THE DYNAMICS OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

BY

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SUPERVISOR'S AUTHORISATION

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Signed:__________________________Date: ____________________

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to:

- The Almighty for He stood beside me through thick and thin. I would not have travelled this arduous research journey alone if He was not with me throughout. WhenI became hopeless, the knowledge that He is the Omnipresent revived and strengthened me to continue up to the end.

- My late mom made me sip the initial taste of schooling even though she did not go to school. She laid the momentous foundations of my learning from which this achievement emanated.

- My late lovely wife passed on while she was on the verge of completing her Ph.D. Her demise invigorated me even more to conclude this Ph.D. May her soul continue to rest in peace.

- To all my family members, friends and colleagues who supported me in countless ways towards completing this research journey.

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ABSTRACT

The South African education system has instituted policies and programmes to expect schools to function better, but this does not seem to be the case when measured by school performance. School performance in South Africa is a multi-faceted phenomenon that needs to be studied and understood in-depth, hence this study on the dynamics of school performance. This is a qualitative research study positioned in the interpretivist paradigm to understand multiple realities about the dynamics of school performance as expounded by Rehman and Alharthi's (2016) that interpretivists believe in multiple socially constructed realities. The study adopted a multiple case study approach involving three primary schools in one district of the KwaZulu- Natal province. The following questions were posed: what factors influence school performance? How do teachers and school management team members see these factors influencing school performance? How can school performance be enhanced? Research participants included the school principals, departmental heads, and teachers in each school. The data generation instruments included interviews, observations, and document reviews. Central to school performance, the major conclusions reached show that school culture was the overarching dynamic of school performance. Within school culture, the key sub-dynamics were the nature of leadership and management, the quality of teaching and learning, and school community relationships. Schools need not only rely on the policies and programmes from the Department of Education (DoE) to improve their performance. Heavy reliance on the directives by the DoE seems not to make schools accountable for their academic performance. In addition to the policies and programmes for improving school performance, schools need to develop internal school performance strategies.

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ACRONYMS	
OBE	Outcomes-based education
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
PILO	Programme for Improving Learning Outcomes
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit
IR	Inadequate Resources
PCP	Poor Career Path
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
UR	Unattractive Remuneration
CE	Contractual employment
CP	Career path
SMT	School Management Team
DH	Departmental Head
PL1	Post level one teacher/educator
HoD	Head of Department
SBM	School-Based Management
CBA	Cost-benefit analysis
CEA	Cost-effectiveness analysis
CUA	Cost-utility analysis
CMA	Cost-minimisation analysis
FS	Family structure
EMB	Education Manpower Bureau
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
SE	Systemic Evaluation
NSES	National School Effectiveness Study
ANA	Annual National Assessment
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of education
WCLAS	Western Cape Learner Assessment Study
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study
SACMEQ	Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SGB	School governing body
DSG	Development Support Group
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
ILSA	International Large-Scale Assessments
HSRC	Human Science Research Council

LIB	Low International Benchmark
GEM	Global Education Monitoring
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
ZIQES	Zimbabwe Indicators of the Quality of Education Study
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation for Educational Achievement
UPE	Universal primary education
MTL	Managing teaching and learning
LTSM	Learner Teacher Support Material
MLQ	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
SLII	Situational Leadership II model
GET	General education and training
FG	Focus group
DP	Deputy principal
DSG	Developmental support group
SDT	School development team
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LoLT	Language of learning and teaching
AV	Average
QT	Quality of Teaching
SC	School Culture
SCR	School community relations
L&M	Leadership and management
MM	Mental model
PC	Productivity Commission
SES	Socioeconomic status
SLQ	Servant-leadership questionnaire
UK	United Kingdom
ILSA	International Large-Scale Assessments
EFA	Education for all

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CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 Introduction

I seek to explore, in this study the dynamics of school performance in selected primary schools in South Africa. In this chapter I describe the research problem and the setting of the study. To acquire this objective, I begin by presenting the background to the entire study. I subsequently explore the dynamics of school performance in the named schools. I, after that, discuss the problem statement, research questions, rationale for the study and my passion for the study. In the concluding section I outline the summary of the report.

My experience as a teacher is that the majority is underperforming while very few South African schools are performing well. Countless factors seem to contribute to school underperformance. For example, teachers attend union meetings during school hours, absenteeism, and poor teacher subject content knowledge. Therefore, I seek to explore and understand factors that affect school performance in this study. I use the term 'school performance' to refer to how well or badly schools work to achieve their goals, including learner performance, teachers being present at school teaching and parents giving the necessary support to their children to improve their performance. Good performance is about efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency is about using minimum resources to achieve maximum goals and producing the desired result. When something is understood to be effective, it means it achieves intended or expected outcomes. The concept of school performance is developed further in the following section.

1.2 Background to the study

The advent of democracy in 1994 unveiled a grim disparity in education in South Africa. Education was extensively segregated. Prior to 1994, skin colour and the population group's race were among the strongest determinants of the kind of education the population received. If you were white, you were entitled to the superior quality of education, while if you were black, you were entitled to inferior quality of education. The amalgamating of the then fragmented departments of education into one department was the great stride the South African government took to address the imbalances of the past. The South African government promulgated multiple legislative mandates to oversee and regulate the amalgamation process. These involved, among others, the South African Schools' Act 108 of

1996 as amended, Outcomes Base Education (OBE), Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), National Curriculum Statement (NCS), Systemic Evaluation (SE), Annual National Assessment (ANA) and currently Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) with its infant Programme for Improving Learning Outcomes (PILO), also known as Jikaimfundo. The sole purpose of these legislative mandates was to improve school performance. However, the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) implicates teachers regarding school performance.

NEEDU (2013) revealed that teachers cannot ensure high-quality education for students either because they will not or cannot. In that case, NEEDU asserts that poor performance results from a lack of discipline amongst staff members, and any remedial action should focus on changing behaviour. Where teachers cannot provide quality education, then intervention should focus on improving and enhancing teachers' knowledge base to equip them with the skills necessary to ensure quality teaching and learning in classrooms. As cited by the NEEDU (2013) report, the challenges of school performance seem to be the start of a more serious situation. Numerous avenues are seemingly contributory factors to school underperformance. Some avenues are cited by Lumadi (2008), who for example, identifies the following factors as challenges contributing to school underperformance: Inadequate Resources (IR), Poor Career Path (PCP), human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic, contractual employment (CE), Unattractive Remuneration (UR), workload and placement. Briefly, each of these factors contributes to the school’s underperformance uniquely. Also, Washington (2016) finds a plethora of factors affecting students’ academic performance in Latinos. These include language obstacles, teacher attitude, lack of time, parental work conflicts, poverty, school climate unfriendly, neighbourhood violence and recruitment issues. Most of these barriers are also applicable to the South African context where most learners are taught using different languages. At entrance level they are taught using mother tongue, and they are later switched to a first additional language. This impacts negatively on learners’ academic performance as the learner has to begin understanding a new language.

Teachers’ qualifications and experience were considered when the DoE promotions were made. This is referred to by Lumadi (2008) as a career path (CP). However, non- consideration of teachers’ qualifications and experience by the DoE for promotion purposes is what Lumadi calls a PCP. A PCP severely discourages teachers from being productive in teaching and learning. Because of these barriers, Lumadi (2008) argues that it would be disreputable to depend on educators' inspirational elements to enhance effective teaching.

Similarly, HIV and AIDS pandemics according to Lumadi (2008) have not only adversely captured the attention of the world but also the attention of South Africa, especially teachers. This adversity caused by HIV and AIDS pandemic seems to negatively impact school performance in that teachers' absence from work increases due to their ill-health. Over and above, teachers require sick and compassionate leave to care for sick family members and attend funerals of family members. Consequently, this hampers school performance. While CE is valuable if upheld, Marsh (2002) feels that teachers employed in this way are being denied the basic rights of employment, which demotivates them to underperform. In the context of this study, I define CE as the employment of teachers temporarily. Teachers employed in this manner do not enjoy benefits that their counterparts employed permanently. According to Lumadi (2008), the UR of teachers contributes immensely to the school's underperformance. For example, Lumadi (2008) argues that in a society that values its teachers and their role in developing future generations, salaries need reviewed on a national level. If teachers are remunerated for good performance, they need to be assessed by the same criteria and circumstances. This is patently impossible in the current educational climate in South Africa. Lumadi posits that teachers are exposed to many conflicting factors and experiences within the classroom that directly impact the performance of the teacher and the learner. Lumadi (2008) declares that it is unfair to further discriminate against teachers who face huge challenges by using the same performance yardsticks as used in a more privileged school to determine salary progression.

Apart from UR faced by South African teachers, Lumadi cites workload as another contributing factor to underperformance. Lumadi (2008) argues that South African teachers are heavily overloaded by their workload as they are expected to fulfil multiple classroom and administrative functions, often with very little support. Lumadi (2008, p. 37) recommends that in order to develop an effective curriculum that would yield to good performance, factors such as managing and assessing learners' portfolios, teaching in an outcomes-based approach, controlling work in overcrowded classrooms, catering for mixed grades, extracurricular responsibilities, implementation of curriculum policy, managing diversity and addressing pastoral needs of learners need to extracurricular responsibilities, implementation of curriculum policy, managing diversity and addressing pastoral needs of learners be considered under the workload. Freeman (2001) adds that in schools with little support, this constitutes an incredible pressure on the teacher, and it impacts negatively on bothteaching and learning which eventually translates into school underperformance.

Lumadi (2008) concludes by highlighting placement of teachers to be the challenge leading to school's underperformance. Lumadi explains why sometimes placement of teachers is regarded as a challenge. For example, the evidence is that teachers prefer to work in urban areas where almost all schools are well resourced. Those who find employment in remote areas do not last. Within a year, they terminate their services. When teachers leave the school because of dissatisfaction caused mainly by remoteness of the school's area teaching and learning are automatically disturbed, leading to the school's underperformance. In a study that was done at Vhembe regarding challenges in educator training on implementing curriculum policy, Brynard and Netshikhophani (2011) find the following factors contributing to poor school performance: shortage of competent educators in public schools, poor learner performance, lack of job involvement and organisational commitment, resistance to change, inadequate knowledge level of trainers, multiple roles of curriculum advisers, lack of training evaluation as training measurement, subject allocation and workload, training and development moratorium.

Brynard and Netshikhophani (2011) maintain that teachers are at the coalface of curriculum implementation in schools, its success and correct implementation is dependent on them. Challenges of school performance, especially related to teachers are not unique to South Africa. It is an international phenomenon. In Australia, for example, the challenges that impact school performance, according to Shine (2015), range from teachers exiting the education system, teachers being underpaid, teachers having difficult and stressful jobs, and teachers regarded as low achievers. Scholars in Australia such as Lonsdale and Ingvarson (2003) assert that Australia faces challenges of teachers that are subject, demographically, policy, career and geographically related. Subjects like mathematics and science have teacher shortages that negatively impact school performance. In the same breath, it is argued that teachers in Australia are retiring in huge numbers without being replaced. In Australia, a policy requires teachers to retire at age 54 (earlier than expected), thereby exerting pressure on school performance.

Regarding career related challenges, Lonsdale and Ingvarson, 2003, p. 12) argue that the career trajectory of teaching is not currently an attractive option. While the salary at commencement level is excellent, further down the track, teachers' salaries have not kept pace with those of other professions. Geographically, some schools are situated in remote rural areas where teachers are not willing to be there due to the cost involved.

In New Zealand, the challenges facing teachers involve, according to McGee (1997), disillusionment with salaries, work conditions, local school governance, and major curriculum and assessment changes that have placed new demands upon teachers.

In Canada, Lonsdale and Ingvarson (2003, p. 1-2) cite the following teacher challenges as some of the contributory factors to school performance:

- More teachers reaching retirement age,
- More students with special needs,
- Fewer graduates from teacher education,
- A lack of interest in teaching as a career,
- A high turnover of beginning teachers,
- A high turnover of teachers leaving for reasons other than retirement,
- Increased student enrolment.

While in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, circumstances surrounding teachers played a significant in impacting school performance, similarly in the United Kingdom (UK), teachers are faced with a myriad of challenges that impact on the performance of the schools. UK, for example, apart from the shortage of teachers being caused by in availability of mathematics and science teachers, but also workload, students' behaviour and discipline contribute. Other than teachers, there are other factors that seem to contribute to school performance. These factors include learners' family background (Li and Qiu, 2018), students' health behaviour (Reuter and Forster, 2021), and school environment (Lone, Rajour and India, 2021).

It is against these background factors that, as a seasoned SMT member and educator in particular, more must be done to regulate school performance successfully. I, therefore, feel that this study would generate more knowledge about how performance could be turned around for the better in schools.

1.3 Statement of the problem

In terms of organisation, it looks like the South African education system has put things in place and one would hope that schools would function well, but this does not seem to be the case in terms of school performance. The state has done lots of work to improve school performance by introducing policies such as the quintile system to redress the injustices of the past, but school performance remains mostly low. I have read multiple local and international studies that talk to individual factors of school performance. Such studies include Lumadi's (2008**)** study, which explored challenges South African teachers experienced with the school curriculum and reasons for their poor teaching-learning performance. The study found, among other things, that recurrent changes in the school curriculum resulted in some of the teachers' challenges. Spaull's (2013) study about South Africa's education crisis sheds light on the plight South African education is facing in terms of academic performance. This is also echoed by Owan (2012) whose study specifically examined performance of primary school learners in Mathematics. Among the findings was that socio-economic background of the learner contributed massively to the learners' poor performance in Mathematics. This can be paralleled to the South African scenario where learners coming from disadvantaged backgrounds are mostly underperforming. In the hope to better the level of teacher performance, local and international scholars suggest, among others, designing teacher incentives to motivate them into performing well. Bruns, Filmer and Patrinos (2011) concur on the idea of pay-for-performance of teachers as a possible avenue to incentivise teachers and ensure their accountability. I seek to study the dynamics of school performance more holistically. There is not much knowledge about why schools perform so lowly. By using phrases "performance remains low" and schools perform so lowly" I mean that schools underperform despite various performance-improving strategies by DoE. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate and explore these dynamics. The following research questions guide this study:

1.4 Research questions

This study looks at answering the following research questions:

1. What do teachers and SMT members regard as factors influencing school performance?
2. How do teachers and SMT members see these factors influencing school performance?
3. How can school performance be enhanced?

1.5 Significance and purpose of the study

This study's significance and purpose is to enhance knowledge of school-based educators, office-based educators, and other stakeholders regarding dynamics of school performance especially in primary schools. This knowledge will probably assist the afore mentioned officials to better understand that there are multiple factors that interplay to affect school performance positively or negatively. Better understanding of various interplaying factors affecting school performance could probably assist in the efficient management of primary school performance.

1.6 Rationale for the study

In this study, I explored the dynamics of school performance in three South African primary schools. The need for this study emanated from noticing the knowledge gap in the ways primary schools perform, for example, the inconsistency in the performance of these schools. In the study, I explored the experiences of PL1 educators, Department Heads (DHs), Deputy Principal (DP) and principals regarding the dynamics of school performance. I used three data generation instruments in the quest to develop a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of school performance. This is what Fusch, Fusch and Ness (2018) call data triangulation. Triangulation as a concept according to Patton in Carter (2014) means the use of multiple data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomenon. I purposively selected three South African primary schools with seven PL1 educators, seven HoDs, one DP and three principals as participants of the study. I generated data through the following data sources: face-to-face interviews, focus group interviews, observations, and a document analysis approach.

1.7 My passion for this study

I have taught for almost three decades. Part of this experience was spent in senior management positions. In this dual experience, I witnessed the ups and downs in the performance of most schools, especially primary schools. In junior positions as a PL1 educator, I was only confined to teaching my allocated subjects and my terrain was too limited. As a PL1 educator, I had to contest the shortage of teaching resources which I sometimes had to improvise where possible to get them to improve my subjects' performance. As a PL1, I directly experienced these ups and downs during the subject analysis after conducting assessments. To counteract these ups and downs in learners' performance in my subjects, I had to design and implement turnaround strategies and network with my colleagues. Little did I know that the challenges of school performance were much bigger than the eye could see until I was promoted to the principalship post. In this newly acquired position, my responsibilities widened. They were limited to my subjects and my learners and the entire school. I had to account for all the activities in the school, including school performance. This is what triggered my interest and passion to explore the dynamics of school performance.

1.8 Summary of this report

Chapter one gives the background for the study, problem statement, research questions guiding the research journey, the rationale for the study, my passion for the study and concludes with the report's structure.

Chapter two reviews the literature on the dynamics of school performance. Concepts such as "dynamics and performance" are defined in this chapter to aid understanding. Empirical evidence of school performance by different scholars is discussed in this chapter. The chapter concludes by discussing accountability and its impact on school performance.

Chapter three discusses the three-pronged theoretical frameworks underpinning the study: transformational, servant, and situational leadership theories. Briefly, according to Jacobs (2007), transformational leadership theory is being confident to allow the school to grow through uncertainty and view this growth as an opportunity to move forward. According to Greenleaf (1977), servant-leadership theory focuses more on being motivated to serve than to lead. According to McCleskey (2014), Situational leadership theory proposes that effective leadership requires a rational understanding of the situation and appropriate response. These three theories are complementary in illuminating the role of leadership in managing school performance.

