

**PRINCIPALS' VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN THE
SWEETWATERS CIRCUIT, PIETERMARITZBURG,
KWAZULU-NATAL**

Thandanani Moses Ndlovu

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DECLARATION

I, Thandanani Moses Ndlovu, declare that this dissertation is my own work, submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg). I further declare that this has never been submitted at any other University or institution for any purpose, academic or otherwise.

THANDANANI MOSES NDLOVU

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CHAPTER I: CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background and overview of the study. The study focuses on the views and experiences that school principals have of their School Governing Bodies. The background to the study is discussed first, followed by the history of school governance in South Africa, followed by the aim of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The South African School's Act No. 84 (SASA) of 1996 introduced an important change in the way schools were to be governed. The School Governing Bodies came into place, replacing School Committees, School Boards and other structures that controlled the functioning of schools during the pre-1994 period.

The political changes in South Africa gave birth to democratically elected School Governing Bodies. Gokar (1998) observes that the government policies deliberately attempted to want education to appear as more grass-root driven, more consultative and more democratic (p: 5).

The new education policies changed the nature of relationships between the stakeholders in South Africa's educational system. Gounden (1999) writes that the more recent transformation in the education system in South Africa gave power to various stakeholders (principals, parents, educators, community leaders, etc.) to participate in school decision- making (p: 2).

The relationship between the family and schools in South Africa have been fundamentally affected over the last few years by numerous changes in legislation and government initiatives. These changes have created a new legal environment for schools - family- community partnership (Educare, 2001: 117).

The South African Schools' Act (SASA) of 1996 stipulates that, in relation to School Governing Bodies, the number of parents comprise one more than the combined total of other members of governing body who have voting rights (p: 18). Parents have now become important stakeholders in school governance. "Parents who previously had very little legal authority on issues of governance are now required to make decisions that were previously made by the principal and/or teachers" (Gokar 1998: 5).

This shift in the way schools are now governed is well within the sphere of democracy as brought in by the new South African Schools' Act No 84 of 1996. It is this turn of events that brings importance to this study. It is now more than 5 years since the policy on school governing bodies was introduced. However, not much has been done to check on how these structures have been used in the South African educational system. While there is a wealth of literature on parental involvement in learners' education there are not many studies done on School Governing Bodies. This is understandable since the School Governing Bodies have not been in existence for very long.

1.2.1 The Need To Change The Organisation Of Schools

The previous school system in South Africa did not put emphasis on stakeholder participation in matters pertaining to the school. A significant shift in policy development came after the 1994 elections. S'busiso Bhengu, the former Minister of Education, believed that the Act (SASA Act 84: 1996) provided for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools, thus bringing to an end the past system based on racial inequality and segregation. Professor Ndabandaba, the former KwaZulu Natal Minister of Education, in his foreword to *Towards Effective School Management Manuals* (undated), alludes to the fact that schools need dynamic and forward-thinking leaders with courage to strive unrelentingly to make schools relevant to the South Africa we all desperately wish for ourselves and, especially, our children. Ndabandaba also goes on to say that all stakeholders involved in a school must be involved in the process of planning and development.

The involvement of all stakeholders in school management comes with some important challenges for all involved (Mosoge and Van der Westhuizen, 1997; Looock and Grobler, 1997; Rambiyana et al, 1996; Le Roux and Coetzee, 2001; Sayed and Carrim, 1997). Among other challenges brought by the legislation specifying the participation of stakeholders are the issues relating to the change of the mind set. The principals, teachers, parents and learners who have long been accustomed to non-participation are now part of important decision-making in their institutions. "The principal, for example, apart from being the educational leader of the school would now act as the executive officer of the governing body and be accountable to both the educational authorities and the governing body" (Looock and Grobler, 1997). The writers put emphasis on skills development that will promote corporative

management. Rambiyana et al (1996) believe that, although the concept is embraced by the majority of South Africans, knowledge of participation and co-responsibility as democratic principles remain questionable. These writers found that certain aspects of democratic principles were not emphasised e.g. the binding nature of majority decisions. The writers emphasise the point that education for democratic participation and co-responsibility is necessary.

The change of political landscape in South Africa is accompanied by the emergence of new realities facing school principals (Van der Westhuizen and Logotlo, 1996). Training of all stakeholders becomes important and more so for school principals. Stakeholders should be able to make informed decisions and share power equally in schools. Le Roux and Coetzee (2001) maintain that the democratic will of all the people, however, presupposes consultation with relevant stakeholders, since a close connection exists between the expectations of those who vote.

Literature has shown that while stakeholder participation is embraced by the majority of South Africa, effort must be towards the empowerment of all stakeholder towards meaningful and informed participation in decision-making, school principals included. It has also been established that anti-democratic tendencies may crop up at any stage.

1.2.2 The Composition Of School Governing Bodies

Democratisation of South African education began in the early 1990s. (NEPI; 1992, 1993A; 1993B; ANC National Education and Training Policy Framework; 1994a; 1994b and Education White Paper; 19995). "The dawn of a 'New South Africa' has

seen a proliferation of legislation specifying school governance and management” (Mosoge and Van der Westhuizen, 1997: 196). The South African School’s Act (1996) came into place. “The origin of SASA can be traced back to the Hunter Commission report on the Organization, Funding and Financing of Schools in August 1985” (Sayed and Carrim, 1997: 92).

This report proposes that parents, students, teachers, non-teaching staff and the principal should serve on the governing bodies of public schools. The report suggests that the parents should make up the majority in the governing body (Sayed and Carrim, 1997). Sharp (1995) shows a proposed composition of school governing bodies of County Schools, in the United Kingdom, in which parents, the school head and teachers are represented. But SASA (1996) also requires learner representation if the school has Grade 10,11 or 12 learners. Rambiyana et al (1996) maintain that learners are regarded as partners in education as are parents. The SASA No. 84 of 1996 on membership of the School Governing Body states that a parent who is employed at the school may not represent parents on the Governing Body.

1.2.3 Duties And Responsibilities Of The School Governing Bodies

The governance of every public school is vested in its Governing Body. “In South Africa the Governing Body of the school is the legal body responsible for development of overall school policy (including language policy and a code of conduct), the vision and mission of the school, financial management and fund raising, as well as making recommendations about appointments at the school” (Davidoff and Lazarus, 2002: 177). The Governing Body therefore, among other things, has to:

- promote the best interest of the public school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school.
- adopt a constitution.
- adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school.
- support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions.
- recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of educators at the school, subject to the Educators Employment Act, 1994 (SASA 100, 1997).

The SASA No.84 of 1996 prohibits the use of corporal punishment. It, therefore, remains the duty of the School Governing Body to address this issue in its Constitution.

The Department of Education and Culture manual 1, on *Understanding School Governance* (undated) sums up the duties of the School Governing Body under the following headings:

- Policy: for matters relating to the constitution and the code of conduct for learners at the school.
- Management: for matters relating to helping the principal and the staff perform their duties and also making recommendations towards the appointment of personnel.
- Meeting: holding School Governing Body meetings at least every three months.
- Financial management: establishing and running of the school fund.

- General: carrying out all other functions given to the School Governing Body by SASA, the SASA and all other applicable laws.

Manual 5 of The Department of Education and Culture, on *Understanding School Governance* (undated) deals with the financial system for schools at great length. Section 37 of SASA also makes it clear that a School Governing Body is responsible for the school fund.

1.3 HISTORY OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

To understand the present policy on governance in South African Schools, we need to compare it with school governance during the colonial era and the apartheid era. For the purpose of a brief and articulate overview of the South Africa's educational changes from the 1800 to the present, I refer to three distinct periods, i.e.

- a) the missionary and colonial education in the 1800 to 1947.
- b) the period from 1948 until just before the first democratic elections in 1994.
- c) the period after the first South African Democratic Elections in 1994.

First period	Second period	Third period
Missionary education and colonial education	Apartheid and resistance to apartheid	Democracy
1800 -1947	1948 -1993	1994 - present

Table 1.1 Three distinct periods in South African education

The table does not in any way suggest a linear development in South African history but is adopted for this study to highlight some important but exclusive events towards an 'education for all' in South Africa.

1.3.1 The First Period: 1800 –1947

Education for Blacks in South Africa was seen as a purposeful process aiming at the incorporation of dependent peoples into structures of Western Civilization (Kallaway, 1984). In 1839 a Department of Education was established in the Cape Colony. The mission schools were formally under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education. "Some state control was exercised through the grant of funds, which first became available to mission schools in 1841 but, in the main, schooling was left to the churches and missionary societies" (Kallaway, 1984: 49).

"Before 1953 Mission Schools provided almost all of the education which was available for blacks" (Christie 1991:67). The mission schools according to Christie (1991) were associated with:

- i) industrial and manual education;
- ii) racism and subordination; and
- iii) sexism and women's subordination.

Colonists controlled education. During this period, there was no parental governance. European parents only chose the official language for their children. "As far as Europeans are concerned, the medium of instruction of every pupil in every Government School is that official language selected by the parent" (Nuttal, 1949:

11). For Native schools, however the medium of instruction was IsiZulu up to Standard IV, and, progressively, English thereafter (Nuttal, 1949: 12). Native parents had no say at all.

Directors and Superintendents of Education were appointed to control education in the Natal Colony. Dr. R.J. Mann was appointed to be Inspector of Education throughout the Natal Colony in 1859. This was one of the recommendations made by the Select Committee that considered the subject of education in the Natal Colony in 1858. The appointment of Dr. R.J. Mann was followed by nine other Superintendents of Education. The last appointed Superintendent, during this period, was R. A. Banks in 1941 (Nuttal, 1949: 19). The Superintendents (Directors of Education) were responsible for school governance during this period. During this period, therefore, governance of schools rested with Superintendents of Education.

1.3.2 The Second Period: 1948 -1993

The 1948 general election saw the National Party coming into power and, with it the introduction of the policy of apartheid. The National Party passed a number of Acts, which provided unequal education for different population groups in South Africa. The Bantu Education Act in 1953 was the first. According to Christie (1991:56) “this is when the system of apartheid education began”.

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 brought Black Education under state control. The Act gave wide powers to the minister of Bantu Education. “The Act made provision for community participation in running of schools through school boards and

committees, but clearly power and control were to be firmly in the state hands” (Christie and Collins in Kallaway 1984:171).

In 1959 the Extension of University Education Act was passed. This Act was to bar Blacks from attending White Universities. The Coloured, Indian and National Education Policy Acts were passed in 1963, 1965 and 1967 respectively. The latter set out the principles of Christian National Education for White Schools.

The events in this period show racial divisions and separate development as grounded in the apartheid policy of the National Party.

The struggle for people’s education intensified during the second period (as in table 1.1). For some African leaders the year 2000 was seen as a milestone. “No blueprint can be drawn up, and no one can accurately foretell how all the different pressures will reveal themselves in the Africa of the 2000...” (Nyerere 1967:116). These pressures resulted in the formation of certain structures in South Africa. During this period the South African Students Organisation (SASO) was formed, the 1976 Soweto uprisings took place, later the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was formed, Cape school boycotts began, followed by state emergency resulting in banning of COSAS in 1985. The South African Democratic Teacher’s Union was formed in 1990. It was also during this period that “the government issued a White paper which accepted the De Lange guiding principles but rejected the major recommendation of a single education department for all” (Christie 1991:58).

The emergence of the above structures had implications for education, particularly for school governance in South Africa. A direction towards stakeholder participation was evident. But during this period (2nd period: Table 1.1) decision-making was still largely in the hands of Whites. A report by the University of Natal (1982:20) on school governance stated that no direct representation of teachers or parents on the governing councils of state schools was guaranteed. The report also stated that the Regional Directors were chairmen while principals were secretaries of these councils.

