upwards to government and outwards to governing bodies.

This new document set in motion new leadership development pathways for school principals. This is because it became obvious that even with the existence of different development approaches, and the inception of the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), which was introduced as a school management and leadership upgrade programme for school principals, performance and delivery of school principals in terms of expected outcomes was seen to be poor in the majority of schools (Bush et al., 2011; Walker, 2017). Furthermore, in view of the need to consider improvement of leadership capacity through in-practice training for school principals, the "what", "how" and "when" of school principals' leadership developmental programmes become not just a pertinent question, but importantly one that has to be contextually problematised. This is because effective leadership is vital to the successful running of a school (Bush et al., 2011). How effective a school principal may be might depend on his or her efficiency at practices such as prioritising, scheduling and organisation of work (Meador, 2018).

Leadership development is seen as important for preparing school principals as leaders to deliver on outcomes that include improving schools and targeting teaching and learning (Bush et al., 2011). School principals are seen to influence all facets of school education, and irrespective of capacity they are to discharge responsibilities and initiatives assigned to them. Therefore, there

are increasing efforts towards strengthening school principals as leaders to enhance teaching and learning, teacher motivation, learner performance, and to provide a conducive environment for learning and interaction with the broader school community.

In view of the demanding and changing roles of school leaders, leadership is central to the concerns of policymakers as well as stakeholders and leadership developers (Huber, 2004). In support of this view, Naicker and Naidoo (2014) and Boerema, (2011) affirm that the ways school principals are prepared and developed in their leadership role are increasingly of interest to education leadership developers. Msila and Mtshali (2011) suggest that both poorly performing and effectively performing school principals need further development to improve and to sustain their practice. Fullan (1991) argued that school improvements depend significantly on quality learning experiences on school management teams. Accordingly, Williams (2013) contends that successful leadership development initiatives make a difference especially on the difficult aspects of the school principal's job. He further argues that good leaders need to become masters of themselves before they can attempt to be masters of anything else (Williams 2013), which emphasises the need for leadership development to be informed on desired pathways of the school principals. Similarly, Gardner (1990) argues that it is important to promote leadership development through opportunities that allow potential leaders to learn through experience. This suggests that giving the principals the chance to decide on their leadership development needs and to enact leadership development through leadership learning experiences mean that huge consideration is given to the variations that define their leadership experiences and contexts, and the challenges of their role as school leaders. This is also supported by Christie (2010) who highlighted the importance of considering contextual factors, cultural influences, community and parental expectations in the provision of school principals' leadership development programmes.

School leadership is seen as important given that it brings high priority to capacity building in leadership development (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2011). Capacity building, according to James, (2002, p. 6) is "an ongoing process of helping people, organisations and societies to improve and adapt to changes around them". This implies that if capacity building is a process, learning must be at the forefront of that process. It is through learning (leadership development) that school principals come to see themselves, their roles and situations within their context in different ways (Kirk & Shutte, 2004) as effective leaders. Accordingly, Naicker, et al. (2014, p.

421) emphasise that “leadership development has become topical as a means in growing future leaders”.

In South African schools there is increasing demand for effective school leaders (Bush, et al., 2011; Ngcobo, 2012), which suggests the need for improved school principals’ abilities through pipelines of appropriate leadership development programmes. However, in considering the expanded role and the additional responsibilities imposed on school principals, beyond effective management of schools, the need for leadership development is equally a priority in order for school principals to have the necessary skills to deal with other difficulties beyond management, both within the context of practice issues and broader issues in a globalised world (Eacott & Asuga, 2013).

The South African education system acknowledges radical global changes that necessitate improved school leadership competencies and skills of school principals (Ngcobo, 2012). This assertion makes school principals’ leadership development a top priority for the education agenda. Williams (2013) affirms that schools are becoming sites for drastic change, and school principals are working under the most challenging conditions. However, Bush, (2009) contends that the main purpose of leadership development is to equip school leaders with more effective skills, thus developing leaders will lead to school principals’ ability to perform at a competitive level and have the knowledge, skills and disposition to meet the multifaceted challenges of schools beyond today (Otunga, Serem & Kindiki, 2008). According to Otunga, et.al. (2008, p. 371), “school principals in South Africa have multifaceted and enormous task of establishing an environment that could lead to effective schooling”. If we go by the above assertions, there is then the need for provision of developmental pathway, which will enable school principals understand their role better, cope with the numerous and changing demands of the role and manage their schools competitively. Therefore, there is an imperative for improvement of school principals in South Africa as leaders in ways that ensure they have the leadership ability to impact change and influence school improvement.

However, while recognising this imperative, Bush and Oduro (2006), Moorosi and Bush, (2011), and Eacott and Asuga (2013) warn that African nations should discontinue the importation of leadership development programmes developed for different contexts. Instead, in developing

leadership programmes, Africa should draw from the present contexts and the needs of the school principals, although it can be argued that imported leadership development programmes are desirable in terms of positioning for the school principals to compete on a global scale. Yet it can be argued that there is need to develop programmes that will centre on the principals' localised knowledge, experiences, values and histories, and that prioritise their leadership developmental needs in relation to these to be appropriately positioned for their role.

Thus, the three key drivers of this research study were drawn from inferences from the above suggested important facets of school leadership development in South Africa, which are the lack of coherence in understanding of school principals' leadership development, the school principals' perceptions of their need within their own context, and the need to examine desires of school principals regarding school leadership development pathways. The main driver of the research study was to understand what school principals perceive and experience as school leadership development. Given a substantial amount of school leadership development work in the literature, there seems to be a significant lack of interrogation into school leadership development theories and methodologies from an understanding of the nuances and complexities of school leadership development practices in South Africa. This study considered it important to interrogate dominant discourses, particularly in illustrating the experiences and perception of school principals towards their leadership development.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

Research on leadership development of school principals points to the difficulty of generalising how the principals' skills will be developed because of the variations in situations, racial and gender differences, cultural and belief systems, individual needs and various contexts of practice (Burgoyne, Hirsh & Williams, 2004; Bush & Oduro 2006; Chikoko, et al., 2014; Eacott & Asuga 2013) School leadership research also suggests that the design of any leadership development programme should take into account structural features such as well-defined purpose, curriculum coherence, and cultural features including rituals, symbols and values (Msila & Mtshali, 2011; Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2009; Peterson, 2002). Since the quality of leadership of a school plays a significant role in its improvement (Msila & Mtshali, 2011), it follows that there is the

need to improve the school principal's leadership skills through relevant context and appropriate leadership development.

The questions of what type of leadership development programmes the school principals should be receiving, the regularity of such programmes, who determines and provides the type of the leadership development programmes and what impact on the school principal's leadership role and practices the leadership development programmes have, are critical in problematising the issues of school leadership and school principals' leadership development in any given context (Bush et al., 2011; Kgwete, 2015; Mathibe, 2007). This is to say that the school principals' leadership development programme is more likely to have an impact on how the principals enact their leadership roles if it is grounded in the realities of their context and needs rather than borrowed from elsewhere – for example, prescribed and modelled after developed countries. Yet there seem to be little evidence of leadership development programmes and the features that are determined and/or decided upon and grounded in the realities and complexities that characterise developmental needs of the South African school principal.

In South Africa, school leadership development seems fragmented and not adequately connected to leadership needs of school principals (Ibara, 2014; Mathibe, 2007). This is partly because of the lack of coherent and articulate programmes of school leadership development that cut across the spectrum of the school principals' leadership development needs in the many and differing schools' contexts. The current practices mean that different agencies and governmental providers all have their own school principals' leadership development programmes (Mathibe, 2007). The implication of this is that different principals have been involved or engaged in different leadership development programmes. This equally means that there is a lack of uniformity in responding to the challenges of leadership development the school principals face in their different schools, which raises the issue of equity and fairness. Again, despite being inundated with provision and providers, it is not clear whether the different programmes being provided are initiated, designed and implemented with adequate recognition given to the principals' actual needs for successful leadership roles in their different schools. However, what is known is that for nearly a century, theoretical and specialised training of school principals has been a practice that tops the education agenda of most countries and continue to remain a crucial point in their deliberations (Bush, et al., 2011).

Bush and Oduro (2006, p. 362) comment that "throughout Africa, there is no formal requirement for principals to be trained as school managers". This may be because there are no compulsory and specific qualifications for the role of school principal. However, as an alternative they are often selected based on a successful career as educators with the implied notion that this offers a satisfactory starting point for school leadership role. In South Africa, to be considered for the role of a school principal, emphasis is put on evaluating the previously obtained training, certificates, degrees, the relationship between theoretical and practical knowledge acquired and any form of continuous professional development (CPD) or in-service training received (Sullivan, 2013). Perhaps, the emphasis put on certification and academic training has meant that attention may have been misplaced whereby school principals scramble for certificates, without being provided with actual developmental skills to achieve desired outcomes in their schools. Duncan Hindle, the then director-general of the DoE (DoE), once said in an interview that as the learners are resuming school so are the principals (*The Star*, January 15 2007, p. 1). This comment came in the wake of poor national matric exam results in 2006.

The concerns about school leadership and learner performance in South Africa have had a long history too. Several pleas for formal training of school principals have been made since the 1970s (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007). Likewise, efforts to provide developmental skills in the form of in-service training courses specifically for newly appointed school principals were organised by DoEs as early as 1967 (Boshoff, 1980). By 2005, all tertiary institutions had formal programmes of study in educational management (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren 2007). Yet there were still concerns about the quality of school leadership development for school principals (Davis et al., 2005). The effectiveness of leadership development programmes provided by university-based providers and other institutions was viewed critically (Davis et al., 2005). Using the analogy of how effectively athletes need to prepare themselves for success in any game to compare school principals' leadership development as preparation for success, Van der Westhuizen and Legotlo (1996, p. 69) state that "school principals in South Africa have to face the realities of transforming and implementing the new educational policies, enshrined in the White Paper 1 and 2 on Education and Training (DoE, 1996) with little preparation and no specific guidelines for managing this transformation".

Yet, even though it is obvious that in South Africa school principals lag behind school principals in Western countries like the USA and UK in training and certification (Mathibe, 2007; Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren 2007), it is perhaps overlooked that they also may not have certain competencies and skills to deal with non-systemic and context-related challenges of their schools. Despite the efforts to improve, lack of developmental pathways for school principals that accord with a national framework that ensures standardisation of leadership development across the differing needs of school principals pose a major stumbling block in addressing challenges of school leadership in South Africa.

The challenging questions start with what the leadership development needs of school principals are; how these are determined; what the school principals' experiences and expectations of school leadership are in the development programmes; and what they want to see happen in terms of their leadership development. Exploring answers to these fundamental questions demands that the voices of school principals themselves on their school leadership development, be heard. In so doing, consideration must be given to school principals' understandings, their experiences, and their desires for school leadership development from the perspective of practice context. However, there seems to be no evidence in the literature of South African school principals' perspectives on what their perceived and desired leadership development pathways are seen to be from their own voices and drawing on practice context. This qualitative case study research contributes to closing this gap by exploring selected school principals perceived and desired leadership development pathways.

1.4 Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study were:

1. To explain the selected school principals' understanding of school leadership development;
2. To examine and outline the desired school leadership development of the selected school principals;
3. To analyse why the selected school principals desire the school leadership development pathways; and

4. To discuss the implications of desired school leadership development of the selected school principals and what lessons can be learnt for leadership development of school principals in South Africa.

1.5 Research Questions

The five research questions this study sought to answer were:

1. What do the selected school principals understand as school leadership development?
2. How have the school principals experienced leadership development in the past?
3. What leadership development pathways do the school principals desire and why do they desire these pathways?
4. What can be learnt regarding leadership development for school principals?

1.6 The Rationale for This Study

The rationale for this study stems from three fundamental motivations. Firstly, from a contextual point of view, school principals' leadership development discourse, at least in South Africa, has tended to be dominated by concerns of how the leadership development is and or ought to be; with a focus on borrowing from existing Western conceptions and models. The importance of practice context in these discussions and related debates seems to be smothered by the overwhelming concerns with theoretical models. As a parent of three learners in two different schools in KwaZulu-Natal, and reflecting from personal practice experience as an educator who has taught in several schools, I have been aware of some of the challenges school principals face in the daily management and leadership of their schools, which are both context specific and broadly generic in nature. Any conceptualisations of leadership development programmes for school principals must therefore be holistic, considering the specific context of practice of the school principals while respecting global best practices, exemplified in the Western models. Thus, in embarking on this study, one of the considerations for its relevance and importance is the observed need for more extensive research on the school principals' leadership development that focuses on the context of their practice, using what the school principals have to say themselves about their leadership development. Secondly, leadership development of school principals is supposed to be part of their personal development plans, which connects with

professional and personal aspirations to perform in their role as school leaders. Therefore, from the personal development point of view, this study is motivated by the importance of understanding school leadership development from individuals, given that leadership development programmes are to influence their experiences and impact on their skills, attitudes and ability to cope with challenges of their role as school principals, and by extension impact expected outcomes in their schools. Thirdly, from an intellectual point of view, it was deemed important to examine how school principals make cognitive sense of their leadership development needs. It is considered that to develop school principals for their leadership roles, it is imperative to understand, in the first place, what their school leadership development needs are. This cannot be done from a top-down prescriptive approach to meeting their needs, which might result in wrong mix-and-match models of developmental programmes. There is need to understand from the school principals themselves what they think they have in terms of leadership development, and what they consider their needs to be, and consequently what they desire to have to meet their leadership development needs. It was therefore considered that knowledge of school leadership development drawing on this perspective has potential to elicit further research interest and add to disciplinary scholarship of educational leadership and management in South Africa.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is considered from three complementary prisms; context, relevance and outcome. First is the prism of context of the study, which emphasises the importance of underpinning the school leadership development discourse and practices on contextual relevance and the needs of the South African schools and school principals. In underscoring the need to problematise school leadership development within the context of school principals, Eacott and Asuga (2013, p. 1) contend that:

> African nations should discontinue the importation of leadership development programmes developed for different contexts. Instead, Africa in developing their leadership development programmes should draw from the present contexts and the needs of the school principals.

This contention is particularly true of the South African school system with its complexities and differing contexts of practice, which will make the one-size-fits-all models of leadership development programmes developed for different contexts a poor fit for the school principals' leadership development needs.

Second is the prism of relevance, which underscores the timeliness of this current study. In an undated report on challenges of school principals in South African schools, Otunga, Serem and Kindiki called the task of school principals "multifaceted and enormous" particularly in an environment that has to be managed in order to achieve "effective schooling". However, Bush (2009) emphasises that leadership development is to serve the purpose of making school principals effective leaders in their schools. Christie (2010) argues that for leadership development programmes to be relevant for school principals, there is need to consider variations in different contexts of practice. Accordingly, Msila and Mtshali (2011) argue for the need for all school principals, irrespective of performance, to be engaged in further development. Naicker, et al. (2014) suggest that leadership development is relevant and topical as an area of inquiry, particularly as a "means in growing future leaders". However, given the concerns raised about the ways school principals' leadership development is done (Boerema, 2011; Ibara, 2014; Naicker & Naidoo, 2014), and with the subsequent introduction of the South African Standard for Principalship Policy gazetted in 2016, emphasis is placed on improving the set of knowledge, abilities and competences for school leadership. Therefore, a research that focuses on in-depth understanding of leadership development of school principals within their own context and practice setting becomes germane and significant. This is because it potentially contributes insights to knowledge on the pertinent issues and critical debates on school leadership development.

Third is the prism of outcome, which is hoped to benefit the school principals themselves, school policymakers, and scholars and researchers in the field of school leadership and management and contribute to knowledge in the discipline of educational management and leadership. The study provided the space for school principals' interrogations of their own practice experiences in terms of their understanding of their school leadership development as school principals, and in terms of making sense of their expectations, experiences and desires. As an outcome, knowledge derived from this study of the school principals' understandings and introspections on their

practices contributes to improving the quality, type and content of leadership development programmes for school principals in South Africa. In another way, this research study's findings contribute to knowledge on school leadership and management by closing the gap in the literature on leadership development of school principals from their practice context and using their own voices. In terms of theory, this study contributes to the understanding of leadership development programmes from Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory, drawing on the concepts of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and More Knowledgeable Order (MKO) as complementary lenses, to Knowles's (1980) theory of adult learning used in the framework for the study, as well as Assets-Based Theory by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993).

1.8 Researcher's Positionality

This section declares my being; personal bearings and beliefs, experiences, expertise, insider insights and or incidents of significance to note, guide and inform the reading of the text. It discusses my reflections on the research journey and its outcome, which helped in my understanding and negotiation of my position in the research process.

As a parent of three learners in two different schools in a school district of KwaZulu-Natal province, and reflecting from personal practice experience as an educator who has taught in several schools, I am aware of some of the challenges school principals face in the daily management and leadership of their schools. These challenges are both context specific and broadly generic in nature. However, my personal beliefs and impact of personal life experiences (Cruess, Cruess, Boudreau, Snell & Steinert, 2015) are mitigated in the research process as discussed in detail in Chapter Four of this study.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Key terms used for the understanding of the study are dealt with extensively in the literature review chapter. In order to ensure a common understanding a broad definition of the key terms used in this study is provided below.

1.9.1 Leadership

There is a wide range of definitions of leadership and these differ according to their focus on the many different aspects of leadership. Leadership as a concept has different meanings and interpretations. It can be gathered from the different meanings and interpretations of leadership that it is an obligation to be carried out, a work to be done, a mission to be accomplished and a service to be provided. Some authors consider leadership based on style (Nanjundeswaraswamy, & Swamy, 2014) others conceive it to have a relationship with personalities (Peltokangas, 2016), and yet others perceive it to be an inborn trait (Di Giulio1i, 2014; Gentry, et al., 2012).

The central idea about leadership, according to Bush (2009), is that it is a process of "influence". This analogy is based on the understanding that leaders could persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. Thus, leadership is defined by Christie (2010, p. 695) as the "relationship of influence directed towards goals or outcomes, whether formal or informal". Similarly, Peretomode (2012) defines leadership as the ability to encourage and inspire others to do things they would not normally consider. Khuong, Tung and Trang (2014) understand leadership as a bond that makes people work together. However, relevant to this study, school leadership is seen as a dynamic concept, which explains the school leader as someone who shapes the goals and inspires the actions of others (Bush, 2013; 2009; Hallinger & Huber, 2012; Nakpodia, 2012). Drawing on the foregoing, the term leadership in the context of this study is defined as the ability to encourage others to work together by shaping the goals, actions and their ability to perform better.

1.9.2 Leadership Development

Leadership development, according to Nakpodia (2012, p. 96), is "the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes". Bolden (2010) suggests that leadership development is an intentional and carefully thought-through process to help leaders become more effective. Nakpodia's (2012) emphasis on leadership development is on developing the leader's capacity. Peretomode (2012) defines leadership development as an activity that boosts the effectiveness of leadership within an individual or organisation that is focused on developing the leadership abilities and attitudes of the leaders individually. Similarly, Chikoko, et al. (2011, p. 317) opine that leadership development "is seen as an activity that

enhances the capacity of individuals or groups to engage effectively in leading individuals or groups". Leadership development can be formal or informal if there is an improvement on the skills of the leaders in their practice (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008). Drawing from the above, a working definition of the term leadership development in the present study is that it is the enablement to build or strengthen capacity and ability of practising principals by focusing on school needs and challenges that are implicit in certain contexts.

1.9.3 Perceived Leadership Development

The term perceived leadership development is used in the context of this study to refer to what the selected school principal participants in this study understand and experience as their leadership development. It includes their explications of how they conceptualise their leadership development and their actual involvement in school leadership development; their reflections on their experiences, and the account or narrative constructs of these experiences. In other words, perceived leadership development connotes the meanings the selected school principals' participants give to what they understand and experience presently as leadership development.

1.9.4 Desired Leadership Development

In this study, desired leadership development is used to explain the aspirations, wishes and expectations of the selected school principal participants regarding their school leadership development. It refers to what the school principals would want to see in terms of the school leadership development type, content, structure, delivery and pathway. It also refers to how their school leadership development is determined in terms of the processes and procedures and assessment of the appropriateness of their school leadership development needs in the school leadership practice contexts.

1.10 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis comprises six chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to the thesis. It discusses the background and context of the study, the statement of research problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions that guided the study, the rationale and importance of the study, the definition of key terms used in the study, and a brief outline of the organisation of thesis. Chapter One concludes with a chapter summary.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature relevant to the study. The review of literature discusses related studies on school leadership development and the current research and debates on school principal's leadership development that informed discussion of findings of the present study.

Chapter Three discusses theoretical frameworks underpinning this study. It also outlines a conceptual framework, based on the work of Williams (2014), which explains leadership development as including opportunities for emerging leaders to be hands-on, on day-to-day challenges of thorough observation and participation, and by leading teams in recognising, applying, and assessing improvement, and therefore argues that leadership development is "the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes" (Williams, 2014, p. 29). Within the framework I indicated I made use of three theories which include Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural theory (SCT) focusing on the concepts of ZPD and MKO. Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) Assets-Based Theory, and Knowles's (1984) Adult Learning theory. ZPD and MKO were used to explore and identify the importance of peer learning, mobilising assets within the communities; Knowles' (1984) Adult Learning theory complemented it as a lens used in understanding the processes of how adults and children learn differently.

Chapter Four discusses the research methodology. It provides a descriptively rich explanation of the procedures and processes undertaken in carrying out this research. It explains the research approach, design methods of data collection, sample and sampling procedures, method of data analysis and limitation to the study as well as ethical considerations and steps taken to ensure rigour and trustworthiness. Chapter Four provides a clear and detailed account of the methods data for this study was produced and gives a justification for decisions for methods and processes.

Chapter Five presents the data analysis and discussion of the findings of this study.

Chapter Six discusses the thesis by presenting an overview of the research study and findings and demonstrating how the research questions of the study were answered, and finally discussing the implications of the findings for practice, research and policy while presenting a model based on the findings.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter presented an introduction and background to this study. The study examined the perceived and desired leadership development pathways of school principals in one district of KwaZulu-Natal. The study explored how school leaders in a variety of schools in one district of KwaZulu-Natal understand and experienced their leadership development. The findings of this study are likely to shed light on the tension between mismatched expectations of the leadership development programmes provided by the DoE and the school principals' experiences of their leadership development needs in their schools. This study therefore provided renewed insight on the perceptions of school principals regarding their school leadership development, reflecting on issues relating to the provisions of their school leadership development. Drawing on the findings, the respondents' views from the ways in which their experiences are understood, interpreted and problematised, this thesis attempts to confront dominant notions of school principals' leadership development programmes in South Africa. It interrogates what the desired leadership development of school principals are in contrast to the provisions and leadership development being enacted. To this end, this study revealed a range of school leadership development challenges that occurred, and the troubling neglect of the school principal's leadership needs that are not just associated to professional/universalistic kinds of skills, but also individual competences specific to contexts, and to the demands of their role in their schools. Their desires for leadership training to emphasise explicit techniques and knowledge needed to attend to issues and problems related to and localised in their practice contexts are simply overlooked in the school leadership development discourse despite the differences in schools and school communities where schools are embedded.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One of this thesis discussed the introduction and the background. In this chapter, a review of the relevant literature for this study is presented. According to Alderman (2014), literature review can be described as an integral part of any research project, which is a means of surveying what previous research has been conducted on the research project topic. Similarly, Baker (2000) explains that literature review is a way of evaluating reports of studies found in the literature related to the current area of study. However, Alderman (2014) emphasises that literature review is done to delimit the research problem and to have a deep understanding of what is known around a specific area of study. In the study, the review of the literature was thematic. A framework was formulated to guide the literature search process in terms of selection, inclusion and synthesis of related literature. Using key concepts in the topic of the study, initial themes from preliminary searches with google scholar, EBSCO host and Jstor and other search engines were formed. Subsequently, study-refined themes drawn from a closer review and evaluation of search result of the literature and information in policy documents, journals and scholarly resources on the context and phenomenon under the lens, which are related to this study, were developed.

Thus, the literature review chapter is discussed under the following themes and subthemes:

- Leadership: definitions and concept
- School leadership
- Some theories of school leadership

  i. Instructional leadership
  ii. Managerial leadership
  iii. Transformational leadership
  iv. Distributed leadership
  v. Contingent leadership

- School leadership development
- Approaches to school principals' leadership development

  i. Mentoring and Coaching
  ii. Portfolio keeping
  iii. Reflective thinking
  iv. Networking
  v. Organic leadership development

- Approaches to school leadership development and South African context
- Emerging trends in school leadership development
- Related recent studies on developing school principals as leaders in schools
- Conclusion

2.2 Leadership: Definitions and Concept

In this section, the definitions and concept of leadership are explored and discussed, which are central to the understanding of the phenomenon under study. Some of these concepts were highlighted in Chapter One Section 1.9 and now I provide some in-depth discussion about them. Defining leadership can be problematic because there are extensive different definitions of leadership, and they differ as they focus on many different traits of leadership. Perhaps this is so because the idea of leadership implies different meanings and interpretations. Though there is no common understanding about its meaning and interpretation, the varying shades of meanings and interpretations of leadership can be gathered as implying an obligation to be carried out, a work to be done, a mission to be accomplished and a service to be provided. Thus, some scholars, in their attempt to define leadership, consider leadership based on style, others conceive it to have a relationship with personalities, and yet others see it as an inborn trait. However, according to Bush (2009), the central idea about leadership is that it is a process of "influence", implying the leader's ability to motivate others to purse well-defined objectives with enthusiasm. Moos and Johansson (2009) defined leadership as influencing relationship between leaders and followers that takes place in contexts where they share a common interest either by their tools or routines. Tools, according to these authors, imply the leaders' skill in leading their followers, routine

represents how they lead, and structures stands for how they intend to use their skills for leading in leadership.

Christie (2010, p. 695) defines leadership as a "relationship of influence directed towards goals or outcomes, whether formal or informal". Similarly, Peretomode (2012) defines leadership as the ability to inspire others to take up challenges they would not normally consider doing. An element in these definitions connotes "influence" and affirms what Bush (2009) asserts as the central idea about leadership. It is therefore possible to infer that influence is implicit in leadership and underlies its conceptualisation. Accordingly, Hallinger (2003) reasons that leadership as a special role is constantly a process of influence.

Exploring leadership from the perspective of interaction and the influence on community/other persons, "it is described as a process of social influence in which the leader enlists the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task" (Chemers, 1997, p. 1). According to Moos and Johansson (2009), leaders mobilise and work with others as a team to achieve shared goals. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) explain that good leaders do not only impose goals and supervise followers but work with them as a team to create a collective direction towards the organisation's objectives and sense of purpose. Accordingly, a leader is seen to be someone whom people follow and who guides and directs others (Moos & Johansson, 2009). However, expanding on leadership and influence, Dewal, Talesra, Kothari, Mantri, Sharma, and Talesra (2011) argue that leadership does not mean having a large army of followers, and or people standing in attendance and doing what the leader says without critical judgment. Thus, Haslam, Reicher and Platow (2011) argue that good leadership might be not determined by winning the hearts and minds of others instead by harnessing their energies and passions. What this implies is that leadership is impacted by followers and can be qualitatively assessed in terms of the influence on follower. Thus, the impact and influence are considered as a quality of which good leadership can be initiated, developed and nurtured (Dewal et al., 2011).

However, Winston and Patterson (2006, p. 7) take an integrative perspective to the definition of leadership and suggest that it is:

> "one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the

organisation's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organisational mission and objectives."

The Winston and Patterson's (2006) definition of leadership emphasised some key terms, which can further explain the dimensions of their integrative perspective on leadership. These are elaborated in the tabular outline in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Key terms in defining leadership

Key term	Elaboration on dimension
"selection"	Leadership as getting the right people to aid in success of the organisation (for example a school); implying there is a great need to select the right people while upholding the interest and future success of the organisation
"equipping"	Leadership as equipping followers with appropriate support through, tools and resources so that they can be highly skilled in completing a given tasks
"training"	Leadership as providing training for followers to enhance the accomplishment of concluding the given tasks of the organisation
"influence"	Leadership as the process of motivating the followers to the collective goals and objectives of the organisation

Similar definitions of leadership that articulate influence and empowerment are seen in the literature. Ngcobo (2012) explains leadership in terms of ability to impact on other people's behaviour and boost their involvement in activities associated with success of the organisation. In viewing leadership from the perspective of empowerment, Huber (2012) argues that leadership is about investing in others as important partners in leadership. Other perspectives on leadership include that leadership is about:

- Building trusting relationship through active listening, caring for others, and demonstrating personal integrity (Pathak, et al., 2011, p. 225);
- Shaping the direction of the organisation and setting a tone of its context (Duignan, 2007); and
- Actively leading and participating in professional learning with staff (Scott & Rarieya, 2011).

Certain definitions of leadership attribute value to its meaning and concept. In their understanding of leadership, Hallinger and Heck (2010) further expand its meaning to involve defining and clarifying the values which determine the direction. Thus, quality leadership is explicated as an essential antidote to unthinking acceptance of a direction deriving from a set of policy directives. Accordingly, Ngcobo (2012) recognises that leadership can be a personality characteristics and behavioural dimension of humans. This posture emphasises the notion of leadership by example, which places expectations on leaders to live leadership in and through their personal actions, prompting Barker's (2002) conclusion that leadership is about two things – process and behaviour.

From an organisational outcome perspective, Davis, et al. (2005) explain that leadership refers to what is seen as three sets of practices that must be in place, which are developing people, setting direction for the organisation and redesigning the organisation. According to this perspective, leadership is about paving the way, and motivating others to take the risk of a new and improved way of doing things (Davies, 2009). However, whereas there are different views and perspectives on leadership found in the literature, which articulate leadership in terms of; influence, empowerment, value, process and organisational outcome, the overarching concept in these views and perspectives on leadership is that it is about influencing others, influencing processes and influencing outcomes.

2.3 School Leadership

In the context of education, leadership is influenced by global and societal trends and pressures. Scholars have attempted to examine leadership from a school perspective. School leaders are being in the position to play a critical role in a complicated context that requires them to be highly equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills (Yan & Ehrich, 2009). Pathak, et al. (2011) contends that school leaders are expected to guide, motivate, direct and make members of the school communities do what they say and have a clear picture of educational goals and what means are available to achieve the goals. Similarly, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) highlight that the basis of school leadership centres on setting the pace for the school, developing the people and the school.

Drawing on a different perspective, Davies (2009) emphasises school leadership as a group of people as opposed to individual. Davies sees school leadership to be about a group of people who provide direction and exercise influence within the school. This view of school leadership stresses on how individuals come together as a group to achieve shared goals. Sharing the same perspective of school leadership, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) further elaborate that school leaders are those who lead in different positions within the school and provide direction and support to influence others towards achieving the goals of the schools. Implied in this view is the understanding that it is not just the principals that run the school by providing direction and influence towards achieving the set goals. Thus, school leaders are all the members of the school management teams who provide support, guidance and inspiration to others to accomplish excellent teaching and learning, and school improvement of their schools. In line with this understanding of school leadership, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) argues further that leadership is not just the school principal, but instead includes different persons in different roles within a school that perform a set of functions.

According to Hallinger and Heck (2010, p. 12),

> school leaders can define the school's educational goals, ensure instructional practice is directed towards achieving these goals, observe and evaluate teachers, suggest modifications to improve teaching practices, shape their professional development, help solve problems that may arise within the classroom or among teachers and liaise with the community and parents.

School leaders are seen to provide different forms of incentives to encourage teachers to improve the excellence towards teaching and learning. According to Pathak (2011), school leaders also have the responsibility for developing a cooperative school culture. The foregoing assertions are supported by Leithwood and Riehl's (2003) contention that:

> in these times of heightened concern for student learning, school leaders are held accountable for how well teachers teach and how much students learn by responding to complex environments and serving all students well.

Similarly, Pashiardis and Brauckmann, (2009) affirms that educational leaders should be torchbearers for change to occur within the schools. This affirmation can be taking to imply what Pathak, (2011, p. 222) further asserts that:

> [a] leader requires basic leadership skills of working together, a fundamental understanding of the manner in which the leader's behaviour affects others, roles and competencies to understand human behaviour, intuition to see the future of the organisation, motivate staff to achieve at maximum level, develop focus objectives and provide a map of required competencies, communicate and reinforce its strategic intentions and need.

However, Crow et al. (2008) caution that school leaders might not have control over all the essential skills which contribute to improving school and running a totally successful school without some forms of support. The job of school leadership is dynamic, and the global expectation of a school leader is increasing and becoming more challenging. The increased interest and improvement of school leadership is also due to the constant calls for the reforms of education systems globally (Hallinger, 2010; Hallinger & Huber, 2012). Continuous reforms and changing dynamism of school leadership implies that the job of school leaders is becoming more encompassing than leading the school. However, Huber (2012) suggests that as school leaders engage in effective running of their schools and are the force behind successful schools, there is need for them to acquire the skills that will aid in achieving these aims.