Chapter four presents and discusses research design and methodology, which is located in the interpretivist paradigm. It uses qualitative research instruments of data generation, which are largely interviews and, to a lesser extent, documents review and observations. It also addresses all issues pertinent to research such as data generation and analysis procedures, the trustworthiness of data, ethical issues, and limitations of the study.

Chapter five presents and discusses findings about performance areas within the school, issues that emanated from the data generation stage, and key issues from literature review and theoretical framework.

Chapter six is the concluding chapter reflecting on the research journey, conclusion, recommendations, and implications for further research

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One provided the synopsis of the entire study. In this chapter, I review literature in the quest for understanding the dynamics of school performance in the selected primary schools. This literature review is constantly guided and driven by the research questions cited in Chapter One. This chapter explores how both international and local scholars perceive the dynamics of school performance. This chapter unfolds through eight sections. First, I define key terms of the study: performance, dynamics, effectiveness, efficiency, school culture, leadership, management, SBM, and accountability. From there, I examine empirical evidence regarding school performance. Such evidence is crucial because it deepens the understanding of the phenomenon of school performance. I subsequently explore the importance of leading and managing school performance to establish how leadership and management contribute to the dynamics of school performance. I then discuss how leadership and management impact school performance. Next, I examine some approaches in school management as they relate to school performance. I explore the role of accountability on school performance. This is then followed by discussing factors affecting performance. In concluding the chapter, I briefly outline the issues emerging from the literature related to school performance, for example, conflicts and gaps.

2.2 Definition of key concepts

This section defines the following key concepts: performance, dynamics, school culture, leadership, management, efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and SBM. These concepts are essential in the comprehension of the phenomenon under discussion. Some of these concepts were cursorily defined in Chapter One, section 1.7, and this section, I provide a detailed discussion of each.

2.2.1 Performance

Sonnentag and Frese (2005) assert that performance is a multidimensional concept. Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, and Sager (1993), for example, define it as what the organisation hires one to do and do it well and can be defined as the result of cumulative actions that an employee performs using his/her skills, abilities and knowledge for a particular situation or task during a given time frame (Prasetys and Kato, 2011). Therefore, performance is not defined by action but by judgement and evaluative processes (Ilgen & Schneider, 1991; Motowidlo, Borman & Schmit, 1997). Borman and Motowidlo (1993) distinguish between task and contextual performance on its basic level. According to Griffin, Neal, Neal (2000), the term ``task performance' refers to the core technical behaviours and activities involved in the job. Borman et al. (1993) argue that task performance relates to an individual's competence to perform activities that contribute to the organisation's 'technical core'. The technical core here refers to the core duty an organisation exists for. This contribution can both be direct and indirect. Direct, for example, in the case of production workers. It is indirect, for example, in the case of managers or staff personnel. The contextual performance incorporates behaviours such as assisting co-workers, being a reliable member of the organisation, and making suggestions about improving work procedures. Griffin et al. (2000) describe contextual performance as behaviours that support the technical core's environment. Examples of contextual performance behaviours include helping co-workers, volunteering for tasks, and defending the organisation (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). These behaviours are important for achieving organisational outcomes, particularly supporting long-term success (Allen & Rush, 1998; Ostroff, 1992).

In the context of this study and based on the above definitions of performance, I define it as the outcomes obtained after teachers have taught learners. For example, if teachers use all available resources to achieve good results, the outcomes are performance. Performance is crucial for this study because I regard it as a yardstick through which the functioning of the schools is measured.

2.2.2 Dynamics

The Oxford South African School Dictionary (2010) defines dynamics as relating to energy and forces that produce movement as opposed to static. In line with the above definition, my definition of dynamics is the interplay of activities, processes, and factors to produce a particular level of performance. If something is dynamic, it is not static but is inclined to constant change. Regarding this study, with its backbone being performance, the interplay of forces and factors to produce performance would cause it (performance) to be good or bad. The term dynamic is important for this study as it sheds light on the actual forces or dynamics affecting performance. It is necessary to measure and assess the extent to which these stimulating forces affect performance, effectiveness, and efficiency.

2.2.3 Effectiveness

Bartuševičienė and Šakalytė (2013) define effectiveness as what measures the degree to which a business achieves its goals, or the way outputs interact with the economic and social environment. The Productivity Commission (PC) (2013) defines effectiveness as a measure of how well the output of a programme or service achieves the stated objectives (desired outcomes). The PC (2013) further defines effectiveness as a measure of the degree to which the value of resources used to produce a specified output or outcome has been reduced. Based on the above-mentioned definitions of effectiveness, I construe it (effectiveness) as a way in which schools utilise the available resources and use multiple strategies to achieve improved learners' achievement. For example, recruiting skillful and professionally qualified teachers (human resources) to teach learners would be effective.

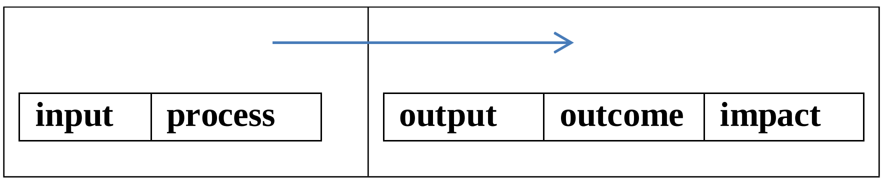
2.2.4 Efficiency

According to Lockheed and Hanushek (1994), efficiency compares inputs and related outputs. Mouzas (2006) defines it (efficiency) as a measure of operational excellence or productivity and argues that efficiency minimises costs and improves operational margins. PC (2013) categorises efficiency into technical efficiency, productive efficiency, allocative efficiency, dynamic efficiency, and economic efficiency. PC (2013) describes these efficiencies as follows: Technical efficiency measures converted to output. Productive efficiency measures how well a given value of inputs is converted to an output value. Allocative efficiency is how well the available resources are allocated to production that meets the population's preferences. Dynamic efficiency is a measure of how well resources are allocated over time to meet the current and future preferences of the population. Economic efficiency measures net benefits that encompass productive, allocative, and dynamic efficiency.

I have utilised Frey and Widmer's (2009) model known as a chain of effects to understand how efficiency and effectiveness are essential for school performance. Figure 2.1 below represents a chain of effects between effectiveness and efficiency in the following illustration, Frey and Widmer (2009).

Figure 2.1: Chain of effects

Efficiency information Effectiveness information



Adopted from Frey and Widmer (2009)

While effectiveness relates to information about output, income and or impact only, efficiency concerns the relationship between input and the effectiveness of a particular issue. Frey and Widmer (2009) claim that effectiveness, describes the programme's impact under real conditions while efficiency denotes the impact under idealistic circumstances. According to Frey and Widmer (2009), the meaning of efficiency is always dealing in some way with the proportion between the input ('the costs') on the one hand and the output, outcome or impact on the other hand. While PC (2013) categorises efficiency into five components, Weiss (1998) categorises it into four components, namely, cost-benefit analysis (CBA), cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA), cost-utility analysis (CUA) as well as cost-minimisation analysis (CMA). According to Weiss (1998), each of these components is defined as follows: CBA is a type of economic analysis in which both costs and consequences of a programme or set of programmes are expressed and compared in monetary terms. CEA refers to a type of economic evaluation in which costs and consequences of a programme or a set of programmes with similar aims are compared. Weiss (1998) defines CUA as an economic evaluation that compares the costs and consequences of a set of programmes. The programme consequences are expressed in terms of utility. Finally, Weiss perceives CMA as a type of economic evaluation that weighs the costs of various programmatic approaches to determine the least expensive alternative to accomplish a defined outcome.

From the definitions of efficiency and effectiveness, I understand that performance would hardly be realised without efficiency and effectiveness. In other words, these two terms (efficiency and effectiveness) are an integral part of the performance. The two terms are like the two sides of the same coin. For this study, I perceive performance in the three chosen schools to be evaluated and measured against how effective and efficient these schools are. For example, how each school performs would signify the degree of the input applied to attain a particular goal (performance). After their (schools) evaluation and measurement these schools could perform either well or underperforming. Considine and Zappala (2002) aptly capture the contributory factors that influence learners' school performance from disadvantaged backgrounds. While this study focuses on internal factors, it is equally important to focus on external factors. This is mainly because learners are first affected by external factors before they are affected by factors found at school (internal factors). For example, learners come to school affected by their family backgrounds. Therefore, there needs to be harmony and synergy between the home and school backgrounds for learners' performance to flourish unhindered at school. Considine and Zappala (2002) mention some of the learners' external factors to be taken heed of by schools lest they might negatively impact their (learners) performance. According to Considine and Zappala (2002), these factors are socioeconomic status (SES), family structure (FS), type of school, absences, gender, ethnicity, geographical location, and housing type.

2.2.3 School culture

Erickson (1985) defines culture as a system of beliefs, culture and everyday meanings and symbols with explicit and implicit content that is consciously and unconsciously learned and shared among members of a naturally bounded social group. Deal and Kennedy (1982 and 1983) conceptualise culture consisting of the shared beliefs and values that closely knit a community together. Hargreaves (1994) argues that school culture is the lens through which participants view themselves and the world. Deal and Peterson (2002) maintain that school culture comprises unwritten rules and traditions, norms and expectations that permeate everything. For example, Deal and Kennedy argue that these traditions, norms, and expectations affect the way teachers feel about their work and their students and whether they seek out colleagues for help or not. Geertz (1973), an anthropologist, may have contributed the most to the current understanding of the term culture by conceiving it (school culture) to represent a historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols. Those symbols include the written (explicit) and hidden (implicit) messages encoded in language. In explaining the explicit and implicit messages encoded in a language, Geertz (1973) emphasises that a school's mission statement may identify some goals in the written text that focus on student achievement. Geertz (1973) also maintains that perhaps not written into the text is the implicit value the school places, or does not place, on academic success. Geertz (1973) sums up that both the goal (better student achievement) and the underlying value (academic success) are part of school culture. According to Geertz (1973), some important elements of culture are the norms, values, beliefs, traditions, rituals, ceremonies, and myths translated by a particular group of people. Thus, the values expressed in lesson plans and classroom teaching, how the principal runs staff meetings, and the decorations displayed in hallways are integral parts of school culture. Geertz (1973) emphatically asserts that the most important aspects of culture are those whose meaning is shared by members of the social system. On the other hand, Deal and Peterson (1990) refer to culture as deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have been formed throughout the school's history. Heckman (1993) interpret school culture as the commonly held beliefs of teachers, students, and principals that guide their actions. Briefly, Stolp and Smith (1995) define school culture as historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include the norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and myths understood, maybe in varying degrees, by school community members. Based on the definitions above of school culture, I perceive it as a unique way school conduct the activities of teaching and learning that produce a certain degree of performance. I regard school culture as key in this study as it appears to affect performance. This corroborates with theme 2 of Chapter Five, where participants express their perceptions about what they regard as their culture and the impact culture has on school performance

2.2.4 Leadership

The concept of leadership has a myriad of definitions. Despite its multiple definitions, Stogdill (1974) asserts that leadership has been defined in individual traits, leader behaviour, interaction patterns, role relationships, follower perceptions, influence over followers, task goals, and organisational culture. Edwards (2011) defines leadership as the practices that lead to positive influence, growth, and development of individuals and groups for a collective purpose. Kouzes and Posner (2007) posit that leadership mobilises others to get extraordinary things done. When collating the definitions mentioned above of leadership, I construe it (leadership) as a key and precondition without which functions of schools would hardly be realised. For example, the main function of the school being teaching and learning, could be compromised as a result of the absence of leadership. For school performance purposes, I regard leadership as indispensable since all activities within the school context require leadership directive. Cox and Sims (1996) thus affirm the indispensability of leadership in an organisation by asserting that no organisation can rise above the quality of its leadership. So, I regard leadership as the driving force behind the operation of any school.

2.2.7 Management

Similar to leadership, management has multiple definitions. Hissom (2009) defines management as the organisational process, including planning, setting goals, managing resources, deploying the human and financial assets needed to achieve objectives and measuring results. Emphasising the importance of management, Ali (2014) argues that since time immemorial, managing has been the most imperative activity as society has continuously relied on group efforts. Ali (2014) thus posits that it has always been crucial to ensure individual efforts coordination right from the time people engage socially. According to Ali (2014), well-coordinated efforts are pivotal for achieving the aims and objectives that cannot be realised individually. Ali (2014), therefore, concludes that management is an act of achieving results by coordinating individual efforts. According to Nadrifar, Bandani and Shahryari (2015), management stems from the Latin word *Manu*, meaning leadership by hand, referring to giving direction. Taylor (1996) opines that management is the art of knowing what you want to do and seeing that it is done best and the cheapest way. According to Koontz and O' Donnell (1976), management is the creation and maintenance of an internal situation in an enterprise where individuals working in groups can perform efficiently and effectively towards attaining group goals. According to Ali (2014), the meaning of management is ever-expanding. As organised groups have become larger over the years, Ali (2014) asserts that the role of management has increased in importance and complexity. Ali (2014) claims that organisations nowadays have become more global; employee groups are more diverse, and organisational structures do not contain large hierarchies but focus on a collaborative approach. According to Ali (2014), this calls for organisations to tackle these new challenges by adopting new methods and philosophies of management.

Against this backdrop, I perceive management as ensuring that all the processes of an institution are run properly and well-coordinated about its mission and vision to ensure that good performance is achieved. For this study, I regard management as crucial since performance in the school requires collective decision making by school management structures, for example, SMT and teachers. The collective decision making by SMT and teachers to ensure the achievement of performance at school partly responds to the second research question for this study, namely, in what ways do teachers and SMT see factors influencing school performance.

2.2.8 School-based management (SBM)

Baratali and Moghadas (2016**)** define SBM as a reform movement to allow schools more autonomy in managing human, material, and financial resources. Caldwell (2004) defines SBM as the systematic and consistent decentralisation to authority at school level, responsible for making decisions on significant matters related to school operations within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, and standards accountabilities Caldwell (2004). According to (EMB) (2006), SBM is a management framework that is school-based, student-centred and quality-focused. Its purpose is to devolve the decision on students learning and resource deployment to the school to facilitate it to make school-based policies that better meet the needs of students and enhance their learning outcomes. I perceive SBM as one of the crucial terms for this study as it pertains to how devolved power and authority are applied at school level to produce performance

2.2.9 Accountability

Spaull (2015) defines accountability as the state of being answerable for something to someone. Spaull (2015) posits that it (accountability) refers to having to account for one's outcomes or performance and to accept responsibility for those outcomes. Fox and Meyer's (1995) definition of accountability involve the government and its agents' responsibility towards the public to achieve previously set objectives and publicly account for them. Fox and Meyer (1995) argue that accountability is also viewed as a commitment for public officials to accept public responsibility for their actions or inaction. Based on the above definitions of accountability, I perceive it as the ability to give an account or face the consequences of one's actions taken after being given the task to perform. For this study, I feel accountability is of utmost importance since it requires people tasked with ensuring that schools perform as per expectation are indeed performing. These people are, for example, teachers and SMT. I regard accountability as a means of removing complacency among teachers and SMT.

2. 3 Some empirical evidence about school performance

Since this study is contextualised on performance in general and particularly on school performance, there are however conflicting views on what constitutes performance. Many scholars describe performance according to discipline in which the term occurs. For example, Zulkiffli and Perera (2011) describe performance in business terms as the operational ability to satisfy the desires of the company's major shareholders. In health systems, performance is described according to the goals. For example, Kruk and Freedman (2008) describe health system's performance as the delivery of effective preventive and curative health services to the full population, equitably and efficiently, while protecting individuals from catastrophic health care costs. Even in educational sector performance has multiple descriptions. For example, Torres and Rodríguez in Willcox (2011) describe performance or academic performance as the level of knowledge shown in an area or subject compared to the norm, and it is generally measured using the grade point average. As a result of the many conceptions of performance I decided use Elger's (2007) performance theory so as to get deeper understanding of what performance really is. According to Elger (2007), performance theory develops and relates to six foundational concepts to form a structure that can explain performance and performance improvements. The six foundational concepts, according to Elger (2007), are: perform, performer, level of performance, performer's mindset, immersion, and reflective practice. Elger (2007) explains that to perform requires taking a complex series of actions that integrate skills and knowledge to produce a valuable result. Elger (2007) insists that the performer is an individual in some instances and other performances, the performer is a collection of people. Elger (2007) states that performance is a journey, not a destination, as the adage goes. The location in the journey is labelled as "level of performance." According to Elger (2007), each level characterises the effectiveness or quality of performance. Elger (2007) argues that the performance of a system, for example, a home entertainment system, depends on the components of the system and the interactions between these components. Similarly, Elger (2007) concludes that the level of performance of an individual or an organisation depends on the components described in table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Components that holistically interact to establish a level of performance

Component	Description	Exemplars	Classification Rules
Level of Identity	As individuals mature in a discipline, they take on the shared identity of the professional community while elevating their uniqueness. As an organisation matures, it develops it mission, its way doing business, and its uniqueness	A student uses disciplinary slang to describe engineering design activities. A teacher examines his performance through the lens of student learning. A college dean holds herself accountable for her leadership. A research team evolves its identity as a performance organisation	associated with maturation in a discipline or culture associated with maturation in life internalised by person or organisation—the individual or organisation takes on the shared identity
Levels of Skills	Skills describe specific actions that individuals, groups, or organisations use in multiple types of performances	making assumptions persisting being humble setting goals observing	describe an action action is relevant in a broad range of performance contexts
Level of Knowledge	Knowledge involves facts, information, concepts, theories, or principles acquired by a person or group through experience or education	Facts/information—names of states, conversion factor between feet and inches Concepts—democracy, chair, force, Principles/theories—relationships between the tilt of the earth and the seasons; law of conservation of energy	derives from human experiences can be communicated or recognised
Context Of Performance	This component includes variables associated with the individual or organisation's situation.	The performance of an academic department is coupled with the organisational effectiveness of the host college. Learning of a student is coupled with the organisation of a class.	relates to circumstances associated with the performance applies to multiple performance within the context—not a personal factor.