But Apartheid and inequalities in education were still evident. During the second period the Department of Bantu Education was renamed the Department of Education and Training, and, according to Christie (1991), more money was put into schooling conditions (p: 245). But this was shortly after the 1976 Soweto uprising, and widely regarded as a concrete achievement from the 1976 struggle for better education for Blacks.

1.3.3 The Third Period: 1994 – to the present

The third period began with influential leaders making addresses about the future education system in South Africa. Pallo Jordan's address cited in Christie (1991), touched on challenges facing education policy makers, the need for equity and fairness in education and relationship between education and work (p: 302). Nyerere (1990) believed that Apartheid would remain the antithesis of development even if Black South Africans were able to enjoy a larger share in South Africa's wealth (p: 13).

It is during this period that the first democratic election for South Africa was observed. The New Constitution also set a new tone. Chapter Two of the South African Constitution dealt with the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights did not neglect Education, and takes into account equity, practicability and the need to redress the results of the past racial discriminatory laws and practices (Act 84 of 1996).

The South African Constitution, and particularly the Bill of Rights, has implications for school governance and thus stakeholder participation became important. This culminated in the South African School's Act of 1996 and formation of School Governing Bodies that included parents, educators and learners. Unlike before, the process of decision-making now rested with the School Governing Body, which is representative of all stakeholders.

The above outline of South Africa's history has indicated how the political events contributed in shaping South Africa's education and why School Governing Bodies were necessary as governance structures for all South African Schools, changing the way schools were to be run. The third period is the focus of this study since it is the only period in which democratic governance for schools is emphasised for every school in South Africa.

The most important change in South Africa was that of the introduction of the new South African Constitution thus changing the whole political set up of the country. "As the supreme law of the country it defines the state and determines its structure and powers" (Bray, 1996). The South African Schools' Act of 1996 draws extensively from the Constitution. The democratically elected government puts emphasis on

democracy itself. "Democracy is practically a new concept in South Africa" (Rambiyana et al, 1996). But the Constitution also puts emphasis on human rights, as can be seen in the Bill of Rights. "Due to the new Constitution, which is based on, amongst others, fundamental rights, access to education irrespective of colour or creed is guaranteed" (Van der Westhuizen and Legotlo, 1996). The Constitution thus provides the opportunity for all to participate in the development of a just and equitable system of education. As shown in this Chapter, the political shift in South Africa has been from missionary to Apartheid education to Democracy. Democracy, among other things, allows for stakeholder participation to take place.

1.4 THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine principals' views and experiences of their school governing bodies, in a small group of schools in the rural section of Pietermaritzburg.

Specifically the following questions are considered:

- What experiences and views do school principals have about their School Governing Bodies?
- How are these experiences and views shaped and what forces bring about these views?
- How do these experiences and views affect the administration and governance of the school?

The study is limited to the school principals' views and experiences of their interactions with the School Governing Bodies.

While the membership of all other stakeholders serving in the School Governing Body should be determined by formal election processes, the Hunter report (1995) states that the school principal should be a member *ex officio*. The school principal's official position is the only requirement for him/her to sit on the School Governing Body. Also, according to SASA (1996), the school principal is a member of the School Governing Body by virtue of his/her official capacity.

By occupying the highest position within the school, the school principal becomes a permanent member of the School Governing Body. Dean (2001:3) mentions that the 1980 Education Act in the United Kingdom made the headmaster of a school a member of its Governing Body unless he or she chose otherwise.

In this study, therefore, it is suggested that the school principal's contribution on the School Governing Body will always be significant and that his/her views and experiences will have an impact in the functioning of the School Governing Body and thus on school governance. It was from this point of view that the school principal was targeted for this study. Also, as has been mentioned earlier, because of the size of this project the study is limited to school principals. This does not in any way suggest that the other stakeholders are of lesser importance in school governance.

1.5 CONCLUSION

The study was informed by contingency theories of leadership that will be elaborated on in Chapter Two. The study assumes that principals as leaders of their schools are able to assess their work situation and also correctly diagnose key aspects of the people they lead. Hoy and Miskel (1982) contend that an underlying assumption of

the contingency approach is that different types of situations require different types of leadership (p: 238).

The changes that came with the first democratic elections in South Africa had implications for school governance. Democracy and stakeholder participation became key elements for school governance. Le Roux and Coetzee (2001) maintain that the democratic will of all the people presupposes consultation with relevant stakeholders.

The study is further guided by the idea of schools as learning organisations. Senge (1990) suggests that organisations that will truly excel in the future will be organisations that discover how to tap peoples' commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organisation. Coupled with the idea of schools as learning organisations, is systems thinking which requires a more participatory form of engagement in schools as organisations.

As can be seen, the study begins with a background to the research problem in Chapter One. The next chapter reviews the relevant literature to this study. The third chapter covers the methodology adopted for this study, which outlines the procedures and strategies that have been applied in this study. The presentation and discussion of results are dealt with in Chapter Four. Chapter Five serves to draw conclusions and make recommendations that are based on the findings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This literature review first covers school governance and then deals with schools as learning organisations. The contingency theories of leadership are discussed next followed by the discussion of school principals as leaders. The literature review attempts to cover some of the areas which will be raised in this study.

2.2 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: THE INTERNATIONAL AND SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXTS

School governance has been reshaped in most developed countries. The 1980s and 1990s have seen Scotland and England restructuring school governance. There has also been a great deal of educational reforms in United States Schools, New Zealand schools and also in Danish schools. In different countries these reforms go by various names: developed school management (DSM), site based management (SBM) and local management of schools (LMS) (Arnott and Raab, 2000).

Change has always been about power and extended participation. Levácić, cited in Arnott and Raab (2000), see change in education governance in terms of two elements:

- i) decentralization to school level of responsibility of decision-making;
- ii) the sharing of decision-making power amongst key stakeholders at school level – head teachers, teachers, parent, students, other community members (p.19).

The power sharing in the school systems of England and Scotland did not seem to cause problems. Despite the differences in their statutory roles, Governing Bodies and School Boards in their schools were supportive of the head. These bodies were not seen to be challenging the school head (Arnott and Raab, 2000). Advocates of DSM and LMS argue that, by delegating functions of local authorities to schools, teachers would have greater autonomy and a greater say in the management of their schools (Arnott and Raab 2000).

However, the principal (school head) becomes a focal point for the Governing Bodies and the School Boards. These bodies appeared to be using their new role to enhance the position of the school head (Arnott and Raab 2000: 72). The school head in this state of affairs will tend to use the school board and the governing body as consultative rather than as decision-making bodies. Power and authority remains with the school head. Traditionally, head teachers have exercised enormous power over the day to day running of the school (Munn in Arnott and Raab, 2000).

The idea of principals gaining even more power and authority is also evident in United States schools. The principal gained considerable authority under SBM (principals also recruited teachers) (Wohlstetter and Sebring in Arnott and Raab, 2000). Jacobs, in Arnott and Raab (2000), also thinks that the reforms in New Zealand Schools saw the principal gaining more authority than before. Even in Danish schools the principal is given more managerial authority through reforms (Arnott and Raab, 2000).

Education Acts introduced in 1986 and 1988 for schools in England transformed school leadership. Dean (2001) observes that governors now have the power, in theory, to run the school (p: 169). School Governing Bodies could now have a say in, and jurisdiction over, issues of curriculum, finance, staffing, resources decisions and appointment of teachers.

Grace (1997) reports on change in English schools and suggests that the culture and ritual of English school headship may have moved away from the autocracy of 'I will brook no opposition' to a democratic style of leadership. The study by Dean in Grace (1997) asked participating head teachers to describe their working relations with their Governing Bodies following the empowering legislation of the 1980s. From this study the following issues were raised:

- There was much more preparation for governors' meetings required.
- Some head teachers thought that they were fortunate because they had 'good' governors.
- Some thought that governors could be 'led' by or 'managed' by a well-informed and organized head teacher.

'Good' governors, according to this study, meant that governors gave no trouble.

- There were more meetings of the Governing Body and of its various subcommittees.
- The reason for meetings being a governor's needs for information and guidance.
- It was recognised that a head teacher's capacity to sustain professional leadership would depend crucially, upon the particular constitution of a School Governing Body, including the attitude of

the chair of the governing body in particular.

These issues are important for South African schools as well, in the sense that School Governing Bodies are elected from the parent body, the majority of whom have never been exposed to school governance before. It remains to be seen how school principals find their interactions with the School Governing Bodies in South African schools.

In English schools, the new power relations for some head teachers had a potential for 'interference' into educational matters. This came with some predicted difficulties as governors exercise the full extent of their powers (Grace 1997:81). The shared leadership was seen as increasing workload associated with a new pattern of shared leadership. Some head teachers believed that leadership was in the hands of 'inexpert' governors. Head teachers saw 'interference' from this perspective. But some head teachers celebrated the empowerment of governors and they welcomed the greater involvement of governors (Grace 1997). It is worth mentioning that this was a small group of head teachers who saw the empowerment of Governing Bodies as important reforms. The political changes, as we have seen in South Africa, have a direct influence on educational systems. "The rules of the world are changing and teachers work to change with them" (Hargreaves, 1994:262).

The thinking of United Kingdom head teachers is similar to that of South African principals who, according to Looch and Grobler (1997), believe that School Governing Body members may not have had much experience regarding educational matters. Discussing the Gauteng Schools Toilet Project, Fleisch (2002:72) mentions

that principals believed that parents lacked the necessary skills and basic education to add value to complex decisions. On the functioning of School Governing Bodies in South Africa, Fleisch (2002:83) also suggests that most schools have School Governing Bodies with little authority who act only to rubber stamp the principals' decisions.

The school principal cannot afford to deprive stakeholders' participation in management activities. To change this, Hargreaves (1994) and Grace (1997) suggest a sustained programme of changing the attitudes of principals, teachers, and learners towards a school management paradigm that is grounded in democratic values. Looek and Grobler (1997) put emphasis on cooperative management for principals to work in more democratic and participative ways.

Steyn (1998) believes that if the transformation of South African education is to succeed, teachers must be at liberty to make informed decisions and share power equally in schools. Teachers themselves believe that power is still in the hands of school principals. This confirms Mosoge and van der Westhuizen's (1997) findings on teacher access to decision-making, in which teachers reported deprivation across the board on all management activities. Cherry in Steyn (1998) suggests that principals must learn to share tasks and power.

Sayed and Carrim (1997) argue that current policies proposed in various policy texts do not necessarily enhance participation and may in fact, contradict moves towards equity. Role players are faced with changes that require everyone to almost abruptly turn over a new leaf. Mosoge and van der Westhuizen (1997) believe that this, in turn,

has presented principals, teachers, parents and learners, long accustomed to authoritarian modes of management and having very little prior experience and theoretical grounding in the tenets of participatory management, with the daunting task of converting this new legislation into practical reality (p: 196). Looock and Grobler (1997) believe that the recent changes require skills development for stakeholders and, more so for school principals who will, in turn, deal with members who may not have had much experience regarding matters of educational management.

2.3. SCHOOLS AS LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS

Writing about organisations, Senge (1990) suggests that organizations that will truly excel in the future will be organizations that discover how to tap peoples' commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization. Schools as organizations also need to be learning organizations. Senge (1990) mentions five disciplines of learning organizations; systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building a shared vision and team learning. According to South African education policy, school principals are faced with the task of transforming schools into learning organizations. Senge (1990: 4) believes that learning organizations are possible because, not only is it our nature to learn, we love to learn.