In this section, I have explained the two major conceptions of school leadership; as a process of leading and as a group of people. In the terms of reference of this thesis school leadership is used as a group of people who are leading schools.

2.4 Some Theories of Leadership

Theory is said to be one of the four important pillars of school leadership, which include policy, research and practice (Bush & Glover, 2014). Bush (2011) outlines a few school leadership theories. Likewise, the work of Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999) provides a good glossary of competing and alternative theories of school leadership. This section examines theories of leadership or leadership theories relevant to this study. Khan, Nawaz and Khan (2016), citing Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta and Kramer (2004, p. 1), contend that "situations, contexts, culture, working environment, new laws and regulations, information overload, organisational complexities and psycho-socio developments remarkably impact the leadership concept thereby, making it commensurate to the changing organisational dynamics". Thus, Khan, et al. (2016, p. 1) further argue that relevance of leadership theory depends "on the context

in which it is applied". In making sense of how school leadership works, different theoretical concepts are used to represent the complex expectations of school leadership.

Scholars and practitioners have recognised the complex role of school leaders and used different concepts in describing these roles, as they reflect on different ways of making sense of events and behaviours within schools. These concepts, according to Bush (2008), signify what are regularly ideologically founded on conflicting views about how educational establishments ought to be managed. Similarly, Hallinger (2004) observes that social structures of the school are guided by philosophical belief that focuses on leadership as hierarchical positions.

However, Bush (2008) asserts that more research on the main constituents of leadership need to be made, which suggests that there is sort of confusion on which leadership behaviour is most likely to create the most favourable results. Similarly, Salahuddin (2010) states that for a successful day-to-day running of school is dependent on how effective the school leadership is. This suggests that for a successful management of school, the quality of leadership focuses on applying different leadership theories. Yet Hallinger, (2004) observes that the predominant leadership theories keep changing as a result of the continuous demanding needs of schools as well as the global expectations in terms of education transformations. Some of the school leadership theoretical concepts, such as instructional leadership, managerial leadership, transformational leadership, distributed leadership and contingent leadership that are dominant in the literature are discussed below.

2.4.1 Instructional Leadership

Globally instructional leadership is seen as focusing on achievement standards, and a call for accountability and school improvement. The focal role of instructional leadership is to create and shape the school culture around conditions for improving teaching and learning (Ohlson, 2009). Joyer (2005) and Hallinger (2005) suggest that the critical tasks of an instructional leader include and not limited to processes such as implementing, planning, supporting, advocating, communicating and monitoring, as well as involve curriculum interpretation and school improvement planning. Thus, instructional leadership is seen as focusing on influencing the followers for greater improvement of teaching and learning rather than just the day-to-day running of the school (Bush, 2008).

Hallinger (2005) describes instructional leadership as leaders who are goal oriented and deeply involved in the instructional processes. The instructional leadership is seen to provide direction on instruction of the curriculum with a focus on management principles using a combination of knowledge and charisma (Hallinger, 2005). Accordingly, Joyer (2005) emphasised instructional quality as underpinning the essence of instructional leadership by claiming that instructional leaders focus on making the quality of teaching and learning the top priority of the school. Therefore, instructional leaders are those that are very much interested in promoting supportive working environments such as opportunities for professional development, collaborations among each other and access to professional learning communities (Joyer, 2005). Within these learning communities, the instructional leader motivates staff members to meet regularly to discuss and promote their common interest as a group (Joyer, 2005).

Drawing on this premise, an instructional leader's involvement is described as more focused in the core business of schooling, attitudes of teachers in their work and fostering high expectations and values for all stakeholders (Joyer, 2005). However, a different view of instructional leadership lays more emphasises on the management of the school which by extension will improve teaching and learning rather than just focusing on it (Horng & Loeb, 2010). According to Horng and Loeb (2010), when it comes to managing a school the principals as instructional leaders are effective in staff support and in maintaining positive working and learning environments. This assertion suggests that instructional leaders influence the attraction of high-quality teachers into a school, and provision of the needed support and resources to achieve a productive classroom and school. Perhaps this assertion may suggest the reasoning behind government-led school leadership development programmes' emphases often placed on instructional leadership, which is seen to focus on improving the quality of classroom learning.

Hallinger (2005, p. 6) opines that there are three dimensions of instructional leadership role of the school principal which are "upholding the school's mission, managing the teaching and learning programme, and promoting a positive school culture and learning climate".

The first dimension, upholding the school's mission, represents the direction in which the school expects to achieve specific goals of the central purposes of the school. This dimension focuses on the principal's role in working with all stakeholders to develop clear, common goals and purpose

and creating motivations for teachers (Hallinger, 2005). Within this dimension, the principal is expected to identify and articulate a vision, foster the approval of group goals, and create opportunities that are high and supported by all school stakeholders and its community (Hallinger, 2005).

The second dimension, according to Hallinger (2005), is managing the teaching and learning programme of a school, which focuses on the organisation, preparation and breakdown of the content of the curriculum. This dimension incorporates some leadership functions like organising and assessing instruction, managing the curriculum and monitoring student improvements. This dimension requires the instructional leader to focus deeply on encouraging, monitoring and supervising teaching and learning within the school (Ohlson, 2009). In other words, these roles mandate the school leader to improve his or her skills in teaching and learning as well as to constantly aspire to improve the school's progress.

Regarding the third dimension, Hallinger (2005) states that it is more intense in scope and purpose when compared with the other two. According to Hallinger (2005, p. 14), this dimension functions to "protect instructional time, promote professional development, maintain high visibility, provide incentives for teachers, develop high expectations and standards, and provide incentives for learning". It conforms to the belief that effective schools create successful student outcomes through the development of improved standards and opportunities for learners and teachers (Hallinger, 2010). Schools that focus on promoting effective teaching and learning develop a culture of constant improvement in which rewards are aligned with purposes and practices the instructional leader must model. These are seen as norms that create a climate for change while supporting the continuous improvement of teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2010; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). However, Bush (2008) argues for an approach of leadership development programme that emphasises instructional leadership to focus more on the "how" instead of "what" of educational leadership. What this probably means is that leadership development programmes have to focus not just on developing individuals but also giving these individuals the opportunity to decide on how their leadership development can be linked to the main purpose of their schools.

Instructional leadership, which is also discussed as learning-centred leadership in parts of Europe and the UK (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009), concerns leadership for learning as much as it concerns supporting learning and learning outcomes, ensuring quality in teaching and improvement of school and student outcomes. Again, instructional leadership is also discussed in the literature using other terms that include "pedagogic leadership, curriculum leadership, and leadership for learning" (Bush & Glover, 2014, p. 18). All these terms are underpinned by the concept of instructional leadership as linking leadership and learning (Bush, 2013; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Dempster & MacBeath, 2009). However, while being a leadership theory with a long history, and that dominated the discourse of school leadership for decades, instructional leadership also has a number of critics. The main criticism of instructional leadership is Bush's (2013), which sees instructional leadership as overly concerned with teaching instead of learning. Another criticism is that it centres focus on the principal's position as embodying expertise, authority and power (Hallinger, 2013). Instructional leadership is also criticised as overlooking and understating the importance of the role of other school leadership roles like the deputy principals, leadership teams, classroom teachers and so on (Bush & Glover, 2014; Lambert, 2002). In being principal-centric, instructional leadership is also seen as deficient in shared or distributed leadership in school, and as such is seen as focusing attention on the direction and purpose of the leader's influence as opposed to emphasis on the influence processes (Dempster & MacBeath, 2009).

2.4.2 Managerial Leadership

Managerial leadership is based on the conceptualisation of the organisational members as rational and therefore the leader's focus should be on facilitating and managing the work of others in the organisation to achieve competency in function, task and behaviour (Bush & Glover, 2014). In the managerial model, leaders wield formal authority and influence others according to proportion and status in the organisational hierarchy (Leithwood, et al., 1999). According to Hoyle and Wallace (2005), there is a relational sequence of managerial leadership to leadership for learning given that learning and teaching, as the primary business of schooling, is supported by the management functions of the school leader. Accordingly, Leithwood, et al. (1999, p. 17) affirm that the practice of managerial leadership is widely supported both in practice and in the literature among school leaders because "positional power, in combination

with formal policies and procedures, is the source of influence exercised by managerial leadership". However, Hoyle and Wallace (2005, p. 68) caution that managerialism can become an "an end in itself" whereby managerial leadership is exercised beyond the support role of leadership and in its extreme practice results in what is described as "management in excess". Notwithstanding, Bush and Glover (2014) observe a shift in language, in terms of school organisation, to use "leadership" more than "management", is more or less semantic because the practice of managerial leadership is widely supported and a preference among school leaders (Leithwood et al., 1999).

According to Bush, (2011) while managerial leadership is considered partly a factor in successful schools, particularly in England, where evidence of successes of the leadership model in English schools abound (Hoyle & Wallace, 2007; Rutherford, 2006), managerial leadership serves best to complement, and not supplant, school leadership approaches that are values-based. Thus, Bush (2011) reasons that though effective management in school is important, a value-free managerialism can be detrimental to school leadership outcomes. Accordingly, Bush and Glover (2014, p. 565), opine that while managerial leadership is "discredited and dismissed as limited and technicist, but it is an essential component of successful leadership, ensuring the implementation of the school's vision and strategy".

However, Bush and Glover (2014, p. 565-566) further argue that:

> Management without vision is rightly criticised as 'amanagerialist' but vision without effective implementation is bound to lead to frustration. In centralised contexts, it is the most appropriate way of conceptualising leadership because the principal's role often remains that of implementing external imperatives with little scope for local initiatives. This is evident in many African countries …

Therefore, they conclude that "managerial leadership is a vital part of the armoury of any successful principal" (Bush & Glover, 2014, p. 566). However, Hoyle and Wallace (2005) highlight the dangers which a leadership approach that is value-free can bring if managerial leadership aim is focusing on competence for its own sake.

The criticism of managerial leadership is that the model will demote the aims of education to managerial aim of sheer pursuit of greater efficiency by just focusing on functions, tasks and

behaviours, (Bush & Glover, 2014; Hoyle & Wallace, 2005). A similar criticism is that managerialist pursuit of achieving targets within set regimes of plans and schemes can be caught up with traditional professional values of school leadership (Simkins, 2012).

2.4.3 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is discussed as the school leader's ability to influence practice by building on the individuals' and group's capacity of finding solutions to the school challenges (Cordeiro & Cunningham, 2014). It presupposes a common understanding of the school aims and institutional objectives among the leaders who share in the leadership power (Bush, 2008). Accordingly, Yulk (1989) explains that transformational leadership means a process of change in attitude and assumptions that influences the staff commitment to the mission, objectives, and strategies of the organisation for transforming the school. However, Van Rensburg (2014) emphasises that transformational leadership can be achieved and sustained only where it involves members who want to see change and are prepared to work together to achieve a new culture in school.

According to Bush (2011, p. 86), the context of a well-working transformational leadership

> [h]as the potential to engage all stakeholders in the achievement of educational objectives. The aims of leaders and followers coalesce to such an extent that it may be realistic to assume a harmonious relationship and a genuine convergence leading to agreed decisions.

Henriquez and Del-Sol (2012) describe the role transformational leadership has on school contexts with learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. They point out that such schools feature practices which result in successful learner performance. These practices are learner-centredness, setting goals, and focusing on achieving set goals, as well as involvement of the other school stakeholders in the leadership processes. The importance of improved school-community partnerships to school improvement and learner performance is documented in the literature on transformational school leadership (Myende, 2013; Myende & Chikoko, 2014). However, other research has shown that ineffective implementation of transformational leadership can have a detrimental effect on school leadership outcomes (Currie & Locket, 2007). Currie and Locket (2007) further indicate that for transformational leadership to be effective, it must have appeal

and acceptance from school principals and any policy must take into consideration the institutional context within which leadership operates.

The transformational leadership emphasises consensus and a view of school management and decision-making that are based on democratic principles (Singh, 2014). In the collegial model, staff representation in the formal decision-making in the school is encouraged and values are commonly shared between staff and school leadership (Bush, 2008; 2003). Involving other stakeholders in the community (Kalenga & Chikoko, 2014) is an element of transformational leadership of school leaders. Accordingly, Intxausti, Joaristi and Lizasoain, (2016) observe that elements of good leadership within the school include having a clearly defined mission shared by all stakeholders, a positive approach to teaching and learning, lifelong learning, ability to nurture and motivate the teaching staff into school aims, support for instructional processes and well-organised coordination of coexistence.

However, there are several critiques of transformational leadership. Bush and Glover (2014) note that the language of transformation may serve as a means of forcing down policies that do not pay attention to school-level vision and goals. In line with this assertion, Hoyle and Wallace (2005, p. 128) contend that "the strongest advocacy of a transformational approach to reform has come from those whose policies ensure that the opportunity for transformation is in fact denied to people working in schools."

Thus, Bush (2011) contends that while the transformational leadership model emphasises the importance of values, it is important to examine or question whose values they are, given that critics believe that they are often the school principals', who may be representing the government, or the government's values that are served. This implies that the values of the school or otherwise the educational values that are practised and held by the teachers are not served, but smothered by externally imposed values (Bush, 2011). Accordingly, Bush (2011) surmises that transformation may become a cover for promoting the school leader's values or prescribed policies of government, which serves a political end instead of genuine purpose of transformation (Bush, 2011).

2.4.4 Distributed Leadership

"Distributed leadership sometimes also referred as shared leadership or team leadership or democratic leadership" (Spillane, 2006, p. 3), involves the expansion of the school leadership role beyond the school leaders (Bush & Glover, 2013; 2014; Harris, 2010). Botha and Triegaardt (2014) suggest that the main purpose of distributed leadership in school is for both the management and other staff to work together towards achieving the aims and objectives of the school and support the school principal in carrying out the demands in school. In other words, it is seen as involving the practices in school, which imply that leadership is shared or achieved using extended leadership powers in teams or groupings (Harris, 2008). Accordingly, Liljenberg (2014) affirms that the crux of distributed leadership theory is in decentralisation of the school leadership role to include possibilities of forms of collective responsibility for school leadership.

Cordeiro and Cunningham (2014) maintain that leadership in the twenty-first century emphasises practice as opposed to power and decision-making being vested in an individual. Again, Bush (2011) argues that power sharing among all or some members of the school implies a space for discussion and consensus in school leadership. Accordingly, distributed leadership is seen as involving the spreading of leadership roles to the teams and allocation of direct responsibility to the different teams or leadership groups including decision-making (Cordeiro & Cunningham, 2014). Similarly, Marsh (2015), in his critical review of leadership literature ranging from 2000 and 2010, emphasised that shared leadership, otherwise distributed leadership, practices require the combination of time, mature and trusting relationships, skills, experience, openness to dialogue and team collaborative work. According to Liu, Bellibas and Printy (2016, p. 401) distributed leadership "is a dynamic process and reciprocal interaction of the leader, the sub-ordinates and the situation". Distributed leadership works on the assumption that teachers and other school staff possess experience and great skills (Marsh, 2015; Williams, 2013), and can participate in decision-making and leadership on individual or team leadership basis. Thus, distributed leadership implies a school leadership practice in which school leadership is characterised by the belief that all knowledge and experience in the school must be put to use, through sharing ideas, shared decision-making and encouraging new approaches to problem solving (Cordeiro & Cunningham, 2014).

Harris, (2011, p. 7) argued that "Distributed leadership, or the expansion of leadership roles in schools, beyond those in formal leadership or administrative posts, represents one of the most influential ideas to emerge in the field of educational leadership." However, Scribner, Sawyer, Watson and Myers (2007) surmise that for distributed leadership to be successful, there have to be new dynamics of staff interaction in their function besides being involved in the school leadership. Accordingly, Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2014) state that distributed leadership implies both the formal and informal school leadership practices in terms of its framing, analysis and interpretation.

According to Harris (2004), distributed leadership works on the principles of collaboration and collegiality. In conforming to this assertion, Slater (2008) affirms that distributive leadership is a school leadership approach that supports teamwork/collaboration and inspires building and using the capacity of other staff in the school. Furthermore, Marishane (2016) argues that distributed leadership presupposes a shared moral purpose of its values that are not only clearly defined but understood by all involved in the organisation. Thus, Melville, Jones and Campbell (2014) imply that distributed leadership, within a school, can be the appropriate frame for considering leadership through school departments. Harris (2004) and Southworth (2004) affirm that through distributed leadership, expertise within the school organisation, in whatever space and position it is found, is utilised to realise common objectives.

However, there are several criticisms of distributed leadership as a theory of school leadership. It is severely criticised that it serves little other than the purpose of standardising practice in school, by delegating more work to teachers (Bush et al., 2014; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2008). However, as an alternative, teacher leadership is equally critiqued as merely serving the purpose of authority and hierarchy of school leadership because it entails monitoring the work of teachers according to a set of predetermined standards by the school leaders (Bush 2014). Yet scholars argue that both distributed and teacher leadership mean that head teachers and principal's appropriate formal authority in schools and school leadership are being enacted through what Bush et al. (2014, p. 5) describe as "formal bureaucracy of the schools". Again, Bush and Glover (2014, p. 12) argue that whereas distributed leadership is popular because it champions the notion of shared values by teacher professionals and other school staff, it may be fraught with difficulties, whereby "assumption of shared values is contradicted by reality of

conflicting values". Despite its critiques, it is strongly argued that distributed leadership finds favour both in research and professional practice as a theory of choice among school leadership (Lumby, 2013).

2.4.5 Contingent Leadership

Bush and Glover (2014) contend that none of the theories or models of school leadership provides a complete picture even though each offer a valid insight. This implies that school leadership theory is not a close-ended discussion, particularly given that leadership in practice can be contextually nuanced and as such understood and problematised. Thus, Lambert (1995) asserts that there can be no single best type of school leadership model. Bush and Glover (2014) recognise that the contingent leadership as a theory provides a different approach given that the nature of the school context is diverse and there is a need for any theoretical model to suit situations of practice.

Contingent leadership is underpinned by the principle that a one-size-fits-all approach, which requires adopting rather than adapting leadership styles, is flawed. Accordingly, Leithwood. et al. (1999, p. 15) contend that for leadership to be effective, a leadership response must take into account the variations in terms of context of leadership practice. In other words, the contingent leadership theory particularly emphasises context as the most important consideration in terms of the school leaders' response to unique school circumstances or problems (Bush & Glover, 2014). Thus, Vanderhaar, Muñoz and Rodosky (2007) argue that leadership is contingent on the setting, which is supported by Yukl's (2002) affirmation that the job of managing an organisation is complex and unpredictable in many ways that require effective leaders to continuously reflect and evaluate how to respond in their approach to it.

Likewise, Morgan (1997) surmises that because leadership demands that effective diagnoses of problems are made, the response to the issues or problems must be most appropriate to the situation. Therefore, the reflexive approach to contingent leadership is considered crucial, particularly in the circumstances or situation that demand that leaders give proper assessment of the situation and respond with carefully weighed and appropriate approach outside of the box of a standard leadership model (Morgan, 1997). In line with this assertion, Bush and Glover (2014) argue that the contingent leadership approach brings a more complete picture of leadership

practice by taking into cognisance that a range of approaches to leadership problems, situations and contexts can be valid. Furthermore, Bush and Glover (2014, p. 15) surmise that the contingent leadership model counters the tendency to normativise, which is a common feature of many other leadership theories that "advocate one right approach to school leadership". However, critics of the contingent model see it as overly pragmatic and not underpinned by a clear set of values. Knowledge of leadership development theories discussed above is important to informing school leadership development pathways for school principals.

2.5 School Leadership Development

According to Nakpodia (2012, p. 65), leadership development is defined as "the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes". Similarly, Bolden (2010) affirms that leadership development is a deliberate and thought-through programme which is directed to assist leaders become more effective in their day-to-day practice. While Nakpodia's (2012) emphasis is on the leader's capacity in roles and processes of leadership, Peretomode's (2012) defines leadership development as an activity that enriches the attitudes and abilities of the individual leader within the organisation. This emphasis implies that leadership development centres on training as well as improving the individuals rather than communal capacity building of group of leaders. Thus, Earley and Jones (2009) surmise that leadership development refers to actions that involve reinforcing one's ability to create clear vision and achievable objectives, and to encourage others to be involved in the same vision and goals. However, leadership development is equally seen as a means of encouraging learning through interaction (Naicker & Mestry, 2015). Widening on the scope of above definitions, Chikoko, et al. (2011, p. 317) opine that leadership development "is seen as an activity that enhances the capacity of individuals or groups to engage effectively in leading individuals or groups".

Applying leadership development in the context of the school, Bush (2008) contends that leadership development of school principals should aim to target the individualised needs and aspirations of the leaders. Similarly, Moorosi and Bush (2011) opine that leadership development must focus on specific needs and challenges of a context, while at the same time giving the leaders an opportunity to engage in international and cross-cultural learning. According to Southworth (2010), the training of school leaders entails defining their roles and responsibilities,

creating opportunities for quality professional training and development, and recognising their essential role in improving learner performance and culture of the school. Although the main role of the school leaders exposes them to positions and situations in which their work is extraordinarily complex and challenging (Okoko, Scott & Scott, 2015), Bush (2008) contends that leadership development provides school leaders opportunity to determine their needs, which are diverse, and to match these with appropriate development in their complex and challenging work of leading their schools.

Okoko, et.al. (2015) understand the need for school leadership development as offering the opportunity for improving essential skills and competencies school leaders need to succeed. Piggot-Irvine, et al. (2013) argue that with the main job description of school principals becoming more demanding many will not cope with these expectations due to exposure to low quality leadership development. This is to say there is need to develop school leaders by improving their leadership skills, knowledge and attitudes. Reigeluth (2006) makes a point about engaging in school leadership development, which it is argued to exert sufficient leverage that can prevent changed parts of school leadership and improvement system from reverting to their previous state. Earley and Jones (2009) highlight school leadership development as an important leadership programme that brings about an improvement in the quality of leadership that leads to continuous school improvements and enhanced outcome levels. Thus, Earley and Jones (2009, p. 162) argue that:

> [L]eadership development is an ongoing process of education, training, learning and support activities taking place in either external or work-based settings proactively engaged in by qualified, professional teachers, head teachers and other school leaders aimed primarily at promoting the learning and development of professionally appropriate knowledge, skills and values to help school leaders to decide on and implement valued changes in their leadership and management behaviour so that they can promote high-quality education for their students more effectively thus achieving an agreed balance between individual, school and national need.

What this means is that leadership development in the context of school is any programme which will enhance, improve skills and abilities of school leaders to enable the developing of a better style of teaching and learning, how school functions and promote a high quality of learning and success in the school. Furthermore, Sparks (2009) explains that leadership development is

important as it focuses on impacting on what leaders believe in, how they understand their roles in running of their school and improve how the leaders operate in their practice. Leadership development helps to improve relationships between leaders and their followers that encourage hope, rather than the burn out that leads to resignations. Piggot-Irvine, et al. (2013) found that school leaders demand to develop in their school leadership role in order that they become better equipped and acquire knowledge as well as skills to aid in day-to-day running of their schools, and to reduce the possibilities of burn-out resignation.

2.6 Approaches to Leadership Development of School Principals

Broadly, leadership development is a practice that has different approaches, whether in business or in education and beyond. However, for school leadership development, there are a number of approaches; some of these are discussed in this section. How successful a leadership development programme is, might lie in the ability of the programme developers and tutors to employ a diversified methods and strategies in their approaches to empowering and equipping school leaders for their multifaceted role (Sparks, 2009). Some of these approaches, according to Sparks (2009), include teacher induction, coaching and mentoring, peer coaching, job-embedded activities, non-academic leadership/management workshops/training, on-the-job support, networking, developing teamwork, high-quality professional learning, and school practices that allow new competitive ideas to be nurtured within the institution and improve the way things are done. However, approaches such as coaching and mentoring, networking, reflective thinking, portfolio keeping, and organic leadership development will be discussed as they are seen to aid school leaders in their practice and provided relevant insight to the study.

2.6.1 Mentoring and Coaching

According to Parsloe, (1992), to mentor means to support someone by making available time and resources to enable them to take full advantage of their possible potentials, improve their skills and their performance while they aspire to become better. Mentoring fosters mutual learning and develops collegial relationships. Where school leaders are able to work with an advanced and experienced practitioner in a natural setting, they observe leadership in action and develop an understanding of its professional expectations in the school community (Browne-Ferrigno, 2007). For instance, Riggins-Newby and Zarlengo, (2003, p. 28) argue that mentoring within the

school setting is where the mentor and the mentee can form an all-inclusive bond characterised by trust, confidentiality, honesty, sensitivity, shared expertise, and personal and professional growth. Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington and Weindling (1995) highlight that a successful mentor, according to school principals, is one who has qualities such as a good listening skills, openness, warmth, passion, good interpersonal behavioural styles, has experience as a principal, is able to provide feedback, being non-judgmental, and can provide counselling skills when needed. Conversely, Walker, Keng Choy, and Guat Tin (1993) suggest characteristics of a successful mentee as identified by mentors to include ability to show sensitivity, being willing to learn, have a positive attitude, and show capacity for professional leadership commitment and initiative and capacity for joint decision-making.

Mentoring for school leaders is an activity that helps school leaders who aim to make a great impact in schools with the support of an experienced or retired principal (Daresh, 2001). Mentoring must include activities such as investment of time and commitment, sharing of information and the creation as well as maintaining of a communally relationship and communication between the mentor and the mentee (Deans, Oakley, James, & Wrigley 2006). However, Barnett (2001) warns that good and positive attitudes are required between the two parties (mentors and mentees) not just matching pairs of individuals that are assumed to possibly have a true developmental and supportive relationship.

Effective mentoring according to Daresh (2001), is a process that is much more complex in practice than simply sharing knowledge and features such as support of the organisation, well-articulated outcomes, pairing and guiding mentees by mentors. “It is the establishment of a personal relationship for professional instruction and guidance” (Walker, et al., 1993, p. 116). Even though researchers have shown the need for an ongoing guidance for practising principals (Boerema, 2011; Msila & Mtshali; 2011; Naicker, et al., 2014), this guidance they identified as “mentoring” and it is one of the learning approaches in leadership development which is externally determined (part of the curriculum content) and linked to positive consequences, such as advanced career, increased self-worth and greater sense of belonging, and is seen as more focused on open-ended personal development.

Coaching is a process that allows new knowledge to be acquired and development to occur while performance improves (Boyce, Jeffrey Jackson & Neal, 2010). Coaching, according to Bush (2009, p. 112), involves "two people setting and achieving professional goals, being open to new learning and engaging in dialogue to improving leadership practices". Kinlaw (1989) gave a distinct definition of coaching as a shared conversation between two individuals that follows a planned process and leads to a more productive performance, committed to improve and create a positive relationship. Bassett (2001), in support of Kinlaw, argues that coaching stresses the skills development dimension of training. Coaching tends to be viewed as more directed on an achievable task, focusing on skills building and directed within a short period (Deans et al., 2006). Coaching and mentoring are two personal growth approaches that foster a person's own abilities to improve performance towards his or her role (Deans et al., 2006). Coaching and mentoring may share the same principles and values, as the former is primarily focused on improving performance within the current job and emphasises personal growth, while mentoring focuses on longer-term goals and developing competence and skills (Daresh, 2001). Coaching is usually a short-term process compared to mentoring that is used for a longer period and focuses on developing specific skills (Deans et al., 2006). The processes of coaching and mentoring are similar as they are both a sequence of conversations between two individuals who aim to achieve same goals.

Effective coaching and mentoring according to Deans, et al. (2006) involve a learning arrangement between a group of individuals aiming for a purposeful outcome that are holistic and empowering while creating a trusting relationship within a safe place using effective questioning and listening. Deans, et al. (2006) further suggest that coaching and mentoring are increasingly used in leadership development programmes as they offer the opportunity for individuals to address personal issues in a non-threatening way because they can develop confidence and self-belief.

2.6.2 Portfolio Keeping

Documentation of the principal's progress which is known as "keeping a portfolio" is a good way of improving practice and yet it is still part of externally determined programme content (Chikoko, et al., 2011). According to Barton and Collins (1993), the main aim of keeping a portfolio is it equips the learner with skills to determine what aspect of their learning experience

to be included in the portfolio. Portfolio keeping is a collection of materials that have been specifically selected for a purpose or need. Such materials include, among others, publication articles, certificates, projects, letters, pictures, audio and video tapes, work samples and test scores, (Ng & Szeto, 2015). The development of portfolios according to Brown and Irby (2001) has been useful in explicitly representing creative and academic skills and in enhancing learning. Further, the contents that make up the portfolio consist of samples of work, feedback, reviews and reflections on issues, processes or changes (Wildy & Wallace, 1998). In this way the portfolio becomes not simply a collection of work samples, but evidence of learning about practice, improving performance and accounting for school leaders' actions.

Ng and Szeto (2015) suggest that the process of collecting materials for the portfolio forces the learner to constantly practise retrospection on their own work and its progress as well as on their interactions with self and others. This is to say that portfolio keeping can improve reflective thinking, be a good approach to problem-solving skills and decision-making. Wildy and Wallace (1998); Chikoko, et al. (2011); Ng and Szeto (2015) all suggest that portfolio keeping contributes strongly to developing a fully effective educational leader.

Further, a portfolio is used as a record keeper, manually kept by the principal to keep track of evidence used for improvement and a powerful collection of work samples which in all exhibits the efforts leading to evidence of learning, progress, achievements and help in improving leadership practice (Chikoko, et al., 2011; Ng & Szeto, 2015). This can imply that portfolio keeping is a vehicle for demonstrating improvement in performance and professional accountability while it provides for the leader the space to reflect critically on practice.

2.6.3 Reflective Thinking

Dewey (1998) highlights how reflection as an active process is a persistent accumulation of knowledge, which aids in new learning to enable informed and logical decisions. Roberts (2008) states that reflective thinking is an important part of learning due to its processes, such as thinking critically about behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and values; and further suggests that reflection is one of the key competencies needed for effective leadership to happen within an organisation. Chikoko, et al. (2011) supports and highlights the importance of developing school leaders by viewing one's practice and experience through reflection. These contentions imply

that the process of reflection can be formal or informal. Reflection is therefore seen as simply thinking about one's experience to create or increase awareness, which helps to consider possible alternatives to a problem (Dervent, 2015), as well as preventing individuals settling on existing traditional patterns while learning process is taking place (Roberts, 2008). This could mean that lifelong learning is an essential part of reflection, which involves continuous self-analysis and development (Reid & O'Donoghue, 2004). Reflective thinking helps to focus on applying an already existing knowledge to bring about a conscious awareness of how best things can be done (Dervent, 2015).

According to Cropley and Hanton (2011), reflective thinking is a skill learnt and developed, while knowledge from it can contribute to development of individuals as they learn from experiences. Although experience has been a contributor to development, Dervent (2015) argues that for a reflection to have great impact on practice, reflecting on experience is a crucial skill needed for development to happen. To encourage reflection, different methods such as reflective journal, reflective interview, peer observation/assessment conferences, group seminars as well as advanced technologies such as videos and electronic portfolios have been used (Dervent, 2015) to help make a reflective analysis of one's practice. Reflective journals according to Roberts (2008), are one of the tools used to increase individuals' practice of reflecting as it has the potential to chronicle the thoughts, feeling, successes and frustrations through the keeper's real world as well as in the professional capacity (Jefferson, Martin, & Owens, 2014).

2.6.4 Networking

Networking in leadership practice is a way to strengthen relationships among leaders within and across groups, communities, and systems (Bush & Glover, 2004). Its main aim is to promote professional socialisation and mutual learning that provide strong potentials for ideas transfers (Bush, et al., 2011). According to Crow (2001), networking is characterised by who participates, what information and resources flow through the network, what brings people together, and what people do among themselves. Networking is seen to be the most favoured mode of leadership learning and can be more effective when it is structured with a clear purpose (Bush et al., 2011). During the process of networking, visits to other schools within the context, with a clear purpose of learning, appear to be valuable, and enhance leadership learning. Crow (2001) suggests that internship is a specific form of networking as it helps with professional socialisation.

School leadership networks are often composed of leaders who were chosen to take part in a leadership development programme (Bush et al., 2011) as well as those who have a common shared interest that creates bonds personally or professionally, which might last over time (Crow, 2001). Bonds are improved when a programme provides opportunities for leaders to collaborate on any learning activity, or when they engage in deep discussion and listening (Crow, 2001), and this could lead to collaborative learning and sustained networking among school leaders. However, the continuation of the relationships will greatly depend on how closely bonded the group was, how their bonding paid off and the impact of supports that were provided to cultivate the network after the programme ended.