Personal Factors	This component includes variables associated with the personal situation of an individual	Performance of a teacher is impacted when he or she is ill Performance of a dean is impacted when his or her spouse dies. A student's performance is impacted by the quality of his or her home environment	involves life situation of an individual
Fixed Factors	This component includes variables unique to an individual that cannot be altered.	Performance in basketball is impacted by height Genetic factors influence	involves an individual immutable; cannot be altered
		performance	

Source: (Elger, 2007, p. 1)

Improving Performance - Elger (2007) argues that while some factors influencing improving performance are unchangeable, others can be influenced by the performer. Those factors that can be varied fall into three categories.

Performer's Mindset*:* Elger (2007) explains that a performer's mindset includes actions that engage positive emotions. For Example, setting challenging goals, allowing failure as a natural part of attaining high performance, and providing conditions in which the performer feels the right amount of safety. Elger (2007) exemplifies the Accelerator Model as the module that provides insights on maintaining a performer's mindset.

Immersion*:* Elger (2007) emphasises that immersion in a physical, social, and intellectual environment can elevate performance and stimulate personal and professional development. As examples, Elger (2007) cites elements including social interactions, disciplinary knowledge, active learning, emotions (both positive and negative), and spiritual alignment.

Reflective practice*:* Elger (2007) opines that reflective practice involves actions that help people pay attention to and learn from experiences. Examples of reflective practice include observing the present level of performance, noting accomplishments, analysing strengths and areas for improvements, analysing, and developing identity, and improving levels of knowledge(Elger, 2007).

The discourses around performance seem to show that performance is why the school exists. In other words, performance seems to be the backbone of the school's functioning. Emphasising the importance of performance, Lamas (2015) argues that it is an issue that deeply concerns students, parents, teachers and authorities in many countries. The level of performance seems to differentiate between good performing and poor performing schools.

2.3.1 Local studies on school performance

According to Spaull (2013), in South Africa, there have been numerous initiatives or tests to monitor the quality of education in the country. It is argued that by measuring what pupils know, these tests enable researchers and policy makers to assess the level of achievement (performance) of different groups of pupils. To measure the extent of performance in South African primary schools, Spaull argues that the following studies were conducted, namely, Systemic Evaluations (2001 and 2007; grade 3); Western Cape Learner Assessment Study (2003; grade 6); The National School Effectiveness Study (NSES; 2007-2009; grades Three to Five) and (ANA; 2012; grades 1, 6 and 9).

The DoE (2003) defines SE as assessing how the education system achieves social, economic, and transformational goals. The DoE, also known as the Department of Basic Education (DBE) does this by measuring learner performance and the context in which learners experience learning and teaching. The DoE (2003) argues that the assessment policy that oversees SE requires it to be conducted in three grades of the education system, namely grades 3, 6 and 9. During 2001 and 2007, the DoE (2003) randomly tested a sample of approximately 54 000 grade three pupils in more than 2 000 primary schools utilising SE. The results of the 2007 SE, according to DoE (2003), showed a staggering average score of 36 per cent for literacy (30 per cent in 2001) and 35 per cent for numeracy. The DoE (2003) concluded an urgent need to improve performance in these critical foundation skills subjects. According to DBE (2003), the main objectives of SE are to determine the context in which learning, and teaching are taking place, obtain information on learner achievement, identify factors that affect learner achievement, and make conclusions about appropriate education interventions.

Taylor, Fleisch and Shindler (2008) posit that Western Cape Learner Assessment Study (WCLAS) tested every primary school in the Western Cape at the grade six level in 2003. Taylor et al. (2008) argue that of the 34 596 pupils tested, a dismally small proportion was performing at the appropriate grade 6 literacy level (35 per cent), and an even smaller proportion was at the appropriate grade 6 numeracy level (15,6 per cent). Taylor et al. (2008) separate these figures by former departments of education and make the important point that four out of five grade 6 children were at the appropriate reading level in formerly white schools, compared to four children in a hundred in the former DoE and Training (black) schools. While the focus of WCLAS was solely on grade 6 learners, the NSES focused on grades 3 to

5 learners. The NSES is the only panel dataset on educational achievement (performance) undertaken in South Africa Spaull (2013). According to Taylor (2011), in this study, 266 schools were tested in numeracy and literacy in 2007 (grade 3), 2008 (grade 4) and 2009 (grade 5). Taylor asserts that the same pupils wrote the same test in 2007, 2008 and 2009, with the test being calibrated at the grade 3 level. Taylor (2011) concludes that the mean scores for literacy in grade 3 [grade 4] were 19 per cent [27 per cent] and on the numeracy tests were 28 per cent [35 per cent] – all well below the levels that pupils at these grades should be achieving. Taylor (2011) finds that there were indeed learning deficits of most children in historically black schools explaining that the distribution for grade 5 pupils in historically black schools was still much weaker than that of grade 3 pupils in historically white schools. One can conclude that by the 5th grade, the educational backlog experienced in historically black schools is already equivalent to well over two years' worth of learning (Taylor, 2011, p. 16).
In drawing from the afore-going strategies for improving school performance, it is interesting to note that the DBE does not remain complacent in improving school performance. It tirelessly engages and exposes schools to various national performance improvement strategies in the interest of school performance improvement. As mentioned earlier, such strategies include SE, WCLAS, and ANA. Interestingly, in its strive to improve school performance, the DBE exposes its schools to rigorous external international assessment strategies to measure how theireducation compares with other countries globally, such as TIMSS PIRLS and SACMEQ.

This section portrays details about how and why ANA as an assessment strategy was implemented in schools. At school level, the performance improvement strategies were corroborated by the implementation of ANA. The ANAs were a set of nationally standardised assessments for numeracy and literacy in grades one to six and nine (Spaull, 2013). South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) perceives the ANA (n.d) as an assessment instrument introduced by the DBE in 2011 to enable a SE of education performance and thereby enhances learner achievement). According to the DBE (2011), ANAs had four areas of impact at school and district levels, namely: ANA encouraged teachers to assess learners using appropriate standards and methods; it (ANA) encouraged better targeting of support to schools by the district offices; it encouraged the celebration of success in schools, it provided schools with a clearer picture of how well they perform in comparison to schools facing similar socioeconomic challenges. Finally, ANA encouraged greater parent involvement in improving their children's learning process. Spaull (2013) expresses concerns that while this testing system was still in its infancy, certain amounts of problems were to be expected. In the report commissioned by Spaull (2013), it is first argued that although ANA was not a high-stakes exam, the act of having to report the results from a national, standardised exam may encourage teachers and principals to act in strategic ways (guiding pupils during the exam or marking leniently). Secondly, the difficulty levels between 2011 and 2012 and across grades within a particular year did not appear the same, either across grades or years. Currently, ANA is no longer administered and was postponed indefinitely due to teacher unions demanding DBE to implement reforms in the implementation of ANA, Mail and Guardian (2015).

Iwu, Gwija, Benedict and Tengeh‘s (2013) study investigated the relationship between poor performance of learners and teacher motivation in selected schools in the Western Cape Province. The study found that the South African education system was in crisis and that there was a direct relationship between poor performance and the degree of motivation of teachers. Heystek and Terhoven (2014) conducted a literature survey on motivation, professional development and adult learning principles concerning contextual factors that affect underperforming schools and various motivation theories. The study then reports on a qualitative study on factors that motivate teachers to participate in development activities. The findings indicate that teachers are passionate about working with students from disadvantaged backgrounds because it allows them to invest in these children's future.

In a study by van Wyk's and Marumoloa's (2012) about the exploration of the role and function of the school management team in policy formulation and implementation, it was found that although the South African Schools Act 108 of 1996 requires the SGB and SMT to work collectively in formulating school policies, this was not the case at school. The SMTs have become a more important policymaking and implementation body unilaterally than the SGB. This disjuncture between the two structures could negatively impact the school's performance.

Kubeka and White (2014) conducted a study describing the current situation regarding staff development at primary schools in Tembisa. Kubeka and White (2014) argue that teachers were engaged in staff developments to keep up with new developments. The study established three main findings: staff development was not regarded as a priority in all the schools. Some schools were not supported financially by the DoE and some facilitators of staff development programmes (SDPs) were not well trained. The DoE sometimes requested schools to finance their SDPs, such as workshops, from their school coffers, which put schools in a tenuous position since not all parents pay the required school fees. Apart from the DoE failure to provide financial support to schools, Kubeka and White's study seems to suggest that, even if strategies to improve school performance are in place, but if a commitment by teachers towards staff development in terms of implementing those strategies is lacking, there is a likelihood of underperformance.

In a study by Milner and Khoza (2008**),** school climate was one of the major factors determining school performance. The study investigated differences in teacher stress and perception of school climate. Milner and Khoza (2008**)** argue that two schools with pass rates of 100% and two others with less than quarter were chosen from a list of schools provided by the province's Educational District Circuit. The schools were compared in area, size, resources, and equipment. Both teachers from the high performing schools and the low- performing schools participated in the study. Students' t-test scores were used to assess the differences between the schools on the variables under investigation. The outcomes showed that the teachers' experience of stress across the different schools was not significantly different, but significant differences did emerge concerning school climate. Thapa, Cohen, Guffey and D'Alessandro (2013) define school climate as reflecting students', school personnel's, and parents' experiences of school life. Freiberg (1999) contends that school climate is related to three school outcomes: student achievement, teacher commitment, and faculty trust.

Van der Vyver, Van der Westhuizen and Meyer (2014) conducted a study about principals' care giving within the school. The findings were that the principals' care giving did not match the expectation of the teachers they lead. This was revealed through a survey conducted among a sample of South African teachers. The findings revealed that principals rated their caregiving more positively than teachers, specifically concerning certain psychological aspects of care. This suggests that the principal-teacher relationship has an impact on school performance. Therefore, the principal has the responsibility to transform the school into a caring community where teachers can experience a positive organisational climate that will, in turn, contribute to optimal performance on their part.

Principals are strategically positioned to influence the school's performance by being at the helm of leading and managing schools. This is echoed by Bhengu and Mthembu (2014) in their study that explored how two schools located in the same poverty-stricken community could perform differently. These schools have taken different directions in terms of learner achievement. The two schools served learners from socio-economically deprived backgrounds. The community highly esteemed one school because of its track record of high learner achievement. The opposite view was held regarding the other school. Bhengu and Mthembu (2014) were aware of these differences from the general public's perspective before they embarked on this study. The researchers assert that they did not know what was going on inside these schools that contributed to these differences. Bhengu and Mthembu (2014) found that what made the two schools differ so drastically was the leadership approaches used by the two principals. These researchers argue that the finding confirms that leadership plays a key role in shaping and sustaining school cultures that promote effective teaching and learning.

Leibbrandt, Wegner, and Finn (2011) conducted a study in which they argue that eighteen years after the political transition, race remains the sharpest distinguishing factor between the haves and the have-nots. Leibbrandt et al. (2011) found that although the spending gap between rich and poor provinces has become much narrower, spending equality has not been reached. They also found that students' academic achievements display higher inequality than international standards. There is evidence that students' capabilities have decreased rather than increased. It suggests that increased spending has not translated into the increased quality of education provision. The implication of Leibbrandt et al.'s (2011) argument for my study is that poverty, although an external factor, appears to contribute to the way schools perform. It would be difficult to teach a learner from a poverty-stricken background the same way as learners from well-off families. The possibility of poor performance by a learner from a poor family would be higher than a learner from a well-to-do family. Perhaps the introduction of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) to mitigate the problem of learners coming to school with empty stomachs resulted from this harsh reality.

In most cases, poor families send their children to schools where they will not pay, especially in public schools, while wealthy families mostly send theirs to high standards and quality schools. At private schools, children's education is extremely costly, and their performance is concurrently excellent. The same cannot be said regarding poor public schools. Wills (2012) studied whether teacher strikes affect student achievement at the primary school level. A cross-subject analysis with student fixed effects was used to eliminate sources of endogeneity bias at the school and student levels. Findings indicated that teacher strike participation negatively affects learning for students in the poorest three-quarters of schools. There was also evidence that more marginalised students, socioeconomic status, and academic performance, were negatively affected by strike action. The relevance of Wills's (2012) study is that the unintended result of teachers' strikes weakens learner performance and this implies that the presence or absence of teachers at work impacts a school's performance. From Will’s arguments, one learns that as long as teachers are seemingly not held accountable for the work they do, poor performance in schools is likely to continue unabated.

A study about accountability by Taylor, Van der Berg and Mabogoane (2013) found that high teacher absenteeism and low curriculum coverage suggest poor teacher performance. These factors seem to me to contribute to the way a school performs. Regarding teacher absenteeism, for example, these scholars contend that the leave rate for a single teacher in South Africa amazingly ranges from 10% -12%, which amounts to 20–24 days per year for the average teacher. Boateng (2014) cites technical efficiency as a factor linked to school performance. According to Boateng (2014), technical efficiency refers to how business productivity can be achieved with the least inputs or resources necessary to do the job. Sathye (2001) perceives technical efficiency as relating to the productivity of inputs. Barros and Mascarenhas (2005) elaborate that the technical efficiency is a comparative measure of how well it processes inputs to achieve its outputs, compared to its maximum potential for doing so, as represented by its production possibility frontier. Boateng’s (2014) study examined the extent to which sub-national public officials, such as subject advisers and circuit managers, are efficient in delivering basic education support services to schools. The responsibility of these public officials is to support and give guidance to schools under their jurisdiction. Boateng argues that technical efficiencies, especially in managing public funds for education, could contribute to schools' good or poor education service delivery.

The study found problems in school supervision, with poorer and underachieving schools receiving fewer supervisory visits than better-off schools. Weaknesses in operational management manifested in leakages of public funds and delays in disbursements. Boateng’s (2014) study further reveals that South Africa has a well-planned, decentralised structure to administer education; however, districts have significant human resource constraints. Capacity is often lacking and record-keeping, particularly financial information, is very poor, Boateng (2014). Lack of technical efficiency has resulted in misappropriation of funds and extensive delays in remitting funds to schools. These inefficiencies potentially affect education outcomes and, therefore should, according to Boateng, be given due consideration when designing and implementing education policy reforms. From Boateng’s study, one could draw that poor support from education officials, especially at provincial and district levels, may contribute to poor school performance. In support of Boateng’s argument, what I have observed as a school principal is that communication circulars from either district offices or provincial DoE requiring a prompt response from schools reach schools late and their purpose is sometimes never realised. Since most, if not all, communications from the DoE to schools aim to improve support and sustain school performance, their delay would likely lead to poor performance.

Taylor (2011) conducted a study using NSES data to identify specific school organisation and teacher practice aspects. These aspects included the effective coverage of the curriculum and completed exercises associated with literacy and numeracy achievement. Taylor (2011) argues that NSES is the first large-scale panel study of educational achievement in South African primary schools. It investigates contextually appropriate features of school management and teacher practice. Taylor contends that many poor children, predominantly located in the historically disadvantaged school system, receive poor quality education. This low-quality education acts as a poverty trap by barring them from achieving educational outcomes necessary to be competitive in the labour market. However, Taylor found that inequity in the quality of education has proved a more enduring problem. To Taylor, an important question is the extent to which this low quality of education is attributable to poverty itself instead of other features of teaching and management that characterise these schools. Taylor's (2011) study found weak evidence that school resources such as pupil-teacher ratios and school facilities are associated with student achievement. As other scholars have argued, Taylor (2011) found that more important than the mere presence of resources is how well they are managed. Thus, in this section of my study, I shall investigate resource management's role in school performance. According to Taylor (2011), and organised learning environment signified by curriculum planning for the full year, a functional timetable, good quality inventories for learner teacher support materials (LTSM), low teacher absenteeism and up-to-date assessment records were strongly linked to better student achievement. Taylor recommends a command-and-control measures aimed at teachers following best practices. Taylor (2011) concludes by claiming that for school performance to be sustained, a better and more ambitious policy route would be exploring ways to attract, train, and support better principals and replace those at the head of dysfunctional schools.