Davidoff and Lazarus (2000) suggest that organizations are like living systems. This is in line with the systems thinking as mentioned by Senge (1990) in *The Fifth Discipline*. The emphasis is on intentional change that involves focusing on both the people and the structure of organizations. Systems thinking require a more

participatory form of engagement in schools as organizations. This scenario is a prerequisite for change in South African schools.

Sergiovanni (2000) refers to the life world and the systems world of an organization. According to Sergiovanni (2000) the life world has to do with purposes, norms, growth, and development while the system world has to do with efficiency, outcomes, and productivity. "Schools need special leadership because they are life-world-intensive" (Sergiovanni, 2000: 166). Concern for humans takes the centre stage for schools, and particularly schools in a democratic South Africa. Successful schools, according to Sergiovanni (2001), will share three characteristics: parents, teachers, and students are satisfied with them, they are successful in achieving their own goals and objectives, and their graduates exhibit democratic values, attitudes, and behaviors (p: 97).

On change Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) say that there is no answer to the question of how one brings about change in specific situations. "Today's leaders must learn to think through solutions themselves (with assistance from their colleagues and communities). This is the essence of the learning organization" (p: 116).

Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) list a number of challenges that face South Africa and thus South African schools. The writers mention political and criminal violence, the poor society, substance abuse and the consequences of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (p:3). Thusi (1993) also believes that a number of factors within and outside the school have contributed to the disorder encountered in the schools. Not only do school principals have to deal with change but also with circumstances within the South African communities. Thusi (1993) believes that the principals have to be innovative and flexible enough to deal with the situations as they present themselves.

Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) mention that sometimes we have to learn more from our opponents and detractors than we do from fellow travellers at the road of improvement. This suggests that principals as leaders will also learn from the potential resistance by other stakeholders. This adds a further challenge for the school principals in managing today's schools. Van der Westhuisen (1996) suggests that when change is implemented resistance can arise.

2.4 CONTINGENCY THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP

Contingency theories of leadership were adopted as the main theoretical framework for this study. As has been alluded to earlier, leadership has always been associated with change. Principals are seen as custodians of change. Leadership theories themselves have evolved through several stages. From a trait-based approach there emerged a style approach. Later, contingency approaches to leadership – fit the leader or the decision to the situation – gained widespread attention (Sims and Lorenzi, 1992: 304). The four models of contingency theories are adopted at different levels of the study, simply because they seem to supplement each other.

Contingency theories assume that school principals, as leaders of their schools, are able to assess their work situation and also correctly diagnose key aspects of the people they lead. Hughes et al (1996) suggest that, with the exception of the contingency model (Fiedler, 1967), leaders are assumed to be able to act in a flexible manner. In other words, leaders can and should change their behaviours as situational and follower characteristics change. A correct match between situational and follower characteristics and leaders' behaviours is assumed to have a positive effect on a group or organizational outcome (p: 488).

It has become important for school principals both, experienced and inexperienced, to understand the nature of schools they are dealing with in the post-election period in South Africa. Democracy has injected a different mindset that has complications, not only for schools as organizations, but also for the entire community in which schools are found. Hoy and Miskel (1982) contend that an underlying assumption of the contingency approach is that different types of situations require different types of leadership, therefore a second major component of the theory is the situation (p: 238). There is no doubt that the conditions have changed, but the question is, how does school leadership experience change in South Africa. The School Governing Bodies represent this new setting for schools and principals, as leaders, are in the centre of this new set up. Principals, according to three models of contingency theories, should make their behaviours contingent on certain aspects of the people they lead and also contingent on the situation in order to achieve effectiveness as leaders.

The four models of the contingency theories discussed here are the Normative Model, the Situational Leadership Theory, the Contingency Model and the Path-Goal-Theory.

2.4.1 The Normative Model

Looking at the different models of the contingency theories we begin with the Normative Model which concentrates on decision-making. It is a theory on how decisions are made in terms of participation. Vroom and Yetton, in Hughes et al (1996), suggest that the decision-making process can be laid down by means of a continuum. At one end of the continuum is an autocratic process while at the other extreme end is a completely democratic process of decision-making.

Autocratic processes		Consultative processes		Group process
AI	AII	CI	CII	GII




Table 2.1 Continuum of levels of participation in the Normative Decision Model

The explanation of the levels of participation in the Normative Decision Model as described by Hughes et al (1996:490) is as follows:

AI: The leader solves the problem or makes the decision by himself using the information available at the time.

AII: The leader obtains any necessary information from followers, then, decides on a solution to the problem herself.

CI: The leader shares the problem with the relevant followers individually, gathering their ideas and suggestions without bringing them together as a group. Then he makes a decision, which may or may not reflect the followers' influence.

CII: The leader shares the problem with her followers in a group meeting. Then she makes a decision, which may or may not reflect the followers' influence.

GII: The leader shares the problem with his followers as a group. Together they generate and evaluate alternatives and attempt to reach agreement (consensus) on a solution.

The levels of participation are the autocratic processes, the consultative processes and the group process. The group process (GII) at the extreme end of the continuum can be regarded as total democracy. The leader adopts a level of participation where he/she is willing to accept and implement any decision that has the support of the

entire group. The level of participation determines the amount of input that subordinates have in the decision-making process.

One important limitation of the normative decision model is that it focuses only on decision-making but Hughes et al (1996) suggest that, despite the limitations of this model, the normative model is one of the best supported of the four major contingency theories of leadership, and leaders would be wise to consider using the model when making decisions.

2.4.2 Situational Leadership Theory

The second contingency model is the Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) which touches on two important aspects; the leader behaviours and the maturity of followers. Leader behaviours address the tasks behaviours and the relationship behaviours. For task behaviours, leaders spell out responsibilities and tell the individual or group what to do, how, when and who is to do the task. As for relationship behaviour, leaders engage in a two-way communication with individuals or groups, whereby the leader assumes a position as a member and a co-worker within the group. Dessler (1985) also discusses the above as task-oriented and people-oriented styles of leadership respectively. While the former focuses on the job and production (for example, schools' examination results) the latter focuses on the happiness and satisfaction of the personnel.

Hersey and Blanchard in Hughes et. al. (1996) suggest that one further step leaders wish to consider is that the model described above helps the leader select the most appropriate behaviours given the current level of the follower maturity. Maturity of

the follower is composed of two components. The first one is the job maturity - which is the amount of task-relevant knowledge, experience, skills and ability the follower possesses. The next component of maturity refers to the follower's self – confidence, commitment, motivation and self-respect relative to the task at hand. While job maturity coincides more with training and in-service training of all the stakeholders in school organizations the psychological maturity is directly linked to the morale of personnel in the school as an organization. Leaders who want to increase the level of maturity of their followers may implement developmental interventions. This is based on the thinking that the more mature followers are, the more effective they become.

The SLT moves a step further than the normative model because it goes beyond decision-making and, according to Hersey and Blanchard in Hughes et. al. (1996), can even be extended to other applications, such as parenting (p: 499).

While Hughes et al (1996) think that there has not been enough research to support the predictions of SLT in the workplace, they contend that the SLT is a useful way to get leaders to think about how leadership effectiveness may depend somewhat on being flexible with different subordinates, not on acting the same way towards them all (p: 499).

2.4.3 The Contingency Model

The contingency model looks at leaders through the 'least Preferred co-worker scale' (LPC). Leaders are categorized into two groups. There are low LPC leaders and high LPC leaders. Hughes et al (1996) look at the LPC leaders in terms of the motivation hierarchy. Low LPC leaders are primarily motivated by the task, which means that

these leaders primarily gain satisfaction from task accomplishment. The high LPC leaders on the other hand are primarily motivated by relationships, which means that these leaders are primarily satisfied by establishing and maintaining close interpersonal relationships (p: 501).

The contingency model, however, shows a considerable degree of inflexibility. The assumption is that leaders may not be able to change their behaviours and experiences gained over the years but in turn they need to recognize and change the key characteristics of the situation so as to fit in. "Thus, according to Fiedler (1967), the content of leadership training should emphasize situational engineering rather than behavioural flexibility in leaders" (Hughes et. al., 1996:505).

While the contingency model somewhat overlooks the flexibility of the leader, it definitely throws light in terms of understanding leaders through their LPC scores. This study maintains that low LPC and high LPC leaders are a reality in school organizations.

Unlike the contingency model, the Path-Goal-Theory, which we look at next, maintains that leaders should first assess the situation and then select leadership behaviour appropriate to the demands of the situation. "Moreover, the Path-Goal-Theory assumes that the only way to increase performance is to increase followers' motivation levels" (Hughes et. al., 1996:514).

2.4.4 The Path-Goal-Theory

The Path-Goal-Theory assumes that there is a valued reward (the goal) and to get to it the best possible way (the path), a direction needs to be clear. Leadership will make it possible for followers to acquire these rewards by providing support on the way.

According to this model, four leader behaviours are possible:

- Directive leadership – This leadership behaviour can be compared to the task behaviour of the SLT, where telling is dominant.
- Supportive leadership – Is characterized by courteous and friendly interactions.
- Participative leadership – The leader engages in a decision-making process with the group.
- Achievement-oriented leadership – This is characterized by both demanding and supporting interactions by the leader; and also showing confidence in the followers' ability to perform to expected levels.

About the followers Hughes et. al. (1996) suggest that followers will actively support a leader as long as they view the leader's actions as a means for increasing their own levels of satisfaction. The situation will include the task, the formal authority system, and the primary work group. The Path-Goal-Theory assumes that the follower characteristics and the situational characteristics can affect leader behaviours, but Hughes et. al. (1996) also mention that the follower and the situational variables can also affect each other (p: 512).

While the four models of the contingency theories have been looked at, their scope according to Hughes et. al. (1996) is limited. The models neglect some aspects of the workplace. However, they give clear light on what and how leaders should manage change in the workplace in performing their duties as leaders of their organizations. In the next discussion we take this exploration further by looking at school principals as leaders.

2.5 SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS LEADERS

As mentioned in Chapter One, school principals are a focal point for this study. This study assumes that a school principal is a leader of his/her school (community) organization. Fiedler (1967) defines a leader as the individual in the group given the task of directing and co-ordinating task relevant group activities or who, in the absence of a designated leader, carries the primary responsibility for performing these functions in the group (p:8). Unlike other leaders in social settings, school principals are appointed to their positions.

As early as 1953 Cattell, in Fiedler (1967), associates a leader with change. The changes in South Africa from the apartheid era to democracy also had implications for schools, and principals are expected to implement and lead these change processes in their schools. What type of leaders should school principals become in order to provide leadership relevant to schools in the post-election period in South Africa?

Dessler (1985) discusses two basic styles of leadership, that is, "task-oriented" and the "people-oriented". Task-oriented leaders focus on the job and worry more about the production. For a school principal subscribing to this leadership style, learners'

results would be the sole reason for the group effort, for example, a 100% matriculation pass rate. On the other hand a people – oriented principal would strive to make the job more pleasant for everyone. Dessler (1985) suggests that although sometimes task-oriented leaders have high performance groups, sometimes it is the people-oriented leaders with high performance groups. “Exactly which style is best, in other words, depends on the situation, and it is apparent that the most effective leaders are able to fit their style to the situation (or are at least shrewd enough to get only into situations that fit their style)” (Dessler, 1985: 304).

The school principal is faced with a dilemma of deciding which style is most appropriate for a group of individuals within the school. Sergiovanni et al (1992) suggest that principals must decide on the unique mix of bureaucrat and instructional leader; principals must decide whether to be authentic or stereotyped (p: 320). But McLagan and Nel (1995) warn that the relationships between authoritarian leaders and their constituencies can be either dependent or hostile (p: 20). Both dependent and hostile groups of individuals cannot make the life of a school principal any easier.