2.6.5 Organic Leadership Development

Moloi (2007) argues that training and development of school leaders can be considered as the most important process that is necessary to transform education successfully and effectively. However, research has shown that there is need for school leaders to start deciding on their developmental needs (Piggot-Irvine et al., 2013). Forde (2011) argues that customisation is increasingly becoming the order of the day when it comes to leadership development. What this means is that school leaders must decide on their leadership development programme and not to be forced to fit into an already existing or determined programme. Although school leaders engage in some sort of leadership training programmes meant for their development, these are often being seen to produce unsatisfactory results and dissatisfaction among the school leaders at the end of training. Why this might be so being perhaps because leadership development programmes are externally determined, implying that the school leaders were not involved in deciding what their targeted developmental needs are in the provision of such training.

2.6.6 Approaches to School Leadership Development in the South African Context

Whereas school leadership development needs of school leaders are externally determined by others (Flick, 2010), it has been argued that there is need for a shift in how these are determined. Bush, et al. (2009) suggests the consideration of personalised and individualised needs of school leaders in leadership development programmes through creating effective networks among school leaders, which are led by themselves. What this suggestion entails is that school leaders, as adult learners, need to be involved in deciding their own learning needs. Although this might

seem a shift from externally determined to self (decided) developmental approach, it will also result in leadership development becoming a personal responsibility of the school leaders themselves (Msila & Mtshali, 2011).

However, the externally determined school leadership development programmes have been seen to improve the school leaders' skills. Yet, Golding, et al. (2008) suggest that effectiveness does not end with good skills, instead an opportunity to decide on the "what", "how" and "why" of their leadership development programmes that will meet the demands of their context and enhance their personal growth. While this might be the case, the need for leadership development is generally seen to be to enhance the school leaders' ability and capability to contribute to shaping the performance of learners and teachers, promoting school improvement, and building the school capacity within their own practice context.

In South Africa, considering the effects of the apartheid system in education, it is seen that the role of the school principal is changing, and they mostly work under difficult conditions (Otunga, et al., 2008). This suggests that a one size-fits-all normative approach to school leadership development may be limiting in meeting the developmental needs of principals in their contexts of practice. For instance, challenges such as lack of resources (both human and physical), union interferences, social factors, poverty, abuse, culture of violence and lack of uniformity of resources, school discipline matters, quality assurance issues and rating, and influences of economic inequalities are rife and varied across the different school districts, whereas in a wider scope, contrasted with other countries like the USA and the Netherlands, school challenges might be different. Therefore, importations of models of school leadership development from one foreign or national district context to another may not necessarily meet or serve the needs of the school leaders in that other context.

Bush and Jackson (2002) in their study reviewing leadership development provision within seven countries acknowledge that there are various approaches to leadership development which might be due to global changes and different policymakers in each context recognising the specificities of needs and its importance. According to Bush and Middlewood (2005), there might be an unwritten national policy issue in most countries, which may explain the content of leadership development programmes being similar in different countries (Bush & Jackson, 2002). This is

supported by authors like Ibara (2014) and Christie (2010) who claim that most leadership development programmes for use in Africa are imported and are grounded in international literature and practice. What this might mean is that approaches used in developing school leaders are similar due to communising practices and influence of global acculturation of the school leadership development programme. However, Bush (2009, p. 117) argues that leadership development should "entail development through a range of action modes and support mechanisms often customised to the specific needs of leaders, through what is increasingly referred to as personalised or individualised learning". This is also supported by Rhodes and Brundrett's (2009) argument that in considering contextual differences there is need for school leadership development programmes to be tailored based on individual desires. Thus, Bush (2009) emphasises the need to consider a most appropriate way to develop school principals, which must take into cognisance and understanding of how best they (as adults) can learn.

Further, Yan and Ehrich (2009, p. 10) explain that:

> the structures of educational systems differ widely across countries and, for this reason, individual countries are best placed to devise their own leadership programmes and approaches that are sensitive to the wider cultural, social, organisational, political and economic contexts.

What this might mean is that the preparation and delivery of effective leadership development programmes has to be contextually driven. Furthermore, Forde (2011) opines that there will be more value added on the "how" and "what" of leadership development if the participants are involved in providing its contents. This is to say that there might be an improvement in practice of school principals if an alternative practice of leadership development is considered as an opportunity to develop criticality, reflectivity, and creativity, and how to seek a solution to contextual issues among school principals.

2.7 Emerging Trends in School Leadership Development

2.7.1 School Leadership Development Cultural Shift

According to Cliffe, Fuller and Moorosi (2018), there is a distinction in meaning and conceptualisation in the two terms "preparation" and "development" of a school principal. This

distinction is important to understand because it signals the orientation of the two distinct programmes although they are often used interchangeably to refer to the school principal's journey (Cliffe et al., 2018). The distinction in meaning is explicated as implying pre-service leadership "preparation", which involves an individual agency in taking deliberate action in their willingness to learn and obtain requisite skills for the role of school leadership. On the other hand, in-service is ascribed to leadership development, which is referred to as nuanced; involving a range of intended activities that make up the process aimed to equip and build the individual's capacity through learning and adapting to the responsibility and accountability of school leadership role (Cliffe et al., 2018; Harris, 2010; Moorosi & Bush, 2011). Thus, Cliffe (2016) suggests that while development may be instructed, learning in development is not merely a conscious action, but also includes what happens subconsciously as the principal journeys through experiences, professional opportunity and life.

However, the role of local authorities and or districts in terms of support to school leadership preparation and development is seen as being eroded (Chapman, 2013). Cliffe, et al. (2018) suggest that there is apparently a shift away from the district support for leadership preparation and development towards individualised form of school leadership development which in part creates unequal opportunities in school principals' leadership development, whereby varying players and different principles are in play. Therefore, Cliffe, et al. (2018) argue for policy and cultural shifts to attend to the core purpose of leadership preparation and development of school principals.

Moreover, Hallinger (2011) asserts the need for both quantitative and qualitative research in investigating successful school leadership practices that will subscribe to views across different cultures. In a similar note, Nooruddin and Bhamani (2019) conclude that the school leadership engagement determines and sets the tone of a given school culture while being instrumental to developing and sustaining that culture. On a different level, Miller (2018) contends that ongoing depletions of school budgets along with rising student numbers, coupled with educational policy environments operated in national school systems place more demand on schools, and consequently forcing school leaders to become more market-oriented in their outlook now more than at any other time. On a different note, Zhang (2018) also emphasises how important it is to understand a school's context and what the ideas behind a school's teaching and learning policy

and practice praxis are, in conceptualising school leadership development. While it is important to take cognisance of the argument that considerable value is to be placed on propagating good leadership practices (Wu & Ehrich, 2009), equally the importance of context cannot be overlooked knowing that some good practices in one school may not be applicable in another due to differences in school and their contexts of location (Chu & Cravens, 2012; Zhang, 2018). Thus, how school leadership development is conceptualised is perhaps a factor that is dependent fundamentally on differences in context. However, Opfer and Pedder (2011) suggest that a conception of leadership development that views it as a specific activity, undermines the complexities that define school contexts and therefore negates the contextual and subjective experiences informing school principals' leadership development needs.

2.7.2 School Leadership Development and Context

The need to understand how the school functions daily and the reality of context of practice the leaders work in (Gronn & Ribbins, 1996) underscores the voice of proponents of approaches to school leadership that is enacted and experienced in distinctive context. Accordingly, these see it right to investigate school leadership from what Gronn and Ribbins (1996, p. 445) adduce as "lived experience of situationally embedded real-world actors". Consequently, Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017) assert that this has prompted attention being dedicated to approaches to understanding school leadership from the perspective of context in which it is enacted.

According to Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017), there are challenges presented by lack of sensitivity to context by education actors including researchers on leadership. Lack of enough attention paid to matters of context can bring about many issues arising for school leaders in individual contexts (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017), and is an omission in school leadership discourse that requires redress. Furthermore, Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017) maintain that school leadership is contested in terms of its understandings and practice, and the fact that context is a determinant of differences and matters concerning context should receive attention and viewed as crucial by practitioners, researchers and policymakers on school leadership and school improvements issues. To this end, the authors advocate a shift in visioning school leadership inquiries, which has to be framed in drawing the nexus between leadership, context and broader schools' environment. Thus, they advocate for expounding of and extensions to the seminal theories of contingent and situational leadership (Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard,

1969). These theories, which are valuable to understanding school leadership, are important here in ways that draw on these to generate fresh and disruptive insights regarding school leadership development (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017). A notable work to this regard is Gurr's (2015) report of the "Successful Outcome of School Principals Project". However, Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017) point out that the claim of being sensitive to leadership context by academics and researchers in their work are often unfounded, even though there are notable exceptions, regarding those researching on school leadership. Thus, Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017) emphasise that that there is much to learn from the field of education studies that pays particular attention to contextual issues, when researching and carrying out recommendations in the area of school leadership, including formulation and enactment of, and rationalising praxis for school principals' leadership development.

Accordingly, Braun, et al., (2011) discussed four context settings in regard to school leadership, which are situated professional, material and external contexts. These are also interconnected, meaning that each can shape the factors which impact the other (Braun et al., 2011). In situated contexts, schools are connected to their context – their past and locality (Braun et al., 2011) and include a school setting, the history and its intake, and these have degrees of influence on school leaders. Professional contexts are said to include not just values, but also teacher commitments, experiences and the policy management in schools (Braun et al., 2011). These are elements that influence the policy enactment in a school that are pinned on broad professional context (Braun et al., 2011). On the other hand, material contexts refer to matters such as staffing, budget, buildings, availability of technology and infrastructure that in one way or another have great influences on policy enactment at the school level (Braun et al., 2011). These may differ in one school from the other in a broad range of ways, including in terms of layout, quality and spaciousness of one school location or the other (Braun et al., 2011). Again, Braun, et al. (2011) recognises the fourth contexts as the "external contexts". According to the authors, the external context constitutes of the pressures and expectations that school leaders, for example, face because of the influence of myriads of policies both local and international. These can manifest in community authority support, school inspectors' reports, legal issues and matters of responsibility and inter- and intra-school relationships (Braun et al., 2011).

Thus, Miller (2018) argues that it is important to consider matters of context alongside leadership theories in debates and interventions aimed for school improvement for any given setting. Beyond these, Miller (2018) also argues that the school leader's personal traits are important to take into consideration, particularly pertaining to the ways that leadership practice are assumed "within a given setting and the influence of societal culture on specific school contexts". Furthermore, Miller (2018, p. 10) indicates that it is "important to recognise that authentic professional learning in processes of school leadership preparation and development should be significantly buttressed by adopting a greater commitment to contextualising … educational leadership". Thus, Hallinger (2011) urges for research practices to embrace different settings to avoid oversimplification, which makes attainment of a knowledge base that is embedded in the realities of schools and their environment (Clarke & Wildly, 2016) inaccessible. Accordingly, Miller (2018) emphasises that what is needed is not just what is helpful or works, but knowledge of what works in different settings. Besides, Osborn, et al. (2002, p. 799) argue that leadership cannot be separated from the context by stating that "any more than one can separate a flavour from food". Despite the situated understanding and embeddedness of distinctive school leadership that is exercised in any given setting, uncertainty, changes, and complexities associated in leading schools are important to understand and to be given attention in the discourses that pertain to concepts and practices surrounding school leadership. But Clarke and O'Donoghue (2016) caution that we have been made to believe that some contexts are better off than the others – but forgetting that every context is unique and different with its own challenges. However, the authors further pointed out that it is problematic to capture a range contextual factors in an exhaustive and appropriate way (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2016). Zhang (2018) observes that school leadership development programmes in general are provided not entirely in the personal interest of the school leaders, because most of such programmes are seen by the school leaders or principals for whom they are provided as not just obscure, but exceedingly difficult to enact in practice. These training programmes are perceived by their recipients as doing extraordinarily little to support the school leaders' practice in their schools (Zhang, 2018). Likewise, some share the view that such programmes that are decontextualised can hardly prepare them rigorously for the professional requirements of their day-to-day leadership roles and activities given that they are not localised in their schools (Zhang, 2018). Therefore, where training is perceived as not 'intelligently reflective or practically relevant', it can only serve as a

mere tick-box ritual of annual review of performance (Zhang, 2018), which in that way, is merely self-serving. Similarly, programmes of leadership development that entail centralised training are seen as creating barriers to effective learning. This is also dissuasive to participation and ownership given that decisions to participate will rather be influenced by the mandate of the central educational authority and not determined by local, individual contextual needs of school leaders (Zhang, 2018).

2.7.3 School Leadership Development and Professional Learning Community

School leadership development through CPD is promoted using professional learning communities in some countries like the USA, UK and New Zealand, among others (Mestry & Singh, 2007). In these practices, using professional learning communities in targeting professional development of teachers and principals have been successful in contrast to South Africa, as an example of contexts where the professional development of school principals is still a nascent practice (Ntengwane, 2012). According to Reimers (2003, p. 10), CPD is not a selective approach to the development but involves "a continual process that comprises of regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession". These can be in the form of opportunities that are in-house (within schools) and are provided in the form of trainings, workshops and other forms of collaborative formal and informal initiatives using the rich experiences within the network of the professional learning community. However, Keung (2007) notes that the more the role of the school principal changes the more limited the research on how professional development of the principal has equipped them for the challenges they face in their job of principal as the school manager. Thus, DeVita (2005, p. 1) posits that there has been a trend that is more than ever before, which is that:

> [I]n today's climate of heightened expectations, principals are in the hot seat to improve teaching and learning. They need to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. They are expected to broker the often-conflicting interests of parents, teachers, students, district office officials, unions, and state and federal agencies, and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of student needs.

These compelling task lines demand school leaders to be able to deliver the multiple and increasingly intended benefits expected from school leadership, to seek learning and improvements within professional communities as a way of being able to do school leadership differently and successfully. Accordingly, DeVita (2005, p. 7) points out that:

> [S]chool leaders must learn to cope with reduced funding, keep standards high, as well as raise them, ensure staff are provided with appropriate teaching resources, keep students engaged and classrooms resourced, effectively, producing more from less, while at the same time, ensuring theirs and their school's duty and responsibility to national economic development is not compromised.

Regardless, Zhang (2018) cautions of the undertone to school leadership development that problematises the school leadership training for school leaders as skilling them for running a school. Therefore, Zhang (2018) makes a distinction between running a school and leading a school. Conceptualising leadership development as skilling school leaders or principals with core skills needed to manage a school operationally is viewing their role as merely fulfilling managerial tasks, while on the other hand they are expected to be a visionary and strategic leader in their schools (Zhang, 2018). Therefore, Zhang (2018) observes that, in China, as an example, there exists a wide gap between what the policy requires of school leaders and what in actual enactment, their job in schools turns out to be. Furthermore, Zhang (2018) observes that this chasm is evident also in the prescriptive managerial content of leadership development curriculum, implied in the concept of leadership implicit in the development agenda of government initiatives. Accordingly, Zhang (2018) notes that this trend is justified in the corporate notion of leadership (Bottery, 2007), albeit its inconsistency with realities of school practices and school leadership contexts. Thus, Zhang (2018) questions the usefulness of content and processes of school leadership development programmes as they pertain to local or context specific needs of school leaders, and further remarks that school leaders generally perceive their role as being trapped in the "discourse of performativity".

2.7.4 School Leadership Development and Communities of Practice

According to Walker and Dimmock (2006), the Blue Skies program developed by scholars in "Professional Learning Programme for Beginning Principals" aimed at offering an improved principal leadership development framework. The idea was to shift emphasis in practices of

leadership development from the focus on structure to focus on learning (Walker & Quong 2005). Walker and Quong (2005) further explain that "Key Qualities of the Principalship in Hong Kong", which was the government of Hong Kong's Blue Skies programme, serves to provide additional professional and psychological support in a trial project introduced to bring about multi-layered CoPs to the principal community. Its focus is also on creating learning partnerships and enabling a flexible learning community for school principals promoting long-term relationships between principals and between schools (Walker & Quong 2005). Thus, Walker, Chan and Wong (2005) explain that adopting these types of leadership development programmes heralds a move towards the shift to a culture of more collaborative learning as an approach to leadership development for school principals.

Kwan (2011) points out that, besides collaboration between principals and between schools, the Blue Skies program is also important for transfer of skills and expertise. According to Kwan, the programme brings on board experienced, competent, and committed principals whose wealth of experience and weight of expertise, transferable skills and professional insights are valuable assets to the beginner principals. These assets are passed on through coaching, mentoring, and counselling, In these ways, the Blue Skies programme initiative rates high as effective and beneficial to the school principals.

However, the report of the Blue Skies programme experimentation shows varied results. Walker and Dimmock (2006) reported that the intensive and direct interventions were a successful strategy in terms of behavioural change in their better management. However, there was no uniform impact with regard to principals and school characteristics (Walker & Dimmock, 2006). In the report, Walker and Dimmock (2006) assert that the overall effectiveness of interventions limited to the districts and subdistricts were poor and had no heterogenous effect. However, a more interesting report perhaps was that direct and intensive interventions recorded more effective outcomes than those at the district and subdistrict levels only. They therefore concluded that the findings contribute insight to ongoing debate on the role of school principals' effective management for results in their schools (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin 2012; Coelli & Green 2012; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli 2006).

Soini and Pietarinena (2011) observe that a most effective strategies for school reforms is through developing professional learning communities. The idea of working together collaboratively and continuously is a way to improve teaching and learning practices in a more effective way (Reichstetter, 2006). However, Naicker and Mestry (2016) maintain that disconnections at school districts are more about the interrelationship between the educational leaders, which hinder organisational learning. Therefore, Naicker and Mestry (2016, p. 1) contend that "changing the culture of the school district through system-wide collaboration could be the key to systemic improvements". They cited strategies such as "collective capacity building, joint problem solving, networking and system leadership, which might provide the essential 'glue' for strengthening the interconnections within the school district" (Naicker & Mestry, 2016, p. 1). Thus, the Leadership for Learning Programme was a system-wide change that targeted change more broadly at the school district level instead of targeting at just school levels.

2.7.5 School Leadership Development and System-Wide Change

Fullan (2009, p. 48) clarifies that system-wide change occurs at "all schools simultaneously". This change can occur either at nation-wide, regional or district level of the school system (Fullan, 2009). Hopkins, (2011, p. 10) explains the "systemic context of a school by pointing out that a school does not exist in isolation, but as a part of a wider educational system". Similarly, system-wide model according to Harris, (2010) is developed upon the ability of all schools within a system to subscribe to a collective change effort by means of collaborating, connecting and aligning their efforts which will result in a systemic effect.

There is need to recognise the difference between targeting any form of change at any level of the schools. Either at the level within the school and or at the level of the system holistically, where the priority becomes improvements within the whole system at large (multiple schools) not only individual schools to flourish (Fullan & Leithwood, 2012). Daly and Finnigan (2011) suggest that successful change efforts, when it comes to school improvement, will require the separate parts of the system to form a network of connections to provide support for each other as a group. Daly and Finnigan's (2011) suggestion implies that this trend of the whole larger system instead of the part, as in individualised school approach to change, indicates a shift in paradigms in the history of educational change.

Given the historical pathways of educational change, there is an indication of a gradual shift towards system-wide change. Initial efforts on change emerged at the level of individual schools without the involvement of the district office as an agent or unit of change appears to have been flawed. Harris (2010) and Hopkins, et al. (2010) argue that the model slows down the pace of change, its unsustainability is questioned and becomes concerning and targeted achievements are limited. Accordingly, the stakeholders, especially policymakers, have come to realise the connectedness of the school system and the district that encourages promotion of links between the district office and schools within, which are dynamic to the change efforts (Daly & Finnigan, 2011; Rorrer, Skrla & Scheurich, 2008).

One of Fullan and Scott's (2009) notions of leadership development in three contexts is system embedded learning which he argues is the most significant and it is an interactive learning that occurs within the district. Within this notion, while the process of clustering schools and creating learning networks is inevitable, the communication and learning happens between and across schools as well as the district office. Similarly, researchers have found that system leadership promotes system-wide change as a strategy for advancing school improvements (Boylan, 2013; Fullan, Bertani & Quinn 2004; Hopkins, 2011). System leadership generally refers to "persons in senior leadership positions, who extend their leadership beyond their own school, with a view to support or change the practice of school leaders in other schools" (Boylan, 2013, p. 12). "The essence of this concept is the transfer of information, knowledge, skills, innovation, and best practice across the system" (Harris, 2010, p. 204).

Levin (2012, p. 11), reviewed past research of system-wide change within the last two decades and argues that for system-wide change to be successful, eight elements to consider important include "goal-setting, positive engagement, capacity building, effective communication, learning from research and innovation, maintaining focus amid multiple pressures, and use of resources", as well as "a strong implementation effort to support the change process".

In engaging in system-wide change, Fullan (2001) cautions against using attractive, short-term improvement approaches that may not produce the desired results, leading to a worse situation. Instead, a report by Green and Etheridge (2001) found that for a systematic change to be effective it is reliant on practices that change mindsets, promote critical thinking, improve

relationship between all stakeholders involved in particular the unions and districts, and move away from dictatorial leadership style to an inclusive approach.

System-wide change is not without criticism. In South Africa, "two system-wide change initiatives were identified in literature, the Systemic Enhancement for Education Development (SEED) programme and the Quality Learning Project (QLP) in De Aar" (Fleisch, 2006, p. 12). Naicker and Mestry (2016) found neither study had shown a definite indication of a positive effect of system-wide change, concluding there is limited empirical evidence of educational leadership development within the system either at national, provincial or district level. Similarly, the unproductive communication and leadership values affect collaboration between the school leaders and district office (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010). These authors suggest that excessive bureaucratic control, relational linkages and lack of communication between the school district office and the schools can hinder change efforts.

Chrispeels, et al. (2008, p. 4) argue that "a dominant top-down approach from the district office appears to hinder organisational learning". Thus Hopkins (2011) suggests that instead of a top-down practice there is a need to relearn the norm by using a different approach such as bottom-up practice whereby the principals become the driving force for the change to happen. In this case an improved relationship between principals and district officials will be practised and promoted as both parties begin to understand each other's challenges. Ackoff (1993) and Banathy (1992), viewing the above in light of the systems theory, contend there is great benefit for district and school leaders to work together to bring about systemic change as the success and nature of their relationship is based on interdependence. What this might mean is that the more connected the principal and the district offices are the more the system is likely to benefit in its movement towards systematic change. Hopkins, (2011) suggest the dangers of these could promote isolated work practices among principals, resulting in principals feeling helpless and a lack of organisational learning.

2.7.6 School Leadership Development and Effectiveness

Within the field of leadership, concern of leadership development and its influence remains highly debatable. While some question the need for investing in leadership development as it is believed to enhance leadership capability, improve efficiency, delivery, ability to change the

culture of schools and improve the skills and effectiveness (CEML, 2002), others question the significance and importance of leadership training (Personnel Today, 2004). Crucial to the argument about the importance and need of leadership development is the question of whether you can train or develop leaders. Early theorists of leadership believed that leaders were "born not made", but subsequent models have questioned this statement, arguing that leadership qualities can be improved while working as a leader. The existing view believes that many leadership qualities can become better through well-developed and personal characteristics like dominance while the ability to socialise to improve practice will impact the type of leadership style adopted.

Considering leadership as a process in a context where the relationships between the leaders or followers are important than the leadership qualities of the individuals are the underlying processes that give increased organisational effectiveness. This is perhaps why many leadership development activities are unsuccessful to achieve the sorts of outcomes desired by those participating in them.

Raelin, (2004, p. 131) argues that "leadership training that is being conducted in corporate offsites is ill-advised because the intent of most of this training is to put leadership into people such that they can transform themselves and their organisations upon their return". What this might mean is that if the goal of training is to put leadership into people in a way they can improve themselves and impact their organisation upon their return leads to failure of the training (Gosling & Mintzberg, 2004); instead that leadership must be aligned with the organisational culture, context and objectives. Therefore, Burgoyne, et al. (2004) suggest if leadership development is to be effective and achieve much expected outcomes, effort must be put on increasing the quality and precision rather than the number of training sessions held.

The need to review the focus of job-embedded learning (Fullan & Scott, 2009) has become increasingly demanding, which Rhodes and Brundrett, (2009) recognised as an area where leadership programmes appear to struggle with making an impact. Thus, more frequent contact with the school leadership development participants in training programmes before commencement is encouraged (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009) in order for the participants' mindset about the programmes to change and for them to realise that the educational challenges that

threatened the school culture and day-to-day activities or challenges they face when it comes to improving education is not just about the issues of the schools; it goes beyond the school. Being limited to their local contexts, school leadership development participants are inclined to believe that they alone faced complex challenges (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Therefore, a programme's effectiveness would equally imply making the participants become aware that the challenges in their schools also occurred in other schools locally and internationally, and the key thing is to provide and equip themselves for meeting the needs of their schools. As the demand for leadership development increases; the more the level of demand is on increase, a new wave of concerns advances on the extent to which current available programmes meet the needs of schools and their organisation.

Taylor, et al. (2002, p. 366) conclude that "the global challenges now occurring demand for approaches to leadership education that are profoundly different from those that have served well in the past". However, for improved leadership practices, trends such as shifting from the initial ideas of "how" and "what" of leadership programmes together with problems attached to traditional approaches can have a great impact. Thus Williams (2013) identifies a huge increase in request for a more effective and functional postgraduate and short courses or professional education within university provision. Central to this trend is a shift towards more flexible approaches tailored to the needs of every participating individual. Such a shift according to Taylor, et al. (2002) requires the reversal of many traditional educational priorities: from theory to practice, parts to systems, states and roles to processes, knowledge to learning, individual knowledge to partnerships, and detached analysis to reflexive understanding. The more the purpose of leadership development is questioned the greater the concern to create more effective leaders, and to enhance and provide programmes that will have a great impact on the leaders' effectiveness.

2.7.7 School Leadership Development and Relational Processes in Leadership

Smit (2014) reflects a departure from traditional management discourse which views leaders and managers as independent, discrete beings with individual agency. In applying a relational orientation that begins with processes rather than persons, leadership is seen as evolving and as constructed in processes (Smit, 2014). According to Naidoo, Naidoo and Muthukrishna (2016), an issue often neglected in leadership research in the African context is the role of emotions and

the dynamics of emotionality in relational processes and within evolving, fluid local-cultural-historical contexts. In a similar vein, Boler (1999) emphasises the need to understand emotions as historically situated and socially constructed, as dynamic in its relationship to power, culture and context, rather than merely a psychological and individual phenomenon. Van der Merwe and Parsotam (2011) focused on the emotional dimension of leadership and the leadership of the school principal beyond the discipline of leadership and management studies. To understand the experiences of school leaders gained either during school leadership training or in the context of practice and enactment of leadership (Lumby & Azaola, 2011), programmes of leadership development need to take cognisance of relational processes and sources of leadership experiences of school leaders.

Generally, the leadership training linked to the concept of leadership and management, such as educational leadership, instructional leadership and transformational leadership, is often examined from a competence lens, which fails to recognise that current leadership competency models contain outdated approaches that undermine their intended purposes. Oduro and Macbeath (2003) draw attention to how general models of competences cannot be universally applicable as they do not take into consideration factors that influence school contexts and leadership practices, such as cultural factors. Thus, Uhl-Bien (2006, p. 655) expresses a "view of leadership and organisations as human social constructions that emanate from the rich connections and interdependencies of organisations and their members". Smit (2014), in her study of female principals, takes the perspective that organisational phenomena are interdependent in relational processes and share intersubjective meanings. Therefore, Naidoo, et al. (2016) argue for a need for more studies that examine the relational process and context of leadership in order to capture the complex interplay of self and other as co-evolving in relation, in process and in constant change.

2.7.8 School Leadership Development and Co-Creating Professional Development

Emphasising the need for equal access to professional development by rural schools' principals in Australia, Hardwick-Franco (2018) argues that it is only when principals are supported can they support students, thereby lifting education. The report by Hardwick-Franco (2018) acknowledges that though Australian research shows that teachers in the bush can accelerate to leadership quickly and early in their career, being an excellent teacher or being the only person

in a small school who is interested in leadership does not make that person an effective school principal. The job of the school principal requires skills that are in addition to, and different from, those of a teacher. School principals work best when enacting educational leadership styles that reference what current research enunciates and pinpoints, as that is what differentiates the work of the school principal from that of teachers. Thus, Hardwick-Franco (2018) contends that it cannot be denied that rural schools deserve quality school principals who are armed with contemporary knowledge in educational leadership. Therefore, it is necessary for all principals to have convenient access to professional development (PD), where the content offered in PD – and the nature of the andragogy used to deliver the PD – is informed by peer-reviewed, evidence-based, international best practices (Hardwick-Franco, 2018). Furthermore, Hardwick-Franco (2018) posits that depending on the school's location the job of principals seems to differ and, as a result, the provision of support to rural principals is failing in places like Australia. Australian rural schools and principals operate in contexts that are different from the urban (Hardwick-Franco, 2018).

Hardwick-Franco, (2018) poses a series of questions: Which style or styles should we include in the PD we offer school principals? Then there is the consideration of the Australian Standards for Principals that people must meet in order to pass their performance review and stay in contention for their jobs. Do we teach to the test, where the content of PD covers the elements in the standards? We also need to think about ways the PD can address the elements that research tells us are different in the country schools. Are these elements domestic violence, juvenile justice, mental health, aboriginal education and of course, student learning? or are they professional isolation, lack or resources, lack of access to PD, closeness to parents and community, supporting teachers, the added load of teaching – and importantly, how to fix the toilets and the roof?

According to Hardwick-Franco (2018), research in principals' andragogy shows that certain andragogy, or ways of delivering PD, are more successful than others. Learning through university as an example is shown to have more than average impact and is better at improving student outcomes when compared with people not engaged in PD. Therefore, technology can facilitate a different andragogy. Patrizio and Stone-Johnson extol the virtues of the "self-study method". McCulla reminds us that mentoring and coaching are important in leadership

development. The dynamic range of andragogy, or ways of delivering training, can be as innovative as we can make them, given access to reliable IT, perhaps warranting the question, which andragogy we should enact when offering PD to school principals (Hardwick-Franco, 2018).

Hardwick-Franco (2018) remarks that a range of sources tell us that rural schooling is different from urban, placing unique demands on rural principals, and proposes that the secret to getting PD correct for country school principals is to work with them to come up with modified content of the PD and the andragogy used to deliver the PD, thereby ensuring it meets the needs of the end user, the consumer, the rural leader (Hardwick-Franco, 2018). Through differentiating PD for the rural context, rural school principals can create a palette of educational leadership styles from which they can draw upon to enact their daily work (Hardwick-Franco, 2018). Current research, published in 2017, states that rural school leadership demands some sort of attention different from their counterparts and there is a "paucity of research on this specialised focus" (Hardwick-Franco, 2018). Thus, there is need to enact research and use the findings to inform policy and funding decisions (Hardwick-Franco, 2018).

2.7.9 School Leadership Development and School Leader Expectations

There is a high expectation that leadership development is a solution to most educational problems (Militello & Berger, 2010), and practically a way to improve context-related issues of school leadership (Hallinger, 2010). Hence Chen (2010) argues that huge amount of investment in money terms of leadership development is to improve school leadership capacity. However, according to Chen, Zheng, and Lo (2011), it is important to interrogate what intended return on investment in leadership development yields by determining whether the expectations of school leaders and stakeholders are indeed attained. Given that the continuing improvement of the leadership skills and capacity of school leaders has consistently been recognised to impact on quality of education (Hallinger, 2010), it is only proper that leadership development expectations of school leaders are met and that targeted resources are matched with not only the variations in school leadership context, but importantly too, significant leadership challenges that pose limitations to leadership capacity of particular schools shaping the school leader's leadership expectations

Zhang (2019) evaluates the leadership development experiences of school leaders in Chinese schools and identified challenges arising from different expectations of both government and school principals. Drawing on a perspective of understanding the nuanced account of leadership development, Zhang (2019) argues that mostly, the available and reliable leadership development practices are championed through agencies with vested interests of maintaining their relationships with government. However, these receive sponsorship from government but hardly use any evidence to support practices that are based on empirical investigation (Li 2012). Unlike practice examples drawn from the West, Chinese tradition is more interested in promoting the works of renowned scholars using descriptive method as opposed to the values of critical engagement in Western practices of leadership development (Zhu, Valcke, & Shellens 2008). Leadership development, for an example based on traditional Chinese assumptions, may be regarded more insignificant to the school principal's expectations compared to leadership development practices that draw on and invests in evidence from empirical data that relate need to development.

Thus, failure to align the quality of leadership development to the context of practice results in outcomes such as difficulty of school leadership to support broader contexts of school development. Despite diversified leadership developments (Chu & Cravens 2012) that are provided across contexts and using multiple providers, it is remarkable that most leadership development programmes are reported as not fitting and therefore hardly address the immediate expectations of school leaders within their school contexts (Feng 2003).

