EXPLORING ETHICAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN CHALLENGING TOWNSHIP SCHOOL CONTEXTS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

BY

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SUPERVISOR: DR S.E. MTHIYANE

DATE OF SUBMISSION: JANUARY 2020

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A thesis submitted in the fulfilment of the academic requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the College of Humanities: School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

SUPERVISOR: DR S.E. MTHIYANE

DATE OF SUBMISSION: JANUARY 2020

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Thulani Dladla, declare that this research report: "**Exploring Ethical Leadership Practices in Challenging Township School Contexts: A Multiple Case Study"** is my own original work and that:

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This thesis has been submitted with / without my approval

_____

Dr S.E. Mthiyane (Supervisor)

January 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This thesis is especially dedicated to:

My late parents, Mr Ndabezweni and Hluphekile, who were truly a blessing to me. Thank you for raising me, and for teaching me to understand that only the sky is the limit.

My beautiful wife, Ziningi this is your achievement as well, your unwavering support through thick and thin has yielded this success. Thank you so much.

My children: Mhleli, Mnqobi, and Sonwabiso, I highly appreciated your support and understanding as, at times, I had to come home very late while you had already retired to your beds.

ABSTRACT

This qualitative and interpretivist study sought to explore the conceptualisation and enactment of ethical leadership by school principals and teachers in challenging township school contexts. A multiple case study was conducted with six school principals and twelve post level 1 educators in the Pinetown District, KwaZulu-Natal. The study was underpinned by these frameworks: Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) Multiple Ethical Paradigm and Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership: African Humanism. Purposive sampling was used to identify the research participants, while semi-structured interviews were employed to generate data which was analysed thematically. The findings show that school principals and post level 1 educators had a profound understanding of ethics (propriety, compassion, care, empathy, honest and trustworthiness, role modelling; collaboration and teamwork); however, these were not properly practised in the schools. The participants understood the need to nurture and foster an ethical environment, yet this seemed elusive or difficult to implement. A code of ethics and better communication were suggested as necessary for the creation of trust and elimination of conflicts in the workplace. The findings further show that some unethical practices were caused partly by the pressure to achieve set departmental academic results and standards, greed in schools, and poor monitoring at all levels in the system. Further, the lack of secure and reliable platforms to report unethical practices was raised as a serious hindrance to ethical leadership in schools. While the study findings acknowledge the overwhelming impact of contextual factors on ethical leadership practices in the researched schools, successful, visionary and ethical school leaders should nonetheless have the courage to stand for what is right, be able to adapt, reflect, transform and influence the context to promote school success, they should not be constrained by it. Hence, despite the challenging nature of the township school contexts and the tumultuous, corrupt environment the research participants face they should maintain unimpeachable honesty and integrity if their schools are not only to survive the challenging times but to remain vibrant and flourishing centres of academic excellence.

19 June 2017

Mr Thulani Dladla (9609076)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Dladla,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1304/016D
Project title: Exploring ethical leadership practices of school principals in multiple-challenging township school contexts: A case study

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 18 August 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

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

....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr SE Mthiyane
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
Cc School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

Exploring Ethical leadership Practices in Challenging

Township School Contexts: A Multiple Case Study

By

Thulani Dladla

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Supervisor: Dr S.E Mthiyane

Date of submission: January 2020

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

There have been expressions of concern for the declining ethical leadership standards in the Department of Basic Education in South Africa (Corruption Watch Report, 2014). This report reveals that some South African schools are becoming fertile grounds for corruption and fingers school principals as the number one culprits (Corruption Watch Report, 2014). Manyaka and Nkuna (2014) contend that the phenomenon of corruption and other unethical practices is a common problem and considered particularly troublesome in developing countries (De Graaf, 2007; Denoeux, 2007), including South Africa. Thus, it is no surprise that scholarly research concerning ethical leadership is on the rise (Avey, Palanski & Walumbwa, 2010). The challenge of ethical leadership has become a pervasive issue for leaders and academics in a variety of fields (Avey, Palanski & Walumbwa, 2010). Ciulla (2005) posits that we cannot begin to understand subjects like ethics and leadership without research from a variety of disciplines. Winston (2007) also contends that ethical leadership and ethical decision-making in organisations should be based on accountability to a range of stakeholder groups such as school community, the parents, the Department of Education and other stakeholders. Drawing from Avey, Palanski, and Walumbwa (2010), there is a great need for a research study of this type to be carried out.

1.2 Background to the study

The study reported here was located at six township schools in the Pinetown District of KwaZulu-Natal. The schools chosen are three primary schools and three secondary schools. The pass percentage is not stable in all the institutions under study; they fluctuate below and above the threshold of 60%, as determined by the Department of Basic Education. Sullivan (2009) contends that, while educators may be bound by any number of codes of ethics as established by governing agencies and professional associations, ethical educational leaders must choose to govern themselves by the highest of standards.

However, Ciulla (2005) states that leaders are imperfect human beings and have moral weaknesses too. Further, Ciulla (2005) argues that these weaknesses (of leaders) are commensurate with the power, visibility, and size of their constituencies. Therefore, it has to be borne in leaders' minds that people are watching their steps and it is easy for people to identify the leaders' weaknesses as people look up to leaders and expect leaders to strive for

perfection. In contrast, Sullivan (2009) suggests that it is essential that ethical school leaders seek wisdom and knowledge from God and that they trust in Him for insight. Moreover, for Sullivan (2009), leaders are visionaries with passion who see the bigger picture and look toward creating an improved future of their followers

Similarly, Columbo (2009) posits that a leader is considered ethical when inward virtues direct the conduct of the leader in the decision-making process. Hence, followers simply become the beneficiaries of leaders leading a virtuous life. Similarly, ethical leadership is about healing and energising powers of love, recognising that leadership is a reciprocal relation with followers (Mihelič, Lipičnik, & Tekavčič, 2010). Therefore, Marcy, Gentry, and McKinnon (2008) recommend that leaders develop a specific strategy related to ethically influencing followers and gaining trust. Moreno (2010) argues that ethical leaders can influence followers by demonstrating consistent conduct, proper actions, moral ways of being an ethical leader, and leaders doing what they say. Further, Mihelič, Lipičnik, and Tekavčič (2010) posit that a leader's mission is to serve and support while leader's passion for leading emerges from compassion. These researchers all assert that leaders serve as role models and demonstrate the behavioural boundaries within an organisation. Furthermore, Mihelič *et al.* contend that employees learn about values from watching leaders in action. The latter view requires that leaders be mindful of their steps. Moreno (2010) corroborates this latter view as he argues that even a small gap between what the leader says what the leader does creates ethical dilemmas for followers. Thus, Moreno (2010) asserts that an ethical leader is one who has no gap between action and words.

Plano, Young, and Lavery (2010) contend that one of the most serious challenges facing organisations nowadays is the impoverished ethical behaviour and non-existence of ethical leadership. A plethora of corrupt activities, as identified by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2006), involve bid-rigging, collusion by leaders, fraudulent bids, fraud in contract performance, fraud in audit inquiries and bribery, to mention a few. In addition, there is wide-spread reporting of corruption and other unethical practices in both print and electronic media that involves maladministration and misappropriation of school funds by school principals, on one hand, while, on the other hand, learners and teachers are suffering due to lack of basic resources at schools (Corruption Watch Report, 2014). These unethical behaviours have become so regular since little or nothing is being done to reprimand the culprits who are squandering public finances; instead, they are redeployed from one school to another. It is

therefore important that leaders themselves are indeed moral persons and explicitly demonstrate ethical behaviour to their followers (Van der Akker, Heres, Lasthuizen & Six, 2009). Brown and Trevino (2006) posit that such explicit behaviour helps the ethical leader to make ethics a leadership message that gets followers' attention by standing out as socially salient (most important) against an organisational backdrop that is often ethically neutral at best. Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes and Salvaldor (2009) cite Trevino, Weaver and Reynolds (2006), who point out that the media interest in corporate scandals highlights the importance society places on ethical behaviour in organisations.

In the South African context, notwithstanding the power of the teacher unions to protect principals' unethical practices, as is my personal observation, individual principals need to be aware that their unethical actions are detrimental to the future of the learners under their care, who, in some cases, have parents who are unemployed. Corruption Watch (2014) points out that since they came into existence in 2012 and directed their focus on corruption in education, more than 600 allegations of school corrupt activities have been received. Corruption Watch (2012) also reveals that the main categories of corruption indicate the misuse of school finances or property, followed by pillaging of the National Feeding Scheme, favouritism/nepotism concerning staff appointments and procurement practices, and selling of tests and examination documents. The former Minister of Finance, Mr Trevor Manuel in 2009 revealed that principals were culprits of these malpractices. School principals were involved in the hiking of prices in School Nutrition Programmes (Schoeman, 2012).

Hence, Kocabas and Karakose's (2009) decision-making process is crucial for school administration, given that, in a school context, the principal is the main decision-maker. Therefore, an ethical or unethical decision directly affects the school climate either positively or negatively. For school principals, it is worth noting that Norman (2012) asserts that it is possible to do something unethical without breaking the law; not everything that is legal is ethical. That said, ethical leaders should strive to increase knowledge of self, their values and those of others to create a culturally proficient organisation. Also, the school principals should understand that the quality of interactions shapes the understanding and the relationships between school leaders, teachers, learners and the families or communities they serve (Ezzani, 2014). Further, strong ethical leadership is required to combat displaced responsibility. This suggests that roles should be clearly defined, all people fairly treated within the organisation and the decisions taken owned by the leaders in the organisations. Again, leaders must put

systems in place so that employees are given clear standards and proper training, most importantly, leaders must hold employees and themselves accountable for any ethical lapses that result (Brown, 2007). The Department of Basic Education is well equipped with policies to guard the conduct and behaviour of both school principals and teachers. These policies include South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998, The SACE Code of Professional Ethics (2003) and the South African Standard for Principals (South African Government, 2016). However, with all these wonderful policies in place in the South Africa context for the Department of Basic Education, there seems to be a lack of commitment on the part of leaders to implement and effect the necessary decisions. No educator in South Africa could claim to be oblivious that corporal punishment was abolished through SASA, but it is administered in most rural and township schools regularly. It is unfortunate that, in schools, principals are somehow powerless as the teacher union leaders seem to over-rule even the Department of Basic Education regarding certain decisions.

Consequently, school principals do not willy-nilly reprimand educators for misconduct, instead they need to involve teacher union leaders, who in turn protect their members, as opposed to the principals who may as well be a member of the same teacher union. With that said, some principals remain powerless and helpless and cannot boldly stand up against any malpractice of teacher union leaders because they also had unfairly acquired their positions as school principals. Hence, they are dictated to by teacher union leaders what must happen or not happen in the schools they manage. As earlier on stated, South Africa already has good comprehensive laws, rules and regulations, most notably the South African Constitution, the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998; the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999; the South African Council of Educators Act 31 of 2000; the SACE Code of Professional Ethics for Educators and, finally, the Policy on South African Standard for principals (South African Government, 2016). The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998, Chapter 5, Section 17 (1) a-f, and 18 (1) a-z respectively, is very clear and addresses almost all areas of misconduct. However, since the levers required to implement and effect the changes are fellow leaders who lack commitment to sound values and give in to peer-pressure from the culture, implementation of such legislation is generally poor (Schoeman, 2012).

Moreover, Oates and Dalmau (2013) posit that, looking at the latest Corruption Perception Index (CPI) from Transparency International, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for ethical leaders to operate in certain countries. Out of the 181 countries ranked in the 2011 Index,

only 50 scored above the mid-point. It is extremely difficult for the leaders to operate at the required levels five or seven in environments where corruption is endemic.

To understand the reasons for these ethical failures in South African schools, it is important to identity the multiple deprivations principals face. According to Chola and Alaba (2013) and Chikoko, Naicker, and Mthiyane (2015), the contexts with multiple challenges include socio-economic circumstances, such as income and wealth (material) deprivation; employment deprivation; education deprivation; living deprivation and the high rate of alcohol consumption among both youth and adults. The levels of deprivation, as Chikoko *et al.* (2015) argue, differ enormously by provinces, and Chola and Alaba (2013) often people in poor living conditions report the worst health outcomes. In qualifying their assertion, Chikoko *et al.* (2015) posit that KwaZulu-Natal province is counted among the four most deprived provinces, the others being Eastern Cape, Limpopo and North West. Despite the foregoing assertions, Chikoko *et al.* (2015) argue that the quality of leadership matters in addressing the challenges. However, they are not oblivious of the fact that leadership alone, without the complementary management, would not carry the day. Leadership is about shaping the direction and purpose of the organisation, whereas management is about efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out the vision of the organisation as envisioned by the leader (Clarke, 2007). Moreover, they argue that a culture of hard work, accompanied by the maximum utilisation of time, is required for success in schools.

1.3 Problem statement

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a research problem is a controversy or a concern that initiates the study. Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005) further assert that a research problem typically takes the form of a concise question regarding the relationship between two or more variables. In addition, to avoid confusion in formulating research questions, Marczyk *et al*. (2005) posit that researchers need to use an operational definition that helps to specifically and clearly identify what and who is being studied. My observation is that schools in the townships and rural areas are generally not performing well, compared to former multi-racial schools. The main concern is that the Department of Education invests large sums of money in improving the standards of education in these areas. However, in some township schools, little improvement is manifest; instead the school buildings are becoming dilapidated despite the huge subsidies from the Department of Education. Van der Berg (2001) asserts that, despite government injecting astronomical sums of money in township schools, the state of

learning remains abysmal. There is depletion of the resources such as textbooks, desks and other forms of resources, due to lack of proper management and lack of policies. Modisaotsile (2012) argues, along the same lines that, despite government's effort to improve the standard of education, the quality of school buildings, resources and learners' academic achievements are drastically declining. Some school principals gang up with service providers, inflate prices for stock requisition and corruptly make extra money for themselves. Seemingly, some school principals view their access to school finances as a golden opportunity for enriching themselves, instead of improving the teaching and learning conditions in their schools. I have observed that most educators who aspire to become school principals want to be in schools with high enrolment figures, as that determines their salaries, as well as the money/resources the school has. The school fund is easily accessed, since most governing bodies in township schools are constituted by mostly illiterate parents (Mncube, 2012).

Some school principals seize the opportunity by either inflating tender prices or directly stealing from the school fund (Corruption Watch, 2012; Schoeman, 2012). This suggests a void of ethical behaviour or awareness on the part of the school principals. The Corruption Watch Report (Corruption Watch, 2014) indicates that South Africa is in a precarious position regarding corruption at schools. The report further states that since 2014, Corruption Watch has received over 1 000 reports of corruption in schools and most of the complaints originate from Gauteng, with the majority from Johannesburg. The report further suggests that schools as fertile grounds for corruption. The Corruption Watch Report (Corruption Watch, 2014) provides school corruption statistics across South Africa as follows: Eastern Cape 17%, Free State 20%, Gauteng 22%; KwaZulu-Natal 17%; Limpopo 4%; Mpumalanga 5%; North West 3%; Northern Cape 1% and Western Cape 3%. The remaining 8% of reports did not include geographical location. Of the report provided, 30% represented financial mismanagement; 22% represented theft of funds while 13% represented tender corruption, to mention a few. According to Corruption Watch Report (2014), 2 700 complaints of corruption were lodged in 2014, which translates to an average of seven reports received a day. Of these reports, 56% were confirmed as corruption. The challenge of corruption and other forms of unethical behaviours is not endemic to the education sector alone but applies generally in the public sector (Corruption Watch, 2014). David Lewis, Executive Director of Corruption Watch, argues that "fighting corruption is a long–term affair; in fact, it is probably a permanent task" (Corruption Watch, 2012). Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, Corruption Watch Board Chairperson, reports that, from Corruption Watch's perspective, 2014 was a year marred by a surfeit of

exposes of the antics of people in positions of power, of gross maladministration and misuse of public funds, of acts of corruption that have continued to go unpunished (Corruption Watch Report, 2013). Indeed, perhaps the most demanding aspect of the society today is the obvious impunity enjoyed by the rich and powerful (Schoeman, 2012). The message is that if you wield either money or power, you are untouchable and are not beholden to the same rules as ordinary citizens. It is becoming apparent that those who have wealth also have access to political power; and those who have political power have access to wealth (Schoeman, 2012).

It is against this background that this study is deemed relevant, to add to the literature and debates on ethical leadership practices of school principals in challenging contexts. The issue of ethics or morals is significant in reminding school management teams of the need to uphold the interests of the community and of the learners entrusted in their care. The major problem is that education standards keep on declining despite the efforts of the government in trying to uplift them (Corruption Watch, 2014). The criteria that are used to promote educators into management positions also seem to be a contributing factor in the decline of education standards and perpetual corruption in the education sector (Van der Berg, 2002; Corruption Watch, 2014). Van der Berg (2002) states that education standards in the township schools in the post-apartheid epoch are deteriorating.

Adding to the challenges in the Department of Basic Education are teacher unions. Teacher unions are key-role players in determining who should be the principals in schools and there is often bribery involved, as well (Harper & Masondo, 2014). It was no surprise when in April 2014, City Press newspaper exposed the involvement of members and officials of a well-known teacher union in the corruption of selling of teacher and management posts in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and North West provinces. It then becomes obvious that a person who is promised by teacher union leaders a school with large enrolment may pay large sums, with the hope of recouping it from school funds. The Ministerial Task Team (2016) appointed by Minister Angie Motshekga to investigate allegations into the selling of educators' posts by teacher union members and departmental officials in provincial education departments reveals that some allegations were true. The allegations ranged from soliciting bribes to undue interference by union officials. The Ministerial Task Team Report (2016) reveals that SADTU officials disrupted interviewing process on several occasions. Moreover, a departmental official (Ms. KZN) solicited a bribe from a candidate (Mr KZN-10) to release an appointment letter. The Ministerial Task Team Report (2016) further confirms corrupt behaviour in Gauteng that ranges

from corrupt procurement processes to maladministration by School Governing Bodies (SGBs) when selecting and appointing teachers to top positions. Interestingly, the report uncovers that the parties involved operate like networks involving SGBs, union officials, and principals. This underscores the diminishing of ethical practices in the education domain. Given the above problem of unethical practices in schools, there is a desperate need for research into the conceptualisations, practices and experiences of ethical leadership of school principals in township contexts with multiple challenges and how such research could add into the knowledge base of ethical leadership in schools. Further, we need to understand how ethical leadership could enhance school leadership in the context of township contexts with multiple challenges.

Given the above introduction and problem statement, this study seeks to explore how ethical leadership is conceptualised, experienced and practised at four schools located in township contexts with multiple challenges, and what we can draw from leadership theory to enhance school leadership, management and teaching.

1.4 The purpose and rationale for the study

I have been a teacher for more than eleven years and my observations are that the state of education is declining and that teachers are consciously or unconsciously playing a part in the status quo. In the staffrooms, the majority of educators who aspire to become principals do so not because they really want to lead the schools or are capable of leading schools, but because school principals have access to resources such as school finances. The gap between the salaries of school principals and post level 1 educators is so vast, and the achievements of most principals make teachers envy becoming principals so that they enriching themselves with school funds by colluding with service providers. This is known to staff members because they know the language that dominates staffroom discussion, of how to defraud the state funds and to abuse the Norms and Standards for school infrastructure development. It is not surprising that, weekly, we read in the newspapers that a school principal is alleged to be involved in maladministration, fraud or awarding feeding scheme tenders to friends or family members (Corruption Watch Report, 2014).

Further, I have served in numerous governing bodies where I managed to identify much ignorance or carelessness of principals. For example, they would ask me as the treasurer to sign

blank cheques, which I turned down a number of times. This, to me, says that an unethical principal tests the knowledge of signatories by asking them to sign blank cheques and to support their request, as if they don't want to bother a member to keep on coming to the school for the signing of the school's cheques, whereas the actual intention is to cash signed cheques whenever the principal needs money for personal use without the knowledge of other signatories. Some school principals connive with service providers by providing them with the quotations of other companies who wish to provide a service to a school so that they produce a cheaper quotation, thus getting the tender. The school principal gets kickbacks in a number of ways. A company may donate something to the school, which may serve as a bribe, since some SGB members view the donating service provider as better than the others and consider that company for the next service. I have also heard that some school principals get personal gifts from service providers. The unfortunate part is that even members of the SGB, when recommending the principal for appointment, expect the principal to award tenders to their companies as a gesture of appreciation, if not, they begin to expose misdeeds of the principal.

Van der Berg (2002) contends that major inefficiencies are in black schools where learning is extremely bad. Dorasamy (2010) points to unethical behaviour in the South African public service, in particular, and argues that public leaders are expected to serve public needs and not promote personal interests. Despite this being widely accepted, the South African public service is characterised by allegations of unethical behaviour, which includes corruption.

However, the issue of lapses in ethical leadership remains a ubiquitous one; there is a growing body of literature which seems to suggest the challenge of ethical leadership has become a ubiquitous matter for executives in different fields (Fulmer, 2004). Trevino and Brown (2004) assert that the twenty-first century has brought corporate ethical scandals that have affected millions of employees and investors and sent shock waves throughout the business world. Kaptein, Huberts, Avelino and Lasthuizen (2005) draw from Punch (1996) and highlight a scandal that occurred in a large Dutch public organisation, which was known by some managers, even though the top manager was completely oblivious about it. Kaufman (2008) argues that cheating on college campuses has been increasing in the past decade. Manala (2014) asserts that the existence of corruption, its proliferation and consequences cannot be denied. Further, corruption interferes with and distorts human character and blunts human value. Similarly, Tang, Bavik, Chen and Tjosvold (2015) posit that the constant revelation of ethical scandals over the past decade exposes the morality of leaders in organisations. Likewise,

Winston (2007) asserts that there is a myriad of examples of high-profile cases of ethical abuses, from many corporate cases to those in higher education, public sector and sports, while Brown and Trevino (2006) highlight other ethics scandals in business, government and non-profits organisations.

Sama and Shoaf (2007) contend that modern times have witnessed critical moral lapses in all three of the bedrock professions, which are business, church and politics, along with well-publicised scandals in the newer professions such as financial services and accounting. Further, they assert that even the church has come under serious scrutiny, jarring communities' perceptions of professional morality and calling into question the integrity of those practising in these sectors. Ciulla (1995), corroborated by Sullivan (2009), asserts that we are living in the world where leaders are often disappointing. Sullivan (2009) asserts that the unethical conduct of chief executive officers and their colleagues in the business world, and the horrendous sexual misconduct of teachers with learners are just a few examples of the unacceptable behaviour making headlines in America. He further argues that, the more defective our leaders are, the greater our desire to have highly ethical leaders. Similarly, Yozgat and Mesekiran (2016) argue that, due to the corporate scandals where leaders concentrate on improving their needs through unethical corporate practices, ethical leaders who demonstrate and preach high moral standards become significant.

Ciulla (2005) points out that the field is still young and wide open for development. Further, she states that she is eager to see more scholars from outside of the United States of America writing on leadership ethics. Brown and Trevino (2006) posit that much has been written about ethics and leadership from a normative or philosophical perspective, suggesting what leaders should do. But a more descriptive and prescriptive social scientific approach to ethics and leadership has remained underdeveloped and fragmented, leaving scholars and practitioners with few answers to even the most fundamental questions, such as "what is ethical leadership?" The latter view is corroborated by Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bordes, and Salvador (2009). They cite Trevino, Brown and Hartman (2003), who contend that, although scholarly work on business ethics has been traditionally studied by philosophers and has taken a prescriptive approach, the emerging field of behavioural ethics takes a descriptive approach by focusing on empirical data collected from social scientists to understand what actually happens in organisations. Similarly, Avey, Palanski and Walumbwa (2010) assert that a great deal has been written about ethical leadership in a prescriptive point of view, often in the form of

philosophical discussion about what leaders ought to do. The forgoing assertions are in agreement that there is a need for research in the field since it is still in its infancy stage. Given the foregoing assertions, there is a need for this type of research to be conducted in schools to elicit how principals enact their ethical leadership practices in schools where the contexts have multiple challenges.

1.5 Significance of the study

The study is intended to elicit the perspectives and the experiences of the school principals, their management teams and teachers about how ethical leadership is enacted in their schools. The purpose was to contribute to the existing body of knowledge since the real purpose of any research is to expand the scientific knowledge in a particular research field (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). Noting that ethical conventions are regularly violated by many school management teams (hereinafter referred to as SMT), there is a great need to establish their understanding of what constitutes ethical leadership behaviour at schools. The research project is stimulated by what I have read in print media and my observations as a teacher of how most school managers are employed. There is also a myriad of reports and allegations of unethical behaviours and malpractices of school management teams, which amongst others (Mestry, 2004; Corruption Watch Report, 2013; Roane, 2013) include misappropriation of school funds, poor monitoring of work, sexual relationship between teachers and learners in exchange for awarding marks and improper control of financial records. In 2011 and 2013, Corruption Watch and Transparency International, respectively, published reports of corruption in different provincial education departments in South Africa.

To counter these practices, the Department of Education (2001) published a document called *The Manifesto of Values, Rights and Democracy* which was intended to cultivate and promote an ethical culture and human rights by encouraging leaders to model positive behaviour, ethics and accountability. The situation often obtaining in schools is that those people imbued with ethical values and moral principles are side-lined, while those unethical in their practices are envied by the youth and hence influence them wrongly. Serfontein and de Waal (2015) further contend that on-going research is crucial to assist everyone concerned in realising that corrupt and unethical behaviour needs exposure and understanding, so as to counteract the damage that ensues. Similarly, Ciulla (2005) asserts that the field of leadership ethics is still young and wide open for development, hence the significance of this study. Furthermore, she is eager to see

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more scholars from outside the USA writing on leadership ethics. Likewise, Toor and Ofori (2009) posit that scholars have mostly discussed ethical leadership in theoretical and conceptual terms, but there are hardly any studies providing empirical evidence about ethical leadership. Similarly, Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes and Salvador (2009) state that, although philosophers and theologians have long discussed the topic of ethical leadership, it is not recently that social scientists have begun to empirically examine ethical aspects of leadership in organisations. On the contrary, Avey, Palanski and Walumbwa (2010) and Brown, Trevino and Harrison (2005) contend that a great deal has been written about ethical leadership from a philosophical point of view and discussion about what leaders ought to do while Brown and Trevino (2006) have dealt with more descriptive and predictive social scientific approaches to ethics and leadership, which have remained underdeveloped and fragmented. The latter assertion qualifies my claim that says there is a need for this study project.

There is no schism between the views since both views acknowledge that ethical leadership is in its embryonic stage from an empirical perspective. Akker, Heres, Lasthuizen and Six (2009) contend that, in research literature, not much explicit attention is given to the ethical and moral dimensions of trust, apart from the widely accepted notion that integrity is a key of perceived trustworthiness. In the African context, according to Manyaka and Nkuna (2014), corruption is problematic for most developing nations primarily because resources that are meant to achieve socio-economic and developmental objectives are more often than not diverted to the benefit of small corrupt elites, thereby undermining the development goals of the nations. Kofi Annan (2004) posits that corruption hurts the poor disproportionately by diverting funds intended for development, undermining governments' ability to provide basic services. South Africa is also one country affected by this scourge of corruption immensely, as reported above (Corruption Watch, 2014).

In addition, the corporate scandals worldwide have also raised awareness and attention to unethical issues (Resick, Martin, Keating, Dickson, Kwan & Peng, 2011), and the world continues to be rocked by these scandalous activities and unethical behaviour (Oates & Dalmau, 2013). Hence, the challenge on ethical leadership has become a pervasive issue. Fulmer (2004) and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (2004) posits that corruption is no longer a local matter, but a transnational phenomenon that affects all societies. Gallagher and Tschudin (2010) further contend that ethical leaders may find themselves in corrupt or unjust circumstances and may have to endure hardships of seeing the organisation collapsing under

their leadership or, in some instances, when they get caught lose their jobs and in turn their credibility diminishes in the eye of stakeholders (Norman, 2012).

However, leadership ought to be ethical in order to be effective and successful over the long term (Toor & Ofori, 2009). Pushpa (2012) posits that, in order to realise the organisational goals and dreams of the organisations, ethical leaders go beyond personal ego and individual goals, recognising that value is in the success of the organisational goals for the benefit of its stakeholders. Similarly, Gallagher and Tschudin (2010) posit that ethical leadership aspires to good ends and to the kind of change that contributes to the flourishing of other human beings, as well as towards the good of other species and the environment. Mayer, Kuenzi and Greenbaum (2011) corroborate the foregoing assertion as they opine that ethical leaders make decisions with ethics in mind and always consider 'what is the right thing to do' in terms of the ethics. In a nutshell, ethical leaders are guided by ethics in their conduct. In addition, they further contend that ethical leaders regularly communicate with their subordinates regarding ethics, and reward and punish subordinates in accordance with ethical principles. In this way, ethical leaders are able to beguile their subordinates with their ethical and fair practice, vividly demonstrating to the subordinates that upholding ethics is significant for the organisation. Pushpa (2012) further asserts that, if ethics are properly used in leaders' actions, how and why decisions are made is addressed and therefore, the decisions being made become ethical and effective. Brown (2007) posits that leaders must rely on their "inner compasses' to point them in the right direction. Without one, a leader is like a captain of a ship sailing aimlessly along. Therefore, Messick and Bazerman (1996) surmise that ethical decisions must be based on accurate theories about the world.

However, Ciulla (2005) contends that there seem to be far more courses on leadership than there are journal articles and academic books on the subject, and she asserts that we cannot begin to understand subjects like ethics and leadership without research from a variety of disciplines, cultures and points of view. Emerging from the foregoing assertion of Ciulla (2005), there is a great need for research on ethics, especially in the educational sphere in the case of South Africa. Dorasamy (2010) argues that South Africa is faced with problems relating to personal ethics. There is a general perception that democracy has been accompanied by a decreasing concern for collective good in exchange for employment. Simply put, those who have power to hire or employ sell posts to the unemployed, regardless of the candidate meeting the job requirements (Dorasamy, 2010).

Given this demoralising picture on the state of ethics and leadership in the public domain and in education in general, this study is significant. As a researcher, I will also have a broader understanding of the ethical dilemmas that school principals experience as they execute their practices in township contexts that have multiple challenges and how they deal with them. This study will further add light on how theories of ethical leadership could be utilised to enhance school leadership and management in schools.

1.6 Research objectives

This study is underpinned by the following research objectives:

- To explore the conceptualisations, practices and the experiences of township school principals and teachers about ethical leadership in schools.
- To explore the perceptions of the township school principals and teachers regarding the causes of unethical conduct (if any) among school principals and teachers.
- To explore the perspectives of participants regarding the level of preparation/in-service development of school principals and teachers regard ethical behaviour and leadership in schools.
- To explore the views of the participants about what should be done to combat the unethical behaviour of some school leaders by the Department of Education and the South African Council of Educators.

1.7 Critical questions to be asked

This study is underpinned by the following critical questions:

- What are the conceptualisations, practices and experiences of township school principals and teachers about ethical leadership in schools?
- What are the perceptions of township school principals and teachers regarding the causes of unethical conduct (if any) among school principals and teachers?
- What are the perspectives of participants regarding the level of preparation/in-service development of school principals and teachers regarding ethical behaviour and leadership in schools?
- What do the participants suggest should be done to combat the unethical behaviour of some school principals by the Department of Education and the South African Council of Educators?

1.8 Discussion of key concepts used in the study

1.8.1 Leadership

A popular quote by Chinese philosopher, Lao-tzu, projects leadership as to "lead people and walk behind them". The leaders we willingly follow tells us what they will do and then they do what they said they will do. Ethical leaders need to be trustworthy and reliable. They need to walk the talk and talk the walk. In essence ethical leaders should prioritise the interest of their organisations by always promoting fair practices and also demonstrate through their actions. Schoeman (2012) maintains that good leadership role models do not fall into the 'telling but not doing' trap and they address the ethics 'knowing-doing' gap. Leaders who delegate tasks only provide the guidelines as to how the task must be performed; they frequently check how far the task done and motivate the followers (Van Deventer, 2003). In this process, (Bush, 2003), shared professional values lead to the development of trust and willingness to give and receive criticism, in order to enhance practice.

In addition, the leaders need to shift from the notion of concern for goals and roles to the task of building purposes into leadership structure and embodying these purposes in everything that leaders do, with the effect of transforming the organisational members from neutral to committed followers. The moment followers are treated as significant stakeholders in the development of the organisation, they begin to willingly serve the organisation. Van Deventer (2003) argues that leadership can occur at any level and in response to myriad situations, and is not necessarily tied to the post level, position, or organisational role. He draws on the concept of *ubuntu*, which states that a person's humanity is expressed through people. A leader should stick to the core values of *ubuntu,* which are morality, interdependence, human dignity and lastly human potential (Van Deventer, 2003) In a nutshell, picking the last core value, leaders have a responsibility to enhance the leadership skills of the followers by delegating tasks to them that would empower them; however, they need to show that they trust and believe in the capabilities of the one delegated to perform the task. Bush (2003) speaks of dispersed and distributed leadership, where the followers are having a voice in decision making. The significance of follower involvement in decision making increases the commitment.

Most importantly, Caroselli (2000) maintains that when leaders follow through, they monitor the work they have empowered others to do. Schuitema (1998) defines a leader as a person who bases his/ her behaviour on values that have a direct impact on people. Moreover, a leader is

identified by Schuitema (1998) as possessing the following traits: honesty, a leader is at all-time committed to the truth; nurturing, a leader cares for the followers; respect, granting importance to others and not claiming importance for the self and co-operation, the leader puts aside his or her own interest in pursuit for the goal of the collective. Justice is holding people accountable when they have deliberately overstepped the mark. Leadership is a special talent based on timeless wisdom that not all people possess. Further, it is based on one's vision, principle and integrity (Pushpa, 2012). Leadership is making happen what would have not happened anyway; it entails working at the edge of what is acceptable (Richard Pascale in Charlton, 1992). Ethical leadership is about enabling ordinary people to produce extra-ordinary things in the face of challenge and change, and to constantly turn in superior performance, to the long-term benefit of all concerned (Charlton, 1992). Hester and Kilian (2010) assert that ethical leadership is about relationships and relationships are sustained by shared moral values, therefore, it is value based.

The same is propounded by Andrew (2015), who asserts that ethics are like leadership, are about human relationships, are about what leaders should do and what leaders should be like as humans. Leadership is a process whereby the individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Bello, 2012). The importance of leadership in organisations is promoting ethical conduct. Leaders set the tone for the organisational goals and behaviour (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Sebudubudu and Botlhomilwe (2011) define leadership as an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perception and expectations of the members. Thus, leaders are the agent of change. Sebudubudu and Botlhomilwe (2011) further assert that leadership occurs when a group member modifies the motivation or the competencies of others in a group. A leader is a person representing others in all kinds of ways from dictating to them to moderately influencing them (Olivier, 2012).

1.8.2 Ethics

Bhatti (2007) states that ethics imply moral principles or philosophy of conduct, actions, decisions and dealings on the part of a person or organisation. Therefore, ethics determines the desirability of conduct, policies, dealings and practices of the people and their organisation, on the precepts of logic and well accepted socio-moral-legal norms (Bhatti, 2007). In the same light, ethics refers to the study of moral principles or values that determine whether conduct or

actions are right or wrong (Kocabas & Karakose, 2009; Warner, 2011; Tang, Bavik, Chen & Tjosvold, 2015) and should be a unique source of competitive advantage (Schoeman, 2015). It is a study of choices that people make and their outcomes, to determine whether choices are good or bad (Warner, 2011). Ethics is a philosophical word derived from Greek word "ethos" which refers to one's moral character and a way in which society expects people to behave in accordance with the accepted norms and principles (Pushpa, 2012).

Similarly, Mihelič *et al.* (2010) define ethics as the code of values and moral principles that guides individual or group behaviour with respect what is "good" or "right" as opposed to "bad" or "wrong" in a given situation. Bello (2012) asserts that ethical behaviour has to begin at the top. Human beings are moral agents; therefore, they are responsible for their choices, and they have a duty to make their own choices in a morally responsible way. However, due to the variety of virtues that people hold, there is a need for codes of ethics to shape their conduct in the organisation. Ethics is a set of principles or values which entail the common will of the society. Moreover, is a code of conduct that regulates the actions of individuals, groups, or the organisations in line with normative principles (Tutar, Altinoz & Cakroglu, 2011). Andrew (2015) contends that ethics has to do with what leaders do and who leaders are, and that ethics are concerned with the nature of leaders' behaviour as well as with the virtuousness of such behaviour. In any decision-making process, ethical issues are embraced either directly or indirectly. The choices that leaders make and how they respond in a given circumstance are informed by ethics.

1.8.3 Ethical leadership

Brown, Trevino and Harrison (2005) define ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of appropriate conduct to the followers through two-way communication and decision-making". Further, they argue that ethical leadership entails engaging in a transparent manner with the followers. Ethical leadership is relational, in the sense that it is constructed in and through the social interactions with followers. In addition, being an ethical leader is about being a moral person and a moral manager. Trevino and Brown (2005) argue that ethical leadership can be viewed as those personal characteristics of a leader that entail honesty, trustworthiness and integrity. Ethical leadership is about values. Simply put, ethical leadership is a style of leadership that is concerned with demonstrating appropriate conduct by developing

meaningful relationships, modelling right behaviour, and reinforcing ethical leadership through communication and decision making (Brown and Mitchell, 2010). Bello (2012) contends that trustworthiness, honesty, care, and fairness are deep driving concerns, which are not only affecting leaders but followers as well. Bello (2012) refers to ethical leadership as a necessary response to the then credit crisis, the worst global recession since the 1930s, and to different scandals in formerly leading corporate business organisations. Bello (2012) further illuminates his point by stating that, apart from cases of unethical practices in developed nations, there is ample evidence also in developing countries. Most importantly, he contends that ethical behaviour embraces vital principles such as honesty, integrity, fairness, and concern for others; furthermore, he contends that ethical behaviour is a situation where the leaders engage in behaviour that benefits others and refrain from behaviour that can cause harm to others. Ethical leadership encourages ethical behaviour by consistently practicing and managing ethics as well as holding every person accountable (Nyukorong, 2014).

Moreover, ethical leaders can engage in various activities to encourage and support ethical practices within an organisation (Nyukorong, 2014). Ethical leadership is generally linked with dimensions of values, vision, and virtue. In addition, ethical leaders have a responsibility to create ethical awareness; granting responsibilities to the people; adopting participatory and democratic administration and, most importantly, creating a positive organisational climate that is suitable for organisational requirements as it is honest and reliable (Katranci, Sungu & Saglam, 2015). Ethical leadership is essential in the workplace as it focuses on promoting ethical behaviour and effective interaction between leaders and followers. Ethical leadership leads to valuable outcomes and has a positive influence on organisational effectiveness by increasing top-management's effectiveness as well as followers' performance, hence leading to job satisfaction (Engelbrecht, Heine, & Mahembe, 2014). Ethical leaders have to have a moral conviction to challenge any policies that are contrary to caring and inclusive learning environment (Ezzani, 2014). Similarly, Perry and Hallet (2014) point out that leaders' character and action give dignity and worth to the followers and work to ensure that dignity and worth is communicated systematically. The latter assertions corroborate that of Hazrati, Alvani, and Zadeh (2013), who contend that the leader is a character who is doing the right things rather than doing things right, despite outside pressures. In essence, when the leader is doing things right, he or she is only doing what is expected to do when supervised, whereas, when the leader is doing right things, even if there is no one who sees the leader, he or she continues to conform to the moral principles not because is afraid of the law. Hazrati *et al.* further maintain that

ethical leaders have a duty to develop trust among followers in the organisation to execute organisational goals. A leader's role is to chart provide meaning and direction to the subordinates to influence them toward a common goal. Leadership is the ability to influence the followers by depending on moral force (Tutar, Altnoz, & Cakiroglu, 2011). Zhu, May and Avolio (2004) contend that leaders are obliged to set a moral example for their organisational members and determine organisational activities. Simply put, a leader need not to opt for short cuts and unethical means to save the organisation, thus compromising the ethical standards of the organisation.

Meanwhile, Henry (2009) posits that ethical leadership always creates an environment that cares about its employees in totality so that they commit to serving the organisation to realise its goals, thus ensuring that the organisation remains a reputable one. In turn, the followers or employees proudly and willingly take care of business and processes, achieving fulfilment. Hester and Kalian (2010) also corroborate the latter assertions as they contend that the purpose of ethical leadership is to protect and promote the wellbeing of all persons. They further argue that the means for realising this goal are complex and need much reflection and reconsideration.

1.8.5 Township contexts with multiple challenges

South Africa once experienced a segregated education system that ensured that resources were inequitably distributed amongst the groupings, with black Africans enjoying the least of the resources (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011; Samoff, 2008). The apartheid masters understood that a good education system was important not only for ensuring that the citizenry was well educated, but also for human development and for maintenance of socially responsive economic and political systems (Modisaotsile, 2012), thus they denied it to black people. Low cost housing development residential areas were established (known as townships) to house the black labourers closer to their work places in the cities and towns (Harber, 2001; Leoschut, 2006; Prinsloo, 2007; Mampane, & Bouwer (2011); Zulu, Bhengu, & Mkhize, 2019). The term township is best outlined by Zulu, Bhengu and Mkhize (2019) as an underdeveloped segregated urban area reserved for African, mixed race and Indian communities, previously known as non-whites. This formation of townships was instituted under the Group Areas Act, which was intended to separate residential areas according to their race colour (Prinsloo, 2007). The quality of education that was rendered to the black Africans learners was of inferior quality compared to their counterpart white learners (Spaull, 2013; Van der Berg, 2008). This was

purposely done to equip a few Africans with essential skills while the majority were exposed to education that limited their aspirations (Samoff, 2008). Sadly, the demographic and socio-economic distribution of the townships continues to sustain racial segregations and the scarcity of resources in the township schools (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011). However, the government has made numerous attempts to up-skill school leaders to cope with the reforms in the education system (Msila, 2008).

The township conditions were and are still characterised by contexts with multiple challenges, which are manifesting themselves even in the education sector (Modisaotsile, 2012). Hence, the quality of education remains very poor and the output rate has not improved. The education system remains sub-standard, especially in the township schools, due to multiple deprivations, which include violence. Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015) document a few of multiple deprivations that school principals have to grapple with as they lead and manage schools. Amongst others, these are: income and material deprivation; employment deprivation; education deprivation; and living environment deprivation. Further, Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015) highlight other forms of deprivations that include the high rate of alcohol consumption among both the youth and adults, generally low parental participation in school activities, large class-sizes, teaching and learning resources very limited and schools highly unionised. It is worth noting that 'multiple challenges' and 'multiple deprivations' have been used interchangeably here. The dawn of democracy in 1994 saw township school principals faced with numerous challenges (Setlhare, Wood, & Mayer, 2016). Quick changes regarding policy, laws, and rules were effected, which compounded the education morass for school principals to deal with (Modisaotsile, 2012).

Further, Modisaotsile (212) posits that the shift from the apartheid system, where resources where inadequately distributed to different races, to an inclusive education system presented numerous challenges for principals. Notably, some principals who were trained in apartheid ideology were administrators rather than leaders and managers as a result were tempted to resist the reforms (Msila, 2008), which also compounded their problems. However, the Department of Education made attempts to mitigate the education morass inherited by some principals by introducing an Advanced Certificate in Education specialising in school leadership to equip them for the democratic society and for efficient school leadership and management (Msila, 2008). The education arena became a highly contested terrain, as principals had to collaboratively work with various stakeholders who in the past had no say in the decision-

making processes. Notably, the school governance in South Africa had been characterised by a top-down approach, in which educators, learners, parents and communities were excluded from decision-making processes, while decision-making processes were the province of the principal and inspector (now referred to as Circuit manger) (Samoff, 2008). The transformation and reforms of the education landscape in South Africa, involving the introduction of South African Schools Act, the Constitution and the Employment of Educators Act, saw all parties invited in decision making processes which compounded the education chaos of the township school principals (Modisaotsile, 2012; Zulu, Bhengu & Mkhize, 2019). The advent of democracy opened the doors for the all-inclusive education system. This saw township parents taking their children to former model C schools, (which were the schools designated for whites or Indians only during apartheid era) since they believed that township schools were not doing justice in teaching their children (Msila, 2008). Meanwhile, the teacher unions became the worst nightmare for township school principals as they sharply contested power with the principals. Their focus on practical issues of wages and working conditions led to treating teachers as workers and reduced their role in shaping and changing education.

This sadly weakened teacher accountability at the same time (Samoff, 2008; Zulu, Bhengu & Mkhize, 2019). As principals are charged with the responsibility to lead schools and also manage them (Bhengu, 2005), leading and managing in a township context school is becoming more of a daunting task. As earlier stated by Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015), leadership has as pivotal role to play in leading and managing schools, irrespective of the challenges. Mampane and Bouwer (2011) assert that there are few learners who beat all the odds of historical disadvantage, poverty, poor quality schools and still excel. However, the protection and the support of the schools are much needed for those few learners to succeed under contexts with multiple challenges (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011). The advent of democracy has devolved powers to SGBs, SMTs, teacher unions and RCLs, mandating them to pull together towards improving the standard of education for all citizenry, yet power contestations appear to be taking the centre stage instead of the stipulated mandate (Zulu, Bhengu & Mkhize, 2019). It is against this background that attempts to help principals cope with the challenging contexts of townships need to take place.

1. 9 Demarcation of the study

Demarcation of the study is also called delimitations of the study. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), the delimitations of the study deal with what the researcher is not going to do. They further surmise that a researcher may be easily beguiled or attracted by data that is intriguing but not pertinent, away from what the researcher needs to know more about. The researcher needs to select and formally delineate the geographic boundaries of the research study areas. The researcher must take into account three considerations: limiting the size, selecting the general location, and lastly, delineating the specific boundaries. These three considerations are significant for my study in that in South Africa there are nine provinces, each with thousands of teachers and hundreds of principals. Besides that, within each of the provinces there are numerous districts of education, and many schools within the education district located in urban, semi-urban, and rural areas.

Given the impossibility of addressing all these contexts, this study is located at six multiple-deprived township schools in the Pinetown District. The participants will be principals and educators from township schools. Three principals will be from township primary schools and the other three from township secondary schools. As for the PL 1 educators, two educators from each of the six identified schools have been identified as participants. The voices of the teachers are significant for triangulation purposes since more than one perspective will be shared in the same phenomenon. These participants are chosen on the grounds that they have a first-hand ontological perspective about their contexts. In purposive sampling, which is adopted in this study (see Chapter Four), the researcher must first think critically about the parameters of the population and then choose the sample case accordingly. The study is limited to the ethical leadership of school principals in township contexts that have multiple challenges. There are no rules for sample size in qualitative enquiry (Kumar, 2011). Further, Kumar (2011) explains that the sample size in qualitative study does not play any vital role since the purpose is to study only one or few cases in order to identify the spread of diversity not its magnitude. Sample size depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the research, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with the available time and resources (Strydom & Delport, 2005).

1.10 Organisation of the study

This study comprises of nine chapters which are organised as follows:

Chapter One provides an introduction and the background to the study, the study focus, the problem statement, purpose and rationale for the study, significance of the study, the research objectives and critical questions which guide the study, clarification of key concepts, delimitations of the study, the organisation of the thesis and chapter summary.