Coupled with the style of leadership would be traits that characterize effective managers. Dessler (1985) discusses (6) six traits that characterize effective managers in a wide range of companies. These traits were a result of Ghiselli’s study on over 300 managers (Dessler, 1985).

- **Supervisory Ability** – the capacity to direct the work of others and to organize and integrate their activities so that the goal of

the work group can be obtained – was the most significant leadership trait.

- Intelligence – a leader's intelligence – his or her "capacity to deal with ideas, abstractions, and concepts and his or her ability to learn and to make good judgements" – was a second important factor in a leader's success.
- The need to be a high achiever- Ghiselli found that more effective leaders were generally high achievers.
- Self – assurance – next Ghiselli found that the more effective leaders were more self-assured and confident than were less effective leaders.
- High need to self-actualise – Ghiselli also found that more effective leaders had a high need to self-actualise, to become the people they knew they had the potential for becoming.
- Decisiveness – Finally, Ghiselli found that decisiveness was another important trait that usually characterized the successful leader (Dessler, 1985: 302-303).

The above traits, however, may not be a demarcation between effective and ineffective leaders. For schools, in particular, it may be possible to find an ineffective principal while exhibiting most or all of the above traits. "The evidence indicates that under one set of circumstances, one type of leader is effective; under another set of circumstances, however, a different type of leader is needed" (Hoy and Miskel, 1982: 223).

Sims and Lorenzi (1992) describe four leadership strategies culminating in what they call the new leadership paradigm.

- The first one is "The Strong- Man: the assumption is that this leader knows best and his word is law in the organization.
- The next is the Transactor. A transactor sets goals and offers incentives for achieving the goal.
- The third strategy is a "Visionary Hero" A visionary hero attempts to influence others through inspiration and vision. "The leader creates a vision (Schema) for the organization as a whole and then attempts to induce others to "buy into" that vision (Schema)"(Sims and Lorenzi, 1992: 293). Sims and Lorenzi (1992) see the above strategies as "top – down" forms of leadership.
- The last is the Super-leader. Sims and Lorenzi (1992) define super-leadership as the art of leading others to lead themselves (p: 295).

Super-leadership assumes that school principals, as leaders of their organizations, will initiate self-managed teams where wisdom begins from the lowest levels of the organization; and where individual responses and commitments are based on ownership of the decisions made. This scenario pre-supposes participation in leadership.

Participation of stakeholders in school governance has always been seen as important for schools to function properly. McLagan and Nel's thesis is that "society's collective

vision of institutional governance is undergoing a fundamental shift that is replacing authoritarianism with participation" (1995:14).

There are concerns for participative leadership. Mclagan and Nel (1995) refer to these concerns as tough issues in participation. The school principals may feel that, because of participative leadership, control may be lost; decision-making may take too long, group thinking may reduce quality and efficiency; and individuality may be lost. But Mclagan and Nel (1995) believe that co-operative education produces high-performing individuals and high-performing groups; and also that individuals develop their own strengths, but also assume responsibility for the group (p: 233).

School principals may also see apathy as a threat and that rights and responsibilities will not be in balance. To emphasise the above points Mclagan and Nel (1995) suggest that when people begin to have access to information, when they are drawn into decision-making, and when they are empowered to exercise meaningful influence, they often demand rights without seeing that rights have related responsibilities (p: 235). For school principals, the understanding should be that participation is about balancing rights and responsibilities. The task of school principals is to make individuals in groups understand that rights are not taken away from management and given to another group, and that rights and responsibilities can never be separated.

Mclagan and Nel (1995) believe that it is important to shift participation so as not to lose the wisdom and skills of a manager or employee. To prevent such a loss, several things must happen at once: managers must take chances and increase people's

responsibilities. At the same time, managers and employees must be helped to acquire the skills needed for effective delegation and decision-making and support must be provided without over-supervision or abdication (p: 238).

These challenges of participation will continue to face participative organizations for a long time but, as McLagan and Nel (1995) believe, none is a patent reason not to change.

Hoy and Miskel (1982) discuss three major factors that may be used to classify the favourableness of the group situation.

1. Position power of the leader, which refers to the degree to which the position itself enables the leader to get subordinates to comply with directives.
2. Task structure is measured by the extent to which the task can be clearly specified, verified and programmed in a step-by-step manner. With a highly structured task, the leader and the group know exactly what to do and how to do it.
3. Leader member relations refer to the extent to which the leader is accepted and respected by the group members (p: 238).

Since the school principals do not operate in a vacuum it becomes important for them to understand the type of situations they find themselves in and these may require different types of leadership. "Contingency theories maintain that leadership effectiveness depends on the fit between personality characteristics of the leader and situational variables such as task structure, position power and subordinate skills and attitudes" (Hoy and Miskel, 1982: 235).

2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter governance of South African schools was compared to that of other countries, especially that of United States of America, Denmark, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Leadership and change was discussed with special reference to school governance. We now turn to Chapter Three where the methodology adopted for this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the methodology adopted for this study. The context of the Sweetwaters Circuit is discussed first followed by a theoretical framework of methodology and research design. A discussion about the researcher's own position and some ethical issues conclude this chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH SITE

The Sweetwaters Circuit is found in the Pietermaritzburg Region of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture. The circuit is one of 26 circuits (soon to be called wards) within the Pietermaritzburg Region. The circuit has been chosen because of its accessibility and proximity to the researcher. There are 22 schools of which 8 are secondary schools and 13 are primary schools. The last school is for learners with special education needs (LSEN).

Because of its nature as a special school, the LSEN-school was not included in this study. The researcher believes that the principal's experience and views of this particular school may be different from that of the main-stream schools and will have to be seen against other special schools.

Sweetwaters is a rural area that lies just outside the town of Pietermaritzburg. The majority of the schools lack facilities such as electricity, running water, libraries and laboratories. The state of the school buildings is satisfactory and most schools are well fenced.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This is a case study of a small section of schools in the Pietermaritzburg Region. Cohen et al (2000:185) believe that significance rather than frequency is a hallmark of case studies, offering the researcher an insight into the real dynamics of situations and people. The study therefore does not intend to make generalizations but to describe and explain the principals' experiences and views of their School Governing Bodies. If any is achieved it is analytic generalization rather than statistical generalization. Yin (1994) believes that some of the best and most famous case studies have been both descriptive and explanatory. This study therefore attempts to describe and explain the principals' views and experiences of their School Governing Bodies.

Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. Neither ethnography nor participant observation was employed for this study. Yin (1994:12) warns that a case study should not be confused with ethnographies or with participant-observation, since these are only data collection techniques. But instead, case studies can be based on any mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence. The purpose of the interviews was to supplement the questionnaires and provide an in-depth study of selected cases. Verma and Mallick (1999:118) maintain that if interviews are supplementary they cover much the same ground as the questionnaires but to a much greater level of detail.

3.3.1 The Research Questions

The aim of the study is to determine school principals' experiences and views towards their School Governing Bodies. The study, therefore, seeks to report on the opinions,

experiences and thoughts of school principals resulting from their daily interactions with School Governing Bodies.

The three critical questions are:

- a) What experiences and views do school principals have of their School Governing Bodies?
- b) How are these experiences and views shaped?
- c) How do these experiences and views affect administration and governance of their school?

The study attempts to determine how the school principals find their interactions with the School Governing Bodies, and why it is so. The final part becomes how does this influence their daily activities. Yin (1994) believes that the 'how' and 'why' questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies, histories and experiments as the preferred research strategies.

The rationale for choosing the school principals for this study was that they were permanent School Governing Body members, by virtue of being school principals. Their views on School Governing Bodies would be important in determining success and failure of these structures. The assumption was that the school principal's contribution was a very important element in the effective functioning of a School Governing Body. The principal's leadership behaviour, together with that of the chairperson, would determine the level of effectiveness of the School Governing Body, given the organizational change in South African Schools.

3.3.2 Data Collection

The study began with a survey in which all school principals in the Sweetwaters Circuit were asked to complete a questionnaire. Verma and Mallick (1999) suggest that this method is frequently employed to indicate prevailing conditions or particular trends (p: 79).

As already mentioned, questionnaires and interviews were used for this study. The questionnaire provided hard data; and the interviews made it possible to explore in greater detail some particular aspects covered by the questionnaire.

3.3.3 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire (APPENDIX B) had sections A, B and C. Section A was designed to indicate inter alia the type of school, size and number of personnel in each school. Section B answered to the question, 'who the principal of the school was?' Although principals' names were not asked, this section addressed inter alia the principals' age, experience, qualifications and place of residence. Section C was about the principals' experiences and views of their School Governing Bodies. Most items were rated on a four-point scale and based on the aim of the study. The last portion of Section C required the principal to list what he/she considered as strengths and weaknesses of his/her School Governing Body.

A pilot questionnaire was given to two school principals not forming part of the sample. The final changes were made, particularly on how the instructions were written on the cover page of the questionnaire.

The strength of questionnaires is that they provide data economically. A very large sample can respond to a questionnaire. But Cohen et al (2000) believe that the use of questionnaires has a disadvantage in that questionnaires often show too low a percentage of returns (p: 129). To counteract the problem of low returns, not all completed questionnaires were mailed. The researcher collected some personally. A total of 20 completed questionnaires were returned, therefore a 95% return rate was achieved. The one questionnaire that was not returned was issued to a school principal who believed that she had no obligation to take part in this project.

3.3.4. The Interviews

The reason for the questionnaires, therefore, was to determine trends as demonstrated in school principals' responses. On the basis of these trends, five respondents were selected for interviews. One respondent was selected from a group of principals who seemed to have a positive view of their School Governing Bodies. One was also selected from a group of school principals who did not think their Governing Bodies worked well. Three were selected from those who fell in the middle who thought their School Governing Bodies were neither doing well nor too badly. In all a total of five interviews were conducted.

Gender was also considered in selecting respondents for the interviews. For instance, the only secondary school that was headed by a female principal had to be included for gender reasons.

Respondents	Gender	School level	SGB rating
1	Female	Secondary	Not well
2	Male	Secondary	Well
3	Female	Primary	Middle
4	Female	Primary	Middle
5	Male	Primary	Middle

Table 3.1 *The interview sample*

The interviews were done at the schools. An appointment was made with each principal, telephonically, for interviews which each took place in the principal's office. A pilot interview was done with one school principal not forming part of the sample. Interviews were semi-structured. The interview schedule had twenty-one questions (Appendix C). Interviews took between thirty and forty-five minutes.

All interviews were tape-recorded. The audiotapes were transcribed. Transcripts were later sent back to the respondents who discussed them with the researcher. A few corrections and additions were done to the transcripts.

3.3.5 Data Analysis

There were 21 school principals issued with the questionnaire to complete. One was not returned. This means that out of 21 schools, 20 completed questionnaires were returned.

The twenty questionnaires were put in a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) package for analysis. Frequencies and cross tabulations were obtained from SPSS. The frequencies and cross tabulations told us about what type of schools were investigated in terms of the size of the schools i.e. the number of learners grades offered and the staff. From this analysis the data showed how the school principals rated the contribution of each component of the School Governing Body i.e. the learner, educator and the parent components. The analysis also indicated the kind of experience the majority of principals had about their School Governing Bodies. The analysis offered a useful direction for interviews. For example, 50% the principals rated cooperativeness as one of the strengths of their School Governing Bodies. It was later determined through interviews what the principals meant about cooperativeness. It was also on the basis of this analysis that the interviews were chosen.

Because the first part of the interview comprised a rather broad question, patterns were matched from the responses. Yin (1994:25) mentions that one promising approach for case studies is the idea of "pattern-matching" described by Donald Campbell (1995), where several pieces of information from the same case may be related to some theoretical proposition.