2.7.10 School Leadership Development and Sensitivity to Diverse School Contexts

Accordingly, Militello and Berger (2010, p. 194) point out "that the 'sporadic' training contents of school leadership development programmes suggest a marriage between politics, legislation, and the curriculum, designed to keep leaders abreast of educational reform, policy and change but with little sensitivity to diverse school context". The what, the how as well as the content of school leaders' training programmes are influenced by knowledge which is driven socially (Li 2007; Walker, Hu, & Qian 2012). For instance, Li (2007) reports on Chinese policy makers that adopted what Bottery (2007) sees as a business style of leadership training with the hope of improving education leadership practices and applying reforms to the system as a whole. Though programme contents usually describe behavioural expectations instead of improvement, little or

no attention is given to practice (Walker, et al., 2012). Yet there are complaints of dissatisfaction of leadership development not speaking to individual needs of the school leaders and not impacting in their practice (Gao 2012). However, the overall nature of leadership development fails to motivate and meet the expectations of leaders. This undermines school leaders' desire of persistence in their leadership development learning (Gao 2012), and in that way contributes to the confusion of school leadership roles in many contexts, for an example in the context of Chinese primary school leadership administrative and management roles (Li 2007).

2.7.11 School Leadership Development and Leadership Development Framework

According to Walker, Chen and Qian (2008), the importance of school leadership development framework cannot be overlooked. Leadership development framework is important for effective school leadership development programme evaluation. Great emphasis on evaluation of the leadership development opportunities and training provided to school leaders is to be achieved using credible models and designs that are achievable using a framework (Walker et al., 2008). However, some scholars argue that framework is unable to assist school leaders confront everyday problems: instead, the framework focuses on satisfying a checklist of reforms for leadership practice (Tighe & Rogers, 2006). These weaknesses suggest fundamental drawbacks to school leadership development. The absence of evaluative framework is tantamount to promoting leadership development programmes that show little or no interest in daily challenges faced by school leaders.

2.8 Related Recent Studies on Developing School Principals as Leaders in Schools

While the changing context of education and expectations from school principals are becoming increasingly focal areas of educational leadership and management research, the debates and practices are also strongly informed and explored from an international comparative perspective. This review of literature draws on such perspectives, and some of the work of seminal academics in the field of leadership development were discussed in this section.

The study by Earley and Weindling (2004) posits that school leadership development is a career-long process as opposed to learning event that just takes place at a time. This position has implications for designing and implementation of school principals' leadership development. The work by Huber (2010) found leadership development programmes require a long period to

complete in order to improve leadership responsibilities in schools. These practices involve a combination of theoretical learning at tertiary institutes with practical based learning in school sites. These programmes also make distinctions between phases in the school principals' careers in the provision of their learning, in addition to making more explicit the aims and objectives of programmes.

Huber (2011) also observes a trend to distinguish experience-based learning, which is critiqued as using schools as clinical faculties, from the more course-based learning. The emphasis of the experience-based leadership development is placed on extensive internships, shadowing and project work. In their work, Moss, et al. (2011) found that school leadership roles and responsibilities are becoming reconceptualised. The study observed that school principals are no longer limited to bureaucratic functions but are saddled with a repertoire of leadership expectations, including assuming responsibilities of being the pedagogical or entrepreneurial leader of the school, visionary leadership, creating a safe school environment, leading in school improvement and so on. The study also highlights the contestations of the two terms "successful" and "effective" used interchangeably in school leadership without agreement as to what they mean in context. In agreement, Bush and Glover (2014) emphasise that there is need to problematise what constitutes "successful" and "effective" from an indigenous perspective given that the meaning of what represents successful and effective school leadership is becoming a global debate. Bush and Glover (2014) further argue that the various types of school contexts should inform what is known, and how they shape school leadership practice. What this position implies for school leadership development is particularly relevant to the discussions in this current study.

However, Hallinger (2016) points out the growing consensus on existence of a generic set of leadership practices that are adaptable to the diverse needs and constraints of different school contexts. Jensen (2016) reasons that there is no guarantee school leadership development can keep pace with actual school leadership practices, suggesting that actual leadership practices and how they develop imply new ways of researching school leadership development both theoretically and methodologically. In conclusion, Jensen (2016) contends that research hardly reflects the variations in the working contexts, professions, and positions of school leaders,

which necessitate the need to focus more on situatedness (the "how") of school leadership development.

Cobb, Weiner and Gonzales (2017) found that in the new millennium, accountability and school turnaround were the main pressures, often from outside education, that school leadership has, which implies a need to develop school principals on how to cope with such expectations demanded of their role. However, Byrne-Jimenez, et al. (2016) catalogue some of the leadership development approaches widely in use after 2008 to include pedagogical approaches, which involve reflecting activities, detailed observations, leadership development based on field experiences and andragogical methods such as life histories, diversity presentations and panels reflective analyses, journals etc. However, in their analyses, Bush and Glover (2014) remark that first, it is important to examine school leadership in context, second, there is need to contextualise leadership; and third there is a need to not just improve present research methods but explore new approaches to enhance understanding of how successful leadership practices respond and adapt in an alternative context.

Tang (2018) evaluates the part government plays in deciding the aims, methods and content of the leadership development of school principals. Tang (2018) argues that although the initial aims were to progressively increase training efforts, what becomes available cannot stand the test of time in terms of how efficient and effective the impact of the programme becomes. However, the crucial concern of leadership development should concentrate on improvements that will focus on improved leadership practices.

Similarly, Zhang (2019, p. 1) considers "the effectiveness of leadership development processes in relation to school leaders' needs within an eastern Chinese District Education Bureau (DEB)". The findings reveal that within the district, leadership development is delayed at principal level due to the pressure between expectation of how of the development and their interpretation of their role as school principals. Although they reported the most functional activities were school visits and interpretation of policy initiatives, their concerns were more on why the huge emphasis was given to classroom teaching and learning (Zhang, 2019), and the study reported that much of what the government is doing is counterproductive to school leadership development. However, these concerns bring about poor outcomes which are determinant aspects described as arising

from aspects beyond the opportunity the leadership development programmes bring. As a point of reference, factors were seen to result from the "centralised regulatory system, from their own lack of power and influence, from the absence of programme-based or wider in-school support, and from limited evaluative studies" (Zhang, 2019, p. 4). The implication leads to school leaders believing that they need to be developed to review their own real-word leadership development and work collaboratively to devise improvement. They suggested that policymakers should foster outcomes to leadership development encouraged in an inquiry-based approach (Zhang, 2019).

In the context of South Africa, a review of the literature on policy and practice in the work by Marishane (2016) surmises the need for a policy implementation infrastructure in view of the introduction of the new policy for South African school principals, which will support school leadership development. However, the contention by Christie, Sullivan, Duku and Gallie (2010, p. 92) that it "seems inappropriate to provide a 'generic' leadership programme for all principals and aspiring principals, regardless of the enormous differences in context and school functionality" provided the heuristic to understandings and insights drawn from the background of the literature, and the gaps that informed the rationale for this current study.

2.9 Conclusion

The literature review chapter explored what shapes a good leadership development of school principals. This review represents a fundamental contribution to the research. The review has explored multiple conceptual understandings of school leadership development making clearer the scope stride of the literature regarding the phenomenon of study. The purpose of the review was to inform my research, the focus of which was the concept of "school leadership" which was fundamental in my pursuit of exploring school leadership development.

The literature review chapter was structured under major themes and subthemes such as leadership: definitions and concept, school leadership, and theories of school leadership such as instructional leadership, managerial leadership, transformational leadership, distributed leadership and contingent leadership were discussed.

The review highlighted that central to the core of school leadership development are a wide scope of approaches, such as mentoring and coaching, portfolio keeping, reflective thinking,

networking and organic leadership development. I then moved on to review the approaches specific to school leadership development relating to South African context. Furthermore, I provided a summary discussion of related seminal research studies on developing school principals as leaders in schools. The next chapter outlines the theoretical framework that guided this research study.

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Three discusses the theoretical framework of this study. In Chapter Two, existing literature related to this study was thematically reviewed, while highlighting the pertinent gaps in the approaches to school principals' leadership development. The review focused on the vibrant literature that together with the theories discussed under this theoretical framework chapter informed the analysis of this study. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the key theories that guided this study providing the lens to problematising and understanding the phenomenon of school principals' leadership development in the context of South African school education system.

Three theories are complementarily used in this study. The theories are utilised in ways that juxtapose their contextual relevance to the discussion. The three theories adopted for the study are Sociocultural Theory by Vygotsky (1978) that particularly emphasises the concept of ZPD and MKO, Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) Assets-Based Theory and Knowles's (1984) Adult Learning theory. This chapter begins by making a synopsis of why a theoretical framework in a research study is necessary and follows this with an outline of each of the three theories, discussing their origin, development, utility and critique. The second section of this chapter outlines how the theories were applied and used within the study. The last section discusses the chapter summary and conclusion.

3.2 Why a Theoretical Framework in a Research Study?

According to Clarke (2005), a theoretical framework is a unique way of abstractly thinking about or looking at the world. In elaborating further, Clarke (2005) explains that the theoretical framework is used in a study to connect the parts and to provide a lens through which the study will be viewed, and certain aspects of the phenomenon under investigation understood. In emphasising its utility, Forde (2010) argues that a theoretical framework is a mechanism which is under control, rather than out of the control if it is to be of great benefit to the quality of the study. Thus, the theoretical framework is deemed a vital component of this study.

According to Clarke (2005), theories often intersect, conflict, collaborate, complement and challenge each other. What this implies is that though there might be inherent tensions and assumptions underlying each theory, theories can be combined and brought under the control to frame a complementary theoretical lens to a phenomenon, which makes its understanding more explicit, and enables a better and deeper knowledge of it. The rationale for the use of the three theories in this study is to enable a close and intently observe the various resonances of the issues under investigation, in terms of the ways school principals' leadership development is debated and rationalised in the literature. Furthermore, it is to enable a nuanced expounding of the school principals' leadership development within the South African school policy, practice and research. The section that follows discusses an outline of each of the three theories in question. While clarifying their importance, the discussion also explains how reinforcing their interdependence and overlapping nature, as utilised in this study, is appropriate.

3.3 Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory

According to Turuk (2008), Sociocultural Theory (SCT) argues that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition given that meaningful learning occurs when the individual involves themselves in social interaction. Accordingly, Vygotsky (1978) explains that though biological factors constitute the necessary prerequisites for basic developments to begin, sociocultural elements are essential for basic natural process to develop. Turuk (2008, p. 247) considers the sociocultural settings as an influential determinant in the improvement of advanced forms of human mental activity such as "voluntary attention, intentional memory, logical thought, planning, and problem solving". What this implies is that social interaction paves the way for development to happen, and great awareness of improvements as well as its impact on cognition becomes the outcome of socialising and social behaviour (Turuk, 2008).

Social relationships improve and lead to cognitive development, and the lifelong process of development is seen to be dependent on social interaction (Chaiklin, 2003). What this means is that as communications between the individuals improve, the socialisation effects can positively or negatively affect the learning process of individuals. Crawford (1996) argues that by making the connection between an individual and the sociocultural contexts in which they engage in shared experiences, the focus of Vygotsky's (1978) theory was on advocating for a learning

context in which learners take up the lead role or play an active role in learning. Hausfather (1996) argues that SCT primarily explains that learning process in an individual is affected during the socialisation process, and that consciousness or awareness is a result of the socialisation. This means that the talk between peers or adults happens for communication to take place. After the interaction with other individuals, peers or adults tend to adopt what was communicated. What this implies in view of SCT is that social interaction enhances and promotes the cognitive development process. Thus, SCT promotes the context of learning in which the learner takes the lead role in the process of learning. However, the integration of intellectual functioning to social environment and the central ideas of SCT centre on ZPD and MKO (Vygotsky, 1978).

3.3.1 Origin and Development of Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory

The sociocultural theory of human development dates back to the intellectual works of the German philosophers in the 18th and 19th centuries championed by Hegel and Spinoza. Sociocultural theories are also influenced by the works of Marx and Engels. However, a more direct influence in the development of the sociocultural theories is the work of the Russian researcher Vygotsky and his colleagues Luria and Leont'ev (Valsiner & van der Veer, 2000). Vygotsky's influence on sociocultural theories is seen to be deeply significant even though he died at a young age of 38 in 1934. Vygotsky's short but productive career is said to have been influenced by the Russian Revolution (Valsiner et al., 2000). SCT, developed by Vygotsky and his colleagues, is an important offshoot of the sociocultural theories that are rooted in Marxism. Other related theories are the social theory, and the cultural-historical activity theory. Lantolf and Poehner (2014) suggest that SCT's emphasis is on the understanding of human developmental processes, but it also prompts action inquiries that seek intervention in creating the conditions for development.

3.3.2 Zone of Proximal Development

"ZPD is the distance between a learner's ability to perform a task under adult guidance and/or with peer collaboration and the learner's ability of solving the problem independently" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). "The common conception of the ZPD presupposes an interaction between a more competent person and a less competent one on a task, such that the less

competent person becomes independently proficient at what was initially a jointly-accomplished task" (Chaiklin, 2003, p. 2). ZPD, according to Hausfather (1996, p. 12) is the "distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers". As Sincero (2011) asserts, a learner can perform a task under adult supervision or with peer support that could not be achieved alone. This assertion implies that the ZPD bridges the gap between prior knowledge and what can still be learnt. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs in this area as social interaction profoundly influences cognitive development that is a level of development attained when one engages in social behaviour.

3.3.3 More Knowledgeable Other

Complete development of the ZPD is determined by social interaction (Chaiklin, 2003). More can be achieved within a shorter time given the support of an adult guiding or peer support compared to what can be achieved alone and the zone focuses its attention on the relationship exiting between instruction and development (Sincero, 2011). The MKO is any person who is more equipped to mentally support or understand more task, process or concepts compared to what the learner's prior knowledge is (Harland, 2003; Doolittle, 1997). This means the MKO can be anyone including and not limited to the teacher, coach or older adult but the MKO could also be peers, or a younger person. Since the ZDP is the point where learning takes place, it can be explained as the turning point where the difference occurs between the ability of the learner to perform a specific task under the guidance of the MKO and the learner's ability to do that task independently (Turuk, 2008).

Traditionally, schools are meant for teachers to always take a lead in students' learning by providing the knowledge for the learners and peers. However, Vygotsky's (1978) SCT theory advocates that the teacher and learners during collaboration practise a different thing to the usual norm (Hausfather, 1996). Thus, Sincero (2011) suggests instead of a teacher encouraging repetition and rote learning for future use, a teacher should cooperate with learners in the knowledge creation process in ways that students can create their own meaningful learning of it. Hausfather (1996) indicates that in a practice such as suggested in the foregoing, the learning becomes a mutual involvement both for the students and the teacher. Hausfather (1996) further

states that individuals who are parts of peer learning or in instructor guided teaching must share the same objectives to enhance the ZPD. It is important that the partners begin the process of learning been aware of different developmental stages by the higher-level individual identifying the lower levels individuals' ability (Hausfather, 1996). This process according to Hausfather, (1996) and Driscoll, (1994) can be unsuccessful if the higher-level individual disregards and dominates the interaction during the learning process. Ultimately, the theory clarifies the significance of the learner as an active role player during the teaching and learning process. In addition, the process of learning will happen at a faster and more efficiently if the individual takes the active role which implies that there is a great importance attached to recognising learners' prior knowledge as an active meaning maker and problem-solver.

3.3.4 Relevance of Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory in the Study

Vygotsky's theory was useful to unpack the school principal's perceptions of leadership development as shared learning, through which, as a community of practitioners, they see the need to learn from and scaffold each other in their leadership development. This notion of leadership development by the school principals lends important insight to how school leadership learning can be problematised and therefore was appropriate lens to thinking about the type of school leadership development learning that is suitable to the context of the school principals.

3.3.5 Critique of Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory

Chaiklin (2003) argues that the ZPD fails to explain how the process of development takes place or occurs. Similarly, Lui and Mathews (2005) argue that Vygotsky's SCT takes cognisance of the collective rather than the individual role in development because Vygotsky's ZPD asserts that knowing is relative to the situation in which the knowers find themselves. Thus, the theory fails to recognise the individual's ability to rise above social norms based on their capability of personal understanding (Lui & Mathews, 2005), for instance gifted individuals and child prodigies.

Again, Lui and Mathews (2005) argue that there exist differences in the skill sets for each learner, and therefore there are different learner constraints. For an example, learners with learning disabilities, accordingly might not experience the same learning from group interactions as those without disabilities (Lui & Mathews, 2005). Thus, Lui and Mathews (2005) criticise

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as not encompassing enough to apply to all social and cultural groups wholly and equally, and in ways that learners are able to gain the same meaning from the learning engagement. Furthermore, collaboration and participation vary from one learner to another. Accordingly, Ballard and Butler (2011, p. 3) contend that Vygotsky's most essential element of instructed learning awakens "a variety of internal processes that only operate during social interaction". Thus, Ormrod (2012) argues that Vygotsky's description of developmental processes is vague and speculative. Still, Vygotsky's theory implies that cognitive, social, and motivational factors are interrelated in development.

Related to the present study, a limitation to Vygotsky's SCT theory is that it is not able to recognise the differences in the context of learning of the learners (Lui & Mathews, 2005), and therefore how the adult learner is different as a learner, and what constrains adults' learning, including the "how", in the way they learn differently, are hardly accounted for within its remits. To address this limitation, Vygotsky's SCT was complemented with the Knowles (1984) Adult Learning Theory through which an understanding of how adults as learners, learn differently from children and adolescents was explored and espoused in the study to understand the school principals' desires for their leadership development learning.

3.4 Knowles' (1984) Adult Learning Theory

Knowles' (1984) Adult Learning Theory provides a structure for understanding how different adult and child learning can occur. Trotter (2006) suggests that with adult learners, teachers need to care about the real interests of learners instead of focusing on what they (teachers) believe are the learners' interests. Knowledge of adult learning theory helps instructors to be more effective in their practice and more responsive to the needs of the learners they serve (Carlson, 1989).

Adult learners, according to Kenner and Weinerman (2011) are always equipped with prior knowledge, experiences and learning styles that may boost improved achievements or genuinely rooted cultural/historical beliefs that can obstruct learning. Adult learners provide opportunities for their educators to embrace their life experiences and wisdom. They are also likely to be more task and goal oriented (Knowles, 1984). Kenner and Weinerman (2011) suggest that the experience adult learners bring gives them the opportunity to take an active or lead role during the learning process. They further argue that there is need to frame learning approaches in ways

that allow the adult learner to see the purpose of the exercises to avoid resistance in the process. Knowles (1980; 1984) identifies and concedes that several natural dynamics impact on learning which affects how adults learn differently from children. Understanding such factors, according to Carlson (1989), could result in guided interactions between the teacher and learner, which involves a process whereby the learner, is able to develop his or her own potential. Knowles (1980) describe the factors that influence how adults learn as including adults as self-directed learners; adult learners' wealth of experience they bring to the educational setting; adult learners entering educational settings ready to learn; adult learners as problem-centred in their learning; and adult learners as best motivated by internal factors.

In attempting to differentiate the manner in which adults and children learn Knowles (1980) popularised the concept of andragogy. Andragogy is a term used initially by European adult educators as a parallel to pedagogy. "It is the art and science of helping adults learn while pedagogy is the art and science of helping children learn" (Goodnight, Owen, & Zickel, 1999, p. 43). The andragogy model, according to McCray (2016), places more responsibility for learning on the learner than on the teacher. Further, with age and more experiences in life adult learners have more to offer when it comes to learning whereas younger learners are reliant on the adult learner as they bring little or no experience to the educational activity (Blondy, 2007). "As adults pull from their extensive life experience, it continues to grow and consistently serves as a resource for learning" (McCray, 2016, p. 18), and they become also a rich resource for one another.

Knowles' (1984) concept of adult learning suggests that as the adult learners become older, they become more capable of being self-directed due to their experiences and past knowledge. Furthermore, their readiness to and interest in what to learn could be triggered by effective role models, what interests them, what learning they would like to engage with more deeply and what they feel they need to learn (Blondy, 2007). Internally motivated factors such as self-esteem, better quality of life, recognition and an improved self-confidence/self-actualisation have led adult learners into an educational engagement with an orientation of learning directed towards life/task/problem-centred learning (Carlson, 1989).

3.4.1 Origin and Development of Knowles' (1984) Adult Learning Theory

Malcom Knowles (1913-1997) is the most prominent exponent of adult learning theory otherwise referred to as 'andragogy'. Adult learning and adult education became an area of emphasis during the second half of the twentieth century in the USA. In the 1950s, Malcom Knowles, as a prominent voice and a major figure in the Adult Education Association began to write his popular works on informal adult education.

According to Smith (2002, p. 1), Knowles' work was an attempt "to develop a distinctive conceptual basis for adult education and learning". The adult learning theory became a widely used concept, alongside other works of Knowles that included works on self-direction and group work, which were co-authored with his spouse. His work on adult learning was particularly significant in shifting the orientation of adult educators from focusing on educating people to emphasis on helping them to learn (Smith, 2002). Malcom Knowles' thesis is that adults learn differently to children and therefore, the way adults learn should be studied as a distinct field of enquiry different from pedagogy. Smith (2002, p. 3) notes that Knowles' combination of curriculum making and behaviour modification "encourage the learner to identify needs, set objectives, enter learning contracts and so on".

3.4.2 Application of Knowles' Adult Learning Theory

Knowles (1984) was useful in this present study as a lens through which it was possible to understand different ways and learning styles the school principals desired in their leadership development. This enabled a clearer grasp of what leadership learning for the school principals implies for understanding and supporting their school leadership development needs as school principals in the context of this study.

3.4.3 Critique of Knowles' (1984) Adult Learning Theory

Knowles' (1984) Adult Learning Theory is critiqued in the works of Tennant (1988). One major criticism of Knowles' Adult Learning Theory is its lack of clarity on whether this was a theory or set of assumptions about learning (Smith, 2002), or a model of teaching (Hartree 1984). Accordingly, Tennant (1988) argues that Knowles' ideas fail to be interrogated within a clear and reliable conceptual framework. In line with these, Smith (2002, p. 4) further notes that Knowles' Adult Learning Theory "had a number of important insights, but because they are not

tempered by thorough analysis, they were a hostage to fortune – they could be taken up in a historical or a theoretical way".

3.5 Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) Assets-Based Approach

Assets-based community development (ABCD), is the concept of assets-based approach expounded by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), which focuses on a community's strength, assets and on its capacity rather than the deficiencies or deficits. This approach assumes that by focusing on its assets and capacity, the community will see and leverage development using its assets (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Thus, Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) explain that ABCD is a systematic process for identifying and detailing resources (both individual skills and organisational resources) and strengths in a community. ABCD focuses on the successes and small triumphs of a community by working on developing these assets more, instead of looking at what is missing or negative about the community (Haines 2009). This suggests that community development should begin with an organised assessment of the assets that exist therein.

In the work of Beaulieu (2002), ABCD is explained as an approach that uncovers and expands the knowledge and skills of people in the community while not ignoring the problems within that community. It focuses on the community's strengths and abilities initially, rather than on discouraging aspects, to provide a positive perspective of the community. In line with this assertion, Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) emphasise that ABCD fosters the building of interdependence by its approach, which is to identify ways that people can use their talents positively and use that to empower other people. Likewise, Mathie and Cunningham (2003, p. 474) surmise that ABCD:

> "…lies within the premise that people in the community can organise to drive the development process themselves, by identifying and mobilising existing but often unrecognised assets thereby responding to and creating local opportunities."

The ABCD approach builds on the assumption that people have strengths and abilities. Therefore, recognition of these strengths and capacities is a key motivator for taking proactive actions (Ammerman & Parks, 1998).

In the ABCD approach, persons who lead the process of growth in their communities recognise the potentials within the communities and opportunities available in the community (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). Further, ABCD as an approach stresses the important part played by formal and informal associations, systems and the socialisation processes between contextually located talents and external opportunities beyond the context (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Thus, the ABCD is a bottom-up method that redirects the emphasis from a default view to an empowerment view by mobilising various assets to bring about positive change (Eloff & Ebersohn, 2001).

ABCD recognises hidden and unrecognised assets within the community. In this way, ABCD is seen as an approach that particularly draws on the community's own resources, providing flexible approaches that can be used by community members to identify and link assets of the individuals, and to stimulate a sense of pride and possibility (Eloff & Ebersohn, 2001). Furthermore, Kretzmann and McKnight (1993, p. 9) suggest that "ABCD recognises the capacity of individuals as the foundation for community building whereas traditional approaches, with their focus primarily put on deficits, often neglect individual capacities and this results in weaker communities". Advocates of the ABCD approach contend that the needs-based approach has numerous detrimental effects (Ammerman & Parks, 1998; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003) compared to ABCD approach. Tamarack (2003) observes that ABCD empowers the community to drive their decision-making ability and encourages them to remain in control of their existing resources and build their social capital. Then again, Goldman and Schmalz (2005) surmise that the aim of recognising assets is to empower community by identifying and making use of their abilities to grow their self-reliance and be able to grow and take control of their transformation. Therefore, in placing the focus on the inside, rather than outside, ABCD puts community members in control. Consequently, the development of the community is seen in this approach to be reliant upon the community itself, and a direct result of the power of the individuals that make up the community (Aigner, Raymond & Schmidt, 2002).

3.5.1 Origin and Development of Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) Assets-Based Approach

Kretzman and McKnight (1993) developed ABCD in response to the need for integrating community with a common interest to achieve positive transformation using their own

knowledge, skills and lived experience of the issues they encounter in their own lives and or context. Ammerman and Parks (1998) claim that every individual, if given the opportunity, has something to contribute, even though it may not be mobilised yet. However, before the development of this approach by Kretzman and McKnight (1993), there was the needs-based approach. Within the practice of needs-based approach, governmental agencies and bodies, and NGOs, among others external to the neighbourhoods, schools and communities survey needs, analyse difficulties, and identify solutions to meet those needs. The needs-based approaches imply that communities seek outside assistance rather than in-house skills and abilities. In addition, the approaches imply that communities encourage their members to focus more on the weaknesses and inabilities by giving opportunities to outsiders to fix their problems (Goldman & Schmalz, 2005). Needs-based approaches according to Mathie and Cunningham (2003), do not only undermine the abilities of the communities in question, but also result in lack of sustainable solution to the problems that exist and continue to resurface because they are not addressed holistically. This implies that external financial resources and programmes are administered by these agencies to meet a struggling neighbourhood's needs. The process and outcome of the needs-based approaches tend to place emphasis on community weaknesses and inabilities, without taking into consideration capacities, abilities and gifts of every person in the community. The tendency to focus on faults and inabilities create the notions of inadequacies as an unfortunate by-product of different consequences that discourage community members (Beaulieu 2002; Goldman & Schmalz, 2005). Further, the needs-based approaches offer a skill for identifying needs within, assigning needs in order of importance, targeting resources to help resolve problems within the community and leading to the impression their community has many shortcomings (Beaulieu, 2002). In this way, the community's voice is often negated and the opportunity to have a voice in determining how concerns within a community can best be addressed is lacking.

3.5.2 Relevance of Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) Assets-Based Approach to the Study

Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) theory provided a useful lens used in this study to complement Vygotsky's (1978) theory and Knowles' (1984) theory in developing an understanding of the school principals' conceptions of their abilities for leadership development learning that exists in a practitioner community. It provided a framework to understanding the

school principals' view of themselves as not just capable of learning from each other as adults, but importantly so, by seeing themselves as assets to that community; implying that their experiences and previous knowledges, as school principal practitioners, were perceived as invaluable to targeting their individual and or collective leadership development projects.

3.6 Putting the Theories Together

In the present study, the active involvement of the school principals in the processes of deciding, and the enactment of their school leadership development is advocated. Drawing on the theoretical framework using the three lenses provided the tools of analysis through which school principals' leadership development was contextually problematised and interpreted. The lenses were Vygotsky's SCT in understanding how school leadership development is perceived as a learning process involving scaffolding and support amongst learners; Knowles' Adult Learning Theory in understanding the school principals' desires and means to their learning as adult learners; Kretzmann and McKnight's Assets-Based Theory in unpacking the perception of themselves as practitioners in community with lived experiences of their practice and knowledge considered as assets in their community.

Using Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, the dynamic nature of the interplay between what each principal as a peer brings to the learning community, and other peer learners' support to the learning, provides a view of the principals' leadership development as arising from learning interactions with others, particularly as adult learners (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011). ZDP is the actual process where learning takes place while recognising what each principal can do alone and what can be done with support/collaboration from peers. The use of ZPD and MKO enabled a lens on how the school principals' understanding of their leadership development as a way to learn from each other is conceptualised. They share ideas on school leadership needs; how these needs can be met, supported through MKO peers' social interaction and activities that lead to meaningful learning were seen to be significant to their leadership development.

In using the Knowles' (1984) Adult Learning Theory, the school principal as a member of a community is recognised as having knowledge, skills, experience, and competencies that are valuable assets that warrant recognising their previous knowledge and what they bring to their leadership development learning. Their perceptions of importance of valuing their prior learning

and experiences relevant to school leadership context and challenges of their various schools were highlighted. In being recognised as adult learners; individuals with strengths and assets as members in a community of peers, the school principals, as individuals and as a collective, desire personal investment, ownership of responsibility, and involvement in processes of identifying and targeting their development needs as school leaders.

In using Assets-Based Theory, the concept of community in this present study adopts Mattessich, Monsey and Roy's (1997, p. 56) definition of community as "people who live within a geographically defined area and who have social, physical, cultural, religious and psychological ties with each other and with the place where they live [and work]". In addition, the concept of community assumes an understanding of a "learning community" and a "community of practice" in which individuals within the community, as peers, brings strengths and weakness that support and are supported by each other. The community of interest in the study is the school principals who live and work in schools in one district of KwaZulu-Natal. The school principals' conceptions of community that focus on community assets and strengths rather than problems and needs, implied a shift from notions of leadership development as extraneous and externally driven to emphasis on inward-looking approaches, which have to draw from within the community of practice.

Furthermore, the concept of community, as applied here, allows for school principals' input in the determination of the direction of their leadership development, which means being involved in deciding their own learning goals and activities, and being able to share ideas, experiences, and learning from practice through interaction as a community to support and strengthen each other (Conrad & Donaldson, 2011).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theoretical framework used as the lens for the analysis and discussion of the phenomenon of school principals' leadership development in the context of the South African school system. It first explored the importance of a theoretical framework in a research study and moved on to discuss the three theories used as a lens through which data is interpreted and analysed. These theories described how adults learn, as learners in peer learning or community of practice. It examined the influence of the environment or context on how the

challenges of practice and conceptualisations of school leadership development needs are understood and problematised by the school principals. It allowed for a view that provides an understanding of what constitutes learning, and how it takes place, in terms of school principals' leadership development. The theoretical framework warrants advocating for relevance of context and practice experience as critical to learning and highlights the need for the voice of the school principals in understanding and interpreting their school leadership development needs and how these can be met for them as adult peer learners in a context of community of practice.

This study drew on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, emphasising the concepts of ZPD and MKO as complementary framework with Knowles' Adult Learning Theory and Kretzmann and McKnight's Assets-Based Theory used in exploring the school principals' leadership development; what it is seen to be, what their experiences of leadership development are, and what their desires for school leadership development are thought to be. These theories thus seek to challenge dominant practices that are typically rooted on the assumption that leadership development programmes are better developed externally from outside of the school leaders themselves. Additionally, the use of the theoretical framework in this chapter suggests an intersectionality of learning, practice context and learning needs with aspirations of school leadership development that the school principals desire. This therefore suggests the need for an inward-looking approach to school leadership that takes a shift away from a one-size-fits-all, or mix-and-match externally driven programmes of school principals' leadership development.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Three of this study discussed the theoretical framework. This chapter explains the research design and methodology. First, it explains the research paradigm. Next, it presents the research design. This is followed by a discussion on the ways in which I negotiated and gained access to the research sites and the participants. I then explain the sampling strategy I used to select the school principals (participants). From there, I describe the data generation instruments. Thereafter, I explain how data were analysed. After that, I discuss trustworthiness and lastly, I discuss the ethical issues.

4.2 Research Paradigm

The term paradigm has its origin from the Greek word "paradeigma", which means pattern (Kuhn, 1962). It was first used by Thomas Kuhn to represent a conceptual framework shared by a scientist. This framework provided them with a convenient model for examining problems and finding solutions. Kuhn (1962) defines paradigm as a research culture that involves a set of beliefs, values and assumptions regarding the nature and conduct of research, which a community of researchers commonly share. Mertens (1998, p. 6) views paradigm "as a way of looking at the world, composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and actions". Kinash (2006) opines that a paradigm is the theoretical mindset, or collections of beliefs that underlie one's research approach. Similarly, McGregor and Murnane (2010, p. 43) explain a "paradigm as a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality".