Chapter Two provides the review of international, continental and national literature that underpins the phenomenon of ethical leadership, which is the focus of this study.

Chapter Three provides the discussion of theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. These theoretical frameworks are Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) Model of Ethical Leadership and the *Ubuntu* Leadership Theory propounded by Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership: African Humanism as Compass.

Chapter Four discusses the research design and the methodology chosen for the study. The research paradigm is discussed with reference to ontological assumptions, epistemological assumptions, rhetorical assumptions and methodological assumptions. The research design, research methodology and sampling are discussed. Moreover, the case study design is outlined in depth in this chapter, as well as data generation and data analysis methods, which are both interviews and document reviews. Ethical issues and issues of trustworthiness are also discussed in detail.

Chapter Five deals with data presentation and the descriptive analysis of the conceptualisations, practices and the experiences of the school principals and teachers about ethical leadership in schools. As part of my analysis, I will make sense of what the data suggests in relation to the phenomenon under the microscope, comparing and contrasting the findings where necessary.

Chapter Six deals with data presentation and the *descriptive analysis* of the causes of unethical conduct (if any) among the school principals and teachers. Further, this chapter will discuss the perspectives of participants regarding their level of preparation (while training to become teachers) or in-service courses to enable the development of ethical behaviour and leadership in schools, provided by the Department of Education and SACE for teachers and school principals.

Chapter Seven consists of the presentation and discussion of the *descriptive analysis* of what the participants suggest should be done to combat the unethical behaviour of some school principals by the Department of Education and the South African Council of Educators.

Chapter Eight provides an *evaluative and theoretical analysis* of the major themes emerging from the findings; summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and implications for future research, and contribution to the already existing body of knowledge. The interpretations will be compared/contrasted with relevant literature and theory.

Chapter Nine provides conclusions of the study (how the study answered the key research questions), the implications of the study, the recommendations as well as suggestions for future research.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the entire research project on the understandings, practices and experiences of school principals and Level 1 educators about ethical leadership in schools. The problem statement, the purpose and the rationale for the study, the key questions of the study, clarification of key concepts / terms, delimitations and organisation of the study have all been presented. The following chapter discusses the literature that underpins this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has outlined the introductory part of the study. This chapter focuses on the literature from the national, continental and international literature that explores issues of ethical leadership.

2.2 Literature review

Literature has been discussed under the following sub-headings: understanding literature review; ethics – "the heart of leadership"; challenges of ethical leadership; distinguishing features of ethical leadership; significance of professional code of ethics; Importance of leader-follower relationship founded on trust; ethical leaders have deep sense of ethical principles, and creating leaders for sustainable future.

2.2.1 Understanding literature review

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) point out that the significance of reviewing literature is to sharpen and deepen the theoretical framework of research and familiarise the researcher with cutting-edge developments in the field of research. Moreover, the researcher gets exposed to the problem, hypothesis and results that other researchers obtained, in order not to replicate efforts but instead to widen and deepen them. Furthermore, the researcher has to locate gaps in knowledge as well as weaknesses in the previous studies conducted. This empowers the researcher to determine what has already been done and what is yet to be produced or improved. The researcher remains with the responsibility to discover and draw connection, and contradictions between various research results by comparing them to one another (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000).

2.2.2 Ethics – "the heart of leadership"

Ethics has always been at "the heart of leadership" (Conger & Riggio, 2007), but unfortunately a great many contemporary scholars, educators, and practitioners have downplayed that fact, contributing to wave after wave of organisational scandals. Providing ethical leadership may well be a leaders' most significant task. Werner (2011) argues that the issue of ethics and ethical behaviour has become very popular around the world, including in South Africa.

The foregoing assertion is corroborated by Temple (2011), who avers that corruption is viewed as a critical reason behind Africa's social and economic problems. In addition, no matter how rich the nation or the institution may be, if the conduct of its affairs is dishonest, if there is high rate of fraud, misappropriation of public funds, no accountability, and constant falsification of documents, that society or organisation is bound to fail (Temple, 2011). Werner (2011) asserts that every organisation has an obligation to its shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers and community at large. Similarly, Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) maintain that ethical leadership encapsulates and accommodates the followers in decision-making processes and facilitates the well-being and potential growth of the employees. Thus, employees tend to show dedication in serving their organisations as they have trust in those leaders who demonstrate credibility and trustworthiness in their behaviour. Engelbrecht *et al.* (2017) aver that a credible leader is more likely to create a significant level of trust between him/her and subordinates. Further to that, they maintain that leaders who embrace a moral perspective, values of integrity and trustworthinesss, are caring. Most importantly, ethical leaders are always honest and fair in the execution of their duties, and in their decision making. Moreover, ethical leaders are mindful and considerate of the welfare of their subordinates, while they give priority to the realisation of organisational goals. Brown, Trevino, and Harrison (2005) argue that ethical leaders need to demonstrate ethical behaviour such as morality, reliability, justice, and care.

Similarly, Werner (2011) opines that behaviours of leaders need to conform to the code of ethics by ensuring that both the leaders themselves and workers conform to the organisation's established values and ethical rules. Ethical leaders are principle-centred in their personal and professional lives. They demonstrate high care level and concern for the community they serve in their decision making. Moreover, ethical leaders preach what they practise and do not rely on a reactive approach for the implementation of ethical conduct (Malik, Awais, Tismal, and Qureshi, 2016). Cheteni and Shindika (2017) argue that ethical leaders need to attract the attention of their followers to key messages on ethics by establishing platforms to engage in ethics discourse and by using reinforcement to support those messages. They further state that reinforcement of ethics requires leaders to carefully make organisational decisions that are aligned to ethical values and take into cognisance that right decisions are always the ones that are guided by ethics. Bello (2012) opines that the success of an organisation is dependent on good quality relationships that are built on respect and trust. Thus, ethical leaders need to fully comprehend that trust and respect are the vital ingredients of success which germinate and grow in a deep fertile soil, which is integrity, honesty, fairness, equity, justice and compassion (Bello,

2012). Trevino *et al. (*2003) maintain that a moral person always displays good character, honesty, trustworthiness and concern for the subordinates' welfare. Moreover, such a leader is approachable to the subordinates.

Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) argue that ethical leaders need to make fair and principled decisions, act as role models for ethical conduct, and acknowledge and reward the ethical behaviour of their subordinates. Further, ethical leaders' fair and caring treatment and open communication show an element of trust that subordinates need to reciprocate. In a nutshell, everyone in the organisation has a responsibility to meet the highest ethical standards. Similarly, Ouma (2017) opines that leader by virtue of his/her position stand as a role model, hence he/she needs to demonstrate ethical behaviour in his/her conduct to the community. Nzimakwe (2014) posits that what is good for the organisation is good for the leader. Therefore, what is embarrassing for the followers of the leader is embarrassing for the entire organisation. Ouma (2017) emphasises the organisation/employee relationship and argues that ethically led organisations serve as models for ethical leadership for other organisations. Ouma (2017) further argues that ethical leadership cultivates credibility and respect for the leader and organisation. Werner (2011) further argues that organisational leaders have a moral duty to promote the interest of the employees by providing them with career opportunities, job security and good working conditions, and by developing their competences. Suganingrat, Yasa, Sintaasih and Subudi (2017) contend that an ethical leader who shows and promotes ethical codes that resonate with the followers' expectations usually gains the confidence of the followers, based on his/her ethical behaviour. Furthermore, they maintain that the followers dedicate their energy towards the attainment of the organisational goals in appreciation; they also feel secured under the leadership of an ethical leader.

Similarly, Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) argue that ethical leaders inspire their followers through an ethical vision and provide the freedom for the employees to take initiative in the workplace. Werner (2011) avers that team building has gained popularity amongst leaders of organisations, with the intention of improving relations amongst organisational members and improving productivity and alignment of the organisational goals. Engelbrecht *et al.* (2017); Qian, Wang, Han, and Song (2017) posit that when employees view their leader as fair and considerate in treating them, they tend to support their leader by putting extra effort and becoming more actively engaged in work. Nzimakwe (2014) avers that leaders with *ubuntu* always emphasise and model the significance of respecting the individual. Ouma (2017) maintains that followers

find it easy to follow an ethical leader because they know they can trust their leader to do what is right for them. Most significantly, leaders tend to place value on teamwork and supporting each other. Therefore, ethical leadership is a matter of serious concern in various organisations (Ouma, 2017). Engelbrecht *et al.* (2017) argue that a leader who displays integrity leaves his /her subordinates with no option but to trust him/her.

2.2.3 Challenges of ethical leadership

Despite the evidence for the effectiveness of ethical leaders, there are numerous examples of unethical leadership behaviours that are obtaining in various institutions. Ciulla (1995) asserts that we are living in a world where leaders are often disappointing. Further, she argues that the more defective our leaders are, the greater our desire to have highly ethical leaders. Affirming the latter assertion, Fulmer (2004) also argues that the challenge of ethical leadership has become a ubiquitous issue for executives in different fields. Mohiuddin and Hossain (2016) argue that, in organisations where unethical leadership prospers, leaders fall short in following rules, failing to take responsibility for unethical behaviours, and go to the extent of avoiding even the appearance of integrity and honesty. Chetini and Shindika (2017) posit that the need for education on ethics is an open secret as it has helped public officials deal with the challenges of moral decay at the workplace. They further point out that ethics education has brought about awareness of ethics issues and has cultivated an attitude of moral obligation and personal responsibility in the public service.

Similarly, Sama and Shoaf (2007) report that scandals continue to rock the professional business sector. They further assert that the understanding of the drivers of ethical lapses becomes a major pursuit of academics and practitioners alike. Brown and Trevino (2006) corroborate Fulmer (2004), in stating that ethical leadership lapses need to be understood and addressed given prominent ethical scandals in virtually every type of organisation. Mayer *et al.* (2009) assert that the empirical research on ethical leadership is still in its infancy stage and a myriad of questions still remain unattended. Hence, this study is pursued with the view to explore the experiences of both township school principals and post level 1 educators in multiple-challenging township contexts, and to solicit some ways in which unethical leadership practices that are prevalent among some township school leaders and post level 1 educators can be attenuated or mitigated.

Soma and Shoaf (2007) also point out that ethical lapses are even manifesting themselves among church leaders. "Even the church has come under serious scrutiny, jarring communities' perception of professional majority and calling to question the integrity of those practicing in these sectors" (Soma & Shoaf, 2007, p. 40). Brown and Trevino (2006) emphasise that many people are confused as to what is going on in various organisations as the reports about business scandals and other forms are on the rise in various sorts of media. Trevino and Brown (2006, p. 1) affirm the concern over ethical lapses in various organisation as they pose a critical question that "following Enron and other recent ethics scandals, in business, government, sports, non-profit organisations, and even religious organisations, people are asking themselves, what is wrong with our leaders?" Unfortunately, employees are likely to follow leaders that are seen to be unethical and even likely to take advantage of them (Mohiuddin & Hossain, 2016).

2.2.4 Distinguishing features of ethical leadership

The spread of scandals has necessitated the question: "what is ethical leadership?" Brown and Trevino (2006) contend that ethical leadership involves integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness, and cognitive trust. Brown Trevino and Harrison (2005) argue that ethical leadership is about the demonstration of the most accepted and appropriate conduct through personal actions, interpersonal actions and interpersonal relationships, and promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way interaction, reinforcement and decision-making. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), and Nel, Weiner, Haasbroek, Poisat, Sono and Schultz (2008, p. 592) view ethical leadership in the light of right or wrong, good or bad, should or ought, and good or evil. Similarly, *Mihelič et al.* (2010) assert that ethics is the code of values and moral principles that guides individual or group behaviour with respect to what is right or wrong. Nzimakwe (2014) contends that, in true communities, people pursue the common good instead of his or her own, but rather pursue his or her good by pursuing the common good. Werner (2011) similarly argues that a code of ethics is significant in that it allows the leaders of organisations to define their organisational ethical positions and provides the guidelines for ethical decision–making.

Further, Werner (2011) states that an ethical code of ethics has to set out all relevant penalties and be enforced consistently through rewards for compliance and penalties for non-compliance. Alshammari, Almutairi, and Thuwaini (2015) corroborate the latter assertion, as they contend that organisational behaviour is characterised by principles and values of right and wrong, which guide the conduct of leaders in influencing the desired behaviour of their followers

towards the attainment of the organisational goal. In addition, Werner (2011) argues that knowing the recipe for ethical leadership then calls for the leadership that will model ethical behaviour, so that employees will emulate it. Similarly, Nzimakwe (2014) argues that, from a leadership perspective, *ubuntu* requires that leaders model the way for others. Kalshoven, Den Hartog and De Hoogh (2010) assert that ethical leaders have a duty to show ethical behaviour. Meanwhile, Engelbrecht *et al.* (2016) opine that leader's ethical fairness, caring and care for their subordinates are traits that rekindle the trust the follower has for the leader. Bello (2012) underscores that the significance of a leader is to encourage employees by leading by example and have a responsibility to define the norms and values, live up to expectations and motivate followers to follow suite to his/her steps. Conger and Riggio (2007) assert that there are two components to ethical leadership - the first one being that leaders behave morally as they carry out their roles. Secondly, leaders shape the ethical context of their grounds and organisations. Cheteni and Shindika (2017) contend that leaders are role models owing to their positions and powers in their organisations.

2.2.5 Achieving ethical environment in the work place

Cheteni and Shindika (2017) maintain that ethical leaders achieve an ethical environment at work by establishing practices that are strictly conforming to conserving ethical values. Importantly, ethical leaders demonstrate to their followers that ethical standards are a priority, even when they need to be conformed to at the expense of the organisation's immediate objectives. Werner (2011) posits that team building is the essential strategy to develop organisation and can be used as means to build staff cohesion, exposing any hidden agendas, and also to increase level of trust amongst members, thus reducing resistance, conflict amongst staff members and resolving the team tension. Mayer *et.al.* (2009) and Werner (2011) assert that, when there are role models in the work environment, individuals will strive to emulate those models. Conger and Riggio (2007) further assert that employees are affected similarly when as they witness sanctions of misconduct and rewards for positive conduct. Therefore, it is possible that the existing lapses can be addressed only if the leaders adhere to the principles of ethical leadership.

Similarly, Messick and Bazerman (1996), and Yukl (2010, p. 99) point out that many executives today face many difficult and potentially explosive situations in which they have to make decisions that can prove positive either for their organisations or for others (subordinates and stakeholders). They further advise that successful executives need to have a clear

understanding of their world and, if they lack that understanding, they need to devise ways and means to have it. Acar, Kaya and Sahin (2012) corroborate the latter sentiments as they contend that the leadership process demands the distribution of tasks be executed in the organisation in a fair manner and that leadership shares rights and responsibilities in just manner. They further argue that leaders should align their conduct to ethical principles, which involve justice, equality, honesty trustworthiness and human rights, to mention a few. Malik *et al.* (2016) contend that treating employees fairly, maintaining moral conduct and keeping an eye on employees contributes immensely to positive moral behaviour and a positive approach in the workplace. Meanwhile, Winston (2007) asserts that ethical leadership and decisions-making in organisations have been the focus of many concerns related to ethics, more so in the light of high-profile corporate scandals. Most significantly, Messick and Bazerman (1996) and Werner (2011) posit that ethical leadership and ethical decision making in the organisations are significantly based on their accountability to various stakeholders. When organisations and their stakeholders are subscribing to the said principle, they are more likely to be successful (Winston, 2007). Malik *et al.* (2016) contend that employees are heavily dependent on the appropriate guidelines from their leaders in order to satisfy the organisational goals and expectations.

2.2.6 Significance of professional code of ethics

Nel *et al.* (2008) assert that, when customers have a positive image of an organisation, customers become attracted to the product and services of the organisation and stay loyal to the organisation. Nel *et al.* (2008) argue that leaders who are principle-centred make better decisions and always act in accordance with universally accepted values which include integrity, transparency, consistency and inclusivity. In a similar vein, Van den Akker, Heres, Lasthuizen and Six (2009) posit that ethical leaders positively influence followers' moral behaviour by facilitating communication about ethics and values. Likewise, Winston (2007) asserts that codes of ethics reflect the attempt of professional association and individual organisation to document and communicate principles to guide the work of those in the field. This often occurs in response to documented difficulties and the complexities associated with competing principles. Nzimakwe (2014) maintains that *ubuntu* principles which encompass the sharing of responsibility and challenges, participatory decision-making and leadership are used as the point of departure in assessing a range of leadership issues.

Meanwhile, Bhatti (2007) argues that the leader has to ensure that there is compatibility between the values he or she cherishes and the values shared by the followers. The values cherished by him/her and those who follow need to be ethically correct and practicable. Friedman (2008) argues in the same line that effective ethical leaders take responsibility for recognising and acknowledging as well as respecting the value of all aspects of life. Werner (2011) and Bello (2012) posit that ethical leadership starts at the top. Therefore, the senior leadership of the organisation is responsible for ethics in the institute and should be exemplar of ethical conduct. In addition, the need to create ethical organisation and the fact that an ethical culture starts with those who are in the helm, need to be emphasised. The senior leadership remains charged with the responsibility to provide support in establishment of an ethical culture in the organisation. Werner (2011) asserts that leaders need to understand that ethical conduct in organisation is influenced by various factors, because persons who join organisations come with their unique values and beliefs. Therefore, leaders of organisations need to ensure that employees understand that their ethical conduct is a core value and that every employee is expected to model ethical conduct at all times, irrespective of their positions. Most importantly, the leader aligns the interest of different people in gaining support for common goals. Therefore, Werner (2011) avers that when organisation leaders engage in team building activities they need to prioritise issues of fairness, human development, respect for others, openness and freedom of choice for the members. Werner (2011) further posits that team building has to be aligned with humanistic principles and be underpinned by ethical concern for the members. Meanwhile, Bhatti (2007) contends that the leader has to ensure compatibility since problems emerge when there is a clash amongst the ethically justifiable values.

Moreover, he claims that such problems need to be resolved by preferring values based on their comparative objectivity, propriety, usefulness, practicability and validation. Punch (1996) argues that ethical leadership begins with leaders and that true ethical leadership is a matter of how to be rather than how to do it. Further, the author argues that it is character rather than competency that creates the substance of a role model of any institute. Similarly, Friedman (2008) corroborates the aforesaid argument as he states that acting with integrity satisfies the craving for the sense of connection, for coherence in desperate parts of life, and for the peace of mind that stems from conforming to a consistent code. Bello (2012) simplifies that latter assertion by arguing that leaders should engage in behaviour that benefit others and desist from the behaviour that can cause harm to others. Hansen (2011) and Bello (2012) maintain that ethical leaders are honest, caring, and sensitive to the interest of all the employees and are

principled individuals who make fair decisions without fear or favour. Moreover, they frequently communicate with their followers about ethics. Ethical leaders ensure that they set clear ethical standards, rewards and punishment to see that the ethical standards they set are observed. In the same light, Gucel, Tokmak, and Turgut (2012) contend that ethical leaders do not just talk about ethics; instead they demonstrate it through their conduct and ensure that unethical behaviour displayed by their subordinates is punished. They practise what they preach and are pro-active role models for ethical conduct.

Similarly, Andrew (2015) argues that ethical leaders should be good role models who motivate subordinates to follow their example. Most importantly, ethical leaders are good role models and they are honest and principled leaders who always want to do the right things and who behave themselves in an ethical manner. They need to make fair and balanced decisions and approach work from a means perspective rather than an ends perspective. Andrew (2015) further asserts that ethical leaders communicate and enforce clear ethical standards amongst those they lead and are always available to give support. Andrew (2015) contends that ethical leaders are caring and listen. Moreover, ethical leaders are trusted by their followers.

Furthermore, Friedman (2008) maintains that being a leader means inspiring committed action that engages people into taking intelligent steps in the direction that the leader has chosen, in order to attain something that has essential meaning for the relevant stakeholders to succeed. In support of the foregoing, Werner (2011) asserts that the leaders of organisations play a vital role in establishing, maintaining and changing culture, therefore, top leadership starts the drive for ethics in the organisation and shows its on-going support by participating in ethics training sessions, including ethics as a regular element in their speeches and presentations and acting in an exemplary manner.

Moreover, Sama and Shoaf (2007) contend that organisational culture is the context within which leadership operates to allocate resources, set goals and perform tasks. It is a shared belief system that guides members' behaviour and one which the leader often takes a role in building, particularly transformational leaders. Senior leaders in organisations demonstrate the kind of behaviour that is perceived to be acceptable and praiseworthy in the organisation by serving as role models and by encouraging and reinforcing ethical behaviour in others (Nel *et al.*, 2008; Werner, 2011). Kim and Brymer (2011) point out that leaders in every organisation need to be the primary influential models of ethical guidance for every member of the organisation. They

further assert that followers learn organisationally acceptable standards by observing their superiors' ethical actions.

2.2.7 New patterns of behaviour can be acquired through experience or direct observation

Bandura (1971) advocates that in a social learning system, new patterns of behaviour can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behaviour of other. The latter assertion is corroborated by Conger and Riggio (2007), who argue that moral leaders practise self-reflection, looking inward to identify and then to combat unhealthy motivations that lead to unethical failures; beyond that, ethical leaders have to convince others to do likewise. Bandura (1971) warns of the dangers that can ensue from learning through modelling. Human beings often have a tendency to depart from the path that they know is right. Butts (2013) argues that, it is a well-known fact that power corrupts a person in authority and a leadership is a power relation. Having power opens the door for the leader to capitalise on personal gains in a certain situation. The primary motivations that triggers wrongdoing are greed, envy, anger, fear, and even jealousy.

Furthermore, Bandura (1971) asserts that, although behaviour can be shaped into new patterns to certain extent by rewarding and punishing consequences, learning would be exceedingly laborious and dangerous if it proceeded solely on this basis. Bandura (1971) further asserts that, in order for imitative learning to obtain, observers need to be motivated to act. They must be provided with an example of the desired behaviour. The significance of character is important in any organisation to succeed. Leaders show their humanness in multiple ways. Trust is the multifaceted virtue that serves as an umbrella over the key values in organisations. Therefore, followers can trust other leaders' work and commitments, just as people in the community can depend on organisations to uphold their words and promises to them. Acar, Kaya, and Sahin (2012) argue that leaders have to create working conditions where the decision-making process is fair.

2.2.8 Character matters and moral leadership actively influences the ethical context

Significantly, the behaviour of the leaders needs to embrace justice and fairness because, when followers perceive their leaders as fair, truthful, trustful and just, the followers' attitude becomes positive towards their leaders' decisions. Butts (2013) further argues that creating a culture of justice with a focus on trust is essential for an organisation to flourish. Moreover, practising the virtue of justice promotes a fair distribution among individuals in the community,

while trust is the glue that binds members. Through their leadership, leaders influence the behaviour of their subordinates directly, but also shape the norms and expectations of the appropriate conduct that become instilled in the organisations' ethical climate and culture. Such leaders manage to convey sincere concern for their followers and genuine interest in subordinates other than themselves. To show much they care about their followers, leaders help them to see what is so apparent to him or her.

In leadership, character matters and moral leadership actively influences the ethical context (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Conger & Riggio, 2007). In support of the foregoing assertion, Nel *et al.* (2008) point out that the senior leadership of the organisation has great influence on the ethical culture of the organisation. Mayer *et al.* (2009), in affirming Bandura's social learning theory, assert that followers will tend to mimic their leaders. Further, they contend that, since lower-level employees tend to follow a role-model and imitate their management's conduct, followers take the actions of leaders seriously, whether they reward or punish certain conduct or behaviour of employees. In essence, this underscores the significance of learning through observation, since when the employees see punishment handed down to a culprit they tend to desist from doing wrong things; in contrast, when good conduct is rewarded, employees tend to do positively so that they get rewarded. The employees feel the sense of indebtedness to those superiors who display ethical conduct towards them. Relationships built on the foundation of trust grow when principals respect and care for others and consistently do what they say (Witten, 2017). Brown (2007) argues for the significance of character importance as he states that leaders' character influences their ethical performance at work. Witten (2017) avers that a principal's ability to create trust amongst staff members and the school community contributes immensely to building a collaborative learning culture that can aid in bringing the school community together around the core values that inform the school vision. Nzimakwe (2014) shares similar notion as he argues that the preservation of people's humanity depends on their ethical conduct towards others. Hence, he argues that leaders need to listen to their inner drives to guide their behaviour to the right direction. Equally, Gallagher and Tschudin (2009) posit that ethical leadership thrives on good ends and to the kind of change that contributes to the flourishing or prosperity of human beings, as well as towards the good of other species and the environment. Further, they acknowledge that ethical leaders may find themselves in corrupt circumstances or a quagmire, but they have to be resilient. Nzimakwe (2014) argues that public leaders need to conform to the public accountability and transparency.

Carosselli (2000) and Werner (2011) argue that the leader challenges the status quo, in the most positive and diplomatic of ways, in order to continuously improve. Moreover, it is the leader that followers turn to if they feel that good enough is not sufficient. The leader always strives to motivate employees and contribute to the culture of accomplishment. Nzimakwe (2014) contends that values and processes directed toward soliciting consensus and mutual understanding, and maintaining harmony, are very much part of African culture. Werner (2011) argues that employees need to be afforded a space to express their views on issues and report unacceptable behaviours on demands through the channels that have been identified. In addition, Werner (2011) avers that the first obligation of the leader is the followers. Therefore, the leader has an obligation to work in order to ensure a safe environment for the followers and unearth the potential threats to the environment. The leader has to show by actions that she understands that, when the leader's integrity is under scrutiny in the organisation, the followers tend to lose trust in their leader (Werner, 2011). In preventing that risk of ethical failure, it is generally the leader of the organisation that is expected to provide ethical guidance, safeguarding and promoting the moral values.

Eisenbeiss (2012) maintains that ethical leadership is composed of four central ethical orientations, which are human responsibility and sustainability orientations, justice orientation and direction orientation. The essence of human orientation is that it is based on treating other people with great respect and dignity. Moreover, their rights are placed at the apex of the leaders' priority list for the benefit of the organisation. As for the responsibility and sustainability orientations, such leaders have a sense of responsibility toward themselves and the community they serve. When a leader takes a decision the responsibility is firstly to reflect on the impact of the decision in the society. Moreover, the leader has to think of the interest and the needs of future generations. Witten (2017) argues that, when attempting to deal with a challenge, it remains imperative to involve stakeholders in a collaborative process to help reach a full understanding of the underlying issue. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) maintain that the justice orientation is more concerned with making decisions that are just and fair and are consistent with justice for all. The leader has to understand that influence rather than authority is key in leading the organisation.

Ethical leadership is therefore important in organisations, because leaders who strive for ethical conduct motivate others to act in an ethical manner. Moreover, ethical leadership has clear features which include fairness, caring, trustworthiness, honesty and integrity, and substantive

character-moulding elements. Substantively, leaders can use their power in a positive way to influence people through ethical role modelling (Butts, 2013). Leaders know how to influence others to persuade them to higher calling. Fulmer (2004) further argues that growing evidence suggests that a company's profitability is bolstered/raised by its reputation as an honest, ethical business partner and further that organisations that routinely practice high business ethics and principles also attract the highest quality recruits and retain employees longer than other organisations. The foregoing view is corroborated by Nel *et al.* (2008), who contend that corporate ethics cannot be divorced from reputation risk management, as damaged reputation is often the result of what is viewed as unethical conduct on the part of an organisation. According to Carosselli (2000), the school principal as the team builder has to ensure that all team members understand the bigger picture and put it above petty personal issues. Therefore, schools, as the organisations that serve communities and that must produce competent and ethical leaders, have a role to play and school management teams need to be ethical in their conduct in order for the future leaders to have role models. If you have a leadership or management role in an institute, then you will be aware that your staff members tend to take their cues as to how to behave, based on what they observe you as their leader doing. Moreover, a lot can be gained by studying others and by discussing their careers and decisions with them (Stockdale & Steeper, 2016).

Nel *et al.* (2008) assert that accentuating ethics in the workplace increases the importance of approaching the management of ethics in a strategic and scientific manner by ensuring that an ethical culture is established in an organisation. Personal integrity is important for maintaining mutual trust and credibility. Moreover, strong integrity and high level of moral development are found in leaders whose main concern is the welfare of followers and the organisation, not their personal career advancement or personal gains (Yukl, 2010).

Leaders should use their power and authority as the means to attain ethical ends (Carosselli, 2000). Similarly, Bhatti (2007) asserts that a leader has to take good care of the values of the personnel under his/her watch. As earlier on alluded to, when employees feel that they are valued, they tend to commit themselves in working towards realising organisational goals. Therefore Werner (2011) contends that a leader should strive to achieve excellence through people, by motivating them to willingly follow the organisational goals and by demonstrating to them that their welfare is of paramount importance.

Meanwhile, Bhatti (2007) argues that a leader has to ensure that the values he/she cherishes influence the quality of his/her leadership and are compatible with those of the organisation. He further argues that compatibility in values leads to a smooth functioning of the organisation and enhances the efficacy of its leadership. Ethical leadership serves as an institutional magnet and it is probably because others find the leader optimistic, energetic, idealistic, and fun to be around. Moreover, a leader can assess his or her optimism by listing all the barriers to excellence within the workplace. Most importantly a leader must have an energised personality as this may stimulate belief in synergy. The leader understands how the total outcome can be greater than the sum of its parts (Carosselli, 2000; Werner, 2011).

Integrity, while usually referring to sincerity and honour, refers to the strength inherent in a well-designed structure or system. Effective leaders tap into this power by recognising and respecting all aspects of life, maintaining the boundaries that enable productive effort in each domain, while taking advantage of resources from stakeholders (Department of Education and other donors) by applying them to benefit others (learners and educators).

According to Friedman (2008) and Werner (2011), every stakeholder dialogue provides an opportunity to build trust and to gain support for achieving your goals. Trust – the willingness to ascribe good intentions and to have confidence in others' words and actions – is the glue that holds relationships together. Leaders depend on it. Friedman (2008) further argues that, without trust, the leader does not have the buy-in that the leader requires from the stakeholders. Most importantly, if stakeholders are not on board, the chances for the leader to get things done are not good. In addition, Friedman (2008) contends that organisational leaders who inspire trust increase their chances to attract the best employees and keep them. Ethical leaders create the sense of belonging in their organisations and the commitment that comes with that feeling. This, in turn, leads to productivity. Friedman (2008) also argues that, the more the leaders open to the stakeholders, and the more the leaders get the stakeholders to open to them, the more leaders will realise how significant the dialogue is to them as leaders and to the stakeholders.

Similarly Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) opine that, when employees trust their leader, they tend to assume that their leader is fair in his/ her behaviour and decisions, hence they believe their leader is fair in the distribution of rewards and treatment of their efforts and, as a consequence, their trust in the leader is enhanced. Friedman states that a reciprocal display is ideal, as it leads to greater trust. Trust is a fragile commodity, and in a stakeholder dialogue there are a few rules

that have proven effective in dealing broken trust. Özan, Özdemir, and Yirci (2017) opine that school is the ideal space for people to apply ethical principles and internalise them all their lives, as teachers build the next layer of generation of the society. They assert that ethical leadership starts with the leaders themselves and gradually permeates many people in the society. Similarly, Werner (2011), Bello (2012), and Mohiuddin and Hossain (2016) maintain that ethics does not apply to only those individuals at the top, all the employees no matter the level in the organisation should conform to the ethical rules, however, senior leadership of the organisation is ultimately responsible for ethics in the organisation and should therefore be exemplar of ethical conduct. Yosgat and Meşekiran (2016) opine that a leader should provide followers with the vision, motivation, inspiration, integrity, transparency, optimism, trust, ethical standards and, most important of all, the intellectual stimulation through charisma to accomplish these goals.

2.2.9 Importance of leader-follower relationship founded on trust

Charlton (1992) contends that fundamental to trust is the comprehension and meeting of the followers' expectations. Moreover, leaders are dependent on followers, therefore, leaders need to know that what is significant is not what they think or do. Instead it is the experiences and interpretation that followers make of the leadership behaviour that determines the action that they take. Pushpa (2012) corroborates Charlton (1992) in this, as she advances that leadership is a relationship between leaders and followers. Moreover, she claims that such a relationship is based on trust. Khuong and Dung (2015) contend that trust-developing strategies are significant in successful companies. Therefore, trust is the most influential variable on organisational performance. The latter is also expressed by Witten (2017), who asserts that teams will not function well when its members do not trust one another. Moreover, trust is the most significant organ for building the team and is the basis on which communication of team members is based on.

The contact between the follower and leader provides the opportunity for the leaders to be equal in words and deeds; simply put, leaders need to strive to practise what they preach. The principal of a school, as the senior leader, has the mandate of encouraging and modelling ethical behaviour, disposition, and competences of teaching as a professional practice. In addition, the work of teachers as professionals is underpinned by a set of principles and values to which they have to abide, which is ethics (Witten, 2017). Pushpa (2012) further corroborates Charlton (1992), as she surmises that the leaders must themselves be ethical in their decision making and

actions in order to influence followers to behave as expected. Most importantly, leaders need to be at all times aware of the impact that they make on followers, hence their conduct should always be ethical or in line with the organisational codes of ethics. The latter is corroborated by Mondy (2010) who maintains that compliance with the law and code of ethics sets the minimum standard of ethical behaviour. Naidoo (2012) asserts that ethical leaders need to avoid the abuse of power entrusted to them for personal gain, need to avoid potential interference and ensure that they protect anti-corruption agencies. In addition, Mondy (2010) contends that leaders who are able to plant the seed of ethics throughout the culture of organisations are the one that are mostly desired. Brown and Mitchell (2010) similarly maintain that leaders are in the unique space to influence subordinates' emotions at workplace, and so through their communication and behaviour can harness a positive emotional contagion that filters throughout the organisation. Pushpa (2012) posits in the same view that ethical leaders must go beyond personal ego and individual goals, recognising that value is in the success of the organisational goal for the benefit of its stakeholders. Katranci, Sungu, and Saglam (2015) state that leaders are supposed to be good leaders and inspirational figures. They further argue that followers learn from their leaders about ethical standards, by observing leaders' ethical actions.

2.2.10 Ethical leaders have deep sense of ethical principles

Mondy (2010) argues that there are codes of ethics that prescribe certain behaviour for professionals and without this conscience that has been developed, it might be easy for the leaders to do wrong things on the ground that everyone does it, or by telling themselves that doing the wrong thing just once won't hurt or no one will ever know. Ivancewich, Konopaske and Matteson (2008) maintain that values are significant for leaders. They define values as the guidelines and beliefs that leaders use when faced with situation where a choice has to be made. Therefore, values pervade decision making. Pushpa (2012) corroborates the latter assertion as she posits that ethical leaders consistently face challenges and engage in doing the right thing for the organisations making difficult decisions from reorienting the organisations' strategy to basic value propositions and personal decisions. Kreiter and Kinicki (2008) and Mondy (2010) maintain that many organisations are examining ways to strengthen their cultural underpinnings. Pushpa (2012) argues that what ethical leaders have in common is a deep sense of ethical principles, values and character at the core of their leadership. Similarly, Buell (2015) maintains that leaders must model ethical behaviour and instil the culture in which unethical behaviour is not tolerated. Organisations do this by fostering an ethical culture. By fostering an

ethical culture, organisations gain the confidence and loyalty of their employees and their stakeholders.

Moreover, the fostering of ethical culture results in reduced financial, legal and reputation risks and also improves organisational performance. Mondy (2010) maintains that the code of ethics offers guidance to ethical behaviour, prohibiting acts that can be harmful to others in the organisation. Pushpa (2012) like Mondy (2010), maintains that a leadership code of ethics guides leaders, not only in their roles, but also for ethical decision-making. In addition, a leadership code of ethics lays principles for fair and equitable treatment of all employees in the organisation. It accentuates fair business practices and, with all the stakeholders, ensures confidentiality, legal compliance and enforcement of the company's standards and code of conduct. It guides leaders in maintaining ethical, social and environmental responsibilities in the organisation practice. Kocabas and Karakose (2009) argue that school principals have a key responsibility in leading schools because they are the main decision-makers, they are school leaders. Therefore, they have more responsibility than others. Hence principals' ethical behaviour and decisions directly affect the school climate positively. However, for all this to happen, school principals need to follow their code of ethics and always think of stakeholders first in their decision making process.

Furthermore, Mondy (2010) points out that, if behaviour is illegal, most people would consider it to be unethical as well. Sadly the organisation becomes negatively impacted by such behaviour. Kreiter and Kinicki (2008) argue that there is sufficient evidence pointing out that organisations that have an enhanced reputation for honesty and citizenship have enhanced profits. Similarly, Mondy (2010) contends that there is an abundance of evidence that suggests that ethical organisations perform much better financially. Khuong and Dung (2015) in corroborating this view contend that ethical leadership is significant because of the impact that leaders exert on the conduct of the organisations and ultimately on organisational performance and on job performance.

Charlton (1992) asserts that successful leaders have to pay attention to building trust on the organisation and individual level. In addition, Charlton maintains that trust is a lubricant which makes it possible for organisation to work. Hazrati, Alvani, and Zader (2013) corroborate the views of Charlton (1992) as they posit that managing ethical values in the organisations strengthens the coherence and balance of the organisational culture and further improves trust

and relationships between individuals and groups. Kocabas and Karakose (2009) maintain that it is essential for the reputation of schools that they have an ethical culture as ethics is an essential part of the job. Khuong and Dung (2015) contend in the same vein that ethical leadership is relevant behaviour that leaders can use to show their integrity and that this behaviour is a vital antecedent of trust. Smit, de J Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2007) maintain that leaders can entrench ethical behaviour in their organisation by providing ethical training programme at all levels of the organisation.

Moreover, they emphasise the vital issue of trust within the organisation. They further assert that the negative behaviour of the leaders in the organisations create moral dilemmas through small gaps resulting from the dissonance between the words uttered and the actions performed. Most importantly, ethical leadership plays a vital role in enhancing subordinates' involvement (Hazrati, Alvani, & Zedah, 2013). Hansen, Dunford, Alge and Jackson (2015) surmise that employees' propensity to trust refers to an employee's dispositional tendency to trust or their willingness to become vulnerable to the actions of their leaders. Employees with great propensity to trust are more willing to take risk based on leaders because they generally tend to trust their leaders more. Bhatti (2007) points out that employees select and follow someone as their leader because that person is demonstrating a high level of trust, dependability and credibility. Bhatti (2007) further states that followers place their trust in the ability of a leader and in their intention to lead them and fulfil their needs. Hazrati, Alvani, and Zedah (2013) posit that ethical leaders must be careful of what they say or what they do because they have to gain their subordinates' trust. The latter assertion is corroborated by Bhatti (2007), who argues that a leader has to create and maintain trust by demonstrating his great skills and ability, acumen and sincerity in the fulfilment of the goals and aspirations of the followers. Hansen, Dunford, Alge and Jackson (2015) further argue that an ethical role model is a significant determinant of trust. Employees place their trust in their leaders within organisations through their performance and intentions to influence social behaviour. Therefore, it is vital that leaders in organisations are ethical people and explicitly outline what constitutes ethical behaviour for the followers (Hazrati, Alvani, & Zedah, 2013). Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) corroborate Hazrati, Alvani, and Zedah (2013), as they posit that employees who experience an increase in trust also experience an increase in work engagement.

In addition, they propound that subordinates learn what to do and what not to do by watching their leaders and also being influenced by them. Bhatti (2007) argues that inspiring leadership

is more than motivation as, by itself, it instils positive feelings and ideas amongst people and drives them, willingly and without persuasion, to give their maximum best at work. Hansen, Dunford, Alge and Jackson (2015) suggest that followers process information about the justice of leaders' actions, along with the cues about organisation's responsibility to make judgements about their leaders and to assist them make sense of and develop opinions about their work environments. Most importantly, the effort that the leader puts in to show commitment gives birth to organisational success. The only way to obtain trust is by doing the right thing with absolute clarity and reliability (Charlton, 1992). Likewise, Khoza (2011) avers that trust cements the leader-follower relationship. In the same vein, Bhatti (2007) avers that people appreciate humility in a leader because it touches their hearts while earning him/her people's respect from within. Most significantly, the leader becomes popular and very close to the people.

Meanwhile, Bhatti (2007) states that the leader needs to remain humble and trustworthy notwithstanding his/her high status. Mondy (2010) corroborates the foregoing argument in the context of ethics, as he contends that leaders have a responsibility to avail themselves in planting the seed of ethical behaviour and providing guidance in ethical behaviour; simply put, in showing followers what is good and bad. Mondy (2010) further argues that leaders need to show care about what is right and wrong, and not be concerned with what is expedient. Trevino and Brown (2004a) point out that, even when people make the right decisions, they find it difficult to follow through and do the right thing as they succumb to the pressures from their work environment. Buell (2015) argues that ethical erosion is characterised by a series of small, sometimes unnoticed acts that erode ethical behaviour, with each act providing a foundation for a more erosive act. In addition, taken together, such acts can lead to significant and even hazardous consequences for both organisations and leaders.

However, a code of ethics establishes the rules by which the organisations live and becomes part of the organisation's corporate culture. In addition, once the organisation has published the rules, everyone within or outside the organisation knows the rules that the employees of the organisation should live by (Buell, 2015). Weaver (2015) states that principals and teachers need to know that they are accountable for their actions whether they are at school or outside school. To qualify her statement, Weaver (2007) contends that many teachers and principals have lost their jobs because their actions occurred outside of schools. Code of ethics

encompasses professional responsibility, ethical leadership, fairness and justice, to mention a few key aspects (Mondy, 2010).

2.2.11 Creating leaders for sustainable future

To increase the quality and supply of exemplary leaders in the world, it is vital that the subordinates in various organisations are exposed to observing models of exemplary leadership. Thus, to develop ethical leaders requires the creation of an environment that allows those aspiring to leadership to observe leaders behaving ethically (Henry, 2009). The same sentiments are shared by Pushpa (2012), who contends that, to create leaders for a sustainable future, organisations need to educate them now and instil future leaders with values of integrity, trustworthiness, honesty, service mind and a commitment to virtue. Kocabas and Karakose (2009) maintain that moral leadership is vital for every organisation of all types and in all corners of life. Moreover, they argue that leaders play an important role in society as leaders and role models for future leaders. Brown and Mitchell (2010) contend that ethical leaders send a strong signal that an individual is potentially suitable for pressures of leadership because of being able to maintain strong ethical performance in the face of such pressure. Hence, Weaver (2007) suggests that principals of schools need to be role models for fairness. They need to make a conscious effort to be fair to their subordinates as well as to students. Moreover, principals need to be trusted by the stakeholders that they will be treated fairly when principals are making decisions.

Similarly, Pushpa (2012) contends that leaders need to live their lives with great personal integrity and they need to show this by communicating and embodying high moral standards. Tutar, Altinz and Cakiroglu (2011) argue that ethical leadership encompasses ethical responsibility. Therefore, ethical understanding requires leaders to have a conscience regarding their own actions, beyond gaining the ability to make only moral judgements. Most significantly, they argue that being an ethical leader requires acting from the ethical values and ethical codes in their all personal and organisational activities.

A code of ethics cannot, in itself, guarantee ethical practice or be a panacea for all challenges in a profession (Kocabas & Karakose, 2009). Therefore, our society needs socially responsible and ethical organisations that can build a stronger social fabric. Pushpa (2012) further maintains that organisations are built by leaders and that, to realise ethical leadership, the key internal driver is the commitment to integrity and excellence as part of the core values of the individual

leader. However, it is worth noting that leaders don't wake up one day with a strong set of ethics, but they are taught. Culture is a set of beliefs and values about what is desirable and undesirable in a community of people, and a set of formal or informal practices to support values. Culture is passed from one generation to the next by family, friends, teachers, and relevant others. In line with Albert Bandura's social learning theory, Kreitner and Kinicki (2008) posit that most cultural lessons are learned by observing and imitating role models as they go about their daily affairs or are observed in the media. Kreiner and Kinicki (2008) further maintain that, when leading people at work, an individual's societal culture, the organisational culture, and any interaction between the two need to be taken into consideration. Collectivist cultures always talk about "we" or "us" and rank shared goals higher than individual desires and goals. In affirming the latter assertion, Khoza (2011) argues that the existence of a person is not dependent on what the person thinks in the lone citadel of the mind, but instead on social ties, common values and ways of viewing things and, most importantly, empathy with others. Simply put, individuals suppress their own wishes and goals to those of the relevant organisations. Values are desired ways of behaving or desired end-states (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2008). Therefore, having a clear values statement helps to align the organisation and employees' behaviour more efficiently than simply assuming that there is a set of shared values. Most significantly, values should drive the behaviour that the organisation wants to achieve. Leaders need to remain ethical in their decision making. However, ethical decision making frequently involves trade-offs, and a decision tree helps managers to navigate through them.

There is no adequate research in the field of education that addresses the issue of ethics in schools. Hence this study will contribute in eliciting enhancing the knowledge of school leaders in relation to ethics and the principles of it.

2.3 Conclusion

The preceding chapter presented introduction, purpose and the rationale, significance of the study, research objectives, critical questions, clarification of concepts, demarcation of the study, and the organisation of the study. The literature presented here shall be utilised in analysing the data collected from the participants. The subsequent chapter shall present theoretical/conceptual factors that shall be used to analyse data generated in this research.

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter has provided a review of international, continental and national (local) literature. This chapter aims to discuss the theoretical frameworks for this study. This study is grounded in two frameworks: Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) model of ethical leadership (multiple paradigms approach) and Khoza's (2011) attuned leadership: African humanism as a compass. These theories are explained below and their relevance to this study is justified.

3.2 Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) Model of Ethical Leadership

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) conceived a model of ethical leadership based on four domains of ethics. They ground their model on four ethics which are: the ethic of justice, the ethic of critique, the ethic of care and the ethic of the profession. This model is discussed below.

3.2.1 The ethic of justice

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that ethic of justice is based on rights and laws. They further posit that educators and ethicists from this tradition have had a profound influence on approaches to education and educational leadership. Moreover, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) state that the ethic of justice indicates that schools should teach principles, in particular those of justice, equity, and respect for liberty. Acar, Kaya, and Sahin (2012) maintain that, while ethical leaders may take success as their target, they also look for doing their work within the frame of justice, honesty and ethical standards. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) borrow from Sergiovanni (1992) in maintaining that there should be deep concern for the welfare of the school as a community by taking into account not only the students, teachers, and administrator, but families as well. Olivier (2012 opines that the demand for justice is the cornerstone for society and its' leadership. In underscoring the significance of the model of justice, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) posit that the ethic of justice may take into account a variety of issues which include, amongst many, equity versus equality; the fairness of rules, laws, and policies; whether laws are absolute, and if exceptions are to be made, under what circumstances; and the rights of individuals versus the greater good of the community. Olivier (2011) corroborates Shapiro and Stefkovich as he argues that leadership stems from the desire of social justice, the fair management of the interests of all the members of the organisation. Moreover, Olivier (2012) maintains that, where justice needs to be guarded, guardians (leaders) are needed to represent and protect the common interest of followers. Acar, Kaya, and Sahin (2012) posit that

when ethical leadership focuses on justice, the behaviours of the employees are positively affected from the situation. They further argue that the practice of organisational justice evokes trust in the leader by the followers.