Modisaotsile (2012) conducted a study about factors causing the drop in the standard of education in South Africa. In that study, she found that there are factors that hinder learners from receiving a good standard of education, such as teacher absenteeism and as a result, out of the number of learners enrolled in Grade1, only half made it to grade 12. Modisaotsile (2012) puts forward the following arguments that could elevate school performance: There should be better discipline in schools and increased involvement of parents; teachers should be recognised and be rewarded adequately by the government and better incentives should be provided for teachers, especially those who teach in rural areas. Modisaotsile (2012) assertion corroborates with Chapter Five, theme 1. Stakeholders such as parents need to join forces with the school to improve performance. This, according to Modisaotsile (2012) might enhance teachers' commitment to their profession.

Coetzee (2014) argues that because of the lingering effect of racial segregation, schools that previously served the white minority and received a much higher allocation of inputs are still out-performing historically black schools. Under-privileged black children selected into the former white schools are usually richer, although significantly poorer than their white counterparts. Poorer black children remain in the former black part of the school system, Coetzee, (2014). Apart from the performance improvement strategies discussed above, scholars have also done independent studies that reveal factors that show many glimpses impacting school performance. Studies reveal that staff motivation contributes to performance. The other study illuminates that collaboration between the SGB and SMT contributes to school performance. The list seems to be endless. For example, some studies cite the following as contributory factors to the way schools perform: the necessity of staff development, school climate, teacher strikes, proper management of teaching and learning resources, accountability and principal care giving to teachers.

2.3.2 International studies on educational achievement

International studies on school performance to which South Africa is part, according to Spaull (2013), including Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) and SACMEQ. Howie, Combrinck, Roux, Tshele, Mokoena and Palane (2008) sum up the functions of International Large-Scale Assessments (ILSA) as follows: to compare levels of national achievement between countries; to identify the major determinants of national achievement, country by country; to examine to what extent they are the same or differ across countries and to identify factors that affect differences between countries, Postlethwaite (1999). Howie et al. (2008) add that the ILSA studies served another significant purpose in the late 1980s and early 1990s, namely the integration of formerly excluded and isolated education systems (for example, countries in the former Soviet Bloc and South Africa). The studies allowed these countries to break away from their previously isolated positions and join the international debates by participating in projects such as the third TIMSS, Plomp, Howie and McGaw (2003). The studies above concentrate on testing learners on numeracy, literacy, or scientific skills. Rittner (2018) aptly captures why literacy is paramount in a learner's education. In this regard, Rittner (2018) argues that literacy is the foundation on which all other subjects are built. Rittner (2018) claims that there is an essential reason why educators focus on reading skills before other subjects are introduced. Rittner insists that literacy is a critical path to success in nearly every aspect of our well-being.

Further, Quinn (2011) clearly articulates the importance of teaching literacy and numeracy to children as they are among the most important life skills schools teach. Literacy and numeracy skills add to a person's ability to develop fully, live a satisfying and rewarding life, and participate fully in society. Ensuring that all young people gain these skills is one of the greatest contributions to achieving social justice and equity.

The Human Science Research Council (HSRC) (2015) describes the TIMSS as an assessment of the mathematics and science knowledge of fourth grade and eighth grade learners worldwide. Reddy (2006) concurs with HSRC (2015) on the role of TIMSS and argues that it evaluates mathematics and science knowledge at grades 4, 5, 8 and 9. Although HSRC (2015) mentions that TIMSS aims to evaluate mathematics and science knowledge at grade 4,5, 8 and 9 levels, much of the surveys were done at grades 8 and 9 over the past twenty years. For example, Spaull (2013) indicates that in the 2002 TIMSS, South Africa tested grade 9 pupils and grade 8 pupils. This was done because earlier rounds of TIMSS indicated that the international grade eight tests were too difficult for South African pupils.

Consequently, too many pupils were performing at guessing level on the multiple-choice questions, Spaull (2013). Reddy, Isdale, Juan, Visser, Winnaar and Arends (2015) confirm that South Africa participated for the first time in TIMSS at the grade 5 level in 2014. According to Reddy et al. (2015) TIMSS is designed to align broadly with mathematics in participating countries. Reddy et al. (2015), thus posit that the results of TIMSS suggest the extent to which learners have learned mathematical concepts and skills likely to have been taught in school. In conclusion, the scholars mentioned above argue that TIMSS uses the curriculum as the organising principle of educational opportunities provided to learners. From the discussion about TIMSS, South Africa is not complacent about the quality of education provided to its learners. Therefore, it exposes them to international assessments to strive to be on par with the rest of the world.

PIRLS is an international initiative to test the reading literacy of grade four and grade eight pupils in participating countries, including South Africa, Spaull (2013). PIRLS is one of the

ILSA and comparative studies of educational achievement. According to Howie et al. (2008), ILSA and comparative studies of educational achievement date back to the early 1960s. PIRLS is under the auspices of the International Association for the Evaluation for Educational Achievement (IEA) (Howie et al., 2017). Howie et al. (2017) enumerate literacy objectives for PIRLS, as follows: to assess how well South African grade 4 learners read and to identify possible associated contextual factors as well as to compare the reading literacy of grade 4 South African learners both internationally and on a national level for all eleven languages and nine provinces.

According to Spaull (2013), there have been two waves of PIRLS, in 2006 and 2011. South Africa only participated in the grade four tests. Spaull (2013) asserts that unlike many other countries that participated in 2006, where only grade four was tested, in South Africa grade five pupils were also tested. This was out of a concern that grade four is a transition phase and was done to compare grades four and five, (Howie et al., 2008). In the 2006 PIRLS, South African grade five pupils achieved the lowest score of the forty-five countries that participated, Spaull (2013). This scenario suggests that South Africa is in dire need of transformation for its primary school education performance. Spaull (2013) maintains that in PIRLS 2006, only 13 per cent of grade four and 22 per cent of grade five South African pupils reached the Low International Benchmark (LIB) of 400.

This section describes the research findings on the general schooling environment in South Africa during the conducting of PIRLS Literacy 2016, at the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016. Howie, Combrinck, Roux, Tshele, Mokoena and McLeod Palane (2017) define the term ‘school climate’ as an umbrella term used to portray the school environment, which includes several aspects such as school composition, school resources and facilities, school emphasis on academic success, principal leadership activities, school discipline and safety. In educational effectiveness research, both nationally and internationally, a conducive school climate is one of the foremost explanatory factors in explaining learner educational attainment/performance (Reynolds, Lee, Turner, Bromhead & Subasic, 2017; MacNeil, Prater & Busch, 2009). Howie, Combrinck, Roux, Tshele, Mokoena and McLeod Palane (2017) separate the school environment into two sections: school composition, resources, and school climate.

According to Mullis, Martin, Foy and Drucker (2012), the school environment may positively influence learner academic success, affecting teacher and learner attitudes about teaching and learning. However, Mullis et al. (2012) contend that the relationship between school resources and learner achievement has been deemed complicated. In this section, the profile of the tested schools is described, followed by the facilities and resources. Mullis et al. (2012) argue that the PIRLS Literacy school questionnaire that the school principals completed as participants sought information about the school location. It also sought information about school composition in terms of socioeconomic background and language of the test as a home language and the language proficiency levels of learners entering primary school, Mullis et al. (2012).

The location of the schools appears to be important in that it affects learner achievement, Howie et al. (2012). Howie et al. (2012) argue that, as reported by school principals, a larger percentage (39%) of grade 4 learners attended schools in remote rural areas compared to other areas. According to Howie et al. (2012), the research findings confirm that learners attending schools in remote rural areas performed considerably lower than their peers in other areas. Several other factors may also conflate the differences found by language. For example, the national sample revealed a strong rural element, Howie et al. (2015). Howie et al. (2012) maintain that the PIRLS Literacy 2016 results concur with the previous findings where the results indicate that the learners in the remote rural settings achieve significantly below the learners from urban areas. Howie et al. (2012) argue that school funding in South Africa is allocated according to a poverty index known as the quintile system. Based on the perceived poverty of the school's area, schools are allocated a quintile classification (Howie, 2015, p. 92). Quintiles 1, 2 and 3, according to Howie et al. (2012), are the most impoverished and receive larger government funding and are non-fee-paying schools. Whereas quintiles 4 and 5 are located in more privileged areas, receive less funding, and fee- paying schools (Howie 2015). Table 2.2 below represents the school location of South African schools participating in PIRLS Literacy 2016. As seen in table.1 above, a larger percentage (39%) of grade 4 learners attended schools in remote rural areas compared to other areas. As discussed earlier in this section, learners attending such schools performed considerably lower than their peers in other areas. According to Visser, Juan and Feza (2015) and Bayat, Louw, and Rena (2014), South Africa’s economic background is important to educational research as it has been found to associate learner achievement. Visser et al. (2015) argue that research was carried to establish the impact of learner background on their performance. Participating principals in the research were asked to indicate what percentage of learners in their schools come from economically disadvantaged homes or economically affluent homes. The table below indicates their responses.

Table 2.2: School Composition by learner economic background

Learners Economic Background and Grade 4 Learner Achievement	Percentage (%)
More affluent	9
Neither more affluent nor more disadvantaged	16
More disadvantaged	75

Source: Grade 4 PIRLS Literacy (Howie et al., 2017, p. 94)

The PIRLS Literacy study found that 75% of learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds, 16% from neither affluent or disadvantaged backgrounds and 9% from more affluent backgrounds. These findings align with the claims by Considine and Zappala (2002) that children from low SES families are more likely to exhibit the patterns in terms of educational outcomes compared to children from high SES families: These children have, lower levels of literacy, numeracy and comprehension and lower retention rates (as children from low SES families are more likely to leave school early), lesser higher education participation rates (children from low SES families are less likely to attend university); exhibit higher levels of problematic school behaviour (for instance truancy); less likely to study specialised maths and science subjects; more likely to have difficulties with their studies and display negative attitudes to school and are less successful school-to-labour market transitions. The above patterns mentioned above are likely to inhibit school performance.

Howie et al. (2012) argue that in previous cycles of PIRLS, it was found that in most languages learners achieved a higher mean score if the test language was the same as the language the learner spoke at home. Principals were asked to categorise the composition of their schools in terms of the proportion of learners learning in a language different from their home, Howie (2015). Howie et al. (2012) maintains that internationally, school principals reported that 63% of grade 4 learners were in schools where most learners (more than 90%) spoke the language of the test as their home language. Nationally, school principals reported that almost two-thirds (59%) of South African grade 4 learners were in schools where most (more than 90%) of the learners spoke the language of the test as their home language. Table 2.3 below displays the percentage of South African grade 4 learners who spoke the test's language as their home language.

Table 2.3: Percentage of grade 4 learners having the test language same as their home language and learner achievement

Grade 4 learners having the test language same as their home language and learner achievement	Percentage (%)
Most learners speak the language of the test	59
Between 50% and 90% of learners speak the language of the test	19
Less than 50% of learners speak the language of the test	21

Source: PIRLS Literacy Grade 4, 2016 (Howie et al., 2017, p. 94) PIRLS L

Howie et al. (2012) argue that contrary to the international findings, overall, in South Africa, the learners that achieved the lowest average score were in schools where most of the learners spoke the test language as the home language spoken at home. The highest performing South African grade 4 learners attended schools where fewer than 50% spoke the test language as their native language. While school performance is the cornerstone in the functioning of every school, but PIRLS and other international assessments reveal that performance is affected by countless variables or factors. For example, performance cannot be stable due to the interplay of these factors as it can be good or bad depending on how performance factors are managed.

2.3.3 SACMEQ

According to Spaull. (2013**),** SACMEQ is a cross-national initiative consisting of fifteen countries' ministries of education in Southern and Eastern Africa aimed at testing the numeracy and literacy skills of grade six pupils in each of the participating countries. Saito (2011) cites the participating countries: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania-Mainland, Tanzania- Zanzibar, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, all illustrated in Figure 1 below. Saito (2011) posits that SACMEQ is an independent non-profit developmental organisation. Its (SACMEQ) mission is to undertake integrated research and training activities that will expand opportunities for educational planners and researchers to (a) acquire training in the technical skills needed to monitor, assess, and compare the overall state of schooling and the quality of basic education; and (b) generate information that decision-makers can use to plan the quality of education, Ross and Makuwa (2009). The Global Education Monitoring (GEM)(2015) cites the origin and the context of SACMEQ in Zimbabwe.

According to GEM (2015), SACMEQ was founded in 1990 in Zimbabwe, and it undertook an integrated research and training programme provided by United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). Then the programme aimed to: assess the quality of education in Zimbabwe's primary schools, involve the Ministry's Planning Unit staff in integrated research and training activities and supply informed advice having to do with policy concerns expressed by senior ministry decision-makers (GEM, 2015). As a result, according to GEM (2015), a research report was produced reviewing a variety of key education policy issues and provided baseline information for comparison with later studies. GEM (2015) claims the report was also used as the central theme when Southern African and Zimbabwean educational planners and researchers participated in a series of IIEP follow up training workshops. In 1992, the workshop participants discussed with IIEP the training needs for strengthening capacity. This is to enable staff members of their education planning units to monitor and evaluate the quality of their education systems (GEM, 2015, p. 2). GEM (2015) maintains that discussion eventually resulted in establishing a consortium of ministries of education known as SACMEQ. SACMEQ was registered as an international non-governmental organisation by the Government of Zimbabwe, Ross et al (2004). The number of participating ministries of education has grown since then from seven in the first SACMEQ project to fourteen in SACMEQ II and fifteen in SACMEQ III (GEM, 2015).

Table 2.4: Framework for SACMEQ 2 for testing grade 6 literacy skills

Skill levels		Sub-domains		
		Narrative	**Expository**	**Documents**
	1	Word or picture coordination involving positional or directional prepositions requiring the linkage of a picture to a position or direction to answer the question.	Word or picture combination involving positional or directional prepositions requiring the linkage of a picture to a position or a direction in order to answer the question	Word or picture combination involving positional or directional prepositions requiring the linkage of a picture to a position or direction to answer.
	2	Recognising the meaning of a single word and being able to express it as a synonym in order to answer the question.	Recognising the meaning of a single word and being able to express it as a synonym in order to answer the question.	Linking simple piece of information to item or instruction.
	3	Linking information portrayed in sequences of ideas and content when reading forward.	Linking information portrayed in sequences of ideas and content when reading forward.	Systematic search for information when reading forward.

	4	Seeking and confirming information when reading backwards through text.	Seeking and confirming information when reading backwards through text.	Linking more than one piece of information in different parts of a document.
	5	Linking ideas from different parts of text. Making inferences from text or beyond text, to infer author's values and beliefs.	Linking ideas from different parts of text. Making inferences from text or beyond text.	Use embedded lists and even subtle advertisements where the message is not explicitly stated.

Source: Ross et al. (2004) Chapter 2: Methodology for SACMEQ II study, p.48

Ross et al. (2004) argue that SACMEQ I assessed only reading. Based on extensive analyses of curricula, syllabi, exams and textbooks used in member countries, the project defined three sub-domains, as reflected in table.4 above, to be assessed in the reading test ('narrative prose', 'expository prose' and 'documents') (GEM, 2015). These sub-domains were combined with five reading skill levels (increasing competence levels from 1 to 5) to form a framework for constructing suitable test items (Ross et al., 2004). Ross et al. (2004) claimed three major changes in the test construction when preparation for the SACMEQ II project was made. Ross et al. (2004) maintain that first, it was decided to add mathematics to the subjects to be assessed, as reflected in table 5 below. Secondly, it was decided to assess performance levels of teachers as well in reading and mathematics, Ross et al. (2004). This meant the performance levels of students and teachers were assessed for reading and mathematics in SACMEQ II and III, while only students were assessed in one subject (reading) in SACMEQ I. Third, Ross et al. (2004) conclude that SACMEQ II included linked test items from earlier studies like SACMEQ I, the Zimbabwe Indicators of the Quality of Education Study (ZIQES), International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA), TIMSS, and IEA's PIRLS.

Table 2.5: SACMEQ II Assessment Framework for grade 6 Student Mathematics Test

		Domains		
Skill levels		**Number**	**Measurement**	**Space-data**
	1	Recognise numbers. Link patterns to numbers.	-	-
	2	Apply single operations to two-digit numbers or simple fractions.	Recognise units of measurement. Apply basic calculations using simple measurement units.	Link patterns and graphs to single digits. Recognise and name basic shapes.

	3	Extend and complete number patterns.	Convert measurement units when undertaking one step operations.	Translate shapes and patterns. Identify data in tabular form.
	4	Combine arithmetic operations to link information from tables and charts when performing calculations.	Apply two and three-step arithmetic operations to numbers. Use and convert measurement units.	Combine arithmetic operations in order to link information from tables and charts.
	5	Combine operations to make calculations involving several steps and a mixture of operations using combinations of fractions, decimals, and whole numbers.	Combine operations to make calculations involving several steps and a mixture of operations using a translation of units.	Link data from tables and graphs to make calculations involving several steps and a mixture of operations.