A research paradigm impacts on the way knowledge is studied, understood and interpreted in the social science field. According to Chalmers (1982), the research paradigm is about certain assumptions and laws and the meticulous use of these in research within a scientific community. In line with this assertion, Taylor, Kermode and Roberts (2007) and Wilson and Olson (2006) posit that the research paradigm, within the social science fields, is understood as the belief system, world view/framework that regulates the research inquiry in a discipline; underpinning

the lens, frames, assumptions and guiding the processes adopted in accomplishing a research study. The researcher is usually confronted with the choice of making research decisions regarding processes and procedures agree with the research methodology. In making the choice of the research paradigm in a research study, the researcher is seen as setting the intent, drawing on the motivation and expectations of research, which subsequently guide and regulate what other choices and decisions that are made regarding the research approach, design and methods (McKenzie & Knipe, 2006; Mertens, 2005).

4.2.1 The Research Paradigm for This Study

This research study is positioned within the interpretive paradigm. Some scholars refer to interpretivism as constructivism (Robson, 2002), as they both acknowledge the multiplicity of knowledge; however, interpretivism focuses on meanings that individuals attach to their world, whereas constructivists focus on the construction of that meaning (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Jacobs and Manzi (2000, p. 36) contend that "an individual's experience is an active process of interpretation rather than a passive material apprehension of an external physical world". According to the constructivist view, the world does not exist independently of our knowledge (Grix 2004). Interpretivism affirms the constructivist view of reality as a social construction of the mind (Cohen et al., 2007), and therefore operates on the assertion that reality is subjective, multiple and contested, which is a contrast from the positivist's view of objective reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Mills, Bonner, & Francis 2006). According to Mack (2010), the interpretivist paradigm is based on relativism, which views reality as subjective. Interpretivism comprises "phenomenological sociology, philosophical hermeneutics and constructionist perspectives" (Kuru, 2012).

The interpretivist paradigm places emphasis on the subjective interactions between myself as the researcher and the researched in ways that enable flexibility and prolonged study in the natural environment of the researched (Cohen et al., 2007). In this way, it makes it possible to gain in-depth and nuanced exploration of a phenomenon. In the interpretivist approach, meaning is seen as embedded in the participant's experiences and facilitated through his or her own perceptions (Merriam, 1998; Scotland, 2012; Tuli, 2010). Goodsell (2013) observes that in the social sciences, interpretivism is commonly applied in research studies, and claims to understand and construct meaning drawing on the subjective experiences of reality.

Further, "[i]nterpretivism provides a framework for researchers to study and understand people's beliefs, values, meaning-making, experiences, attitudes and self-studying" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 354). It is founded on the understanding that in order to appreciate meanings which people attach to their realities, this reality should be socially constructed (English, 2006).

Based on the focus of the study, the interpretivist paradigm was appropriate for this study as it allowed me to work with methods that provided the school principals the opportunity to talk about their understanding of school leadership development, how they experienced leadership development programmes, and what were their desired school leadership development and needs, and why.

Given the interpretive paradigm emphasis on understanding realities, the participants were given the opportunity to talk about their leadership development processes and methods, they drew from their experiences. In interrogating previous school leadership development programmes and practices, reflecting on experiences, and conceptualising desired needs. Their desired leadership development is one that attends to the needs and challenges as school principals in the context of their practices.

Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006) explain that in every research study, the research paradigm is considered from the three dimensions of ontology, epistemology and methodology. Willis, Jost and Nilakanta (2007) affirms that the research paradigm comprises the three dimensions which involved an interlaced system of practice and thinking, define the nature of the enquiry and the steps that are taken in the process. Each of these dimensions is discussed in detail below.

4.2.2 Ontology

According to Okeke and van Wyk (2015), ontology is concerned with the nature of what exists in the real world. It focuses on the nature of reality. Ontology obligates the researcher to ask questions such as: "What is the truth"? "How do we know that something is real"? Realities within this dimension are those which are conceptual. While the critical paradigm aims to critique and advocate to transform the dominant structures within the society, interpretivist researchers seek to interpret, understand social reality as multiple truths (Cohen, et al., 2011). Denscombe (2002) argues that the followers of the interpretivist ontological position see reality as a creation and interpretation of people. They understand and make meaning of realities in their

minds; that is, they focus on meanings that individuals attach to their world. Such realities are influenced by the context and experiences of those who construct them (Guba, 1994).

Within this dimension the interpretive paradigm refutes that objective reality exists and its focus is on discovering the multiple views of all the participants in their natural context (Henning, et al., 2004). These multiple perspectives are socially constructed (Mertens, 2005). Informed by the instructional leadership perspective, which is based on the notion that instructional leaders make the quality of their instructions the top priority of the school and attempt to bring vision to the realisation. I made an assumption that participants would desire a leadership development different from what they have been used to. I portrayed multiple realities of participants by employing multiple quotes of their own words which highlighted their various perspectives.

4.2.3 Epistemology

This has its origin in the Greek words – *episteme*, which means knowledge (Krauss, 2005), and *logos*, which means knowledge, information, theory or account (Duberley, Johnson, & Cassell, 2012). Epistemology is understood to mean how we come to know the reality, the concept truth and how we know whether some claim, including our own is true or false (Cohen et al., 2011; Duberley et al., 2012). Hofer and Bendixen (2012, p. 227) believe that epistemology is simply "[i]ndividuals' conceptions of knowledge and knowing and their influence on learning". In other words, epistemology is thought of as how one develops, interprets, evaluates and justifies knowledge, which implies there are multiple natures and forms of knowing (Scotland, 2012). Epistemology is concerned with questions such as "what is the nature of the relationship between the knower and the known" (Guba, 1990, p. 18); "How do we know what we know?" What counts as knowledge? (Cohen et al., 2011). Since realities are constructed socially, it is important for the researcher to interact with the participants (Duberley et al., 2012). The epistemological position of interpretivist is that there is need to understand a phenomenon from the participant's point of view. Accordingly, the phenomenon of school leadership development was investigated from the point of view of various school leaders as participants.

4.2.4 Methodology

Interpretivists use qualitative data generation methods which include interviews, observations and document reviews (Creswell, 2012). The use of these methods in relation to the assumption

that reality is socially constructed is imperative and as such the interaction between the researcher and the participants is essential. Accordingly, the data generation methods used in this study include face-to-face and focus group interviews. Given that this study was concerned about understanding the desired leadership development programmes of school principals, it adopted the qualitative methodology approach.

As the researcher I did not seek to predict, generalise and establish findings that were universal in a closely controlled research environment (Rule & John, 2011), which characterises quantitative approaches. In this study attempts were made to understand what leadership development school principals desired. This resonated well with a qualitative research approach.

The qualitative approach rejects assumption of reality as existing out there independent of the knower. It counters the positivist view of the quantitative approach that social reality can be observed in the same way as scientists observe physical occurrences. Miller (1968) emphasises that the qualitative research approach involves observing people in their school settings and engaging in interactions with them in their own language and according to their own terms in order to understand the meaning and experiences of reality. Merriam (1998) observes that qualitative approach concerns with exploring how people make sense of their world and experiences and construct meanings. Thus, qualitative researchers examine the phenomenon and the meanings people bring to their experiences and understanding of it within their natural settings.

The qualitative approach works on a paradigmatic assumption that reality is multiple, contested, subjective and constructed socially by its participants (Tuli, 2010; Krauss, 2005; Amare, 2004: Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The qualitative approach is used in research studies that seek understanding of complex social processes. It explores in depth aspects of a phenomenon that are essential to understanding the values, beliefs and motivations for certain behaviours from the participant's own perspective (Currie & Locket, 2007). What this means is that researchers working in the qualitative approach seek to understand and interpret reality through the eyes of the research participants; drawing on their lived experiences in the context of their environment, using clear and thick descriptions of these observations of experiences, narratives and behaviour of those researched (Struwig & Stead, 2013). Accordingly, Struwig and Stead (2013, p. 11)

assert that in the qualitative approach, “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the issues being researched from the perspective of the research participants”.

Blanche, et al. (2006, p. 272) surmise that researchers working in the qualitative approach interpret “people’s feelings and experiences in human terms”. The qualitative research approach usually makes use of interviews and focus groups discussions in generating data because it involves the application of naturalistic methodology to studying the subject matter and emphasises the weight of the data towards its input in answering the research questions (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, the qualitative research methodology approach offers the researcher the opportunity of robust immersion and interactions in the field that allow detailed abundance of described phenomena of study that is not afforded in the quantitative research approach (Poetschke, 2003; Gavin, 1998). Another strength of the qualitative research approach is that it uses relatively unstructured methods of data generation that allow the researcher to “penetrate to the deeper significance that the subject of the research ascribes to the topic being researched” (Gavin, 1998, p. 147).

This study adopts a qualitative approach, which enabled me to gain an in-depth understanding of the school principals’ leadership development experiences from their own perspective. The choice of a qualitative approach is justified given that qualitative research places emphasis on participant’s perception and description of their beliefs and experiences. This contrasts with the quantitative research approach, which tends to control and predict phenomena, and make claims to objectivity (Struwig & Stead, 2013). Stake (2010) asserts that researchers adopt the qualitative research approach because they tend to rely on human perceptions and understandings. Thus, in this study, I relied on the perception and understanding of the research participants’ descriptions of their experiences of school leadership development, what it means for them, how they engage the leadership development programmes and what they think their actual leadership development needs are, and their desires for leadership development.

Again, this study adopted a qualitative approach because I aimed to obtain a rich and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon of school principals’ leadership development in the South African school system using a case study of school principals selected from one school district in KwaZulu-Natal. Nieuwenhuis (2007) explains that the qualitative research approach is

appropriate for research studies that focus on understanding and describing the phenomenon in the context of the research participants' settings or in this case, practice. The qualitative research approach enabled the in-depth insight I gained in this present study on the "what", "how" and "why" of the school principals' experiences and desires of their leadership development within the practice culture and broader discourse of school leadership development and the context of their schools in the school district.

4.3 Research Design: Case Study

This study design is a qualitative case study. According to Rule and John (2011), a case study design enables the researcher to attain a rich insight into the ways a phenomenon is nuanced. It allows for systematic and in-depth exploration of content to generate new knowledge (Rule & John, 2011; Yin, 1984). In using a case study design, a researcher aims to understand the behavioural conditions of the participant's through their own perspective (Rule & John, 2011). Thus, Rule and John (2011) summarise that a case study research design is a systematic and thorough investigation of a particular example of phenomenon in a given context with an aim to generate rich meticulous and well-detailed data. Cohen et al. (2011) emphasise that a case study research design provides for a rich detailed description of the important issues critical to the case in a sequential order. Cohen, et al. (2011) further stress that a case study research design focuses on understanding the perceptions of the individual or group participants. According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), a case study involves in-depth analysis of a phenomenon in its actual context.

The use of case study research design in this current study is justified because it explored the participants' understanding of leadership development, their experiences of leadership development programmes, and their desired leadership development within the context of the school leadership in the particular district rather than to generalise. Furthermore, the case study design aligns with the research approach of this study. Cohen, et al. (2011) argue that a case study is often used within qualitative research approach. In using a qualitative case study methodology, it was possible for me to study the complexities of the school principals' leadership development as embedded within their practice context (Cohen et al., 2011). Qualitative case study design also permitted me, in the research procedures, the possibility of

tying the case, the discussion of the data sources and triangulation of sources in this study (Cohen et al., 2011).

Case study research design has its criticisms. A common criticism of case study design is its dependency on a single case exploration. Critics argue that the dependency on a single case makes it difficult to reach generalisation of results of case study research (Zainal, 2007) given that it uses small numbers of participants. In other words, a case study research is not intended as a study of entire organisation, but rather is intended to focus on particularity of issues, features or unit of analysis. Accordingly, in this study, I did not aim to obtain information that is generalisable, but instead I aimed to portray rich, textured and a deeper understanding of what leadership development school principals desired.

The use of different data gathering techniques is one of the many advantages linked with the case study approach (Rule & John, 2011) as the researcher is able to generate a variety of data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). This study therefore used two different data generating techniques in order to generate the data. Within the uniqueness of a case study, Nieuwenhuis, (2007) suggests that it has the potential to capture unique features of a phenomenon. This study was intended both to capture and to understand the phenomenon of leadership development of school principals. I consider the case study appropriate for this study because it allowed me to explore the perception and the desired leadership development of school principal's within a district in KwaZulu-Natal.

Zainal (2007) explains that there are three types of case study research design, which are descriptive case study, exploratory case study and explanatory case study. Exploratory case study explores any phenomenon in the data that is of interest to the researcher. In the present study exploratory case study is used. Exploratory case study design was decided upon to enable me to undertake an in-depth exploration of the desired leadership development of school principals and it also aligned with both the paradigm and the qualitative approach of this research study.

4.4 Research Sample (Participants) and Sampling Procedures

4.4.1 The Research Process

In this section, I discuss my personal experiences of negotiating, entering and conducting the research. I explain the challenges, I encountered during the research journey and steps taken in the process to overcome and mitigate impact of the challenges on the research outcome.

4.4.2 Negotiating and Gaining Access to the Research Participants

Cohen, et al. (2011, p. 81) posit that "investigators cannot expect access to a school, college or university as a matter of right". This assertion underlined the need for me to demonstrate and convince the gatekeepers and participants on the value of the research before they can grant permission (Okeke & van Wyk, 2015). Cohen, et al. (2011) advises researchers to gain permission in the early stage of the research, including fully informed consent of the research participants. Creswell (2012) highlights the importance of researchers to first think of the research sites, participants, resources and skills before they can embark on the process of data generation. In this sense, there is a need to explain how I gained access to research sites and the participants.

Cohen, et al. (2011) highlight the need for a researcher to follow official channels when requesting permission to undertake a study. In line with this, I had to first apply for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal as it is mandatory for students to get ethical clearance from the university before any data can be generated. I obtained permission from the DoE in KwaZulu-Natal to conduct research within the district. I also requested permission from the principals. Details of the ethical clearance steps are discussed in Section 4.8 below.

My first visits to the schools of choice for contacts with the research site and participants were not without drama. The purpose of this first visit was to approach the principals to introduce myself and the research purpose, and to indicate the intention to involve them as research participants for my research study data collection. Out of the 15 schools visited, 12 principals declined participation, giving their reason that the research request came at a bad time because of busy schedules during the period they were approached. Out of those left, one principal later indicated he might not be a good candidate for the study because he had lost hope with the

department (meaning the DoE) and that he did his own things for survival. Asked to clarify what he meant, he said in confidence it was more spiritual than physical. While I did not expect this decision, I respected it and was gladdened by the fact that participants in research have autonomy and rights as discussed in Section 4.8.

As an option B, I approached a neighbour, who has worked for over 10 years as a school principal, and the church pastor to assist linking me up with the colleagues and church members who were principals. This option curiously led to success, even though the consenting participants agreed to participate on the condition that their participation would only be out of working hours and not during school hours to avoid clash of the data collection with school activities. It is important that the qualitative researchers establish a rapport, creating warm interactions with participants from their first meeting. According to Partington (2001), empathy and rapport are important because the participants can only show willingness to engage and disclose information to interviewers where there is a trusting interaction, which is ideally achieved over a period. Rapport means building trust and respect for both the participants and the information shared. It entails agreeing on the appropriate and safe environment for sharing the interviewee's personal experiences (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Despite their tight schedules, all the participants afforded me time which in most cases was not convenient for me due to family commitments. However, in order to create a good rapport for the study I joined the principals at different times for their functions to enable me hear their story on leadership development. For instance, on one occasion I had to contribute towards and attend a braai gathering which some of the participants invited me to.

Another important step was negotiating for the venue, time and period of focus group interview discussions was another challenging experience I had. Nevertheless, after several attempts of changing and setting new dates, it was decided that the best way forward was to have two focus group interview meetings. In the first group, I convinced one principal whose school is in the suburb to agree to the time convenient for the others as the other principals' schools are within the same area and they ride daily to work in the same car. In the second focus group meeting was less difficult, as I requested the use of the church hall as the venue and was able to get one of the other principals who works in the suburb to join the others at the set time and date. The venue was a welcomed decision because three out of the four principals were attending the same church

function in the evening of the set date. In trying to coordinate for focus group interview I saw that gaining access to participants is a complicated process, and it required being ardent in constant negotiation and renegotiation (Cohen et al., 2011). The next section describes and explains sampling and sampling methods of the study.

4.4.3 Sampling

According to Tuckett (2004), sampling is a critical consideration in a research study, which determines the success of its results. Sampling refers to the selection of participants from a particular population. Whereas sampling is an important part of a research study (Bouma & Atkinson, 1995), the sampling procedures in qualitative research differ from those in quantitative approach. Coyne (1997) suggests that in qualitative research, the sample is considered weighty in assessing the quality of the research. However, it is further suggested that in qualitative research studies, the research sample is primarily decided according to context, purpose, the research design and objective. These suggestions are affirmed in the assertion that there is no clear-cut answer to what the correct sample size is in qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2007). What this assertion implies, is that sample size in qualitative studies is not guided by any rigid or defined rules but are often small numbers because the intent of the study is to investigate the researched in depth and detail in their natural settings (Onwuegbuzie & Leach, 2005; Tuckett, 2004).

The sample size for this present study was eight participants. The participants were all school principals in eight different schools in selected district. The decisions on the size and composition of the research study sample were made in view of the context, purpose, research design and objectives of the study. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) explained that if the sample size of a qualitative research is too large, it becomes difficult to interact with the participants and collect the thick, rich data for the research. Therefore, the eight participants were selected on the assumption that based on their experiences as school principals they would have rich information regarding leadership development. While it is understandable that this number is not representative of the entire population of school principals in South Africa, the results of the findings in this study were not meant to be generalised (Struwig & Stead, 2013). The intent is to obtain nuanced and in-depth information on school leadership development using the case of school principals in the context of the district schools as site of the research study.

Other important criteria in the selection of the eight participants were the issues of access and the time factor. Accessibility to the school principals in terms of the distance between their school and where I am based was considered because of the financial implications of travelling to very distant schools. On the other hand, the challenges of managing a school and the tight schedules of the school principals meant that they were very constrained in participating in the research study by other competing commitments in terms of their time. This implied that only those school principals who willingly committed to the time needed to conduct this research participated, which enabled me to engage deeply with them. Cohen, et al. (2011) suggest that researchers who are interested in in-depth study of a phenomenon use convenience sampling, which is a way of selecting participants purposively. In deciding on the selection of the participants, the school principals whose schools were nearer to the researcher were considered and chosen based on convenience. Likewise, the school district was chosen as it was the nearest district to the researcher and was conveniently accessible.

Then again, the choice of the eight participants was also informed by the assumption that they were knowledgeable about the issues and underpinning debates on school leadership development. This assumption was based on the selected school principals' experiences of leadership development programmes. Creswell (2012) emphasises that in selecting participants in a qualitative research study, the researcher must select individuals with experience of the phenomenon under study. Rule and John (2011) suggest that it is important to select participants based on their relevant knowledge regarding the study. The principals of choice were selected because they had relevant experiences and were expected to possess the knowledge relevant to the objectives of the study. The participants were those who have had at least five years of work experience as school principals in South Africa and have also been involved in any form of school principals' leadership development programmes.

4.5 Data Generation Instruments

Qualitative research uses a combination of methods of data generation (Gill et al., 2008). Researchers working in the qualitative research approach must make the important decision on the choice of which appropriate method or methods to use that are justified by the purpose and methodology of a study (Kumar, 2005). Some of the methods used in qualitative research include

interviews, observation, questionnaires, focus group, and document analysis (Kumar, 2005). This qualitative study used two data generation methods, namely semi-structured individual interviews and focus group interviews. According to Flick (2013), different qualitative research methods, otherwise referred to as triangulation of methods, are used in a qualitative research study to enable the researcher to obtain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. In using multiple ways of generating data, I ensured a practice of self-reflection in and through the processes which form part of the data collection processes. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) describes self-reflection as a process where the researcher actively engages, being conscious of their own positioning in relation to the research participants. The primary sources of the data generated in this study were the school principals from a school district in KwaZulu-Natal. The process of data generation used and the decisions that informed the choice are discussed in detail below.

4.5.1 Interviews

Three kinds of interviews are used in a qualitative research, namely structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interviews tend to lean to the quantitative end of the scale and are mostly used in survey approaches, while semi-structured and unstructured interviews are mostly used in qualitative research. According to Okeke and van Wyk, (2015), semi-structured interviews allow participants the space to fully express and elaborate their responses while providing details that are of interest to the researcher. In this case, the researcher also prompts for details using probing questions to follow up on the participant or interviewee's responses. In this study I adopted semi-structured interviews to get insights regarding participant's perception and desired leadership development. A major justification for use of semi-structured interview as method of data collection is to allow for flexibility, which helps in discovery and elaboration of information that is important to participants but might be overlooked or omitted by the researcher if rigidity and predetermined questions are to be used, because they were not thought of as pertinent (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Gill et al., 2008; Turner, 2010).

Interviews were used in order to gain an insight into the knowledge and views of the participants regarding their perceived and desired leadership development programmes. According to Miller, (2017) interviews involves a face-to-face discussion and/or group interaction between the interviewer and the participant which is conducted with the aim of generating data based on the

ideas, opinions and behaviour of the participants. These two types of interviews were used to generate data which were appropriate in answering research questions. In a qualitative research, interviews are a common way to collect rich data about everyday experiences of the social world (Fossey et al., 2002). However, the main purpose is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Okeke & van Wyk, 2015).

In addition, an advantage of a semi-structured interviews is that they are often scheduled ahead, giving the time for the interviewee to be prepared for the interview session. The interview would usually start and be guided by specific key questions, which are used to map and chart the direction of the interview. This is otherwise named a "schedule" and it details and provides a guide to cover the areas that needs to be explored in the interview. I drafted a guide, which consists of key questions for covering the areas of importance in collecting the information needed to answer the research question (Flick, 2013). This made it possible for me to probe for clarity and depth of information from the participants' responses (Nieuwenhuis, 2007) by skilfully steering the conversation in ways that the participants did not diverge from providing the rich ideas or responses that were explored in more detail (Gill et al., 2008). The use of an individual interview was appropriate for understanding school principal's perception and desired leadership development as it gave the opportunity to obtain rich ideas and responses from the participants.

The procedure of the data collection involved each of the school principals interviewed in an individual interview. Likewise, each principal was a member in one of the two focus groups that were created. The focus group sessions preceded the individual interview sessions. This enabled the researcher to follow up on and explore further using more probing questions in order to get in-depth accounts and rich and thick explanations to the participants' experiences using individual interviews (Creswell, 2013).

4.5.2 Individual Interview

The choice of the use of individual interviews in this study is justified firstly, based on the flexibility and convenience it offered in approaching the eight school principals at different times and places while still covering the same interest in collecting the rich and sufficient data that answered the research questions. Secondly, Creswell (2012) affirms that individual interviews

allow the researcher to probe deep and generate detailed data about the case under study. The individual interview enabled me to use the interview content, sequence and wordings in a skilful probe that generated information on a school principal's perception and desired leadership development. Thirdly, individual interviews complemented the use of other methods of data collection used in this study and provided for the triangulation of data generated using the other methods, namely focus group interviews (Flick, 2013). Fourthly, the use of the individual interview as a method of data generation in this study was useful because it enabled me to uncover other thinking and individual perspectives to school principals' leadership development that were silent in the group dynamics of the focus group interview sessions that preceded the individual interviews.

Two individual interviews were done within the school premises after hours, another three were done both in the church premises and at the district office at different times and dates. The last three interviews were done in different locations including my house and the house of one of my neighbours where the principals were attending a get-together. Although the individual interviews were done at different times, the school principals were very resourceful and prompt on the agreed times of the interview.

Another important experience with three different principals at their individual interview was their demand that I come back at the end of the study to give back to the schools, to encourage their staff on the need for them to develop themselves further and to equip the teachers on skills that will guide them to cope with their work as educators. The thinking was that if they can get any kind of training beyond what the DoE provides, it will assist substantially in meeting the challenges they have within the school district context. Without making a promise on their offer, I explained that where appropriate and permitted, the willingness to share findings of the study with the participants and school is all part of the research process.

4.5.3 Focus Group Interview

I utilised the focus group interview as another method to generate data. A focus group interview is used with the assumption that it brings a group of participants in a study to a discussion session in which the researcher motivates the conversation to learn everything the participants have to share about the research topic (Milena, Dainora & Alin, 2008; Kairuz, Crump &

O'Brien, 2007). According to Flick (2013), the use of the focus group in a research study enables participants the space to bring their views and exchange ideas regarding the topic of research. The focus group interview allows for the recognition that people's beliefs are constructed socially, and individuals form opinions after they have listened to the opinion of others (Bachman & Schutt 2016).

In accordance with the view of Cohen, et al. (2011), the focus group interview yields a collective rather than an individual view. The use of the focus group interview method in this study was justified because it added rich information from the perspective of the collective view of the school principals on desired leadership development of school principals, dynamics which were not attainable using individual interviews. A focus group interview is usually made up of four to 12 people who agree to participate voluntarily (Struwig & Stead, 2013). In this study, two groups of four participants met within a period of three weeks. These interviews were held at convenient locations and times for the school principals as already described in Section 4.4.2. The focus group interview discussion sessions took an average of 65 minutes per session and were tape-recorded with prior permission of each participant in the group. In addition, the view of Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005, p. 201) that a focus group consists of "small number of individuals or interviewees that are drawn together for expressing their opinions on a specific set of questions" affirms the justification for the use of the focus group interview as one of the methods of data collection for this study.

The focus group interview is recognised for a number of reasons. It is effective in qualitative data production since many people are interviewed at the same time. In addition, it provides enjoyable experiences to the participants. It also empowers participants in that they are given a platform to make their own comments while they are stimulated by comments of others within a group (Robson, 2002). The use of focus group interview also allows participants' conversations to build on ideas from one another during the discussion sessions in ways that enrich the information they all bring to the topic (Flick, 2013). It requires the researcher to be keen and attentive to the discussions. It also requires that the researcher has good listening skills, and to be a good listener and at the same time ensure that the conversations are channelled in a way to focus on the study and important information that can answer the research questions (Struwig & Stead, 2013).

A major concern in the use of focus group interviews is constant power dynamics while allowing individual voices to dominate discussions in the group (Brindley, Blaschke & Walti 2009). Having this in mind, the researcher promoted group socialisation and involvement by pre-informing the participant on the need to respect fellow participant's views and opinions, this led to confidence among the participants. Despite this, participants were encouraged by the presence and participation of colleagues, never felt unconstrained to speak out by breaking the barriers or shying away or feelings of apprehension for discussing the issues on the topic of interest (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). This allowed the issues and information about the topic to be exhaustively explored and discussed at length while the school principals were motivated. This made it possible to uncover important issues on desired leadership development in the focus group as complement to the individual interview as the other method of collecting the data for this study.

4.6 Data Analysis Procedures

It is essential that research has to produce the results and such results can only be developed if the data that has been generated can be analysed to allow the meanings to be developed. Data analysis is a process consisting of organising, accounting for and explaining data (Flick, 2013; Cohen, et al., 2011). In qualitative research studies, data analysis entails looking for the participants' definition of situation, noting patterns, searching for categories, emerging themes and regularities of occurrence (Cohen et al., 2011). Struwig and Stead (2013) suggest that data analysis serves the purpose of giving meaning to raw data. In understanding what the participants perceive to be their desired leadership development, data was generated and analysed to make sense of the participants' views. On the other hand, Flick (2013) argues that data analysis in qualitative research aims at description of the phenomenon of the study. Creswell (2013) opines that in qualitative research data analysis is about preparation and organisation of data and reducing it to themes represented in discussion.

Marshall and Rossman (2014) observe that qualitative data analysis comprises seven phases. The first phase involves the data collation and organisation. Struwig and Stead (2013) argue that interview transcripts are to be typed verbatim without rephrasing or correcting the grammar. Creswell (2012, p. 239) explains transcription as "a process of converting audiotape recordings or field notes into text data". The different data generated was organised after it was transcribed

verbatim and the notes made during the process of generating the data were attached to each transcript. The second and third phases involved the researcher carefully studying the data and categorising it to identify emerging themes from the data. Attride-Stirling (2001) emphasises that qualitative studies usually use the development of themes as a common feature that entails systematic search for patterns in the data. The data were read over time and themes were used to generate full descriptions that gave insight on desired leadership development of school principals (Gale et al., 2013).

The fourth stage is the coding of data. Flick (2013) sees coding as a preliminary step preparing the data and making it ready for interpretation. While coding the data, there was need to label the text in order to describe the themes generated from the data. Data was interpreted in the fifth phase. In the sixth phase, alternative understandings of the data were sought. Marshall and Rossman, (2014, p. 111) define data analysis as "the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the data". Finally, the seventh phase involves reduction of data to meaningful sections. According to Flick (2013, p. 5), in qualitative data analysis, interpretation involves "implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it". This stage gave the opportunity for the researcher to interpret and make sense of the rich and complex data; while linking the various concepts and opinions of the participants, comparing them and bringing the predominant information of their desired leadership development into manageable and meaningful text. Finally, the data in form of interview scripts were organised, and I recategorised them according to the broad themes that emerged from the data. Within each theme, subthemes emerged which undergirded the discussions. The analysis of the data was approached in line with the theoretical framework and literature reviewed in this study.

4.7 Trustworthiness

All research should comply with the rigorous requirements of validity and reliability (Brink, 1993). In a qualitative approach, every research study must be tested against the validity requirements and the research must show how this requirement is met by explaining clearly the research processes and steps taken in achieving trustworthiness of research findings. Trustworthiness of a qualitative research can be viewed from Lincoln and Guba (1990, p. 290)

contention that the “goal of trustworthiness is to support the argument that the research findings are worth paying attention to”. According to Cohen, et al. (2011), trustworthiness of a study can be regarded as the degree of accuracy and the comprehensiveness of coverage in the study. De Vos (2005) suggests that trustworthiness is the true value of the study as the researcher sets out to convince the reader that his or her findings can be trusted. Therefore, to maintain and ensure trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba (1990) highlight certain approaches to enhance trustworthiness that include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These criteria were attended to in this study as explained below.

De Vos (2005, p. 341) explains that credibility aims to “demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described”. The credibility of this research work, as Guba (1985) suggested was assured by sharing the data and its interpretation with the school principals, a strategy otherwise known as “member check”. This was done by giving the participants an opportunity to read through interview transcripts for verification and presenting part of the responses in the participants’ own words. While doing this, I seized the opportunities to probe for clarity while I continued with the data production process. Furthermore, triangulations of data collected by different methods (Guba, 1985) were used as another means of credibility. Triangulation is a means of assuring trustworthiness of a qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). Different methods of interviews were used as a credibility measure of triangulation to cross validate data generated. In this study the data obtained on the desired leadership development of school principals by means of semi-structured individual interview and focus group interview were validated using triangulation.

Transferability is the extent to which we can examine results and how these can be generalised to and across population of person, settings, times and outcomes (Okeke & van Wyk, 2015). In other words, transferability refers to the extent to which the findings from one study in one context can be applied in other context or with other participants. Transferability in qualitative research can be achieved through thick description (Anney, 2014). Transferability was achieved through the generation of thick descriptive data to allow readers to make their own decisions about the transferability of the outcomes of this study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Trustworthiness of the research processes was also achieved through positioning in this study. Since the researcher is a professional educator and a parent of children who are in schools in the

district, and therefore to some extent personally was aware of the context of inquiry, efforts were made to bracket the personal feelings and opinion, avoid judgment, beliefs and bias to achieve analytical distance in this study (Morse et al., 2002; Roberts et al., 2006).

Where the findings are credible and transferable, then they are most likely to be dependable and confirmable (Anney, 2014). Dependability is the extent to which the study will produce the same results if it is repeated and can be attained through triangulation and providing rich detailed description (Shenton, 2004). Dependability helps to assess the quality of combined processes of generating data like analysing of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to address the dependability within the study the processes should be reported in detail (Shenton, 2004). In addition I had to use multi-methods of data generation as a way of enhancing dependability of the findings. In that way findings from semi-structured interviews could be checked against those elicited from the focus group interviews.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) states that the concept confirmability is the extent to which the study measures what it was intended to measure. Shenton (2004) suggests that confirmability is achieved by using more than one method to gather data (triangulating), consulting with the participants about emerging conclusions (member checking), or having prolonged or extended engagements with participants. In ensuring confirmability the researchers' interpretations were confirmed by the participants. To ensure that my interpretation of what was emerging from the interviews was accurate, I had to do member checking to confirm my interpretation. In addition, after the transcriptions had been completed, I gave the participants transcripts of the interviews to confirm authenticity.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Cohen, et al. (2011) define ethical considerations in research as referring to what is right and wrong in the pursuit of gaining knowledge and understanding about a phenomenon. This implies that researchers must be conscious about what should be done or should not be done. Throughout the research, I took the responsibility and conducted the research in an ethical manner. However, the concerns about ethics in research is not a simple process as the research sometimes has to

face ethical dilemmas and the researcher has to make decisions which he or she believes are morally suitable.

DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006) assert that, in conducting research, it is imperative to stick to the guidelines prescribed as part of ethical principles in order to anticipate problems that may arise during fieldwork and also to protect the rights and autonomy of the participants. Ethical standards such as the "participants' rights, confidentiality, mutual respect and anonymity are imperative in the qualitative research method" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 432). In compliance of these principles, I first applied for ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the College of Humanities in the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The application was approved, which granted full ethical permissions to carry out this research study as proposed and stipulated the terms of compliance. In terms of gaining access to the chosen district, I applied for permission from the provincial DoE to conduct research in the selected district (see Appendix A), permission was granted by the district Education Officer as gatekeeper (see Appendix B). Although I intended to use eight participants, the request for permission was for 15 principals. The reason for requesting this number was in case some principals declined participation, in which case I could still be left with ample numbers of participants to choose from.

Roth (2005) observes that ethics regarding human participation in research is an extremely important consideration to be made by the researcher. The integrity of this study was properly considered, and I took the necessary steps to deal with ethical issues appropriately as stipulated in the ethical approval granted for the research study. For instance, one of the ethical issues that I considered in this study was informed consent (see Appendix D). It means that the participants were informed about the nature of the study and they gave their informed consent to participate in the study. DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, (2006) warn researchers that continuous negotiations are needed despite gaining initial permission to access the research site, as it will enable them to further generate more data as needed. Accordingly, I visited each school to make appointments with the participants, the school principals were presented with letters of permission to conduct research (see Appendix C) and they were briefed on the nature and procedures of the study. It was not difficult to get consent from the interested participants as they were willing to engage in the study.

The participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, (2006) warn that violating confidentiality can cause harm to the participants. Roth (2005) suggests that keeping the identities of the participants unknown to avoid revealing any information about them must be confidential. In this study, the identities and all information that may reveal the identity of the participants were treated with confidentiality. For instance, confidentiality was guaranteed in writing and maintained throughout writing up the thesis. The use of pseudonyms to replace the participants' names was applied and the district where the participants worked in was never mentioned. Guaranteeing the participants about confidentiality and anonymity made them relax and they were able to talk about school leadership development without fear that their identity would be revealed.

The participants were informed on their rights to the study, especially that they have the right of withdrawal as participants in the study at any time they want without any consequences to them or their positions as school leaders. Finally, all interviews were recorded with the participant's prior permission. Each participant was assured that the contents of their recorded and unrecorded interview conversations would be used solely for the study and thereafter appropriately stored and destroyed as required by the ethical approval of the study. The signed declaration of consent forms giving their voluntary participation were returned by each participant (see Appendix E) for sample of signed forms consenting to the study.

4.9 Conclusion

Chapter Four discussed the methodology used in this study. Methodology is an essential part of a research study as it provides an action plan which explains the choices and the use of research methods in the study. This chapter has outlined the methods used to gather information for this study and provided a detailed descriptive account of the decisions and justifications of the methodology of this study. It also provided account of challenges I encountered in the research process and the steps taken to deal with these. The research design for this study is an explorative case study, and data is collected using qualitative methods. Thematic analysis is used to analysis the thick and rich descriptive data collected in this study. Chapter Five presents the data analysis and discussion of findings.

CHAPTER FIVE
DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter Four, I discussed the methodology of this study. In this chapter I present and discuss the data. The first section provides an outline of the chapter including an overview that recaps the context and site of the study and the participants' background information. The sections that follow present the analysis and discussion of the data. This presents and discusses the data under four themes and the subthemes under three of the themes. The chapter concludes by highlighting the key issues of the findings discussed**.**

This study explores the school principals' perceived and desired leadership development pathways providing evidence from selected principals in one district of KwaZulu-Natal. Data were generated through semi-structured individual and focus group interviews. As discussed in detail in Chapter Four, the data generation involved each of the school principals interviewed individually and after that taking part in one of the two focus group discussion sessions. Again, as discussed in Chapter Four, because I intended to explore some salient points expressed in the group dynamics of the focus group discussion, the use of the individual interview was justified because it allowed me to pick those points and explore them deeper with each individual participant. This enriched the quality of information I generated from the participant because it was a way to further unbundle the issues and meanings they attribute to their school leadership development experiences.

Thus, the individual interviews were particularly useful as a follow up to the group discussions. Firstly, it was used to probe furthermore some of participant's responses in the focus group which I considered salient even though were not exhaustively discussed due to group dynamics. For example, the group dynamics experienced in the group interview were to an extent a hindrance to some of the principals explaining their views. In order to understand the expectations and daily experiences of some of these principals towards leadership development it was one of the reasons I did a follow-up individual interview as well as constantly making calls to clarify information. Secondly, I used individual interviews, beyond group conversations, to

elicit the thick and rich information on what each participant considered as desired leadership development. Though this was part of topics of the conversation during the focus group discussion, I considered that in-depth explications of their meanings and understandings of desirable school principal leadership development would be better and further unpacked using the individual interview methods. Thirdly, as highlighted in Chapter Four, the use of focus group and individual interview methods with same participants is not meant for corroboration of information generated as is usually the case with data from two different sources. In this case, it was meant to complement the information, which enriched data collected using the two methods with the same source (Cohen et al., 2011).

In conducting the interviews, I used guiding interview schedules, which drew on responses in the earlier focus group discussions to produce in-depth and richer explanations from individual participants to the salient points in the focus group discussions (Creswell, 2012). Thus, the data presentation is organised in a way that the focus group comes first and data from the individual interviews follows. Likewise, the data from the two methods is discussed in that order.

The four themes drawn from the research questions give primacy to the school principals' accounts of their experiences. The four themes tracked school principals' leadership development experiences, their leadership challenges and needs, their reflections on leadership programmes, their desired leadership development, and how to develop as school leaders, which are discussed in this chapter. The participants' narratives present first-hand accounts of understanding and experiences of actual enactment of school principals' leadership development. The information generated from the two methods form the discussions under the themes, which are informed by the research questions of this study. The participants' understanding of leadership development, their experiences of leadership development and the desired change they wish to see in their leadership development from how their school principals' leadership development are contextualised are discussed. Discussion in this chapter is further explored using the relevant literature and theories such as Vygotsky's SCT focusing on ZPD and MKO, with Adult Learning Theory and Assets-Based Theory providing the lenses through which the analysis of data and the discussion are viewed.

5.2 Background Information of the School Principals

This study involved eight school principals working within schools in the selected district. Six of these are male and two are female and were between the ages of 47 to 59. As indicated in Chapter Four, I used pseudonyms to protect their identity and their schools. Brief information on each of the principals and the schools they work in follows in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Information on schools where principals work

Schools	**School 1 Combine Gr R-9**	**School 2 Primary Gr 1-7**	**School 3 Primary Gr 1-7**	**School 4 High Gr 8-12**	**School 5 Primary Gr 1-7**	**School 6 Primary Grade 1-7**	**School 7 Primary Gr 1-7**	**School 8 Combined Gr R-9**
Quantile	2	1	5	4	2	4	2	4
Location	Rural	Rural	Urban	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Nu of learners	541	461	920	835	97	720	486	1633
Nu of educators	18	16	48	34	6	21	11	59
Fee/no fee paying	No Fee paying	No fee paying	Fee paying	Fee paying	No Fee paying	Fee paying	No fee paying	Fee paying

Table 5.1 shows four of the schools are located within the rural and four within the urban area. The schools are two combined schools (Grade R-9), five primary schools (Grade 1-7) and one high school (Grade 8-12). Four of the schools are no fee paying, the others are fee paying however, the cost of their fees differ. The number of learners and educators in each of the school ranged from 97 to 1,633 learners; and from six to 59 educators. My observation shows that they all seemed to share a common understanding and passion for their schools and eagerness to invest in their school's improvement.

Table 5.2: Information on school principals

Principal	**Andile**	**Vuyani**	**Prince**	**Mweli**	**Thembeka**	**Frank**	**Ntombi**	**Sbu**
Gender/age	M/59	M/55	M/53	M/50	F/47	M/49	F/56	M/49
Name	NNZ	SSA	JNG	PBN	NKJ	MDW	ANM	NBM
Home language	Zulu	Zulu	Afrikaans	Zulu	Zulu	English	Zulu	Zulu
Qualification	STD + BED HONS	JPTD + B PRIM ED + PMDP	HDE + HONS + ACE + PMDP	STD + AdvDip (leadership & management)	BCOM + PGD (leadership & management) + BED HONS + M ED	BED + ACE	STD + ACE	B Sec Ed + HONS (work in progress)
Total Experience in school	32	32	31	29	26	28	34	27
Experience as a principal (years)	19	17	15	14	11	4	18	10

Typically, the principals' profiles indicate that across the board they had minimum educational qualification expected of an educator in school, which is a diploma. All had held the position of school principal for more than four years including their current posts. All eight principals were classroom-based educators for several years. None has been an office-based educator. Another striking observation is that most of all eight principals know one another beyond being professional colleagues.

From the above tables one can infer that the school principals show insufficient grounding in the theoretical knowledge base of leadership development.

5.3 Theme 1: School Principals' Understanding of Leadership Development

The context, curriculum and outcome of school and schooling are increasingly impacted by global pressures and expectations. How schools are led; the governance and management expectations are increasingly under public censure as global and societal trends put pressure on and demand school leadership performance. As a consequence, these expectations bring school leadership under growingly close and critical scrutiny. On the one hand, these demands and scrutiny force more regulatory accountability on school leadership (Hallinger & Huber, 2012; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Yet, on the other, it can be seen that schools are dynamic social organisations that do not operate in an insulated vacuum. Schools are in and within social contexts of communities and are led and managed within the existential realities of context and practice. This means that, whereas uniformity of accountability and expectations are a desirable regulatory mechanism, performance and skilled leadership for achieving school improvement and or successful school leadership are perhaps concepts that are contextually subjective.

In other words, the school leaders' understanding of leadership development and what it means for their practice is of important consideration in their role. In the individual and group interviews with the participant school principals, the first question I explored was what they understood the school principal leadership development to be. This topic for discussion that is the principals' understanding of leadership development is based on the first research question which is what is the school principals understanding of leadership development as discussed in Chapters One and Four. Responses are discussed below in the subthemes that follow, and further expounded in the subsequent two themes and its subthemes.

5.3.1 Tailoring to Size: Leadership Development as Identification of, and Matching Experiences with Training

During the focus group discussion, the school principals shared their understanding of leadership development. A view that came out strongly was the common understanding of leadership development by the school principals, which is that it is a series of workshops aimed at the problems they face:

> *...leadership development is to identify what the problems the principals are faced with and then workshop us on that. In that way a lot of research have indirectly been done*

based on our different experiences, and this can then feed into the programmes for the workshops and trainings that we are called to attend… (sic)

…..it is a further training targeted towards school leaders to improve on both known and unknown skills that will help to lead to changes and improvements in school, classroom and the community at large…

I asked them whom they were referring to as us; did they mean particular group of principals or all principals. And one of the participants explained further:

Yes, all principals. The trainings provided for all principals from the department [meaning Department of Education, DoE]. … they are very good I will not lie because they usually touch on a lot of things even the one you are not aware of, then you become aware of them … But sometimes it doesn't help because it is not what you need because school B will differ from school A ...

Following on this, I asked whether the training is for all school principals on the same things and same locations and how. The responses are that the training is the same for all principals and same locations:

… yes, school A principal has her own needs and I have got my own needs too in my school. You will find out we [meaning all principals] are trained in one and the same thing, but they [DoE] should acknowledge that we are in different places. Now, it is like bringing one sized cloth for a size 10, 12, 14 to wear.

Goldring, et al. (2008) argue that for leaders to be effective, there is need to complement their good skills with providing them opportunities to decide on what, how and why of their leadership development and to enhance their personal growth. The participants' view of their leadership development is that it is a need that differs from one to another because leadership development should be responsive to their leadership needs, which varied from school A to school B.

This understanding of leadership development is from a perception of the school leader in terms of not just requisite skill but the tailored ability and leadership capability of a school leader that are fitting for their role in their own school context. However, the participants' view of leadership development suggests that while these are factors such as how school principals are

being challenged in their role are across the board. However, the influence of these factors differs according to individual schools' context. Otunga, et al. (2008) found that school leaders in post-apartheid South Africa still work under what are described as "difficult conditions". It is also common knowledge that a majority of the previously disadvantaged schools still face challenges including lack of resources (both human and physical), and influences of social factors that obtain within the communities where they are located like poverty, abuse, culture of violence, lack of discipline, poor parents' involvement in learners' schooling, etc. This goes to say that school leadership needs vary, and the principals' understanding of what school leadership development is, seem to vary accordingly. It is perhaps not surprising then that their understanding of leadership development, though seemingly disparate, is seen from the specific needs and experiences of their own schools' context. This view of leadership development challenges the norm of a generic approach to development of school leaders that is tailored to context and adopts models of school leadership development premised on the notion of what works nationally or internationally (Bush & Middlewood, 2005). Yet, as Ibara (2014) and Christie (2010) observe, most leadership development programmes implemented in Africa are imported, and are grounded in the international literature and practice.

In theorising school leadership, Bush and Glover (2014, p. 565-566), faults many African countries that adopt "managerialist" conceptualisation of the school principal's role, which involves them in management without vision by "implementing external imperatives with little scope for local initiatives". These observations, tallied with the participants' view of leadership development, highlight the need for sufficient consideration to be given to problematising leadership development by understanding of the local and contextual nuances to school principal's leadership experiences that inform their understandings of what their leadership development means. Keeping in mind that school principals are adults, their understanding of individual leadership experiences in their schools undergirds the meanings they bring to their development. Thus, their leadership development is understood from what challenges they are faced with in their schools, and what opportunities for learning are there as understood and rationalised by themselves as adults.

5.3.2 "Developing Us Very Well": Leadership Development as Further Professional Development

Intent on exploring further what other understandings of school principals' leadership development the participants had apart from seeing it from the point of view of trainings, I followed up on the focus group discussion and enquired to clarify precisely what the school leadership development trainings the DoE provided mean or what else they understood leadership development to mean. The responses from the focus group claim that the DoE did not have interest in developing the school principals well.

> *Hahahaha, you see those big guys [meaning officials of DoE] sitting in the big offices are not very interested in developing us very well.*

Seeking clarity on what leadership development that develops the school principals "very well' would be, I asked the participants what they meant by "not very interested in developing us well".

> *The workshop is usually two days and you can see the amount of work is jam-packed, loaded. And highlighting certain things of which we do not come into grasp with them is a waste because there is never time to address them…*

And another commented.

> *…Yea, maybe I need to get into UJ [meaning University of Johannesburg] to study a particular course that will develop me within the curriculum or within the subject that I am teaching but I am not consulted but instead am sent for a training and I will just find myself in a hall that all of us [meaning principals] have been put there and be trained maybe on inclusive education… [and] two years ago I attended same training …*

The participants' responses suggested two important revelations: a possible misunderstanding of school leadership development with educator professional development, on the one hand and an ambiguity in the perceptions of leadership development on the other. Yet, the school principals had a common, even if not clear, notion of what leadership development is all about from the way they strove to articulate their understanding of leadership development. This notion is that their leadership development should be about specific needs as opposed to learning a generic set of skills. Another comment from them is that it is about considering practice experiences in their

own schools' context in the processes and decisions involved in determining what their leadership development needs and training are. Scott and Rarieya (2011) explain leadership as meaning being actively involved in leading and participating in professional learning with staff. Earley and Weindling (2004) understand school leadership development as a career-long process as opposed to a learning event that just takes place at a time. It is interesting that the participants' understanding of leadership development indicates seeing it as involving participating in professional learning in course-based studies in the university in areas of need.

However, Huber (2010) found that there is a common trend towards what is considered as extended and time-consuming programmes of school principals' leadership development. Huber further explains that these programmes involve a course-based learning at colleges and universities in combination with experience-based learning in workshops or school sites. Yet, it is possible to deduce from their view of leadership development as further course-based learning in university. There seems to be an awareness of the leadership challenges, as well as the desire of the school principals to be actively involved in learning as a way to meet their school leadership needs. Moss, et al. (2011) attests that school leadership roles and responsibilities are becoming reconceptualised. Moss, et al. (2011) further explain that expectations from school leaders are no longer limited to their performance of bureaucratic functions, but also include assuming responsibilities of pedagogical, entrepreneurial, and visionary leadership, which means leading in creating a safe schooling environment, school improvement and so on.

Leadership development as seen from the participants' view is perhaps better articulated as involving a bouquet of needs provision that include not just generic and intermittent workshop trainings, but combination of delivery of learning and trainings that suit particular needs. A view of leadership development in this way agrees with the idea of leadership development as personal responsibility of the school leaders themselves (Msila & Mtshali, 2011), and justifies Christie, et al. (2010, p. 92) comment that it "seems inappropriate to provide a 'generic' leadership programme for all principals and aspiring principals, regardless of the enormous differences in context and school functionality".

5.3.3 Driven on the Path of Different Struggles: Leadership Development as Skilling for Context and Contingency

There was perhaps an inclination to understanding leadership development as something that has to be done in skilling and reskilling in response to the needs of the principal's job role of school leadership. Perhaps this blurs the line of what can be considered as further professional development as educators and what the participants understood as leadership development. Reading the data in this manner prompted my next line of questioning in the individual interview, which was to follow up on and expound the participants' understanding of school principals' leadership development drawing on personal practices. The participants' responses in the focus group discussions point to the understanding of leadership development from considerations of the individual expectations and encounters the principals faced in their schools, such as one of the participants surmised in the individual comment:

> ***Mr. Vuyani:*** *Ehen, when it has to do with leadership, we have had different struggles of which the different principals can attest to. So, if our development can be driven on the path of our struggles then a huge difference can be seen in how we run our schools and the progress that is possible in terms of performances. For me, it is about the trainings I need as school leader to run the school. It includes the trainings the department give from time to time, whole lot of them especially the school management, financial management, the safety issues within our schools, discipline, budgeting I can go on and mention a lot that the department had organised for us to a certain extent, but it will not be able to address the issues we face at school. I think the major thing is I (we) face different struggles as I say, and these require understanding where you are operating, the environment and the needs. You don't manage a school theoretically, you deal with practical issues that put you on the edge, but it does not mean trainings aren't useful, it is a question of which, where you are seated and, how relevant the training to your own struggles.*

In a similar individual interview response to same question, Thembeka confirmed that school challenges determine an understanding of school leadership and in that manner school principal's leadership challenges. The contention therefore is that school leadership development is not only about a definite static need that is generic and monolithic. Conversely, it is seen as a process of involvement in refinement of skills and competences that are important for school leadership as the need arises.

> ***Thembeka:*** *... it involves trainings that must focus on one thing at a time. It must not include loads of information that confuse. If it focusses on say, like train school leaders to know how they can deal with learners when it comes to inclusive education, it speaks to how they can involve all learners, how can you apply for proper concession. How do you identify learners with special needs? You see this is one topic at a time, but it is also one topic within the curriculum, but so then it can be easy for let's say, each and every subject teacher to identify a learner with a special need. But it has to be relevant to what you see where you are. What do I meet as challenges in mine school? Do I have the relevant competencies, knowhow and theoretical and practical knowledge to deal with these that I see? What do I need to be skilled in dealing with managing what I see and what is available; how do I improve what I meet in this school? I mean, school improvement is central to leadership performance. Am not saying it should be separated from whole understanding of a basic threshold of what a school principal should be skilled, or I know as a school leader, but what I mean is that school principal's development is something that is ongoing. What do you see, is that some of the challenging tasks, that would mean you must up your leadership skills to deal with? Some of them like one, like discipline and you can see and deal with, like every day, some different scenarios present their own issues.*

This view implies considering leadership development as the sensibilities and flexibilities required in order to fit and meet the school leadership demands of a given context of practice and to deal with challenges that exist. Huber (2012) maintains that school leaders are a force behind the success of their schools. However, the view of the participants as expressed in their responses above suggests that school principals are only a force where and if they possess the appropriate skills that enable them to engage in effective running of their schools.

Regarding school leadership development being context-dependent, Thembeka further explains:

> ***Thembeka:*** *It means being responsive to place and need, and not just a set of these general once off trainings. Yes, it is the department's [DoE's] designs we must go for these trainings. But, so for an instance, to say this school is in this township and this is how the school leader is challenged in the role, and what can be done with the principal to equip for these challenges. I mean what she needs for her to achieve expected school improvement.*

Thembeka's response suggests that what is considered as appropriate skills is perhaps important to unpack in understanding of leadership development.

Further to the expectations of leadership development being context driven, Sbu and Mweli added that the effects of social problems such as teenage pregnancy, violence and sense of entitlements affects the supposed progress in schools thereby affecting the day-to-day running of the schools.

> ***Sbu:*** *I feel there is need for our trainings to focus on the problems we have within the communities especially dealing with young mothers-to-be and those who are already mothers it is difficult and confusing to deal with them because these are kids in mind and physically adults.*
>
> ***Mweli:*** *Violence has become a daily reality in our communities and we can never have peaceful schools if this is so. What this means for me is that we need to be supported in handling this because even our lives are threatened as it is.*

Sbu and Mweli's concerns on what and how their leadership development should focus could imply that the contents of leadership development they have been exposed to may not be topical to them as it is not focusing on what they have seen as issues within their context.

Hence, I followed up on these discussions and in the next step decided and explored how the school principals experience their leadership development and what is the nature of these experiences.

5.4 Theme 2: School Principals' Experiences of Leadership Development

In order to be clear on their narrations about the experiences they have had of leadership development, I cued previous discussions on how they understood their school leadership challenges as defining what their school leadership development needs are seen to mean.

I followed up on what the participants understood and how they viewed school leadership development. The following section presents the participants' narratives of the understanding of their experiences of the processes of deciding the leadership development, approach to delivery and, the content of the programmes they have engaged in as school principals.

5.4.1 School Principals' Accounts of Their Leadership Development Experiences

In their responses, the participants suggested that their leadership development require targeting their training to meet individual and unique needs. During the focus group discussion, I sought to find out how the participants experienced their leadership development training in terms of how often they attended, in what form and content. The participants' responses indicate that opportunities for leadership development were regularly provided for them in the form of workshops and seminars. Many of the participants began the conversation by explaining the variety of training they had attended

> *I have been engaged in a number of leadership development. To start with I have done whole school development, and I have been exposed to IQMS which is integrated school management system. I have been exposed to teacher discipline, heh heh heh, also I have attended disciplinary measures [laughs and peers knowingly join in the laughter] don't get me wrong, by that I mean steps we're taught to take in disciplining those educators who are misbehaving. Yeah, there's quite several of them …*

Some of the participants explained further what they had engaged in.

> *… yes, a whole lot of them, especially many workshops about school management, financial management, the safety issues within our schools, discipline, budgeting, I can mention a lot that the department had organised for us.*

> *I have been engaged in discipline, management and strategic development of a school many times. What are the other ones, the one that is done by SACE [meaning South African Council of Educators] for principals? (Peers chorus the name CPTD [continuing professional teacher development] and using IQMS [meaning…integrated quality management system]) to enhance and monitor performance.*

I asked who provided the programmes and how often. The participants' responses indicated that there were other providers of the training programmes apart from the DoE.

> *Within our district we have Afrikaans association of school leaders, they arrange seminars, but just maybe they [meaning … DoE] think we [meaning non-Afrikaans-speaking schools] face similar challenges because they don't ask us what we need help in, instead they give us timetables of what is available and when, so that you choose from the availability.*

The variations in the working context of school principals mean that their experiences also differ. However, beyond the provision of access to appropriate training and development, it is equally important to understand from school leaders' experiences the specifics of these responsibilities in terms of what counts as appropriate. In addition, it is important to know how the school principals themselves experience these training and development programmes. This is so that one can understand and see how if what is provided aligns with the specific responsibilities involved in leading their schools. Therefore, in probing further on the school principals' experiences of their leadership development, I sought to explore in the focus group what the processes of their engagement in these programmes were and if they are consulted about these leadership developments that are being provided and how.

> *No, they don't consult us. They just send us 'for your information' through circulars. They do as they please because they see for themselves this is suitable for principals. They don't even ask us maybe at the beginning of the year what we might need or at the end of the year from our experiences this year, where can we help improve your practice or which areas do you, the principal need help with …*
>
> *… yes, there's no consulting on anything, I mean they just come with what they feel we need… We only receive information that there will be a workshop for something, then we attend the workshops that's all what happens.*

One of the participants during the focus group interview suggested that if proper consultation were made with the school principals before training begins, it can be an avenue to connect to their sensitivities and ventilate the problematic challenges of their job, and the insights on these as inputs will then make the trainings relevant.

> *… I also think the department will have to consult us in a way, perhaps if they do ask us to present our problems in the form of school improvement plan. But you know it will end up again as paper work, they give themselves and that means insensitivity to us, because they will never attend to the issues. So, you see in most cases, they come with their own ideas in workshops which do not cover 100% of all of our school needs. But because we are not consulted that is a problem, and they will not know what your needs are as usual.*

I probed further why they thought there would be a difference if the DoE consulted them before training.

A lot of information is top down, nothing is done on the ground to find out what are the challenges schools are facing, experiencing or even, no one ask us how you are trying to overcome your challenges.

You see we were always told through circulars, but we were not consulted to see if we really do need this or in case there is something else, we are desperately in need for…

Yes, they must consult with us or how would they know what is needful here? But you see, normally what happens is we receive a circular from the department indicating that there will be a workshop for this aspect or that. And you must attend …

Piggot-Irvine, et al. (2013) and Forde (2011) emphasise the need to work with school leaders in ascertaining what their leadership development needs are, and to customise their leadership development according to these needs; taking into consideration their experiences. The participants' views on leadership development programmes they have attended suggest the importance of giving attention to the nature of school principals' experiences. Taking cognisance of these experiences, including experiences of the leadership development training contents, and the relevance of these to how training, workshops and or other development programmes can be made or provided, need to be in ways that effectively attend to or meet the principals' school leadership development needs. As adults, the leadership development needs of the school principal cannot be divorced from what and how they perceive these needs and ways of meeting them. Therefore, any learning or development programme targeted at meeting their leadership needs outside of what they consider these needs to be is bound to be problematic. Jansen (2016) argues that school leadership researchers, in doing research, have to reflect the variations in the working contexts, professions, and positions of school principals which inform understandings they bring to their leadership development. These variations are also present in school leaders' experiences.

The participants' responses also suggest that such leadership development workshops and/or training they attended however, fail to reflect the variations in the working contexts which inform their leadership development expectations. The participants' responses also suggest that they felt that the workshop training was inadequate for their leadership development needs and the challenges they have because the programmes are either profiled or too generic that they do not work in their specific practice context. Southworth (2010) emphasises that school principals'

leadership development entails focusing specifically on their responsibilities and providing access to the appropriate professional training and development that match the responsibilities.

The participants' responses regarding their experiences of leadership development they have engaged in indicate that two important considerations need to be taken in the provision of these programmes. First, the leadership development providers deciding on what is appropriate leadership development for the school principals. Second, deciding on how the leadership development is and will be provided. Both considerations demand that the school leaders' experience come to the fore in considering of the what and how of their leadership development provision.

Intent on probing further on their experiences of leadership development in terms of approaches to delivery, I decided to use the individual interview to seek explications to their views on their experiences. The participants' responses show that they viewed the way their leadership development trainings were delivered as monologues and non-interactive.

> ***Ntombi:*** *It's a number of workshops. They [meaning DoE workshop providers] just talk and we listen, sometimes do activities in groups, but you know most times it is not enough because they are not very detailed on what concerns you…*

I asked Ntombi about where they attended workshops – were these provided for them in the school, or district-based.

> ***Ntombi:*** *No, they [meaning DoE workshop providers] don't come here to the school, we [meaning school principals] attend the workshops mostly at district, all principals must attend, and you just have to …*

During the individual interview with Thembeka, I inquired if she had attended any other forms of leadership development other than the workshops done outside schools.

> ***Thembeka:*** *…the issue of the types of training we have engaged on. For me it's one size-fits-all workshops. It makes easier for you to have an intervention available, that is good. But that's whether it works or can't work in your school. How do you know it can't work? Hahahahah! That's the issue, it will be very stressful if it cannot, because it is like putting a square peg in a round hole...*

Another participant during the individual interview shared the same sentiment as Thembeka's response.

> ***Frank:*** *…in most cases they conduct workshops, some of the issues are discussed but do not concern your own case in your school, or you don't exactly need them …*

I asked Frank why he thought he did not need some of the workshops provided.

> ***Frank:*** *… those are too good to work for us, schools are not the same, am sure you must have seen that … It is just that in most cases when the department is developing us they don't ask us as principals which areas of development we would development like to embark upon … I think it is important that the schools must be heard and handled as individual school not as a group …*

I enquired further on a point that was mentioned during the group discussion that is if workshops and seminars are the only way school principals would like to be engaged in their leadership development.

> ***Frank:*** *It is only the group workshop thing when it happens…*

In the individual interview, I enquired on the effects of not consulting with the school principals before the training is done.

> ***Vuyani:*** *Yes, because you see, when these policies are drafted in the first place, I don't believe in most cases schools are consulted. There must be some sort of an interaction between the policymakers and the people on the ground than a mismatch between them because nothing is done on the ground to find out what are the challenges schools are facing or I mean experiencing ...*
>
> ***Ntombi*** *… yes, because even if they issue out threats for not attending … but do you feel committed to, when you don't even know how useful what you're called to attend will be, meanwhile office work mounts, and you're to attend to that, I mean the paper work and much of it. And even though sometimes they want us to do school improvement plan indicating our weaknesses, but then you spend time on this, and they do not address directly those weaknesses …*
>
> ***Frank:*** *… yes when they ask us to fill in our management plan towards our school needs. I don't think they go back to engage with the demands on them. Those are supposed to be*

our voices and thoughts well-articulated in black and white but you see, the case is that they decide on what and how they want to run the training, we are side-lined, and we have no input … and not being consulted, but called to come attend a seminar or training that does not cater for my needs, I feel it is meant for somebody elsewhere and not for myself. But if I am being consulted it will be for me … yes, we do have an instrument whereby we do identify our needs, strengths and weaknesses but is it reflected in this training? You see, all that effort is just about paper work as usual.

Mweli: *… the problem with the department, they ignore what we have learnt so far from the job. Our experiences should and must count when preparing our training programmes. But they don't engage us or ask us exactly where our weaknesses or strong points are. But they do the workshop as they want it, and they don't ask us what workshops do we need or have we done before or even where we need improvement on.*

Forde (2011) draws attention to the increasing need for customisation of leadership development. This required that close consultations between the department and the school principals regarding their school leadership and leadership challenges take place often in order to inform their school leadership development. Yet the participants' responses indicate that there is an absence of close consultations, and leadership development is decided without involving them in the decision. Moloi (2007) emphasises the centrality of training and development of school leaders in successful school improvement and transformation. However, as Piggot-Irvine, et al. (2013) point out, while it is not the trend, school leaders' input on the decisions regarding their leadership development has to be seen as important, given the evidence from research. The participants in this study affirm this point in confirming that school leaders are not being consulted for their input on leadership development programmes, which paradoxically are meant to serve their needs.

The negativity of school leaders about what their leadership development needs are, and on what prior experiences and challenges they have had or areas that they need consolidation, confirmation, and or change is worrying. In using a "top-down" approach to provide leadership development information through circulars that merely invite them to workshop training, as the participants describe, the providers neglect the school leaders' positionality as adults, and by implication negate the way their learning needs ought to be determined and or targeted. Therefore, even though leadership development workshops/seminars and training are provided

for the school leaders, the way the school principals narrate experiences of the leadership development workshops show dissatisfaction because they feel they are being undermined in the process of deciding what workshops they need and or are provided for them.

The literature documents various types of school leadership development that include coaching and mentoring, peer coaching, job-embedded activities, non-academic leadership/management workshops, on-the-job support, networking, developing team work, real-time professional learning, and so on (Sparks, 2009). It is clear from the participants' responses that their experiences of the leadership development provided for them was that of fatigue and disconnect because of the content, delivery, frequency and site. They viewed the approach to leadership development delivery, from their own experiences, as not centred on them and, in that manner, as inadequate. Their experiences of the approach are that of cautious doubt about the content and its relevance, dissatisfaction with the pedagogical methods, which is seen to be all about someone talking and them listening.