3.4 THE RESEARCHER'S OWN POSITION

The researcher, as a school principal himself, has had his own experiences working with both the school committees and the School Governing Bodies. The importance of this study to the researcher was to attempt to find some answers and solutions to some problems he had encountered in relation to school governance. This indicates how important it was that the researcher remained objective and clear minded about

data collected. For this purpose the transcripts were taken back to the respondents to ascertain if the contents were the required responses intended by the respondents. The researcher also acknowledged the fact that, although he lived in Sweetwaters, he had never taught in the area.

3.5 ETHICAL ISSUES

The questionnaire was prepared by the researcher together with a letter asking for access to schools. This was submitted to the District Manager (Appendix A) two weeks before data collection began. The District Manager informed the school principals in a principals' meeting and then contacted the researcher telephonically to give permission for the researcher to visit schools. The researcher visited all school principals to deliver questionnaires. They all knew about the project. One principal did not want to participate. The right of this one school principal was observed as she stated strongly that she had no obligation to take part in the project. Cohen et al (2000:245) believe that respondents might be strongly encouraged, but the decision whether to become involved and when to withdraw from the research is entirely theirs.

The personal information questions included age. Although for some this could be a sensitive question to ask, it was made simple by not asking for the exact age but for the age group e.g. between 31 – 35 or 36 – 40 (Appendix B).

The researcher ensured the respondents that, although on completion of the research project findings would be made available to others, their comments would not be

personalised and confidentiality would be maintained. For these interviews, times and place were set by the respondents.

Respondents sometimes gave their responses in IsiZulu. The researcher continued to use English in asking questions, but accepted every response given. The researcher was conversant in both languages, and since not much IsiZulu was used, the researcher translated the responses.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This Chapter has served to outline the methodology adopted for this study. Chapter Four focuses on the presentation and discussion of results.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part A is the representation of results. Each research question is dealt with separately. For each research question data from both the questionnaire and interviews are used. Part B is the discussion of results. Patterns from the findings are matched. Discussion of limitations for the study concludes this section.

4.1 PART A: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Research question I: What views and experiences do school principals have towards their governing bodies?

4.1.1 School Governing Body Chairperson

The questionnaire data (APPENDIX B, item 16) shows that, on a four-point scale, most principals rated their School Governing Body chairpersons as either good or satisfactory on leadership abilities, listening skills, understanding educational issues and also on human relations. Also 90% of the school principals said that their School Governing Body chairpersons' participation in School Governing Body meetings was either very good or good. The interview data shows that three out of five school principals said their School Governing Body chairpersons were 'okay'. Responding to the question: Explain how successful is the chairperson of your School Governing Body, the last two school principals were a little critical of their School Governing Body chairpersons. Their responses were as follows:

Case 2 (school Principal W) said:

In a short space of time I have been with him, I would say he is bit pushy. I think he believes that as School Governing Body they must take all the decisions and that they must actually rule the school.

Case 5 (School Principal Z)'s response was:

I do not know about being successful, I would say he is a very honest person. He is very courageous. He likes being the chairperson of the School Governing Body.

4.1.2 Parents On The School Governing Body

The questionnaire data (APPENDIX B, Item 17) showed that, when rating the parent members serving on the School Governing Body on their commitment to school development, 75% of the school principals felt that the parents were either very good or good. The interview data revealed the kinds of duties the parent members of the School Governing Body were doing. Two school principals said the parents' main duties were maintenance and repairs. One school principal said the parents' work was mainly discipline with the other saying it was the nutrition programme. One school principal, however, said the parents were not doing anything unless they were paid. This issue of remuneration came up twice.

Case 5 (School Principal Z) said:

They are not doing anything else unless there is some remuneration. They like to be paid. They take pride in doing some job for the school but at the same time they want to be paid.

Case 3 (School Principal X) said:

They have a feeling that they should be paid for serving on the School Governing Body. So they don't work as much as they should be.

4.1.3 Educators On The School Governing Body

The questionnaire data (APPENDIX B, item 18) showed that only 25% of the school principals thought that the educator members of their School Governing Body were very good in decision-making, in attending School Governing Body meetings and in demonstrating skills to do their duties. Only 15% of school principals thought that the educator members understood educational issues very well. The interview data showed that there was a split between the parent-component and the educator-component of the School Governing Body.

Case 4 (School Principal Y) had this to say:

They (educators) should look at the interest of the school and not of the educators only. They neglected governance of the school over the interests of the educators.

Case 3 (School Principal X) thought that the problem lay with the educators' attitude.

Their attitude is that school governance is for the principal and not for them. They also do things when only they are told to; also they may not attend meetings just because they do not feel responsible for school governance.

Case 5 (School Principal Z) said:

They (educators) see themselves as participants on the School Governing Body.

Case 2 (School Principal W) thought that educators' participation could be improved:

...By means of workshops in terms of the role that they need to play. We need to make educators aware that they need to be more serious when they elect people to sit on the

School Governing Body. Some educators want to run away from this duty of serving on the School Governing Body.

4.1.4 The Learners On The School Governing Body

From the questionnaires (APPENDIX B, item 19) no school principal out of eight Secondary Schools thought that their learners were very good in their understanding of educational issues, in their commitment to school development, in their understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and in having skills to do their duties as School Governing Body members. Out of eight school principals only three thought that their learners were committed to school development. Of the Secondary School principals 50% thought that learners were poor in their understanding of educational issues and also poor in decision-making. The two secondary school principals that were interviewed saw the presence of learners on the School Governing Body as important, despite their lack of understanding of educational issues.

Case 2 (School Principal W)

... Because some of the issues that trouble us in our day-to-day work as a school, they are able to inform their colleagues in their numbers about decisions that have been taken like the payment of school fees. They persuade the learners to pay.

But Case 5 (School Principal Z) did not have full confidence in the learner representatives: She says that:

When they have reported to the rest of the learners, I will follow it up because I do not want them to get second hand information. I want them to get it from myself.

She also says that: *They (learners) would not do anything unless approached to do something.*

4.1.5 School Policy Formulation

The interview data revealed how school policies were formulated. In two schools the School Governing Body made policies. In one school the educators made policies for the school. In one school the School Governing Body and the educators sat together to make the school policies. In the final school the chairperson and the principal had the final say with regard to school policy formulation:

Case 5 (School Principal Z):

We come together and discuss. It begins with the School Governing Body and then educators and finally the chairperson and myself.

4.1.6 Principals' Assessment Of The School Governing Body

The questionnaire data (APPENDIX B, item 21) showed that 20% of school principals thought that the School Governing Body had always infringed on educators' rights, 75% of the school principals thought that their School Governing Body respected the principals' authority. 30% thought that the School Governing Body tended to dictate to the principal. 45% of school principals thought that the School Governing Body had always improved the morale of the school. The interview data showed that two school principals thought that their School Governing Bodies were okay. The other three school principals gave different reasons why their School Governing Bodies were not working well:

Case 3 (School Principal X) said:

The School Governing Body is not working well. They have a feeling that they should be paid for serving in the School Governing Body. So they do not work as much as they should be.

Case 4 (School Principal Y) said:

As for as I see it, it is divided into two. There are parents and educators. This stops the School Governing Body from performing well.

Case 5 (School Principal Z)

My School Governing Body consists of people who think they are dedicated to the school. I like them but most of the time their participation always lacked behind.

On the strengths of the School Governing Bodies, the questionnaire data (APPENDIX B, item 22) showed that 50% of school principals said that the strength of their School Governing Body was cooperativeness while 20% thought it was their availability. 10% thought their *School Governing Body's* strength was being firm on learner-discipline. The interview data showed that one school principal referred to the School Governing Body's availability and its preparedness to come forward and help.

On the weaknesses of the School Governing Body the questionnaire data (APPENDIX B, item 23) showed that 35% of the school principals thought their School Governing Bodies were not educated, meaning that they could not read and

write. Of the group 25% said their School Governing Bodies were either late or absent from meetings. 10% said the School Governing Body had no skill and another 10% saying the School Governing Body relied too much on the educators.

One commented that: *I would be happier if they were a little bit more educated, because very few of them are.*

Research question II: How are these views and experiences shaped and what forces bring about these views.

4.1.7 Gender Representivity

Out of 20 schools, 85% had male School Governing Body chairpersons. The questionnaire data also showed that out of 20 schools, there were 55% male principals. Male principals dominated Secondary schools. A female principal headed only one out of eight Secondary schools.

From the interviews it was established that three schools had more females on the School Governing Body while the other two had more males.

Case 5 (School Principal Z) said that:

...When we call the AGM and when we want to elect people to the School Governing Body, as soon as we mention that the elections are to be done, men would hide under their hats.

The above school principal wanted more males to join the School Governing Body.

Four school principals, however, were satisfied with gender representivity.

CASE 3 (School Principal X) said:

I think this gender representivity is okay because female parents are easy to get, they are not employed, and also they come and work at school. Female parents usually attend meetings more than the male parents. When they are called for parents' meetings the majority usually is the female people also we deal with young kids. We are up to Grade 4 only.

Female School Governing Body members were generally shy.

Case 4 (School Principal X) said:

They (females) are trying but they are usually shy. We need to do workshops on gender equity. By perhaps giving them workshops and explain to them that they are equal to male members.

In 15 out of 20 schools, attendance at School Governing Body meetings was either very good or good. From the five interviews it was established that two School Governing Bodies had members who participated well in meetings. In two schools female members would keep quiet in meetings. In one school the female members were active in meetings.

Case 1 (School Principal V) said:

What I have experienced with this School Governing Body particularly the females is that they do not hide how they feel about things. If there were some things they don't like, they would say so as soon as possible.

When the school principals were asked to describe a School Governing Body meeting that went very well, two school principals could not recall any.

Case 2 (School Principal W) said:

I do not know if one could say there is a meeting in which everything goes well, because there may be some of the issues that we might not be able to resolve in a meeting.

The three school principals who described School Governing Body meetings that went well had different reasons why the meetings went well, but reasons had to do with the nature of the issues that were being discussed.

Case 3 (School Principal X) gave the following reasons:

It is because we were all talking and no one was quiet. The relationship that we were discussing with the neighbouring school was an interesting one. People were enthusiastic about it. This school also took some of our learners on a bus to join them during the day. So the parents were happy about the partnership.

When asked to describe a meeting that went badly two of the five school principals interviewed alluded to the "Educator/Parent split".

Case 4 (School Principal Y) had this to say:

There was conflict involving a parent member and an educator. The situation was so bad that they nearly fought while the meeting was still on.

Case 1 (School Principal V) explained that the meeting which did not go well was when an intruder interrupted the meeting.

The intrusion by an intruder. He tried to bring in his political ideas to the school. He wanted to use the school for his political ambitions and the School Governing Body was totally against that.

Case 5 (School Principal Z) said:

When there is conflict within the School Governing Body personnel, the meeting does not go well. At one instance the School Governing Body chairperson was at loggerheads with the Deputy. Every time there was an issue that was being discussed it was sort of distorted by the fact that the two were getting at each other.

The last two school principals explained that issues concerning fees and school discipline were difficult to handle. The attendance at School Governing Body meetings was also cited as a problem by one school principal.

4.1.8 Role Of Parents

When asked about the role of parents in school governance, school principals gave varying responses. But generally what came up was that the parents merely represented the community on the School Governing Body. A more conclusive response was given by

Case 2 (School Principal W) who said:

They help take decisions as far as the policies are concerned. They are very active in the form of fundraising, because they believe that people must pay for themselves. And they see to it that funds are collected.

When asked what hinders participation in school governance most school principals thought that some members of the School Governing Body did not care enough about the school. They thought that only people interested in helping the school should be on the School Governing Body.