Source: **Ross et al. (2004) Chapter 2: Methodology for SACMEQ II study, p.51**

Murimba (2005) cites and summarises the impact of SACMEQ as reported by member countries into five categories. These categories are monitoring and evaluating quality; capacity-building; enhancing the quality of statistical and non-statistical information systems; policymaking and systems-improvement processes and choosing pathways to the achievement of Education for All Murimba (2005).

Briefly, Murimba (2005) argues that the key role of SACMEQ is to monitor and evaluate the quality of education. Murimba (2005) also indicates that the linkages within the different data sets collected by SACMEQ allow for comparisons against country-specific norms or expectations, across countries and over time. Furthermore, Murimba (2005) clarifies that classical item analysis and modern item response theory facilitate a descriptive account of learners' performances.

Murimba (2005) explicitly elucidates that one of the key goals of SACMEQ is to build capacity within SACMEQ ministries of education to evaluate and monitor the quality of the education being offered. Training is an integral component of the research process. Such training focuses on the key skills that planning officers need to generate valid, evidence-based information required for policy development, Murimba (2005). Murimba (2005) emphasises that the range of skills required is very wide and encompasses at least the 'traditional' research activities. These activities include planning and designing a research study, instrument development, test development, sampling, data collection, data capture and cleaning, data analysis, data interpretation and policy report preparation (Murimba, 2005). Murimba (2005) posits that one of SACMEQ's research hallmarks is high-quality data. For this purpose, it ensures that quality is built into the entire process of data collection, with meticulous care taken to ensure its accuracy and validity at every stage (Murimba, 2005, p. 98). Murimba (2005) explains that an accurate sampling frame, for example, is a prerequisite for a representative sample. Valid, reliable data results from the correct administration of good instruments on a good sample (Murimba, 2005). Murimba (2005) concludes that in short, quality is viewed as a cumulative product of interlinked processes that emphasise quality.

Murimba (2005) acknowledges that the greatest impact SACMEQ has had on ministries of education is on policy related, system development processes. Murimba (2005) confirms that an area of specific concern that SACMEQ's research activities have brought to the attention of ministries is the problem of policy implementation deficits that have taken a variety of forms. SACMEQ found out that, in most education systems, there was an absence of a comprehensive and up-to-date list of standards or norms for resource inputs to schools. Murimba (2005) makes an example of Zimbabwe, where resource provisions were available within the ministry, but their presence remained unknown to policy makers and implementers alike. Only when SACMEQ-related research sought to establish that the norms were pulled out from the files, only to discover a discrepancy between the ideal and the reality regarding the provision of inputs to schools, Murimba (2005). Murimba (2005) argues that few SACMEQ countries have achieved universal primary education (UPE). As a result of the World Declaration on Education for All (1990), there have been renewed efforts favouring the universalisation of basic education. Several countries have implemented reform measures to this effect (Murimba, 2005, p. 101). Murimba (2005) asserts that the most recent efforts were by countries like Namibia, Malawi, and Kenya. Murimba (2005) highlights that each of the countries mentioned above has faced unique obstacles in the march towards EFA due to their differing national contexts. The results from SACMEQ research have provided each of these countries with research-based suggestions on the path they can follow to achieve education for all (EFA), Dolata, Ikeda and Murimba (2005).

2.4 The importance of leading and managing school performance

While management and leadership share many similar duties which consist of working with people and influencing others to achieve goals, these two concepts play a major role in the school academic performance. For example, it is said that **e**very organisation needs managers and leaders, and their roles should be viewed as complementary to one another, Wajdi (2017). It is against this because school academic performance needs school leadership and management to be managed and led well. In managing and leading school academic performance these two concepts affect how schools perform academically. Planning, building, and direct organisational systems use management skills to accomplish missions and goals, while leadership skills focus on a potential change by establishing direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring (Wajdi 2017). Leadership and management must go together. They are not the same thing. But they are necessarily linked and, as indicated earlier, complementary. Any effort to separate the two will likely cause more problems than they solve, Wajdi (2017). Since teaching and learning are the microcosm of school performance, managing and leading these activities would translate into performance.

Managing teaching and learning is increasingly recognised in South Africa and globally as one of the most important activities for principals and other school leaders, Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and van Rooyen (2009). Bush and Glover, 2009; Spillane, 2004 and Taylor, 2007 claim that there are three fundamental requirements for developing effective teaching and learning in schools: sound classroom practice from specialist educators, sufficient and suitable learning materials, sound proactive leadership and management of learning. Unless these fundamental requirements are properly managed and led in the school, they will likely not yield good performance. Bush et al (2009) conducted a study in two South African provinces about the consequences of leadership and management in enhancing classroom practices and improving learner outcomes. The study revealed that managing teaching and learning is shared amongst principals, SMTs, DHs and classroom educators Bush et al. (2009). Bush et al. (2009) argue that it is progressively recognised that managing teaching and learning (MTL) is important (if not the most important) activities for principals and other school leaders. The core purpose of principalship is to give leadership and management in all areas of the school to create and support conditions under which high-quality teaching and learning take place and promote the highest possible standards of learner achievement (Bush et al., 2009). Bush and Glover (2009), referring to the South African context, claim that a principal who focuses strongly on MTL would undertake the following activities: Oversees the curriculum across the school; ensures that lessons take place; evaluates learner performance through scrutiny of examination results and internal assessments; monitors the work of DHs, through scrutiny of their work plans and portfolios; ensures that DHs monitor the work of educators within their learning areas; arranges a programme of class visits followed up by feedback to educators and ensures the availability of appropriate LTSM. If the activities mentioned above are done under the auspices of the principal at school, the likelihood of improved school academic performance would exist.

Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) provide an overview of the literature concerning successful school leadership that promotes schools' academic performance through teaching and learning. Leithwood et al. (2008) sum up the findings into seven claims of successful leadership: school leadership comes second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning. Nearly all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices; and how they apply these basic leadership practices, and not the practices themselves, demonstrate responsiveness to, rather than dictation by the contexts in which they work. Also, school leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment, and working conditions; that when widely distributed school leadership has a greater influence on schools and students, some distribution patterns are more effective than others. Next is the brief unpacking of these seven claims about successful school leadership to clarify what each one entails. Leithwood et al. (2008) maintain that the first claim is about school leadership being second only to classroom teaching influences pupil learning. Leithwood et al. (2008) posit that some will consider this claim controversial. Leithwood et al. (2008) argue that they could have claimed simply that school leadership has a significant effect on pupil learning, but their use of wording captures the comparative amount of (direct and indirect) impact exercised by successful school leaders. Leithwood et al. (2008) clarify that the second claim agrees that almost all successful leaders draw on the same series of basic leadership practices. To this end, Leithwood et al. (2008) argue that this claim emerges from recent research initiatives and they (Leithwood et al. (2008) believe that its implications for leadership development have not yet been fully grasped. Leithwood et al. (2008) cite the basic assumptions underlying this claim: the central task for leadership is to help improve performance and that such performance is a function of employees' beliefs, values, motivations, skills and knowledge and the conditions in which theywork.

According to Leithwood et al. (2008), the third claim is about how leaders apply leadership practices, not the practices themselves but demonstration of responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the contexts in which they work. For example, building a vision and setting directions**,** understanding, and developing people, redesigning the organisation, and managing the teaching and learning programme. Regarding the fourth claim, Leithwood et al. (2008) perceive school leaders as the ones who enhance teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their impact on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions. For example, if it influences pupil learning and achievement, a key leadership task is to improve staff performance.

According to Leithwood et al. (2008), the fifth claim has to do with school leadership having a greater influence on schools and pupils when it is widely distributed. Despite the popularity of this claim, Leithwood et al. (2008) argue that evidence in its support is less extensive and, in some cases, less direct than that in support of the previous claims. Leithwood et al. (2008) posit that an inquiry was made about the leadership provided by many possible sources, for example, sources such as individual teachers, staff teams, parents, central office staff, students and vice-principals as well as the principal or head teacher. This brought to the fore the concept of "total leadership" which, according to Leithwood et al. (2008), refers to the combined influence of leadership from all mentioned sources. Leithwood et al. (2008) conclude by indicating that the result of the inquiry was that total leadership has indirect effects on student learning and achievement through its direct effects on the three dimensions of staff performance.

Leithwood et al. (2008) argue that some distribution patterns are more effective than others in the sixth claim. Leithwood et al. (2008) opine that this claim grows directly from evidence about the superiority, in most but not all contexts, of distributed rather than focused (single-person) leadership. Leithwood et al. (2008) cite the research on a sample of 110 schools that demonstrated relationships between the use of different patterns of leadership distribution and levels of value-added student achievement. According to Leithwood et al. (2008), that research reveals that schools with the highest levels of student achievement attributed this to relatively high levels of influence from all sources of leadership. Schools with the lowest levels of student achievement credited this to low levels of influence from all sources of leadership. Schools with the highest levels, as compared with those in the lowest levels, of student achievement differed most in their ratings of the influence of school teams, parents and students. Head teachers were rated the greatest (positive and negative) influence in all schools. According to Leithwood et al. (2008), this evidence is consistent with claims about the ineffectiveness of non-interventionist forms of leadership. It also reflects earlier findings of power as a relatively unlimited resource in organisations. Leithwood et al. (2008) maintain that there is no loss of power and influence on head teachers when, for example, the power and influence of many others in the school increase.

Leithwood et al. (2008) maintain that the seventh claim is about a small handful of personal traits that explain a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness. The school leadership performance is sometimes hard to comprehend, especially concerning managing and leading teaching and learning. According to Leithwood et al. (2008), this evokes many questions. For example, questions like: Why are some leaders more expert than others? Why do some people develop leadership capacities to higher levels and more quickly than others? In response to these questions, Leithwood et al. (2008) focus on successful leaders' traits, dispositions, personality characteristics, and the like. However, Leithwood et al. (2008) argue that the evidence is less comprehensive within schools.

Less knowledge is available is to why leadership performance vary from leader to leader. As a result (Leithwood et al. (2008) posit that little research was done and focused on personality characteristics or intelligence, though there have been significant contributions concerning cognitive processes and leaders' values. Leithwood et al. (2008) discovers that one recent American study on school leaders' confidence or sense of collective efficacy illustrates the potential value of future research on leader's traits. This sense of efficacy shaped the nature of head teachers' leadership practices; highlighted the relationship between these practices and their schools, and indirectly influenced pupils' learning and achievement (Leithwood et al., 2008). Leithwood et al. (2008) confirm that these leaders are also flexible rather than dogmatic in their thinking within a system of core values, persistence (e.g., the pursuit of high expectations of staff motivation, commitment, learning, and achievement) all), resilience and optimism. Leithwood et al. (2008) conclude that such traits help explain why successful leaders facing daunting conditions can often push forward when there is little reason to expect progress thus improving academic performance through teaching and learning. Based on the claims above about leadership concerning school performance, one learns there is no substitute for leadership. The school fails or succeeds in its performance because of its leadership.

2.5 How does leadership and management impact school performance?

The impact of leadership and management on academic performance can best be understood through leadership and management styles. Many management styles affect school performance in one way or another. According to Okon and Isong (2016) organisations are set up to achieve certain goals and objectives. To meet this target, they use strategies to manage both the human and material resources of the organisation (Okon and Isong, 2016). Okon and Isong (2016) argue that this is referred to as the management style. According to Robbin (2003), management style can be defined as a manager's method in administering an organisation. It can also be described as the particular practice used by the manager to direct the affairs of an organisation (Robbin, 2003). Similarly, Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy (2014) refer to leadership style as the relatively consistent pattern of behaviour that characterises a leader.

Leadership style is a social influence and a process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates to reach organisation goals (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014).

Khan, Khan, Qureshi, Ismail, Rauf, Latif, and Tahir (2015) posit that leadership style is how the leader influences the followers. Khan et al (2015) indicate that there are many ways to lead, and every leader has own style. According to Khan et al (2015), some more common leadershipstyles include democratic, participative, and bureaucratic leadership styles.

The democratic leadership style according to Khan et al. (2015) is also referred to as the participative style as it makes employees part of the decision making. Khan et al (2015) claim that the democratic leader keeps employees informed about everything that affects their work and shares decision making and problem-solving responsibilities. This style needs the leader to be a coach who has the final say but gathers information from staff members before deciding (Khan et al, 2015). Khan et al. (2015) opine that democratic leadership can produce high-quality and high-quality work for long periods. Khan et al. (2015) clarify that many employees like the trust they receive and respond with cooperation, team spirit, and high morale.

In this leadership style, the followers have no say in the institution's running. That is probably why Khan et al. (2015) refer to bureaucratic leadership as to where the manager manages "by the book" ¨ To Khan et al. (2015), everything in this leadership style must be done according to procedure or policy. If the book does not cover it, the manager refers to the next level above them (Khan et al., 2015). Khan et al. (2015) posit that this manager is more of a police officer than a leader, and he or she enforces the rules. In the next section, I summarise leadership styles, their advantages, and disadvantages in tabular form below. Efere (2003) posits that different managers display different management styles in their work. What follows is the examination of some of the most commonly exhibited management styles as propounded by Efere (2003) and Okon and Isong (2016).

Authoritarian style is also called coercive style of management (Efere, 2003). According to Efere (2003) authoritarian managers would normally demand immediate compliance. Efere (2003) claims that such managers say, "just do as I say". Efere (2003) expresses concern that this management style cannot succeed in modern business organisations, as it will ultimately cause staff demotivation that might lead to possible riots and litigation for bullying. However, authoritarian management style may not be all that bad. It may be suitable in crises and the military (Efere, 2003). Efere (2003) opines that full of authority and influence, managers who display this type of management style can easily mobilise people with a great deal of enthusiasm and with clear objectives. These are very confident and charismatic managers saying, “come with me, trust me” (Efere, 2003). However, Efere (2003) argues that some cynics might feel that such managers are too overconfident and arrogant.

Efere (2003) claims that democratic managers seek to achieve their objectives by consensus and staff participation, as the name implies. Okon and Isong (2016) explain that the democratic management style is a very open style of running a team. Okon and Isong (2016) insist that the democratic management style means facilitating the conversation, encouraging people to share their ideas, and synthesising all the available information into the best possible decision. Efere (2003) concurs with Okon and Isong (2016) in arguing that these managers would seek their staff's opinion on serious issues. This assists in staff improved performance (Efere, 2003). It is said that such a management style is likely to reduce staff rebellion. However, Efere (2003) argues that there may be problem areas if, for instance, the staff members are against an important plan that management wants to implement.

On the other hand, Okon and Isong (2016) claim that the democratic manager must also communicate that decision back to the group to bring unity once the plan is chosen. Okon and Isong (2016) assert that a democratic management style will trust employees and encourage them to make decisions. This requires good two way communication and often involves democratic discussion groups, offering useful suggestions and ideas (Okon and Isong, 2016). Okon and Isong (2016) conclude that in democratic management style, employees are kept updated about issues that affect them, they are allowed to share in decision making and problem-solving duties and provides opportunities for employees to develop a high sense of personal growth and job satisfaction.

Efere (2003) claims that the affiliative style of management is intended to create unity and harmony in the organisation by building an emotional bond among staff. According to Efere (2003), such bonding is expected to create an atmosphere of friendliness, unity, and love in the organisation, which is seen as a motivator. Efere (2003) points out that affiliative style can also breed staff feeling tied to the same destiny. Efere (2003) expresses concern that, while there is no doubt that it is a positive style, some could say that being too close and friendly with the staff could cause problems relating to too much familiarity. According to Efere (2003), the permissive style is the laissez-faire style where in this management style the managers give little or no direction to the staff, allowing them to carry on with their job (Efere, 2003). This causes an over-empowerment for the staff members who may feel proud that they are in charge of their work and can work without being managed.

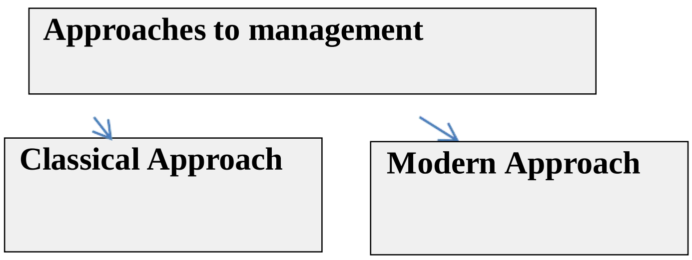
Indifferent management style is where the manager cannot be bothered (Efere, 2003). Efere (2003) opines that this may be the case where the manager is seriously demotivated due to lack of recognition or simply that he/she has had enough and does not care what goes on. Efere (2003) mentions coaching management style as impacting school performance. Efere (2003) claims that this is a management style where a manager focuses on training, guiding, counselling, and staff personal development for the organisation's future growth. According to Efere (2003), this will be extremely useful for improving staff performance and the future strength of both staff and the organisation. Efere (2003) notes that properly trained staff will be much more confident and efficient on the job.