The relevance of the ethic of justice to education becomes paramount when school principals make decisions relating to misconduct of the subordinates. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) state that the ethic of justice frequently serves as a foundation for legal principles and ideals. Hence Olivier (2011) opines that employees are not much interested in leadership but want justice. The legality of actions of individuals is sometimes relative. In agreement with the latter view is the assertion that, what is legal in some places may be considered illegal in others. They pose an important question of what is to be done if the law is wrong. The solution to the latter is to consider ethics to make a fair and just decisions.

3.2.2 The ethic of critique

The ethic of critique has its roots in critical theory (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005) and emphasises that schools produce inequities similar to those in societies. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) posit that educators need to comprehend that their classrooms are political as well as educational locations. Hence, ethics is not a matter of individual choice or relativism, but a social discourse grounded in struggles that refuse to accept needless human suffering and exploitation. Mncube (2012) avers that any form of shutting up the voices of learners undermines their constitutional right to democracy and justice as they have a right to be listened to. Smit, Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2007) assert that employers should be interested in the behaviour of employees because the attitudes give warning of the potential problems. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that the ethic of critique serves as a vehicle in the struggle against inequalities. Smit, Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2007) argue that ethical decisions need to involve the equitable, fair and impartial distribution of benefits and costs amongst the individuals and groups. In this study, this latter notion is most appropriate in that school principals need to create space for the voices of the followers and as such treat them fairly and justly in the workplace. Moreover, learners' interests need to be prioritised. In secondary schools in South Africa, there is a Representative Council for Learners (RCLs), which is the voice of learners in the education system. These structures in some township secondary schools do exist, but these structures are not empowered to carry out their mandates. Therefore, the ethic of critique remains much relevant and necessary, since the voices of learners need to be heard in schools. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that through the critical analysis of social class and the distribution of resources, having taken into

account divisions of wealth and power, there is the possibility that more knowledgeable, moral and sensitive school principals may be prepared. Kalshoven and Hartog (2009) opine that ethical leaders provide followers with voice, listen to their inputs and allow them to share in decision making that concerns their tasks. This can, in turn, assist in rectifying the wrongs in schools. Mncube (2012) argues that organisational decision- making processes need to be inclusive for everyone to own decisions taken within the organisation.

3.2.3 The ethic of care

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) argue that the ethic of care is significant, not solely to scholars, but to educational leaders who are often asked to make moral decisions. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that the primary responsibility of the school is to care for children (learners). Owens and Ennis (2005) argue, in the same line, that teachers' ethic of care requires the teacher to be responsive to the learners' interests and should make manifest teachers' desire for relationship and connectedness to learners. Further, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) posit that an ethic of care offers another perspective and way to respond to complex moral challenges facing educational leaders in their daily work. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) state that school principals need to be both outstanding leaders and learners who are willing to listen to others when encountering the need to make vital moral decision. The ethic of care asks that individuals consider the consequences of their decisions and actions. Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) assert that a leader who embraces ethics in his/her practices is likely to demonstrate honesty, fairness and care towards others and should be seen to be dedicated to open communication and to involving others in decision–making processes. Ethical principals need to put the interests of their learners first. Owens and Ennis (2005) state that human caring and the memory of caring and being cared for underpin the bases of the ethic of care.

Additionally, the caring teacher is sensitive to the needs of the learners and acts in the interest of the learners and shows a caring attitude and feelings toward the learners. Kimber and Campbell (2015) assert that principals must resolve tensions that emerge from situations in which professional ethics might conflict with their duties as a public sector employee, such as caring for the student who is participating in an illegal activity. Furthermore, Kimber and Campbell (2015) posit that most dilemmas school principals encounter relate to students or staff. School principals need to put the interest of learners first, by at all times striving to assist learners to achieve high academic scores and good behaviour, as well as assisting learners in

achieving their needs and goals. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that leaders need to reflect solutions that show concerns for others as part of their decision-making. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) maintain that a caring teacher does not tell learners to care but rather shows them how to care by creating caring relationships amongst them. Through shared moral values and honesty and caring, fairness and modelling ethical leadership, leaders can foster employees' work engagement (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) contend that ethical leaders care about their followers and engage in frequent ethical discourse with them. Meanwhile, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) posit that caring teachers devote their serious attention into thinking about negotiating and carrying out actions in the best interest of their learners.

Further, those teachers establish a passionate belief in themselves and their learners as creators and evaluators of knowledge, exhibit the willingness to respect and honour the diverse nature of learners, varied skills and styles. Schools are institutions established to promote social change and establish social norms. These institutions are dedicated to the well-being of children, but students generally are not in control of what is occurring in these institutions (Katranci, Sungu, and Saglam, 2015). Yates (2014) argues that ethical leaders are concerned for others. Moreover, ethical leaders are those that promote collegiality and participative decision-making, treat their followers with consideration, and are fair to and care for others.

3.2.4 The ethic of profession

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that the amalgamation of the ethics of justice, care, critique and of the profession closes any ethical gaps that leaders of institutions may encounter. Therefore, school principals need to have ethics as their guiding compass in their practices. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that professional ethics calls for a dynamic process that requires school principals to develop their own personal and professional codes that have to be inclusive of the ethic of justice. Therefore, school principals need to consider the professional codes of ethics established by professional associations such as South African Council of Educators (SACE), and both the professional community and community standards in which the leader works are significant for the leader in crafting his/her professional codes of ethics. In a nutshell, the leader has to understand the community he/she works for and accommodate their ethics. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) posit that the process of formulating a code of ethics involves an understanding of oneself as well as others. Mncube (2012) avers that learners' role

in an SGB needs to be legitimised by the adults in the SGB, and it should be respected so that they can meaningfully participate in crucial decision-making processes. In addition, Mncube (2012) maintains that the SGB ought to be elevating learner leaders in the SGB to become exemplars of discipline, respect, morality, and the promotion of positive relationships amongst learners themselves and between learners and staff, and community and parents.

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) contend that there are possible clashes in the codes of ethics. Those clashes are when an individual's personal ethical code conflicts with professional code of ethics; when personal and professional code of ethics conflict with community practices and customs; and clashes between the personal codes among members of School Management Teams (SMTs) to mention a few. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) attest that ethical codes set by the state and professional associations tend to be deficient in their responsiveness, in that they are somewhat detached from the day-to-day personal and professional dilemmas school principals encounter. In accentuating their argument, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) draw from Lebacqz (1985) and Nash (1996) respectively, that professional codes of ethics serve as guideposts for the profession, and they display the highest moral ideals of the profession, thus presenting an ideal image of the moral character of both the profession and of being professional. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) further posit that due to dissonance or disagreement between what is set for school principals and what is happening in school, there is a great need for principals to develop their own personal and professional codes. In addition, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that leaders need to be take cognisance of community standards in their decision-making process.

Notably, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) contend that for school principals to develop their own personal and professional codes they need to understand themselves as well as others. Moreover, school principals need to recognise that the preparation of students to live and work in the 21st century needs very special principals who have grappled with their own personal and professional codes and have taken time to reflect on the different forms of ethics, having in mind the diverse backgrounds of the students enrolled in the schools they are heading. In addition, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that for school principals, coming to grips with clashes that may emerge among ethical codes and making ethical decisions in the light of their best professional judgment means a judgment that considers the interest of the students as of paramount importance in all ethical decision making. All educators are expected to work under a code of ethics that is intended to guide their professional conduct in the field (Brown,

Bessestte, & Chan, 2006). With the above said, Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) ethical leadership model is most relevant for this study, as it provides guidelines for what constitutes good ethical leadership. I believe, through this multiple paradigm approach, that school principals' ethical leadership practices in multiple challenging contexts can be enhanced.

3.3 Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership: African Humanism

Khoza (2011) draws from the then Republic of South Africa President's assertion that helping other people is not what Africans do with an expectation of any favour in return but give assistance needed on the basis that one is helping a person who is like them. Khoza (2011) suggests that kindness and generosity should be extended to the needy because is just a human being, not because one is expecting a reward thereafter. Khoza (2011) further reveals that amongst Africans, helping another person is not viewed as a moral duty but as something done out of compassion and out of the understanding of human condition and dependence of humankind on one another.

Khoza (2011) maintains that modern ideas of leadership in organisations and politics tend to be deficient of components of humanness encapsulated in *ubuntu*. As a result, there is space for *ubuntu* as a solution to the much-craved sound ethics that can breed good leaders (Khoza, 2011). To accentuate the significance and the need of *ubuntu*, Khoza (2011) borrows from Archbishop Desmond Tutu's perspective of *ubuntu* that "African humanism seeks to balance between material and spiritual realities. *Ubuntu* joins the broader category of philosophies that affirm the dignity and worth of all people, based on the ability to determine right and wrong by appealing to universal qualities including rationality and intelligence" (Khoza, 2011. pp. 82-83). *Ubuntu* shares great similarities with ethical leadership since both raise the awareness of what is right, good and important, and raise up followers into leaders who give priority to the organisational interests above their own interests (Khoza, 2011; Naidoo, 2012). In his quest to illuminate what *ubuntu* is all about, Khoza (2011, p. 81) avows that "my being and your being are the creation of our collective being, the being of humanity itself". To underscore the same point, Khoza (2011) emphases this phrase that there is, outside of society, no personhood, no sense of self, no sense of morality, no language, no learning. The in-depth discussion of Attuned Leadership: African Humanism model focuses on *ubuntu* as under the following sub-headings: being, humanness, individualism, compassion, and moral necessity

3.3.1 Being

Khoza (2011) posits that *ubuntu* is a statement of being – the 'I am' in all of us. Khoza provides clarity that, in essence, even though we are living separate lives as human species, we draw our reason for existence from the collective, thus, for us to be persons, it is through other persons. Khoza further argues that the divine and everlasting spirit of the God binds us to one another in virtues that we deem to be acceptable which were also valued by our ancestors, acknowledging that we owe our existence to those around us while our ancestors in their graves remain indelible in our minds. The foregoing manifest itself when something good happened or we have achieved something big, we sometimes even say I wish my late mother or father was here to observe and share my success. *Ubuntu* teaches us how we should act for the good of others. The world is viewed through the lenses of human and non-human and identifies human beings as essentially social in nature. *Ubuntu* recognises that knowledge accumulates from generation to generation. Hence it is our collective knowledge, built on traditions that are culturally handed down and derived from the world as well as the introspection of ourselves (Khoza, 2011). Khoza (2011) opines that logic must, by the nature of collective human existence, be based on communication principles such as clear and orderly discourse and rules of induction and deduction.

Further, Khoza avers that logic concerns reasoning, therefore it needs to be respected as it forms the basis for humans to be able to reason with each another. Through dialogue, the sages use their judicious acumen to manage to create a common moral position for the community. In addition, there is no world that is outside our perceptions, since we inhabit a human frame of thought, motion and expression with which previous generations have endowed us, and which we develop in our turn and pass onto future generations. Khoza (2011) avers that ordinary Africans admire and look up to sages, but the sad reality is that, lacking formal education or positions in academies, they are often dismissed by the educated as mere repositories of folklore. Broodryk (2006) shares similar view that *ubuntu* makes a vital contribution to indigenous ways of knowing and being, and is embedded on the primary values of caring, sharing and compassion, ensuring that there is a happy family. *Ubuntu* underscores the significance of respect for others, helpfulness, caring, sharing, and unselfishness and a sense of community (Khoza, 2011). *Ubuntu* assumes that we are by nature moral, again because it would not be possible for humans to exist collectively or even individually without an innate ethical sense (Khoza, 2011). We cannot steal from our fellows without feeling a sense of guilt. This is an indication that *ubuntu* connects our spiritual being with our social being, as a moral

statement. The main determinant trait of *ubuntu* is that one cannot exist as a human being in isolation from others. Khoza (2011) sees *ubuntu* also as the ability of people to share and appreciate beauty and together to be capable of making evaluative judgements based on the standards of taste. Hence, Khoza (2011) maintains that interconnectedness occurs in two ways – as a precondition of social living and as the basis of individual and group morality. Moreover, Khoza (2011) avows that *ubuntu* preaches that one acknowledges his/her humanity by recognising the humanity of others. Simply put, by demonstrating respect for the people around, one in reciprocity gets accorded the same respect. Msila (2014) corroborates Khoza's (2011) assertion that *ubuntu* is a collective, shared experience and solidarity which has significance in the development of people and organisations. Mangena (2012) corroborates Khoza's (2011) assertion that *ubuntu* is a spirit of togetherness or oneness, where people help each other to develop and rebuild organisation.

Ubuntu embraces ethical leadership and is as a result more relevant to all sectors and society as a whole (Khoza, 2011). *Ubuntu* promotes communal decision-making through engagement, as the only resource that can mitigate between groups in conflict. In line with *ubuntu* principles, the Department of Basic Education scripted the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Department of Education, 2001), which advocates educational strategies underpinned by notions of building consensus and understanding difference through dialogue, in nurturing of a culture of communication and participation in schools. The foregoing requires leadership's commitment to ensure that there is room for dialogue and for a culture of communication and participation. The Manifesto of Values, Education and Democracy (Department of Education, 2001) further suggests that opening the channels of dialogue amongst stakeholders builds confident, inquiring and empowered citizens.

3.3.2 Humanness

Khoza (2011) defines humanness in a leader as the quality of being human, considering the whole humankind as a group. In addition, Khoza (2011, p. 88) avers that humanness is a far broader term, since it pertains to the quality of being human and considers the entire humankind as a group. Within ubuntu, humanness defines comprehensive relationships that are expressed in the phrase "a person is a person through other people". Hence, Khoza (2011) posits that the ethic of humanness within *ubuntu* suggests that 'a person is a person through other people'. In a nutshell, the leader can only realise organisational goals through his/her subordinates. Khoza

(2011) maintains that the ethic of humanness suggests that each person owes his/her existence to others, since all human species draw their being from the collective. The foregoing assertion resonates with Msila's (2008) view that management that adopts *ubuntu* in management ensures that other stakeholders are embraced in the workplace. Khoza (2011) clarifies that to be humane is showing kindliness to other living beings either people or animals. The ethic of humanness suggests that humanity is the caring species. To clarify the significance of ethic of humanness, Khoza (2011) argues that humanness in the leader is demonstrated through his/her ability to be able to empathise with subordinates, since the success of the leader is dependent on the subordinates, while subordinates depend on their leader for the direction. The leader-follower relationship draws on the collective spirit of humanity as a whole to meet the organisational goals (Khoza, 2011). *Ubuntu* discourages the actions of a person that are done with an intention to gain some accolades, instead the leader has to subscribe to *ubuntu* and avoid intimidating or silencing the voices of others, for the good of all. The Manifesto of Values, Education, Democracy (Department of Education, 2001) advocates the significance of respect as a precursor in communication for teamwork for organisational success. Humanness in a leader signals decency and integrity, which are the essential traits for the establishment of cohesion and unity within the organisation. The ethic of humanness assumes that leaders owe their status and power to their followers (Khoza, 2011). Therefore, the success of a leader is dependent on the reception she/or he gets from the subordinates.

Further, to accentuate the significance of the ethic of humanness, Khoza (2011) points out that humanitarian law designed to prevent the human suffering in wars and natural disasters has its roots embedded in humane concerns. Human beings are not born good or evil, but the systems (family systems, villages, communities, towns etc.) in which human grow shape their behaviours (Khoza, 2011). Khoza (2011) contends that Republic of South Africa Constitution accords recognition to the *ubuntu* in the preamble to demonstrate the society's commitment to human rights, which acknowledges that all people are human, and all should enjoy the same legal constitutional and social rights. The conduct of some African leaders has though undermined the wonderful attributes that *ubuntu* embraces and promotes to guide behaviours. Despite the foregoing view, Msila (2008) maintains that *ubuntu* is very significant for numerous institutions in the society and schools are no exceptions. *Ubuntu* advocates for the development of inclusivity culture towards the attainment of organisational goals. Likewise, Khoza (2011) maintains that *ubuntu* has universal significance and can teach a lesson to the world. Msila (2008) argues that an *ubuntu* leadership style embraces a shift from hierarchically structured

management relationships and introduces an inclusive and supportive style of leadership in which the collective solidarity of the group is used and respected. The foregoing resonates with well with the Manifesto of Values, Education, Democracy (Department of Education, 2001), which states that *ubuntu* has a place in education system for it is based on African mores: "I am human because you are human". The manifesto further states that values of *ubuntu* and human dignity are underpinned by compassion, kindness, altruism and respect.

3.3.4 Individualism

Ubuntu assumes that, though humans have different lives, we are highly dependent on each other, therefore, the individual is a locus of community consciousness (Khoza, 2011). The foregoing indicates the interdependence that exists between human beings and demonstrates that the differences in human species are there to complement the areas of deficiency to others. Khoza (2011) asserts that those who are in power need to understand that their role is to use their power and capacity to empower others. In addition, leaders need to perform their duties having in mind that their subordinates expect their leaders not only to demand work to be done optimally, but also expect their well-being to be prioritised. In concert with Khoza's (2011) assertion, Nzimakwe (2014) asserts that *ubuntu* is the foundation for basic values which shows / manifests itself through the caring, harmony, hospitality and respect demonstrated in a leader's conduct. Khoza (2011) avows that *ubuntu* is about humility and morality, thus leaders embracing *ubuntu* philosophy do not see themselves above their subordinates; instead leaders strive to provide them with quality service. In a nutshell, the *ubuntu* philosophy / driven leadership shares some commonalities with servant leadership in this regard, since *ubuntu*-driven leaders see themselves as community servants.

The foregoing assertion challenges leaders on the issue of individualism; leaders need not to be aloof but to co-exist with others. It provides an understanding that the individual person owes his/her *being* to those around him/her and further indicates that those in power have a duty to develop those under their leadership without expecting to repay them back. The Western philosophy advocates 'I think, therefore I am' as against the African 'I am because you are.' The previous sub-topics have demonstrated that *ubuntu* is highly underpinned by communal roots – thus it advocates collective existence. However, Khoza (2011) points out that there is a Cartesian worldview that promotes individualism contrary to the African worldview. Further, Khoza (2011) reveals that in Descartes' view a person is an entity separate from others. Against

this, from an *ubuntu* business perspective, leaders have a duty to listen with their mind and heart to the voices of their subordinates, if they have a desire to succeed. Failure of a leader to listen to the subordinates cracks the relationship and the leader loses touch with the subordinates. The implications of the disconnect or disjuncture between leaders and their subordinates, emanating from leaders' failure to reflect on their relationship with others, are dire. The latter assertion is true because the success of the leader in this modern era is extremely dependent on the shared vision and common purpose. Congruent with Khoza's (2011) assertion, Nzimakwe (2014) avows that *ubuntu* embodies a tradition of the participation of ordinary members of the society in decision-making processes.

Moreover, *ubuntu* stresses the importance of respect and places value on teamwork and supporting each other. Hence, Khoza (2011) argues that the leaders in any organisation in the modern epoch are compelled to continuously reflect on their relationships (leader-follower relationship) and empathise with their subordinates as they depend on them to provide direction. Eranil and Özbilen (2017) corroborate Khoza's (2011) views and further contend that leaders embracing *ubuntu* provide the creation of production and learning space. Simply put, the leaders focus on the empowerment of their subordinates so that they become more effective at their work. Khoza (2011) opines that leaders who uphold *ubuntu* promote the sense of serving people with integrity and accountability.

Consequently, ethical leaders are in constant communication with their subordinates and share ideas with them. Khoza (2011) attempts to demonstrate that all human beings have something to contribute toward the growth of others, since the individual is a significant organ of the community consciousness. In addition, Khoza (2011) avers that it is normal and correct for the subordinates to expect their leaders to treat them fairly and consider their well-being, as much as they expect them to be committed and effective in their job performance. Leaders need to understand that their position in the society is meant to empower rather than to deprive the society. The latter assertion demonstrates that *ubuntu* bases leaders-follower relationships on a deeply respectful attitude that emphasises common humanity, which is a product of the leader's ability to treat others as human beings (Khoza, 2011).

Importantly, the commitment of a leader in respecting and treating others with dignity yields a healthy leader-follower relationship and trust, which is the most essential trait for leader's success. Khoza (2011) proposes that it is important for the leadership to consult and engage

with stakeholders often, seeking to achieve rational and compassionate mandates. Leadership should also aim to comprehend the aspirations of subordinates. Khoza (2011) contends that the essential qualities of a leader who forges trust among members in the *ubuntu*-driven organisation are communication, persuasion, accommodation, cohabitation and accountability, because, when these qualities are well managed, they breed goodwill and confidence within an organisation.

3.3.4 Compassion

Khoza's (2011) perspective of compassion refers to feeling pity or sympathy for the suffering that others experience. However, Khoza (2011) refers to a broader perspective of compassion that is about loving and understanding applied to others. In a nutshell, Khoza (2011) suggests that as a people we share pain with those who are directly affected. We try to show that the pain they are feeling we share with them intuitively. The latter is well expressed as Khoza (2011, p. 94) contends that "to feel is an individual experience, but to share feeling is to experience intuitively the pains and joys of others." We can never know quite how much of our intuition is accurate though we can try to establish this through talking and the give and take of mutual understanding" Compassion is underpinned by empathy (Khoza, 2011). We act out of compassion, based on an understanding of our common human condition, recognising our morality and our dependence on each other.

Additionally, Khoza (2011) posits that empathy as the essential part of compassion is a one-way expression of personal feeling that applied to others. In essence, as a people we express compassion towards others once we learn of their inner state. Khoza (2011) maintains that it is difficult for leaders to understand exactly what their subordinates think, instead they make assumptions based on what they observe them doing. Sometimes leaders assume that their subordinates are experiencing some challenges due to their performance as they execute their duties. In short, compassion is intuitively grasped. Khoza (2011) asserts that compassion is not rehearsed but engulfs us either instantly or, after some time, dawns slowly in our minds, but what matters is that we all feel it.

Importantly, compassion, as an expression of humanness, calls for a heartfelt response to another person's predicament (Khoza, 2011). Leaders need to understand that their role requires them to see their subordinates as their responsibility to care for. In addition, the leaders need to

be in the shoes of their subordinates when they need their sympathy. Khoza (2011) contend that, when leaders demonstrate compassion towards their subordinates, that compassion is reciprocated. Khoza (2011) avers that leaders need to make attempts to understand the predicaments of their subordinates and that promotes love of one another within the organisation. Khoza (2011) draws wisdom from an old adage that we need to treat others as we would love to be treated, which resonates well with the Christian belief that you should love thy neighbour as you love yourself, to underscore the significance of compassion. Leaders respect their employees' rights and treat them fairly (Eranil & Özbilen, 2017). When a leader demonstrates respect and treat his/her followership fairly, in reciprocity the leader earns trust and respect from his/her subordinates. Treating followers fairly is a symbol of compassion, since compassion is about inclusivity and treating others fairly and with respect (Khoza, 2011). Leaders need to recognise that they need community for the basic needs of life and protection because it is only society that can provide.

Furthermore, Khoza (2011) argues that human beings draw their sense of being from empathy, which leads to compassion. Compassion is all-inclusive, it is reciprocal. All human species need compassion from others around them. To emphasise the importance of compassion, Khoza (2011) asserts that compassion is more than acting out of feeling pity for suffering; instead it is extended to others out of loyalty towards the community of human beings. Hence the phrase "we are because of others"; to deny that is tantamount to denying one's self. Khoza (2011) argues that the African community spirit teaches that people need to acknowledge that they are dependent on one another and, without that interdependence, people can be understood as inhuman. Khoza (2011) argues that a leader need not stand alone, instead they need to collaborate with their subordinates for the common good. Nzimakwe (2014) believes that *ubuntu* is the foundation for basic values that manifest themselves through the spirit of caring, harmony, hospitality and respect. Hence, Khoza (2011) highlights the commonality that underpins the ethic of care with *ubuntu*, as both promote fair treatment and compassion as the bases for unity and trust. These are qualities that organisations need dearly to succeed in realising their goals.

Meanwhile, Khoza (2011) argues that for leaders to be not dependent is the same as the denial of their own being. The latter clearly suggests that when the leader sees himself/herself as not part of the collective, his/her relationship with the subordinates becomes strained, thus subordinates lose trust and commitment in serving their leader. Moreover, subordinates do not

trust the leader's decisions to be fair and, as a result, they tend to question the leader's decision making. It is common knowledge that a leader who is not in contact with the subordinates can hardly understand their needs and fairly consider their interests. As a result, Khoza (2011) maintains that, when leaders lack compassion, they disconnect themselves from the collective. He further asserts that leadership without compassion is empty, and devoid of the community aspirations as well as the desires of the followers. It is essential that the leader exercises *ubuntu* when pondering about decisions. Congruent to Khoza's (2011) argument, Rao (2018) avers that there are some commonalities in ethics that call for individuals to carry out introspection, thus leaders increase their knowledge of self, their values and the values of others, to establish a culturally proficient organisation.

3.3.5 Moral necessity

Khoza (2011) opines that humans are special because they are moral creatures. Khoza (2011, p. 86.) theorises that "ethically and politically, *ubuntu* assumes that we are by nature moral and again because it would not be possible for humans to exist collectively or even individually without an innate sense". However, Khoza (2011) is very quick to write, though, that humans are ethically centred but that does not suggest that they are not fallible, and they will always act morally; instead he contends that virtues have authority over the entire being. In essence, Khoza (2011) argues that, despite some human beings' unethical behaviours, that does not nullify the reality that innately virtues exist in the human species. He further maintains that, in terms of *ubuntu*, humans are constituted in commonality. The foregoing suggests that altruism is essential in sustaining our unity as a people. Therefore, commonality requires us to act with integrity and decency toward each other. Hence, Khoza (2011) avows that people cannot exist without reciprocal selfless concern for the well-being of others. In essence, as a people they need to demonstrate love for one another.

Further, *ubuntu* affirms the dignity and the worth of all people based on the ability to differentiate between the right and wrong, by appealing to universal human qualities, which include rationality and emotional intelligence (Khoza, 2011). What keeps us united as a people or as human beings is our ability to demonstrate selfless concern for the welfare of our fellow citizens and they, in turn, reciprocate without fail. Leaders who embrace *ubuntu* understand that subordinates need to be treated with respect in order to gain their respect. In addition, the leader demonstrates intellectual and caring acumen in order to truly win the respect of his/her

subordinates (Khoza, 2011). A leader needs to stay humble toward his/her subordinates to convey the messages of honesty and decency that can easily earn him/her the subordinates' trust.

Ubuntu affirms absolute ethical standards (Khoza, 2011). To qualify his assertion, Khoza (2011) refers to the famous Former President of the Republic of South Africa, Nelson Mandela to outline the wisdom and understanding of *ubuntu* when outlining hospitality. Astutely, Khoza (2011, p. 80) carefully chooses when Mandela speaks of the 'stranger principle' and compares it to Christian principle 'love thy neighbour as thyself' – "you don't know this person who comes to your doorstep in need of sustenance, yet, because they are human, like you, kindness and generosity will be extended to them". Khoza (2011, p. 180) surmises that the community genuinely accommodates strangers because they regard a stranger as their fellow human driven by *ubuntu,* on the premise that he is one of us. The foregoing resonates with Mihelič *et al.* (2010), as they theorise that ethics is the code of values and moral principles that guide individual or group behaviour with regard to what is right or wrong. Accommodating someone who is in need of help is the right thing to do and is a moral act. It is therefore essential that ethical leaders play the role of moral managers by communicating messages of ethics and rewarding employees on the basis of ethical compliance.

Moreover, ethical leaders need to understand the need to address the interests of the organisation morally regarding sharing of knowledge with the stakeholders, with full understanding that concerted effort contributes to organisational effectiveness (Tang, Bavik, Chen, & Tjosvold, 2015). Leaders who lack integrity and do not value the interests of their subordinates are bound to fail. Consequently, Khoza (2011) asserts that 'humbleness in a leader is a facet of human decency and probity', therefore the success of a leader is dependent on his/her the attitude. Leaders can learn from St. Augustine's famous quotation that: *"It was pride that changed angels into devils, it is humility that makes men as angels"*. In essence, the foregoing quotation reminds leaders that they need to respect their position and be the servants of their organisations to earn the respect and commitment of their subordinates for the benefit of all stakeholders and for a healthy climate with the organisation.

Meanwhile, Khoza (2011) argues that our actions towards others are informed by social norms. We owe our existence to the commonwealth and our understanding of ourselves is dependent on understanding of the people around us. Simply, Khoza (2011) surmises that, as a people, we

empathise so as to discover our collective being, since we live our lives in relation to others around ourselves due to the emotional intelligence or 'empathy' that naturally exists within ourselves. Therefore, our social being and moral nature are rooted in the community. Khoza (2011) argues that moral behaviour is an integral necessary part of the 'being' of being human and has not arisen as an add-on produced by culture, tradition, history, religion, ideology or any other result of the past or present. He further states that, because we are all human, an individual's moral sense is an acknowledgement of the authority of virtue over human interactions. Even as people who are moral beings, lack of virtue in our relationships is within our choosing. However, if we choose to ignore the authority of virtue, that happens at the cost of our consciences. Khoza (2011) finally emphasises that moral necessity calls for a leadership imperative that is entirely directed at the common good. Further, he posits that virtue is a beacon of leadership. Therefore, as moral beings, we need to strive for the common good and avoid moral wickedness in our leadership.

3.4 Conclusion

The preceding chapter has delved on the local, continental and international literature review. This chapter has discussed in detail two theoretical models that underpin this study and outlined how these models relate to the phenomenon studied. The subsequent chapter discusses the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research design and methodology that guided the entire study. The research design was determined by the researcher through his choices and actions (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2005). In this chapter, the following key methodological issues are broadly discussed, and these are: the research paradigm, the research methodology, sampling, data generation methods which involved semi-structured interviews, observations and document review, data analysis and issues of trustworthiness. Subsequent to that, ethical issues are unpacked and thereafter I conclude the chapter.

4.2 Research paradigm

Creswell (2007) contends that, in the choice of qualitative research, the researcher makes paradigmatic assumptions. He further states that these assumptions involve a stance towards the nature of reality, which is ontology, how the researcher knows what she knows, which is epistemology, the role of values in the research, which is axiology, the writing needs to be personal and informal which is rhetorical assumptions, and the methods used in the process, which is the methodology. A research paradigm or world view is a basic set of beliefs that guides research action and is a general orientation about the world and the nature of the research that a researcher holds (Creswell, 2009). The researcher's beliefs influence the researcher in choosing the methodology.

Similarly, De Vos (2005) asserts that paradigms are a way of viewing one's own research material and that they are systems of interrelated ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. In addition, paradigms act as perspectives that provide a rationale for research and commit the researcher to particular methods of data generation, observation, and interpretation (Durrheim, 2006). In addition, Creswell (2007) identifies four different paradigms that one could use when doing research and these are: post-positivism, social constructivism/Interpretivism, participatory/advocacy and pragmatism. From amongst the four research paradigms, the interpretive has been chosen for this study. Creswell (2007) further maintains that researchers are bound to position themselves in research since they themselves hold a certain axiological perspective regarding the subject under investigation. This study was

then founded on the interpretivist paradigm. As has been earlier mentioned, Creswell (2007) puts forward five philosophical assumptions that researchers foreground in their studies, and these are: ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical and methodological assumptions. These are addressed in turn.

4.2.1 Ontological assumptions

As this study was imbedded in the interpretivist approach, its ontological assumption is that the researchers are in the continuous quest for understanding multiple realities. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) maintain that interpretivist researchers use systemic procedures but maintain that there are multiple realities that are socially constructed. Meanwhile, Creswell (2007) argues that interpretive positions provide a broad or wide lens or perspective on all aspects of a qualitative research project. Researchers have a sizeable number of participants, whose interpretations of their contextual experiences may somehow vary. The ontological perspectives of the participants about their context emerge as the researcher engages with the generated data. Meanwhile, the epistemological quest is to understand participants through enabling them to share their stories and hear their voices, thus revealing their ontological perspectives. There is a desire to know the context in which the participants address the phenomenon focused on by the researcher. This propels the researcher to collect data generated by talking directly to the people and seeing them behave and act within their context.

The foregoing assertion is a major characteristic of qualitative research, and occurs in natural settings, where the researcher has face-to-face interaction over time with the participants. It is through this engagement that the reality as understood by unique individuals, surfaces, hence the multiple realities emerge. With these epistemological assumptions, the researcher makes the interpretation of what the participants have shared in those interviews or other forms of data collection. Creswell (2007) argues that the use of themes and quotations in the qualitative study affirms the ontological perspectives that individuals in the same entity hold. The perspective on ontological assumptions empowers individuals to share their stories and hear their voices. It aims to minimise the power relations that often exists between a researcher and the participants in a study. In this study, both post level 1 teachers and school principals gave their varied perspective on the interpretation of their contexts. Though they operated in the same context, their ontological comprehension and interpretation differed. In reporting the findings, their

most telling statements in relation to the study were used as quotations, to emphasise distinctions and similarities in viewing their context.

4.2.2 Epistemological assumptions

The researcher conducts the research with the view to get as close as possible to the participants being studied. The longer the researcher spends time with the participants the more they know what they know from the first-hand information (Creswell, 2007). The researcher uses various methods to solicit data from the participants, and it is a significant requirement that a good rapport is negotiated from the onset, for participants to willingly share their experiences with the researcher. Creswell (2007) contends that researchers gain access to generated data where the participants live and work. The data was obtained from both post level 1 teachers and school principals. They shared their experiences and perceptions as they made meaning of their context. As a researcher, I had to negotiate the venue and time for the interviews and time for the generation of data. I also pleaded for the access to the documents that the principals had at school that corroborated the data provided.

Axiological assumptions require that the researcher acknowledges that research is value-laden and that biases are present (Creswell, 2007). The researcher enters into research holding certain values that may interfere with the research findings, therefore, it is significant that the researcher reveals that in the study (Creswell, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In a nutshell, researchers need to disclose where they have positioned themselves in the study. Every study conducted has to contribute to the already existing knowledge. Therefore, this study is not unique and is not unrelated to the previous studies. As Yin (2014) posits, to strengthen the value of this study, the views of the participants that seem to be in agreement with each other should be used as quotations to corroborate each other. I made the interpretations of the quotations in my attempt to represent the participants' voices. Employing various data generation methods assists the researcher in understanding different behavioural patterns of the school principals. Yin (2014) claims that the use of multiple sources of data generation addresses various behavioural patterns of the case being studied. Semi-structured interviews, as the main method, and documentary reviews, as a subsidiary method for triangulation purposes, have been chosen for this study. Therefore, this study uses a multiple case study to solicit various views participants who function from varied levels of operation within the same organisation.

4.2.3 Rhetorical assumptions

Creswell (2007) posits that qualitative researchers tend to embrace the rhetorical assumption that writing needs to be personal and literary in form. Instead of quantitative terms such as internal validity, external validity, objectivity, etc., qualitative researchers choose to use terms such as credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. Creswell (2007) further contends that the language of the qualitative researcher becomes personal, literary and based on definitions that evolve during a study, rather than being defined by the researcher. The study of this nature must be possible to be conducted in other field of study and should produce similar results. Again, if another study can be conducted in this field it has to be able to yield the same results. Most importantly, in qualitative studies, the use of terms such as respondent is not encouraged but "participant" is. The findings of the study need to be relevant to the case studied and also be representative of the phenomenon under study. For this study to conform to the forgoing assertion, principals and educators from township schools were identified as the participants, so that they share their lived township contexts. Moreover, this study referred to principals and educators as the participants, to conform to the conventions of qualitative research. This study sets out evidence that it would produce similar outcomes when conducted in a similar context, due to the nature of challenges that are manifesting themselves in township schools in particular.

4.2.4 Methodological assumptions

Creswell (2007) contends that the procedures of qualitative research are characterised as inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher's experience in generating and analysing data. In clarifying the foregoing argument, Creswell (2007) points out that sometimes the research questions change in the middle of the study to reflect better the types of questions needed to understand the research problems.

This study used the interpretivist worldview. Interpretivism holds to the assumption that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences and their meanings in relation to certain objects or things. This worldview propounds an ontological assumption that meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, Creswell (2009) contends that the goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views

of the situation being studied. In the case of this study, the ethical leadership of school principals, in contexts with multiple challenges, was explored. It was the school principals who clearly understood the various challenges they faced which impacted somehow on their execution of the leadership roles. To elicit the challenges principals faced, principals themselves were the most directly affected people, hence they were best to explain their challenges and their responses to those challenges in the execution of their duties. Creswell (2009) asserts that interpretivist researchers often address the process of interaction amongst individuals, and they focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work. Furthermore, Creswell (2009) points outs that the researcher's intent is to make sense of the meanings others have about the world.

In addition, interpretivist researchers often address the process of interaction among individuals, and they focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work, in order to understand the historical and cultural setting of the participants (Creswell, 2007). Moreover, Creswell (2007), as alluded earlier to, asserts that the researcher's aim is to establish the sense or interpret the meanings others have about the world. Maree and van der Westhuizen (2007) assert that research is about understanding the world, and that understanding is informed by how you view the world, what you view understanding to be and what you see as the purpose of understanding. These lenses of seeing or viewing the world are labelled as epistemology, ontology and axiology respectively. Ontology describes how one sees the reality while epistemology is viewed as how one thinks social phenomenon should be studied (Strydom & Delport, 2005). Creswell (2007) also asserts that axiology is about the role of values in a research. Similarly, axiology is about the values and beliefs that we hold (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Likewise, Creswell (2007) posits that all researchers bring values to a study, but qualitative researchers like to make those values explicit. In qualitative research, researchers admit the value-laden nature of the study and actively report their values and biases as well as the value-laden nature of information gathered from the field.

Similarly, Creswell (2007) points out that, with epistemology in this paradigm, the researcher tries to get closer to participants being studied. The intention is to find out what they understand to be the truth. Denzin and Lincoln (1984), and Creswell (2007) describe ontological assumptions as related to the nature of the reality and its characteristics. Further, Creswell (2007) asserts that, as the researcher, one engages in the navigation of the truth and embraces the idea of multiple truths or realities. The ontological assumption in this paradigm sees reality

as subjective and multiple, according to various authors (Denzin & Lincoln, 1984; Creswell, 2007). The majority of researchers in this paradigm define research as value laden and recognise the possibility that it contains biases. The philosophical assumptions related to ontology, epistemology and axiology are central issues when choosing qualitative research (Creswell, 2007). The foregoing view corroborates that of Denzin and Lincoln (2000), who state that all research is interpretive and is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Creswell (2009) contends that interpretive qualitative research is a form of interpretive inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear, and understand. Further, he argues that the interpretations that researchers make cannot be separated from their personal backgrounds, history, contexts, and prior understandings. he reiterates that the researcher in this paradigm has the advantage of using various date generating methods to yield high quality and rich data which is representative of the participants' perspective and can be used for triangulation purposes.

4.3 Research design

Research design is the complete strategy of attack on the central research problem, in addition, it provides the overall structure for the procedures that the researcher follows, the data that the researcher generates, and the data analyses that the researcher conducts (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Similarly, Durrheim (2006) states that a research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and execution of the research. Research design is about all those decisions a researcher makes in planning the study (De Vos, 2005). Likewise, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define research design as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data generation procedures to answer the research questions. Simply put, it is a ''blueprint'' for the study (Schumacher and McMillan, 2010, and Creswell 2007). Research design is a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically (Kumar, 2011).

Creswell (2009) asserts that research designs are plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data generation and analysis. Further, he argues that research design comprises various decisions and these need not to be taken in any particular order. Moreover, Creswell (2009) describes the three main types of research designs (referring to methodologies) as qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods (Creswell, 2009). The researcher looks for the suitability of the methodology for the project.

The methodology of a project is the specification of the way in which data will be generated, coded, analysed and interpreted to enable the researcher to draw warranted descriptive, explanatory or interpretive inferences (Bellamy, 2012). Creswell (2009) contends that qualitative research is a means for exploring and comprehending the meaning individuals or groups give to human or social problem. Creswell (2009) as corroborated by Bellamy (2012), further points out that the process of research includes emerging questions and procedures, data generated in the setting of participants, data analysis, inductively building from particular to general themes, and the researcher constructing interpretation to produce meaning from the data generated. Methodology pertains to or involves how well the researcher argues from the analyses of data to draw and defend conclusions (Bellamy, 2012). Kumar (2011) holds the epistemological assumption that the main focus in qualitative research is to comprehend, explain, explore, discover, and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and experiences of a group of people. Therefore, the study designs are often based on the deductive rather than inductive logic, are flexible and emergent in nature and are often non-linear and non-sequential in their operationalisation.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) further posit that a research design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained. In a nutshell, the research design spells out the general plan as to how the research is set up, what happens to the participants, and what methods of data collection are used. Moreover, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) posit that the purpose of the research design is to specify a plan for generating empirical evidence that will be used to answer the research questions. Similarly, Nieuwenhuis (2007) posits that a research design is a plan or a strategy that moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specify the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done. Creswell (2012) corroborates the foregoing and asserts that research design sets out the specific procedures involved in the research process, which include data collection, data analysis and report writing. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) contend that research design is very important because certain limitations and cautions in interpreting the results are related to the design and because the research design determines how the data should be analysed.

There are various qualitative research designs. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), Creswell (2007) and McMillan and Schumacher (2010), there are five qualitative approaches to enquiry: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case studies.

In a case study research, according to the above researchers, a particular individual, programme, or event is studied in depth for a defined period of time using multiple sources of data in the setting. In addition, sometimes researchers focus on a single case, perhaps because its unique or exceptional qualities can enhance the understanding or inform practice for similar situations. Creswell (2007) corroborates the latter assertion as he states that case study research involves the study of an issue explored through a single or more cases within a bounded system. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) argue that case study provides a unique example of real people in a real situation, enabling readers to comprehend ideas more vividly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles. In addition, case studies acknowledge and accept that there are numerous variables functioning in a single case. Hence, to catch the implications of these variables requires more than one tool for data generation and numerous sources of evidence.

In alignment with the foregoing arguments, this study purported to explore the experiences of school principals as they enacted their ethical leadership practices in township contexts that have multiple challenges. Therefore, a case study research design was most appropriate, on the grounds that the principals' ethical practices in their schools was the case that one had identified, and principals were directly involved in the enacting of ethical leadership. Post level one educators were working under the supervision of these principals and observed their daily practices; hence they also had a good understanding of how their leaders operated in their school. It was against this background that a case study research design was selected. This study was not intended to make generalisation, and the study focused on the lived experiences of school principals and the observations made by teachers. However, the use of two theoretical frameworks in this study qualified this study to generalise. Cohen, Manion, Morrison (2011) assert that case studies opt for analytic rather than statistical generalisation, and in analytic generalisation the focus is not so much embedded in a representative sample so much as its ability to contribute towards the expansion and generalisation of theory. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) posit that, in case study, a particular individual, programme or event is studied in depth for a defined period of time. In a similar vein, Creswell (2007) maintains that case study design involves exploration of a bounded system over time, through detailed in-depth data generation involving a myriad of sources of information.

In addition, case study design has been favoured for this study because, according to Creswell (2009), case studies are strategies of enquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a

programme, event, activity, process or one or more individuals, and this seems to be appropriate for my study. Fouché (2005) and McMillan and Schumacher (2010) contend that a case study is an in-depth analysis of a single entity. Furthermore, it is a choice of what to investigate and what to identify as a single case. Similarly, a case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system. Moreover, it is an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context (Merriam, 2009). Case study involves a process, event, activity, programme or an individual (Fouché, 2005). Advancing a similar argument, Creswell (2009) states that cases are bounded by time and activity, and a researcher gathers detailed information, employing various data generation techniques over a sustained period. Case study provides a unique example of real people in a real situation, enabling the readers to comprehend more vividly than simply by being presented with abstract theories or principles. In addition, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) assert that a case study can establish cause and effect, and indeed one of the strengths of the case study is that researchers observe effects in real context, recognising that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects, and that in-depth comprehension is needed to do justice in the case.

In planning a research design, the researcher in the quest of new knowledge and understanding cannot be shackled by discipline-specific methodological constraints (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Ensuing from the foregoing argument, a qualitative case study design was chosen for this study. Similarly, Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) assert that research design is the plan that is used to obtain research participants and collect information from them. Mason (2002) asserts that, through case study, a researcher can explore a wide array of dimensions of social world, including the texture and the weave of everyday life, the understandings, the experiences of research participants, the way that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the importance of the meanings that they generate.

Case study is a situated activity that locates the researcher in the world, and it consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) In case study research, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), a particular individual, programme, or event is studied in depth for a defined period of time. Furthermore, sometimes researchers focus on a single case, perhaps because its unique or exceptional qualities can enhance the understanding or inform practice for similar situation. Creswell (2007) corroborates the latter assertion as he states that case study research involves the study of an issue explored through a single or more cases within a bounded system. Cases are bounded by time and activity and

researchers generate detailed data using varied data generation procedures over time (Creswell, 2009). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) argue that case study provides a unique example of real people in a real situation, enabling readers to comprehend ideas more vividly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles. In addition, case studies acknowledge and accept that there are numerous variables functioning in a single case. Hence, to catch the implications of these variables requires more than one tool for data generation and numerous sources of evidence (Creswell, 2009). In addition, Denzin and Lincoln (2003) advance that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Kumar (2011) opines that the case study is based on the assumption that the case being studied is typical of cases of a particular type and therefore a single case can provide insight into the events and situations prevalent in a group from which the case has been drawn. Moreover, in selecting a case, the researcher uses purposive, judgemental or information-oriented sampling techniques.

Creswell (2007) posits that the types of qualitative case studies are differentiated by their size of bounded case, such as whether these cases encompass one individual, several individuals, group, the whole programme, or an activity. Moreover, types of case studies can also be identified in terms of the aim of case analysis. Creswell (2007) categorise these cases into three variations: the single instrumental case; the collective or multiple case study; and intrinsic case study. He further outlines that, in a single instrumental case study, the researcher delves into an issue or concern, and then selects one bounded case; in a collective case study, the one issue is selected, but the researcher selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue; in intrinsic case study the focus in directly on the case itself because the case presents an unusual or unique situation. Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) mention four main case study designs: the single–case design; the embedded single-case design; multiple-case design and the embedded multiple design. This study therefore subscribes to a single instrumental case study. The ethical leadership practices of principals and Post Level 1 educators is the issue that I want to have an in-depth understanding about. The case itself is bounded by its selection of contexts that present multiple challenges and it only uses principals in certain specific township schools.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) posit that a single case may be part of a multiple-case study design and, by contrast, a certain data generation tool or technique may be part of cross-site case study. In addition, case studies tend to, but do not always, follow the interpretive tradition of research- seeing the situation through the eye of the participants. As Creswell

propounds in the afore-mentioned argument, Yin (2009) in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) similarly argues that single–case design can focus on a critical case, an extreme case, a unique case, a representative case, a revelatory case to research a case un-researched. In essence, a single in-depth case study was selected here as I was able to focus in one case and to select township school principals speaking about their own contexts, which have multiple challenges. The educators were required to give their perspectives of the operations of school principals as they worked in the same context with their principals.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) assert that, to make sense of participants' experiences and perceptions, a researcher needs to make an interpretation of what the participant is saying and also observe carefully. Likewise, the researcher strives to grasp the intent of the participant from the inside. This affirms the notion that a research design situates researchers in the scientific world and connects researchers to specific sites, persons, groups, institutions, and bodies of most relevant interpretive materials, incorporating documents and archives. Case studies take as their subject one or more selected examples of the social entity such as community, social groups, organizations and events, to cite a few (Hakim, 2000). Similarly, the case study is the in-depth study of a single example of any phenomena that the researcher wishes to investigate (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). McNeill and Chapman (2005) posit that the case may be an individual person, a group, an event or an institution.   Semi-structured interviews offer the researcher an advantage to interrogate the participants to get deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.