Case 1 (School Principal V) thought that the problems could be political:

At the present moment I have not seen anything that might hinder the school governance, unless we have some interference from the community. You know we will have elections soon. Political parties will come to the school to talk on their behalf. This makes things difficult because we cannot, as a school, be associated with a political party.

When asked what could be done to foster participation in the governance of the school, two school principals said School Governing Bodies need workshops, particularly on financial management. The other two school principals thought that parents needed to be encouraged to pay school fees. One school principal thought that participation in school governance could be fostered by involving people who cared about the school.

4.1.9 Policy Implementation

The questionnaire data showed that 40% of school principals said that the staff always implemented School Governing Body policies willingly; with 55% saying it only sometimes happened. The data also showed that 30% of the school principals thought that the School Governing Body's ability to adapt to education policies was poor. The

interviews data showed that 3 school principals saw policy implementation as problematic.

Case (1 School Principal V) said:

When we talk about the constitution and policies there are some difficulties, for example, about time we have times to begin school in the mornings, but at the same time some educators would come late and say they live very far from work. So it becomes difficult to implement what has been made policy.

Case 5 (School Principal Z) explains the difficulty she has experienced with policy implementation:

It is not easy to implement the policies. Take for instance the admission policy. We know that we cannot take certain age groups in Grade 8, but you find that at 17 years of age they are still at Grade 8. If we try to admit according to what our policy says we may lose learners to other schools.

Case 4 (School Principal Y) explained:

The only policy that was formulated by the School Governing Body was not implemented because educators did not accept it.

Research question III: how do these views and experiences of the School Governing Body affect the governance and administration of schools?

4.1.10 School Governing Body Meetings

The questionnaire data showed that the two issues discussed the most in the School Governing Body meetings were finances and security, followed by finances and appointments. 35% of the School Governing Bodies discussed finances and security while 30% discussed finances and appointments in the last five School Governing Body meetings. Finances and maintenance; finances and results; discipline and results and, appointments and security each appeared only once.

16 out of 17 school principals said that finances were always discussed in School Governing Body meetings.

From the interviews it was also evident that the topic of finances dominated meetings.

Case 5 (School Principal Z) had this to say:

I would say they enjoy listening to the principal or treasurer giving a report on the financial statement. That is what they enjoy the most and also seeing the school looking good.

When asked what sorts of workshops the School Governing Body needed to be exposed to, one school principal gave the following response:

Case 1 (School Principal V)

Finance. At present moment, we are Section 20, we need to move to Section 21, and for them to be confident enough about running a section 21 school they need some workshops. These workshops will serve to address the fears that they may have about controlling their own finances.

4.1.11 Principals' Understanding Of School Governing Body Duties

Three of the school principals interviewed believed that the duties of the School Governing Body were merely maintenance and repairs.

Case 3 (School Principal X) said

Repairs and maintenance. Also to encourage parents to pay school fees and attend the meetings.

One respondent said that the School Governing Body was a support structure therefore the School Governing Body is there to support the school. The last respondent said that the School Governing Body's work was to do budget and discuss the Post Provisioning Norm (PPN) of the school. PPN has to do with the learner-educator ratio of the school.

4.1.12 Principals' Understanding Of The Role Of Learners On The School Governing Body

The two Secondary school principals interviewed thought that the learners on the School Governing Body were playing an important role. The role of learners was seen as a one-way communication in which learner representatives would inform the rest of the student body about decisions taken by the School Governing Body, and also persuade them to conform.

Case 2 (School Principal W) said:

... Because some of the issues that trouble us in our day-to-day work as a school, they are able to inform their colleagues in their numbers about decisions that have been taken.

4.1.13 Principals' Assessment Of Educators On The School Governing Body

It has been established from the discussion earlier that school principals did not have much confidence in the educators serving on the School Governing Body. The two school principals went on to say that workshops are needed for educators so that they understand their role on the School Governing Body.

4.1.14 Principals' Leadership Styles

The interview data showed that 3 school principals thought that they were democratic leaders, but they also said that there are times when one needs to be autocratic. These are some of the explanations:

Case 2 (School Principal W)

I think I am somewhere between being autocratic and democratic, I would say transformational also. It depends on the situation. Like on discipline and attainment of the highest standard of work. But I will also be democratic to make people feel that they belong to the school as an organization.

Case 1 (School Principal V) said:

I like a bottom up approach. It helps because it is where you get the ideas of these people.

Case 3 (School Principal X) gave the following example:

We also came together to discuss what colour our soccer jersey should be. It was going to be very difficult to take that decision for them. They would resent in different ways. But because they decided on the colour themselves there were no problems. As a leader you also need not to be there when they make some of the decisions, just to make them free to say things.

Case 5 (School Principal Z) said:

Not autocratic definitely. Participatory leadership. I believe people must be part of the decisions we make.

When asked to give an example of decisions taken for the school recently, the school principal said:

I took a decision that I was going to be the one who looks for funding to renovate the school. I wrote a proposal and got funds.

When asked what was the School Governing Body's contribution in this decision, the school principal said:

Since the funding came from outside, I think they felt that they did not have much to say.

From the above response it was evident that the school principal did not understand participatory leadership very well.

4.2 PART B: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.2.1 Power Relations

From both the questionnaire and interview data power relations among School Governing Body stakeholders became evident with the school principal having more power than the other members. This is what Levâćić, in Arnott and Raab (2000), alludes to about the sharing of decision – making power amongst key stakeholders at school level – head teachers, teachers, parents, students and other community members. In this study it seems that the struggle was between the principal and the rest of the School Governing Body members.

International literature concurs with this finding. When schools in England transformed leadership during the periods of 1986 and 1988 (Grace 1997; and Dean 2001) the school heads tended to use the school board and the Governing Body as consultative rather than as decision-making bodies. Power and authority still remained with the school head. South African writers confirm the above. Mosoge and Van der Westhuisen (1997) and Steyn (1998) believe that power is still in the hands of school principals, and that teachers are deprived of all management activities. Cherry in Stein (1998) even suggests that principals must learn to share tasks and power. In most cases in this research project power is in the hands of the school principals.

Writers also acknowledge the fact that the involvement of all stakeholders in school management comes with some important challenges for all involved (Mosoge and

Van der Weisthuizen 1997, Looock and Globler 1977, Rambiyana et al 1996, Le Roux and Coetzee 2001, Sayed Carrim 1997). This is the challenge facing the school principals in this study, who had long been accustomed to authoritarian modes of management and having very little prior experience and theoretical grounding in the tenets of participatory management. Gokar (1998) writes that decisions that were once principals' responsibility now require the blessings of the School Governing Body before implementation. In this research project stakeholder participation is a challenge for school principals. It has also been established that while the majority of South Africans embraced stakeholder participation, some anti-democratic tendencies could crop up at any stage. Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) mention that while the trends towards democratisation were evident in South Africa, they occurred in only a minority of schools.

In this study school principals gave reasons why the School Governing Bodies were not suitable as structures to lead and govern schools. Here some school principals believed that the Governing Body members were interfering and also illiterate, supporting Grace's (1997) view that some head teachers believed that leadership was in the hands of "inexpert" governors and that the new power relations for some head teachers had a potential for "interference" into educational matters.

The evidence of problematic power relations between the schools principals and the School Governing Bodies in this research project could be summed up by the following response by a school principal:

Case 2 (School Principal W) said:

I think he (the chairperson) believes that as School Governing Body they must take all the decisions and that they must actually rule the school. At times it is good, and at times it worries me.

4.2.2 Contextual Factors

4.2.2.1 Gender Issues

Gender issues in the context of Sweetwaters circuit, was still a problem. Women were not participating on an equal basis as men did, in education women assumed a traditional role of being subservient. Females were mostly shy and did not participate well in School Governing Body meetings.

There was a perception that only men could head schools of older learners. Out of eight secondary school principals only one was female. The role of a woman was depicted as more caring and nurturing. Female educators were seen as only appropriate for younger learners. One school principal explained that when parents were called to meetings the majority would always be women, the reason being that most men were at work. Women were mainly at home because they were not employed. One school principal thought that it was 'okay' that the majority of the School Governing Body was women because; they only dealt with 'young kids'. Their school only went up grade four.

Gender stereotypes were also evident when men would childishly 'hide under their hats' to avoid being elected to the School Governing Body. It was also interesting to note that 85% of the School Governing Bodies had male chairpersons. This further

explained the subservient role women were expected to play. In the context of Sweetwaters Circuit men would play a leading role and women would follow, men would talk women would listen. There was only one female principal out of a total of eight secondary school principals, a statistic of 12,5%. Female educators were still at a disadvantage in the Sweetwaters Circuit. This is typical of authoritarian leadership as discussed in the autocratic processes of the Normative Decision Theory. Patriarchy was evident in the Sweetwaters Circuit. Weiner (1994) describes patriarchy as the historical dominance of men over women. "Radical feminists point to the fact that women are oppressed by men and in a worse position than whatever the economic and political system of society" (Maesor and Sikes, 1992:27). According to Measor and Sikes (1992) radical feminism argues that it is patriarchy that oppresses women, and that patriarchy must override the other forms of inequality. The above was also true for Sweetwaters Circuit since there was no evidence suggesting that the gender inequalities were a result of either the economic or the political system of the society.

4.2.2.2 Community Relations

Some school principals in this project explained that party politics had been the cause of turmoil at their schools, with "intruders" visiting the schools with the aim of selling their political ideas. One school principal was concerned that, since it was going to be government elections the following year, his school would experience further problems. Thusi (1993) maintains that a number of factors within and outside the school have contributed to the disorder encountered in the schools. Thusi (1993) also mentions that although principals continued in their positions as heads, they had almost no authority to suppress the unrest that threatened the normal functioning of their schools.

Unrest in Thusi (1993) above refers to the turbulent environment schools found themselves in. In support, Gokar (1998:76) writes that parents allow political affiliations to impinge on the professional management of the school.

Apart from the political disturbances there was also a concern about school being invaded by the outsiders. This meant that the school had to protect itself against its own community. This suggested that the community did not own the schools. School principals were also concerned about the fact that when School Governing Body elections were held people who did not have the interest of the school could be voted in. The schools did not have a working relationship with their community. This is supported by Purmasir (1993), who believes that the schools' communication with their publics is infrequent and often ineffective, while communications with parents is cursory.

4.2.2.3 Educators' Places Of Residence

The places of residence of educators had an impact on school governance. School principals themselves did not live in Sweetwaters. Out of twenty school principals only one lived in Sweetwaters. Principals complained about late coming, saying that it was not possible to implement this school policy, because educators would come late for school themselves, because they lived far from the school. There was apathy on the part of principals to act on late coming.

In the context of Sweetwaters Circuit schools the majority of educators (principals included) travelled for an average of 30km to and from school. While Sweetwaters is

a rural area, most educators either lived in suburbs around Pietermaritzburg or in townships. This scenario also explained why educators were either late or absent from School Governing Body meetings. Places of residence for educators had a negative impact on school management and administration. About places of residence for educators, Gokar (1998:75) writes that teachers suspect that teachers from within the community are likely to be at an advantage and that teachers who do not live in the community are likely to be accused by the parent governors of being insensitive to local needs.

4.2.3 Leadership Styles

The study assumes that the school principal as the leader of his/her school is able to assess the work situation and also correctly diagnose key aspects of the people he/she leads. In other words the principal can and should change his or her behaviour as situational and follower characteristics change. This is despite the fact that the principal is not the chairperson of the School Governing Body. The results of this study suggested the opposite. School principals in this study, despite saying their leadership styles depended on the situation, were not willing to change. (See p. 60). Shah (1990) suggests that principals generally shy away from change because they lack an understanding of the change process and how to manage change.