Efere (2003) explains that school performance is affected by pace setting management style. According to Efere (2003), this management style sets examples and standards for high performance. Efere (2003) insists that management is by example, where require subordinates to resemble their actions. This is management style is similar to role modelling. According to Efere (2003), this management style is appropriate to highly motivated subordinates. Efere (2003) asserts that there is also a visionary style of management, where managers move their staff to share positive dreams of potential benefits and opportunities they stand to gain. Efere (2003) adds that when both staff and organisational goals are clearly defined and the means of achieving them are well known by everyone, this management style is very appropriate. Efere (2003) confirms that visionary managers can be innovative and would normally seek to develop the staff's ability to make effective decisions and improve performance. Bureaucratic management style contributes to the way a school performs. For example, Efere (2003) claims that the book's bureaucratic management style is management, so managers are completely inflexible. Such managers say "they are rigidly going by the book" (Efere, 2003). According to Efere (2003), the bureaucratic style requires everything to follow company policy, procedure, and culture. Defensive management style is the final Efere's (2003) management style**.** Efere (2003) argues that this is a management style practiced by managers who always seek to find fault from the staff and assumes that he/she is correcting the fault. For example, these managers may always disapprove of what the subordinates do (Efere, 2003). Efere (2003) expresses concern that this management style can be de-motivating and demoralising. Efere (2003) insists that if such behaviour persists, the staff may also become defensive towards the manager. Westwood and Chan (1992) cite paternalistic management style as contributory to how a school performs. According to Westwood and Chan (1992), paternalism refers to a father-like management style with authority. Farh and Cheng (2000) posit that the paternalistic management style is a style that mixes strong discipline and authority with fatherly kindness and moral integrity.

2.6 Some approaches in school management

As indicated earlier, the industrial revolution laid the foundation for various management approaches. There are essentially two management approaches: the classical and modern approaches. The importance of these approaches for this study is that each approach has attempted to explain the concept of management from different aspects (Ali, 2014, p. 6). Figure 3 below depicts approaches to management.

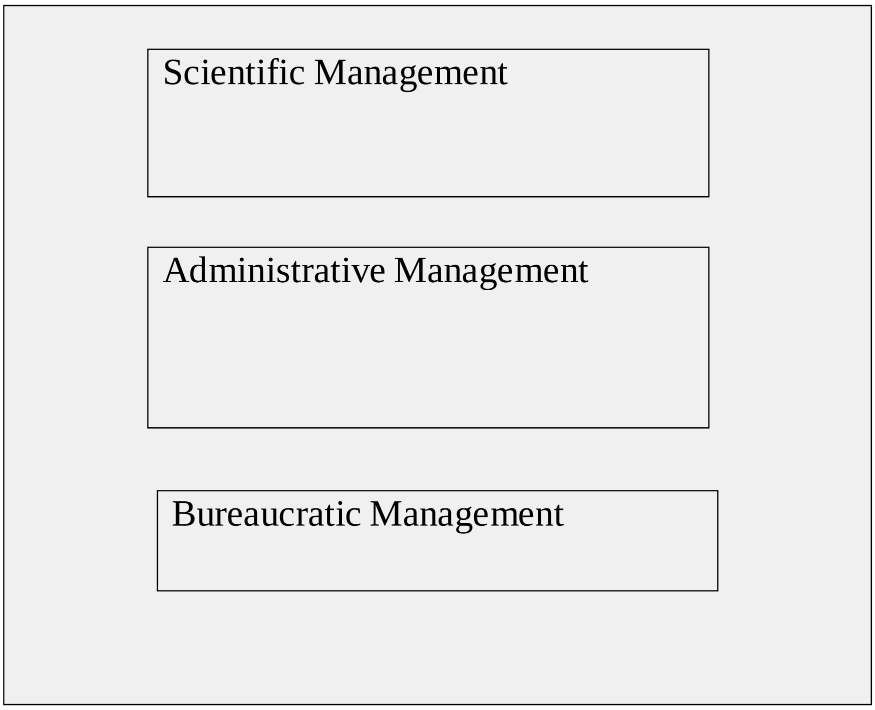
Figure 2.2: Approaches to management:



Adopted from (Ali, 2014)

Ali (2014) posits that the classical approach to management was developed between the 1880s to the 1920s. Ali (2014) argues that in this approach, it was recommended that production be increased by improving the efficiency of an organisation. Thus, managers must determine the best ways to perform jobs (Ali, 2014). The classical approach to management can be studied under three main areas, which are shown in Figure 4 below:

Figure 2.3: Three main areas of classical approaches to management:



Adopted from (Ali, 2014, p. 7)

2.6.1 Scientific management

Ali (2014) posits that Taylor (1856-1915) developed the scientific management approach. Ali (2014) argues that Taylor's contribution in scientific management can be understood through the following categories: time and motion study, differential piece-rate plan, supervision, Friendly cooperation between management and workers, administrative management, separation of work, authority and responsibility, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, subordination of individual interest to general interest, remuneration, centralisation, scalar chain, order, equity, stability of personnel tenure, initiative, unanimity, bureaucratic management, management by standard rules, division of labour, selection of personnel having technical skills, Record of all administrative acts, decisions and rules and hierarchical organisational structure. Each of the categories is briefly explained below.

Ali (2014) maintains that time and motion study is a technique of scientific management that was developed to define employee productivity standards. In this technique, a complex job is first divided into simple tasks. After that, the way these tasks are performed is observed to determine and eliminate waste motions. Ali (2014) maintains further that in this way, the precise time taken to complete the job is determined, which further helps in developing delivery schedules and incentive schemes. Time and motion study is most appropriate for repetitive jobs. Ali (2014) elucidates that Taylor developed a differential piece-rate plan assuming that all the workers have different capabilities and must be paid accordingly. This plan is also based on the assumption that the production system is based on piece rates. Under the plan, according to Ali (2014) time and motion study is used to estimate the standard time of completing a job. Ali (2014) argues that two piece rates are devised based on the standard time, namely higher and lower. The workers who exceed the standard time are given higher piece rates as wages. On the other hand, lower piece rates are given to those workers who do not meet the standard (Ali,2014).

Taylor suggests that work in an organisation must be planned and assigned to the workers by foremen. Foremen should assign work based on workers' specialty and supervise workers' performance. For that, an organisation should hire an adequate number of foremen.
According to Ali (2014), Taylor believed that management and workers have one common goal: increase production. Consequently, both management and workers must work together to achieve a common goal. Ali (2014) reveals that Fayol (1841-1925) promoted the concept of administrative management. Ali (2014) posits that Fayol focused on developing administrative principles applicable to general and higher managerial levels. Ali (2014) indicates that Fayol presented fourteen principles of management, which act as a guide for developing management practices.

2.6.2 Division of work

According to the principle of division of work, work should be rationed among individuals and groups according to their abilities. This enhances the completion of the task with greater efficiency. Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015) add that division of work is important as staff perform specific tasks simultaneously and as a routine duty. Henry Fayol's first management principle states that staff performs better when assigned jobs according to their specialties (Uzuegbu and Nnadozie, 2015).

Drawing from Fayol's management principles, Ali (2014) argues that authority is a right of an individual to give orders and instructions. This authority right arises from position,

intelligence, experience, and skills. On the other hand, responsibility is a state of being accountable for the consequences of the decisions taken by an individual. Managers should be accountable for the actions taken by them. Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015) opine that this principle suggests the need for managers to have authority to order subordinates to perform jobs while being accountable for their actions. Ali (2014) maintains that discipline refers to obedience to authority as a management principle. Corroborating with Ali (2014), Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015) point out that discipline advocates for clearly defined rules and regulations to achieve good employee dis- cipline and obedience. Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015) ascertain why Fayol’s inclusion of discipline as the principle of management is the natural human tendency to lawlessness. Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015) explain that Fayol might have felt the degree of organisational disorder that may erupt if management rules do not strictly guide employees, norms, and regulations. Ali (2014) affirms that maintaining good discipline in an organisation, needs proper supervision across all levels in the workplace, clear understanding between management and workers, and rational use of sanctions.

According to Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015), the principle of unity of command states that employees should only receive orders from and report directly to one boss. This means that workers must be accountable only to one immediate boss or superior. Ali (2014) declares that this helps avoid confusion in the employees' role. According to Ali (2014), unity of direction means that there should be one direction in which employees must move to achieve a particular objective. Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015) concur with Ali (2014) in that this principle proposes that there should be only one plan, one objective, and one head for each of the plans. Ali (2014) asserts that it may be difficult to achieve the objective if employees get pulled into different directions.

The organisation's interests supersede every other interest of staff, individuals, or groups (Uzuegbu and Nnadozie, 2015). In this principle, Ali (2014) posits that Fayol emphasised aligning individuals’ personal goals to organisational goals. Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015) declare that employees must dedicate themselves in doing the work of the all the organisation. In other words, organisations should not accept any staff member committed to their objectives. (Uzuegbu and Nnadozie, 2015). Ali (2014) points out that, workers should have fair wages. Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015) add that staff salaries should be as deserved. The salary should be reasonable to both staff and management and neither party should be short-changed (Uzuegbu and Nnadozie, 2015). Ali (2014) clarifies that the calculation of wages should be done by considering various factors, such as business environment, cost of living, the capacity of the organisation to pay, and productivity of employees.

2.6.3 Centralisation

According to Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015), the principle of centralisation suggests that decision making should be centralised. Ali (2014) argues that according to Fayol, the degree of centralisation should be decided to make the optimum utilisation of employees’ skills. This means that decision making and dishing-out of orders should come from the top management (central) to the middle management, where the decisions are converted into strategies and are interpreted for the line staff, which executes them (decentralisation).

Scalar chain refers to the hierarchy followed in an organisation, from top managers to employees working at lower levels (Ali, 2014). Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015) maintain that this principle produces the formal organisation system, also known as the hierarchy principle. Ali (2014) argues that according to the principle of scalar chain, all communication should pass through proper channels of hierarchy. However, in case there are any delays in communication due to hierarchy, there must be the provision of cross communication (Ali, 2014). Ali (2014) argues that according to Fayol, the scalar chain is vital to the success of organisations.

Order as the principle of administrative management is, according to Ali (2014), required for the efficient coordination of all the elements in an organisation. Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015) opine that this is another formal organisational control system interpreted differently. Some see it as the rule of giving every material its right position in the organisation and others think that it means assigning the right responsibility to the right worker (Ali, 2014). Ali (2014) argues that management must follow the principle of the right place for everything and every man. Ali (2014) argues that the principle of equity means fair treatment of all employees. But the objectivity required, probably, is such that it must make the staff comply with the principle of subordination of individual interests to organisational interests (Uzuegbu and Nnadozie, 2015). Ali (2014) claims that management must treat all employees equally and should be free from biases and prejudices

Fayol (as cited in Uzuegbu and Nnadozie, 2015) argues that the service period should not be too short, and workers should not be moved from positions frequently. Ali (2014) argues that management must strive to stabilise employees' tenure by providing them job security. Fayol (as cited in Ali, 2014) stresses that an employee cannot render useful service if removed before becoming accustomed to the work assigned to him. Fayol (as cited in Ali, 2014) maintains that increased turnover always results in inefficient production and therefore, organisations must attempt to reduce it by improving employee morale and motivation.

Fayol (as cited in Kaur and Khunteta, 2012) posit that using employees' initiative can add strength and new ideas to an organisation. Initiative on the part of employees, according to Fayol, is a source of strength for the organisation because it provides new and better ideas (Kaur and Khunteta, 2012). Fayol (as cited in Ali, 2014) advises that (as cited in Ali, 2014) management must provide freedom to employees to carry out orders effectively. Fayol (as cited in Ali, 2014), claims that employees should be encouraged to take initiatives in their respective fields to perform their jobs efficiently.

Fayol (as cited in Kaur and Khunteta, 2012) defines esprit de Corps to be referring to the need of supervisors to ensure and develop morale at work, individually and communally. It refers to team spirit. Team spirit, according to Fayol, helps develop an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding (Kaur and Khunteta, 2012). These can be used to start and help change processes, organisation, decision making, skill management and the total view of the management function (Kaur and Khunteta, 2012). Fayol (as cited in Kaur and Khunteta, 2012) declares that management must adopt new ways to improve employee team spirit. Fayol concludes that this helps employees work in harmony (Kaur and Khunteta, 2012). According to Abun, Calamaan, Magallanes, Encarnacion and Sallong (2021), bureaucracy is controlled by rules, regulations and hierarchical structures.

Ali (2014) asserts that bureaucratic management was promoted by Webber (1864-1920), who was a German sociologist. According to Webber (as cited in Ali, 2014), bureaucratic management is the most appropriate administration and consists of the following features: management by standard rules; division of labour; selection of personnel having technical skills; record of all administrative acts, decisions, and rules; hierarchical organisational structure. According to Webber (as cited in Ali, 2014), management by standard rules, an organisation must be governed by a set of rules. Webber (as cited in Ali, 2014) emphasises that upper-level managers must follow these rules while controlling lower-level workers. Webber (as cited in Ali, 2014) promoted the division of labour while assigning the work to all employees. According to Webber, the division of labour saves much time consumed during changing over from one job to another (Ali, 2014). Webber (as cited in Ali, 2014) opines that employees who have acquired technical skills must be hired to perform their jobs efficiently. Webber (as cited in Ali, 2014) indicates that the bureaucrats are neither elected nor inherited, but appointed through selection. Webber asserts that promotions in bureaucracies are also based on technical qualifications and performance (Kaur and Khunteta,2012). Webber affirms that an organisation must record its administrative activities, including policies, rules, and decisions. Webber (as cited in Ali, 2014) maintains that the record can study the nature of activities and people in the organisation. Finally, Webber (as cited in Ali, 2014) argues that to be successful, an organisation must adopt higher-level managers must supervise a hierarchical structure wherein lower-level employees.

Figure 2.4: Characteristics of bureaucratic administration

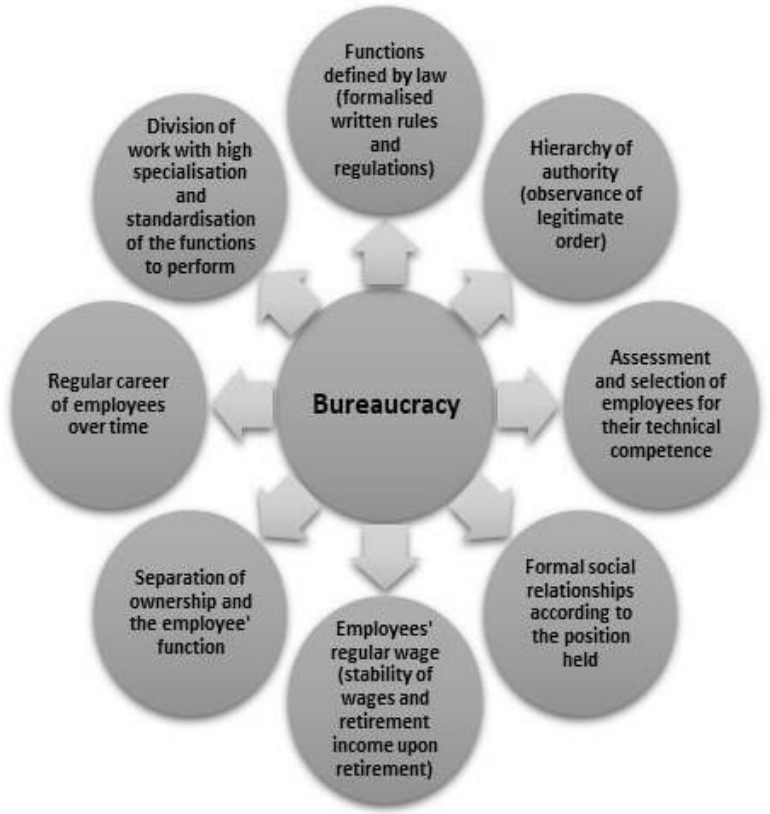


Figure 2.4 summarises and clarifies features of bureaucracy.
Source: Adopted from Ferreira et al., 2004, pp. 24 and 25

2.7 Accountability and its impact on school performance

This section on accountability is limited to Darling-Hammond's (2004) five types, namely, political accountability, legal accountability, bureaucratic accountability, professional accountability, and market accountability. According to Darling-Hammond (2004), political accountability is when parliamentarians and school board members, for example, must regularly stand for election and answer for their decisions. Darling-Hammond (2004) opines those political mechanisms can help establish general policy directions, but they do not allow people to judge each decision by elected officials, and they do not necessarily secure the rights of minorities. In the context of this study, school board members are tantamount to school governing body (SGB) members. They, too are responsible for regulating the school using the policies of DBE, inclusive of policies on school performance. According to Darling-Hammond (2004), legal accountability operates per law and people can ask the courts to hear complaints about the public schools' violation of laws. Legal

mechanisms are useful in establishing and defending rights, but not everything is subject to court action and not all citizens have access to the courts (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Darling-Hammond (2004) clarifies that Federal, state, and district offices promulgate rules and regulations intended to ensure that schooling occurs according to set procedures. Darling-Hammond (2004) argues that bureaucratic mechanisms are appropriate when standard procedures produce desired outcomes. Darling-Hammond (2004), however, expresses concerns that these mechanisms can not be productive when clients have unique requirements that require differential responses by those who must make non-routine decisions. Darling-Hammond (2004) posits that teachers and other staff are expected to acquire specialised knowledge, meet standards for entry, and uphold professional standards of practice in their work. Professional mechanisms are important when services require complex knowledge and decision making to meet peoples' individual needs, but they do not always take competing public goals (e.g., cost containment) into account (Darling-Hammond, 2004).