A point that is certain in these responses is that the resourcing and delivery of the leadership development as the participants' experiences appear to suggest, did not take cognisance of the way adults learn and or engage the learning content. Hallinger (2016) observes the tendency to a generic set of leadership development practices that are adaptable to the diverse needs and constraints of different school contexts. However, Jensen (2016) cautions against the assumption that generic school leadership development can keep pace with how actual school leadership practices are challenged. Okoko, et al. (2015) emphasise on the need for school leadership development not to be a mere fulfilment, but an opportunity for school leaders to gain essential skills and competencies needed to succeed in their own schools. Earley and Jones (2009) surmise that leadership development of school leaders involves ongoing process of education, training, learning and support activities, which take place in either external or work-based settings. This contention raises a critical question about approaches to, and siting of leadership development programmes in ways that disconnect the school leaders' specific experiences and needs and kill the interest with monotonous practices of using only workshops or seminars and same styles of content delivery. Thus, the participants' experiences affirm the need for variation and relevance in resourcing school leadership development emphasised in Piggot-Irvine, et al. (2013), that

school leaders demand leadership development that better equips them to acquire knowledge and skills useful in day-to-day running of their schools.

Given that the workshops are externally imposed without any input from them in deciding what and how of the workshops, the school leaders felt that they were mere recipients, forced to fit into an already determined and decided leadership development that hardly severs their own needs. Goldring et al. (2008) argue that beyond targeting the provision of generic skills, school leaders need to be given the opportunity to give input on what type, how and why of their leadership development that serves the school leadership needs of their contexts in order for them to be effective in the management of their schools.

5.5 Theme 3: Leadership Challenges and Needs

In the focus group discussion session, I sought to clarify what the school principals' understanding of their leadership development were, and in what ways these were given meaning from their leadership challenges and needs, and whether these were unique to them as individual principals or commonly generic. Their responses pointed to typical challenges they faced in their schools that shaped their expectations of leadership development and define what they considered as their needs:

> *...major problem I am experiencing and need help with is on teacher absenteeism in schools, and that is due to various reasons like illness, family responsibilities and so on.*

Another participant added a new dimension about learner discipline:

> *I also need help with 'acting-out' and angry learners. I mean those who have witnessed abuses of different forms and the school becomes a 'safe place' for them to express their anger.*

Yet, another commented on discipline:

> *... discipline, because these are big problems in many schools. And also, we don't have councillors who assist these [undisciplined] learners ...*

Regarding the different challenges the school principals face, I sought to understand more from the group discussion whether the issues were fundamentally related to poor discipline. If it were,

what the nature of it is and how much these challenges are related to what they are trained on. However, the participants said that while their schools somewhat differ, what is usually a common occurrence in most schools, and these were mentioned, which are usually what is commonly known:

> *… yea, there are quite a number of issues or these things. Like discipline, but also adolescent behaviours, financial management, parental involvement, dealing with teenage pregnancy and there are also needs like managing teaching and learning …*

On the other hand, some of the participants in the group discussion agreed that inclusive development is important. One participant said that:

> *… and I need a huge deep development on inclusive education because in South Africa we are dealing with learners that are progressed to the next grade rather than learners who passed. You see what I mean. So, in all I would like to be developed on how to deal with my management team, inclusive education, financial management, how to use and improve curriculum and discipline.*
>
> *Yes, if we have a good informed leadership development programme, I will want trainings that will be able to equip me with skills to cope with the difficulties I'm currently facing. But it is true the trainings are short, and they lump ideas, some of these are good in paper. But do they say something for us on the ground with the issues at hand, I mean you must understand that's where we have this problem with the department. Say for instance, what do I need in my school? It's to improve on whole school involvement. I need to have a good relationship between all the stakeholders. I need to have capacity for curriculum interpretation, leaner discipline, parental involvement. You see, the most important thing is parental involvement because they must not neglect their duty to the learners.*

In the individual interviews, I decided to further the earlier points made during the focus group discussion and to seek to understand how leadership development specific trainings that they had been involved spoke to these challenges. I enquired in what ways one is challenged by these unmet leadership needs that are mentioned earlier, like issues of discipline, how it is a challenge specific to your own school.

Sbu: *So, for me it's much like safety concerns, issues, the problems that prevent our school from being a threat free school. Threats like drugs, school vandalism, sexual abuses between and among the learners of opposite sex, and a lot of bullying attacks on both leaners and educators. It's about particular learners that must be put on right tracks and working in unison with staff to get things done. But you can't get much done without the parents, I suppose that there is where my major issues are, how to see that the school gets working cooperation with parents to ensure learners are safe to learn…*

Thembeka: *… in my school, many things disturb the main central activity of teaching and learning including threats by learners to peers and staff. There are also instances of increasing pregnant learners, how do you deal with this, absenteeism both from learner and educators and all, these impact what you do in terms of installing discipline, and if you add lack of parental involvement, the gang activities in and outside the school, issues of hungry learners, and the failure on the part of the department to do the needful for the schools, you must agree here that one is seeing challenges from many fronts, and any out of the scene solutions are merely palliatives and not the cure.*

Ntombi: *As a principal in a township school they are more for my case. Challenges I'm faced with daily like learners who belong to a gang and, some are being alleged to be involved in car thefts, you could imagine; where learners stab people to death, hijacking cars, vandalising properties and using drugs. The drugs are a serious one because they using it is destroying them and leading them to do all other atrocities.*

I enquired if all these happened within the school or were learners procured by outside influences, while trying to clarify how these negative issues from community can filter in and impact normal school activities, especially if learners are mentioned in these circumstances:

Ntombi*: … these drugs are also sold around the schools. Although the school, we are fenced all round, but you can see that they create holes in the fence and invade the school grounds where they do their things. So, if I can get training and support as a school leader on how I can deal with these behaviours, I think I will be fine, very fine …*

Intxausti, et al. (2016) point out that a positive attitude to training is one of the important elements in school leadership. The school leader's ability to identify areas of need for appropriate training and leadership development for self and staff development is crucial to school improvement. The participants' outlines of issues or factors that pose challenges in their different schools are similar. Yet, they identify varying areas of need for leadership training and

development considered as necessary for them to be effective and able to deal with the challenges in their respective schools. Therefore, it is significant to note the view of the participants that leadership trainings, which are out of context, are not solution to their leadership needs. Thembeka sums up in her words that "any out of the scene solutions are merely palliatives and not the cure".

However, as already discussed, appropriateness of training or school leadership development is perhaps dependent on what the school leaders themselves consider as their pertinent needs and the challenges of their individual schools. Whereas these challenges are catalogued by the participants in this study to include relationship issues, threats to learners and educators, learner pregnancy, gang violence, indiscipline, stakeholder issues and lack of involvement, drugs, poverty and improvement of quality in teaching and learning, and so on, it is clear from their responses that these are challenges that manifest in different forms and gravity from one school to the other. In recognition of their needs as unique, the participants affirm the contention by Bolden (2010) that leadership development is planned, deliberate and a process that aims to position leaders to become effective in their role. Nakpodia (2012) and Peretomode (2012) reason that leadership development has to be an activity targeted at enhancing the quality of leadership within an individual organisation, which in the case of school leadership development can be taken to mean a specific school.

In this view of leadership development, it is seen as a focus, not on universal set of skills and competencies of a collective, but on developing the abilities and attitudes of the individual school leader. This focus is on preparing and supporting the individual school principals in running their schools according to their individual and unique needs. Moloi (2007) emphasises that training and development of school principals can be a strategy to pursue the transformation of education. Education transformation, perhaps more critically, involves understanding what challenges particular schools have, and what are school leadership development needs of the school principals in terms of targeting school performance and desired school improvement. Yet, these are ascertainable through the school principals' understanding of what the school challenges are; how challenges impact school leadership role, and consequently their school leadership development needs. What this means is that the importance of relevant and context-

appropriate skills of school leaders for dealing with their school challenges cannot be overemphasised in understanding what they considered as their leadership development needs.

Again, in the focus group discussion, the participants' view of context as critical to their understanding of leadership development, points to the relevance of contingent leadership theory (Bush & Glover, 2014) to perceptions and understanding of school leadership role.

Bush and Glover (2014) indicate that understanding of school leadership, from the theory perspective, is not a closed-ended issue, given that leadership in practice is nuanced, contextually influenced and defined. Recognising that contingent leadership provides an alternative approach, which serves the nature of school contexts (Bush, 2006), it is perhaps not surprising to observe particular emphasis the participants put on context. In their view, school leadership development is emphatically about training to be fit for particular needs and challenges in situations of practice. This understanding underscores the contention by Piggot-Irvine, et al., (2013) that though school leaders have the obligation to improve the quality of schools and their learners' performance, it is a problem if they are not able to cope because they lack the knowledge, skills an attitude they need to lead their schools. These discussions echo Bush's (2008) contention that leadership development of school principals should aim to target their individualised needs and aspirations as school leaders. In further emphasising relevance of context to school leadership development, Bush (2011) argue that leadership development has to focus on specific needs and challenges of a particular context, and at the same time taking cognisance of the benchmarking of international cross-cutting needs. These arguments suggest that experiences of school leaders as adults and the context of such experiences need to be involved in determining their challenges and thus their own leadership development needs. In line with the foregoing contentions, and intent on finding out what the school principals' desired leadership development would be if allowed the opportunity, I decided to explore more on the school principals' desired leadership development in the subsequent sessions.

5.6 Theme 4: School Principals' Desired Leadership Development

The extent to which school leaders themselves are involved in the decisions of "how" and "what" of leadership development in terms of how it is resourced and provided is of key

importance to successful contextualisation of school leaders' development. This could mean that leadership development is perhaps more valuable to the school principals if centred on their individual needs. Premised on this line of thought, I focused the next group discussion on what the school principals would want to see in their leadership development as the desired leadership development.

The participants' responses indicated that they do not see the trainings and leadership development that are being provided for them as desirable because the leadership development do not connect with their individual leadership challenges and in that manner did not meet their leadership development needs.

5.6.1 "So If I Can Get Training": School Principals' Desires for Individualised Leadership Development Training

The participants suggest through their responses that the enactment of externally determined programmes of school leadership development for school principals are done without consultations with the principals to ascertain what their desired development or areas of need and leadership challenges are considered to be. In view of that, in the focus group and interview sessions, I started first with a question to the participants which is whether they consider the need for their leadership development as school principals desirable.

During the focus group discussion, the term "practical" was regularly used by several of the participants when referring to their leadership development, so I explored further what the school principals meant by "practical" as it randomly kept coming up. One of the participants explained further:

> *....what I mean is getting support and training in areas that I need them in my school. I want to get help on how to integrate what happens at school, at home and in the community, it's a big challenge. You find out that learners get mixed messages in community and need to consolidate what is learnt in school amid the other bad influences in community.*

Seeking more clarity, I again asked the participants if being practical meant making the training speak to their desired leadership development. When asked to talk more about desired leadership development and what would one desire as leadership development as a school leader, their

responses suggested that practical leadership development is one that focuses on specific needs of the school principal. This is their view is in contrast from looking at leadership development from what the principals are assumed to require in order to deliver on the curriculum as this focus group comment articulated.

> *There are lots of difficulties and challenges we encounter while running a school. If the department can support us with very good trainings instead of so much threats for when we don't deliver on the curriculum ... my desire is to be trained as an administrator, on financial training, human relationship, interpersonal relationship and curricula development. I would like to get training on parental involvement, other needs like managing teaching and learning, educator management. Also, how to deal with policy, policy abuse, implementation, and challenges of proper policy implementation in my school.*

It is in viewing school leadership challenges from a fixated perspective of types of common challenges and therefore using an across-the-board consideration of school leadership learning need, instead of the school principals' individual understanding, experiences, and needs, that it becomes a problematic dealing with school leadership development. This is because an across-the-board provision in both content and delivery has hardly permitted a close attention that the individual school principal learning needs demands.

Accordingly, in the focus group interview, this discussion was furthered and I sought to explore broader responses to the question: "What would you desire as your leadership development as school leader in your school?" Varying responses from the participants suggested that their claims of differing needs also underpin their perceptions regarding what their desired leadership development would be as these comments show:

> *At the moment I can be developed on handling finances and on how to improve learner discipline in my school. Because if the learners are not disciplined our work becomes more strenuous…*

> *I started teaching years back and then those were times learners were listening to us but nowadays, learners do what they just want, making noise while going up and down corridors, some of them get involved in bad behaviours using their phones … Some end up not reaching school as destination in the morning but join some group of gangs on*

their way to school and get into trouble, sometimes they come down here outside the school to smoke and harass other leaners and girls particularly. So, if I can get trainings on how to handle those and these 'modern technological learners' then we'll spend our greater time dealing with teaching and learning …

… for my school. I will need leadership and management. Yes, they usually go together, but with management skills it's very important because you think you know but there are things you don't know and simply can't handle unless you are taught this is how you deal with this in my school.

Earley and Weindling (2004) observes that school leadership development is not just a learning event that happens once or occasionally; rather it is a career-long process. What this means is that leadership development must continually aim at matching the school leadership needs of the school leader with appropriate training and development in order to suit the challenges at hand. The school principal participants' responses show that they envisaged their school leadership development to meet their experiences and speak to their present challenges in their practice as opposed to presumptive targeting of their learning needs and providing them with general training on what is expected of them to know or learn as school leaders.

The focus group discussion was then followed up on with probing questions in individual interview conversations that sought to find out what the participants considered their desired leadership development to be and how they desired to be developed. Their responses unequivocally affirmed the desirability of leadership development and explicated further why the importance of leadership development for school principals as Vuyani stressed:

Vuyani: *Leadership training is very important especially when you combine the theory and the practical parts of it. With experiences and what is learnt from school leadership development training, it will be easier to manage a school. When you get a theoretical knowledge and you have the practical experience to back it up you will be sure to have what to fall back on when you are faced with challenges … but I must say theory without practical about what is happening cannot give me the exposure needed to manage a school.*

However, in the seemingly common challenges school leadership poses, each adult learner's needs are specific and in several ways can be reflective of their own practice situations as this by Prince in the individual interview shows:

> ***Prince:*** *… when trainings are provided it is a generalisation for us all, but when you come to the grounds to see what the schools are, the conditions of each school differ from one to the other. For instance, one principal might have issues of classroom discipline, bullying, learner and educator absenteeism, yet another is dealing with mostly serious issues like gang violence, drugs, rape and educator and learners' safety in our school and around the schools… these are also discipline issues, yes. But how do you understand your own school's problems and deal with these differently at the levels and the kind of attention required? I mean, can I assume that a learner who brings guns or dangerous weapons to school is simply intimidating others or bullying me? That will just beg the question…, serious gangs are not just mere issue of discipline. I mean, it must be seen there's a wider issue here, and needs taking the correct actions to manage and to curtail and be dealt with decisively. And one needs to know how, especially if you see that it is a fact that school is also part of this community, you can see what I mean …*

In the view of the participants, every school leader seems to see the challenges and their leadership needs in their particular school as something unique in its own way, despite the issues or challenges mentioned are the same as others. What this suggests is that perhaps the differences in the challenges or needs of school leadership are not in the type, which is commonly seen in schools, but in the way, which the school leaders themselves conceive, experience, and identify these as areas of leadership development need. I probed further with a view to getting more explanation on how the school principals saw their school leadership development needs as unique.

> ***Prince:*** *So, if it is generic and general, how can it speak to my concerns, it will not be of much assistance to me, it must be specific, made to answer my own questions. I think these trainings must be relevant and must empower us to be able to action and deal with things that are specific to my own school if I'm to be able to be effective here, because the challenges differ from school to school, and we see these things in different ways.*

The responses suggest that the school leaders saw the leadership development programme by the DoE as being foisted on them. They see the contents of these trainings as already determined,

which means they are forced to fit into predetermined programme. The responses by the participants further indicated how their leadership development is externally determined without the school leaders involved in deciding on these leadership development programmes. In their work, Rhodes and Brundrett (2009) argue that the variations in the working context and schools where school leaders' role and leadership are practised necessitate the need for designing school leadership development programmes based on individual desires. Although the responses of the school principal participants in this present study affirm this contention, what is important is how to ascertain the individual leadership development desires of the school leaders.

There is, therefore, a certain disconnect between what the DoE leadership development provisions address and what school principals saw as their leadership development needs. Consequently, there seemed to be a manifest mismatch between how school principals' leadership development programme is being targeted, and what the principals' actual challenges in their respective schools and the desired leadership development of the school principals necessitates. Okoko, et.al. (2015) recognise that the role of school leaders in schools exposes them to situations of complex and challenging leadership work. The responses of the participants in this study indicate that school leaders' capacity to effectively carry out this work will be dependent on what opportunities there are for them to determine their individual leadership need; the means or ways of providing for their learning and leadership development. Again, given that their desired leadership development is also considered as their opportunity of being consulted, engaged and involved to enable them to develop the criticality, reflectivity, and creativity there is need to understand what is fundamental to bringing the solutions to their school leadership challenges (Ainscow, 2012; Christie, 2010). Thus, I sought to find out how the desired leadership development for meeting their leadership needs for the day-to-day running of schools can best be provided.

5.6.2 "But If They Can Come to Us": School Principals' Desired Ways to Provide Their Leadership Development

In the participants' view, their actual leadership practices and the demands on school leadership roles are challenged and influenced by school setting, which explains the variations in their experiences. Accordingly, school principals' view of their leadership development need; how they experience leadership development, and their desires for their leadership development,

which gathered from the responses of the participants in this study, are dependent on the setting in which they practise their role as school leaders. The participants envision a leadership development that involves them in sharing with other peers their experiences and challenges, and ways of addressing their similar leadership needs in their different schools as this focus group comment shows:

> *… we can learn from each other and strengthen each other as well, I think this will make the difference.*

In the follow-up questions, I therefore sought to find out in individual interview sessions with the participants how their desired leadership development can be provided effectively. The participants expressed that they would like their leadership development to be provided on-site, and also to deal with how leadership development issues pertain to their schools.

> ***Vuyani:*** *I will be appreciative if the department are doing the training through my eyes not through their instincts. But if they can come to us and they can help us with on-site leadership development to suit our needs and the school community then it can help us to improve.*

I asked Vuyani to explain what he meant by on-site leadership development training.

> ***Vuyani:*** *Yes, I think it is important to know where we operate and why we need to be supported or trained in a particular way, so we can respond to the problems and difficulties we are facing in our schools …*

I enquired further on the possibilities of on-site training giving the availability of resources.

> ***Vuyani:*** *Yes, if there could be a change on how the workshops are done. You can see that if not every individual school, certain schools may have similar problems, and it will be a question of which principals need this particular training and the principals themselves will provide insight from their experience how issues pertain to them and on their peculiar challenges. They can learn from each other and strengthen each other as well, I think this will make the difference.*

In corroboration, when I asked Prince in the individual interview the question: “Do you think on-site school leadership development training can be a more effective way of delivering leadership

development trainings for school principals as some suggest?" Prince responded that involving the principals means providing them opportunity to own the leadership development training:

> ***Prince:*** *Yes, to reduce our non-involvement. So, I think I will be very happy if it will give an opportunity to be able to say this is what I need, and in decision of training to be provided, it's an opportunity for me, I think to make best use of trainings and I'll use that training in my own school to the fullest …*

I probed Prince to explain further what he meant by the opportunity to make best use of what is provided.

> ***Prince:*** *Yea, yes training here, I think is going to make one become at ease, when you come to someone's school to provide the training in his or her site, it would mean that you can see what is happening. For me, to come and train people in their own sites means that you really want to show them how things can be done better.*

In the individual interview with Thembeka, when I asked her the same question: "Do you think on-site school leadership development training can be a more effective way of delivering leadership development trainings for school principals as some suggest? She responded:

> ***Thembeka:*** *… schools differ in geographical factors and sometimes when you are doing these trainings people who are present cannot relate to what you are saying cos of these differences, so what's the use? So, if the trainings can be done in the context where people can make sense and see and feel, so you can understand what they go through, that is what can make a difference in our leadership development.*

I enquired further from Thembeka whether the question would not be about how feasible it is, if the DoE do not have the resources to implement such individualised leadership development. Her response echoed the expressions that was also made by the participants in the focus group discussion for a clustered leadership development training for school principals coming from the same area:

> ***Thembeka:*** *But also forming clusters may be a better approach. Training for school leaders coming from the same area can help because you will be relating to what each person says or know. For instance, we went for a training in Durban and the trainer was telling us about the beach there and the talk is overly Durban what what what, and I said*

to myself, I'm from Newcastle what do I know about the beach? You see, am not relating to what the person is saying. But if we are to form clusters where we are sharing similar experiences because we're coming from same district and, then we are trained in the area. Then we will be able to relate to what we are trained on because we are on similar grounds.

This would mean that school leadership development learning is planned, and everyone involved is party to the decision as surmised below as Vuyani commented in the individual interview:

Vuyani: *I think there will be a great improvement in our practice when we engage and work with each other as colleagues in a well-planned and thought out training because it will mean it is what I want that I will get. You know what they say, planning is the key to a great success. When we come together like schools in this district, we can all work together knowing that we can benefit from our different experiences, we can learn from each other, I mean support ourselves. But you see it means if planning is done ahead it prepares you for the occasion, and you know what to expect, also in terms of your involvement and other parties too.*

These responses express common understanding and view within the focus group and individual interview, which is that the participants saw themselves as a community of school leaders and their school leadership development learning needs as embedded within their practice challenges and experiences. They saw themselves as sharing similar experiences and working within same district where certain communalities in terms of environmental and school community influences existed and shape their school leadership challenges. They also viewed their situation as a community of practitioners; they expressed a desire to learn from each other and strengthen each other using a network of structured learning and leadership development in which they are in control of their own learning as opposed to using only DoE periodic workshops. Bush, et al. (2011) and Crow (2001) affirm that the use of networking as a means of school leadership development allows for the creation of common shared interest and professional bonds among school leaders and offers opportunities for the leaders to collaborate on action learning projects. Smith (2002) maintains that adult learners are characterised by the desire to set objectives and take control of their own learning, which implies that approaches to adult learning have to emphasise helping the adult learner to learn and not on educating the learner. Aigner, et al. (2002) explains how individuals use their abilities, talents and resources as assets within the

community to help and strengthen others. Engagement in community means collaboratively working with others or peers through inspired action and learning that involve community members to take proactive actions in control of decision-making processes. As a learning community, the participants' views imply collaboratively working together in active participation in finding and enacting solutions to their school leadership development learning needs (Tamarack, 2003). Thus, in reversal of the traditional role of teacher-led learning, adult learners, as underpinned by the SCT, require untraditional role-reversal approaches where learning is collaborative and shared in ways that emphasise reciprocity in knowledge creation processes (Tamarack, 2003), and in which the learner makes their own meanings out of the learning (Hausfather, 1996).

However, it is noteworthy to report that in the individual interviews with one of the participants, a rather contrasting surmise is reached in response to school leaders' involvement in the planning and timing of school leadership development. Despite the majority agreeing in the group that consulting of the school leaders before training commences with regard to what they want or need for their leadership development programme and nature of involvement in the planning, and making leadership development relevant and timely, one divergent suggestion indicates this:

> ***Andile:*** *Yes, it is the responsibility of the individual to go for the trainings as organised by the DoE. He or she sits there and listen to what is taught then come back to their school to implement and also engage with other staff members and show them the positives of the training. On the part of the DoE, it is their duty to make sure that the trainings they invite us to is of great value to us.*

Although the school leaders had an informed suggestion of possible and relevant ideas on how their leadership development is to be determined and provided for them, in their responses, they tended to suggest a need for a shift in the DoE practices of resourcing and providing leadership development of school principals. These responses fault the DoE approach of imposing school leadership development without their involvement both in deciding the training, the form and content, and in defining what exactly are school principals' leadership development experiences and needs. The participants' responses suggest that the approach of short-circuiting the provision of school principals' leadership development training means that the DoE did not give enough attention to how leadership role is challenged in their different schools' context. A resultant

effect of this flaw is seen in the experiences of fatigue with, and disapproval of the DoE workshop trainings by the school leaders as the school principal participants' responses attest. The DoE workshop training that school principals are compelled to attend is considered as inadequate and not completely relevant to the school leadership needs of the school principals.

Hallinger's (2018) work discusses what is observed as a growing consensus, which is that a generic set of leadership practices can be adaptable to the diverse needs and constraints of different school contexts. It is perhaps this consensus that informs the resourcing and delivery of school leadership development in ways that target the leadership needs of school principals using what, according to the responses of the participants in this study, is seen as oversight conception of school leadership challenges. The participants' desires diverge from this approach to the conception of school leadership challenges, and in addition, the targeting of school leadership development needs as non-specific. Thus, the participants' responses amplify Bush and Glover's (2014) contention that it is important to examine school leadership from context in order to explore new approaches to understanding how successful school leadership responds and adapts in different contexts.

Turuk (2008) argues that meaningful learning occurs when the individual involves him- or herself in social interaction. Chaiklin (2003) concurs that a lifelong process of development is dependent on social interaction, while social learning leads to cognitive development. Thus, Crawford (1996) argues that the focus of SCT is on a learning context in which learners play an active leading role during learning. Sincero (2011) asserts that with peer collaboration, the learner can master a task that could not be achieved or done alone. The conception of the ZPD in Vygotsky's SCT presupposes an interaction between a more competent person and a less competent person involving supporting the less competent person in independent mastery of task that they initially could not achieve alone on their own (Chaiklin, 2003). Development is seen, in this way, as a function of social interaction processes achieved through participation in peer group interaction. The participants' desired approach to their leadership development show their desire for sharing and supporting each other with their experiences, which is a preference over the practice of provision of workshops that target them as homogenous. In being targeted as

homogenous, the learning content of their leadership training provided in the workshops is seen as based on assumed needs, which are different from their actual challenges and needs.

Bush and Glover (2004) explain that networking as a leadership development practice promotes professional socialisation and mutual learning, and provides potential for ideas transfer (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011). The participants' view of how their desired leadership development was to be provided agree with the notion and concept of networking. Crow (2001) explains that networking is characterised by who the participants are, what the participants are sharing, what brings the participants together and what participants add to and take from the network. Commonalities in geographical location and context of practice in terms of school district and or community, and preference for similarities in ideas and in their experiences are points the participants mention in their responses, which characterise their desire for bonding together in a network of school leaders to target or pursue their individual leadership development. However, Bush, et al. (2011) caution that networking is favoured as a mode of leadership learning and is particularly effective when structured and embarked upon with a clear purpose. What this caution implies is that while use of networking as a school leadership development practice is tenable, perhaps it will also involve considerations of how the process works; specifying the purpose, who is involved and where. According to Vanderhaar, et al. (2007) leadership is contingent on the setting.

However, Jensen (2016) points out that school leadership development cannot be guaranteed to keep pace with how actual school leadership roles are challenged. Bush (2009) affirms that there is need to consider developing school leaders from an understanding of their leadership development, which has to consider how best they can learn. Therefore, I was prompted in my next line of questioning to seek from the participants how, from their experiences, they think their leadership development can be improved upon.

5.6.3 "Who Says We Need the Department …": On Possibilities of Improving School Principals' Leadership Development

Considering the participants' views on their leadership workshop training, and also cognisant of the school leaders desires for their leadership development, I sought to find out more on their future leadership development. I probed further to ask them, if despite their compelling

responses on the appropriateness of the leadership development training that the DoE currently provides and their experiences thereof, is there not a way of improving on what is provided in these trainings by way of the approach, contents, delivery and their experiences. In the focus group discussion, the participants' responses suggest that there is room for improving on what the DoE trainings provided:

> *… what I am saying is maybe for the immediate you will not need the new knowledge you got through the workshop trainings, but one might need it at some other time and then it becomes handy. But the fact is that if it can be done for everyone according to their needs, I think our schools, learners and all will benefit more and improved learner's results, which is what we all want …*

I asked, could the training not be improved so that it can lead to you achieving the improvements and expectations you desire. The participants were of the opinion that improvement is possible, but not without their inputs.

> *I really do think that the DoE can actually make a difference when it comes to improvement of our trainings. They can start by appreciating that they gave us the jobs as school leaders and, so they can trust what we know and have had as our experiences, collective and individual …*

One of the participants suggested.

> *It is not that simple yes, or no. But now because the department wants us to do these workshops in that same way, we are doing it again. If it is all about what they want, that is where I see the problem …*

Another participant affirmed the view that the leadership development training can be incorporated into a year-end reflective appraisal providing lesson for way forward.

> *I agree with you, and I think the best way is they [DoE] will make out time after the end of the school year and we meet them to discuss our challenges for the year. In that way, no pressure, and we have ended the year and been able to think carefully how the year went by …*

However, there were other divergent views expressed during the interview discussion with the participants:

> ***Prince:*** *… hahahaha. Who says we need the department, if we really need something to be done, it means we have to do something ourselves to improve what we get? We all know that if we have to work after the school year [has] ended it will be at our cost because nobody from the government will want to go through with it given the timing …*

Yet the overwhelming view suggested by the participants in the focus group discussions was that the DoE can improve on the leadership development using inputs drawn from the experiences of the school principal.

Moloi (2007) recognises the need for training and development of school principals as a process that is of strategic importance to school transformation. The school principal participants in the current study are of the view that something needs to change about their school leadership development if the expectations in their schools are to be met. However, what needs to be changed and who drives the change are crucial questions, answers to which are fundamental to understanding what their desired school leadership development is seen to be. Yet, the responses of the participants show a willingness and desire on the part of the school principals to start deciding their school leadership development needs on their own, and how these are to be met (Piggot-Irvine et al., 2013).

Rhodes and Brundrett (2009) put emphasis on the importance of considering contextual differences and differing needs in the provision of school leadership development that has to be tailor-made to suit individual desires. Accordingly, Bush (2009) argues that the recognition and understanding of how best adults learn is an important step in considering a most appropriate way to develop school leaders. In discussing how adult learners make sense of their learning needs, Trotter (2006) explains that with adult learners, care has to be taken to focus the learning on their actual interests instead of what the teacher or learning provider believe are the learners' interests. Smith (2002) discusses that adult learning is underpinned by Knowles' theory, which emphasises involving the learner through curriculum making to behaviour modification, which encourages the learner to identify needs, set objectives and enter learning contracts. It is important therefore, that good knowledge of how adults learn is applied in school principals' leadership development if it is to provide for a responsive engagement that connects to the needs of the adult learner (Carlson, 1989).

In expounding the argument, Yan and Ehrich (2009) recognise that usually differences in both structures and systems of education across countries necessitate the need for leadership development approaches to take into cognisance sensitive cultural, social, organisational, political and economic variations in the context of practice. Therefore, one could rightly argue that an effective planning and delivery of school leadership development programmes has to be in ways that put the focus on context. But to what extent this focus has to be contextualised is perhaps the critical question. Forde (2011) opines that there will be more value addition to the planning, delivery and content of leadership development if the participants are involved in the processes of providing its content. Involving the school principals' input in the determination of the direction of their leadership development warrants their decision on their own learning goals and activities, and their being able to share ideas, experiences, and learning from practice through interaction as a community to support and strengthen each other's development (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004). The use of school principals' leadership experience on their development warrants positioning them as capable of understanding and taking responsibility for their own leadership needs. Again, the dynamic nature of the interplay between what each school principal as a peer brings to the learning community, and other peer learners' support to the learning, leads to the principals' leadership development arising from learning interactions with others (Vygotsky, 1978), particularly as adult learners (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011). It can therefore be affirmed that important lessons regarding the school principals, which has to draw from their own understandings, perceptions and experiences as adult learners and as learning community of practitioners are required for a nuanced approach to school principal's leadership development interventions.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter was about data presentation and discussion. It was divided into four themes, namely school principals' understanding of leadership development; school principals' experiences of leadership development; their leadership challenges and needs; their reflections on leadership programmes; and their desired leadership development. In the case of biographical data, I reported that the participating school principals had good and relevant qualifications to be a school principal and take part in any way towards improving leadership development. On school

principals' understanding of leadership development, I found that leadership development can be an identification of, and matching experiences with trainings; can be as a further development and as well as context-driven exercise. Concerning school principals' experiences of leadership development, I found that school principals required training that targets meeting their individual and unique needs.

Regarding school principal's leadership challenges and needs, the principals pointed to typical challenges they faced in their schools that shaped their expectations of leadership development and in return they defined what they considered as their needs. On their reflections on leadership programmes and their desired leadership development findings disclosed that leadership development is perhaps more valuable to the school principals if centred on their individual and collective needs. Overall, from findings I noted that school principals are very much interested in improved leadership for their school; however, in order to grant them their desires; leadership development providers should endeavour to involve school principals while deciding on the "how" and "what" of their leadership development.

CHAPTER SIX
LESSONS FROM THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I reflect on the lessons from the study regarding the perceived and desired leadership development of school principals. To understand these key issues, I first provide a recap of the research journey to show the essence of each of the five chapters of this report. I move on to explain lessons that can be learnt regarding school principals perceived and desired leadership development. I dwell on these lessons based on the findings as they relate to the critical research questions and how school principals perceived and desired leadership development can improve practice. Finally, I conclude with my final thoughts.