4.4 Research methodology

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem (Kothari, 2004) while Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that methodology is a way we become aware of the world or gain knowledge about the world. Creswell (2009), MacMillan and Schumacher (2010) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) mention three types of strategies of enquiry, which are: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. However, in this study, qualitative enquiry will be used. Qualitative methodology explores multiple realities and seeks to understand social situations from the participants' perspectives. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) and McMillan (2010) report that, of the three methodologies, qualitative and quantitative are mostly used. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) note that the terms qualitative and quantitative are used frequently to

identify various modes of enquiry or approaches to research. However, there is an increase in the use of mixed methods by researchers.

Drawing from the foregoing arguments, in this study a qualitative approach has been chosen because the epistemological essence of this research approach focuses on comprehending the meaning and experience of participants from their point of view (Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, qualitative research is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and a particular set of interactions (Merriam, 2009). Bush (2003) argues that interaction between members of the organisation eventually leads to axiological norms that gradually become features of the organisation. Bush (2003) thus argues that leaders ought to delve into axiological influences, beliefs and ethics. This study purported to explore the principals' experiences and perceptions of schoolteachers regarding ethical leadership practices of township schools' principals, in contexts with multiple challenges. This study was thus congruent with the aforesaid assertion by Merriam.

Similarly, Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) argue that inductive research is research in which theory is developed from the observation of empirical reality; thus, general inferences are induced from particular instances. Furthermore, Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) assert that induction is about building a theory and gathering of qualitative data. Moreover, the inductive approach is about generating theories and hunches on the bases of studying specific cases. Merriam (2009) explains that qualitative researchers focus on how people make sense of their world. She adds that qualitative research is an umbrella term covering a myriad of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, how people make sense of their world and experiences they have in the world. Qualitative research, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), is endlessly creative and interpretive as the researcher does not leave the field with an abundance of scientific materials and simply write up his or her findings. Instead, the researcher makes his or her own interpretations of data generated, to construct meaning and findings.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) claim that the interpretive practice of making sense of the findings is both artistic and political. Moreover, as the researcher is faced with a voluminous amount of qualitative data, the researcher explores ways of managing and interpreting the documents. In this regard, Denzin and Lincoln (2003) report that, in situations like this, data management

methods and computer assisted models of analysis may come handy for use. Qualitative research is the research that elicits participants' accounts of meaning, experiences and perceptions; it also produces descriptive data in the participants' own written or spoken words. Moreover, qualitative methodology rests on the assumption that valid understanding can be obtained through the accumulated knowledge gained at first hand by a single researcher (Fouché & Delport, 2005). This said, the school principals and teachers will be able share their conceptualisations, practices and experiences, respectively, about how principals enact their roles of ethical leadership in multiple-challenging township contexts.

4.5 Sampling

A sample is a set of participants selected in some way from a population, and a population consists of individuals, which could be persons, events, cabbages, nuts, patients, hospitals etc. or anything at all of research interest (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). Likewise, Maree (2007) states that sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for the study. Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) assert that sampling is the selection of group of participants from who the data are collected. In purposive sampling, often but no by means exclusively a feature of qualitative research, the researchers hand-pick the cases to be included in the sample on the bases of their judgement of their typicality or possession of certain traits being sought (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Daniel (2012) corroborates the foregoing assertion and states that sampling is the selection of a subset of a population for inclusion in the study. Qualitative research usually involves smaller samples and is flexible and often continues until no new themes emerge from the data generation process (Maree, 2007). In this study, township school principals and post level one educators constituted the research participants. Principals were chosen because they represent the top management of the school hence they were thought of as having full knowledge of the functioning of lower levels of management. Post level one educators on the other hand were chosen because their role is mainly classroom based and they have a different view in analysing the performance of leaders mainly the principal. Moreover, they as well need to be ethical in their behaviour as learners look up to them as role models. Worth noting that township schools were my best choice because my observations were in the township and I worked in a township school.

Kumar (2011) identifies three types of sampling, which are random or probability sampling, non-probability/random sampling, and mixed sampling. Creswell ((2007) and McMillan (2010)

mention numerous typologies of sampling strategies in qualitative inquiry. Among those are: maximum variation, homogeneous, critical cases, theory based, confirming and disconfirming cases, snowball or chain, extreme or deviant case, typical case, unique case, reputational case, intense case, political importance, random purposeful or combination of purposeful sampling strategies, stratified purposeful, criterion, opportunistic, combination or mixed, and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling has been adopted for this research study. Creswell (2007) states that the concept of purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research. The researcher selects the individuals and sites for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and the central phenomenon in the study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) maintain that researchers choose various sampling strategies as needed or desired for research purposes. Kumar (2011) contends that, as the main aim in qualitative research is to explore diversity, sample size and sampling strategy do not play important role in the selection of a sample.

Meanwhile, Kumar (2011) maintains that all non-probability sampling strategies, which are purposive, judgemental, expert, accidental, and snowball, can also be used in qualitative research. Purposive sampling is favoured for this study because, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), in this type of sampling, the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest. In my study, four township school principals had been selected to provide their experiences in enacting ethical leadership in with multiple challenges contexts. The views and the perceptions of both Post level 1 educators and school principals were heard. Creswell (2012) asserts that the standard used in choosing the participants and sites is 'where they are', in other words is dependent on where the participants are situated. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2011) assert that in purposive sampling, a case is chosen because it illustrates some features or process that is of interest for a particular study. Furthermore, in purposive sampling, the researcher must first think critically about the parameters or factors of the population and then choose the sample accordingly.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) posit that a purposive sample is chosen for a specific purpose. Creswell (2012) and Daniel (2012) also point out that the term used in qualitative research for qualitative sampling is purposeful sampling. He further argues that, in purposive sampling, the researcher intentionally selects individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. In addition, De Vos (2011) argues that, in the case of purposive sampling,

the researcher purposefully seeks typical and divergent data. De Vos (2011) claims that the research needs to be guided by processes that will provide rich detail to maximise the range of specific information that can be obtained from and about the context. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) argue that purposive sampling is used in order to access knowledgeable people, in a nutshell, to have those people who have an in-depth knowledge about a particular issue, maybe by virtue of their professional role. As a case in point, this research study has purposefully identified school principals as participants, due to their professional expertise. Consistent with the foregoing assertions, Daniel (2012) posits that, in purposive sampling, participants are not selected simply on the basis of their availability, convenience, or self-selection. Instead, the researcher purposely selects the participants because they satisfy specific inclusion and exclusion criteria for participation in the study. In this study, purposely, principals in multiple challenging contexts that engulf them were selected on the basis of having first-hand working experiences in such conditions.

A purposive sampling method is based on the judgement of the researcher regarding the traits of the representative sample. Most importantly a sample is chosen on the bases that the researcher considers to be typical of the units being studied. The strategy that is used is to select the units are viewed or seen to be the most common in the population under the investigation. Furthermore, the purposive sampling technique often leads to non-representative sampling (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000).

Purposive sampling was chosen due to its targeting of specific participants; it was more appropriate, and also selection bias was less in purposive sampling since the selection of the participants was not based on availability. This latter assertion justified the significance of selecting school principals as participants, since I intended to find out more about the practices of principals of schools. Furthermore, using purposive sampling strengthened the internal validity of the study. Daniel (2012) posits that, through employing homogeneous sampling, the internal validity of purposive sampling tends to be higher than the internal validity of availability sampling. Case study was preferred as the methodological approach, on the basis of its strength in producing the most relevant and specific data to the phenomenon being studied. In this approach, sampling is aimed at providing insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalisation from the sample to a population (Patton, 2002). Most interestingly, with regards to the sample size, Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) assert that a vital issue in sampling is to determine the most adequate size of the sample. This is on the grounds that, the

larger the sample, the more are the chances of it to be representative of the population, but it becomes more expensive. Contrary, a small sample is much less accurate but more convenient. Moreover, qualitative inquiry typically focuses in-depth on relatively small samples, even single cases selected purposefully. Information-rich cases are those from which a researcher can learn a great deal about issues of main significance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002).

Moreover, Patton (2002) asserts that there are no rules that specify the sample size in qualitative inquiry. Instead, the sample size relies on what the researcher wishes to know, the purpose of the research, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with the available time and resources (Patton, 2002). Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) argue that the primary criterion employed in choosing a sample size is the extent to which the sample is representative of the population. The township school principals and PL 1 educators were chosen on the basis of the positive image their schools were known for, despite the township contexts that have a myriad of challenges. On the grounds of the foregoing assertions, purposeful sampling is deemed an appropriate sampling method for this research project.

4.6 Data generation methods

There are two major approaches to generating data about a phenomenon (Kumar (2011). The data can be generated as primary data or as secondary data (Kumar, 2011). Data generated using the primary data approach is said to be generated from the primary sources. The primary sources in this study included finding out first-hand data through observation and interviewing. Secondary sources include documents such as census, personal records, earlier research, etc. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggest five major methods for data generation which are observations, interviews, document review, and the use of audio-visual materials. However, this study only used interviews, document reviews and observation.

Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) propound eight main kinds of data generation methods which include: interviews; accounts; observations; tests; personal constructs; role playing; and visual media. Creswell (2009) states that the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the phenomenon and the research question. In a nutshell, the data generation methods are significant in generating the data that provides answers to the problem or research questions.

Out of the numerous mentioned data generation methods, interviews, and documents review were chosen for this study, so as to yield relevant and rich data.

The qualitative researcher can use a variety of techniques for gathering information directly from the participants (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000). Further, there is no single prescription for which data generation methods to use; rather the issue of fitness for purpose (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000). Data generation involves the strategy and tactics used to gather data that responds to the research questions (Maree, 2007). Garnham (2008) defines data generation as the theory and methods used by researchers to create data from a sampled data source in a qualitative study. Garnham further states that data sources are human participants, documents, electronic media and events, to mention a few. As earlier on reported, the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully choose participants or site that will best help the researcher comprehend the problem and research question (Creswell, 2009). For the purposes of this study, township school principals and post level 1 educators as human participants had be chosen and documents were reviewed as sources of data for triangulation purposes. In qualitative studies, methods align well with questions that address description, comparison, correlation, and experimental and single–subject approaches to gathering and analysing the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) report that there are several types of data generation instruments that are used more widely used in qualitative research than others, and these comprise observations, in-depth interviews, documents and artefacts collection, field observations and supplementary techniques. Consistent with the foregoing assertion, Creswell (2009) asserts that there are four basic types of data generation methods used in qualitative research, which are observations, interviews, documents and audio-visual materials. However, for this study, both interviews and document reviews were used to generate data.

4.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) opine that, through the use of interviews, an abundance of useful data can be generated. As stated earlier on, there are many possible ways of generating data from the participants (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000). A defining aspect of interviews is that they involve direct contact with the participants who are asked to answer questions relating to the research problem being investigated (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000). The interviews can be verified, as, when they are given to the same individuals again, they are likely to produce the

same results (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) assert that the research interview is a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for a specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information. The researcher then focuses on the content specified by the research objectives of systemic description, prediction or explanation. Similarly, Maree (2007) posits that an interview is a two-way conversation, which Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) define as not ordinary, everyday conversation, in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to generate data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participant. Greeff (2005) posits that interviewing is the predominant mode of data generation in qualitative research. Hence, I have decided to use semi-structured interviews for the purposes of accessing data in depth, since semi-structured interviews (Greeff, 2005) are allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth.

Moreover, the advantage of using interviews is that they permit flexibility rather than fixity of sequence of discussions, allowing participants to raise and pursue issues and matters that might not have been included in a pre-devised schedule (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Creswell (2009) contends that, in qualitative interviews, the researcher conducts face to face interviews with the participants by telephone or engages in focus group interviews with six to eight interviewees in each group. In the light of the foregoing, individual interviews were utilised in this study. Maree (2007) advocates three types of interviews, which are: open-ended interviews, semi-structured interviews, and structured interviews. The aim of qualitative interviews is to see the world through the eyes of the participant, and they are a valuable source data (Maree, 2007). In this study, semi-structured interviews were used. I chose semi-structured interviews on the grounds propounded by McNeill and Chapman (2005), that semi-structured interviews consider or adopt certain features of both structured and unstructured interviews and allows room for both open ended and closed questions. There was a set of predetermined questions schedule that I gave to my participants, which helped in generating appropriate data.

Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were relevant in that, in this study, I intended to have a better understanding of a single case. Greeff (2005) argues that semi-structured interviews help researchers yield detailed data about the participants' perceptions and beliefs of a researched topic. They further maintain that this is possible because semi-structured interviews use predetermined questions on an interview schedule. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) posit that the interviews serve three purposes. First, interviews can be used as the primary means of generating the data that has direct bearing on the research objectives. Secondly, it can be used

to test hypotheses or to generate new ones. Thirdly, the interviews can be used in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking. In this study, interviews were complemented /supported with document review as a data generating tool. Maree (2007) asserts that interviews provide the researcher with rich descriptive data that will help the researcher to understand the participants' construction of the (epistemological assumptions) knowledge and (ontological assumptions) reality. Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) posit that the use of interviews helps the researcher to obtain data on participants' meanings – how individuals conceive their world and how they explain and make sense of the important events in their lives.

Interview methods involve the presentation of oral verbal questions and responses in the oral form. The meeting between researcher and participant is face to face. There are three main types of interviews that are used in social research (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). There are first structured interviews, which are more formal or structured in nature. Their distinguishing feature is that a researcher has a list or a set of standardized questions, which may include either an interview schedule or questionnaire. This spectrum of interview is composed of closed questions that require structured or fixed responses from the participants. However, this form of interview spectrum is used mainly to produce quantitative data. The other end of the spectrum consists of unstructured or informal interviews. McNeill and Chapman (2005) asserts that the unstructured interview allow flexibility during questioning. The researcher in this case has a list of topic areas to be covered. Hence, there are no predetermined questions to be used during the interview process (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). These interviews are as an informal conversation between the two individuals. Therefore, the questions that are asked in this interview spectrum tend to be open-ended and the focus is on the participants speaking for themselves. That the participants are speaking for themselves qualifies these interviews as the production of qualitative data.

The other spectrum of interviews is semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are a combination of both structured and un-structured questions aimed at generating data that are factual and attitudinal (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). Interestingly, these interviews have the potential of producing the same data again and again from different sets of participants. McNeill and Chapman (2005) assert that semi-structured interviews are the most viable and reliable methodological tool to be used in generating qualitative data. Moreover, they argue that semi-structured interviews produce straightforward factual data relatively cheaply.

Interviews are one of the most commonly used forms of qualitative research methods (Mason, 2002). Furthermore, qualitative interviewing tends to be seen as involving the construction and reconstruction of knowledge more than the excavation of it (Mason, 2002). Good qualitative interviewing requires hard, creative, and active work. Therefore, it is a much more difficult and exhausting exercise to plan and carry out a qualitative interview. As qualitative interviewing is loosely structured or semi-structured, the fact that it flows as an informal conversation does not mean that extensive planning is necessary. Mason (2002) further argues that qualitative interviewers should work even harder on the structure and flow of the interview. Moreover, a qualitative research should be able to make on-the-spot decisions about the content and sequence of the interview as it progresses, and to keep everything running smoothly.

As this study sought to elicit the ethical leadership practices of school principals and educators in multiple-challenging township contexts, semi-structured interviews were deemed most appropriate as participants shared with me their stories as they experienced, and there was an opportunity for me to probe where I needed more clarity. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) posit that the popularly used interview method in qualitative research is the semi-structured interview, where a schedule is prepared that is sufficiently open-ended to enable the contents to be registered, digressions and expansions to be made, new avenues to be included and further probing to be undertaken.

4.6.2 Document review

The first and most important injunction/command to any person seeking for official records is to believe that, if any event happened, some records of it are available (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). There are many official documents in organisations, and they take various forms. Strydom and Delport (2005) posit that official documents are more formal and structured than other records. Formal documents include minutes and agendas of meetings, inter-office memos, financial records, statistic reports, annual reports and process records. Other documents such as memos, minutes of meetings, working papers and drafts of proposals are informal documents that provide an internal perspective of the organisation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It is against this background that documents were reviewed and used as a secondary method to generate data. The minutes of governing bodies, where the adoption of the budget was decided, and the minutes of disciplinary committees in schools, when dealing with cases pertaining

learners' conduct, were frequently used, though the learners' code of conduct was the most significant document to be reviewed. Merriam (2009) argues that the finding of public records is often limited by the researcher's imagination and industriousness.

However, Strydom and Delport (2005) report that the accessibility of official documents is often a problem, due to legislation on the confidentiality of information and further advise that a researcher should always bear this in mind. Strydom and Delport (2005) point out that documents review has its pros and cons. The pros are that document review involves relatively low cost, the document may reveal otherwise hidden information, the researcher does not have to deal with reactive participants or inaccessible subjects, because as a researcher I don't need to be in contact with the participants. However, there are more disadvantages, such as: bias; the lack of preservation of documents, where documents may be destroyed, lack of availability, the lack of linguistic skills in the writing of documents; the lack of standard format; origins of documents are impossible to ensure; and lastly, the bulk of documents which may be unorganised and incomplete. To access relevant documents, I assured the participants that schools' names were to be erased and copies were to be kept in a safe place. Also, I informed them that, once the transcribing process was concluded, they could have access to transcribed work so that they verified it so as to conform to requirements of anonymity.

Records, documents, artefacts, and archives constitute a particularly rich source of information about many organizations and programmes. At the very beginning of organizational fieldwork, access to potentially significant documents and records should be negotiated. Patton (2002) suggests that the ideal situations would include access to all routine records, all correspondences from and to programme staff, financial and budget records, organizational rules, regulations, memoranda, and any other official or unofficial documents generated by or for the programme. The significance of a document review is that documents provide the researcher with information about many things that cannot be observed. Moreover, they may reveal things that have taken place before the research started, including private interchanges a researcher would not normally be privy to, and even the goals and decisions that the researcher might have not known.

Patton (2002) asserts that, as with all the data generated, the confidentiality of records must be respected. In addition, the extent to which actual references to the quotations from the organisational records and documents are included in the final reports depends on whether the

documents are considered part of the public record and therefore are able to be utilised for public consumption, without the breach of confidentiality.

4.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of generated data (De Vos, 2005). Further, qualitative data analysis is also a search for general statements about relationships among the categories of data. TerreBlanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006) posit that data analysis involves reading through data repeatedly and engaging in activities of breaking the data down (thematising and categorising) and building it up again in a novel way (elaborating and interpreting). Data analysis involves three steps, which are: the scanning and cleaning of data, organising the data, and lastly, re-presenting the data (Vithal & Jansen, 2008). This research adopted an interpretive research paradigm.

Check and Schutt (2012) define qualitative data analysis as the techniques used to search and code textual and oral data, and to explore relationships among the resulting categories. Qualitative data analysis involves and focuses on texts, which can be pictures or any other images that the researcher examines. The texts that qualitative researchers analyse are most often transcripts of interviews or notes from participant observation sessions (Check & Schutt, 2012). In addition, analysis of qualitative research notes begins in the field, at the time of observation, interviews, or both, as the researcher identifies problems and concepts that appear likely to help in understanding the situation. De Vos (2005) asserts that data generation and analysis go hand in hand in order to establish logical interpretation of the data. However, De Vos (2005) posits that data analysis does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not tidy. The data for qualitative research mostly of jotted notes in the field or during interviews or text transcribed from the audio and/or video recordings are essential and need to be carefully analysed (Check & Schutt, 2012). The analysis of data requires special care from the researcher. De Vos (2005) asserts that, once data is generated, it is prudent for the researcher to make backup copies of all data and, further, to put one master copy away somewhere secure for safekeeping.

Field notes are detailed interview and observations notes that are made by the researcher. De Vos (2005) states that, in social research, the analytic process demands a heightened awareness of the data, a focused attention to the data, and openness to the subtle, tacit undercurrents of social life. Further, De Vos (2005) points out that identifying silent themes, recurring ideas or

language and patterns of belief that link people and settings is the most intellectually challenging phase of data analysis but that it is helpful in integrating the entire endeavour. Field notes need to be made of everything said during the interview. Furthermore, the researcher should take note of any nonverbal behaviour such as pauses in conversation, sitting arrangement, and body gestures (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). Tape recordings and dictation need to be transcribed to text before they can be subjected to the same processing as handwritten notes.

Moreover, it is significant that the "uhs", "ers", pauses, word emphases, mispronunciations, and incomplete sentences are considered in the write-ups (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005). Conceptualising, coding and categorising, examining relationships and displaying data constitute the centrepiece of the analytical process. Coding the data is the formal representation of analytic thinking; codes take various forms abbreviations of key words, colour dots, or numbers (De Vos, 2005). De Vos (2005) and Terre Blanche, Durrheim, and Kelly (2006) posit that a great deal of the work of qualitative analysis involves creating cutting and pasting of the data. Moreover, the researcher reads the transcripts in their entirety several times; this is done so that patterns are identified, and the researcher becomes familiar with the data. Therefore, the researcher has to make notes on the margins to identify important statements and to propose ways of coding data. De Vos (2005) asserts that organising data is the first step in data analysis away from the site, which begins with an inventory of what the researcher has. The final stage involves writing the report as the researcher presents the data, an organisation of what was found through interviews and in documents reviews.

4.8 Issues of trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1984) contend that it is difficult to use validity and reliability in any qualitative study. However, they acknowledge that the trustworthiness of a research study is significant to evaluating its quality and rigour. To achieve trustworthiness in this study, four alternative constructs identified by Lincoln and Guba (1984) were used. These constructs are, first credibility: as an alternative to internal validity, credibility demonstrates that the research was conducted in such a way as to ensure that the subject was correctly identified and described. Credibility in qualitative research considers whether results are consistent with the data generated. Transferability is the second; this concerns demonstrating that the findings have applicability in other settings. Dependability is the third; as an alternative to reliability, it shows

that the inquiry could be logically repeated producing the same results. Finally, confirmability replaces objectivity, as it accentuates the need to ask whether the finding of the study could be confirmed by another. The study's findings should be not impacted by the researcher's biases. In this study, I was using semi- structured interviews to elicit data, as these will allow me to probe where necessary. Greeff (2005) posits that every word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness. Therefore, the voices of the participants will generally be representative of their genuine views. Greeff (2005) further states that interviewing participants involves the descriptions of the experience and also involves reflection on the description. Thus, as a researcher I was probing what participants were stating, so that they would shed more light in the subject. In ensuring the quality and trustworthiness of the findings, I was able to verify the findings with the participants before compiling the final report. This strategy is termed as social verification of data (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Merriam (2009) posits that triangulation, which is the use of multiple methods and sources of data or multiple theories to confirm findings, ensures greater trustworthiness of the study. Semi-structured interviews and document review have been favoured as suitable tools for generating data and ensuring trustworthiness.

Moreover, two theoretical frameworks had been employed in ensuring that quality data was generated. As interviews were used, permission was sought to use the tape recorder, thus increasing the trustworthiness of the findings. In maintaining dependability, an audit trail, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), was used. Merriam (2009) asserts that an audit trail in qualitative study offers a detailed description of how data was generated, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the research. This also serves the purpose of evaluating the accuracy and authenticity of the finding and of the interpretations and conclusions drawn that are compatible with the data. Regarding confirmability of the data in the study, I borrowed from Ryle (1949) and used the method that he termed thick description. It refers to a description of the setting and of the participants of the study, as well as a detailed description of the findings, with sufficient evidence presented in the form of quotes from the participant interviews, field notes and documents (Merriam, 2009). Also, I made efforts to ensure meticulousness in selecting the study sample to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. In this study, participants were purposefully selected.

4.9 Ethical issues

Strydom (2005) defines ethics in research as a set of moral principles, suggested by an individual or a group and subsequently are widely accepted, that offer the rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards research participants. Ethics in research are concerned with the beliefs about what is right or wrong from a moral perspective (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Further, research ethics are focused on what is morally proper and improper when engaged with research participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Interviews have an ethical dimension; they concern interpersonal interaction and produce information about human conditions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). In addition, the researcher has a responsibility to strike a balance between the demands placed on them and their participants' rights and values that may threatened by research (this is known as the costs /benefits ratio) (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Furthermore, there is a great need for obtaining the consent and cooperation of the participants who are to assist in the research and of the significant others in the institutions or organisations providing the research facilities (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

Furthermore, the principle of informed consent arises from the participants' right to freedom and self-determination. Creswell (2007) argues that a researcher must protect the anonymity of the informants by assigning numbers or aliases to individuals. In addition, a researcher develops case studies of individuals that represent a composite picture rather than an individual picture. Strydom (2005) posits that obtaining informed consent implies that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the procedures that will be followed during the investigation, the possible advantages and disadvantages to which the participants may be exposed, as well as the credibility of the researcher, be rendered to potential participants, or to legal representatives in the case where the participant is underage. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) accentuate the necessity of keeping the research innocuous to the participants. The principle of *primum non nocere* (first of all, do not harm) is maintained by assuring the subjects (participants) privacy, anonymity and appropriate storing of data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Check and Schutt (2012) corroborate the foregoing assertion by underscoring the need to observe privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. Moreover, the researcher must throughout the analytic process consider how the findings will be used and how participants in the setting will react. In addition, selected research participants should be negotiated with, early in the study, regarding the steps that will be taken to protect privacy and to maintain confidentiality. Further, respondents should be afforded the opportunity to review reports or other reports

before their public release, to gauge the extent to which they feel their privacy has been appropriately preserved.

Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) state that the privacy of research participants is more than simple confidentiality. The right to privacy means that a participant has the right not to take part in the research, not to answer questions, not to be interviewed, not to have their homes intruded into, and not to engage in private behaviour in their own private place with a fear of being observed. In a nutshell, a researcher has to abide by the *non-maleficence* principle (do no harm). Strydom (2005) argues that researchers should identify respondents could possibly prove vulnerable during the investigation, in order that they may be eliminated beforehand. Possible harm to the participants should not be rationalised by saying that the study might benefit the participants in some other way. It is against this background that consent was sought from the potential participants prior engaging to research. The research participants were informed of their rights as they participated in the research. The ethical significance of the study as well as that the confidentiality of participants were ensured in this study by using pseudonyms, by locking the data in the form of electronic and hard copies in a safe place, by erasing their names and that of their organisation or any other facilities they served,

In the light of the above, I applied for ethical clearance certificate from the Research Office of the University of KwaZulu-Natal to do the study; thereafter permission to do the study was requested from the KZN Department of Basic Education as well as with the school principals and teachers in the study. Respondents were thoroughly informed beforehand about the nature and purpose of the study (Strydom, 2005). Research participants were also assured of confidentiality with regard to their names and those of their schools. Research participants were told that pseudonyms would be used in ensuring their anonymity. Strydom (2005) contends that nobody should be coerced into participating in a research project because participation should be always voluntary. Drawing from the latter assertion, I also advised my research participants that they were free to withdraw from the study at any moment they wish and that they would not incur any penalties.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the discussion of research design and methodology. The case study research design, the methodology, sampling, data generation and data analysis methods were

discussed in depth. In addition, trustworthiness and ethical issues were also discussed. The next chapter presents and discusses data on the perspectives of township school principals and PL 1 educators.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE ETHICAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND EDUCATORS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter delved on the research design and methodology informing this study. This chapter features the presentation of the study findings, the analysis and discussion of the findings thereof. Owing to the voluminous nature of data generated, the data presentation was subdivided into three chapters, namely Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. This chapter delves into the presentation of the experiences and the perspectives of school principals while Chapter Six discusses the experiences and perspectives of post level one educators and Chapter Seven deals with the descriptive analysis and suggestions on what should be done to combat unethical behaviour at schools and to report to the Department of Basic Education, and to teachers' conduct watchdog which is SACE. The data was generated from the field through the interviews, document review and observations with the research participants. In strengthening the findings, the research questions, literature review and theoretical frameworks, which were thoroughly discussed in Chapters Two and Chapter Three respectively, were used.

In keeping the reader in touch with the study's aims and the broad critical questions, which were presented in Chapter One, the critical questions are presented again here:

What are the conceptualisations, practices and the experiences of the township school principals and Post level 1 teachers about ethical leadership in schools?

What are the perceptions of the township school principals and teachers regarding the causes of unethical conduct (if any) among the school principals and Post level 1 teachers at schools?

What are the perspectives of participants regarding the level of preparation/in-service development of school principals and teachers about ethical behaviour and leadership in schools?

What do the participants suggest should be done to combat the unethical behaviour of some school principals by the Department of Education and the South African Council of Educators?

Moreover, in presenting this data I wanted to ensure that the voices of the participants are clearly evident in the discussion. As a consequence, their original voices are quoted in verbatim throughout in the data presentation and discussion. Pertinent and relevant findings are analysed through the content analysis, as discussed in preceding chapter on theoretical frameworks.

5.2 Discussion of findings

The forthcoming responses were obtained from different participants who were from six different township schools with similar context. From each sampled school, the school principal and two post level 1(PL1) educators were interviewed. Worth noting that pseudonyms were used to conceal the identity of the schools and participants. Hereinafter biographical details of researched schools are tabled:

School name	School name	School name	School name	School name	School name
Iphothwe Secondary	Intuthuko Secondary	Sakhisizwe Secondary	Ikhethelo Primary	Senzokwethu Primary	Zakhele Primary
Principal's name	*Principal's name*	*Principal's name*	*Principal's name*	*Principal's name*	*Principal's name*
Mr Ndlovu	Mr Mnguni	Mrs Mngadi	Mr Pelepele	Mrs Dube	Mr Ngobese
Teaching experience?	*Teaching experience?*	*Teaching experience?*	*Teaching experience?*	*Teaching experience?*	*Teaching experience?*
18 years	21 years	35 years	23 years	30 years	28 years
Name of post level 1 educator	*Name of post level 1 educator*	*Name of post level 1 educator*	*Name of post level 1 educator*	*Name of post level 1 educator*	*Name of post level 1 educator*
Mrs Thobela	Mrs Gadlela	Mr Mpofu	Mr Mhlophe	Mrs Moloi	Ms Grootboom
Teaching Experience	*Teaching Experience*	*Teaching Experience*	*Teaching Experience*	*Teaching Experience*	*Teaching Experience*
25 years	22 years	33 years	19 years	17 years	19 years
Name of post level 1 educator	*Name of post level 1 educator*	*Name of post level 1 educator*	*Name of post level 1 educator*	*Name of post level 1 educator*	*Name of post level 1 educator*
Mrs Mseleku	Ms Thandi	Mr Tema	Mr Mvelase	Mr Jali	Mrs Ngcobo
Experience	*Experience*	*Experience*	*Experience*	*Experience*	*Experience*
22 years	19 years	19 years	12 years	25 years	23 years

5.3 Perspectives and experiences of township school principals and post level 1 educators

The first question that was asked to all the study participants solicited their understanding of ethics and ethical leadership in schools:

5.3.1 Respecting and treating others in a fair and just manner

In an attempt to bring clarity to how the school principals perceive ethics and ethical leadership in township schools with multiple deprivations, the study focused on how township school principals perceive the issue of ethical leadership. They spoke of ethics and ethical leadership

as embedded in treating others in a fair manner. It became evident from the findings that fairness is instrumental in the schools' success. This stimulates trust and the followers easily embrace the decisions taken. A principal who is fair communicates decisions and clarifies them to all stakeholders. Diversity is also embraced by the leader and this includes treating people in a similar way. Three school principals from multiply-deprived contexts corroborated each other in saying that people in the workplace need to be accorded the same respect and treatment. Some of the principals concurred that fairness is the driving force behind leader to lead smoothly. They further argued that ethics involves the issue of moral principles or standards set by the community that govern the person's behaviour. The foregoing assertions are supported and justified by these corroborating utterances from the participants:

> *Ethical leadership can be fairness, transparency, being empathetic, gender sensitive, acknowledging and respecting people with disability and dreadful disease. Ethics are set standards by a particular community or organisation.*
>
> (Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Combined School)

A similar sentiment was echoed by Iphothwe Secondary school principal who averred that:

> *I think the most important thing is to know that what you do to teacher A is done to teacher B as well. To be an ethical leader you don't see colour, or you don't treat people differently. You treat them the same way so that, even if certain things affect the school, people will say, but he was treating us the same way.*
>
> (Mr Ndlovu, Principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)

Further, the issue of fairness was underscored by Mr Mnguni, who had the following to say:

> *Ethical leadership is directed at respect. It is the respect for the dignity and the rights for others. Ethical leadership pertains to trustworthiness; honesty, consideration; fair; and charisma. Ethical leader is doing justice at work; people should not fear that they are going to be prejudiced.*
>
> (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary)

Meanwhile, principal of Zakhele Primary School had this to say:

> *When you want to be trusted as a leader, you have to convince those you are leading that you are trustworthy. You do that by simply involving stakeholders in all the activities that you do at school. Be transparent, mainly on how you spend school fees. Treat your staff equally. They must see you as a leader to be fair and*

just in your decisions. Try to involve them so that they will own decisions. Let them have a say in the running of the institution.

(Mr Ngobese, the principal of Zakhele Primary)

The above three quotations indicate that ethical leadership and ethics are seen to be key in the success of schools and of a leader. These quotations reveal that, when people feel valued in the organisation, organisation, they tend to conform and be willing to work with and for the leader. For the leader to be respected in return, she/he has to demonstrate respect and be honest. The leader has to strive to do the right things at all time. Further to that, Cheteni and Shindika (2017) maintain that for a leader to achieve ethical environment in the organisation, he or she has to establish practices that strictly conform to conserving ethical values that demonstrate to followers that ethical standards are a priority, even when they have to be upheld at the expense of the organisation's immediate objectives. Likewise, Yuan, Cuong Vu, and Nhung Nguyen (2017) argue that, when the followers view their leader as caring, supportive and motivating them, followers tend to be loyal to their lead and have faith towards their leader and, most importantly, they feel as part of the organisation. Ahmad (2017) argues that the most favoured leadership is the one that ought to be ethical in order to satisfy the trust of the followers and cementing trust and integration in the organisation. In a nutshell, followers must look up to the leader; even when the leader is not there, followers must be able to willingly do what the leader expects from them. Werner (2011) avers that assertive communication is a necessary requisite that is obtainable through openness, through building mutual trust and common ground for the stakeholders. Pushpa (2012) argues, as does Mr Pelepele, that the empathy the leaders shows to the employees promotes team spirit. It is of utmost importance that leaders understand and respect how values and influence social environment for leaders to be ethically successful (Chmielewski, 2004).

Kim and Brymer (2011) take a similar stance, as argue that leaders in every organisation need to be the primary influential models of ethical guidance for every member of the organisation. They further state that followers learn organisationally acceptable standards by observing their superiors' ethical actions. Moreover, Gallagher and Tschudin (2009) maintain that ethical leadership is about putting the interests of the subordinate first, so, when they introduce any changes, the welfare of the followers is taken into cognisance. These assertions seem to suggest that teachers, when they are well appreciated and treated, tend to trust their leader and commit their efforts in working with their leader. Smit, Cronje, Brevis, and Vrba (2007) assert that the

relationship between the leader and the follower is often based on the way each treats the other and how this reciprocal behaviour is interpreted. Werner (2011) and Brown and Trevino (2006) assert that ethical leadership involves integrity, honesty and trustworthiness and cognitive trust. Further, trust between the leader and the follower plays a prominent role in the effectiveness of organisational communication. In addition, Bhatti (2007) give the view that trust is the faith placed in the prowess, truthfulness and the reliability of the leader, which cements faith between the leader and followers. Weiner (2011) maintains that knowing the recipe for ethical leadership calls for leadership that will model ethical behaviour so that followers will emulate.

Meanwhile Alshammari, Almutari and Thuwaini (2015) assert that organisational behaviour should be characterised by principles and values of right and wrong, which guide the conduct of the leader in influencing the desired behaviour of followers towards the attainment of the organisational goals. According to the attuned leadership theory as advocated by Khoza (2011), leaders have an obligation to reflect and empathise with their followers as they look up to them for the direction. Further, the trust that followers receive from their leaders cements their relationship with the leaders. Werner (2011) maintains that goal attainment and work structure are the ingredients for leadership behaviour that promotes mutual respect, and trust in the organisation. Meyer *et al*. (2009) and Werner (2011) posit that, when there are role models in the workplace, employees tend to strive to emulate those models. Cheteni and Shindika (2017) briefly state that leaders are role models owing to the positions and powers they wield in their organisations. Fulmer (2004) underscores that company's profitability is bolstered by its reputation as an ethical business partner. The latter is true, as Bhati (2007) avers that when a leader takes care of the purpose, output and wellbeing of his/her organisation, people and self, the organisation succeeds. In addition, Bhatti accentuates the point that a leader has to accord higher priority to the interests of his/her organisation and people than his/her own interests.

Likewise, Pushpa (2012) avers that ethical leaders suppress their own interests in order to pursue that of the broader community as they recognise that value is not in the prominence of the leader but in the success of the organisational goals for the benefit of its stakeholders. Similarly, Smit, Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2007) echo that empathy provides people a shrewd awareness of others' emotions, concerns, and needs. Moreover, an empathetic leader reads emotional currents, such as tone, or facial expressions. They further argue that focusing on the interactions with people is significant for the leader to succeed. Yates (2014) argues that ethical

leaders are concerned for the followers. Ethical leaders ensure that their followers are part of the decision-making processes, care for, and are fairly treated (Yates, 2014).

5.3.2 Transparency builds commitment and trust between leader and followers

The findings from the interviews suggest that ownership of decision making by the subordinates in an organisation is of utmost importance. It results in subordinates being dedicated in serving their organisation and developing trust between them and their leaders. Most importantly, participants believed that when the leader is transparent, followers tend to show commitment towards their work and own the decisions taken at school level. The impact of transparency is seen in the functionality of the organisation. Ethical leaders build commitment to employees by being truthful, delegating and transparent to their followers. Kim, Ko, and Kim (2015) opine that the trait that is commonly embraced by ethical leaders is that of transparent communication, which stimulates ethical behaviours towards organisational members. Furthermore, Kim, Ko, and Kim (2015) posit that the ethical integrity and credibility of a leader is of vital importance in the organisation.

In a similar vein, the principal of Iphothwe Secondary School argued that:

> *I delegate because it makes people own things that are happening within the school. Delegating to teacher X when I am not at school, people are there to be my eyes and ears, and their eyes and ears as well because they want to see the school succeeds.*
>
> (Mr Ndlovu, principal of Iphothwe Secondary)

Mr Ngobese explored as follows:

> *School is for the learners and they are the main beneficiaries. Therefore, I ensure that my teachers are made aware that as I look after their interest, they need to as well look after the interest of their learners. Teach them as if they will never have another day to teach them. I even tell them that when learners know you care about them and for them, they will never do something that will disappoint you. But you must be honest to yourself first and do what is right for your learners.*
>
> (Mr Ngobese, Principal of Zakhele Primary School)

The latter assertions corroborate that stance taken by Engelbrecht *et al.* (2016) when they argue that leaders that embrace the moral person perspective value integrity and are trustworthy, caring, honest and fair. They further maintain that when the subordinates are respected and fairly treated by their leaders, they tend to reciprocate their leaders' conduct. Positive culture is enhanced in the organisation when employees feel they are treated in a fair manner and that leaders are maintaining moral conduct (Malik *et al.,* 2016). In any profession, people who are executing their roles within the ambit of ethical codes and standards earn the trust of others, prevent waste of time and resource, and contribute to the order of the organisation (Özan, Özdemir, and Yirci, 2017).

Mr Mnguni of Intuthuko Secondary had this to say:

> *I believe in working with others not for myself, but for the benefit of the organisation as a whole. I promote sense of community or spirit at work. Ethical leadership boosts and reboots the energy of the teachers and this is what some managers forget or don't understand. It ignites the verve of everyone in the organisation to work hard.*
>
> (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

Similarly, the principal of Ikhethelo Combined had this to say: "People tend to own decisions taken. Hence it results to the functionality of the school. It also creates trust to the principal as the leader". (Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary School)

Moreover, the issue of trust goes to the extent that it becomes easier for them to share with their leader even things that are highly personal to those who are led, if discussion of matters has been developed as a culture. That surfaced from the utterances of Mr Pelepele who stated that: "Discussing the matters, people are developing trust and can even tell you their personal matters ... that caused them to being absent from school". (Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary School)

Meanwhile Mr Mnguni had the following to say:

> *Ethical leadership is doing justice at work, and people should not fear that they are going to be prejudiced. A person who is in charge must not be biased. There must be justice. ..., the subordinates must feel that they are being listened to attentively.*
>
> (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

The above assertions are well supported by the views of myriad of scholars who view trust as a fundamental basis for organisations to succeed. Ahmad (2017) argues that good leadership is the one that is underpinned by equity, participation, pluralism, transparency, accountability and the rule of law. Sullivan (2009) asserts that ethical leaders are not only well-spoken but also truthful; they listen to all sides, and their words are encouraging and motivating to the people. Moreover, Sullivan (2009) argues that ethical leaders are servants and always seek ways to meet the needs of their followers. Khoza (2011) argues that trust cements the leader-follower relationship. Meanwhile, Hansen, Dunford, Alge and Jackson (2015) maintain that the modelling of trust by leaders is a significant determinant of trust as employees respond to such trust through their own performance; intentions and influence can influence social behaviour. Bhatti (2007) argues that the leader is chosen and followed because is demonstrating high level of trust, dependability and credibility. Furthermore, a leader should create and maintain trust by demonstrating his/her great skills, abilities, acumen, and sincerity when is doing his/her duties. The leader must acknowledge the subordinates' positive commitment through reward as a gesture of appreciation for what the employees are doing for the organisation.

Bello (2012) avers that ethical leaders have to understand that good quality relationships geminate and grow in a deep fertile soil of fundamental principles such as trust, integrity, honesty, fairness and respect. Yates (2014) avers that ethical leaders' voices are in line with what they do as well as with the ethical standards their organisations advocate. The author further (Yates, 2014) indicates that these standards should incorporate honesty, integrity and concern for others; the consistency with which they are followed allows followers to create trusting and stable perceptions of their leaders, behaviour expectations and work environment. The latter underscores the values or principles that are enshrined in *ubuntu* philosophy. Friedman (2008) argues that, without trust, the leader does not have the buy-in the leader requires from the stakeholders. Hazrati, Alvani and Zader (2013) argue that managing ethical values improves trust and the relationships between the groups. Pushpa (2012) echoed the same sentiments, that the basis of good leader-follower relationship is trust. Meanwhile, Khuong and Dung (2015) argue that trust-developing strategies are vital in successful organisations. When integrity is at stake in an organisation, according to Werner (2011), the followers tend to lose trust in their leader. Witten (2008) argues that relationships built on the foundation of trust grow when leaders respect and care for others and consistently practising what they preach. Moreover, the benefits of a leader's ability to build trust amongst staff members contributes

hugely to building a collaborative learning culture that can bring members of the organisation together around core values of the organisation. Heine and Mahembe (2014) posit that, when employees experience an increase in trust, they also experience an increase in work engagement. Olivier (2012) argues that the demand for justice is the cornerstone for society and its leadership, while Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) assert that the ethic of justice takes account of various issues which include fairness, equity and the rights of individuals, as opposed to the greater good of the community.

Mayer, Aquano, Greenbaun and Kuenzi (2012) state that an ethical leader has the potential to influence organisational members' behaviour through demonstrating the equitable treatment of members in the organisation. Moreover, such behaviour stimulates a climate that condones ethical behaviour. Heres and Lasthuizen (2010) argue that ethical leaders and followers share the same goal and vision and they strive to achieve the purpose of the organisations collectively. Bello (2010) posits that ethical leaders therefore need to promote moral values and fairness in decision-making processes and be aware of the impact of organisational decisions on followers and other stakeholders. Most importantly they should communicate to employees the impact of their actions at work, and to the overall goals of the organisation. Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa (2012) opine that school principals are not just in schools as administrators, but they are there to provide a vision and provide ethical leadership in implementing curriculum changes embracing *ubuntu* principles. Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa (2012) and Werner (2011) further opine that, if respect for one another is offered a space within the school context, it can produce trust amongst learners, teachers and parents.

The second question that was asked to all the study participants was:
What leadership practices do you try to promote as you do your work, if there is any, as a school principal?

5.3.4 Involvement of stakeholders in organisational matters enhances positive organisational culture
The findings seem to suggest that involvement of the stakeholders in the organisational activities is vital in the success of the organisation. The involvement of stakeholders ranged from giving them tasks to perform on behalf of the principal to involving them in decision-making processes. Some principals believed that when people are kept up to speed with the

developments within the school, they become content and feel as part of the organisation and, most importantly, they willingly work for the organisation.

The foregoing is endorsed by Mr Ndlovu of Iphothwe Secondary who had this to say:

> *..., delegating is one of the things that I believe in to make sure that things are done in a proper manner. That is my practice. So that we all own that success and if not success then I get to receive the beating, Ja ..., So, I believe in delegating.*
>
> (Mr Ndlovu, the principal of Iphothwe Secondary School*)*

A similar view was held by the principal of Ikhethelo Combined, who had the following to say: "I exercise distributed leadership where I involve all the stakeholders in my leadership style. That is, I involve School Governing Body, the School Management Team, Educators and the Unions". (Mr Pelepele of Ikhethelo Combined School)

The foregoing assertions are similar to those that Mr Ngobese shared:

> *I know very well that I cannot run this school effectively on my own, but I need to share responsibilities with my colleagues. I delegate tasks to my colleagues in management and the post level one colleagues. I diligently do this because I don't want to lose sight of who is accountable at the end which is me as the principal. So, I empower my staff and advise them to give me regular feedback on the progress".*
>
> (Mr Ngobese, principal of Zakhele Primary School)

Meanwhile, Mr Mnguni of Intuthuko Secondary conveyed similar notion as he posited that:

> *One thing I think is helping us in our institution is leading by example. Because for me ethical leadership is reciprocal, so people with whom I work look up to me, so do as I do. ...., a leader must lead beyond reproach.... It starts with democratised decision- making processes. Sharing ideas and making members feel being part of decision- making. Making them own the outcomes of the institution.*
>
> (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

The notion of stakeholder involvement was significantly corroborated by the presence of agendas and minutes of staff meetings that discussed school matters. Evidence of various committees in all schools sampled supported the claims of the respective principals that, indeed,

their followers were provided with space to contribute in the functioning of their organisations. Albeit access was granted to peruse documents, the principals were not comfortable to release the official school documents, despite my attempt of explaining that the names of the schools and persons whose name appeared in the document were to be erased. Werner (2011) asserts that the behaviour of the members of the organisation mirrors organisational values, therefore leaders of the organisations need to take into cognisance that organisation are the entities of the communities they are serving.