Figlio and Loeb (2011) define school accountability as the process of evaluating school performance based on student performance measures. School accountability seems to be consistent with the motive for this study as it seeks to find out partly what factors influence school performance. Figlio and Loeb (2011) opine that school accountability is increasingly prevalent worldwide. According to Figlio and Loeb (2011), school accountability is enforced by generating explicit or implicit rewards or sanctions to schools based on aggregate student performance on standardised tests. The rewards and sanctions associated with accountability systems could be explicit, such as bonuses for educators in schools considered excellent or threats of restructuring or closing low-performing schools (Figlio and Loeb, 2011).

Similarly, Figlio and Loeb (2011) argue that rewards/sanctions could also be implicit, operating less through direct action by central decision-makers and more through community pressure on schools to improve. While the context of the school might be a factor in the way the school performs, learning from successful schools in similar contexts could assist in improving performance. According to Darling-Hammond (2004), market accountability is when parents and students may, in some cases, choose the courses or schools they believe are most appropriate. Market mechanisms are helpful when consumer preferences vary widely and the state has no direct interest in controlling choice, but they do not ensure that all people will access services of a given quality. I perceive that being held accountable for school management and leadership can make the performance of schools unshakeable. It can make managers and leaders real servants of the people they lead and manage.

2.8 Factors affecting performance

Nickols (2016) posits that there are seven factors for analysing performance. These factors can affect performance positively or negatively. They are goal clarity, repertoire, knowledge of structures, feedback, mental models, motivation and environment. Any deviation from these performance factors' expected standard of behaviour could lead to negative consequences. Similarly, any compliance to each factor's expected standards of behaviour could yield positive outcomes. Each factor is briefly explained in the ensuing section.

According to Sawyer (1992), goal clarity is the extent to which the outcome goals and objectives of the job are clearly stated and well defined. In further clarifying goal clarity, Nickols (2016) asserts that people must have in mind a clear picture of any outcome they are to achieve. Without this picture, they cannot tell if they are making progress or when they have completed the task or assignment, let alone if it has been completed properly. Correspondingly, the time a manager spends developing, communicating and clarifying the goals or ends to be achieved is time well spent (Nickols, 2016). In this study, I view the clarity of goal in activity performance as paramount as it shows what is to be achieved when doing something. For example, the lesson's goals should clearly be stated and achieved when the teacher teaches. Merriam-Webster dictionary (2019) defines repertoire as the number of individuals or amount of something available at any given time. The repertoire is linked to goal clarity in that people working towards it must possess a suitable, flexible repertoire. They must engage in whatever behaviours are necessary to obtain that goal. Accordingly, in some cases, this will involve carrying out a routine specified in advance by someone else (Nickols, 2016). Nickols (2016) argues that in other cases, it will require figuring out on the spot an appropriate course of action. In many situations, the end to be achieved will remain constant but the conditions under which it will be attained will vary. Thus, in this study, I regard repertoire as the flexibilitysomeone carries to achieve the set goal.

Apart from the repertoire, knowledge of structure is another factor that affects performance. It entails figuring out what to do in a particular situation. Nickols (2016) asserts that people must understand the elements making up the situation, how those elements are connected and the relationships between and among these elements. Knowing the situation's structure makes people say how the actions they imagine taking will lead to the result they seek. Nickols (2016) posits that feedback is information about actual conditions compared to intended goals or results. Nickols claims that without feedback, no one can perform to standard. Feedback informs progress, enables corrections, and eventually signals attainment of the objective (Nickols 2016).

Senge (2006), claims that mental models play a core role in creating and enhancing the link between individual and organisational learning. Senge (2006) further maintains that MM plays an important role through being able to sustain organisational memory and in being able to influence the behaviour of the individual. Magzan (2012), on the other hand, defines mental models as representations of reality that people use to understand specific phenomena. They represent deeply ingrained assumptions or generalisations that influence understanding the world and taking action (Magzan, 2012). In the absence of feedback, people have no choice except to act consistently with internally held views or mental models of what is appropriate or what should work instead of externally based information about what is and is not working. Motivation is an interdisciplinary concept. Stirling (2014) argues that it is a topic of interest to researchers in various fields, including psychology, human development, education, sociology, and business. Patrick and Oseikhuemhen (2011) define motivation as an inner drive that activates behaviour and gives it a direction. Motivation is a management tool that managers employ to obtain organisational objectives (Patrick and Oseikhuemhen 2011, p. 89).

Patrick and Oseikhuemhen (2011), claim that motivating employees is a major concern of most goal-oriented managers. Their (managers) worry is that how can employees be induced to see organisational goals as part of their own goals and work hard to assist in achieving these organisational goals? To provide a plausible understanding of motivation, scholars in Ali (2014), such as Maslow (1908-1970), McCgregor (1960), Hertzberg, Mauser and Snydeman (1959), Aldfer (1969), McClelland (1961), Hollenbeck, Williams and Klein (1989), Skinner (1969), Bandura (1977), Adams (1963) and Vroom (1964) have coined theories of motivation. De Benetti (2009, p. 2) defines theory as ideas or sets of ideas to explain something about the world or life; general principles and ideas on a subject and ideas or opinions that, with no substantiating proof, someone thinks is true. Abend (2008) defines theory as a general proposition, or logically connected system of general propositions, establishing a relationship between two or more variables. Also, that theory is an explanation of a particular social phenomenon. A detailed discussion of relevant theories to this study will be discussed in chapter three (theoretical framework chapter).

The environment is the last, but not the least, factor affecting performance. Oludeyi (2015) defines environment, concerning work, as the settings, situations, conditions, and circumstances under which people work. Nickols (2016) claims that, even if the six factors of performance (goal clarity, repertoire, knowledge of structure, feedback, mental models, and motivation) are present, performance might not occur if the environmental conditions are not conducive to performance. Nickols (2016) concludes that the environment must support the desired performance, at the very least, it must be manageable.

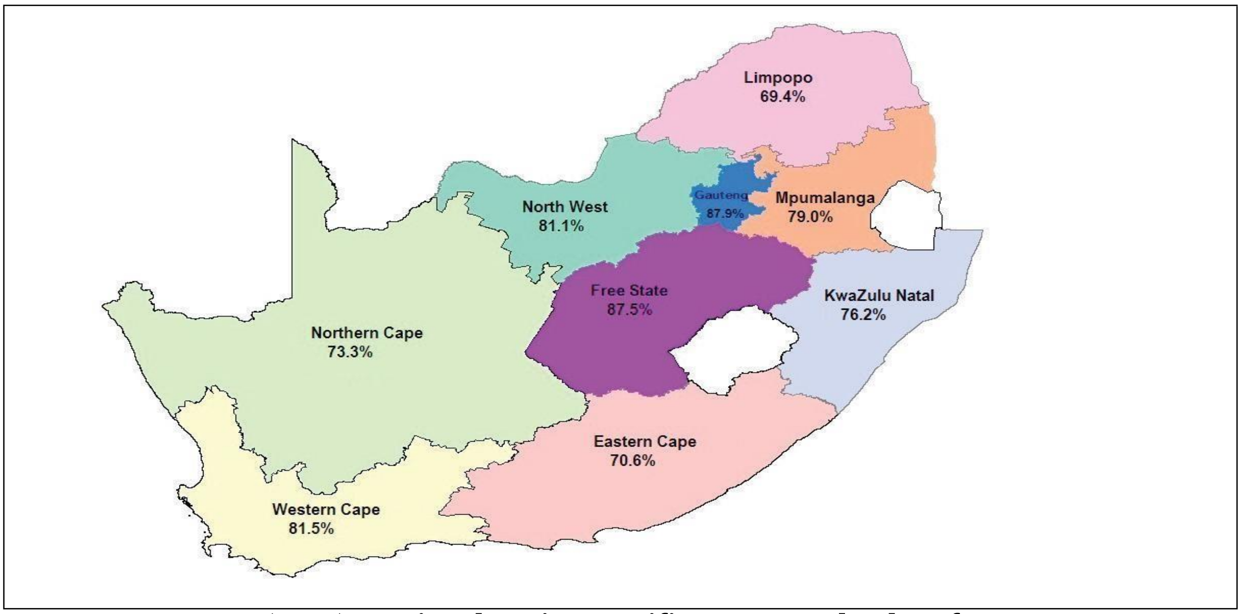
The elaborate definitions of performance have shown me that performance has a task component, which is work to be done. The work needs to be done in a particular setting hence task (work) and contextual (setting) performance. I, therefore, construe performance as it relates to my study as central and the backbone of my study without which it (performance) would cease to exist, that is, the context being the three selected schools and the task being performed. Scholars differ greatly about factors affecting school performance. Some scholars attribute socio-economical contexts as contributory factors to school performance while others relate it to how schools are run. Whatever the case may be, the fact remains that there is no one way-fits-all in managing school performance.

2.9 Summary

This section summarises major issues that came up in the literature. Studies show that how the school performs is, to a large extent, not influenced by one factor but countless factors. The literature reveals leadership and management as central to school's performance. Most studies agree that leadership and management are different yet complementary. Scholars also agree that leadership and management determine the level of performance of a particular institution. This suggests that more time spent developing and sharpening leaders and managers would pay dividends in improving school performance. Literature also reveals that since South Africa is part of the global community, it is incumbent upon it to compare its school performance with other countries internationally, hence South Africa’s participation in international assessments such as PIRLS, SACMEQ and TIMSS. I foresee this comparison helping the country to weigh its school performance against that of other international counterparts.

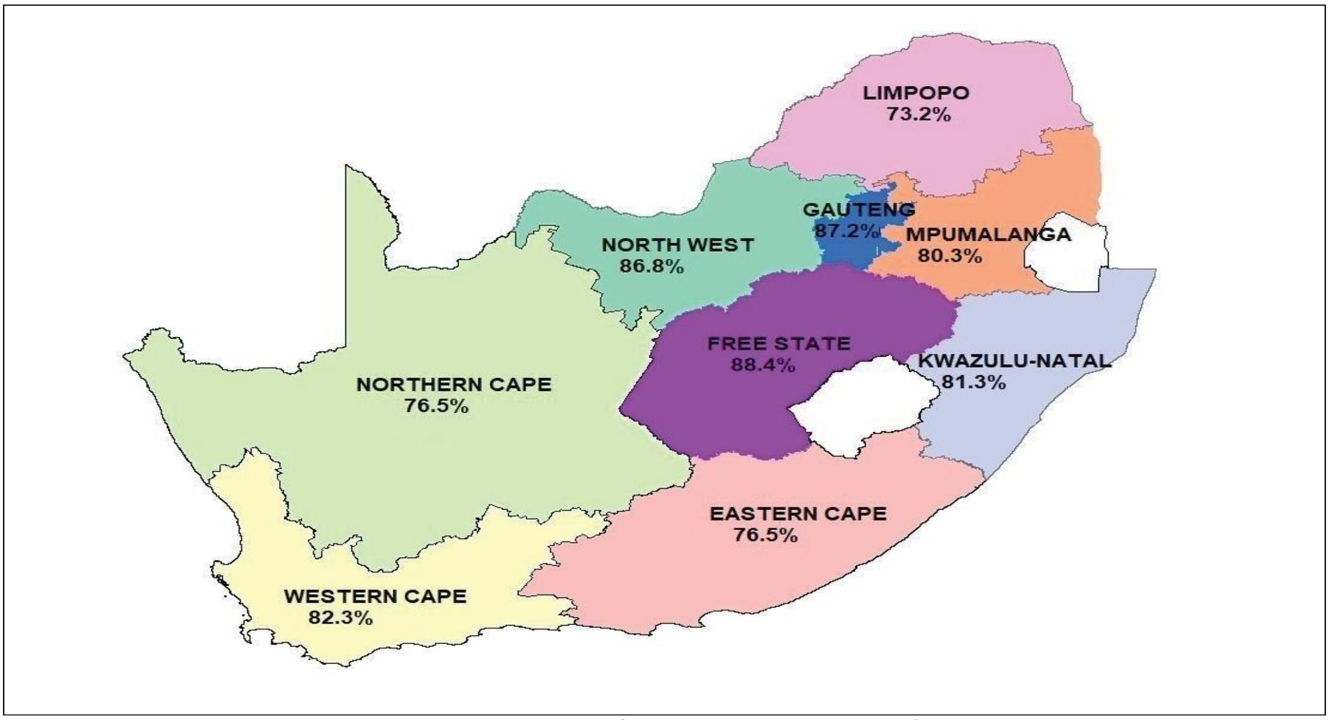
School performance is the prerequisite for measuring the education of any school in particular and of any country in general. For example, in the three selected schools, in Chapter Five, figures 11 to 13 reflect how these schools performed during the years 2015 to 2017. School performance seems to be the only yardstick through which education provisioning is measured nationally and internationally. The single yardstick for determining school performance seems to be a gap that needs more research to be done to find more measuring instruments and strengthen the credibility of school performance-measuring- yardsticks. For example, in South Africa, the figures below represent how the country's matriculation performed per province during 2018 and 2019 respectively. Although these two figures pertain to school performance in secondary schools, not in primary schools, I have nevertheless provided them to paint the picture of how school performance is measured at national level.

Figure 2.5: Matric national school performance for 2018 in South Africa



Source: DBE (2018): National Senior Certificate 2018 school performance report

<u>Figure 2.6: Matric national school performance for 2019 in South Africa</u>



Source: DBE (2019): National Senior Certificate 2019 school performance report

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined the relevant literature to understand the dynamics of school performance. This chapter is about the theoretical framework that underpins the study. In this chapter, I first define theory in general, drawing from various scholars. Next, I discuss three relevant leadership theories in the following order: transformational leadership theory, servant-leadership theory and situational leadership theory that collectively make up the theoretical framework for the study. In each leadership theory, I discuss factors characterising it, its strengths, criticism, how each leadership theory is applied and in conclusion, the implication of each leadership theory for the study.

3.2 Theory

Neuman (2014) argues that theory has multiple definitions and takes several forms defined below. For example, a theory is defined as a logically connected set of general propositions that establishes a connection between two or more variables. A theory explains a specific social phenomenon that identifies a set of causally relevant factors or conditions. A theory provides insights into the true meaning of a social phenomenon by offering an enlightening explanation and by telling us “What it is all about.” It is an entire worldview, or a way of seeing interpreting, and understanding events in the world. A theory is a criticism based on a political and moral viewpoint; it stands for a set of beliefs-values from which it evaluates the opponent’s position and arguments. Finally, a theory is a philosophical analysis of key questions or issues about core issues of developing knowledge about the social world. For example, how we construct a sense of social reality.

3.3 Transformational leadership theory

This study's transformational leadership theory is relevant as it transforms performance through education. The concept of transformational leadership was introduced by Burns (1978). Burns (1978) suggests that leadership could be expressed in two different forms: transformational or transactional leadership, which in his opinion are the opposites of each other. According to Burns (1978), this suggests that when discussing transformational leadership, transactional leadership should also be discussed. But scholars such as Bass (1985) refute Burns claims saying these are two separate leadership concepts

(Transformational and transactional leadership). Vanderheide (2017) points out that transformational leadership is a model of leadership that causes a change in individuals and social systems. Bass (1985) and Yukl (1999) add in defining transformational leadership that it is the way of influencing major changes in the attitudes, beliefs, and values of followers to a point where the goals of an organisation and the vision of the leader are internalised and followers achieve performances beyond expectations. Transformational leadership is aptly captured by Bass, Avolio and Atwater (1996) in their description that regards it as a process in which the leaders take actions to increase their associates' awareness of what is right and important, to raise their associates' motivational maturity and to move their associates to go beyond the associates' self-interests for the good of the group, organisation, or society. These scholars (Bass, Avolio and Atwater) say that such leaders provide their associates with a sense of purpose that goes beyond a simple exchange of rewards for effort provided. According to Bass, Avolio and Atwater (1996), these transformational leaders are proactive in many different and unique ways. These leaders attempt to optimise development, not just performance (Bass, Avolio and Atwater, 1996). The said development encompasses the maturation of ability, motivation, attitudes and values (Bass, Avolio and Atwater, 1996). Bass, Avolio and Atwater (1996) conclude their description of transformational leadership by noting that through the development of these leaders' associates, they optimise the development of their organisation as well. Leaders such as the above, want to elevate the maturity level of the needs of their associates to strive for a higher-level of potential and higher levels of moral and ethical standards (Bass, Avolio and Atwater, 1996). The definitions mentioned above of transformational leadership are the main reasons for choosing transformational leadership theory as the framework for this study. Since schools are run by individuals (people) in their various capacities, for example, ordinary teachers (PL1 teachers) and SMT members, transformational leadership would likely cause them to change to optimise school performance. A detailed report was furnished in chapter 5, whereby participants shared their perceptions about what teachers and SMT members regard as factors influencing school performance.