Anti-democratic tendencies, as suggested by Mosage and Van der Westhuisen (1997) Sayed and Carri (1997) and Davidoff and Lazarus (2002), are also evident in the choice of leadership styles pursued by the school principals. While principals in this study liked to be seen as adjusting to the new styles of management, they were also reluctant to completely do away with the old ways of leadership. Shah (1990) also

found that principals would resort to an autocratic style of decision-making under special circumstances or in the emergencies. For example, if the education authority lays down a policy, which restricts the principal to make a decision for the school within the limits of the policy, then it would be acceptable for the principal to make an autocratic decision. In this study the above has been evident when three out of five principals who were interviewed said that there were times when one needed to be autocratic.

Tshabalala (1987), investigating problems perceived by headmasters in the Bergville Circuit, found that principals were unanimous in their identification of the qualities of a good principal who was seen to be neat in appearance, fair to his subordinate, well qualified, honest and capable of producing more than his post required formally. The above is a superficial description of good principal. In the above study principals were silent about participatory leadership, stakeholder participation and decision-making. This is understandable if considering the period in which the above study was conducted. Democracy was not yet in place for South African public institutions. When school principals, both experience and inexperienced, finally understood the nature of schools they were dealing with in the post-election period, they found it difficult to change their leadership behaviours. Tshabalala's research supports the findings of this study. Some of the difficulties faced by the school principals in this study had to do with what Mclagan and Nel (1995) refer to as tough issues in participation. School principals felt that because of participation, leadership would be lost, decision-making would take too long; and group thinking would reduce quality and efficiency.

The school principals in this study followed a leadership strategy that Sims and Lorenzi (1992) referred to as 'The Strong-Man', where the leader seemed to know all and his word was law in the organisation. This is typical of autocratic principals of the apartheid era.

The reasons why the school principals would seem to want to employ democracy and participation were trivial. One principal said: " I will also be democratic to make people feel that they belong to the school as an organization". Democracy was thrown in just to avoid opposition and make people feel they were part of the decision-making process. In the language of Hopkins et al, (1994) we have the 'appearance' of change but not the 'reality' of change. This is not a mature situation on the part of school principals. It why there were problems, particularly with policy implementation.

The Sweetwaters Principals demonstrated a loss of hope and felt that certain standards were not easy to reach. There was lack of confidence on the part of principals as suggested by the Situational Leadership Theory. The attainment of high standards was not achieved in Sweetwaters schools. They were more 'task-oriented'; Dessler (1985) focusing on the job and worrying more about the production than concern for people. For example the secondary school principals worried more about matriculation results than anything else.

4.2.4 Educator-Parent Split On The School Governing Body

School principals in this research project were critical of the educators' lack of commitment to the School Governing Body. School principals believed that educators

did not see themselves as part of the School Governing Body. Educators believed that school governance was for the school principal. Educators neglected school governance in the pursuit of their own interests. This, according to school principals, caused the split. This reinforces Gokar (1998) findings that, South African parents are using the Schools' Act No. 84 of 1996 to exert their influence in areas that they were previously not accustomed to, and that teachers are not yet prepared to allow parents into areas they consider their professional domain. His findings that educators themselves contribute to this split are echoed in this research project. School principals in Sweetwaters were not able to merge the educator component and the parent component for effective school governance.

According to Gokar (1998:77), parental involvement affords teachers the opportunity of familiarizing themselves with the socio-economic conditions of the communities in which they teach. The educator-parent split, as discussed earlier in this chapter, deprived both the school principal and the educators the opportunity to understand the nature of the community they served. But Gokar (1998) also believes that with the involvement of parents in the school governing structures, credibility in the education system is gradually being restored.

The educator-parent split was also evident in the manner in which school principals perceived the role of parents on the School Governing Body, as discussed next.

4.2.5 Principals' Perceptions Of Parents On The School Governing Body

School principals in this study saw the parent component on the School Governing Body as a consultative rather than a decision-making voice. This is typical of the

consultative processes as seen in the Normative Decision Model discussed by Hughes et al (1996). Principals were also critical of the attitudes of some of the parents who seemed to disturb the smooth running of the school. These were parents who seem to worry about their own interests and thereby neglecting the schools interests. The parents' interests, according to the principals, included remuneration and politicising the school. This state of affairs suggests that schools principals were not able to understand and accommodate parents' needs about their schools. Communication seemed to breakdown. In support, Van der Westhuisen and Legotlo (1996) refer to the emergence of new realities facing school principals. Some of these realities had to do with skills to be demonstrated by school principals. School principals in this study, did not do well in demonstrating skills pertaining to democratic participation and co-responsibility. Principals relied on the position of power rather than task structure as seen in Hoy and Miskel (1982).

Parents, as perceived by the school principals in this study, were not qualified enough to deal with issues of school governance; their education levels were questionable and they always needed to be led by the school principal. They also wanted to be paid for serving on the School Governing Body. The school principals did not understand the duties of the School Governing Bodies very well. Principals thought they had only to do with manual labour, in terms of maintaining school buildings. This explains why the parents expected to be paid for their contribution. This perception of parents' duties by school principals deprived the parents of an opportunity to engage more on issues of policy formulation and implementation, management of matters relating to helping the principal and staff perform their duties, and carrying out all the functions

given to the School Governing Body by SASA and the applicable laws. This led to difficulties with the supervisory roles and poor esteem on the part of the principals.

Most principals described their chairpersons as willing, co-operative, and honest and also visiting the school regularly. A parallel could be drawn between the description of chairpersons by the school principals and what Grace (1997) refers to as 'good governors that gave no trouble'.

On the contrary, one school principal described his chairperson as being pushy and that this chairperson believed that, as a School Governing Body, they should rule the school. The above indicated that the school principals did not understand the duties of the School Governing Body's chairperson and those of the School Governing Body as a governance structure very well. It is clear that the principals' understanding of the parents from the School Governing Body was problematic. The principal preferred 'directive' leadership by himself. Principals expected a passive involvement from the parent component on the School Governing Body.

4.2.6 Principals' Perceptions Of Educators On The School Governing Body

School principals in this study were not only critical of educators' contribution to school governance but also thought that, in most cases, educators disturbed the functioning of the School Governing Body. One school principal commented that educators only thought about their own interests and neglected school governance. The understanding of stakeholders' participation by school principals was also problematic. School principals seemed to be lacking in supporting leadership. The motivation levels, as suggested in the Path-Goal Theory, were not taken care of by

school principals. Steyn (1998) believes that if the transformation of South African education is to succeed, teachers must be at liberty to make informed decisions and share power equally in schools. Mosage and Van der Westhuizen (1997) also suggest that teachers are deprived across the board on all management activities. This was also true for most of the schools studied. The state of affairs resulted in certain difficulties in terms of policy implementation at schools.

The school principals thought that educators needed to attend workshops in terms of the roles they needed to play on the School Governing Body, and also to change their attitudes. Principals were unable to successfully deal with the educator component on their School Governing Body. As mentioned earlier, the principals preferred 'directive' leadership.

4.2.7 Silences On Other Important Issues

4.2.7.1 Children's Rights

The South African Constitution emphasises human rights. "Due to the new constitution, which is based on, amongst others, fundamental rights, access to education irrespective of colour or creed is guaranteed" (van der Westhuizen and Legotlo 1996). The South African Schools' Act No. 84 of 1996 also provides for the rights of learners. School Governing Bodies as school governing structures have a task to provide for the rights of learners for each school.

The school principals were silent about learners' rights. The School Governing Bodies did not seem to be conscious about learners' rights and, therefore, the efforts to provide for these rights by Governing Bodies were not evident.

Although the abolition of corporal punishment was referred to several times, the democratic right for all learners to participate in decision-making about matters affecting them at school did not appear. School principals were also silent about non-discrimination and equality; privacy, respect and dignity of learners; non-violence, freedom and security of learners; freedom of expression and the right to demonstrate and present petitions; the right of learners to a clean and safe environment that is conducive to education; and also the right to education.

4.2.7.2 HIV/AIDS

Principals and School Governing Bodies were also silent on the issue of HIV/AIDS. The policies that were referred to by school principals were those of admission, conduct for learners and the constitution of the School Governing Body. Principals did not mention issues surrounding HIV/AIDS under issues discussed the most by the School Governing Bodies.

4.2.7.3 Accountability

The School Governing Bodies, particularly the principals, did not see themselves as accountable for school governance. School principals did not see the School Governing Bodies' capacity building as their responsibility. While school principals realised that workshops on certain issues were important for School Governing Body members, they themselves did not seem to have a way of providing such opportunities for their School Governing Bodies. Gokar (1998) supports this finding when he mentions, that the absence of capacity building programs is minimising the productive involvement of both teachers and parents.

4.2.8 Schools As Learning Organizations

The findings of this study suggest that the schools studied were not learning organizations. Although this was not part of this study, from the responses it was evident that principals did not consider their schools as learning organizations. Senge's (1990) five disciplines of a learning organisation were not evident from any of the data collected.

4.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As has been mentioned earlier, this case study is restricted to the school principals' views and experiences of their School Governing Bodies. Because of the size of the study other stakeholders, like parents, learners, and educators, were not involved as respondents. On reflection, perhaps School Governing Body chairpersons should have been involved in the study.

Because of the small size of the project, document analysis was not done. The data collected were only from what the school principals said through questionnaires and interviews. Furthermore some issues that were raised were not explored further e.g. *the infringement of the educators' rights and participation in policy development*. The researcher believes that these issues are exhaustive and could be dealt with in another study. Furthermore, the results of this study may only be related to schools found in the previously disadvantaged section of schools in the Pietermaritzburg Region. The Sweetwaters circuit is composed of schools with limited resources. The homogeneous nature of the schools studied resulted in the sample being composed of Black South African people only.

The researcher, although not from the same circuit of schools, also served as a school principal during this research process. Although not detected, this may have had an influence on the responses given.

We will now move to Chapter Five and look at the recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this final Chapter, capacity building programs for school principals and their School Governing Body chairpersons are discussed. The focus is on participatory-leadership style, change of attitude, accountability and awareness. The need for further research is discussed last.

5.2 CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND THEIR SGB CHAIRPERSONS

The results of the study indicate that much still has to be done in terms of preparing school principals and School Governing Body chairpersons, for school management and school governance in a democratic South Africa. "For principals who find a formal course lacking in their own education, school-board or school-administration, workshops can help to compensate for the absence of rudiments" (Rossow and Warner, 2000:172). This includes developing capacity building programs for School Governing Body members with a sustainability plan, as a matter of urgency. The capacity building programs should inter alia involve the following:

5.2.1 Participatory-Leadership-Style

School principals and chairpersons should be empowered so that they are able to suit the demands of change. School principals should acquire a deeper meaning of stakeholder participation. Participation should not be viewed as window dressing and must not be used for trivial reasons. This endeavour should afford school principals an opportunity to share responsibility with all stakeholders thereby avoiding

unnecessary confrontations. Principals and chairpersons must be empowered and mentored to change their schools into learning organizations. Induction courses and regular in-service training for school principals could be of great help together with an on going mentorship programme.

5.2.2 Change Of Attitude

School principals cannot afford to label other stakeholders as intruders that are interfering with their jobs. The school principals' attitudes should change. The community deserves to know about what goes on in schools. Transparency should not be compromised. The education levels of parents on the School Governing Body should not be of any concern because education is not prerequisite for any parent to be on the School Governing Body. The change of attitude would also assist the school principals to deal with the educator-parent splits more successfully. To change the principals' attitude, they need to be persuaded to accept that they are, themselves, change facilitators (Rossow and Warner, 2000:282).