The assertions by participants resonate well with the views of some researchers, including Broodryk (2006), who argues that leaders should involve stakeholders as significant stakeholders or partners because, as Khoza (2011) states, a leader's success is dependent on how the followers respond to her/his leadership. Meanwhile Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa (2012) state that leaders' success is dependent on the involvement of their followers. In emphasising their point, they borrow from the saying that: *"chara chimwe hachitswanyi inda"* meaning one cannot kill lice with one finger. Basically, for school principals to effectively and efficiently lead their schools, they need to acknowledge the role that their followers play in the institution. Likewise, Meylahn and Musiyambiri (2017) argue that involvement of other people in decision-making processes is a good thing to do because, without the support of the people, organisations are more likely to fail. *Ubuntu* leadership acknowledges that there cannot be a leader without followers' support. Eisenbeiss (2012) avers that when the leader takes decisions, he or she has to first reflect on the impact of the decision in the society. Werner (2011) asserts that employees need to be afforded a space to express their voices on issues and report unacceptable behaviour on demands through clear channels. Meanwhile Andrew (2015) opines that ethical leaders are caring and listen. Most importantly, ethical leaders are trusted by their followers (Andrew, 2015). In the same vein, Friedman (2008) avers that the more the leader opens to the followers or stakeholders, and the more the leaders get the followers to open to them, the more leaders will realise how important the dialogue is to them as leaders and to the stakeholders. In addition, Friedman (2008) argues that the display of reciprocity is ideal as it leads to greater trust.

Meanwhile, Pushpa (2012) posits that the leader must be ethical in decision making and actions in order to influence followers to behave as expected. Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa (2012) contend that human beings always crave for a society that embraces *ubuntu* principles such as respect, dignity, justice, liberty, fairness and other human rights. Further, they (ibid, 2012)

argue that there is a need for the leaders to view schools and communities as partners and that this can possibly be realised through conforming to *ubuntu* principles. African traditional governance underpinned by *ubuntu* was democratic as it embraced many elders in making decisions (Meylahn & Musiyambiri, 2017). Again, Msila (2008) avers that *ubuntu* leadership promotes inclusiveness of the stakeholders in decision-making processes within the organisation. Broodryk (2006) maintains that leaders need to involve stakeholders for the success of their organisations. *Ubuntu* as an African philosophy fosters communal approach to handling tasks at hand (Meylahn & Musiyambiri, 2017). Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa (2012) argue that people are naturally different, hence their views always differ. However leaders need to continually strike to strike a consensus rather than imposing common sameness in issues. Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa (2012) further maintain that *ubuntu* values are the best principles for school principals to adopt with the view to bring about management of teaching and learning in schools that is both effective and efficient. Similarly, Nicolaides (2014) opines that what all responsible organisations ought to instil in their employees, amongst other principles, is integrity and care for others. These are contained in the ethics of *ubuntu* and can easily integrated into organisations' values.

5.3.5 Ethical leaders set the example by going an extra mile without expecting compensation

The findings seem to suggest that ethical leaders are concerned with the success of the organisations they lead hence go an extra mile to realise their organisational goals. This has been evident in the voices of the participants. This is what Mr Pelepele had to say:

> *... one emphasises that by influencing teachers, you know, uh like myself, I am a school principal, I don't have a duty load, but at six o'clock I am at school teaching grade 8 Mathematics so as to show them that I practice what I preach.*
>
> (Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary School)

Mr Ngobese had this to say:

> *I have a study from seven in the morning for Grade 7 learners. I monitor that study myself. I want teachers to learn from my actions than from my words. I have to display leadership and thing which I may want my teachers to do. I can tell you*

right now that I acknowledge my teachers at the end of the year for excellence and those who deserve awards are chosen by their colleagues

<div align="right">(Mr Ngobese, the principal of Zakhele Primary School)</div>

Similar sentiments were echoed by the principal of Iphothwe Secondary, who had the following to say:

... but you have to show that by leading by example, if I say lead by example I mean, whenever is my teaching time I always go there on time, I attend my workshops, there is never a time where learners will say the principal was not in class though at school unless I am attending principals' meeting

<div align="right">(Mr Ndlovu, principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)</div>

In line with these statements, Werner (2011) argues that leaders are role models in their organisations for their followers and at all times motivate their followers to look up to them. Smit, de J Cronje, Brevis, and Vrba (2007) aver that there is so much that the leader of the organisation can do to create the environment that caters for the interest of the employees, with the view to stimulating their interest and commitment in serving the organisation as they come to see their interests coinciding with that of the organisation.

Meanwhile, Mnguni of Intuthuko Secondary posited that: "... I think is helping us in our institution is leading by example. Because for me ethical leadership is reciprocal, so people with whom I work look up to me so as to do as I do". (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

Mr Mnguni further posited that *ubuntu* is an important philosophy to guide leaders and had this to say:

Have ubuntu, I think that is a theory that we have to teach people. So that people will be able to understand other people and care, do things not because they will benefit themselves but the community, in our case the learners who are our clients.

<div align="right">(Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)</div>

Corroborating the aforesaid, Ahmad (2017) avers that ethical leadership is not only about the leader doing the right thing, but mainly is about leading others to do the right thing in the organisation which leads to the formation of organisation's ethical culture. Meanwhile, Smit,

de J Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2007) posit that the foremost requirement for embedding a culture of good ethics in an organisation is through leading by example. Yates (2014) asserts that it is the mixture of role modelling and caring that the leader embraces in the organisation that gives birth to improved followers' attitudes and behaviours towards their work in the organisation.

Moreover, ethical leadership manifests itself in a number of ways. For an example, teachers themselves sacrifice their holidays and weekends with the view to help their learners pass at the end of the year with good results. The latter surfaced in Mr Pelepele's assertion that: "At any time you go to our school, there is teaching and learning that is going on, so those teachers I find them ethical that they sacrifice their time and go to school without expecting any payment". (Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary School)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mr Mnguni who stated that:

> *We have extra-classes which range from mornings, afternoons, weekends, and on vacations to compensate for the context under which we operate. We fundraise for food that will be eaten by our learners when we want to keep them at school till late or on holidays as we understand their socio-economic backgrounds.*
>
> (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

Meanwhile, the finding further suggests that some situations compel teachers to dig deep from their pockets to maintain the dignity of their learners by either buying them uniform or food. This was uttered by Mr Ndlovu who had the following to say:

> *..., those learners that need more, teachers sacrifice, some of them even buy them uniform, this is part of ethics, to say look at your shirt is no longer appropriate, but because I am a teacher, I am employed and I am being paid, let me donate so that you will be accepted the way you appear.*
>
> (Mr Ndlovu, principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)

Likewise, Mr Ngobese of Zakhele reported that:

> *Ethics manifests itself in a number of ways. Like for instance, my teachers do not complain for us having our staff meetings till late. We hold our meetings outside contact time. I explained to them that we cannot sacrifice learners' time of being taught by holding our meetings during contact time, and they understood and conformed to that norm. You know, ethical people never put themselves first instead*

they want to give help to others and are honest to themselves and to others. ... As an ethical leader, you need to show the way that people must follow through your actions.

(Mr Ngobese, principal of Zakhele Primary School)

Mr Mnguni, in underscoring the significance of leaders going an extra mile as they perform their duties, had the following to say:

Ethical leaders have a strong value of selflessness. They do not put themselves first, they put others first. They care for the people who work with them more than they care for profit. They don't push for profit and performance to such an extent that they walk on people, they become considerate to situations.

(Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

The foregoing views were evidenced also in the literature reviewed. Yukl (2010) posits that strong integrity and high level of moral development are found in leaders whose main concern is the welfare of the followers and organisation, not their personal career advancement or personal benefits. Pushpa (2012) contends that ethical leaders go beyond personal egos and individual goals recognising that value is in the success of their organisational goals for the benefit of its stakeholders. Hansen (2011) states that ethical leaders are honest, caring, and principled individuals who make fair decisions. Moreover, they develop their followers by modelling behaviour. Gucel, Tokmak, and Turgut (2012) posit that ethical leaders do not just talk elegant language for good game, instead they practise what they preach and are proactive role models for ethical conduct. Andrew (2015) posits that ethical leaders are always available to offer the support needed by the stakeholders. Meanwhile, Kim and Brymer (2011) argue that leaders in every organisation need to be the primary influential models of ethical guidance for every member of the organisation. Smit, de J Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2007) state that reciprocity is essential between the leader and the follower in terms of how they treat one another. A leader needs to be open, honest and trustworthy for the effective communication and followers to trust him/her. Yozgat and Mesekiran (2016) corroborate these findings, that leaders are the role models for their employees, because when leaders are displaying credibility, their followers tend to be attracted to them and thus they mimic their leader's behaviour

Owens and Ennis (2005) argue that a caring teacher does not tell the learners to care but the teacher shows them how to care by creating caring relationship within them. Yozgat and

Mesekiran (2016) opine that trust is enhanced by fair and caring treatment that is accompanied by clear and open communication by leaders. Kim, Ko, and Kim (2015) argue that the manifestation of leadership is when the influence of a moral leader permeates the family, the country and the world in its entirety. Broodryk (2006) contends that *ubuntu* makes a vital contribution to indigenous ways of caring, sharing, respect and compassion ensuring that there is a happy and complete family. Khoza (2011) avers that *ubuntu* underscores respect for others, helpfulness, caring, sharing and unselfishness and a sense of community. Ware and Dethmer (2008) argues that if leaders desperately want to maintain and sustain an ethical culture, they need communicate, embrace and practise firm ethics themselves. Nzimakwe (2014) posits that, in the true community, people do not pursue the common good instead of his or her own, rather they pursue his or her own good by pursuing the common good. Werner (2011) posits that ethical leadership starts at the top, therefore leaders of organisations are responsible for ethics in their institutions and should be exemplars of ethical conduct.

5.3.6 Ethical leaders build teams to create ethical working environment

Half (Fifty percent) of the principals believed that team building exercises were crucial in building good relationships amongst educators. They even went to an extent of organising activities that occurred outside school context.

> ...*I promote integrity and trustworthiness amongst teachers. One made sure that this year for the first time in our school history, we had a team building activity whereby we wanted to create that capacity – seeing each other in a not so formal environment...*

> (Mr Ndlovu, the principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)

Similarly, Mr Mnguni proclaimed the significance of team building in realising the goal and the vision of the school as he had the following to say:

> *Our focus is in team building as team building brings everyone on board. The ownership of loss and benefit is for us all. ..., in team building exercises you know, people become genuine in their efforts to achieve goals. ..., team building is so important, it resolves conflicts.*

> (Mr Mnguni, the principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

The foregoing assertion shares the similar sentiments to that of Mr Ngobese, principal of Zakhele Primary school who had this to say:

> *I believe in having a strong team of staff members, I begin by strengthening the relationship amongst management members and use them to workshop the staff as a whole. I invite outside experts on various issues, like my last workshop for my management was in January which was based on school management and curriculum supervision. ..., at the end of term three I take my staff out of school for team building exercises and planning for the following year, and that is our norm.*

<div align="right">(Mr Ngobese, principal of Zakhele Primary School)</div>

Smit, de J Cronje, Brevis, and Vrba (2007) opine that team existence is based on the attainment of the team's goal. Team members acknowledge and recognise their collective responsibility for the success of the team. Bhatti (2007) argues that leaders need to make people in their organisations work as a team and further argues that teamwork is much dependent on team spirit. So, team spirit demands mutual understanding, respect for one another, being sensitive to another person's needs and being willing to sacrifice for the team. Most importantly, team spirit requires one to be obedient to orders and care for every team member. Smit, Cronje, Brevis, and Vrba (2007) aver that all teams have their leaders who act as motivators, facilitators, coach and resource for them. Carosselli (2000) states that a team builder has to ensure that members of the team understand the bigger picture and always put it above their selfish personal issues. Van Niekerk (2012) advocates the same sentiments, that when educators learn to work as a collective, they tend to become more effective and efficient in executing their professional mandate. In addition, their effectiveness manifests itself in their quality of their work with one another and their learners, which is thus enhanced (Van Niekerk, 2012). Smit, de J Cronje, Brevis, and Vrba (2007) argue that teams require training for them to effectively deal with all forms of challenges which surface unexpectedly and also to cement team spirit amongst members.

Meanwhile, Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa (2012) argue for the principle of caring for each other's wellbeing and a spirit of mutual support. Thus, each individual's humanity is expressed through his or her relationship with other members and theirs in turn is expressed through acknowledgement of individual's humanity. However, Van Niekerk (2012) points out that team pass various stages and all teams go through a process of team building, despite having selected the right people in the right roles. In addition, Van Niekerk (2012) states that teams do not

happen by chance but are systematically established and managed. Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa (2012) opine that *ubuntu* emphasises how individuals add value to the good of the collective. Therefore, Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa (2012) argue that values of togetherness and brotherhood can be viewed as part of a way of living. Moreover, they maintain that group solidarity is of paramount importance for the success of organisation. Bhatti (2007) argues that teamwork is one of the most significant dimensions needed for an organisation to smoothly function and optimise its output. Van Niekerk (2012) avers that teamwork is essential for building professional culture in schools. As educators share information about learners, teaching and learning, and their roles as parents and teachers, they become more effective and the learners benefit as a result.

5.3.7 Ethical leaders are accountable, and responsible for the decision-making

The findings from the principals' responses from the interview questions seem to suggest that ethical leaders need to embrace both accountability and responsibility as they lead their organisations. Again, 50% of the principals that I interviewed argued that for any leader to be regarded as ethical they must be accountable and responsible in his/her conduct. This is evident in the voice of Mr Pelepele, who had this to say: "I practise transparency in fees, like fees do not necessarily belong to the school, it belongs to the community, for, and I involve parents in the issues of fees to know what is going on". (Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary School)

Likewise, Mr Ndlovu echoed similar sentiments as he maintained that:

> *Because most of the things that affect more principals is money, so anything that we do as a school it is always done in conjunction with the Fin-Com so that people will be aware what is it that when there are things that need to be bought. ..., I believe in making sure that I lead by example and..., in making sure that all that is done is done in a transparent way.*
>
> (Mr Ndlovu, principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)

Mr Mnguni echoed the same sentiments as he averred that: "We encourage teamwork as I said before. We ensure accountability as part of our conduct. We also monitor the work that is being done. We ensure transparency in what we do". (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

The foregoing voices find resonance in Collins (2010), as he opines that employees want their leaders to be honest, credible, respectful and fair, as, when the leader demonstrates these qualities, followers tend to admire the leader and imitate the leader's behaviour. Msila (2014) states that the use of *ubuntu* philosophy by school principals in their quest for success can enhance their own leadership and meaningful followership, which can prove to be an effective answer to establishing unity among the employees. The latter view can be realised when the leader acknowledges that, as a leader, he or she is responsible for his or her actions and has a moral responsibility for what his/her organisation or employees have done. Therefore, for the leader to realise the socio-legal moral responsibility, he or she needs to ensure that the organisation and the employees have a well thought out purpose to work for, and they operate within the set standards and the codes of ethics (Bhatti, 2007). Observing the latter assertion may result (Yozgat & Mesekiran, 2016) in fair and caring treatment, because the behaviour that is consistent, clear, and involves open communication is likely to yield trustful relationship between leader and followers. Messick and Bazerman (1996) and Werner (2011) respectively argue that ethical leadership and ethical decision making in the organisations are significantly based on accountability to various stakeholders. Meanwhile, Nel *et al.* (2008) assert that leaders who are principle-centred make better decisions and always act in accordance with universal accepted values which include integrity, accountability, transparency, consistency and inclusivity. Kocabas and Karakose (2009) contend that leaders have a key responsibility in leading organisations because they are the main decision-makers – they have more responsibility than any others in the organisation. The foregoing is true because leaders' ethical behaviour and decisions directly affect the climate of the organisation. Matte and Scribner (2014) opine that ethical leaders are those who acknowledge that accountability is more than just raising standards tests, as equally important is taking in cognisance standards that encourage engagement from the stakeholders and value their opinions. Elvin and Howard (2013) posit that leaders have a responsibility to motivate people to be the best they can and act on the basis of what they believe to be right, based on their complete values and ensure that they feel able to discuss it with their leaders if there is a serious conflict between personal and organisational values. *Ubuntu* is the philosophy that seeks to unite people and considers the welfare of all members (Msila, 2014). Msila (2014) further maintains that the significance of *ubuntu* lies in its nature of inclusiveness in the workplace.

5.3.8 Lack of in-service training for newly appointed principals creates uncertainty in job related ethics execution

The findings derived from the principals' voices seem to suggest that the most needed training for managers is not forthcoming from the Department of Education and SACE as they would have expected them to provide these necessary training. It is though worth noting that not all principals felt training was not provided. However, even the one who had a contrary view to that of the majority highlighted the scarcity of the workshops and the amount given for the workshop. The findings seem to further suggest that principals need to find the path of leading their schools successfully on their own.

Mr Mnguni had this to say regarding training from the Department of Education:

> *There is a document (Educator Labour Relations Council file) that the Department of Education gave us which carries all the Education policies including the professional code of conduct. But now that code of conduct on ethics may not be able to cover wide aspects of ethics of ethical work. But again, no time is allocated for workshop on ethical leadership.*
>
> (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

Mr Pelepele, the principal of Ikhethelo Primary school had this to say regarding training of school principals on ethical issues: "No training, not at all, principals are expected to embark on trial and era method. There is no induction or on–going mentoring for principals, but they will just learn by just doing".(Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary school)

Meanwhile, the principal of Zakhele Primary had a contrary view as he had this to say*:*

> *The Department of Education makes an effort to train principals mainly on issues of financial management. Mainly induction happens when there had been elections of the school governing bodies, principals are invited with their chairperson, treasurer and finance officer to be equipped with necessary skills of handling public finances.*
>
> (Mr Ngobese, the principal of Zakhele Primary school)

The views of the participants were suggesting that there is a great need for principals to be developed and that not enough was done to develop principals for the mammoth task they have to discharge. It to me becomes obvious that people always wear different lenses when looking

at issues. Messick and Bazerman (1996) argue that people always attribute problems to some challenge rather than finding a cause of the challenge and dealing with it. They argue that, within a system, human errors occur and that leaders tend to differ vastly in the degree to which they are error proof. This, again, to me suggests that an issue which may be significant to one person may not be that significant to the other. The literature reviewed corroborates the notion that training on ethics is essential. The is evident when Cheteni and Shindika (2017) posit that there is a great need for education on ethics as it can help the officials deal with the challenges of moral decay at workplaces. Messick and Bazerman (1996) surmise that, if a leader fails to disclose his/her knowledge of employee's incompetence, he responsible for the harm that other colleagues cause to the organisation, that person is somehow responsible for the harm done in the organisation. They further make reference to the typical situation that when good people fall short in taking necessary action, and something wrong happens, they get protected; as a result, it remains a rare case where good people are held responsible for evil. Hence Brown and Trevino (2006) and Fulmer (2004) assert that there is a need of understanding the possibility of ethical collapse and address it as it occurs in virtually every type of organisation. Werner (2011) avers that the code of ethics is vital, in that it allows the organisation leaders to define their organisational ethical positions and provide education for ethical decision-making. Van den Akker, Heres, Lasthuizen and Six (2009) assert that leaders have a responsibility to facilitate communication on ethics and values. Ethics and moral consideration are the building blocks of ethical leaders when making decision (Yozgat and Mesekiran, 2016).

Meanwhile, Winston (2007) avers that the code of ethics reflects the attempt of professional association and individual organisation to display and communicate principles to guide the work of those in the field. Ethics training helps to develop and reinforce a culture of trust and of high integrity. Further, people employed in organisations where training is given priority have more positive perceptions about their organisation, ethics and their job satisfaction (Collins, 2010). Hallak and Poisson (2005) argue that most of the countries have opted for establishing codes of conduct for their employees to reduce levels of corruption or unethical behaviours.

5.4 Conclusion

The previous chapter presented the research design and methodology. The major aspects that were discussed were the following: research paradigm, research design and methodology,

sampling methods, data generation methods and data analysis. The chapter concluded with a focus on issues of trustworthiness. The current chapter presented a descriptive discussion of the experiences and perspectives of school principals regarding ethics and ethical leadership. The forthcoming chapter further provides descriptive discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER SIX
THE CAUSES OF UNETHICAL CONDUCT AMONG SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter addressed the conceptualisation, practices and experiences of school principals and educators of ethics and ethical leadership in schools. This section features a descriptive analysis of the causes of unethical conduct amongst school principals and educators as well as discussing the perspectives of the participants regarding the level of in-service development/training of school principals and educators about ethical behaviour and leadership in school. The discussion takes an inductive analysis as the literature reviewed is utilised as a lens to illuminate the findings. These were obtained through the primary data, which were from interviews and secondary data in the form of documents reviewed.

6.2 Presentation and descriptive analysis of data

All the participants were subjected to the same question which went as follows: In your view, what are the causes of unethical behaviour in schools among school principals and teachers? All the participants willingly responded to the question and as a consequence the following are the most prevalent responses that they offered.

The findings seem to suggest that there are various reasons for unethical conduct that happen in schools. The notion of unethical conduct includes desire to have more than what the leader has, which is greed; Leaders have high demands as well as bullying among educators; theft which involves stealing, misappropriation and embezzling of school funds; sexual harassment; peer pressure; availability of opportunity; values from upbringing; being highly trusted.

6.3 Causes of unethical behaviour among some principals and educators
6.3.1 Greed or selfishness as a source of unethical behaviour

It emerged from the participants' voices that there is no single cause of unethical behaviour. This notion of varied reasons for unethical practices was shared by the majority of participants. However, the findings seem to suggest that unethical behaviours that are demonstrated by some school principals and educators are as a result of selfishness. The exposure of staff to abundant and unguarded resources encourages unethical behaviour. In the case of greed, the school

principals and teachers are easily tempted to mismanage and steal monies that are either meant for the buying of teaching and learning resources or paid towards tours or excursions on the side of teachers, mainly sports organisers. The foregoing assertions find resonance in the concurring voices of the participants:

> *A leader in an organisation who is unethical may be selfish and think that by his/her position can utilise resources under his/her supervision to her benefit. People who are selfish lack ethics and dismally fail to abide by the codes of ethics since they lack integrity and honesty.*
>
> (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

The same notion was shared by Ms Thandi, post level one educator of Intuthuko Secondary, who had to the following to say: "Greed is the main cause of principals' unethical behaviour. They earn a lot of money but still go on to steal from the money allocated to maintain school and buy much needed teaching aids". (Ms Thandi, post level 1 educator of Intuthuko Secondary School)

Congruent to the foregoing voice Mr Pelepele, the principal of Ikhethelo Primary posited that:

> *Money is something else, everybody will always want more cash, you cannot say because you are the school principal and you are earning more than anyone at the school then you don't need extra money. That is where stealing from the school coffers starts. No one can be ever satisfied with the money he or she earns.*
>
> (Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary school)

Mr Ngobese concurred with the latter voices in that greed is the driving force that makes principals want to steal from the school funds. This is what he had to say:

> *As a principal myself, I see no reason for a principal to steal from the school fund except greed. We as principals get paid enough to meet our basic needs and we have a right to claim for travelling expenses but that must to be done within the school policy rules. However, colleagues decide to enrich themselves instead of spending towards improving the learning and teaching environment.*
>
> (Mr Ngobese, principal of Zakhele Primary School)

The latter assertion finds congruence in the voice of Mrs Ngcobo who had this to say:

I think principals are greedy because when they applied for their positions, they promised to serve the interest of the school but their exposure to resources makes them to want to serve their own interests and forget the learners and teachers. They want to leave fancy lifestyles and forget that they have a responsibility to spend money towards the benefit of the school community.

(Mrs Ngcobo, post level one educator)

The foregoing assertions reveal that most principals and educators engage in corrupt or unethical practices due to greed. It is an open secret that all organisations aspire for their leaders and employees to demonstrate high ethical standards in their behaviour, understanding that the opposite undermines or prejudices the organisation's success. Unethical behaviour continues to be a major concern for the majority of the institutions. The violation of generally acceptable norms and standards is still prevalent and pervasive throughout various sectors, including the education sector. This results from leaders wanting to satisfy their own personal interests rather than those of the organisations they serve. When the principals engage in unethical behaviour, they are aware that what they are doing is unacceptable but continue because they are selfish. Nowadays, principals appointed in positions are not promoted because of their character and capabilities, but instead because of their union or political activism. The character of a leader is important because he or she understands that his/her actions may jeopardise the functionality of the organisation. He or she should always strive to serve the interest of the organisation over his or her own. As most scholars have advocated that organisations are dependent on their employees in order to realise their goals, however, some leaders still engage in unethical activities intentionally to serve their own interests. It is not that they don't understand that their actions are unethical; they fully understand that, as they disregard the written codes of conduct and set standards of the organisation, they are retarding or stagnating the ability of the organisation to meet its goals.

The latter assertions are corroborated by Butts (2012) who asserts that the primary motivation that triggers unethical conduct is greed, envy, anger, fear and jealousy. Manjunatha and Maqsud (2013) argue that some people engage in unethical knowing exactly what they are doing because they are propelled by self-interest, personal gain ambition and downright greed. Maicibi, and Yahaya (2013) contend that leaders engage in unethical activities by using their authority for personal gain. Hitch (2015) avers that the principals' need to pad or fill their pockets is one of the causes of unethical behaviour. Meanwhile Schurr, Ritov, Kareev and

Avrahami (2012) posit that some principals engage in unethical activities only to the extent that allows them to maintain a self-concept of integrity. The latter clearly suggests that there is a particular standard that principals set for themselves and want to maintain at all costs. Notwithstanding the foregoing assertion, Lašáková and Remišová (2015) opine that, ultimately, unethical leadership harms both employees and organisation.

6.3.2 Lack of consequence management and accountability for unethical behaviour by DBE

The Department of Basic Education is not enforcing accountability as it is supposed to and, as a consequence, the misappropriation of school funds happens without one suffering the consequences. The punishment most teachers or principals get is being moved from one school to another in spite of the damage they made in the former school. Some teachers and principals will have their salaries docked for a maximum of three months as a punishment. These lenient actions against corrupt behaviours perpetuate unethical behaviours. Mr Pelepele highlighted the scenario of what transpired in the current institution where he is serving as the principals. He pointed out that:

> *I told you that five principals before me served in this school in less than five years and all of them are serving in various schools. Not even one amongst them was dismissed, including the one who paid R200 000 rand for painting of school the labour. Instead his being expelled, he was moved to another school. That must tell you that there are no consequences for people's actions.*

<div align="right">

(Mr Pelepele, the principal of Ikhethelo Primary school)

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Mr Ndlovu added that the issue of corruption is pervasive in the sector because even post level one educators, mainly those who coordinate sports, tend to steal money by inflating money for trips or excursions. This is what he had to say:

> *As principals of schools we sometimes avoid depositing money for trips and excursions because when we withdraw that cash to pay for the buses or transport, we are charged by the banks. So, teachers take that advantage and they are very much energetic when it comes to coordinating trips and excursions. We as principals we don't take actions against those teachers.*

<div align="right">

(Mr Ndlovu, principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)

</div>

Meanwhile, Mr Mnguni averred that:

> *The Department of education is very lenient in dealing with corruption, be it selling of posts, embezzling of school funds or teachers having relationship with learners, there are no drastic consequences instituted by Department of Education. Instead the Department redeploys the culprit to another school or cause him/her to pay a fine over a certain stipulated time.*

<div align="right">

(Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

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The foregoing view was corroborated by Mr Ngobese's assertion that:

> *I have read and heard many stories regarding principals having misappropriated or embezzled school funds without being dismissed by the Department of basic Education. Some even have their videos having sexual intercourse with school going children or practising corporal punishment circulated in the social media, but they are still practising as teachers either in the same school or moved to another school. That encourages ethically weak individuals to take chances of engaging in unethical activities.*

<div align="right">

(Mr Ngobese, principal of Zakhele Primary School)

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In the same vein, Ms Grootboom stated that:

> *When the issue of selling promotional posts was in the news and the report was released, I thought certain people were to be arrested and lose their jobs. Guess what happened! Nothing happened to them to date. That is not the only case, there are many videos on social media depicting male teachers have sex with learners, and there is nothing done to punish them.*

<div align="right">

(Miss Grootboom, post level one educator from Zakhele Primary)

</div>

Similar sentiments were shared by Mr Mhlophe who had this to say:

> *The Department of Education is like a toothless dog when it comes to dealing with corruption in the system. Corporal punishment was banished in 1996. However, still today some schools do practise corporal punishment and there is an abundance of evidence even on social media where videos of teacher slapping learners on the face or hitting them with sticks are circulating on social media but no consequences thereof.*

<div align="right">

(Mr Mhlophe, post level one educator from Ikhethelo Primary School)

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The foregoing assertions suggest that the Department of Basic Education is not acting in response to the reported unethical behaviours in the system. There is a myriad of unethical activities that are taking place in the education sector, with inadequate consequences. The lack of proper punishment or actions instituted against those alleged and those found to be guilty motivate others to engage in the same acts, knowing that there will be no harsh sentence against them should they be caught involved in unethical activities. This then calls for the Department of Basic Education to have strict rules and also to enforce the rules and code of conduct. I am by no means suggesting that there are no codes of conduct and acts governing the behaviour of the employees in the Department of Education. However, there is a need for strict or severe sanction for unethical behaviour, even to the extent where one can be dismissed from employment if there is a strong case against him/her. It is worth noting, though, that, for the Department of Education to act against unethical behaviour, there must be a whistle blower.

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) contend that principals have a duty to ensure that there is a code of ethics that underscores justice, equity and respect for liberty in the organisations they serve and that principals need to maintain deep concern for the welfare of the welfare of the school community. The ethic of care acknowledges that school principals encounter complex moral challenges as they execute their daily work, however, it also offers numerous ways to confront those challenges. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) state that principals are charged with the responsibility to craft their personal and organisational codes of ethics, which embrace the ethics of justice and that they need to conform to their professional code of ethics. Significantly, acknowledge that there are possible clashes in codes of ethics. As a consequence, the existing clashes that are there in the ethical codes of conduct set by Department of Education and Professional Associations (SACE) fail to respond decisively to unethical behaviours that take place in schools. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) further argue that the disjuncture that exists between what is obtaining in schools and what is purported by the policy that advocates high moral standards shows that there is a need for action to eradicate unethical practices through punishment.

Khoza (2011, p. 96) states that leaders engage in unethical practices because they lack *ubuntu,* which promotes helpfulness, caring, sharing and unselfishness and sense of community. Further, Khoza (2011) suggests that what is obtaining in organisations where leaders see themselves above the institutions, they are serving symbolises the lack of *ubuntu* because those

leaders who are guided by *ubuntu* in their practice strive to provide quality service and to realise organisational goals. Khoza (2011) acknowledges that there is evolution in how people respond to such issues as ethics, given the rapid fourth industrial revolution, which has drastically changed the mind set of people. Corruption has become highly sophisticated in this epoch and *ubuntu* has been craved more than before as a solution to the scourge. Khoza (2011) puts it blatantly, that it is sad that respect and care has evaporated into thin air from the school principals.

Scholars such as Askew, Beisler, and Keel (2015) underscore the rise in reports of unethical practices. However, those who report cases of corrupt practices become victims of retribution. Further, Askew, Beisler and Keel (2015) aver that it is unacceptable to have rule and regulations that are not enforced, as is the case with South Africa, which is known for having an excellent Constitution and Code of Professional Ethics for educators, which are undermined mainly by those who are supposed to be the custodian of them. Trevino and Brown (2004) opine that there is a great need to comprehend that even when principals make right decisions, they find it difficult to follow and do the right thing as they succumb to the pressures from their work environment. Boes (2015) asserts that education about unethical behaviour only makes principals and educators less naive about unethical behaviours and further exposes them to information about unethical acts. Thus, education about unethical behaviour does not stop unethical behaviour and, though it may help set a moral compass, it does so without stopping unethical behaviour. Further Boes (2015) argues that unethical practices are sometimes unnoticed when they occur after which they build up into a more severe erosive act. Hence the notion becomes used that not all that is unethical is illegal. Notwithstanding the foregoing assertion, Cheteni and Shindika (2017) report that the officials of Department of Education are supposed to deal with the moral decay at workplaces. They further suggest that, through proper ethics education, the awareness filters through and the culture of moral obligation and personal responsibility pervades in the organisation.

Furthermore, Cheteni & Shindika (2017) report that the Department of Basic Education has to create platforms for discussions about ethical conduct and use enforcement to support the ethics messages. Pushpa (2012) avers that leaders don't wake up one day with strong set of ethics, instead they are taught. Meanwhile, Soma and Shoaf (2007) state that unethical behaviours are pervasive, therefore the Department of Education needs to reinforce the principles and values of right and wrong that guide the behaviour of principals in influencing desired behaviour on

followers. Conger and Riggio (2007) posit that employees are affected similarly when they observe sanctions of misconduct and rewards for positive conduct. As a consequence, it is possible for Department of Basic Education to reduce or eradicate the existing lapses of ethics in the sector by sanctioning unethical practices of school principals. Messick and Bazerman (1996) and Werner (2011) argue that principals and teachers need to understand that they are accountable to various stakeholders. Sadly, Hallak and Poison (2005), and Belle and Canterelli (2017) believe that the level of unethical behaviours has connection with the level of accountability, hence principals continue engaging in unethical practices because there is a dearth of punishment for non-compliance.

Moreover, Werner (2011) maintains that there is a myriad of factors that affect the ethical conduct in the organisations as people join organisations with their unique values and beliefs, therefore the Department of Basic Education has a duty to provide support and establish ethical culture in the organisations. Nzimakwe (2014) insist that principals as public leaders have to conform to public accountability and transparency. Eisenbeiss (2012) maintains that principals as leaders have a responsibility towards themselves and the community they serve. Pushpa (2012) offers advice to leaders that they need to go beyond their personal egos and individual goals to recognise that the value is in the success of the organisational goals for the benefit of all the stakeholders. Similarly, Lašáková and Remišová (2015) argue that, when the leader is self-centred, self-protective and self- serving, it tends to compromise the organisational goals as his/her practices are driven by egoism, thus leaders' interests get prioritised over everything else.

6.3.3 Pressure from the service providers

The voices of the majority of the participants suggest that pressure from the service providers becomes too heavy for the school principals to handle as they tantalise them with good offers. Further, the participants indicated that it becomes easier for one to accede to the call to defraud the school coffers since these service providers come with sophisticated strategies to eliminate any suspicion or evidence that wrongdoing had occurred. It is that assurance that motivates other principals to engage in such evil activities of stealing from the coffers and other forms of corruption such as tenders to relatives or friends or even to themselves. It is sometimes easy for principals to engage in corrupt or unethical activities because the service providers are well

endowed with strategies to execute corruption by enriching school leaders and making them believe that there is no harm in what they are doing.

Meanwhile, Mr Ngobese was very quick to suggest that sometimes one gets into unethical behaviour due to those who sell various products to schools. This is what he had to say:

> *Sometimes a representative from a particular company will come to you when you are really broke and have a lot of debts that you need to settle and tell you that if you buy his product you are guaranteed 10%. Tell me what do you do in that case? You just fall into the trap of becoming unethical. Fortunately for me our school is under section 20 so everything is ordered by the Department of Education on our behalf as a school. But I must say it is highly tempting.*
>
> (Mr Ngobese, principal of Zakhele Primary school)

Mr Pelepele had this to say: "Temptation to school principals is caused by the existing trend that if you want to supply anything to the school or searching for a job then you must bribe the principal, even those who want promotions have to bribe school principals". (Mr Pelepele, the principal of Ikhethelo Primary School)

Similar sentiments were echoed by the principal of Iphothwe Secondary who had this to share:

> *The guy who supplies books and stationery, when he was at school for the quotation, said to me if you buy books or stationery from me, you will get something in your pocket. I can give you 10 % from the order you would have made. Further indicated that some other principals he works with do take the proposal or offer. I also encountered the same challenge with the one who was selling desks who suggested that I can get 20% per desk as the desk will be quoted higher than the normal price.*
>
> (Mr Ndlovu, principal of Iphothwe Secondary school)

Meanwhile the foregoing assertion was corroborated by that of Mr Mnguni, who reported that these people who supply schools with stationery have all the tricks to defraud the state and they make it sound easy to do it. Regarding one supplier, whom he had phoned to supply the school with toner and inks said:

> *If there is something you want me to do for you, you must tell me so that I include your share in your invoice. However, you will have to understand that there are*

charges at the banks, and I will have a share in the amount you ask for. Believe me there is no challenge in this, I do this with most of my clients.

<div align="right">(Mr Mnguni, the principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)</div>

Mhlophe had this to share:

Principals are like any other people. They get into their positions and want to balance their positions and their achievements. They start to behave unethically by stealing school finances to balance their status and their lifestyle. Basically, it is the pressure from their surroundings. They find it easy to steal because they control all the school resources including finances of the school.

<div align="right">(Mhlophe, post level one educator from Ikhethelo Primary School)</div>

Drawing from the voices of the participants, there are numerous failures on the part of the Department to curb unethical behaviour in the sector mainly by school principals. It is evident that the surface is fertile for corruption to prosper. The pressure exerted by service providers finds principals who are in a compromising financial status hence they easily get caught up into colluding with service providers. This is bound to be perpetual because these service providers work with numerous schools and have sophisticated strategies to defraud school funds. When service providers make mention of numerous principals who benefit from the strategy, it obviously tempts the ethically weak principal to fall into unethical conduct. There was a consensus among the three principals that the suppliers of stationery and books have a tendency to tantalise them with some kickbacks if they give them work. They further give them strategies of how to steal from the school funds.

Meanwhile, Maicibi and Yahaya (2013) posit that theft, embezzlement and misappropriation are the forms of corruption that infest organisations. Askew, Beisler, and Keel (2015) corroborate the latter assertion and further contend that it is important to know the employees' intentions to make unethical decision as preventative measure can be taken before the unethical conduct is executed. Trevino and Brown (2004) aver that peer pressure is not only affecting teenagers but even school principals and educators because peer influence is so powerful. In accentuating their points, Brown and Trevino (2004) argue that principals and teachers emulate what their colleagues do. They argue that the environment in which principals and teachers operate supports the reinforcement of unethical behaviours.

Similar sentiments were shared by Eranil and Özbilen (2017), who maintain that individuals' behaviours in organisations are directly impacted by their organisational environment. Therefore, employees develop various kinds of behaviour and attitudes in relation to their organisational atmosphere. Kaptein (2011) avers that principals participate in corrupt or unethical behaviours because they fail to uphold ethical standards that they are custodians of and further explains that schools became fertile ground of unethical behaviours as a result of the principal violating ethical standards, as employees tend to mimic their leader's behaviour. Singh and Twalo (2015) argue that the rise in accusations of principals' having committed unethical behaviours calls for close scrutiny by the learners. Boes (2015) avers that principals with a weak moral compass are easily influenced, as they are readily encouraged by temptations, they find themselves confronted with to behave unethically. Principals are exposed to a myriad of temptations to behave unethically, for example; they have full control of school cheque books and other resources. As a consequence, it is easy for the school principals to steal from the school funds to enrich themselves.

6.3.4 Unethical values acquired from the environment of one's upbringing

Most of the participants felt that the socialisation of individuals has great influence on the conduct one displays in the work environment. The values that one learns or acquires in the community may be totally at odds with those of the organisation, hence organisational goals get undermined. Some people find themselves disadvantaging the organisation to serve their own selfish interest because they conform to certain standards inherited from their community. It is therefore important that organisations have their own code of conduct that is well communicated to the employees and there must be training on the importance of abiding by the code of conduct. However, some scholars have noted that training may not be of any help when unethical conduct has deeply embedded itself in one's lifestyle. This also emerged from the participants' voices as Mnguni had the following to say:

> *Most of the things we do are the things that we learnt from our communities. The way we dress and the way we speak to others. Same with ethics we learn how to conduct ourselves through observing what our parents do and members of our communities. We carry those values to our workspace. So, principals and educators do what they learnt from their neighbourhood. In the Township, brothers who steal cars and wear fancy clothes have influence on youth and are seen as successful and admired by youth.*

Similarly, Mr Ngobese, the principal of Zakhele Primary school believed that the environment influences people the way they do thing and the way they think. He posited that:

> Some principals who display unethical behaviours learnt from their upbringing that stealing without physically hurting others is not a bad think. They tend to play down the impact of their actions as not harmful since they are not taking money directly from the learners and further make reference to what is happening in the government in the upper echelons where corruption is the order of the day. Corruption of principals and teachers is what we read about almost in every newspaper.

(Mr Ngobese, principal of Zakhele Primary School)

Mhlophe shared similar sentiments that he had learnt a lot of disturbing news of corruption from various forms of media. This is what he had to say:

> Unethical behaviour is not something that one just finds himself /herself involved in it overnight. This is the habit one grows with it from youth. When a weak person is exposed to power it becomes easier for her to engage in corruption. Think of a person from disadvantaged background entrusted with millions or lot of thousand rand to be in charge of, how is she likely to behave? Same with some of the principals are from poor background and have seen people succeeding due to corrupt activities.

(Mr Mhlophe, post level one educator from Ikhethelo Primary School)

Ms Ngcobo from Zakhele primary posited that:

> In the staffrooms, teachers know that principals spend school money wrongly at times to benefit themselves. However, there is nothing that teachers can do to report the principal because they are experts when it comes to corruption. Moreover, they learnt it from their peers and from township where they grew up how to steal without being caught. When one gets promoted just know has good opportunity to enrich himself or herself from the school monies as most principals do.

(Mrs Ngcobo, post level one educator from Zakhele primary school)

Principals are not different from other people. The findings seem to suggest that principals learnt a lot of habits from their environment through observing what their elders were doing. It is worth noting that learning also happens amongst peers, hence the significance of peer pressure. Some principals and educators end up doing things that they know are wrong and have been advised to desist from doing, but, for them to fit into certain groups, they end up doing what most members of the group are doing. It is not surprising that some of the people in leadership positions are unethical in their conduct as some unethical leaders perpetuate what is obtaining in their communities. When educators join organisations, they are introduced to the rules and regulations to conform with. For example, the Educators' Labour Relations Council (ELRC) document was issued to most educators in early 2000. However, some educators, when they were promoted to other schools, redeployed or retired, did not leave those documents containing school policies, which have almost all the basic rules that teachers need to abide by as they do their daily work. Moreover, those rule and regulations are in conflict with codes of ethics that educators uphold from their communities, hence find themselves violating the organisational code of ethics to suite their own interest.

The socialisation of a person has a lot to do with the conduct that one displays when is in the working environment. The values that people learn in their environment sometimes differ immensely from the organisational values. Manjunatha and Maqsud (2013) opine that the background of employees has an impact on their conduct, whether ethical or unethical. Bandura (1971) states that new patterns of behaviour are acquired through direct experience or observing behaviour. Bandura (1971) further avers that people, including school principals and teachers, have a tendency to derail from the path that they know is right. Nel *et al.* (2008), Kim and Brymer (2011) and Werner (2011) posit that senior leaders in organisations ought to demonstrate behaviour that is acceptable and praiseworthy in the organisation by serving as role models and by encouraging and reinforcing ethical behaviour in others. Kim and Brymer (2011) assert that principals' role is to model ethical guidance for every member in the organisation and enforcing organisationally acceptable standards observed being displayed by leaders themselves. Unfortunately, most school principals have relinquished their ethical roles.

6.3.5 Inadequacy of guidance and training offered to principals and teachers
The majority of participants concurred that there is dearth of in-service training of the school principals and teachers. They felt that the much-needed training to acquaint principals mainly

those newly appointed was non-existent. Numerous dilemmas that are infesting township schools are as a result of principals engaging in a trial and era method as they lead their schools. Participants felt there was nothing concrete that the Department of Education had done to empower the newly appointed principals to deal with day-to-day challenges or dilemmas they face in their workplace. This is what Mrs Thobela from Iphothwe Secondary had to say:

> *The Department is failing us as teachers. Corporal punishment was abolished, and no training was offered to principals and teachers to deal with unruly learners. Not that alone, curriculum changes occur with every newly appointed Minister of Education. However, teachers and Principals are given a one day or two-day workshop on the curriculum delivery strategies. With Alternatives to corporal punishment, nothing happened to empower teachers, no workshop I ever attended in that respect.*
>
> (Mrs Thobela, Post Level 1 educator of Iphothwe Secondary school)

Miss Mseleku shared similar sentiments as she posited that:

> *What I can tell you is that there are workshops that are conducted by the Department of Education intended at developing teachers I will assume even principals because sometimes our principal will leave school to a workshop or meeting. However, to directly respond to your question, workshops are seldom convened to and they don't focus much on matters affecting us like dealing with learners' behaviour that pushes us to resort to corporal punishment.*
>
> (Mrs Mseleku, Post level 1 educator of Iphothwe Secondary School)

Meanwhile, Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary shared similar sentiments about the level of in-service training offered to teachers and Principals. This is what he shared:

> *There is nothing that I would say I personally remember offered by the DoE to embower me in executing my duties as the principal. I can say I was fortunate to have ELRC document I received long ago from my previous principal and it was not unpacked for us as teachers by then. We were told that it contains important policies. So, it helps me now in guiding teachers mainly Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 and SASA 84 of 1996. Worth noting in relation to your question, not much time is allocated for workshop on ethical leadership.*
>
> (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary school)

Similarly, Mr Ndlovu, the principal of Iphothwe Secondary lamented that he cannot recall being invited to a workshop as a newly appointed principal: This is what he had to say:

> *I do not think I was properly inducted by my Circuit Manager as my supervisor. Honestly speaking I don't think I was inducted. In my case, it was a matter of jump in a swim; I had to learn as I was moving along. Networking with senior principals I knew that were good in leading their schools. I don't remember a workshop where I was called as a newly appointed school principal and find myself with other newly appointed principals.*
>
> (Mr Ndlovu, principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)

Consistent with the latter assertion, Mr Pelepele averred that:

> *Believe me, there is no specific workshop or induction workshop I remember that was called with the view to equip me as the principal who has been newly appointed. Instead principals are caused to embark on trial and era method. There is no induction or on-going mentoring for school principals, they learn along the way of their practice.*
>
> (Mr Pelepele, the principal Ikhethelo Primary School)

Congruent to the latter assertions, Mhlophe had the following to say:

> *Unfortunately for me I cannot recall being invited to a workshop where I was inducted by the Department of Education on ethics and ethical leadership. Workshops that I attended were related to subject that I teach. Content workshops which will be run from 12h00 to 15h00 are the workshops that I can tell you I have attended.*
>
> (Mhlophe, Post level 1 educator of Ikhethelo Primary school)

Ms Ngcobo shared similar sentiments with other participants as she argued that:

> *A principal friend of mine ones told me that principals don't run short of money. They always claim from the school coffers. If you make proof available anything is possible. I use my car to run Department errands and there is no money put aside for me to service my car. I don't steal but I take what is rightfully mine. I cannot spend my children's money to do the work for the Department.*
>
> (Mrs Ngcobo, post level 1 educator of Zakhele primary School)

Similarly, Ms Thandi had the following to say:

> *To be honest with you, not that I am promoting or encouraging corruption, but generally money is tempting. There are times where one is broke and if there is money one is looking after, there is a temptation to use it and as you know to pay back money spent is difficult. It is worse when there is nobody to put pressure on you to pay it. I think that is what happens with some of the principals who get tempted to spend money that belongs to the school.*

> (Ms Thandi, post level educator from Intuthuko Secondary School)

There was consensus amongst the majority of the participants that there is inadequacy of in-service training offered to both educators and principals to equip them to do their work ethically. The principals' role in school is to act on behalf of the Department of Basic Education. Therefore, their actions are supposed to reflect the aspirations of the Department of Basic Education. The policies that promulgate training of educators, such as IQMS, are not properly implemented in schools; as a result, there is no in-service training that empowers educators and school principals. Participants believe that principals and governing bodies have a mandate to formulate school policies that they themselves do not conform to. Most of the schools in the township have superficial policies which in some schools are even designed by the outside bodies for those schools, thus not speaking to the contextual factors within and around the school.