6.2 A Recap of the Research Journey

This study emanated from personal observations and existing reports from research on school leadership development in South Africa, which tended to highlight three important features: 1. School leadership development programmes are fragmented across provinces and between providers (Mathibe, 2007; Van der Westhuizen, 1991); 2. A need exists for school leadership development to draw on practice experiences and use CoPs (Mathibe, 2007; Naicker, et al., 2014), which implies understanding school principals' perceptions of their need within their own contexts; 3. Current approaches and content of school leadership development programmes, heavily influenced by international literature, expound methodologies that are perhaps not completely suited and are difficult to apply in South African schools' context (Bush, et al., 2011; Ngcobo, 2012; Walker, 2017). What these suggested is that leadership development programmes have tended to be more ad hoc and reactive than strategic. But it is important to note that in the literature, context characterises school leadership discourse (Christie, 2010).

Although the context of the school policy framework in South Africa is very clear on both leadership and management functions of school leaders, it is not completely known what the school principals' desires for developing them as school leaders is. This contention highlights

school leadership as an area of challenge that remains obscured by lack of nuanced evidence of leadership experiences of school leaders.

Yet school leadership is an item under daily societal spotlight. Perhaps, major concerns and interests in school leadership are due to the most obvious reasons. First what transformation is or is not is shaped in the dominant societal gauge that appears to see transformation only in terms of resources and visualised changes in school. Improvement in physical infrastructure, school access and learners' success are visible more than the processes and leadership inputs that drive these outputs. Second, is the "hype" that follows accounts of learner performance, that is, fixations on whether learners perform poorly or exceptionally in school-leaving exams such as Senior School Certificate. The challenge therefore continues to be how to understand and unpack the school leaders' experiences of the day-to-day running of their schools, which in fact largely contribute to these other visible outcomes of school performance.

Thus, the rationale for the current study is seen in the need for more extensive research on the school principal's leadership development that focuses on the context of their practice drawing from their own voices on leadership development. Secondly, from the personal development point of view, it is considered important to understand school leadership development from school principals as individuals. Leadership development impacts school principals' experiences and their skills, attitudes, and ability to cope with challenges, and influence outcomes in their schools as individual school principals. Thirdly, it is considered important to examine how school principals make cognitive sense of their leadership development needs. How do they make determinations of what their school leadership development needs are? Knowledge of school leadership development that draws on the school principals' understanding of their experiences and desired leadership development is valuable and potentially contributes to scholarship and the practice and policy of educational leadership and management in South Africa.

This research report comprises six chapters. Chapter One provided an introduction of the problem in detail. In this chapter I provided the background and context of the study. I formulated the critical questions that guided the study as follows:

1. What do the selected school principals understand as school leadership development?
2. How have the school principals experienced leadership development in the past?
3. What leadership development pathways do the school principals desire and why do they desire these pathways?
4. What can be learnt regarding leadership development for school principals?

Therein I identified the research problem as the need to understand from the school principals themselves what they think they have experienced in terms of leadership development and what they consider their needs to be and what they desire in their leadership development.

In Chapter Two I reviewed literature. I structured the chapter in four main sections. In the first main section the major issues emerging are in defining leadership. I defined leadership as referring to the ability to encourage others to work together by shaping the goals, actions and their ability to perform better. I discussed theories, such as instructional leadership, managerial leadership, transformational leadership, distributed leadership and contingent leadership. The second section explored leadership development, school leadership development and different approaches to leadership development. It emerged that there are a several methods and strategies to leadership development including mentoring and coaching, portfolio keeping, reflective thinking and networking; these showed the complexity of the challenges of school leadership. It also points to nuances of school leadership development and its contextuality in terms of school leadership roles. The third section reviewed emerging trends in school leadership development. Such trends include school leadership development versus cultural shift, context, professional learning community, CoPs, system-wide change, effectiveness, relational processes in leadership, co-creating professional development, school leader expectations, sensitivity to diverse school contexts and criticisms of the central leadership development framework in China. These trends could be as a result of the development of school leaders being a priority in the educational policy agenda of different country. The last section examined related recent studies. It emerged that the changing context of education and expectations from school principals are becoming increasingly focal areas of educational leadership and management research.

In Chapter Three I discussed the study's theoretical framework. I indicated that the framework is made up of three theories. These theories include Sociocultural Theory by Vygotsky (1978). The Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) Assets-Based Theory, and Knowles' (1984) Adult Learning Theory. While ZPD and MKO were used to explore and identify the importance of peer learning, mobilising assets within the communities and mentoring of school principals in their leadership role, Knowles' (1984) Adult Learning Theory complemented it as a lens used in understanding the processes of how adults learn.

Chapter Four discussed the research methodology. In that chapter I positioned the study within the interpretivist paradigm on the basis that to understand situations surrounding their leadership development focusing on their perceived and desired form of leadership development. I adopted an exploratory case study research design because there was need to explore the leaders' first-hand experiences and perspectives. I also reported that I generated data through semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions and explained that these were appropriate because they were complementary and allowed for flexibility. I also explained that I was reflective in using both methods, which helped in discovery and elaboration of information that is important to participants but might have been overlooked or omitted by the participants in using one or the other of the methods.

Chapter Five presented and discussed the data. The data chapter is made up of seven main sections and four main themes. The four themes were generated based on the research questions. Theme one is on school principals' understanding of leadership development. Their understanding of leadership development is that it involves training and supporting them in leadership skills and knowledge that is relevant, not just generic, tailored to the leadership problems that challenge school leadership in their individual schools. This suggests that their understanding is influenced by not only global pressure, societal trends and expectations but also the local realities of their practice in terms of the problems that impact their individual school leadership. Theme two highlights school principals' experiences of leadership development. It reveals that targeting the school principal's development training should include programmes that aim to meet individual and unique needs. Theme three is on leadership challenges and needs. Some of the challenges that emerged included issues of discipline, relationship issues, threats to

learners and educators, learner pregnancy, gang violence and stakeholder's commitment and involvement. Their needs included unmet expectations implying that leadership development should be planned in such a way that it will be deliberate and become a process that aims to position leaders to become effective in their role. Combined, these shaped their expectations of leadership development and defined what they considered as meeting their leadership needs. Finally, theme four is on school principals' desired leadership development. Their desired leadership development included individualised leadership development training, context-driven types of leadership development training and improved leadership development training that will use inputs drawn from the experiences of the school principal. These suggest that their school leadership development is externally determined without consultations with them, the principals.

On the basis of the research process I have described above, I arrived at lessons learnt through this journey in the next session.

6.3 Lessons That Can Be Learnt Regarding School Principals' Leadership Development

The important lessons from the school principals' leadership development are summed up under the following points.

1. The nature and basis for school leadership development of school principals need to be contextually problematised and understood.

   The school principals' view of their leadership development reaffirms that it is a need that differs from one principal and context to another. Accordingly, leadership development should be responsive to leadership needs, which vary from school principal in school A to school principal in school B. Therefore, their view of leadership development and awareness of their own leadership challenges as well as their desire to be actively involved in learning in order to meet their school leadership needs have to be taken into account in their leadership development.

2. As adult learners, school leaders desire to take responsibilities for their own learning; setting the objectives and determining what to take away from the learning.

The responses of the school principals regarding their experiences indicate that they are hardly engaged regarding their input to the content and designing of their leadership development as adults. Whereas a varying distinction between how children and adults learn exists (Knowles, 1984), it is not the case that this is recognised in the present school leadership development approach for the school principals.

3. Varying approaches to school leadership development provisions including on-site training are desirable to school principals in contrast to the use of one and the same style of leadership training.

   The school principals' experiences affirm the need for variation and relevance in resourcing school leadership development. Piggot-Irvine, et al. (2013) points out that school leaders demand leadership development that is designed in ways to better enable them acquire knowledge and skills useful in day-to-day running of their schools. For an example, considering themselves as assets (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993), the participants emphasise that learning by sharing their knowledge and practice experiences within a community of practice can be an option to facilitating their leadership development.

4. The school leaders' desired areas of leadership development are synonymous with what is commonly outlined in the literature. What is seen as variant is not the "what", which is subject of their leadership development, but the "how", which is the processes of providing the leadership development.

   Whereas the school principals' areas of desired leadership development conform to the generic and already known findings in the literature like administrative competency, financial management competency, human relations and stakeholder management, curriculum development, pedagogical leadership, policy implementation, school discipline, stakeholder involvement, and so on. Their views of how these challenges their role and therefore how to attend to their leadership development needs to these regards vary. The view of school principals' leadership development from a fixated perspective of common leadership challenges and using an across-the-board consideration of school leadership learning needs, to rationalise how leadership development is provided, is seen as erroneous from the school

principal participants' responses. Their responses imply that school principals' individual understanding, experiences and needs should become central in determining how school leadership development is provided. This is because a generic and non-specific provision in both content and delivery style hardly permits a close attention that the individual school principal learning needs demands. In other words, the "what" of school principals desired leadership development needs, merely seen from seemingly commonalities, often overshadow the "how" consideration, which is important. Furthermore, there is need to take account of what the school principals considered as their unique needs. This would imply that as adult learners (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011) their needs will mean different ways of learning that are specific, and reflective of their own practice situations.

However, some critical questions also abound, particularly relating to the school principals' desired leadership development. First, the challenge of deciding on what is appropriate leadership development for them presents a problem given that feasibility and applicability of individualised leadership development to suit all principals will be difficult to attain. Notwithstanding, context is an important consideration in developing school leaders to be fit for the problems and issues that challenge effective leadership in their schools, but the feasibility of providing individualised school leadership development training within the South African school system is an equally important point for consideration. Second, negating the school leaders' prior experiences and their say on their leadership development was seen by them as worrying. Their demand that their experiences as adult learners come to the fore in leadership development provision means that it is important to involve the school principals in decisions regarding how to develop them as school leaders. This seems an opportunity item that has been hardly recognised. Meanwhile, involving their valued and varying prior experiences in the designing and delivery of the leadership development for them will result in mutual benefits. Promoting a community of practice, which will allow for each being a peer scaffolding support to one another (Vygotsky, 1978) would then mean that their learning will be supported with, and in the community through prior experiences they share as school principals.

The three-pillar model in Figure 6.1, presents a conceptual model to understand school principals' leadership development in South Africa in terms of the perceived, desired and suggested way forward in line with the findings of this study.

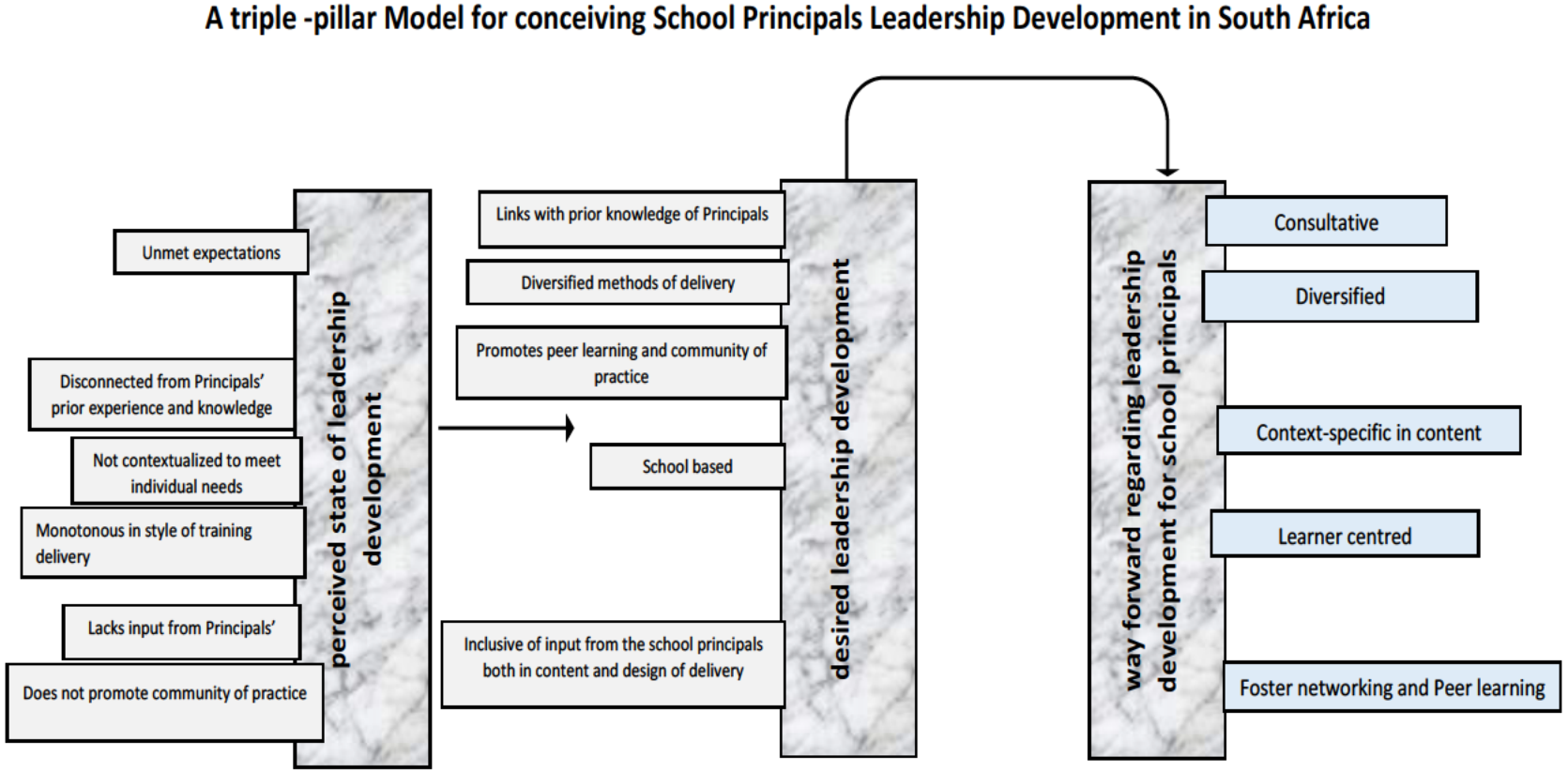

Figure 6.1: Three-pillar model for school principals' leadership development

In the first pillar on perceived state of leadership development, the findings suggest school principals feel a sense of disconnectedness in the way they tended to construct their current state of school leadership development. Their perceptions of leadership development as not promoting community of practice, lacking the input of principals, being monotonous, not meeting their individual needs and expectations are informed by understanding of leadership development from the way their roles in their schools are challenged. Their perception of current state of leadership development rests on a logic that school leadership development is not a need that is generic. Their view is that their need and their leadership development cannot be separate things, which means their needs decide what should be their leadership development. Along these lines of understanding, the views cast school leadership development as not in isolation of, but critically a response to, specific leadership needs. These views also speak to the way they think of desired leadership development.

The second pillar on the desired leadership development suggests that school principals want their leadership development focus to centre on school leadership challenges that exist at a given time and place. Their desired leadership development is one that its approach should be on working with them as adult learners as opposed to educating them as learners. Their desire is to determine their leadership development learning needs and use their abilities, talents, and resources as assets within a learning community. Thus, desired leadership development is one that fosters learning in a community of practitioners, using cluster networks of structured learning. In addition, they want school leadership development which is shaped by school settings. Their preference is for leadership development that is localised in their schools in tune with their varied experiences.

In the third pillar on the way forward regarding leadership development for school principals, I drew on the disjuncture between the current perceptions of desires for their leadership and the possible way forward for school principals' leadership development to contrast five flag points: that is, school principals' leadership development should be consultative, diversified, context specific, learner centred, and fostering networking and peer learning. The desired school leadership development in the second pillar suggests a preference for learning that value experiences in practice settings. This explicates the discontent the school principals felt in their

prior experiences of leadership development which inform their perceptions of school leadership development. The way forward therefore warrants making the case for leadership development that does not take for granted the fact that the school principals desire to see themselves as actively involved in their own leadership development.

6.4 Final Thoughts

Current concern and interests, both in practice and research, among school stakeholders and school leadership scholars in South Africa are geared towards improving school principals' leadership development. It is important that in all these, the school principals' own understandings of their leadership development; how they experience it and what they desire to see as the leadership development that works for them; making them fit for purpose in their role in schools, is not overlooked. The fact that context characterises school leadership discourse in the literature (Christie, 2010) means that important attention needs to be given to understanding the school principals and the realities of their school leadership practice from their own experiences.

Findings in this present study revealed that the leadership development provided is not seen by the school principals as in line with their needs in order to effectively lead in their schools. The present findings thus attest to the contention that the type of leadership development programmes the school principals should be receiving, the regularity of such programmes, who determines and provides the leadership development programmes and what the impact the leadership development should make in the school principal's leadership role and practices are critical in problematising the issues of school principals' leadership development in any given context (Bush, et al. 2011; Kgwete, 2015; Mathibe, 2007). Similar studies conclude that school principals tend to perceive the school leadership development programmes being provided as not focused on their leadership development needs (Mathibe, 2007). Other studies suggest the need to contextualise school principals' leadership development based on local situations (Chikoko, et al., 2014; Piggot-Irvine, et al. 2013). This present study posits that the school principals' leadership development pathway is more likely to affect how effectively the principals enact their leadership roles if grounded in the realities of their context and needs, knowledge and experiences. Yet there seems to be little evidence of leadership development programmes that

draw on the experiences, expectations and desires of the school principals, and that are determined and or decided upon by involving the stretch of experiences, practice challenges and needs of school principals' in the diverse school contexts

Understanding the importance of localised experiences and knowledge and drawing on the aspirations and desires of school principals are necessary first steps towards responding to the contextual constraints and latitudes to school principals' leadership development in South Africa. Having said that, it is important to point out that the school principals' understanding of context is slightly limited. Individual schools and school practice communities on their own are indeed a context but they also belong to a broader, bigger context, for an example, school district context, provincial context, and the much broader South African school system context. In their emphasis on their individual school settings dynamics as particular contexts, which of course as I have earlier pointed out is important to acknowledge as such, they however seem not to see or recognise that theirs are not contexts in isolation of broader frames of school contexts in as much as context is concerned. It is possible to argue here that it is of same importance to also understand context from a broader sense and balance the significance or emphasis on the local with broader spheres of contextual possibilities, "cans and cannots", in school principals' leadership development.

Together the three pillars, as explained in the model above, indicate the perception or understanding, desire and possibilities of leadership development of school principals going forward. In the third pillar, I suggest that school principals' leadership development should foster possibilities of drawing on and working with the school principals' vast experiences and contextual knowledge of their practice settings, by which I mean their taking the role of an active rather than passive receiver of leadership development. This role, beyond simply recognising and providing them with leadership development in the schools or that match specific contexts of practice as they advocate, also requires principals to take direct responsibility for acting upon their involvement in their leadership development and recognising the desirability of leadership development that could easily and practicably translated across contexts: school, district, provincial and national. This is the change that needs to be seen in school principals' leadership development.

In consideration of the importance of direct responsibility and involvement of school principals in their leadership development and in view of the suggested way forward as I discussed above, I would recommend the need for further research to explore:

1. How best, and what opportunities exist for involving the school principals' input in all phases of their leadership development programme, including from planning to delivery.
2. Examine what can be learnt from this and similar contexts about the importance and value of school principals' practice experience as a key influence on their perceptions of leadership development.
3. The role and possibilities of multi-modal styles and approaches – on-site and off-site – to school leadership development programmes for South African school principals and in similar school systems.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Permission to Department Of Education to Conduct Research within Amajuba District

University of KwaZulu-Natal

School of Education Leadership and Management

PhD Education Research Project:

Researcher: Nnenna Fidelia Ezeonwuachusi

Contact (082 269 2441)

Supervisor: Prof Vitalis Chikoko (031 260 2639)

The District officer,

Department of Education

Amajuba District

05 January 2015.

Dear Sir,

Permission to Undertake Research with School Principals in Amajuba District

My name is Nnenna Fidelia Ezeonwuachusi. I am a Ph.D. research student under the supervision of Professor V. Chikoko in the School of Educational Leadership and Management (ELM) in Edgewood Campus University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am conducting a research study to explore the **Possibilities of organic leadership development of school principals in KwaZulu-Natal.** I intend to use some of these principals as part of my participants to achieve the aim of the study.

The aim of this research study is to explore the possibilities of organic leadership development of school principals in KwaZulu-Natal. The study will be exploring from the principals experiences of leadership development programmes how possible it is to develop organically programmes/activities which will equip them (principals) with skills that will aid them in developing further their abilities to cope as principals and also able to face the challenges they encounter at their respective schools and beyond.

I am seeking consent for principals' participation, which will involve extensive interview sessions, he/she also participating in a focus group interview and also each principal's keeping a journal. The interviews will be audio-recorded. Consent to audio-record the interview in formal writing will be sort from the principals. The audio- recorded information will be transcribed for the purposes of this research study. The audio-recordings and transcribed text will be stored at the School of Education University of KwaZulu-Natal for a period of 5 years. At the end of this period, the audiotape and texts will be eventually destroyed.

Principal's participation in this research is voluntary, and continued participation is also by choice. The principals have the right to choose not to participate, and to withdraw from participating at any time. There is no penalty if principals chooses not to participate in this research or chooses to withdraw from participation at any time.

The outcome of this research may be published. In the event of this being the case, the principal's name and identity will not be used. All information the principals will give concerning this research will be confidential. A code or number will identify the information the principals provides. Only authorized persons from the School of Education University of KwaZulu-Natal will have access to review the research records that contains principals' information.

Information collected from the research participants for the purposes of this research study will be cross-checked with the principals when analysed for confirmation and validation and any other feedback in terms of agreement or disagreement the information given during the interview

There is no benefit for the participants participating in this research.

If there is any question you wish to ask concerning the research study or the participation of principal's in this research please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor using the telephone numbers shown above.

I will be very grateful as my request will be granted.

Yours Sincerely,

……

Researcher's signature

Appendix B: Permission To Conduct Research

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane Tel: 033 392 1004 Ref.:2/4/8/350

Mrs NF Ezeonwuachusi
PO Box 22628
NEWCASTLE
2940

Dear Mrs Ezeonwuachusi

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"POSSIBILITIES FOR AN 'ORGANIC' LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: A CASE OF EIGHT PRINCIPALS IN KWAZULU-NATAL",** 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 15 February 2015 to 15 February 2016.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education:

    Amajuba District

[redacted]

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 03 February 2015

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...dedicated to service and performance
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004**beyond the call of duty**
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: WWW.kzneducation.gov.za

Appendix C: Letter of Permission to School Principals

Letter of permission to school principals

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DISCIPLINE OF EDUCATION LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

Dear Research Participant,

PhD Education Research Project:

Researcher: Nnenna Fidelia Ezeonwuachusi on nenna4@yahoo.com and 082 269 2441

Supervisor: Prof Vitalis Chikoko on chikokov@ukzn.ac.za and 031 260 2639

Research office: Ms. P. Ximba on ximbap@ukzn.ac.za and 031 260 3587

I, **Nnenna Fidelia Ezeonwuachusi,** a PhD candidate, at the School of Education, discipline of Education Leadership, Management and policy of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, hereby request your participation in my research project entitled: **Possibilities of Organic leadership development of School Principals in KwaZulu-Natal.** The aim of this research is to explore possibilities of principal developing themselves in their own way. The research study is significant because it is hoped to contribute to the body of knowledge on leadership development of school principals. Its outcome can also contribute to the basis of re-thinking how leadership

development programmes are determined and provided, particularly in terms of improving on the challenges principals face in KwaZulu-Natal and beyond.

In this study I request your participation in the following, first to participate in a face-to-face interview, focus group interview and keeping a reflective journal. You will also be required to sign a declaration of consent. It is my intention that results from these is hoped to contribute significantly to the aim of the research study and also bringing out clearly and evidently the voices of school principals.

Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions or raise concerns you may have about participating in this study. You may also choose to contact me, my supervisor or the research officer on the details provided (see above).

Thank you for your anticipated corporation.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Signature of Researcher

Date : _____

Appendix D: Informed Consent Letters

Informed Consent Letter (Individual Interviews)

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DISCIPLINE OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Dear Research Participant,

PhD Education Research Project:

Researcher: Nnenna Fidelia Ezzeonwuachusi (082 692441)

Supervisor: Prof Vitalis Chikoko (031 260 2639)

I, **Nnenna Fidelia Ezzeonwuachusi,** a PhD candidate, at the School of Education, discipline of Education Leadership and Management, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, hereby request your participation in my research project entitled: **Possibilities of Organic leadership development of School Principals in KwaZulu-Natal.**

The aim of this research study is to explore possibilities of principal organically developing a leadership development programmes for themselves. The research study is significant because it will contribute to the body of knowledge on leadership development of school principals. It will particularly be useful in terms of providing findings that are pertinent and important for thinking new ways of leadership development in South Africa as a whole. Its outcome can also contribute

to the basis of re-thinking how leadership development programmes are determined and provided, particularly in terms of improving on the challenge's principals face in KwaZulu-Natal and beyond.

It is my intension that results from this interview contribute significantly to this aim of the research study. Your face-to-face and focus group interviews will be useful in terms of bringing out clearly and evidently the voices of principals. The research project will involve different interviews of participants from the Department of Education Amajuba district

Please be aware that your participation in this research project is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. Your consent to participate in this research project has no monetary gain attached. You will be required to sign a declaration of consent form. All records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the **School of Education, UKZN** and strict compliance will be followed to ensure your confidentiality and anonymity. The duration of the interview will be a maximum of **55 minutes** at your own convenient time. I will share the information and analysis drawn from the interviews for this research project with you for confirmation and validation and any other feedback in terms of agreement or divergence of these with the information given during the interview.

The interview will be conduct at a place convenient for you. The interview will be audio-taped. It is only the researchers working on this project that can have access to the interview tape recordings. The recorded tape will be transcribed for the purposes of this research. The tape recordings and the transcriptions will **be archived for a period of five -years by the School of Education University of KwaZulu-Natal** and then destroyed thereafter.

Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions or raise concerns you may have about participating in this study. You may also choose to contact me or my supervisor at the numbers provided (see above).

I am hoping you will choose to participate in this research study.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Signature of Researcher

Date : _____

This page is to be retained by participant

Informed Consent Letter (Focus Group Interview)

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DISCIPLINE OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Dear Research Participant,

PhD Education Research Project:

Researcher: Nnenna Fidelia Ezeonwuachusi (082 269 2441)

Supervisor: Prof Vitalis Chikoko (031 260 2639)

I, **Nnenna Fidelia Ezeonwuachusi,** a PhD candidate, at the School of Education, discipline of Education Leadership and Management, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, hereby request your participation in my research project entitled: **Possibilities of Organic leadership development of School Principals in KwaZulu-Natal.**

The aim of this research study is to explore possibilities of principals organically developing a leadership development programmes for themselves. The research study is significant because it will contribute to the body of knowledge on leadership development of school principals. It will particularly be useful in terms of providing findings that are pertinent and important for thinking new ways of leadership development in South Africa as a whole. Its outcome can also contribute to the basis of re-thinking how leadership development programmes are determined and

provided, particularly in terms of improving on the challenge's principals face in KwaZulu-Natal and beyond.

It is my intension that results from this interview contribute significantly to this aim of the research study. Your focus group interviews will be useful in terms of bringing out clearly and evidently the voices of principals. The research project will involve different interviews (face-to-face and focus group) and also keeping of a reflective journal by participants from the Department of Education Amajuba district

Please be aware that your participation in this research project is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. Your consent to participate in this research project has no monetary gain attached. You will be required to sign a declaration of consent form. All records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the **School of Education, UKZN** and strict compliance will be followed to ensure your confidentiality and anonymity. The duration of the interview will be a maximum of **55 minutes** at your own convenient time. We will share the information and analysis drawn from the interviews for this research project with you for confirmation and validation and any other feedback in terms of agreement or divergence of these with the information given during the interview.

The interview will be conducted at a place convenient for you. The interview will be audio-taped. It is only the researchers working on this project that can have access to the interview tape recordings. The recorded tape will be transcribed for the purposes of this research. The tape recordings and the transcriptions will **be archived for a period of five (5) years by the School of Education University of KwaZulu-Natal** and then destroyed thereafter.

Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions or raise concerns you may have about participating in this study. You may also choose to contact me or my supervisor at the numbers provided (see above).

I am hoping you will choose to participate in this research study.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Signature of Researcher

Date : _____

This page is to be retained by participant

Informed Consent Letter (Reflective journal)

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DISCIPLINE OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Dear Research Participant,

PhD Education Research Project:

Researcher: Nnenna Fidelia Ezeonwuachusi (082 2692441)

Supervisor: Prof Vitalis Chikoko (031 260 2639)

I, **Nnenna Fidelia Ezeonwuachusi,** a PhD candidate, at the School of Education, discipline of Education Leadership and Management, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, hereby request your participation in my research project entitled: **Possibilities of Organic leadership development of School Principals in KwaZulu-Natal.**

The aim of this research study is to explore possibilities of principal organically developing a leadership development programmes for themselves. The research study is significant because it will contribute to the body of knowledge on leadership development of school principals. It will particularly be useful in terms of providing findings that are pertinent and important for thinking new ways of leadership development in South Africa as a whole. Its outcome can also contribute to the basis of re-thinking how leadership development programmes are determined and provided, particularly in terms of improving on the challenges principals face in KwaZulu-Natal and beyond.

It is my intension that results from this interview contribute significantly to this aim of the research study. Your input from your journal entry will be useful in terms of bringing out clearly

and evidently the voices of principals. The research project will involve different interviews (face-to-face and focus group) and also keeping of a reflective journal by participants from the Department of Education Amajuba district.

Please be aware that your participation in this research project is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. Your consent to participate in this research project has no monetary gain attached. You will be required to sign a declaration of consent form. All records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the **School of Education, UKZN** and strict compliance will be followed to ensure your confidentiality and anonymity. The duration of the reflection will be from February 2015 until April 2015. I will share the information and analysis drawn from the reflections of the journal for this research project with you for confirmation and validation and any other feedback in terms of agreement or divergence of these with the information given during the journal entry.

For the journal entry to be successful, I will provide the needed resources for journal keeping. It is only the researchers working on this project that can have access to the journals. The journals will be transcribed for the purposes of this research. The reflective journals and the transcriptions will **be archived for a period of five (5) years by the School of Education University of KwaZulu-Natal** and then destroyed thereafter.

Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions or raise concerns you may have about participating in this study. You may also choose to contact me or my supervisor at the numbers provided (see above).

I am hoping you will choose to participate in this research study.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Signature of Researcher

Date : _____

This page is to be retained by participant

Appendix E: Declaration Of Consent

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DISCIPLINE OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

PhD Education Research Project:

Researcher: Nnenna Fidelia Ezeonwuachusi (082 2692441)

Supervisor: Prof Vitalis Chikoko (031 260 2639)

Thank you for your agreeing to participate.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I…… (full-names of the participant) having read and understand the contents of this document and the aim and nature of the research project, hereby consent to participating in the research project. Furthermore, (please tick the relevant choice)

	I <u>do consent</u> to this interview being audio-taped
	I <u>do not consent</u> to this interview being audio-taped

I have been informed and I am aware that I am participating in this research voluntarily. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research project at any time without negative consequences to me.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE

…… ……

This page is to be retained by researcher.

Appendix F: Field Questions

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (Face-to-face) FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Phase A: face-to-face Interview 1

Leadership development needs of school principals

1. What leadership development programme/training have you been engaged in?
2. Is there what you would love to develop further which did not happen in the training you were engaged in and why? (What areas do you need to develop to enhance your role as a school leader)?
3. How does the training you had previously match with your leadership needs?
4. Do you believe there is need for leadership development on your part? Why/why not?

Leadership development approaches of school principals

1. What would you consider to be how your leadership needs can be met?
2. What is the nature of leadership development programmes you have engaged in: external or internal?
3. How were you consulted prior to the leadership development programme you have been engaged in to ascertain your leadership needs for training?
4. How do you think your leadership development needs differ from what (content) you were offered in the programme?
5. Do you consider these programmes you engaged in adequate in equipping you with skills for your role as a school principal and why?
6. What would you like to be developed?
7. And how would you like to be developed?

INTERVIEW PHASE 2 (Focus group)

Phase 2:

Focus group interview 1 (intervention)

- What would you like to achieve for your school through leadership development?
- What need/s would you like to be developed during leadership development?
- How would you like your role as a school principal to be considered during deciding on leadership development programme and why?
- As a school principal what are the needs (leadership competencies) you consider important to be develop for effective leadership role?
- In what way will your identified needs influence school outcomes? (educational objectives)
- What professional/leadership development content would you value?
- In what way/s do you think these needs can be adequately targeted through trainings?
- How do you see leadership development programme relate to improving school central activity of teaching and learning?

INTERVIEW PHASE 3 (face-to-face interview 2)

Phase 3: face-to-face interview 2

Responds to organic leadership development

- What do you think about leadership development you as a principal decided on?
- How do you think these leadership development content you want can be done (put into practice)
- Do you consider organically developed programmes as useful to meeting your leadership development need for the role of school principal?