The gender stereotypes were not only evident in the composition of School Governing Bodies but also in the position of school heads, therefore, the role of the district officials becomes important as well. While gender equity has been much publicised, gender stereotypes still persist among our schools. These negative attitudes against women by principals, School Governing Body chairpersons and district officials need to be changed.

5.2.3 Accountability

School principals should understand that they are accountable for School Governing Bodies' performance. It is therefore important that the principals are empowered sufficiently to deal with the splits on the School Governing Body. They must be able to co-ordinate the activities of all the School Governing Body components i.e. educator, parent and learner components. Principals must be able to render all necessary assistance to the School Governing Body in the performance of their functions in terms of the SASA Act 84 of 1996. School principals should also work towards making their schools learning organizations.

5.2.4 Awareness

The government and the Department of Education have introduced a number of initiatives. These include the one on Discipline Safety and Security at schools and Batho Pele. Similarly departmental manuals such as the ones written by Sacred Heart on understanding school governance (2000), the *Towards Effective School Management* manuals (2002), the policy handbook for educators (2003) and the *Children's Rights Resource Handbook* (Undated) have also been supplied to schools, but there is not much evidence that they are being used in the Sweetwaters' schools. "In order for a principal to be successful in student control and discipline, a grasp of student rights is essential"(Rossow and Warner, 2000:196).

While the above initiatives and others are aimed at successful management and governance, they do not seem to be well communicated to school principals. The challenge is for the department of education officials to design programs to engage

school principals properly. Team working, twinning schools or school clusters could be used to increase awareness.

School principals should be aware of a further two important issues in their school change programme, i.e. the rights of children and their critical role in the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The programs should be aimed at enhancing principal's awareness and guide them in bringing about changes which will lead to effective school management.

5.3 NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The overall findings of this study were based on the responses given by school principals. There is a need for a wider study in which all stakeholders could be involved. These should include learners, educators, parents, donors, community members, department officials, and policy makers. A wider study has the potential to reveal both the successes and challenges facing School Governing Bodies and thus the governance of schools. A heterogeneous sample that is representative of all South African Schools could also throw weight on the findings and thus offer a better understanding of the country's schools.

Further research could explore why certain departmental policies and initiatives seem to have been overlooked by principals and the School Governing Bodies in the governance of their schools.

5.4 CONCLUSION

It is almost ten years since the first democratic elections in South Africa and the SASA Act No 84 of 1996 came into place. This study has only served to evaluate how certain sections of SASA have been implemented at a small group of schools. A lack of stakeholder participation and non-participatory leadership styles have appeared as key factors impeding effective school governance.

While school governance is the responsibility of the whole School Governing Body the school principal takes the centre stage. The school principal, therefore, should be well prepared for this mammoth task of running the school.

This research project has revealed the views and experiences school principals have of their School Governing Bodies. These include the assessment principals make on different components of the School Governing Body. Furthermore, the forces, which bring about these views and experiences, were discussed. The most important being the principals' leadership styles. This study has also shown that principals' views and experiences may negatively affect the governance and administration of schools, for example the problems around policy implementation.

In conclusion, Chapter One provided the context of the study by outlining three periods in the history of South African education where the governance of schools was compared. Chapter Two discussed the theoretical framework of the study. The contingency theories of leadership were adopted as the main theoretical framework. Chapter Three dealt with the methodology adopted for this study. Because of the size and nature of the study the case study method was preferred. Chapter Four dealt with

the presentation and the discussion of results. From the findings patterns were matched and related to certain theoretical propositions. In Chapter Five recommendations based on the findings were made. The recommendations emphasised capacity-building programmes for school principals.

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APPENDIX A

P.O. Box 8663
Cumberwood
3235
20. 06. 2002

**The District Manager
Vulindlela District
PIETERMARITZBURG**

Dear Sir

RE-REQUESTING ACCESS TO RESEARCH SITE (SWEETWATERS CIRCUIT)

I hereby ask for permission to conduct my research project in the schools under Sweetwaters Circuit.

This research will serve as a partial fulfilment for a Masters' Degree with the University of Natal (PMB). The project focuses on School Governing Bodies.

The title

Principals' views and experiences of school governing bodies in the Sweetwaters Circuit

The Sweetwaters Circuit was chosen for this study because of its proximity to the researcher.

Please find the research instrument to be used for this study attached.

Thanks in advance

**Ndlovu T.M.
Contact details: 0823325835 or 033-3241124**

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL (P.M. BURG) Faculty of Education

***Principals' views of School Governing Bodies in the Sweetwaters Circuit of
Pletermaritzburg Region in the KwaZulu-Natal Province***

Background

This research project is conducted by a M.Ed student in Education Management at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (P.M. Burg).

The SASA Act (1996) introduced an important change in the way schools were to be governed. The School Governing Bodies came into place, replacing School Committees, School Boards and other structures that controlled the functioning of the schools during the pre-1994 period. It is now almost ten years since this policy on School Governance was introduced.

The purpose of this study is to determine school principals' (and acting principals) views towards their School Governing Bodies. It is hoped that the principals' views and experiences will help us understand how school principals interact with their governing bodies and also determine how this affects school management and schooling in general.

In this questionnaire the principal's name is not asked but personal details are asked. Any information provided will be used discreetly and confidentially for research purposes only. You are therefore encouraged to answer all the questions fully and frankly. Should you have any questions regarding this questionnaire, please feel free to call me (Ndlovu T.M.) at 0823325835 or at 0333241124 or my supervisor Dr V.Reddy at 0332605835 or Professor K. Harley at 0332605362.

Instructions

This survey divided into three sections. This questionnaire may take 20 minutes to complete. Please answer all sections as fully as possible. Where you are required to write comments, please do so as fully and legibly as possible. Remember your input is vital for this study. A completed questionnaire is expected by the 28th of June 2002.

Thank you for your co-operation.

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL (P.M. BURG)

***PRINCIPALS' VIEWS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN THE
SWEETWATERS CIRCUIT OF PIETERMARITZBURG REGION IN THE
KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE***

The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate principals' views and experiences of their governing bodies. Please do not sign your name on any part of the questionnaire but do indicate the school to which you belong. All information is confidential and will be used for research purpose only.

SECTION A (ABOUT THE SCHOOL)

1. School (No. Only).....
2. Type of school. (Indicate with a Tick) Primary: Combined: Secondary
Intermediate: Other (specify).....
3. Lowest Grade..... Highest grade.....
4. Total number of learners (enrolment).....
5. Total number of educators (staff).....
6. Total number of non-teaching staff.....

SECTION B (PRINCIPAL'S PERSONAL INFORMATION)

1. Gender (Tick one)

Female	Male
--------	------

2. Age (Tick one box)

20-25	
26-30	
31-35	
36-40	
41-45	
46-50	
Over 50	

3. Experience (in years)

Total teaching experience	
As a H.O.D.	
As a Deputy Principal	
As a Principal	
Other work experience (specify)	

4. Do you live in Sweetwaters?.....
5. Did you at any time attend school in Sweetwaters?.....
6. Please list all qualifications obtained after matriculation (Indicate current studies)
-
-

SECTION C (ABOUT THE SGB)

1. How many educators are in your SGB?.....
 2. How many parents are in your SGB?.....
 3. Are there any learners.....if yes how many?.....
 4. When was this SGB elected (date)?.....
 5. About how many parents attended?.....
 6. Is the chairperson female or male?.....
 7. What is the age of the chairperson?.....
 8. What is the occupation of the chairperson?.....
 9. What is the occupation of other members of the SGB?
 - a).....
 - b).....
 - c).....
 - d).....
 - e).....
 - f).....
 - g).....
 10. How do you describe your chairperson?.....
-

11. SGB MEETINGS (JULY 2001-JULY 2002)

Date of Meeting	How many Attended	Who did not attend	Key issues Discussed

What day of the week and time are SGB meetings held?

Day	Time
-----	------

12. How would you rate your SGB on the following issues?

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Commitment				
Skills				
Understanding of Education				
Decision making				
Attendance				
School development				
Human relations				

13. What is your opinion? Can your SGB deal with the following successfully?

Tick Yes, No Ns (not sure)

	Yes	No	Ns
Staff Appointments			
Sporting Activities			
Admissions			
Discipline			
Financial Matters			
New Education Policies			
Take Useful decisions			

14. What is your opinion on the following?

	Yes	No	Ns
Is it right or fair to include learners in the SGB?			
Are staff views considered in SGB meetings?			
Does the staff implement SGB policies willingly?			
Does SGB involvement improve teacher morale?			
Does the SGB infringe on the rights of educators?			
Do educators dictate to the SGB?			
Do decisions of the SGB affect the school favourably?			
Is the authority of the principal respected by SGB?			
The SGB normally tends to dictate to the principal.			
Parents representatives should be increased in SGBs			

15. SGB members. Please indicate how many members make up your SGB.

Members	Total number	Female	Male
Educators			
Parents			
Learners			
Non-teaching staff			
Other (specify)			

16. How would you rate the chairperson in terms of the following? (Place a Tick where appropriate)

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
As a leader				
Ability to listen				
His/Her understanding of educational issues				
One human relations				
Ability to participate in SGB meetings				

17. How would you rate the SGB parent members on the following?

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Commitment to school development e.g. fundraising and sports activities				
Understanding of their roles and responsibilities				
Skills to do their duties				
Understanding of educational issues				
Decision making				
Attendance to SGB meetings				

18. How would you rate the SGB educator members on the following?

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Commitment to school development e.g. fundraising and sports activities				
Understanding of their roles and responsibilities				
Skills to their duties				
Understanding of educational issues				
Decision making				

Attendance to SGB meetings				
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19. How would you rate your learner members on the following? (if applicable)

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Commitment to school development e.g. fundraising and sports activities				
Understanding of their roles and responsibilities				
Skills to their duties				
Understanding of educational issues				
Decision making				
Attendance to SGB meetings				

20. How would you rate your SGB ability in dealing with the following issues?

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Staff Appointments				
Promoting Sports Activities				
Learner Discipline				
Managing Finance				
Their ability to adapt to new education policies e.g. policy on corporal punishment, on pregnant learners, etc.				
Dealing with educators				

21. What is your experience on the following? Do these always, sometimes or never happen in your SGB? (Please tick one box per statement)

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Learners participate meaningfully in SGB meetings			
Staff views are considered in the SGB meetings			
The staff implement SGB policies willingly			
The SGB involvement improves the school morale (happy atmosphere)			
The SGB infringes on the right of educators			
SGB decisions help the running of the school			
The principal's authority is respected by the SGB			
The SGB normally tends to dictate to the principal			
The SGB finds it easy to agree on important issues			

22. What would you consider as strengths and weaknesses of your SGB?

Strengths _____

23. Weaknesses _____

Thank you for you co-operation

APPENDIX C**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. How are you experiencing the SGB at your school? How do you feel about it?
2. How is the SGB participating in the running of your school? Give examples.
3. What kind of duties does the SGB like to do?
4. According to your understanding what kind of duties they ought to be doing?

5. What is the ratio of males as to females on your SGB?
6. Are you satisfied with the gender representivity on your SGB? Why?
7. Do you think this gender representivity could be improved? If so how?
8. How are female members participating in the SGB meetings?

9. What role do learners play in the governance of your school? Explain.
10. What role do educators play in the governance of your of your School? Explain.
11. What role do parents play in the governance of your school? Explain.
12. How successful is your chairperson?

13. Can you describe a SGB meeting that went badly?
14. Can you describe a SGB meeting that went well?
15. What things hinder participation on the SGB of your school?
16. What things help/assist/foster participation on the SGB of your school?

17. How can you improve your school governance?
18. List policies your school have.
19. How were these policies formulated?
20. Describe some critical incidents that happened in relation to these policies.

21. Explain what type of a leader are you? Why?