The findings suggest that principals and teachers are not exposed to any form of in-service training regarding their new positions. Instead, principals need to find a way by themselves to cope with the day-to-day challenges they encounter as they do their work. It is worth noting that, although there are documents with the policies that pertain to principals' work, no guidance is offered to make them have full understanding of those policies. Moreover, principals are expected to craft policies themselves and guide the school governing bodies in the policy formulation process, despite their own deficient knowledge, hence flimsy policies are produced and not well communicated to the relevant stakeholders. The in-service training is not adequate to solve the ethical dilemmas that are obtaining in schools. The expectation that school principals are supposed to act as role models is undermined when principals are not leaving up to the dictates of departmental policies.

Chetini and Shindika (2017) opine that the pervasiveness of unethical behaviours by principal and educators in workplaces is due to lack of education and in-service training. Sama and Shoaf (2007) posit that, for in-service training to be significant and relevant there is a need to understand the drivers for ethical lapses in workplaces. The latter corroborates the views of Brown and Trevino (2006) and Fulmer (2004), who state that ethical lapses need to be understood and addressed given the nature of the spread of this behaviour throughout organisations. The scandals obtaining in various organisations indicate that the need for education of principals is becoming imperative (Ciulla, 1995). Scholars including Trevino and Brown (2006), Soma and Shoaf (2007), Mayer, Kuezi, Bardes and Salvador (2009) opine that ethical lapses are ubiquitous and are a concern, as the integrity of principals is brought into question. Messick and Bazerman (1996) and Yukl (2010) posit that principals face numerous dilemmas and potentially explosive situations, in which they have to make decisions that can prove harmful for the organisations or to others, yet they are not properly empowered to face these daily challenges through in-service training. Sadly, owing to their power, principals are regarded as role models and more often than not they are caught napping. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) state that, when principals engage in distribution of resources, the process need to be moral and sensitive, which is often not the case as some of them view it as an opportunity to self-enrich.

6.3.6 Pressure to achieve to the expected standards or levels

The findings suggest that the pressure that principals get as they do their day-to-day work motivates them to embark on short-circuiting ethical requirements and to focus purely on the means to achieve the results that would be satisfactory to the employer (DBE). The findings further suggest that, when principals engage in unethical activities, they are well aware that their actions are unethical. They even revealed that there is no one who wants to be ridiculed for failing to lead the school, due to poor results. So, for principals to reach the threshold for a performing school, they will do anything in their power, including causing a learner who is at risk of failing, to write an examination on half of the subjects that she/ he registered for at the beginning of the year. There is no principal or teacher who does not know that corporal punishment was abolished in 1996. However, there are some school principals and educators who are still practising it as they rigidly pursue results. The following is what the participants had to say.

Mr Ndlovu from Iphothwe be allowed to write examination on half of the subjects in a stream of her choice) spoke as follows:

> *I think pressure. I face the same pressure as the high school principal. As high schools we are judged by Grade 12 results. So, we end up using corporal punishment though we know it was abolished, but because we know when there are no good results, we shall face the music at the end of the year.*
>
> (Mr Ndlovu, principal of Iphothwe Secondary school)

Similar sentiments were shared by Mr Mnguni who had this to say:

> *As a principal at times I let wrong things to happen for the good intentions by pretending as if I don't know that my teachers are doing it. For example, teachers use corporal punishment. You see, nowadays we are not allowed to hit learners. However, to get these learners cooperating, mainly grade 12, that put so much pressure on us as principals, we end up using corporal punishment to get our learners on toes. It works for us because all our learners attended extra classes who offer them and for one who fails without reporting they know what to follow. It helps though it is a wrong thing to do but for their good at the end.*
>
> (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

Similarly, Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary School, argued that the policies of the Department of Basic Education indirectly compel them to use any means possible to maintain the dignity of their schools. For an example, the DBE had introduced circular D2 to determine the functionality of schools. Circular D2 determines that primary schools are poor performing schools when Mathematics and English have been achieved below 60%. Thus, the school principals reverted to the use of corporal punishment and any other unethical means to get their schools recognised as academically performing schools. Mr Pelepele had this to say:

> *I must confess most principals in township schools are compelled to resort into the use of corporal punishment due to apathy shown by learners towards their schoolwork and they know that they fail once in a phase. So, to get learners working, corporal punishment is the solution and does help though we know it was long ago abolished. We have a pressure to achieve above 60 %. Some schools even cook results to rid themselves of this pressure.*
>
> (Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary school)

The same sentiments were uttered by Mr Ngobese who had this to say:

> *As a school principal, I have a responsibility to ensure proper functioning of the school, but it is difficult to control learners without corporal punishment since inviting parents of these learners to school does not work because they don't show up. Learners don't finish their classwork, homework, if I can allow that to happen the learners will be destroyed, my teachers do administer corporal punishment, but I don't reprimand them because that is what works in township schools. Remember I have to account for the results to parents and Department each term end.*
>
> (Mr Ngobese, the principal of Zakhele Primary School)

Similar sentiments were echoed by post level one educators as Mrs Thobela said:

> *Learners in nowadays are no longer showing interest in their schoolwork and as teachers we are left with no proper and immediate solutions to making them do their work except opting for corporal punishment. I do use it at a minimal level to get my learners in action. I explain to them before I hit them the reason. I need to account to my departmental head and principals for the results of each learner under my care. I account even to parents, so I use possible means to get them working.*
>
> (Thobela, post level 1 educator from Iphothwe Secondary School)

Ms Thandi shared a similar view that corporal punishment is the only working solution to learner behaviour that township school survive by, despite it being abolished many years ago. To emphasise her point this is what she had to say:

> *To be honest with you, I know pretty well that corporal punishment was abolished since 1996. However, as an old teacher I know it helps and has helped me for many years as an old educator teaching grade 12 learners. I still use it and my learners know if my work is not done, I will punish them. That is one of the reasons I don't get less than 95% in my subject since I started teaching Accounting at grade 12.*
>
> (Ms Thandi, post level 1 educator from Intuthuko Secondary School)

The pressure to meet the set minimum requirement is one amongst many that propels school principals and educators to contravene the Department of Basic Education policies. All the school principals and the educators interviewed clearly understood that corporal punishment was long abolished in 1996. However, they are still administering it. The claim is that it is the

only working solution to correct the conduct of learners and also to ensure that the learners conform to their educators' demands, such as class attended and cooperation in doing their schoolwork. The successes most of the school achieve they attribute to the use of corporal punishment. There is a strong feeling among teachers and principals that, should there be no corporal punishment in their schools, the pass rate would drop, because learners will be doing as they please.

School principals have a mandate to ensure that their schools are functional. One of the key performance indicators of a functional school is the results that the school produces. Principals alluded to the fact that circular D 2 was initiated by the DBE to determine the minimum pass requirement of schools and failure of a school to achieve at the minimum and above puts much pressure on the principals particularly in secondary schools. They are compelled to have extra classes even during holidays to ensure that they maximise teaching and learning to realise their targets. The conditions in the township compel principals and teachers to opt for corporal punishment to meet the threshold. That said, principals are aware that their conduct is against the law. However, they view corporal punishment as the best solution to learner absenteeism and are not oblivious to the fact that what they are doing is against the law. That they have been succeeding throughout the years and their success has been acknowledged, they believe that exercising corporal punishment helps them and therefore cannot stop using it.

Further, the dearth of alternative to corporal punishment leaves principals and teachers with the only option that they have known to yield the intended results at all times. In the township schools, parents are quick to advise parents to use the corporal punishment to their children because, even at home, corporal punishment is used. Some teachers and parents believe they can be supported by parents, whenever they are required to account for their actions. Some teachers believe that explaining to the learner why corporal punishment has to be administered against them beforehand renders it less illegal. However, that is absolutely wrong, and the act does not accommodate it as less of an offense. Simply put, the action of administering corporal punishment is illegal and unacceptable.

Messick and Bazerman (2009) and Yukl (2010) state that principals make decisions under highly challenging contexts which are potentially explosive such that can tarnish the image of their organisations or their fellow colleagues. Hence, they need to have clear understanding of their world. Winston (2007) asserts that principals' leadership and decision making in their

schools are a focal point in relation to ethics mainly in the light of high-profile scandals. Further, Messick and Bazerman (2009) and Werner (2011) maintain that principals' decision-making is more significant as they are accountable to various stakeholders. That pressure drives principals to do things that they would normally not do, and that they find themselves under extreme pressure to succeed, pressure to get ahead of their colleagues, pressure to meet deadlines and expectations from co-workers and Department of Education, when their actions violate the set organisational codes of conduct their actions remain unethical. Lašáková and Remišová (2015) maintain that principals passively allow for immoral wrongdoing to obtain in their organisation, they decide of rules and processes that are unethical to achieve their goals. They further advise that even if the principal does not intend to harm others, however, if her actions are contrary to ethics code of conduct and are intended to serve leader's wellbeing need to be discouraged.

Leaders foster unethical conduct among their subordinates without engaging in the behaviour themselves and do so by rewarding and condoning non-conformers and ignoring unethical acts (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Employees engage in unethical acts to boost organisational performance or help organisation in another way. This happens with the intention to protect the leaders from primary blame (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Belle and Canterelli (2011) opine that principals within their professional roles can be involved in unethical behaviours without seeing anything wrong about their behaviour. Therefore, under moral inversion principals view their evil actions as normal and good. Kaptein (2011) opines that some principals engage in unethical job behaviour and performance practices fully aware that their conduct is unethical. However, their behaviour is motivated by desire to meet the set standards of performance. Singh and Twalo (2015) corroborate the latter assertion that principals carry out some unethical practices fully knowing the rule and regulations and use their knowledge of the rules to sabotage certain rules without being noticed. Boes (2015) states that principals have pressure to reach certain targets hence find themselves embroiled in unethical acts. Simply put, Boes (2015) maintains that principals act unethically with the intention to realise the standards set by the Department of Education for achievement. The latter suggests that the Department of Education exerts pressure on principals so that their focus ends up being on the attainment of results, thus neglecting how the means through which those results are attained. Hence there is fertile ground for various unethical actions to be carried out.

6.3.7 Availability of opportunity to do unethical activities

When the school has a lot of money and no activities planned towards spending that money, school principals get easily tempted to spend money unwisely for their own benefit. Even when there are well formulated policies and budgets, some school principals still find their own ways and means to defraud the school funds. The school governing bodies are constituted by illiterate parents in most cases. Some of the parents, when joining school governing bodies, accept nominations with the intention to benefit from the school funds. When parents show their interest in benefitting from the school funds, with lack of knowledge as to how governing bodies operate, that presents a morally weak principal with an opportunity to embezzle school funds. The principal, as the ex-officio member in the governing body plays a pivotal role in the processes of school policy formulation, thus manipulating the dearth of knowledge from parents of how finances are utilised. This transpired from Mr Pelepele who had this to say:

> *I am the 6th principal in my current school as my predecessors were moved for various unethical conducts relating to school funds. The school that is not so big was painted at a cost of over R200 000. This amount was for labour only, excluding the painting materials*

> (Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary School)

Ms Thobela had the following to say:

> *Having served in various positions in the SGBs of various schools where my children are schooling, I have seen how dodgy (dishonest) school principals are when it comes to school finances. The principals will ask a parent to sign blank cheques and attribute that to saving that parents' time from coming to school to sign cheque, if there is something that needs to be bought. Poor parents will sign out of ignorance and trusting that school principal cannot do something unethical.*

> (Ms Thobela, post level 1 educator of Zakhele Primary School)

Mr Ndlovu posited that sometimes as school principal in a high school you do wrong things for the good intentions and when closely scrutinised, you can be in big trouble. This is what he had to say:

> *As high school principal I sometimes spend money to keep my learners at school till late. I have to buy food for them. Sometimes I have to take them to nearby school to learn Mathematics or Physical Sciences, I then take from the school funds. Sometimes I take from the money budgeted for something else. This is*

misappropriation of school funds according to the law. Unfortunately, as principals we do it though some of us take advantage of such programmes to benefit themselves.

(Mr Ndlovu, principal of Iphothwe Secondary school)

Mr Mhlophe similarly stated that:

I have observed and heard many wrongful doings of school principals such as embezzling or misappropriating school funds without being punished for that. Even at my school, a lot of things my former principals were doing without our knowledge which some ended up living school because they were alleged to have misappropriated or embezzled school funds. Under a period of 10 years, we have had five if not six principals having been moved to other schools because were suspected to have squandered school finds.

(Mr Mhlophe, post level 1 educator of Ikhethelo Primary school)

Mr Ngobese highlighted that some principals will obviously exploit the flows in the controls that are non-existence in the Department when it comes to managing finances:

A principal from the neighbouring school had resigned a year ago because he was investigated after a teacher from his school reported him to have solicited a loan of R25000.00 from loan shark in the area claiming to use that money to pay for security guard.

(Mr Ngobese, the principal of Zakhele Primary School)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Ms Grootboom, who said that:

In my previous school, which was a fee-paying school, more money went to the school administration clerk, principal, and even to teachers' pockets, unaccounted for. This happened during the times when report cards were issued at the end of the year to learners and were paying cash to the principal, clerk to access their report cards. Some teachers were advising their class learners to pay to them as report cards were issued by the teachers. Principal was unable to reprimand teachers as he knew that teachers were aware that a lot of money was going into his pocket without being accounted for.

(Ms Grootboom, post level 1 educator of Zakhele Primary School)

A congruent view was shared by Mhlophe who said:

> *More money went to sport organisers' pockets in the previous years at our school.*
> *Learners were paying more for the trip and the organisers were pocketing some*
> *money as money was not deposited in the school account. They were not accounting*
> *to the previous principals about money collected from learners. However, they*
> *reported about the trip as well as the results only.*

<div align="right">(Mr Mhlophe, post level 1 educator from Ikhethelo Primary School)</div>

Judging by the participants' utterances, it is clear that corruption is multifaceted. The school principals succumb to the temptation of money. Suppliers who work with schools are able to convince those principals who are morally weak to act against the school policies, which they are expected to be the custodians of. Further, the findings seem to suggest that it is not only the school principals who are perpetuating corruption in schools but also teachers at the lower levels. In the positions that they hold in various committees, teachers tend to find ways of financially benefitting themselves with the money they have collected for school activities or programmes.

It is worth noting, though, that sometimes principals engage in unethical practices with no intention to harm others or to benefit themselves. They sometimes divert money budgeted for a specific activity to run other programmes such as afternoon and Saturday matric classes. Some principals are forced by the circumstances to make unauthorised the school resources that they have bought with the state finances. Due to lack of money, they end up negotiating with the loan sharks to lend them money to pay for security guards, with the intention of protecting teaching and learning aids in the main. In the township schools there is a lot of burglary taking place with an intention to steal food that is meant to feed learner and that was provided by the National Schools Feeding Programme, computers and other school resources. However, though the intention may be good, the conduct is against the law. Therefore, school principals need to have full understanding of the policies that govern their duties and uphold those policies as stipulated.

Moreover, the failure of school principals to communicate policies and adhere to the policies themselves creates gaps for teachers to receive the money that is due to the school and not to forward it to where it is supposed to go. Educators are quick to learn from the conduct of their leader and emulate their leader's conduct. That said, some principals are by nature corrupt.

They take advantage of the illiteracy of the school governing body members by advising them to sign blank cheques and principals put in the figure of amount they need, without the knowledge of the member who signed. In sum, the situations that are obtaining in schools are as a result of the school principals using their powers to benefit themselves. Principals at times do the wrong things in pursuit of their own selfish narrow interests, hence opting to abuse their power.

Butts (2013) avers that power corrupts a person who is in authority. Therefore, having power opens the doors for principals to capitalise on personal gains. Business ethics are different from laws because in some circumstances it may not be illegal to engage in unethical behaviour. To elucidate the foregoing assertion, the following were put forward by Askew, Beisler, and Keel (2015) as examples of unethical behaviour that are not illegal: short cutting quality of work, abusing sick days, and lying to customers. Singh and Twalo (2015) opine that principals' unethical behaviour is not always driven by lack of capability or capacity but sometimes is due to selfishness and personal interests. Furthermore, Singh and Twalo (2015) claim that, when inappropriate behaviour is allowed to prosper by being not punished, generally employees take the advantage of the environment because they know that there will be no negative consequences to follow their unethical behaviour. Therefore, principals and educators tend to believe that unethical behaviour as opposed to legitimate means can offer them the opportunity to realise their personal ambitions.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a descriptive analysis of the causes of unethical conduct among school principals and educators. It further looked at their level of preparation and the possibilities for in-service development about ethical behaviour and leadership. The voices of the participants were used to underscore the findings of the study. The chapter further provided clarity on how both principals and educators viewed the relationship between ethics and ethical leadership in relation to their practices in their own workspaces. The following chapter is an extension of this current chapter. It features the presentation of the descriptive analysis of the suggestions on what should be done to combat unethical behaviours in schools that report to the Department of Basic Education and where teachers are governed by SACE.

CHAPTER SEVEN
SOLUTIONS SUGGESTED TO COMBAT UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter delved into the descriptive analysis of the causes of unethical conduct amongst school principals and teachers at schools and their perspectives regarding the level of preparation in-service development of school principals and teachers about ethical behaviour and leadership. This chapter deals with the descriptive analysis and suggestions on what should be done to combat unethical behaviour at schools, and report to the Department of Basic Education and teachers' conduct watchdog which is SACE. The data was generated from the field through interviews and document reviews. In strengthening the findings, the research questions, literature review and theoretical frameworks which were thoroughly discussed in Chapters Two and Chapter Three respectively were used.

7.2 Strategies to combat unethical practices

The participants felt that numerous strategies were available to deal with unethical behaviours of principals and teachers in schools. However, the participants suggested that there was little, even nothing at all, being done to combat unethical behaviour in schools by both the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and South African Council for Educators (SACE). There was concern that principals had to use trial and error until they got it right or solicit help from their fellow colleagues. In instances where workshops were offered, issues of ethical leadership/ behaviour were located at the tail end of the presentation. The notion of insufficient time allocated for such important issues was also identified by some of the participants.

7.2.1Provision of training on ethics and ethical leadership for both principals and teachers

The majority of the participants felt that, amongst many alternatives to eradicating unethical behaviour of some principals and teachers, the foremost was to provide them with proper ethics training to prepare them for their work. There was resonance among the participants that unethical behaviour was rife amongst principals and teachers. Moreover, they corroborated each other a number of times on this issue, a number of times that when enough training is offered to the principals and teachers as practitioners, there is a possibility of a decline in unethical behaviours of some school principals. This is what Mr Mnguni had to say:

The Department of Education and SACE must provide training on ethics and ethical leadership for those who have been appointed in the principal positions. However, the training should not be limited to principals only but be extended to teachers as well because they are a number of times caught up in various forms of unethical practices, including having intimate relationships with their learners.

(Mr Mnguni, the principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mr Ndlovu, the principal of Iphothwe Secondary School who had the following to say:

Considering the level of scandalous activities that have been reported about both principals and teachers in various forms of media, I think it is necessary that there is proper training on ethics for principals and teachers. I also think that ethics training should not be a once off thing but be continuous.

(Mr Ndlovu, the principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)

The latter views were also corroborated by Mr Pelepele who had the following to say:

There must be emphasis on ethics training for newly appointed principals. It is the responsibility of the Department of Basic Education to ensure that newly appointed personnel are empowered to execute their mandates. I mean the Department of Basic Education must have mentoring programmes for principals and teachers. On the other hand, SACE must be putting emphasis on the ethics training for both teachers and principals.

(Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary School)

Congruent to the latter assertions, Mr Ngobese, the principal of Zakhele Primary school stated that:

My view is that to attenuate unethical behaviour of both teachers and principals, the Department of Basic Education must have a series of ethics training workshops for the novice educators and also newly appointed principals. Over and above that there must be mentoring programmes in place which will ensure that principals and teachers are continuously reminded of their responsibility and the implications of unethical conduct to the image of the leader and the consequences thereof to the culprit, and to the image of the school and the Department of Education.

In the same vein, Mr Mhlophe felt that training principals and post level one educators (teachers) could make a huge difference to their behaviour. When one is perpetually exposed to what constitutes ethical behaviour, one is bound to comply, as the conduct will be embedded in the leaders' thought processes. This is what Mr Mhlophe of Ikhethelo Primary School had to say:

> *I strongly believe that when education on ethics is prioritised by the Department of Education, the attitude of teachers and principals will drastically change and I believe when one is more often exposed to the impact of unethical behaviour is likely to change for the better of the organisation he or she works for.*
>
> (Mr Mhlophe. post level one educator from Ikhethelo Primary School)

Congruent to the previous assertion, Ms Thandi of Intuthuko Secondary School posited that:

> *I think education on ethics and ethical leadership is partly a solution to this conundrum of unethical behaviour. Department of Education and SACE as the Council for teachers should take a giant step towards training teachers and principals on ethics. They need to have constant training workshops and not take for granted that they have to keep on reminding principals and teachers of ethics.*
>
> (Ms Thandi, post level one educator from Intuthuko Secondary School)

The same sentiments were echoed by Mrs Thobela, who argued that:

> *I think SACE and DBE can tame the scourge of unethical behaviour of some school principals and teachers by offering ethics education/training especially those who are joining the sector or promoted to new positions. The training must be continuous. Not like workshops that are conducted for two hours, once a year but each year at least one weekend be dedicated to the training of novice and experienced employees in their portfolios.*
>
> (Mrs Thobela, post level one educator from Iphothwe Primary school)

In the same motion, Mrs Gadlela from Intuthuko Secondary expressed that:

> *I think SACE needs to focus on educating or training and evaluating principals and educators on ethics. Principals and educators need to be exposed to what constitutes ethical behaviour and be closely monitored. That can vanquish the*

tendency of being too comfortable for principals in their positions and learning ways of defrauding the institution they work for.

<div align="center">(Mrs Gadlela, post level one educator from Intuthuko Secondary School)</div>

There foregoing assertions strongly make the case for principals and educators to be trained on ethics. Due to the widely spread corruption perpetrated by principals and teachers, which has been reported on various forms of media, focus has to be placed on continuous ethics training. The ethics training needs to be continuous so that it gets embedded in both the principals' and teachers' minds. In addition, the significance of training is that when an employee if found involved in unethical behaviour, sanctions can be instituted with minimal objections. However, prior to instituting any form of sanction, the employees need to be well exposed to the sanctions. When there is proper training, and sanctions are consistently communicated and known by all staff members, the message sinks into one's brain. The benefits of ethics training, when it is continuously done, is that the conscience of the employees is revived. However, to ensure that the embedded ethics understanding remains, there is a need for providing mentors for principals and teachers. When principals and teachers have mentors, they will not be comfortable to engage in corrupt activities.

7.2.2 Schools need to have a clear Code of Conduct /Ethics

Ethics code of conduct emerged as one of the most significant means to mitigate principals' and teachers' corrupt practices in the workplace. Ms Dube, the Principal of Senzokwethu Primary School, mentioned that principals have a responsibility to instil discipline among staff members. Therefore, the formulation and the availability of code of ethics is the most significant in combating unethical behaviour. However, school principals and teachers have their SACE code of conduct that guides their conduct. The limitation of SACE is that seldom propagate the code amongst its constituency. Thus, the code needs to be well communicated to stakeholders. This is what Ms Dube had to say:

An organisation without code of conduct is bound to fail and be infested by conflicts. Hence it is important for SACE and Department of Education to ensure that code of ethics is communicated to all the Department of Education employees. I think that it can be justifiable to reprimand unethical behaviour because reprimand would be happening on the basis of the code of conduct that is known to everyone at school or in the Department of Education.

In concert with the latter assertion, Mrs Mngadi and Mr Ndlovu added that when the code of conduct has been made available to principals and teachers, it needs to be clarified. This is what Mrs Mngadi had to share:

> ..., ethics code of conduct is very important for employees to behave accordingly. However, since it cannot speak for itself, SACE and DBE need to communicate it to all the teachers and even give them copies to file. Moreover, every meeting session, ethics subject needs to be touched upon.

<div align="right">(Mrs Mngadi, principal of Sakhisizwe Secondary School)</div>

Likewise, Mr Ndlovu reiterated that: *"..., no principal or educator can claim to be not aware of ethical issues involved in the work that he/she does, but because they are seldom reminded by SACE or Department of Education more about ethics, they tend to take the issue of ethics lightly".* (Mr Ndlovu, the principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)

In compatibility with the foregoing assertions, Mr Jali added that the best way to embed ethics in the educators and principals is by assigning mentors to support them on ethics. He contended that:

> ..., for the Department of Education to keep principals and teachers intact with the ethics, they need to be assigned mentors who are morally strong to support them. Moreover, principals as Departmental officials need to craft policies in line with SACE code of professional ethics to guide educators' conduct.

<div align="right">(Mr Jali, post level one educator of Senzokuhle Primary school)</div>

Similarly, Mr Pelepele from Ikhethelo Primary school felt that principals, as the representatives of the Head of Department, have a duty to promote ethical leadership in schools. Their failure to uphold the Departmental legislative mandates suggest that they are not fit to hold the office and they need to be reprimanded accordingly. This is what he had to say:

> As a principal I act on behalf of the provincial Head of Department, therefore my conduct has to reflect what the Department aspires. Principals are supposed to promote posit school culture through school codes of conducts that are in line with SACE code of professional ethics. Moreover, as principal we need to demonstrate ethical leaders through our actions.

Likewise, Ms Thobela asserted that principals are responsible for the functionality of the school and therefore they need to work closely with their School Governing Bodies to formulate school policies, including the ethical code of conduct for teachers and learners. This is what she had to say:

> *I think principals and school governing bodies are supposed to formulate code of conduct for the teachers and learners so that they build school culture guided by the code. I believe this can work because the SGB is composed of all school community stakeholders and each component prior to meeting sitting seeks mandate and later on reports to its constituency of the resolutions.*
>
> (Ms Thobela, Post level 1 educator of Iphothwe Secondary school)

Meanwhile Ms Grootboom of Zakhele Primary School said that: "Principals are department officials in their own respect, so they need to take initiatives in ensuring that schools have codes of conduct and ensure that codes of conduct are enforced". (Ms Grootboom, post level 1 educator of Zakhele Primary School)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mr Mpofu of Sakhisizwe Secondary School, who had this to say: "Code of conduct is essential in setting up the school culture and guiding the behaviour of staff members. This is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that the code of conduct is available and is a living document". (Mr Mpofu, post level one educator from Sakhisizwe Secondary School)

The foregoing assertions suggest that, though the Department of Education and SACE have a responsibility to promote ethics in schools among teachers and school principals, principals as the head of institutions have the greatest responsibility to ensure that there is discipline and a culture that is known and upheld by all members. The School Governing Body has the major role to play in the formulation of school policies including an ethics code of conduct. Therefore, each component of the SGB should communicate the ethics code of conduct to their constituencies. The participants felt that there would be no resistance from the teachers to conform to the ethics code, if all relevant stakeholders were part in the formulation of the ethics code of conduct. As a result, unethical behaviours were bound to be eliminated in schools.

7.2.3 Punish unethical behaviour and reward ethical behaviour

The majority of participants contended that the Department of Education was not doing enough to deal with the unethical practices of some principals and educators in schools. As a result, most school principals and teachers were finding it easy to infringe the Department's rules and policies. Furthermore, the participants surmised that when infractions occurred without consequences, others who were observing the infractions and the benefits related to it were tempted to emulate the unethical behaviours. As a result, the majority of the participants felt that there was a need for disciplinary measures to be put in place to decisively deal with unethical practices that are frequently reported in various forms of media. However, there was a feeling that a dialogue on ethics was essential to keep everyone informed with what constitutes ethical behaviour and also to outline the sanctions accompanying the violations of ethical standards. The participants acknowledged that, there were some school principals and educators who demonstrated their commitment in serving their communities in a just manner. Therefore, their commitment to ethical behaviour needed to be rewarded. The participants further stated that rewarding ethical behaviour could motivate other principals and educators to behave ethically, while punishment could motivate them to desist from unethical behaviour due to the consequences following from it.

Mr Pelepele, the principal of Ikhethelo Primary School had the following to say: "The Department has to enforce its policies against those principals who violate the rules and regulations that inform their employment. Principals as Department officials are supposed to reprimand those educators who violate Department policies". (Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary School)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mrs Dube who had the following to say:

> *The Department of Education and SACE need to tighten the screws when dealing with corrupt elements of some principals and educators. On the contrary, those principals and educators who conform to ethical standards of the Department must be rewarded as a form of motivational stimulus.*
>
> (Mrs Dube, principal of Senzokwethu Primary School)

Similarly, Mr Ndlovu, the principal of Iphothwe Secondary School proposed that:

> *Strengthening consequence management might be able to assist in dealing with unethical behaviours because employees can be reminded of how they should behave. However, the code of ethics has to be communicated clearly to*

stakeholders to diffuse any form of unethical behaviour that may occur when gaps are not closed.

<p align="right">(Mr Ndlovu, principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)</p>

Meanwhile, Mr Mnguni the Principal of Intuthuko Secondary School, in the same vein, said:

Those who are entrusted with leadership should emphasise on the question of ethical leadership through formulation and communication of code of ethics so that people are familiarised with the concept. Thereafter, anything contrary to the ethics must be rebuked. Consequences must be felt by those who violate the ethics code.

<p align="right">(Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)</p>

Consistent with the afore-said views, Mr Ngobese, principal of Zakhele Primary school gave as his views that:

SACE as the watchdog of educators' conduct has to be on board and institute the sanctions stated in the code of professional ethics for educators without fail. Moreover, all in leadership including us as principal we need to create sessions where ethics are clarified and sanctions thereof in the case where code has been violated. Also, SACE must reward good behaviour to motivate educators to remain ethical in their conducts.

<p align="right">(Mr Ngobese, principal of Zakhele Primary School)</p>

Likewise, Ms Grootboom stated that:

The Department has to apply the sanctions that are stated in the Employment of Educators act depending on the seriousness of the offense. However, rewarding those who are ethically behaving can also serve as a motivation. Since contextual factors influence behaviour, principals are supposed to formulate their schools' code of conduct informed by that of SACE.

<p align="right">(Ms Grootboom, post level 1 educator of Zakhele Primary School)</p>

In concert with the foregoing assertion, Mrs Mngadi, principal of Sakhisizwe Primary School suggested that:

There must be harsh sanctions against those who violate the professional code of ethics. If the offense qualifies expulsion, that must be effected without fail.

<div align="center">143</div>

Corruption thrives in education because principals and educators know their jobs are protected no matter what wrongdoing they engage in.

(Mrs Mngadi, principal of Sakhisizwe Secondary School)

Similarly, Mr Jali, post level 1 educator of Senzokwethu Primary School posited that:

My take on the matter of combating unethical behaviour is that SACE and Department of Education should apply the sanctions against those who infringe on the ethical standards. And the Department should reward good behaviour as means to promote ethical behaviour.

(Mr Jali, post level 1 educator of Senzokwethu Primary School)

The voices of the participants assert that the Department of Education and SACE have to decisively act against corrupt practices. The application of the sanctions enshrined in the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 could eliminate those principals and educators who undermine the ethical standards stipulated in South African Council for Educators Act 31 of 2000. The participants suggested that the Department of Education and SACE need to recognise those principals and educators who are dedicated to the ethical service of their constituencies by rewarding them. The participants surmised that rewarding ethical behaviour and punishing unethical conduct could promote a clear awareness of what is expected of each employee. That said, the participants stated that discussion on ethical matters prior to instituting harsh sanctions was significant. In addition, the participants suggested that principals had to understand that that they were acting on behalf of the Department of Education, hence their conduct had to reflect the aspirations of the Department of Education. Some participants argued that those in leadership needed to be firm in the application of the sanctions to set a clear example, thus combating unethical practices.

7.2.4 Model exemplary leadership or behaviour

The majority of the participants gave as their view that principals and teachers have a responsibility to lead by example. There was a consensus among most participants that, when the leader demonstrates good conduct, the subordinates find it difficult to violate the code of conduct. The visibility of the principal among teachers and learners strengthens the relationships, as they gain greater understanding of the principal and feel comfortable around her and establish a meaningful relationship with the principal (Odhiambo & Hii, 2013).

Moreover, there was synergy among the participants' voices that the leader gains the trust and respect of those she leads. In addition, the community respects and easily send their children to a school where there is demonstration of ethical leadership by both school principal and teachers. Even the learners' academic performance improves if the school is led with integrity. Learners and teachers tend to emulate the behaviour demonstrated at the top. Mr Ngobese, the principal of Zakhele Primary, had the following to say:

> *Those in leadership in education including Principals, South African Counsel for Educators and Department of Education need to preach ethics and show ethical leadership through their actions. They need to walk the talk and talk the walk. They must lead by example at all time.*
>
> (Mr Ngobese, principal of Zakhele Primary School)

Consistent with the foregoing, Mr Mnguni, the principal of Intuthuko Secondary School argued that:

> *As the principal I have a duty to provide direction to teachers. The image of the school is very much determined by my character and behaviour. So, my behaviour has to be the behaviour I can expect my teachers to demonstrate towards my learners.*
>
> (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School)

In the same vein, Mrs Dube stated that:

> *Principals as leaders need to show what they expect from teachers and their learners through their actions. You know they say actions speak louder than words. So, principals need to lead the conduct that they want their teachers to demonstrate. Principals must lead by example.*
>
> (Mrs Dube, the principal of Senzokwethu Primary School)

Similarly, Mr Mhlophe, post level, 1 educator of Ikhethelo primary of Ikhethelo Primary school shared the following:

> *As a teacher I have a responsibility to educate my learners how to behave. Learners look up to us as adults, so I try my best to set good example for my learners. Same with school principals have to set good example for teachers and learners.*
>
> (Mr Mhlophe, the post level 1 educator of Ikhethelo Primary School)

Consistently with Mr Mhlophe's assertion, Mrs Moloi averred that:

> *Principals set the school tone through their behaviour. The principal has to lead by example. How can a principal who absents herself from school reprimand the teacher who perpetually absents himself from school? So, the principal has to model be behaviour she expects from her teachers.*
>
> (Mrs Moloi, post level 1 educator from Senzokwethu Primary school)

Likewise, Ms Thandi shared the same sentiments with the foregoing assertions. She had the following to say:

> *Principals need to be good role models for everyone at school. I know that as a teacher, I have to show care to my learners so that they can learn from my behaviour. The behaviour of principal determines how teachers will behave as they look up to the principal and emulate the behaviour.*
>
> (Ms Thandi, post level 1 educator of Intuthuko Secondary school)

In concert with the foregoing assertion, Mrs Ngcobo said:

> *As a teacher I am a role model for my learners. So is the school principal, I look up to my school principal as my leader. Principals can make or break the school with their behaviour. Hence, they have to show set the school culture by demonstrating the behaviour that is attractive to teachers and learners.*
>
> (Mrs Ngcobo, post level 1 educator of Zakhele Primary School)

Similarly, Mr Jali, post level 1 educator of Senzokwethu Primary School contended that:

> *Role modelling is important to be demonstrated by principal and be embraced by educators. The conduct of educator and principal set the tone at school. Learners embrace the behaviour that is demonstrated and promoted by school principal and educators. Positive role modelling eliminates space for unethical and deviant behaviours.*
>
> (Mr Jali, post level 1 educator of Senzokwethu Primary School)

Likewise, Mr Ndlovu, the Principal of Iphothwe Secondary School believed that leading by example was significant, since the principals and educators have a parental role to play and need to teach learners in their totality to become responsible citizens. He had the following to say:

Principal and educators serve in loco parentis and have a responsible to produce independent and responsible future leaders. As learners learn a lot through observing it is important that principals and teachers be good role models so as to mould future ethical leaders through modelled behaviour.

(Mr Ndlovu, the principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mrs Thobela, who said that:

As an educator I have a responsibility to help all my learners to become responsible citizens. I know that in one way or another these learners tend to look up to us as educators the kind of behaviour to emulate, hence we have to show them the correct path so that they become responsible citizens.

(Mrs Thobela, post level 1 educator of Iphothwe Secondary School)

Participants consistently gave the view that the school principals and teachers are role models for everyone at the school. Principal and educators cannot abdicate their obligation to set a moral example for their subordinates (Bello, 2012) for their organisation to succeed. Hence, the principal's behaviour is significant in determining the tone of the school by embracing the purpose, vision and values of the organisation and the subordinates, informed by ethical ideals (Bello, 2012). Therefore, principals need to ensure that their behaviour is consistent with the organisational goals and aspirations. Moreover, principals need to know that their actions are significant in determining how the community views the school. In addition, role modelling by the principals helps shows the subordinates the expected behaviour and it becomes easier for well-meaning principals or teachers to reprimand subordinates, as opposed to principal or an educator who violates the ethics codes when he/she has to deal with infractions of the subordinates. Good or positive role modelling was viewed by the participants as vital in moulding grooming future leaders. Ethical leaders demonstrate the traits that they observed modelled during their childhood or during their career that were rated as better ethical leaders by their employees (Voegtlin, 2015). Educators felt it was their responsibility to guide the leaders as they act on behalf of parents.

7.2.5 Establish tracking and support systems

The majority of the participants surmised that most unethical behaviour arises because there are no proper systems in place to track and monitor unethical behaviours in schools. Hence, the

participants suggested that monitoring of behaviour is significant. In addition, the participants felt that support must be provided to teachers and principals to ensure that principals are ethically behaving as they carry out their leading and teaching responsibilities. Underscoring the importance of tracking the unethical behaviours, Mrs Mseleku had the following to say:

> *..., principals need to be monitored by SACE and Department of Education because when they have freedom, they can easily get out of the way. Monitoring structures need to be put in place that will ensure that anything untoward that surfaces is dealt with urgently and harshly to set an example.*
>
> (Mrs Mseleku, post level one educator of Iphothwe Secondary School)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mrs Ngcobo, who had the following to say:

> *Having all the rules and regulations in place is not much important but it has to be bolstered with close monitoring of behaviour and consequences there off. However, SACE emerges when sanctions against an educator have to be effected having not bothered to workshop teachers on the code of ethics.*
>
> (Mrs Ngcobo, post level 1 educator of Zakhele Primary School)

In concert with the latter assertion, Mr Mnguni lamented that:

> *..., there are so many scandalous reports that had been made about principals and teachers despite the presence of wonderful acts and policies. Unethical practices happen because there is no proper monitoring by SACE and DBE of the principals' and teachers' conducts. When one knows is monitored, he shies away from unethical acts. Therefore, monitoring can reduce unethical behaviour in schools.*
>
> (Mr Mnguni, principal of Intuthuko Secondary school)

Similarly, Mr Ndlovu argued that:

> *..., the Department of Education can reduce the level of unethical behaviour by ensuring that there are clearly systems of reporting unethical behaviours of teachers. Moreover, unethical the Department of Education must punish that person who violated the rules so that those who reported are motivated to report future unethical behaviours.*
>
> (Mr Ndlovu, the Principal of, principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)

In the same vein, Mr Ngobese stated that:

Combating unethical behaviours in schools requires the employees within the institution to report the occurring unethical conduct. Hence there should be assurance that whistle blowers' anonymity is protected. Sometimes principals are the ones who are supposed to report teachers but fearing for their safety end up not reporting.

(Mr Ngobese, the principal of Zakhele Primary School)

Similarly, Mr Pelepele, the principal of Ikhethelo Primary School, contended that:

I believe that one of the reasons unethical behaviours are not reported to the Department of Education is fear of victimisation and no certainty that the culprit will not get to know who reported him. I therefore think that when there are secured/safe platforms to report unethical behaviour people deviant behaviours can drastically be reduced as principals and teachers may fear to be caught and severely punished.

(Mr Pelepele, the principal of Ikhethelo Primary School)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mrs Thobela, post level 1 educator of Iphothwe Secondary School:

We know a lot of wrong doings by both our colleagues and principals, but we cannot report those unethical practices because we are afraid of victimisation or losing our lives. If the Department of Education is serious about combating corruption that is happening in schools by both teachers and principals, needs to create avenues where unethical practices can be registered anonymously.

(Mrs Thobela, post level 1 educator of Iphothwe Secondary school)

In concert with the afore-mentioned views, Ms Thandi, post level 1 educator of Intuthuko, shared the following:

..., one of the ways of combating unethical leadership in school is by making it safe for the whistle-blowers to report deviant behaviours. Nowadays taking one's life in the Township is like slaughtering a cow. So, unless the whistle blowers' lives are safe more unethical behaviours will be reported and people will start to behave well fearing to lose their job when caught.

(Ms Thandi, post level 1 educator of Intuthuko Secondary School)

In concert with the foregoing assertion, Mr Jali, proposed that: "One of the best solutions is to ensure that those who are brave to report unethical behaviour are protected and it must be easy and safe to report unethical conduct". (Mr Jali, Post level 1 educator of Senzokwethu Primary School)

Similar sentiments were shared by Mrs Dube who further stated that:

> *Combating unethical behaviours in schools calls for the principals or Department of Education to ensure that support is given to those who are against corrupt practices. Support can be in the form of ensuring that whistle blower remain anonymous to the offenders.*
>
> (Mrs Dube, principal of Senzokwethu Primary School)

The findings seem to suggest that combating unethical behaviour was dependent on the assurance that, when the whistle-blower had registered the deviant behaviour, his/her anonymity was to be guaranteed. The major concern was that reporting deviant behaviour sometimes put the life of the whistle blower in danger, since there were no proper means of protecting the anonymity of the whistle blower. Moreover, the participants felt that support was not given to those who were anti-corruption and, as a result, they surmised that, if adequate support was given to the whistle blowers, unethical practices would be combated. In addition, the procedures to report unethical practices were viewed by the participants as cumbersome, hence observers were reluctant to report deviant behaviour. The participants further considered that monitoring was one means of tracking unethical behaviours that could have positive impact in combating the unethical behaviours of some educators and principals.

7.2.6 Involvement of stakeholders in decision-making by school principals

The participants surmised that principals need to involve educators and other relevant stakeholders in the decision-making processes. They suggested that, when the employees feel comfortable, they can easily make positive suggestions that can improve the school ethos and contribute towards realisation of the organisational goals. Moreover, the participants suggested that the benefits of involving stakeholders in the decision-making processes were so immense that participation of members in organisational activities would be voluntary and that trust between the leaders and followers would be enhanced. As a result, the educators tended to avoid all activities that can undermine their organisational ethical standards. The participants

suggested that educators become loyal to their leader. In addition, participants believed that educators would trust that the decisions of their principals would be fair and would cater for their interests. Participation in decision-making processes empowers educators and principals to conform to democratic principles. To that end, by principals involving educators, the schools benefit as educators gain confidence and commitment in serving the schools. This is what Mr Mpofu, the post level 1 educator of Sakhisizwe had to share:

"When the principal acknowledges that our presence is important and gives us platform to share our views, we get encouraged to work hard because we feel as an integral part of the school".

(Mr Mpofu, Post level 1 educator of Sakhisizwe Secondary School)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mrs Mngadi, principal of Sakhisizwe Secondary School, who had the following to say:

> *Teachers feel valued and important when are included in the decision–making processes. As a result, they avoid anything that may tarnish our relationship (teacher-principal relationship). Therefore, I believe creating space for educators to share their opinion can contribute in combating unethical behaviour.*
>
> (Mr Mngadi, principal of Sakhisizwe Secondary School)

In the same light, Mr Mhlophe stated that:

> *When the principal shows confidence in teachers by allowing them to share their views and implement some of the suggestions that they put forward, it motivates teachers and builds unity and trust between teachers and Principal.*
>
> (Mr Mhlophe, post level 1 educator of Ikhethelo Primary School)

Congruent to the latter assertion, Mr Tema asserted that:

> *As teachers we get motivated and corroborative when we are part to decision-making processes at school. Even if we are made aware of the developments that are taking place at school before they happen, we welcome them with confidence that our interest has been considered.*
>
> (Mr Tema, post level one educator of Sakhisizwe Secondary School)

Similarly, Mr Ndlovu the principal of Iphothwe Secondary School stated that: "I think as principals we need to involve teachers in decision-making processes so that they know that the

school is not for the principal but for all of us and we need to collectively restore the image of our school". (Mr Ndlovu, the principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)

Likewise, Mrs Dube of Senzokwethu Primary School reiterated the same view, when she said:

> *To build trust and stimulate teachers' interest to fully participate in realising the school goals, they need to be involved in the decision-making processes especially when they will be expected to implement the decision. Involving teachers in decision-making eliminates resistance. Importantly, room for unethical behaviour is shuttered as all stakeholders have organisation interest at heart.*
>
> (Mrs Dube, the principal of Senzokuhle Primary School)

Mr Ngobese shared the same sentiments when he contended that:

> *I think to gain full support of educators and their loyalty to the success of the school, principals need to involve educators in the decision-making processes so that they can report any suspicious deviant conduct which may harm or abort the shared goals of the school.*
>
> (Mr Ngobese, principal of Zakhele Primary school)

The findings seem to suggest that when the school principals included educators in the decision–making processes, they tended to feel as the significant part of the organisation and began to commit to the realisation of organisational goals. Moreover, they felt it was their responsibility to avoid any deviant behaviour to protect the image of their organisation. However, for that to happen, the principal had to ensure that the inputs of the stakeholders were embraced in the implementation of the decision. Educators and learners know that their presence is valued by their principal and they are trusted (Odhiambo & Hii, 2013). Importantly, the principals needed to ensure that educators were actively involved in the decision-making processes that were pertinent to their work, especially the decisions that required to be carried out by educators. The success of the leader in gaining the full support of the subordinates was viewed as a vital element combating any form of infraction, as both principal and educators shared the common goal to take the school to the next upper level.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented and provided discussion of the descriptive analysis of what the participants suggested should be done to combat unethical behaviour of some school principals and educators, by the Department of Education and South African Council of Educators. The subsequent chapter provides an evaluative and theoretical analysis of the major themes emerged from the findings. The interpretations shall be compared and contrasted with relevant literature and theory.

CHAPTER EIGHT
DISCUSSION OF THE KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

Chapters Five, Six and Seven were dedicated to the descriptive analysis of the findings from the field. In this chapter I evaluatively discuss the key themes that emerged from the generated data. This chapter focuses on the major themes that I believe respond to the research objectives and questions of the study. Each of the findings led to a particular theme and at times to sub-themes, which are presented and analysed in this chapter. In discussing themes, purposeful attempts have been made to relate the findings to the research questions, literature, and theoretical frameworks presented in Chapters Two and Three respectively in this study.

8.2 Themes that emerged from the data generated

The themes that emerged from the data were: Ethics as the set of values or principles that guide the behaviour of a leader to be able to distinguish right from wrong; Demonstration of propriety (honesty and integrity); Trustworthiness of leaders in the education sector; The necessity of ethics training for school principals and educators; Shared code of ethics; Collaborative leadership (stakeholders' involvement).

8.2.1 Ethics as the set of values or principles that guide the behaviour of a leader to be able to distinguish right from wrong

It appeared that participants had a sound understanding of ethics and ethical leadership. This study revealed that the ability of a leader to differentiate right from wrong was a significant feature of ethics and ethical leadership. This study's findings emphasise that the ability to distinguish between what is right and wrong was essential, because it made the leader to be able to provide guidance to his/her followers and gain their trust at the same time. The findings also revealed that the leader's ability to differentiate between right and wrong propelled the leader to take into cognisance and value the interest of the subordinates. Moreover, the leader understood that he/ she had to operate within certain organisational principles and ensure that those organisational principles were upheld in the presence or absence of other people. In addition, the leader had a responsibility to provide guidance to the followers by observing the organisational standards and ensuring that subordinates conform to the set standards. The study noted the dissonance between individual and organisational values. However, the study's findings suggest that the ethical leader had to synergise organisational values with his or her

own, in the best interests of the organisation. Hence the findings are that values that guide the leader's conduct should take into cognisance and prioritise the goals of the organisation. The study further established that actions of ethical leaders have to be aligned with the interest of the organisation and the leader had to understand that his/her actions may undermine the image of the organisation. Thus, the commitment of the stakeholders in realisation of the organisational goals may become limited.

Furthermore, the study revealed that ethical leaders always strive to demonstrate compassion and care towards the subordinates. As a result, ethical leaders embody fairness and justice in their decision-making, which provide evidence of knowing the difference between right and wrong. Hence, a leader who upholds ethics and practises ethical leadership demonstrates fairness and justice in his/her conduct. In a nutshell, fairness and justice as democratic principles are adhered to by the leader and followers equally. The ethical leader is transparent on issues that have a bearing on the welfare of the subordinates. A study carried out by Perry and Hallet (2014) comes to the similar conclusion, that trust, honesty, care and fairness form the integral part of ethical leadership. In addition, the study founded that ethics are a set of values that guide the leader's behaviour and ethics is rooted on the common will of the stakeholders, thus ethics rejects biasness in a leader (Pushpa, 2012).

Kimber and Campbell (2015) posit that ethical dilemmas arise when leaders find themselves in a confusing situation that necessitates them to choose among competing sets of principles, values and beliefs. Further, these dilemmas that confront school principals and educators pertain to "right versus right" and "wrong versus wrong" and, as a result they are challenged to make tough decisions over and above the need to be able to deal with these tensions. The study founded that ethics were about knowing the difference between what was right and wrong. The literature cited in Chapter Two clearly depicts that the ability to separate the right from wrong signified that a leader acted with integrity and displayed compassion. Congruent to the foregoing, the study discovered that ethics were about the leader's ability to differentiate the right from wrong. Moreover, ethics promoted respect for the rights of others. The study found that fairness, justice, honesty and integrity are central principles of ethics. These ethics principles determine the character and the way stakeholders expect leader to behave (Pushpa, 2012). Likewise, Yozgat and Mesekiran (2016) corroborate the latter assertion that ethical leaders treat their subordinates in a fair and caring manner. Significantly, ethical leaders allow their followers room to share their views. The studies conducted by Bass and Steidlmeier

(1999), Nel *et al.* (2008), Mihelič *et al.* (2010) and Alshammari, Almutairi and Thuwaini (2015) corroborate this study findings that ethical leadership is founded on the principles of right and wrong, good or bad. Similarly, Ahmad (2017) reiterates that ethics guide a leader to do the right things, even if there is no one around to observe the leader's behaviour. Meanwhile, Wilson (2013 reiterates similar views that ethics accentuate that leaders must do what is right for the good of others not because they think of sanctions or reward, instead guided by their moral drive.

Ethical leaders know that they have a duty to protect and safeguard the interest of employees. In addition, ethics involves leader's ability to motivate and empower the followers to understand their responsibility and guide them to exercise their right with great care. Most importantly, the leader creates the environment that is conducive for ethical behaviour to prosper (Brown & Trevino, 2006). Nzimakwe (2014) reiterates that true ethical leaders uphold ethics and engage in ethical activities not for the sake of impressing their stakeholders but to ensure that the organisational goals are realised while the interests of the stakeholders, including employees, are protected. Simply put, leaders need not to sacrifice their values over those of the organisation or members; instead the leader has to synergise her values with the organisational values. As a result, Özan, Ozdemir, and Yirci (2017) report that ethical leaders use their power positively to determine what is good and bad, right and wrong, to influence their subordinates' conduct towards realisation of organisational common goals. Similarly, Yozgat and Mesekiran (2016) accentuates that ethics motivate the leader to behave ethically thus creating trustful school climate as the subordinates deem their principal as respecting of their rights and just in her conduct.

The documents that most schools produced were the minutes which contained numerous resolutions that had been collectively taken. The minutes of all the schools showed that the voices of the employees were valued by the school principals. In addition to the minutes of meetings, the principal of Intuthuko Secondary School produced the Kwazulu-Natal Department of Education educators' pledge and pointed at the assertion that "I will treat my fellow educators and employees of the Department of Education in a way I would like them to treat me, I will act professionally and honestly at all times", to emphasise the importance of involving others. Further, he referred to Chapter10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa to emphasise the importance of involving others in the decision–making process. When the leader is involving employees in decision making processes, he or she is not doing it as a

favour but is upholding their democratic right as enshrined in the Constitution. Chapter 10, Section 195 (e) postulates that "people's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making". It is against this backdrop that involving employees in decision-making is protecting their right but not doing them a favour.

The documents that I gained access to were the school codes of conduct for the educators and for learners, which demonstrated that the voices of the stakeholders were welcomed in various forms. There were minutes of the schools' Finance Committees, which reflected that the school principals were transparent when it came to financial matters. The school principals were able to produce the evidence where schools' budgets were approved in the parents' meetings. That said, the majority of the principals expressed their concern in so far as the participation of parents was concerned and stated that their budget meetings always had to be convened twice as the quorum was not met in the first meeting.

8.2.2 Demonstration of propriety (honesty and integrity)

The findings revealed that a leader's honesty and integrity are essential traits for the organisations to function effectively and efficiently. The leader's demonstration of honesty and integrity motivates the subordinates to trust their leader; thus, trust expands amongst the other relevant stakeholders, who show interest in working with the organisation. An ethical leader understands that his/her success is dependent on how the subordinates view and receive him/her. Therefore, an ethical leader recognises that employees are the essential assets of the organisation and without them, the organisational goals and objectives cannot be realised (Bello, 2012). On the flip side of the coin, the study suggests that employees strongly desire to be led by leaders who are honest and have integrity. This finding is consistent who the views of Brown and Trevino (2006), who maintain that the leader's integrity, honesty and trustworthiness are vital characteristics that contribute to ethical leadership and trust. Bello (2012) reiterates the notion that employees want to be associated with the leaders who demonstrate honesty, credibility, respect, and fairness. When the employees are happy and have respect and trust for their leader their job performance is enhanced, and their ethical performance develops.

The followers place much of their hope to the leader and even avoid doing things that could jeopardise the image of the organisation. Simply put, the employees dedicate their energy in

serving the organisation and never doubt their leader's decision-making as they believe that the leader is honest and values their interest. In addition, an ethical leader understands that living in harmony with essential ethical principles, including trust, respect, integrity, honesty, and fairness, nourishes the relationship between the leader and the followers, hence benefitting the organisation in achieving its goals (Bello, 2012). However, too much trust given to the leader becomes destructive to a successful process as too much mistrust, because too much trust creates room for collusion, which leads to mistrust. Therefore, there is a need for a balanced amount of trust and monitoring for proper consensus among stakeholders (Senge, 2012).

This study established that honesty and integrity are the major traits that the leader had to demonstrate in order for the organisation to remain a reputable one. The finding finds strong resonance in the voices of some researchers. For example, Toor and Ofori (2009) state that ethical leaders engage in behaviours that are beneficiary to others and desist from the behaviours that can cause harm to others. Pushpa (2012) reiterates that the core values that an ethical leader demonstrates include living a life of integrity and in service of the collective good. Further, integrity manifests itself when the leader is motivating others in ethical directions. Meanwhile, Bello (2012) supports the notion that honesty, integrity, fairness and concern for others are the cornerstone principles of ethical leadership. Similarly, Engelbrecht *et al.* (2017) aver that ethical leaders make fair and principled decisions. As a result, ethical leadership is the relevant means of behaviour through which leaders demonstrate integrity. Thus, ethical leaders create space for the voices of the followers to report challenges and to share constructive ideas for organisational development (Khuong & Dung, 2015). Ethical leaders focus on moral values and fairness in their decision making. Further, ethical leaders take into cognisance the impact of their actions on the image of the organisation and ensure that a clear message is communicated to the employees as to how their actions can impact the goals of the organisations. Nicolaides (2014) posits that *ubuntu* values, which include integrity, care for others, pride in performance and safety, are essential principles that ethical leaders should embrace and inculcate in their employees. Leaders embracing ethical perspectives value integrity and are trusting, honest and fair (Stouten, van Dijke, & De Cremer, 2012).

The leader's ability to balance what is good for the organisation with what is good for the stakeholders is symptomatic of leader's demonstration of honesty and integrity traits (Manjunatha & Maqsud, 2013). De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) argue that ethical leaders treat their subordinates in a fair and respectful manner, create a trusting environment that

positively influences employees' satisfaction and dedication. In addition, Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, and Salvador (2009), Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) state that ethical leaders create a fair and trusting environment, to stimulate employees' ethical and pro-social behaviour. Stouten; van Dijke and De Cremer (2012) contend that ethical leaders are motivated to act fairly to gain their subordinates' trust.

Similarly, viewed from the perspective of Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) model of ethical leadership, integrity and honesty are the essential part of the leadership fabric that values the welfare of others and promote justice for all. Drawing from the ethic of justice, a leader values all the employees, accords them the same treatment and is fair in applying the laws. In a nutshell, the leader applies the laws in a just and fair manner when reprimanding certain infractions that undermine the realisation of the organisational goals. Therefore, when the leader values the interest of the employees and treats them in a fair and just manner, the same attitude is reciprocated by the employees, hence the healthy and positive culture is sustained within the organisation. Most importantly, from the perspective of the ethic of justice, employees appreciate their leader and become more interested in serving under his/her leadership, pulling together towards the realisation of the organisational goals.

In this study, it was evident that principals and educators were well informed about what constitutes ethics and ethical leadership. Despite the challenging contexts within which schools were located, principals and educators tried their maximum best to operate within the principles of ethics. There was sufficient evident that showed that stakeholders were accommodated in various ways and, when issues were deliberated, care was taken to ensure that all members received fair treatment. The schools had policies such as learners' code of conduct and general school policies, over and above those that were from the Department of Education. The purpose was to have a tool that all stakeholders were aware of and, when infractions occurred, these were to be dealt with in a similar manner within the organisational standards of ethics. The availability of the disciplinary meeting that occurred and the sanctions thereof, as spelt out in the minutes, were an indication that the school principals were ethical in their leadership.

8.2.3 Trustworthiness of leaders in the education sector

Linked to the above, trustworthiness of a leader is the most essential aspect for the organisation to succeed. The leader is revered, based on how he/she conducts himself /herself at work or

outside his/her workplace. Therefore, it is essential that the leader earns the trust of the school community through his/her demonstration of ethical standards. For a leader to be trusted and respected, he or she has to acknowledge and accept people for they are and accord them the same status. Most significantly, the leader needs to have a listening ear, avoid bias and be considerate of other people's interests. There is a litany of literature to show that ethical leader is an approachable person who shows concern for the welfare of others and, most importantly, is honest and trustworthy (Bello, 2012). Further, ethical principals act in the best interest of their educators and do not enact harm upon them by not respecting their rights as stakeholders (Stouten, van Dijke, & De Cremer, 2012). In addition, ethical principals understand that good quality relationships are built on fundamental principles such as trust, respect, integrity, honesty fairness, equity, justice and compassion, and that these determine the realisation of organisational goals (Bello, 2012). Hence, a school principal has to combine personal values and leadership ethics with the organisational code of ethics and professional standards, which need a commitment to ethical leadership and inclusiveness (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2005, & Gardiner, 2015).

Moreover, ethical principals vividly understand that they have a moral obligation to serve the interests of their educators and learners, including the people they may not know personally, but who may have vested interest in the operation of the school at larger (Wilson, 2014). The study established that school principals are aware that school are community institutions and therefore various stakeholders have varied interests at school. School principals are on a daily basis bound to engage with various community members politely and with respect even if they hold a views contrary to their proposals. As a result, ethical values, leadership and trust are the significant subjects which school principals embrace to be able to survive within their organisations (Acar, 2012). The research carried out by Manzoor, Ullar, Hussain, Ahmad (2011) established congruent, to this study, that team members freely engage in discussions about their mistakes and politely accept the criticism from their colleagues since they trust each other (Mangena, 2012). The reaction of the principal is always under scrutiny, regarding how he/she responds to the needs and interests of the community, therefore, for the leader to be trusted, he or she has to stick to the ethics codes.

Similar sentiments were echoed by Stouten, van Dijke, and De Cremer (2012), that ethics is the single greatest predictor of trust in leaders, therefore creating a trusting environment is vital for the leader-follower relationship as it provides legitimacy to the leader's position, and decisions.

Based on the latter sentiments, principals know that the cooperation of educators and school management team members is highly dependent on trust, and, as a result, school principals work on developing trust within their schools. Township school principals showed great understanding of the strength of trust among members within the school, since they believed that it provides a buffer/defence against unnecessary upheavals or cataclysms, reduces mistakes and improves the quality of the results.

Viewed from the ethic of care, it appears that the caring of a leader is the most critical feature of ethical leadership that cements trust amongst the stakeholders. Principals and educators need to demonstrate care, to effectively deal with their daily complex moral challenges. Principals can best demonstrate that they are caring when making decisions and also by being good listeners. The leaders have to make tough decisions on a daily basis; hence they need to always be alert that their decisions and actions bear consequences. There, Engelbrecht *et al.* (2014) advise that the leader has to demonstrate great care and honesty towards the subordinates and be in continuous open communication with the stakeholders regarding decision-making. Thus, principals are expected to demonstrate care in their actions and make decisions that are biased towards the interest of subordinates.

8.2.4 The necessity of ethics training for school principals and educators

The study identified ethics training as an essential need for principals and educators. It was vividly established that the institutions of higher learning were not doing enough to equip educators for becoming ethical leaders when employed. However, there was a concern that ethics were context based. As a result, it was always going to be a challenge for the institutions of higher learning to teach ethics since the ethics were subjective. African culture and Western culture always have fundamental differences and what is ethical in Western culture may be deemed unethical in African culture. For example, when a child is looking at the adult while talking to her, this is deemed disrespectful in African culture, whereas in the Western culture when a child is not looking at the adult when talking to her suggests that there is something wrong the child is guilty of. These contradictions are essential because they shed some light as to why there is scarcity of ethics training in the institutions of higher learning. That said, there are numerous similarities regarding ethics that are common to both African and Western cultures.

However, that the latter does not diffuse the question that, whose ethics should be taught? As a result, many educators have not had the benefit of relevant ethics training in their teacher preparation programmes that would lead to ethical preparedness. Yet ethics, whether named or un-named, underpin everyday aspects of schooling system, ranging from decision-making processes about discipline to educators' talk in the staffroom or social gatherings. In the light of the enumerated complexities regarding ethics training, such challenges are bound to continue. In the case of South Africa, ethics seem to be under serious suppression by those in power and as long as there is no formal ethics education and the consequences of unethical practices, the scourge of unethical conduct will continue to thrive. It is against this backdrop that principals must educate their educators and instil future leaders with values of integrity, trustworthiness, honesty and commitment to virtue in them (Pushpa, 2012). Therefore, the principals' primary motivation is in building such sterling qualities in their staff members (Meylahn & Musiyambiri, 2017).

Moreover, ethical school principals create platforms to engage in ethics discourse and use reinforcement to support the ethics messages to attract their subordinates' attention to ethics messages (Chetini & Shindika, 2017). In a nutshell, principals share information and remain approachable on matters of ethics within the school. This study revealed that principals have a moral duty to promote the interests of the staff members and other stakeholders by providing them with the career opportunities, good working conditions and by developing their competencies (Werner, 2011). "A leader is forever a learner, and learning is the leader's source of energy" (Kim, Ko & Kim, 2015). The latter assertion sets out the need for principals to be continuously exposed to ethics training so that they can extend the knowledge they gain to educators and other stakeholders within the school environment.

The study established that the school principals overwhelmingly concurred that educators need to be trained to their best abilities so that they can achieve day to day tasks with better performance towards the attainment of the school goals (Malik, *et al.,* 2016). Therefore, principals have a duty to create a favourable environment for ethics training. Moreover, principals comprehend the importance of ensuring integrity and limiting unethical behaviours within the school setting, to develop an ethical culture.

8.2.5 Shared code of ethics

This study revealed that a code of ethics was leaders' most frequent attempt to instil ethical behaviour in the organisation. The code of ethics contained ethical principles or standards aimed at guiding the behaviour of the employees across all levels. However, ethical leaders have a responsibility to communicate these ethical standards to their subordinates. A study conducted by Van der Akker, Heres, Lasthuizen and Six (2009) corroborate this study, in that leaders communicate the code of ethics and institute rewards and punishment where infractions have occurred. The code of ethics is not solely designed to deal with unethical behaviours but also to promote ethical behaviours through rewards. The effectiveness of the code of ethics requires all the stakeholders to be involved in its formulation so that they accept and conform to it.

The documents reviewed corroborated the findings of this study that the code of ethics provides the stakeholders with the guidelines of the aspired conduct. Leaders ensure that employees subscribe to the policies and standards that govern the organisational culture. Among the codes of ethics reviewed, Ikhethelo Primary School's code of conduct emphasises the commitment to a disciplined and purposeful teaching environment that encourages the creative potential of all learners, whilst upholding the principles of loyalty and pride in the school through sharing of ideas, values and beliefs and inculcation of honour, dignity, integrity, self-esteem, self-discipline, respect, tolerance and compassion. The significance of integrity and caring for others can never be overemphasised in creating an ethical environment. The presence of a code of ethics is not sufficient when it is not communicated to relevant stakeholders.

Consequently, the communication of the ethics code to all the stakeholders creates a fertile ground for leaders to implement the sanctions set out in the code of ethics to eradicate infractions whenever they arise. School principals demonstrated vividly that the effectiveness of schools is dependent on principals' shift from a hierarchical approach to a collaborative approach, where leadership is somehow shared and the principals play a significant role in empowering educators and other staff members (Martin, McCormack, Fitzsimons & Spring, 2014). Vision is an essential part of a strategic planning process because it provides the direction for the school. Therefore, the vision needs to be shared to accomplish its purpose of motivating employees and guiding their behaviour. The notion expressed by Darbi (2012), that mission and vision statements are key communication tools for stakeholders, resonates with this study, since it established that the vision and mission communicate the envisaged behaviour

as well as attitudes and values that the school aspires to. As a result, when sanctions are applied, there is no resistance from the employees since they have understanding of the code of ethics and the implications thereof in the case of non-compliance. Further, availability of the code of ethics creates a fair application of sanctions, since it serves as a reference.

Congruent with the findings, Caroselli (2000) posits that ethical leaders demonstrate their comprehension of power by regarding it as means to attain ethical ends. Thus, they understand that it is not enough to have a code of ethics, but they need rather to enforce the policies established. Establishing and enforcing the code of ethics helps in creating an organisational environment that promotes ethical behaviour among the employees (Askew, Beisler & Keel, 2015). Leaders know that they have to abide with the code of ethics in all what they do, even if they are not in their workspace. Thus, unethical behaviour does not need to be directly linked to the work that the leader is doing, but, once it is unravelled, it tarnishes the reputation of the organisation and the goodwill that was initially achieved by the mission and leader's enthusiasm (Caroselli, 2000).

Moreover, a code of ethics guides leaders, not only in their role as leaders, but also in ethical decision-making generally (Pushpa, 2012). In addition, the code of ethics underscores fair organisational practices with all the stakeholders regarding confidentiality, legal compliance and enforcement of company standards and codes of conduct. To eliminate or prevent unethical practices, various institutions develop professional codes of conduct. The principal aim is to hone the commitment, dedication and efficiency of the service among members of the profession by formulating a set of recognised standards to which all members of the profession adhere, to provide disciplinary guidelines for members of the profession by creating norms of professional conduct, and to ensure that the community supports and has confidence in the profession by accentuating the social responsibility of the profession towards the community (Hallak & Poisson, 2005). Ethical leaders communicate the ethical standards to their subordinates and use methods of rewards and punishment to enforce those ethical standards (Malik, *et al.*, 2016).

8.2.6 Collaborative leadership (stakeholders' involvement)

Linked to teamwork, collaboration is the essential means through which ethical principals ensure that decisions are reached by consensus rather than by division or conflict. Therefore,

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this study established that school principals canvas the advice of their colleagues before making a decision; simply put, the process of decision making is one of consultation. Thus, the school principals seemed to have full understanding of the essence of collegiality as the establishment of a participatory culture in decision-making within the school environment. Ethical principals seemed to believe that power has to be shared with staff in a democracy rather than remaining the preserve of the principal as a leader (Bush, 2003). The foregoing suggests that, for the school principals to lead their schools effectively, they require the support of staff members and other stakeholders. This study established that, despite challenging contexts, ethical principals encourage participation and the input of the educators. However, they understand that sometimes they must take decisions that will not satisfy every employee yet not be harmful to anyone. The advantage of ethical principals is that they are caring and compassionate and go beyond professionally developing their subordinates and ensure that they actively avail themselves to their staff members. Moreover, ethical principals show concern for their staff personal issues that affect them and dedicate themselves to assisting them to get through their challenges. In reciprocity, the educators are bound to comply with and honour the decisions of their principal, if these are fair and ethical. Moreover, if educators know their principal is fair and encourages them to speak out their opinions without fear of retribution; their behaviour then shows confidence and trust to their principal, thus teamwork and synergy amongst educators is honed.

Studies conducted by Hester and Kilian (2010) and Andrew (2015) arrived at similar conclusions to those of this study, that ethical leadership is founded on relationships, therefore for relationships to thrive there must be synergy between the moral values of leaders and followers. School principals seem to comprehend that ethical leadership is not solely the province of the principals of schools; instead principals as ethical leaders have to create ethical awareness, delegating tasks to the subordinates, and adopting participatory and democratic leadership, creating a positive organisational climate that is suitable for the organisational prerequisites, and being honest and reliable to gain the support of the staff members (Katranci, Sungu, & Saglam, 2015). Principals as ethical leaders encourage educators to voice their opinions and suggestions, both on ethical matters and other work-related processes and work context, because ethical principals convey high moral standards to staff members (Vu & Nguyen, 2017).

Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) reiterate the participants' assertion that the best weapon that educators have against uncertainty and change in education is working together. Therefore, school principals emphasise the importance of teamwork or collaboration among staff members. Principals seemed to understand that team building is essential for proper collegiality, as the effectiveness of staff members is attainable through satisfying the desires of staff members. As Mr Mnguni, the principal of Intuthuko put it, staff members' collaboration brings about the smooth functioning of the school and also enhances the skills of staff members, their knowledge and abilities while working collaboratively. In addition, when educators work together, they become more efficient and professional, thus the quality of their work as colleagues and their learners is enhanced. Similar sentiments were shared by Caroselli (2000), who posited that ethical principals don't work in isolation. Instead they establish connections with their immediate followers, but also network with others at various levels inside and outside their organisations.

 Further, ethical principals solicit buy-in from the stakeholders well in advance of the implementation of the idea. Collaboration is important for establishing a professional culture in schools. As educators share information about learners, teaching and learning and their roles as parents and teachers, they become more effective and the learners benefit as a result (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). Educators get motivated when they are afforded an opportunity to use their own discretion and are also shown that they are trusted by being given authority to make decisions and by being held accountable for the work of others (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). It is common knowledge that, when the leader shows trust to the subordinates, the subordinates go an extra mile to please the leader who appreciates them.

However, for the school principals to successfully gain the confidence of their educators, they seemed to understand that astuteness and good communication are vital features for effective collaboration. Without good communication, employees can become demotivated (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). Through collaborative enactment, school principals promote ethical behaviour and empower their educators, through providing them with the necessary opportunities to enable them to carry out their work as they learn from one another. Principals ensure that they treat their subordinates equally and promote fair and principled decision making. Thus, the study concludes that ethical principals involve their subordinates in decision-making processes and facilitate the well-being and potential growth of educators (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2014), through collaboration.

8.2.7 Township contexts with multiple challenges

This study has founded that school principals are confronted with a myriad of challenges, yet the school they are heading are still undergoing reforms and transformation since we are only 25 years into democracy, considering that it was on the 27th April 1994 when the first democratically elected government was chosen by the South African population. Entering into democracy did not mean that all the intricacies of the past vanished into thin air. There was a need to come up with an astute and appropriate strategy to manage the transition from an apartheid regime, which was characterised by autocratic ways of leading, to a democratic one. The scars that were left by the apartheid regime are still visible in some sectors, including the education sector. Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015) clearly point out the multiple challenges that township school principals have to grapple with on a daily basis if they were to be able to realise their mandate. Among many challenges, they include socio-economic circumstances such as income and wealth deprivation, employment deprivation, education deprivation, living deprivation, and the high rate of alcohol consumption among both youth and adults.

A similar deduction emerges from Zulu, Bhengu, and Mkhize (2019), who, after 25 years into democracy, postulate that deprivations are still manifesting themselves in the township schools in the form of poverty, crime and violence, and townships are labelled as war zones, where the safety of residents is compromised. This thesis established from the voices of the participants that poverty is a major challenge to some learners, such that they depend on the school nutrition programme for food. It appeared that educators make means to identify and ensure that when there is food that remains it is put aside for those specific destitute learners. This emerged from the principal of Iphothwe Secondary School: "At time we pack food for the learners that we know them to have nowhere to get food except from school. When the term ends, we divide all the uncooked food among those learners. Sometimes learners will come to school even when they are no longer learning writing exams". (Mr Ndlovu, principal of Iphothwe Secondary School)

That also was echoed by Ikhethelo Primary School's principal, who said that: *"We prepare parcels for those indigent learners. Sometime teachers adopt a child and sacrifice their own money to purchase the school uniform for a very needy learner. Others carry lunch for their adopted learners".* (Mr Pelepele, principal of Ikhethelo Primary School)

The above assertions illuminate the reality that is obtaining in some township schools and the educators have to check their conscience and act in an ethical manner. Principals even mentioned that their learners sometimes abscond from school during examination time and they have to drive many kilometres to fetch the absconded child.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the inception of the democratic Republic of South Africa in 1994 gave birth to innovations with regards to policies and laws aimed at reforming and transforming the education system. This propelled government to inject considerable amounts of money with the view to improve township school life through education (Van der Berg, 2002). Government went to the extent of introducing a feeding programme to schools to alleviate poverty. This poverty had affected schools, as some learners had to leave school in search for jobs since they head families and those who came to school could not concentrate for the duration of seven hours with empty stomachs. Unfortunately, some principals and Service providers saw an opportunity for an avenue through which they could enrich themselves, forgetting the intended recipients' predicament.

However, all the efforts of government have gone and continue to go in vain as school buildings deteriorate and learners' academic performance are failing, despite the government's financial support intended to remedy the inequities of the past. This is upheld in Zulu, Bhengu and Mkhize's (2019) assertion that poverty is linked to the stealing, vandalism and other forms of destruction that occur in township schools, because destitute members of the community identify school as source of what they can sell to fend themselves. These deprivations cause an enormous challenge for the school. Zulu, Bhengu and Mkhize (2019) assert that some township schools are still in a dire state because community view it as their possible source of income. Points made in the first Chapter One resonate with the statements of Zulu, Bhengu and Mkhize (2019), who report that democracy brought about some democratic changes which include formulation of the highly respected Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (Act 108 of 1996; the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998, Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 and South African Council for Educators 31 of 2000 to bring about redress and these were appropriate. However, the introduction of these laws and policies made the work of school principals even more complex than before. Zulu, Bhengu and Mkhize (2019) postulate that principals' roles have drastically evolved towards more complex responsibilities as principals are no long leading and managing the school affairs but are required to participate in numerous organisations, such as the school governing body, manage

school finances and participate in staff recruitment to mention a few. In addition, they argue that the complexity of leadership emerges from the South African Schools Act and Constitution that mandated school governing bodies (SGBs) and educators' unions to be official partners.

There are some points of divergence between the roles of SGBs and those of principals that create complexity for principals in carrying out their mandate in a more ethical manner. The root cause of conflict is the nature of the stakeholders' background and their interests in education (Zulu, Bhengu & Mkhize, 2019). Despite this, Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015) maintain that leadership considerably matters in addressing all the dilemmas that come with the afore-mentioned challenges/deprivations. In addition, they fully understand that principals cannot succeed in their endeavour to lead schools in ways that achieve an ethical climate, if they do not involve other stakeholders in their quest for realising organisational goals. The difficult part is that these new partners in education have vested interests, which are to satisfy their narrow and selfish interests. When corruption occurs, the poor become the most affected because all the funds intended to better their lives are diverted, thus undermining the government's commitments to provide services (Annan, 2004). Seemingly, the fight against unethical behaviour seems to be an unending battle (reporting Lewis, 2012, of Corruption Watch, considering how widely it has spread and how it has become a transnational phenomenon affecting all societies (Fulmer, 2004, & United Nations Convention Against Corruption Report, 2004)

8.2.7 Dearth of procedures for reporting unethical behaviours

This study has established that a major challenge most school principals encounter in their workplaces relates to the lack of clear channels to report unethical practices without being prejudiced at the end. The schooling system's bureaucratic nature makes it difficult to register unethical practices. Therefore, there is a need for ethical leaders can communicate openly to their subordinates about the goals and expectations of their organisation (Engelbrecht, Heine & Mahembe, 2017). When this happens, it can be easy for employees to detect infractions and report to the relevant body. Oates and Dalmau (2013) reveal the escalating levels of unethical behaviours around the world, such that corruption has become a non-stop, perpetual phenomenon. The availability of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption signified the concern and how widely spread corruption was. At the same time, it gave hope that there were attempts made to fight the scourge of corrupt practices. The most affected by corruption

have been developing countries where the elites enriched themselves, instead of providing services for the poor. This thesis emphasises the need for ethical leadership in order to have effective and successful organisation. Even if a platform to report unethical practices can be in place for those entrusted with the responsibility to investigate and act, it will remain the same. The most needed remedy, without suggesting that it is a panacea, is ethical leadership training.

8.2.8 Impact of exemplary leadership on motivation of subordinates

This study deduced that a leader has a duty to lead by example. An ethical leader is aware that what he/she does may either positively or negatively impact on the image of the organisation. Moreover, the ethical leader aptly understands that employees are looking up to his/her conduct and are more likely to emulate his/her conduct. As a result, ethical leaders are mindful of their actions and strive to be good role models for their employees. They ensure that they observe the organisational set standards and role model the envisaged conduct from the employees. In concert with the foregoing, Senge (2012, p. 151.) postulates that "people learn in cycles, moving naturally and between action and reflection, between activity and rest. These cycles enable us to improve what we do... observing our previous action, reflecting on what we have done, using that observation to decide how to change our next action and apply that decision to another action all for the sake of improving our behaviour or the norms of our organisation". Senge (2012) assertion underscores this study's conclusion that leaders understand themselves first and the role they play in the success of the organisation. The leaders have understanding that employees look up to them and emulate their conduct. Leaders' demonstration of ethical behaviour sets the tone and the culture of the organisation for employees to emulate.

This study has established that employees evaluate the actions and words of the leader to find any synergy in them. From their evaluation, the employees make deductions as to whether the leader is or is not worth trusting to keep his or her words. For the leader to pass the test, he or she has to remain moral and ethical, thus ensuring that the interests of the followers are protected at all times. In short, the leader has to keep the interest of the subordinates ahead of his/her own, to set an example that can be emulated.

Ethical leaders understand that they are entrusted with their roles so that they use their authority to serve the needs of followers. Thus, ethical leaders' traits have considerable effect on the promotion of the overall ethics in the school (Katranci, Sungu & Saglam, 2015). In addition,

ethical leaders actively influence the ethical environment. Ethical leaders model and encourage ethical behaviour in subordinates by communicating their standards and using rewards as well as discipline to reinforce appropriate and less appropriate behaviour (Stouten, van Dijke & De Cremer, 2012). Therefore, ethical leaders have broad ethical awareness and concern for all the stakeholders, including their subordinates. In addition, leaders create an ethically friendly work environment for all employees, communicate ethical issues, serve as role models and put mechanism in place for the development of responsible employees (Manjunatha & Maqsud, 2013).

In the light of the foregoing, ethical leaders comprehend that they have to model credible and legitimate conduct for subordinates to emulate (Stouten, Van Dijke & De Cremer, 2012). Freeman and Stewart (2006) posit that ethical leaders set example for others and withstand temptations. Through modelling of (in)appropriate behaviour, approval, or sanctioning of unfair play, the emotional climate and the moral atmosphere that they create, leaders are a significant source of influence on the ethical performance of their subordinates (Yukhymenko-Lescroart, Brown & Paskus, 2014). As a result, ethical leaders preach what they practise and do not rely on a reactive approach for the enactment of the ethical conduct (Malik, *et al.,* 2016). Instead, ethical leaders create a moral leadership system that serves as a benchmark that holds others responsible for their actions and behaviour, as exemplified by the ethical leader (Almutairi, Alhussaini & Thuwaini, 2016).

Further, ethical leaders show strong leadership, serve others and even display an unceasing commitment towards upholding the ethical goals and obligations of their organisation (Almutairi, Alhussaini & Thuwaini, 2016). The most effective leaders empower their subordinates to follow the model of integrity. In order to influence their subordinates to emulate their behaviour, ethical leaders use their decision making and actions (Pushpa, 2012). Moreover, ethical leaders make their lives an example, making the world a better place (Werner, 2011; Pushpa, 2012). Ethical leaders ensure that they are attractive and legitimate in the eyes of their subordinates, due to the integrity and honesty that they demonstrate in their behaviour (Engelbrecht, Heine & Mahembe, 2017).

8.2.9 Succumbing to pressure to meet goals breeds unethical conduct

The study established that ethical leadership were supposed to be grounded in the central core of ethical principles that are unshaken by the dilemmas and other positions of difficulty. However, the current crop of leaders succumbs to the pressure from various stimuli. The weaknesses that some school principals display emanate from the desire to succeed, yet the conditions they find they find themselves in are extremely challenging. The challenging contexts that drive principals to do things they would not normally do include the pressure to succeed, to get ahead, to meet the deadlines and expectations determined by the Department of Education. Similarly, numerous researchers including Conger and Riggio (2007) have established that leaders are generally afraid of chaos and failure and that as a result they violate common codes of decency and good conduct.

8.2.10 Leaders' greed gives rise to unethical behaviour

This study established that leadership is a victim of greed that infested the majority of the school principals. It is not surprising, though, that unethical leadership is so heightened in the education sector, considering how the majority of the principals got into their positions, especially in township schools. The majority of the principals who demonstrate unethical leadership practices in their schools are the ones who were deployed by their unions on the basis of their activism in union activities. Moreover, some of these principals skip post levels from post level 1 to deputy principalship, if not principalship, without any reasonable management experience. They gain these positions for self-enrichment, since they know they are backed by their cronies/comrades in the event that any scandalous activity that has been committed surfaces. It was not surprising that the jobs for sex scandal did not yield any positive results (Harper & Masondo, 2014), yet an exorbitant amount of money was spent in trying to uproot unethical practices that infested the education sector. In some instances, principals of schools who are ethically inclined are either assassinated or directed to vacate positions for comrades.

The literature that I reviewed in Chapter Two corroborated the findings of this study that unethical leaders put their personal interests first, fail to show private virtues such as courage and temperance and put their narrow selfish interest before of the larger group. Further some principals are driven by greed in their endeavours, which encourages dishonesty, blinds them to the needs of others, and focuses attention on selfish interests rather than the greater good

(Conger & Riggio, 2007). These unethical school principals know exactly what they are doing and why, which is an attempt to satisfy their narrow selfish-interest, personal gain, ambition and downright greed (Manjunatha & Maqsud, 2013). Unethical conduct distorts leaders' character and undermines human value (Manala, 2014). Dorasamy (2010) attributes greed to lack of personal ethics and lack of concern for the collective good.

8.2.11 Ethical leaders focus on team building

There was a consensus amongst the participants that team building was essential for the attainment of organisational goals. It appeared that, when the leader places more focus on teamwork, members of the team learn the strengths and the weaknesses of their colleagues and, as a result, find ways and means to complement each other in order to realise the organisational goals. The purpose of team building is to create good working relations amongst members, even if they have vast personal interests. Working within a team helps the team members realise that, for effective realisation of the organisational goals, members need one another. It is essential, though, that the leader demonstrates interest in the organisational goals by promoting teamwork with the view to get all the members working together, listening to one another and helping each other in an attempt to serve the organisational goals. The employees look up to their leader for the direction, therefore the leader shows a positive work ethic. As a result, the leader's positive attitude encourages and motivates the followers to commit themselves in working for the leaders and the organisation. Most importantly, the school principals need to be mindful of how they communicate with their subordinates, make decisions and look after the interest of their subordinates.

In addition, the leader gets more commitment from the team members if his/her attitude is positive, likeable, polite, generous, and handle mistakes positively, and fairly, rather than otherwise (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). As a result, the success of the organisation depends greatly on the leader's attitude, and an ethical leader has to accentuate teamwork with the subordinates and promote a team spirit by appreciating the importance of every employee as part of the team (Pushpa, 2012). The importance of teamwork, as expressed by Mr Mnguni, the Principal of, principal of Intuthuko Secondary School, vividly shows the role that principals need to play in entrenching teamwork among members. When the leader is adhering to ethics, he/she works towards creating a teamwork environment for the employees, which helps cementing their commitment in working towards the same goal, thus yielding good

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organisational outcomes. Principals' enforcement of team building is good because it motivates employees to genuinely collaborate with each other, with the view to realise organisational goals. When decisions are made and the interests of the organisation are put first, conflicts are eliminated.

Numerous researchers arrived at similar findings that teamwork is the essential organ for organisation to succeed. Teamwork is essential for school principals in their endeavours to build and implement a school professional culture. Since the school exists mainly for the moulding of learners' bright future, teamwork offers educators with opportunity to share information about the learners as well as about teaching and learning, thus educators becoming more effective in executing their duties (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). Through teamwork, the unlocking of resources and the garnering of employees' support of the employees in the realisation of organisational goals becomes much easier for the school principals. Forging teamwork makes team members realise that their weaknesses can be complemented by their fellow colleagues, thus they strive to support one another whenever the need arises.

Viewed from the perspective of Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership: African Humanism theory, it seems that school principals as heads of their institutions were aware that the success of any organisation was dependent on the concerted effort of all stakeholders. Khoza (2011) corroborates the notion that, when the school principal stands alone, he or she is bound to fail as the educators are likely to withdraw their support and feel alienated in the school processes. The importance of teamwork has been emphasised in innumerable African axioms; for example, in Ghana they say: "a tree cannot survive a storm on its own" through this axiom the emphases is on the importance of working as a team for the purposes of achieving the common good. In IsiZulu, "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" translated as "a person is a person because other people" is used to underscore the same notion of teamwork. In a nutshell, Khoza (2011) avers that the best way to underscore the relationship between a principal and educators can be expressed through axioms. It is worth noting Mangena's assertion (Mangena, 2012) that individualism is chastised in African cultures because the African culture holds the view that justice resides with the community as opposed to individualism. In most schools there is an abundance of evidence that school principals are shifting their mental attitudes towards democratic principles where educators are encouraged to work as teams and made aware that the success of the organisation is dependent on teamwork among staff members. The foregoing resides well with another African axiom that says: "one finger cannot pick up the grain". The

principals and educators understand that *ubuntu* is about solidarity and inter-dependence, which makes the functioning of schools much better; over and above that, *ubuntu* driven leadership eliminates or reduces the conflicts in the workplace.

8.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and evaluatively analysed the various key themes that emerged from the findings. These themes were significant in that I believe they directly respond to the research objectives and questions of the study. The following chapter explores the lessons learnt, the recommendations, the contribution to knowledge and the implications for further research.

CHAPTER NINE

REFLECTIVE LESSONS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

9.1 Introduction

The previous chapter was dedicated to the presentation and analysis of the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data. Having closely analysed the data presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven and also the key themes that emerged and were presented in Chapter Eight, this chapter presents a reflective summary of the lessons learned, establishes the findings related to each research questions, draws conclusions from the findings, makes recommendations for further study and sets out its contribution to knowledge and implications for further research on ethical leadership practices in multiple challenging township school contexts with multiple challenges.

9.2 Reflective lessons learned from the study

The primary objective of the study was to explore the ethical leadership of school principals and teachers in township contexts with multiple challenges. This study adopted qualitative enquiry to solicit a deeper understanding of the participants' views regarding ethical leadership. The study revealed a myriad of lessons to be learnt. The majority of the participants claimed that township schools' principals understand ethics and ethical leadership, mentioning that ethical leaders work with vision and mission that was collaboratively constructed. Moreover, the school principals continue to communicate the message of ethics through the actions and interactions of staff members. Role modelling emerged as the significant other required trait for leaders to effectively achieve the organisational goals. Despite the understanding that school principals need to act as ethical role models in their schools for educators and other employees to emulate, in reality, the majority of the school principals seemed not to demonstrate this much-needed trait. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two and the data analysed show that learning happens through observation. The study further revealed that the consequences of unethical leadership that continued to rock some of the township schools led to their dysfunctionality, despite school principals' profound knowledge of ethics and the fact that their schools are decorated with detailed codes of ethics that are meant to guide the conduct of all staff members. The persistence of unethical behaviour in township schools was an indication

that some school principals are hypocrites since they do not practise what they preached. In essence, lack of honesty and integrity among some township school principals undermined the aspirations of the community that had those schools as their only beacon of hope, yet school principals opted to serve their own personal interest at the expense of poor communities. The study demonstrated that collaboration was the essential toolkit for the success of ethical leadership. Collaboration requires that members trust one another and freely communicate their ideas. It was not surprising that collaboration and teamwork among educators and school management teams also emerged as significant lessons with positive end-results when correctly applied. The majority of participants spoke the same language that teamwork was essential, and the school documents corroborated their voices. However, the impact of the team building activities is hardly demonstrated by the educators in the staffroom, as they were mostly found seating in separate groups. Worse, those groups tend to despise their counterparts in other groups. The study demonstrated that schools' principals need to play a significant role to create a favourable environment for teamwork and for the collaboration of staff members towards the success in attaining the organisational goals.

Further, the study revealed that the effectiveness of collaboration is dependent on members of the school management team and educators, as well as other stakeholders, coming together often times to share ideas and develop a common understanding of organisational goals, thus collectively arriving at best ways in which those goals can be attained. Most participants vehemently agreed that the Department of Education and SACE are not doing enough in inculcating ethics amongst school principals and educators. Hence, unethical practices thrive in some township schools, as at times school principals and educators engage in unethical activities, not knowing that their actions were unethical. It is though worth noting that this study has demonstrated that, most often, school principals engage in unethical practices because they are taking advantage of poor monitoring and the lack of harsh consequences in those cases where one has been caught involved in unethical practices.

In contrast, the study has revealed that schools that are led by ethical school principals tend to be organised and more effective in respect of carrying out their mandate. The code of ethics is not viewed as the preserve of the principal but as being for the entire school community. The school principals understand that they are accountable even to the community where their schools were situated.

The literature in Chapter Two emphasised the impact of ethical leadership in schools. The considerable literature used in this study demonstrates that no school principal can run the school by herself or himself alone, owing to the complexity and challenges face by various stakeholders in township schools (Witten, 2017).Therefore, through collaboration school principals can achieve school objectives and goals that are much bigger and broader than that of any individual in the school (Witten 2017). There are numerous lessons that have been learnt from the study.

Further, the study revealed that in-service training is the essential tool in curbing unethical behaviour among township schools' principals, yet the Department of Education is not doing enough. Most participants echoed the same sentiments regarding the dearth of training for school principals on ethics matters. For the township schools' principals to be effective in executing their instructional leadership in schools and not engaging in unethical leadership, the Department of Education and South Africa Council for Educators (SACE) need to enforce in-service training to curb the unethical conduct of teachers. That said, some scholars, including Jansen (2016), state that in-service training cannot bridge the gap between where educators and school principals are and where they should be regarding ethics and ethical leadership. Therefore, in-service training has to be coupled with proper ethics compliance monitoring. It is worth noting, though, that monitoring emerged as one of the major challenges that lead to schools becoming a fertile ground for unethical practices. I believe that striking a balance between in-service training and the monitoring of ethics in schools could positively influence the mind-set of school principals to act ethically.

9.3 Conclusions

As a result of the findings presented in Chapters 5-7 and key themes in Chapter 8, this study yielded the following conclusions:

The school principals and post level 1 educators in this study had a profound understanding of ethics and ethical leadership. Ethical leadership was very much desired, considering the high levels of unethical behaviour that were obtaining in schools. However, though school principals and post level 1 educators are committed in instilling ethical behaviour amongst learners and even among their colleagues, this somehow proves to be a mammoth task. Moreover, fearing for their lives and victimisation, school principals and post level 1 educators could not report infractions that are happening right under their noses. Hence, the need was emphasised for

creating appropriate platforms for whistle blowers to register unethical behaviours/practices, without fearing for their lives and becoming victims of the circumstances. The impact of unethical practices of some school principals and post level 1 educators have had had dire consequences in the functionality of schools. As a result of schools' dysfunctionality caused by unethical practices, the need for in-service training becomes so much pronounced / imperative. In addition, collaboration between the Department of Basic Education and universities is advocated as one of the best solutions to mitigating the scourge of unethical practices. In essence, collaboration is seen as fundamentally significant in fostering unity and trust within organisations thus yielding organisational success. Likewise, teamwork emerged as the significant organ for the forging unity and trust among stakeholders. However, the success of teamwork was mainly attributed by participants to the commitment of leadership and management of the school.

Discouraging was the failure of the Department of Basic Education and SACE as the watchdog for educator conduct and welfare to make a positive impact in developing programmes to educate both school principals and post level 1 educators about ethics and ethical leadership. A code of ethics and a school vision and mission statement are suggested as essential instruments, mainly for school principals to mitigate the infractions thriving in their organisations. However, if not communicated to the relevant stakeholders and enforced, these are as good as non-existent, so clear communication is fundamentally vital for school effectiveness. Role modelling is suggested as the fundamental component of ethical leadership. To gain the respect and support of their subordinates, school principals and post level 1 educators need to demonstrate propriety, if their subordinates are to reciprocate.

9.4 Recommendations

This segment of the thesis presents and discusses the recommendations which are made, based on the research questions, findings and the lessons of the study.

9.4.1 Participants' conceptualisation of ethical leadership

This study has established that school principals have considerable understanding of ethics and ethical leadership. It became clear that there is a close link between the two, as ethics are the building blocks of ethical leadership and knowledge of ethics shapes the leader's ability to differentiate between right and wrong. Knowledge of ethics forms the essential toolkit for

ethical leadership, which is underpinned by credibility, honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, compassion, justice and fairness to mention a few. Thus, ethics and ethical leadership are recommended to be the guiding compass for school principals and for the creation of an ethical climate in schools. Further, township school principals need to understand that, through their credible leadership, they directly influence the behaviour of the educators and other employees at school, while at the same time setting a tone for the expected kind of behaviour they wish to inform the school culture (Heres & Lasthuizen, 2010; Engelbrecht, Heine, & Mahembe, 2016). Therefore, township school principals are recommended to demonstrate integrity to be trusted and to gain confidence of their subordinates. An ethically credible and caring leader is essential in order to be able to influence educators and other employees through ethical forces, which are honesty, trust, consideration and fairness (Ul-Aabdeen, Khan, Khan, Farooq, Salman, & Rizwan, 2016). The advantage of ethics is that it inculcates trust amongst employees in the organisation, thus creating a positive work climate.

School principals' "fair and caring treatment and open communication signal trust that subordinates are likely to reciprocate" (Engelbrecht, Heine & Mahembe, 2017, p. 370.) The foregoing is realised because school principals conform to moral principles, which is about understanding the difference between right and wrong. Further, Eranil and Özbilen (2017) state that the creation of a positive working environment harnesses the quality of work done, as it increases employees' job satisfaction levels. Moreover, the morale and organisational commitment get rekindled due to the positive organisational climate. The significance of fairness in leadership is that employees feel valued and appreciated. When the leader is fair, is also transparent because, when taking decisions, other members need to know how the decision was taken. Fairness and transparency cement the positive relationship between the leader and the follower. In addition, fairness and transparency eliminate the room for unnecessary conflicts and employees avoid infractions that could dilute a positive work climate.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, ethical leadership calls for the school principals to craft codes of ethics and ensure that they communicate them well to the staff members. In the crafting process, they need to involve their subordinates. Eranil and Özbilen (2017) posit that ethical school principals provide the creation of a productive learning environment and are in constant communication with their subordinates, with the view to exchange ideas. They further (Eranil & Özbilen, 2017) posit that, based on ethical principles in their conduct, ethical school principals treat their staff members with respect and fairly. The only best way through which

school principals can thwart the risk of unethical behaviours is by providing ethical leadership, safeguarding and promoting moral values. This is significant, as without ethical leadership school's success and its survival are at stake (Mihelič, Lipičnik, & Tekavčič, 2010).

Likewise, the literature presented in this study showed that it is essential for the leaders to be ethical and demonstrate through their actions the need for the followers to emulate ethical leadership. The literature revealed that the cooperation of employees towards the realisation of the organisational goals is dependent on the leader's conduct. Eranil and Özbilen (2017) posit that the leader has to make the decisions that are morally right. They further posit that moral decisions strengthen organisational commitment by contributing to the development of ethical values that support truth, honesty, and loyalty within the organisation. This calls for school principals and educators to have a deeper understanding of ethics to be able to appropriately practise ethical leadership. Brown, Trevino and Harrison (2005) posit that school principals need to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner through their actions, interpersonal relationships and promotion of ethical conduct to staff members through communication. Good communication creates solid links between the leaders and subordinates, thus enabling a pleasurable work climate. Effective communication nourishes individual inspiration.

9.4.2 Participants' promotion of ethical leadership

One of the findings was that most of the participants view ethical leadership as essential and they feel that they have role to play in the promotion of ethical leadership. The post level one educators indicated that they include essential conversations with their learners on ethical conduct and even ensure that their behaviours were worth emulation by their learners. This study supports the notion of spreading ethical standards amongst the learners. It is common knowledge that learned behaviour at a young age is difficult to dislodge. Therefore, it is suggested that ethical leadership is taught to learners while still young so that they grow up having a full understanding of ethics. Mihelič, Lipičnik, and Tekavčič (2010) support the suggestion that ethical leadership values are learnt from watching leaders in action.

However, due to fear of victimisation when pointing out the unethical behaviour that are happening at school their role ends up being limited to promotion of ethical leaders among their learners, mainly by those who are class teachers. Therefore the Department of Education has to create proper platforms where ethical leadership cannot be viewed as the province not only

for school principals and departmental officials, but all employees of the Department of Education should be afforded with education where they are made aware that not acting against unethical practices is tantamount to being an accomplice.

9.4.3 Promotion of collaborative culture amongst schools

One of the findings of this study was that most participants were excited about the impact of the collaboration among staff members as it cements teamwork, which leads to school effectiveness and to unity among staff members. However, they felt that the scale of collaboration was confined to individual schools. Instead of schools working together, they viewed their neighbouring schools as their competitors and always wanted to out-perform them. This is evident in some township schools which are separated by a fence, yet their grade 12 academic performance /achievement is so vastly apart. In addition, the learners leave school A, which is not academically well performing, for school B, where learner academic achievements are cherished. It is suggested that to curb competition amongst schools in the same vicinity, the Department of Education has to foster compulsory partnerships or collaboration amongst schools, where those school principals who demonstrate high ethical leadership skills are utilised to mentor school principals of dysfunctional schools.

Furthermore, the Department of Education needs to put emphasis on collaboration among schools, in order to support those school principals who are not performing well and lack ethical culture. PLCs are symptomatic of *ubuntu (Department of Education, 2001)*. Nzimakwe (2014) states that *ubuntu* is about collectivism and relationships rather than about material things; it thus includes the ownership of opportunities, responsibilities and challenges. In addition, Nzimakwe (2014) states that, in the sphere of work, individual creativity and solidarity of co-operation and common ownership go hand in hand. So, it is suggested that, in schools where dearth of ethical culture appears to be the order of the day, collaboration should be enforced with the view to empower the school principal. In this manner the occurrence of unethical practices in township schools can be reduced significantly.

9.4.4 Inculcate role modelling

Good school principals play a significant role in promoting ethics in their schools though their actions. Ethical school principals know their responsibility for promoting ethical values, fully understand their core values and are courageous to live according to their values in their

workplaces, in service of the common good. Tyler (2014) states that school leadership has become a daunting challenge for most talented school principals, who are under continuous pressure to achieve high expectations for improved academic improvements, regardless of the contextual factors. Despite multiple challenges in the contexts that principals find themselves in, they are expected to demonstrate leadership that embraces a plethora of moral qualities, including honesty, integrity, reliability, modesty, trustworthiness, respect, conscientiousness and fairness, amongst others (Mohiuddin & Hossain, 2016). In addition, school principals are expected to provide their staff members vision, motivation, inspiration, transparency, trust, ethical standards and intellectual stimulation to realise organisational goals (Yozgat & Mesekiran, 2016).Yet school principals have to deal with a substantial decrease in resources and funding that hinders their focus in meeting the expectations of the community they are serving. Therefore, there should be incentives for quality performance to motivate ethical leaders and infractions should be sanctioned severely.

When the pressure of soliciting funds and replenishing the school resources are lifted from the school principals, they can make a meaningful focus on the promotion of ethical standards through modelling the behaviour. It suggests that the Department of Education needs to support school principals with the provision of adequate resources, as they are faced with new challenges of balancing local, national, and global norms and moral as well as ethical values in the process of education (Gluchmanova, 2015). The literature explored in Chapter Two revealed that there is a clear indication that ethical standards in schools are compromised by unethical role modelling of some school principals, as educators often emulate the behaviour of their principal at school (Sing & Twalo, 2015). Weaver (2007) correctly states that there is a need for the role modelling of ethical behaviour by school principals, since most lessons are learnt by observing and imitating role models (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2008). It is also worth noting Bandura's (1977) claim that leaders influence their subordinates through modelling and that employees learn their ways by observing their leader's behaviour and its consequences. Sadly, even unethical behaviour of the leader can be emulated, resulting in unethical workplace. This study has established that ethical leaders allow their subordinates to contribute their idea in the decision-making processes and listen to their ideas and concerns. The study further suggests that, when employees are included in the decision making, they respect and trust their leader and such behaviour is reciprocated.

9.4.5 Foster partnerships with universities for ethics training

This study has noted the dearth or inadequacy of in-service training with respect to ethical leadership. Most participants felt that there was not enough effort dedicated to enhancing ethical leadership amongst school principals, in particular. Despite the view that the human species is not naturally unethical, but temptation engulfs them, therefore there is a need to provide intense in-service training for those who are already in the trenches. Pushpa (2012) stresses the significance of creating leaders for an organisation's sustainable future by providing ethics education to future leaders (in this case, students). Some scholars are in agreement that in-service training sometimes cannot change the behaviour of unethical person. Kocabas and Karakose (2009) posit that training and code of ethics, on their own, cannot guarantee ethical practice for the challenges faced by township schools. However, they note that in-service training can have some positive impact since it can stop people from doing something unethical, since it is then known by everyone that an act is unethical. Moreover, fear of being caught and the consequences thereof can positively turn around behaviour.

Based on the foregoing, the study recommends that in-service training should be prioritised and be done continuously so that is internalised by all employees. Another concern that the literature revealed regarding ethics training was the question of whose ethics should be thought at the universities or institutions of higher learning (African or Western values, for example). Since the majority of scholars agree on what constitutes ethics or moral principles, curriculum on ethics training should be crafted on the bases of those principles which I have highlighted in the previous discussion. The literature reviewed also established that sometimes employees engage in unethical activities because they could not see anything wrong with their actions. Gilson (2005) acknowledges that the average person is not grossly unethical, but often tempted and sometimes confused by what appears to be a virtuous path. Therefore, this study suggests that, if ethical leadership is to be promoted and any unnecessary infractions in the school thwarted, all the employees are bound to clearly know those ethical standards of an organisation that can make them recognise the wrongdoing and act on it.

In order to mitigate the risk of employees engaging in unethical practices and claiming that the issues are blurred, making unclear where there was misconduct in their action, ethics education can become the best solution, as all key elements of unethical behaviours will be unpacked. Ethics training/ education needs to encompass a code of ethics and formulation of the school vision. Some township school principals, instead of formulating their own codes of ethics and

visions that speak to their contextual factors, opt to buy fancy ones for compliance purposes, when the IQMS is conducted. This is essentially important drawing from Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model which advocates that *ubuntu* is a pivotal standard of moral conduct.

9.4.6 Department of Education should review procurement procedures

The way procurement procedures are done appeared to be a challenge for the majority of the participants. The powers are given to school principals and their school governing bodies to invite bidders. The literature in this study also suggests that another challenge in some township schools is that members of the school governing bodies are illiterate (Mncube and Mafora, 2013), which make it easier for school principals to collude with the service providers in embezzling school funds. The Department of Education is fully aware that there is serious corruption going on in the Department, yet no action is seen to be initiated to fight this scourge of corruption. Corruption Watch Report (2014) revealed that, in 2012 alone, about six hundred (600) allegations of school corrupt activities reached their attention. Among the corrupt activities reported were procurement practices, which are done by Department officials and school principals, yet the system operates the same as if there is nothing wrong happening. This study suggests that the Department of Education should out-source the procurement process and also ensure that finance auditors are appointed by the Provincial Finance Office. Where infractions are detected, sanctions should be implemented and be published for others to draw lessons from.

It is said that the Department of Education is losing a lot of money through school principals' corrupt practices. As Modisaotsile (2012) states, some school principals gang up with service providers and inflate prices for stock requisitions, thus corruptly enriching themselves. Sadly, the unethical actions of some school principals deprive learners of the opportunity to attain quality education. As Van der Berg (2002) argues, the efforts of Government to improve the standard of education by injecting more money is yielding negative fruits as the state of learning in township schools remains abysmal. It is suggested that the departmental officials should establish the schools' needs, working with school governing bodies and heads of various committees such as School Infrastructure Maintenance Committee, School Assessment Integrity Committee, SGB treasurer who is the chairperson of the finance committee of the governing bodies to find quotations and forward to an independent panel of adjudicators to decide who gets the tender. The monitoring of the project has to be throughout the duration of

the project and reports will have to be compiled and communicated to the Head of the Department of Education.

9.4.7 Visibility of department officials in combating unethical behaviours

The literature reviewed concurred with the views of participants, that some township school principals use their power and authority for their own personal gain. Therefore, the power of the school principals should be solely in managing school affairs in relation to instructional leadership and should not be involved in the finances of the school. The educators showed great concern about how other male teacher prey on female learners taking advantage of them in their quagmire of poverty. It is suggested that the Department of Education should hire/employ social workers who can have sessions with learners where they conduct interviews and listen to their concerns in schools. The level of preying on learners could drastically drop as educator will fear to lose their jobs.

The study also established that the unethical behaviour among some school principals was triggered in part by pressure to achieve the expectations of the Department of Education and the school community. While the Department exerted pressure mainly for high school principals to produce academic results above set threshold, there is a failure to monitor that results are justly obtained. As a result, some school principals take advantage and infringe on the ethics principles to meet the academic standards demanded by the Department of Education. It is recommended that the Department of Education provides support to school principals in terms of well qualified teachers to teach the subjects. Moreover, the Department of Education has to cut down on the paperwork that school principals need to fill before they can access a substitute educator in cases where a permanently employed educator has to be away for unforeseen reasons, regardless of the duration. There is a major need to monitor how assessment is done. School principals should not be chief invigilators in their schools as some school principals get tempted to advise their teachers to help learners with answer.

Similarly, Chetini and Shindika, Pushpa, (2012), and Trevino and Brown (2004) recommend that school principals and educators need to be subjected to extensive ethics training even when they do things right because they are not immune to succumb to pressures from their workplace. They further recommend that proper ethics education can bring awareness and revive the sense of moral obligation and personal responsibility within the school. The latter recommendation

is supported by Boes (2015), who states that education about ethical behaviour gets school principals and educators less naive about unethical behaviour and helps them understand what constitutes unethical acts.

9.4.8 Create avenues for reporting unethical behaviours

This study found out that school principals have huge opportunities at their disposal to exploit school finances. School principals are entrusted with the responsibility to handle school finances in conjunction with their school governing bodies, yet no proper training in provided to them regarding how to handle the school fees. Some school principals have difficulty in handling their personal financial affairs, yet they do not hold back from managing their school financial matter. As a result, conflicts of interest emerge, and they become arrogant and overpower members of the governing body, especially when they are illiterate. The Department of Education has the directorate that is responsible for training governing bodies on financial matters and on the consequences, in those instances where money was not properly spent. However, this directorate is short-staffed and as a result is unable to effectively reach to all schools to peruse documents and supporting evidence to prove how schools spend the money. It is therefore recommended that, before school principals can be afforded with the right to be signatories, they must undergo screening of their ability to manage their personal financial affairs. In addition, the Department of Education must hire more personnel to ensure that education is extended to all SGBs and even community members. Ordinary community members do not know that they have a right to know how school finances are used, so the Department of Education needs to extend education to members of the community.

Another challenge that emerged from the voices of the participants pertained to lack of avenues where they can securely register any unethical act that they observe or hear about. The existing platforms were criticised for failing to protect the anonymity of whistle blowers, and also feedback regarding the reported case either took long time to be communicated or never communicated at all. Based on the latter experiences, whistle blowers become unwilling to report instances of unethical behaviour because they fear for their lives and, even if they report, they do not find any joy of knowing about the outcomes. Corruption Watch does make attempts to fight against corrupt activities. However, there are many reports that Corruption Watch receives where thorough investigations need to be conducted, yet it does not have enough personnel to carry out the task. The South African Council for Educators has a similar mandate

to guide the conduct of educators, including school principals, however it appears as if is struggling to win the battle of corruption taking place in schools. It recommended that SAPS should be utilised in investigating infractions taking place in schools. Corruption Watch should also have published the reports of successfully investigated cases and the sanctions handed down, for schools to know and to caution those who may still think of engaging in such conduct.

9.4.9 Identification and communicating causes of unethical behaviours

Failure to identify and deal with ethical behaviours at the early stage was identified as a serious problem that affected the progress in some township schools. Therefore the Department of Education, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, SACE and unions should have viable programmes to address the embezzlement of school finances, tone done the pressure that the Department of Education puts on school principals and teachers to produce positive academic results, which most participants attributed rather to lack of interest by parents in the education of their children.

9.4.10 Enforce accountability and consequence management to address unethical behaviour

This study also found out that the Department of Education and SACE were not doing enough to hold culprits of unethical behaviour accountable and this seems to be exacerbating the level of corruption among some school principals. The perpetual occurrence of corrupt acts in school may be interpreted as the failure of the Department and SACE to act with conviction against unethical behaviours. This study recommends that the Department needs to review its policies and ensure that policies are adhered to through proper monitoring. The Department of Education should also consider the use of modern technology to hold employees accountable. The Department of Education developed a programme called the South African Schools Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS) in early 2000s that enabled them to monitor schools' functionality through networked computer system. The system allows the National Department of Education to monitor the functionality of schools ranging from learners and educators' attendance to academic performance. Albeit the Department of Education is able to monitor what is happening in schools, no harsh action is taken against school principals of those schools where the levels of absenteeism among learners and teachers are high/ rife. I therefore recommend that the Department of Education should provide school principals and teachers with extensive training in leadership and management to up-skill them. After re-

skilling them, the Department should hold the school principals and teachers accountable by demotion when they persist in acting against the Department's code of acceptable behaviour. SACE has introduced a points system where school principals and teachers have to register and get certain points over a three-year cycle.

However, even today there are educators who have not registered, and SACE is supposed to have a monitoring system that provides a warning if some educators are not compliant. I therefore suggest that SACE needs to work closely with the district offices, particularly the circuit managers, to ensure that all school principals are compliant. The Department of Education and SACE should attempt to work with teacher union leaders as well, to emphasise the importance acting ethically. Moreover, the teacher unions should be discouraged from representing their members when charged for undermining ethical principles. This is because the study found that some school principals and educators engage in unethical behaviour with the knowledge that their unions will represent them, whilst knowing very well that they acted against the professional ethics code. Other school principals and educators engage in unethical and corrupt activities because they know that not all that is ethical is legal, and not all that is unethical is illegal. Therefore, the Department of Education and SACE need to put more emphasis on the *ubuntu* philosophy to guide the behaviour of educators.

9.5 Contribution to knowledge

This study was conducted with school principals and educators in challenging township school contexts. The aim of the study was to explore both the conceptualisation and practices of township school principals and education of ethical leadership in multiply-challenging township contexts. This section advances an argument for the contribution of this study to the already existing body of knowledge; the following claims are put forward:

9.5.1 Contribution to ethical leadership in township contexts that have multiple challenges

The phenomenon of the collapse of ethical leadership was raised in Chapter two. However, the emphasis of that was largely on ethical leadership in the context of the corporate world. Thomas, Schermerhorn, and Dienhart (2004); Perks and Smith (2008); Belle and Cantarelli (2017); Pushpa (2012), Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris and Zivnuska (2010); Bello (2012); Boes (2015) Ciulla, 2006) and Trevino and Brown (2004) respectively report in full on the collapse

of ethics in the business sector. It was further noted that there are some previous studies that have been conducted in the field of education such as that of Almutairi, Alhussaini and Thuwaini (2016); Özan, Ozdemir and Yirci (2017) and Tyler (2014). These focus on ethical leadership emanating from the need to produce quality academic results and focus on the impact of technology. Özan, Ozdemir and Yirci (2017) attribute the dwindling of ethical standards in various sectors, including education, to globalisation and the development of communication technology. The stakeholders expect leaders to make ethical decisions and behave ethically when dealing with conflicts in the workplace (Özan, Ozdemir, & Yirci, 2017). My findings should expand the knowledge of the phenomenon of ethical leadership since it tackles the subject from a different perspective of that of the previous researchers.

Despite Zulu *et al.* (2019) identifying multiple-challenging contexts, his study is not concerned with leadership. Conducting the study of this nature occurred at the most relevant time, as South African schools are engulfed by a litany of unethical practices, notably amongst which is violence. Numerous reports revealed that learners fight with their educators and at times even kill them. The Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, in 2018 even convened a symposium with the view to solicit solutions to mitigate the dearth of ethics in schools. Therefore, this study should add knowledge in the continuing debate about what can be done to eliminate the scourge of unethical behaviours in schools. My study findings should deposit some insight on how ethical leadership can be restored in township contexts that have multiple challenges. It is worth noting, though, that the collapse of ethics is becoming a ubiqui**t**ous issue as, in recent times, the former model C schools are also experiencing a sharp decline in ethics (Modisaotsile, 2012). The community members are perpetuating the decline as they vandalise schools and loot the school resources.

9.5.2 Contribution to policy and practice

The findings of this study are significant for both the Department of Basic Education and the South African Council for Educators (SACE), in addressing the ascending level of unethical behaviours in schools among school principals and educators. SACE is contemplating effecting some amendments in the code of professional ethics, for educators to effectively fight unethical practices that are reported to be happening in schools. The primary concern is the scepticism among witnesses and victims in continuing with the case and testifying, after the culprit or his/her friends have persuaded either parents or victims to accept the bribe and cancel the case.

The findings of this study acknowledge the importance of policy and practice in ensuring that all the stakeholders understand what is expected of them within the organisation. However, the findings put emphasis on collaboration in the decision-making process for the stakeholders to have ownership of the policy. The findings revealed that the effectiveness of the subordinates is dependent on the inclusive approach of the leader in the decision-making process and ensuring that there is communication of the policy or code of conduct.

The findings indicated that ethical leaders value the interests of their subordinates, hence they involve them in decision-making processes that lead to high motivation and increased commitment to the realisation of organisational goals (McKinnon, 2008; Moreno, 2010; Meylahn & Musiyambiri, 2017). In the presence of clear policies, there is no room for school principals and educators to engage in something unethical by manipulating the discourse, for example, in arguing that, sometimes, unethical conduct may not be illegal (Norman, 2012). School principals should have a clear school vision and mission, and code of conduct for employees that is ethics complaint. SACE should, as well, make the necessary amendments for stakeholders to know their jurisdiction of behaviour. The findings revealed that the knowledge of participants regarding ethical leadership was vast. The majority of the participants underscored the importance of a code of ethics for the smooth functioning of the organisation. The findings emphasised the significance of a shared vision and mission for compliance and for maintaining trust and respect. Most importantly, when there is a policy in place, leaders are more prone to be fair in their decision-making processes.

9.5.3 Methodological contribution

This study used a qualitative multiple case study design, which was used in conjunction with other methods for triangulation to ensure trustworthiness in exploring the phenomenon of ethical leadership in township schools. The foregoing was the most pivotal methodological contributor to the study. This is importantly so, because the use of qualitative research gave credibility to this research since it is the most suitable means for exploring and understanding the meanings that individuals give to social or human problems. The foregoing essentially allows the researcher to make interpretation to produce meaning from the generated data (Creswell, 2009; Bellamy, 2012). This study should further offer a valuable contribution regarding the understanding, exploring, discovering and clarifying of situations, perceptions, beliefs and experiences shared by the participants about the phenomenon in question (Kumar,

2011). Moreover, a methodological contribution emerged through the ways of generating data and analysing and interpreting it to aid the researcher to formulate warranted descriptive and interpretive inferences (Bellamy, 2012). This study used the interpretivist paradigm. As earlier on stated in Chapter Four, the interpretivist paradigm satisfies the need for the researcher to interpret and make sense of the meanings of the people from their own contexts (Creswell, 2007). Data generated through the interpretivist paradigm is rich and credible as it provides multiple realities and seeks to comprehend the social situation from the perspective of those who directly experience it. Influenced by Denzin and Lincoln's (2003) assertion that all research is interpretive and guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood, and by Creswell's (2007) interpretive inquiry, the researcher made an interpretation of how and what he/she hears or sees, which offered the researcher the opportunity to generate data that is rich and of high quality, which is representative of the participants' perspectives and can be used for triangulation. In essence, I got to understand the perceptions of the participants and their feelings about unethical leadership and its impact in the functionality of schools. Creswell's (2009) assertion that meaning are varied and multiple, leading to the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories, is essential in stimulating the researcher to be broad-minded in working with the generated data. This is more importantly because interpretive practice provides a surfeit of data for the researcher to artistically and or politically interpret, in order to make sense of the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

In the quest to understand the participants' world, semi-structured interviews became the most relevant means since they allow the researcher to probe the participants for better understanding of the participants' responses. As a result, I interviewed the participants to make sense of their world, and experiences they have in their world as (Merriam, 2009) suggests. I used document reviews to compensate the shortcomings of the interviews and provided a juxtaposition for triangulation purposes to give credibility and confirmability to the findings of the study. Hence the findings from semi-structured interviews and document reviews aided me to compare and contrast the findings. I was also influenced by the fact that all schools keep records of all the incidents occurring at school as well as of policies that guide employees and learners' conduct. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) refer to the foregoing assertion as "fitness for purpose". In addition, I used TerreBlanche, Durrheim and Kelly's (2006) thematic or categorising analysis, underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm, to develop themes and sub-themes according to the two sets of the study participants. Adopting this thematic analysis aided in strengthening the

research and having a profound understanding of the participants' perceptions of their lived experiences. In sum, the use of varied sources to triangulate eliminated the room for criticism and instead offered the study credibility.

9.5.4 Theoretical contribution

This study was foregrounded on two major theories namely Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) multiple ethical paradigm model and Khoza's (2011) Attuned leadership: African Humanism as Compass. Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership accentuates *ubuntu* principles which include but are not limited to inclusivity, compassion, humanness, morality and propriety. These two models were selected to complement each other where one had a shortcoming. These models offered extensive worthwhile findings regarding what constitutes ethical leadership practices. Moreover, they demonstrated what leaders can do to create a healthy organisational climate, by improving communication, developing strategies to get others actively involved, allowing different views to flouring without prejudice, and, most importantly, promoting inclusivity and creating a code to guide behaviour in schools, as organisations of learning and teaching. Noting the role of Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) multiple ethical model in this study, which promotes the ethic of care, justice, critique and profession, the study offers tools to leaders for ethical leadership. Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) multiple model is effectively complemented by Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership: African Humanism as Compass. This is an African philosophy that advocates the significance of *ubuntu,* which entails being, humanness, individualism, compassion and moral necessity in leading organisations efficiently. It is worth noting that these models complemented each other regarding ethical leadership. In essence, these models were a perfect fit for strengthening the quality of the findings.

Concerning the theme, participants' conceptualisations of ethical leadership, I used both models. Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) multiple model underscores the importance of justice as a legal principle, which is essential in treating others fairly and consistently within the organisation. Further, these models underscore the importance of collaboration and treating others in a carrying manner. The importance of collaboration is emphasised in both these models. This suggests that ethical leaders should be inclusive in their decision-making and should prioritise subordinates' welfare. The ethic of profession encourages leaders to formulate policies that are inclusive of subordinates' ethics and of the community. Both models encourage leaders to benefit learners in the school environment. Compassion and caring are significant

features of ethical leadership that both theories promote, for effective and efficient organisations. Subordinates need to be valued and allowed to make their contribution. For the theme of role modelling, the ethic of profession is essential, in that leaders have to demonstrate the high moral character of both the profession and the professional for others to emulate.

Theme two emphasised the significance of fairness, trust and just conduct, which both theories advocate for leaders to manifest in their practices for the benefit of their organisations. The ethic of justice advocates that leadership should be informed by a desire for social justice, and fair management of the interests of all members within the organisation. Therefore, for leaders to be good exemplars to their subordinates, they need to be fair, just and honest when making the decisions and conduct. The theme of fostering partnerships resonates with Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership, since individualism is discouraged while collectivism is promoted. This philosophy of attuned leadership projects *ubuntu* as the beacon of collective existence, yet it also acknowledges that the individual is an essential organ of the broader community, hence is free to put forward his/her views, perceptions and emotions etc., to expand the social pool of knowledge. Mangena (2012) reiterates that, through communication, elders manage to bring about a common moral position for the community. Attuned leadership reminds leaders to reflect on and empathise with their subordinates, as they look up to them for direction. Moreover, it reminds leaders that the success of any organisation is dependent on a shared vision and common purpose.

Therefore, leaders ought to know that they have a responsibility to fulfil the hopes and be the champions of their subordinates. Thus leaders need to demonstrate during review of procurement procedures the importance of collectivism, whereby stakeholders are recognised to make submissions towards policy changes and innovations. The attuned leadership model suggests that trust concretises the relationship between shareholders, customers, competitors and society at large. The importance of working together was strongly emphasised in the study as the participants repeatedly spoke about teamwork as a crucial contributor to organisational success. The latter assertion embraces what *ubuntu* advocates, which is collectivism. The findings suggest that conditions in the township schools could be improved should the school principals and educators subscribe to *ubuntu,* which is an African philosophy. The creation of avenues to report unethical behaviours, both models fit well, as the ethic of justice encourages people to work within the framework of justice which advocates that leaders should demonstrate deep concern for the welfare of the school community, meanwhile the ethic of care

contends that leaders should consider the consequences of their decisions and actions and should have a listening ear. Meanwhile *ubuntu* favours collectivism and human relationships over material things. In addition, leaders are encouraged to treat their subordinates with respect and make life more humane for subordinates (Nzimakwe, 2014). Suffice to say that the findings indicated the void of ethics which manifested itself in numerous ways in schools despite understanding of what constitutes ethics and ethical leadership. Promotion of *ubuntu* as a beacon of attuned leadership theory should be a solution to how some township schools are led and managed.

The findings show that Khoza's (2011) Attuned Leadership Model, coupled with Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) multiple model, could strongly revive ethics and ethical leadership to the benefit of learners and the government as the resources can be used for what they are meant to accomplish. Attuned leadership and the multiple model speak to caring and compassion, respectively, as essential in transforming the current dearth of ethics in some schools. As earlier on stated, that *ubuntu* is a beacon of collectivism, hence *ubuntu* is projected as collective shared experience and solidarity that significantly direct both organisational and human resource development (Khoza, 2011; Msila, 2014). The use of the attuned leadership model, which is fairly new in the field of research, offers an important dimension which can be an alternative option to the dominant Western theories. In the context of South Africa, *ubuntu* has a huge role to play considering the current unethical practices ranging from educators having intimate relationship with their learners, to learners fighting with their educators. I believe it can also contribute in improving communication between schools and community members.

Having used these two models which cross-pollinate perfectly, I confidently argue that they have enhanced the authenticity and originality of this study. As Khoza (2011) asserts, *ubuntu* theory as an African philosophy had been challenged for its relevance due to among other reasons, the conduct of African leaders who demonstrate lack of interest in the welfare of others and cling onto power for their selfish and narrow interests. However, one swallow does not make a summer. Numerous other African leaders, such as the late President Mandela and retired Archbishop Tutu, have demonstrated the positive impact of *ubuntu* leadership in their behaviour. Hence, for this study both models proved to be relevant.

9.6 Implications for future research

This thesis used a qualitative approach to delve into the experiences of township school principals and post level 1 educators of six schools situated in township contexts that experience multiple deprivations. It is worth noting that, due to the size of schools researched, the results of this study cannot be generalised to all the township schools. However, there are some lessons that can be drawn from the results of this study that can be borrowed to deal with challenges in similar situations and conditions. This study's findings have shown that township school principals have a deep understanding of ethics and ethical leadership. The schools also have documents that demonstrate that indeed they were familiar with ethical leadership principles. However, some of the schools were found wanting in implementing all the wonderful vision and mission, and ethics codes that they have. This confirmed the assertion by some researchers that a code of ethics cannot on its own create an ethical environment; instead, the leaders of the institution should demonstrate and communicate what is contained in the documents. The implications for this study are that township school principals should not be overly excited by having great policies but need to strive to implement what is contained in the documents. School principals should include relevant stakeholders in the processes of formulating policies and codes of ethics. School principals need to be actively involved in the formulation of the ethics codes so that they can communicate it well to others and model the standards set in the code. School principals need to be democratic in order to be able to practise ethical leadership. Even the literature reviewed in Chapter Two emphasised the significance of ethics principles in cementing the relationship between the leader and the subordinates, thus creating trust and motivation amongst the subordinates in working with the leader.

Furthermore, this study established that trust significantly contributes to the promotion of collaboration and unity among subordinates in order to thwart conflict and promote unity. The findings of this study corroborate the view that staff collaboration is the essential element in promoting unity amongst staff member. Collaboration can be linked to teamwork, as both are significant in establishing employees' cohesion and unity in working towards the common good. The implications for the study are that, when the school principals do not forge collaboration in their schools, they subject themselves to a chaotic and dysfunctional unhealthy working climate. School principals need to be the first to accept and promote unity in their schools by ensuring that they are transparent and treat their subordinates fairly and equally. The same is applicable to post level 1 educators when they work with their learners. School principals need to initiate team-building activities and to ensure that they take part in those

activities. It is common knowledge that some schools have more than one staffroom, one of which was created as a result of sour relationships among post level 1 educators, and that school principals made no attempt to quell such behaviour. So, promoting collaborations has a potential of revealing to post level 1 educators that they need each other to complement each other where one has a weakness, so they can gain support from the strength of the team member. The Shangaan axiom puts it clearly that "*one man cannot surround an anthill*", which means person is a dependent on other people to accomplish certain goals. Theories and literature utilised in this thesis have emphasised the advantages of collectivism. So, township schools principals need to focus on collaboration to realise an ethical climate in their schools.

This study has shown that inadequacy of in-service training contributes to the dearth of ethical leadership in schools. As is also reported by the literature reviewed, the involvement of school principals in unethical practices is sometimes not intentional. However, one is not oblivious of what the literature cited presents regarding ethics training, that it may not just change the conduct of a corrupt person, but instead can prevent him /her from acting unethically in the presence of other people who may know that his/her actions are unethical. Also, the concern that whose ethics, African or Western, should be taught calls for further exploration in the Department of Education and SACE. The literature and theory cited acknowledge the dissonance that exists between ethics, however, provides guidance that the leader needs to find synergy and ensures that he or she has full understanding of his/her own codes of ethics and those of profession. I believe the implications here are that, since the Education Department has its own code of professional ethics compiled by SACE, employees need to be taught those codes and these should also be infused in the university modules. Ethics education should not be compromised because of the uncertainty over whose ethics must get priority since when policies are formulated are subjected to scrutiny by the parliament which makes it authentic and justifiable. This has implications for both the Department of Education and SACE to have thorough consultative meetings with various communities to solicit their views in order to have their buy-in to the codes that can be enacted as part of the universities' curriculum. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the fact that ethics and law are sometimes antagonistic suggests that ethics subjects need to be further explored in relation to law.

The study also found that platforms for reporting unethical practices and behaviours were hard to access. Even the methods of reporting unethical behaviour were not clear. As a result, whistle blowers were reluctant to report any infractions that were happening in their working

environment. The essence of their reluctance was the fear of being victimised after reporting the cases, as they felt that their anonymity was not prioritised. Therefore, the implications for this study is that whistle blowers will continue to remain silent, while knowing that something unethical is perpetually happening in their workplace because they fear for their lives, unless the Department of Education creates proper and safe platforms for reporting unethical behaviour. Again, this has implications for the communities in whose schools unethical behaviours thrive; they need to take a stand and act against corrupt school principals and teachers within the ambit of the law by following the correct platforms. When all the stakeholders are working together to eradicate unethical behaviours, their schools would embrace ethical climate.

This study found that ethical role modelling was the essential trait that ethical school principals demonstrated. Ethical role modelling requires a leader to be guided by moral principles in his/her leadership. For school principals, the implication is that they will thus ensure the effective functioning of their schools and the creation of an ethical climate within their schools. The danger with role modelling is that, when the school principal is conducting himself or herself in an unethical manner, subordinates emulate such conduct to the detriment of the school ethical climate. The literature cited in this thesis has demonstrated key moral principles that school principals need to show as they lead their school. Therefore, the Department of Education needs to be in continuous communication with the school principals about what constitutes an ethical leader and the advantages of leading an ethical life. The study has also the implications for post level 1 educators in ensuring that the classroom environment is healthy and there is transparency regarding the expectations of educators from learners. They have to serve as good role models for their learners. Role modelling promotes trust and eliminates conflicts; it requires that the leader practises what (s)he preaches. Good role models do not find difficulty in leading their organisation because they demonstrate what they want their subordinates to demonstrate within the organisation. Because they are transparent in their actions, to reward ethical behaviour and punish unethical behaviour does not affect the climate within the school because they are known to be fair in their decision-making.

9.7 Conclusion

The recommendations that have been suggested for the school principals, the Department of Education and SACE are not conclusive by any means. Instead, they are intended to shed light on how ethical leadership can help in guiding the leadership styles they forge to better learners' academic performance. Moreover, they illuminate key aspects that are essential if a leader is to be regarded as ethical. The recommendation that school principals should promote collaboration is essential for the school principals, in that they can delegate tasks and allow their subordinates to freely work on their own, because they trust one another. In the end, the school principal is relieved from focusing on what educators can do because there is trust and because subordinates appreciate and reciprocate it. The importance of an ethical climate in school depends on how the school principals behave themselves in the presence and absence of their subordinates. That is ethical role modelling, which is essential for providing direction within the school without necessarily saying a word, but through actions. Likewise, an effective way of ensuring that all leaders and educators subscribe to moral principles is the provision of intense ethics in-service training or education. The role of communities in monitoring school principals and educators' conduct for the purpose of sustaining an ethical climate in schools cannot be overemphasised.

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APPENDIX A

(Permission letter to KZN Department of Basic Education)

42 Hikadene Road

Newlands West

Durban

4037

The Head of Department

KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education

Private Bag X 9137

Pietermaritzburg

3200

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SCHOOLS

I am Thulani Dladla, a registered PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in the faculty of humanities- School of Education. My research topic is:

Exploring ethical leadership in challenging township context: A multiple case study.

This letter serves to extend my request for your permission to allow me to conduct interviews and review documents in schools that shall form part of my study sample. The entire process shall involve principals and post level 1 educators.

I hope my request to undertake this study in your schools shall be received positively.

Please be assured that high level of confidentiality shall be observed. The following are some critical aspects that I shall adhere to:

- There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.
- Your identity will be concealed during and after the reporting process.
- All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used to represent your names.
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.

- The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview. You and educators will be contacted in time about the interviews

For any queries and further details you may contact my supervisor Dr S.E Mthiyane at o73 3774672 or Email:Siphiwe.mthiyane@wits.ac.za
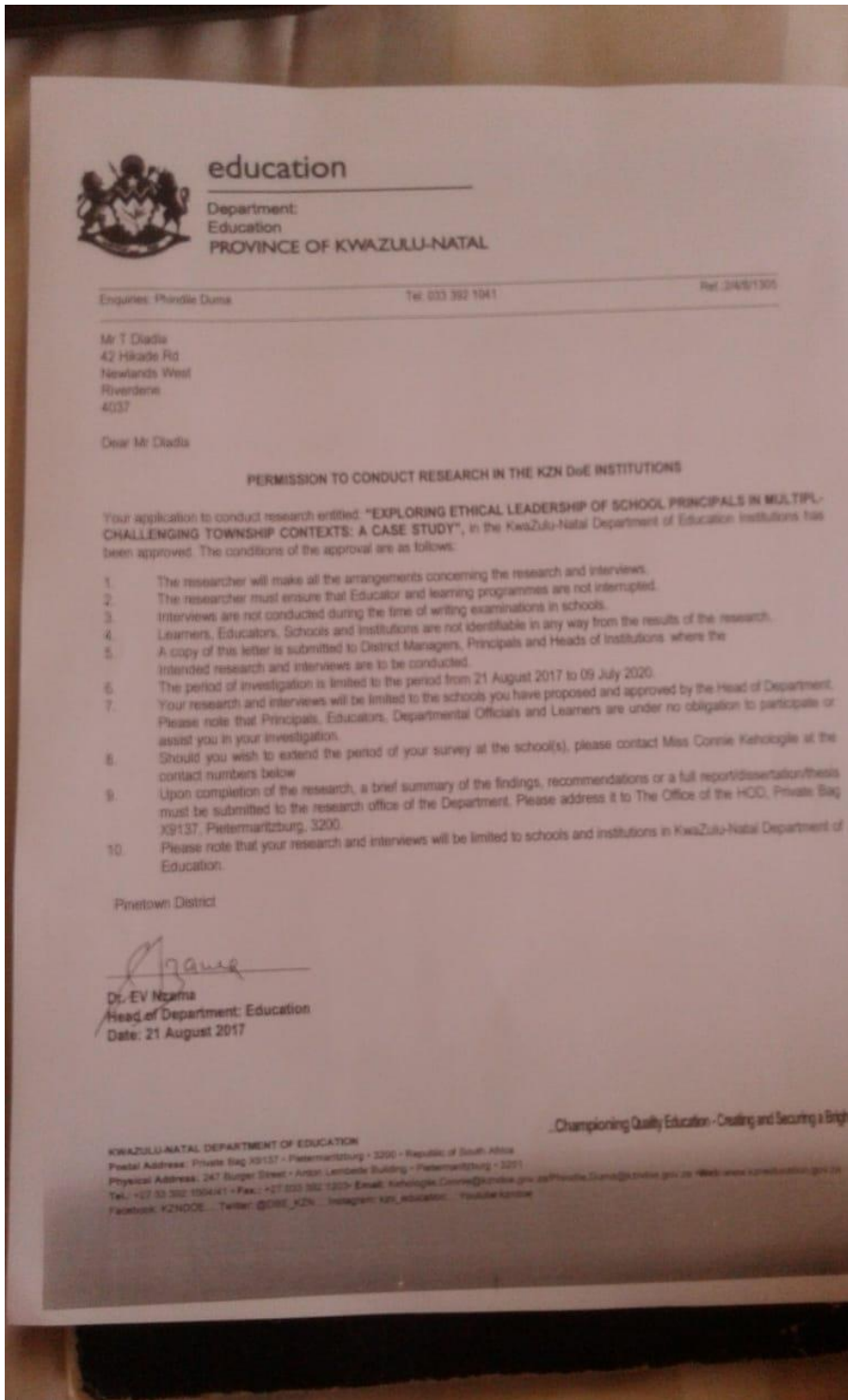
Thank you

T. Dladla

_____ (9609076)

APPENDIX B

(Permission letter from KZN Department of Basic Education)

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma | Tel: 033 392 1041 | Ref. 2/4/8/1305

Mr T Dladla
42 Hikade Rd
Newlands West
Riverdene
4037

Dear Mr Dladla

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"EXPLORING ETHICAL LEADERSHIP OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN MULTIPL-CHALLENGING TOWNSHIP CONTEXTS: A CASE STUDY"**, 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 21 August 2017 to 09 July 2020.
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.

Pinetown District

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 21 August 2017

Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 - Pietermaritzburg - 3200 - Republic of South Africa
Physical Address: 247 Burger Street - Anton Lembede Building - Pietermaritzburg - 3201
Tel: +27 33 392 1004/41 - Fax.: +27 033 392 1203- Email: Kehologile.Connie@kzndoe.gov.za/Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za -Web: www.kzneducation.gov.za
Facebook: KZNDOE... Twitter: @DBE_KZN ... Instagram: kzn_education... Youtube: kzndoe

217

(Permission letter to the school principals)

42 Hikadene Road

Newlands West

Riverdene

4037

The Principal

....

....

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am Thulani Dladla a PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal conducting a research in school. I have identified your school as one of the most relevant schools to share quality data. Please be aware that I have received the permission from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education authorising me to conduct research at your school as a research site. A copy of this letter is attached for your reference. The title of my study is: **Exploring ethical leadership in challenging township context: A multiple case study.**

I will appreciate your permission and assistance to conduct interviews with you and your staff members. I promise not to disturb any school programmes that you have planned for the year. Interviews shall be conducted at the time and venue that is convenient for you. I hope the Department of Education shall benefit from this research in one way or another.

Be assured that all information shared will be treated with confidentiality. In ensuring confidentiality, the following shall be observed to the fullest:

- There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.
- Your identity will be concealed during and after the reporting process.
- All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used to represent your names.
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.
- The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview. You and educators will be contacted in time about the interviews.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr S. E Mthiyane at 073 377 4672.   E-mail: siphiwe.mthiyane@wits.ac.za

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

T. Dladla

_____ (9609076)

(Declaration by participants)

Declaration

I ……………………………………………………………. (Full name of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study**: Exploring ethical leadership in challenging township context: a multiple case study.**

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

 I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant: -- Date------------------

Signature of Witness/ Research Assistant: ------------------------------- Date: ---------------

Thanking you in advance.

Thulani Dladla (Mr)

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS/ PL 1 EDUCATORS

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

---

1. Gender: male _____   Female _____
2. Experience (in years):
   - As a Post Level 1 educator: _____
   - As a School Principal: _____
3. School type (*Please tick or cross in the relevant box*):
   Primary ☐   Secondary ☐

SECTION B: Interview questions

1. When you hear people talking about Ethical Leadership in schools or Education, what comes to your mind? Putting it simply, what is your understanding of ethics and ethical leadership in schools? Please expatiate.

2. What ethical leadership practices do try to promote as you do your work (if there is any), as a school principal and an educational leader/ PL 1 educator? Please tell me more.

3. Why do you think those ethical leadership practices you mentioned above are important? Please elaborate.

4. Without giving names of the people, would please share with me experiences you have either seen, heard or observed that you regard as unethical in the school where you are working? Please tell me more.

5. As a school principal / PL 1 educator serving in a deprived community, what do you do to promote an ethical culture (trustworthiness and propriety) within the school, yourself, and among educators that you manage? Please elaborate on your views.

6. In your opinion, what are the causes of unethical conduct in schools among both the educators and school principals? Please expatiate.

7. In your view, is there any relationship between the leadership style(s) adopted by the school principal in a multiple-deprived context and his/her ethical behaviour? Please elaborate.

8. When you were training to become an educator, do you remember being exposed to education on ethical conduct?

9. As a school principal / PL1 educator, have ever been invited to a workshop where you were inducted by the Department of Education as your employer as part of in-service training and development of professional ethics in school / education?

10. Since you were appointed to the position of school principal, how regular have you been invited to workshops organised by SACE to be inducted into the Code of Professional Ethics for Educators? Please elaborate.

11. How would you rate the quality of training (if any), that you received from SACE to promote ethical conduct among school principals? Please elaborate.

12. Do you think is necessary for school principals / PL 1 educators as part of continuous leadership development to be exposed to ethical leadership development? Please elaborate

13. What are your views regarding what should be done to deal with (combat) unethical behaviours of some school principals and educators in schools?

14. In conclusion, is there any other issue related to this interview that I have not asked but you strongly feel that you would like to share with me?

- Thank you very much for taking part in this interview.

APPENDIX F
(Documents Review schedule)

The document that shall be reviewed will not be older than three years and will include: (a) Written sources such as minutes of the staff meetings where issues of curriculum delivery and monitoring are discussed and recorded. (b) School Management Teams meetings and reviewing of instructional core plans will be studied. Frequency of engagement between SMT and community. (c) The school's Code of Conduct for Learners' policy shall also be the focus for my study. (d) The school's Log Book and the Time Book (since punctuality and early departures will be seen as part of ethical conduct) shall also be extensively studied. Official documents will be used to corroborate the observations and interviews thus improving the trustworthiness of the findings. The documents may reveal aspects that were not found through the observations and interviews. Extensive notes will be taken on matters relating to ethical practices that are practised in schools.

(Language clearance certificate from language editor)

Crispin Hemson

15 Morris Place

Glenwood

Durban 4001

hemsonc@gmail.com 0829265333

This is to confirm that I have undertaken language editing of a thesis by Thulani Dladla, entitled **Exploring ethical leadership practices in challenging township school contexts: a multiple case study.**

14th January 2020