3.3.1 Factors characterising the transformational leadership theory

Like other leadership theories, transformational leadership theory is composed of characteristics that distinguish it from other theories. According to Smith and Bell (2014) transformational leadership theory consists of the following seven characteristics in order of their importance: person-centredness: a key attribute; development and change: possibilities for people and their environment; forming the future: the focus on vision; sharing the vision: inspiring others; seizing the chance: fluidity and flexibility; core values: a cornerstone for transformational leadership; developing people: the ability to change. Each of the features mentioned above is described to unpack the essence of transformational leadership theory.

Firstly, Cardiff (2014) defines person-centredness: a key attribute as a leadership style in which the leader tries to enable people to come into their while working towards a shared vision/common goal. Albitton (1995) attests that person-centredness is a strong feature of transformational leadership that concentrates on developing others and empowering them to achieve. According to Smith and Bell (2014), leadership that subscribes to person- centredness has belief in others with great qualities despite their previous performance.

Secondly, concerning development and change: possibilities for people and their environment, Smith and Bell (2014) argue that transformational leaders often see possibilities for others of which people are not aware. Bass and Riggio (2006) acknowledge how this feature of transformational leadership often enables people to achieve much more than any other leadership style. Thirdly, the feature, namely forming the future: the focus on vision, according to Hartog (2003) is the ability to see a possible improved future and share this vision with others that could be motivational. Fourthly, Armstrong (2004) asserts that transformational leaders are inspirational in their dealings by sharing vision and inspiring others and creating a desire to achieve more and drive them forward. Fifthly, regarding seizing the chance**:** fluidity and flexibility: according to Harris (2003) transformational leaders have faith in human nature and often allow circumstances and personalities to play a part in the evolution of organisations in new unforeseen directions. Harris (2003) opines that these unexpected developments can lead to paradigm shifts and not anticipated or predicted improvements. The sixth feature of transformational leadership is core values: a cornerstone of transformational leadership. In this feature, Anderson and Anderson (2001) maintain that transformational leadership is linked to a strong purpose and core values. The seventh and final feature is developing people: the ability to change. Anderson and Anderson (2001) reiterate that the belief in core values and developing further have also been identified as traits associated with transformational leadership.

In addition to the above-mentioned transformational leadership factors Bennis and Nanus (1985) identified four common strategies leaders use in transforming organisations. Kouzes and Posner (1988, 2002) develop a transformational leadership model consisting of five fundamental practices that enable leaders to accomplish extraordinary things: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.

Bennis and Nanus's (1985) four common strategies used by leaders in transforming organisations involve the following strategies: First, transforming leaders have a clear vision of the future state of their organisations. Bennis and Nanus (1985) argue that the vision usually is simple, understandable, beneficial, and energy creating. The compelling nature of the vision touches the experiences of followers and pulls them into supporting the organisation. Bennis and Nanus (1985) assert that when an organisation has a clear vision, itis easier for people to learn how they fit in with the organisation's overall direction and society. Bennis and Nanus (1985) maintain that people's clarity of vision empowers them because they feel they are a significant dimension of a worthwhile enterprise. Bennis and Nanus (1985) found that to be successful, the vision had to grow out of the entire organisation's needs and be claimed by those within it. Bennis and Nanus (1985) maintain that although leaders play a large role in articulating the vision, the emergence of the vision originates from both the leaders and the followers. Secondly, Bennis and Nanus (1985) argue that transforming leaders are *social architects* for their organisations. Bennis and Nanus (1985) create a shape or form for people's shared meanings within their organisations. These leaders communicate a direction that transforms their organisation's values and norms.

In many cases, Bennis and Nanus (1985) posit that these leaders could influence people to accept a new group identity or a new philosophy for their organisations. Third, Bennis and Nanus (1985) mention that transforming leaders create *trust* in their organisations, by making their positions known and standing by them. Bennis and Nanus (1985) explain that trust is predictable or reliable, even in uncertain situations. To them (Bennis and Nanus), leaders-built trust by articulating a direction and then consistently implementing it even though the vision may have involved a high degree of uncertainty. Bennis and Nanus (1985) discover that when leaders establish trust in an organisation, it gives a sense of integrity analogous to a healthy identity. Fourthly, according to Bennis and Nanus (1985), a transforming leader uses creative deployment of self through positive self-regard. Bennis and Nanus (1985) opine that these leaders know their strengths and weaknesses and emphasise them rather than dwelling on their weaknesses. Bennis and Nanus (1985) emphasise that based on an awareness of their competence, effective leaders can immerse themselves in their duties and the overarching goals of their organisations. Bennis and Nanus (1985) acknowledge that these effective leaders can fuse a sense of self with the work at hand. Bennis and Nanus (1985) found that positive self-regard in effective leaders has a reciprocal impact on followers, creating feelings of confidence and high expectations. Kouzes and Posner's (1988, 2002) transformational leadership model consists of five practices: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Kouzes and Posner's (1988, 2002) discuss these practices as follows:

Kouzes and Posner (2002) insist that leaders need to be clear about their values and philosophy to model the way. They need to find their voice and express it to others. Leaders who model the way are exemplary and as such they set a personal example for others by their behaviours. These leaders follow through on their promises and commitments and affirm the common values with others. Effective leaders create compelling visions that can guide people's behaviour regarding inspiring a shared vision. Kouzes and Posner (2002) argue that effective leaders can visualise positive outcomes in the future and communicate them to others. Through inspiring visions, effective leaders challenge others to transcend the status quo to do something for others.

According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), challenging the process means being willing to change the status quo and step into the unknown. It involves being willing to innovate, grow, and improve. Exemplary leaders are like pioneers: They want to experiment and try new things. They are willing to take risks to improve things. When exemplary leaders take risks, they do it one step at a time, learning from their mistakes as they go. Kouzes and Posner (2002) explain that outstanding leaders effectively work with people by enabling others to act. They build trust with others and promote working together. These leaders highly value teamwork and unity. They pay attention to diverse points of view and treat others with dignity and respect. Kouzes and Posner's (2002) maintain that these leaders also allow others to make choices, and they support the decisions that others make. Kouzes and Posner's (2002) conclude that such leaders make environments where people can be confident about their work and contribute to the greater community. The final component of Kouzes and Posner's (2002) transformational leadership model is encouraging the heart, where leaders encourage others by rewarding them for their accomplishments. For these scholars (Kouzes and Posner), it is natural for people to want support and recognition. Thus, effective leaders are attentive to this need and are willing to praise workers for well-done jobs. To this end, Kouzes, and Posner

(2002) explain that effective leaders use authentic celebrations and rituals to show appreciation and encouragement. According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), the result of this kind of support is greater collective identity and community spirit.

3.3.2 Strengths of the transformational leadership theory

According to Northouse (2016), transformational leadership has the following strengths: first, it has been widely researched from many different perspectives, including a series of qualitative studies of known leaders. It has also been the crucial point for a large body of leadership research since its introduction in the 1970s. Second, transformational leadership has intuitive appeal, which means that the transformational perspective describes how the leader is out front advocating change for others. Northouse (2016), claims that people are attracted to transformational leadership because it makes sense to them. The third, transformational leadership strength, treats leadership as a process between followers and leaders. Since this process incorporates both the followers' and the leader's needs, Northouse (2016) opines that leadership is not the sole responsibility but emerges from the interplay between leaders and followers. Northouse (2016) propounds that the needs of others are central to the transformational leader.

For this reason, Bryman (1992) asserts that followers achieve a more prominent position in the leadership process because their attributions are instrumental in the evolving transformational process. Fourth, Northouse (2016) insists that the transformational approach provides a broader view of leadership that augments other leadership models. Many leadership models, according to Northouse, focus primarily on how leaders exchange rewards for achieved goals, for example, the transactional leadership process. According to Avolio (1999) and Bass (1985), the transformational approach provides an expanded picture of leadership that includes the exchange of rewards and leaders' attention to the needs and growth of followers. Fifth, Northouse (2016) maintains that transformational leadership emphasises followers' needs, values, and morals. Northouse (2016) recalls Burns (1978) when he suggests that transformational leadership involves attempts by leaders to move people to higher levels of moral responsibility. It includes motivating followers to transcend their self-interests for the team's good, organisation, or community (Howell & Avolio, 1993; Shamir et al., 1993). Finally, Yukl (1999) notes substantial evidence that transformational leadership is an effective form of leadership. In a critique of transformational and charismatic leadership, Yukl (1999) reveals that transformational leadership is positively related to follower satisfaction, motivation, and performance to appraise leaders. Furthermore, Yukl (1999) argues that transformational leadership was effective in various situations in studies that use interviews and observations.

3.3.3 Criticism of transformational leadership

Apart from having strengths, transformational leadership also possesses some criticisms. Northouse (2016) identifies the following criticisms about transformational leadership: First, one criticism is that it lacks conceptual clarity. It is difficult to define exactly the parameters of transformational leadership. The parameters of transformational leadership often overlap with similar conceptualisations of leadership. For example, Bryman (1992) argues that transformational and charismatic leadership are often treated synonymously, even though charisma is only one component of transformational leadership in some leadership models.

According to Northouse (2016), the second criticism pertains to measuring it. Northouse (2016) indicates that some scholars have typically utilised some version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure transformational leadership. According to Tejeda, Scandura and Pillai (2001), MLQ is one of the widely used instruments to measure transformational leadership and transactional leadership behaviours. Some studies have challenged the validity of MLQ, saying that the four factors of transformational leadership correlate highly with each other, which means they are not distinct factors (Tejeda et al., 2001). Tejeda et al. (2001) add that some transformational factors correlate with the transactional and laissez-faire factors, which may not be unique to the transformational leadership model.

According to Bryman (1992), the third criticism is that transformational leadership treats leadership as a personality feature or personal predisposition rather than a behaviour that people can learn. Bryman (1992) contends that if it is a feature, training people in this approach becomes more problematic because it is difficult to teach people how to change their traits. Bryman (1992) claims that even though many scholars, such as Weber, House, and Bass, emphasise that transformational leadership is concerned with leader behaviours, such as how leaders involve themselves with followers, there is an inclination to see this approach from a trait perspective. Bryman (1992) argues that this problem is perhaps increased because transformational creates images of one person as the most active component in the leadership process. Bryman (1992) maintains that even though "creating a vision" involves follower input, transformational leaders tend to see visionaries. Bryman (1992) confirms that there is also a tendency to see transformational leaders as people who have special qualities that transform others. Bryman (1992) concludes that these images accentuate a trait characterisation of transformational leadership.

According to Day and Antonakis (2012), the fourth criticism is that researchers have not established that transformational leaders can transform individuals and organisations. Day and Antonakis (2012) explain that evidence indicates that transformational leadership is associated with positive outcomes, such as organisational effectiveness; however, studies have not yet clearly established a causal link between transformational leaders and changes in followers or organisations. In the fifth criticism, Avolio (1999), Bass and Avolio (1993) mention that transformational leadership is elitist and antidemocratic. According to Bass & Avolio et al., (1993), transformational leaders often play a direct role in creating changes, establishing a vision, and advocating new directions. This gives the strong impression that the leader is acting independently of followers or putting him or herself above the followers' needs. Although this criticism of elitism has been refuted by Bass and Avolio (1993) and Avolio (1999), who contended that transformational leaders can be directive and participative and democratic and authoritarian, the substance of the criticism raises valid questions about transformational leadership.

According to Northouse (2016), the final criticism of transformational leadership regards it (transformational leadership) as having the potential to be abused. Northouse (2016) reminds us that transformational leadership is concerned with changing people's values and moving them to a new vision. The vulnerability of transformational leadership towards abuse prompts the following rhetoric questions as cited by Northouse (2016, pp. 91-94): "Who is to determine whether the new directions are good and more affirming?" "Who decides that a new vision is a better vision?" Consequently, Northouse (2016) agrees that if the values to which the leader is moving his or her followers are not better, and if the set of human values is not more redeeming, then the leadership must be challenged. However, Northouse (2016) is aware that the dynamics of how followers challenge leaders or respond to their visions are not fully understood.

3.3.4 Application of transformational leadership

Northouse (2016) argues that rather than being a model that tells leaders what to do transformational leadership provides a broad set of generalisations of typical leaders who are transforming or who work in transforming contexts. Northouse (2016) asserts that transformational leadership provides a general way of thinking about leadership that emphasises ideals, inspiration, innovations, and individual concerns, unlike other leadership approaches. Northouse (2016) indicates that transformational leadership requires that leaders be aware of how their behaviour relates to the needs of their followers and the changing dynamics within their organisations.

Bass and Avolio (1990) suggest that transformational leadership can be taught to people at all levels in an organisation and positively affect a firm's performance. Bass and Avolio (1992) cite instances where transformational leadership can be used, for example, in recruitment, selection and promotion and training and development. Bass and Avolio (1994) point out that transformational leadership can also improve team development, decision making groups, quality initiatives, and reorganisations. Bass and Avolio (1990) mention that programmes designed to develop transformational leadership usually require leaders or associates to take the MLQ or a similar questionnaire to determine the leader's particular strengths and weaknesses. Taking the MLQ helps leaders pinpoint areas in which they could improve their leadership. Bass and Avolio (1990) cite an example where leaders might learn that it would be beneficial if they were more confident in expressing their goals, spend more time nurturing followers or be more tolerant of their opposing viewpoints. Bass and Avolio (1990) state that the MLQ is the springboard to helping leaders improve a whole series of their leadership attributes.

3.3.5 Implication of transformational leadership for the study

The implication of transformational leadership theory for this study is that it would add more understanding of how school performance is transformed to better factors influencing performance in the school.

3.4 Servant-leadership theory

According to Northouse (2016), servant-leadership originated in Greenleaf's writings (1970, 1972, 1977). Northouse (2016) argues that servant-leadership is a paradox - it is an approach to leadership that runs counter to common sense. For example, Northouse (2016) explains that our everyday images of leadership do not coincide with leaders being servants. Northouse (2016) argues that leaders influence, and servants follow. How then can leadership be both service and influence? How can a person be a leader and a servant simultaneously? Northouse (2016) perceives servant-leadership as an approach focusing on leadership from the leader's point of view and his or her behaviours. Northouse (2016) claims that servant- leadership emphasises that leaders be attentive to the concerns of their followers, empathise with them, and nurture them. Northouse (2016) acknowledges that although servant- leadership seems contradictory and challenges our traditional beliefs about leadership, but it is an approach that offers a unique perspective.

Page and Wong (2000) define servant-leadership as serving others by working toward their growth and well-being to meet goals for the common good. Another definition that is evident in the servant-leadership literature describes it as “distancing oneself from using power, influence and position to serve self, and instead gravitating to a position where these instruments are used to empower, enable and encourage those who are within one’s circle of influence” (Rude, 2003). Spears (1996) holistically defines servant-leadership as a new leadership model that puts serving others as the number one priority. Servant-leadership according to Spears (1996) emphasises the following principles: increased service to others; a holistic approach to work; promoting a sense of community; and the sharing of power in decision making. Northouse (2016) clarifies that the above principles must be explored to present a fuller picture of the servant-leadership framework.

Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko (2004) argue that service to others means that servant-leadership begins when a leader assumes the servant's position in their interactions with followers. Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko (2004) maintain that authentic, legitimate leadership arises not from exercising power or self-interested actions but from a fundamental desire to help others. Smith (2004) concludes that a servant leader’s primary motivation and purpose encourage greatness in others, while organisational success is servant-leadership's indirect, derived outcome.

Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2004) maintain that servant leaders trust followers to act in the organisation's best interests and focus on those followers rather than the organisational objectives. In order to have a deeper insight into the concept of servant-leadership, Spears (2002) identifies ten characteristics in Greenleaf’s writings that are central to the development of servant-leadership. These characteristics include Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualisation, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to the growth of people, and building community. The characteristics mentioned above of servant-leadership, according to Northouse (2016) provide a creative lens from which to view the complexities of servant-leadership. A brief discussion of each characteristic is outlined below:

According to Northouse (2016), listening refers to communication between leaders and followers and it is an interactive process that includes sending and receiving messages. Spears (2002) explains that servant leaders communicate by listening first and then recognise that listening is a learned discipline that involves hearing and being receptive to what others have to say. Spears (2002), argues that through listening, servant leaders acknowledge the viewpoint of followers and validate these perspectives.

Regarding empathy, Spears (2002) posits that it is "standing in the shoes" of another person and attempting to see the world from that person's point of view. Spears (2002) maintains that empathetic servant leaders demonstrate that they truly understand what followers are thinking and feeling. Spears (2002), notes that when a servant leader shows empathy it confirms and validates the follower. It makes the follower feel unique.

Greenleaf (1970) explains that to heal means to make whole. According to Greenleaf (1970), servant leaders care about the personal well-being of their followers. They support followers by helping them overcome personal problems. Greenleaf (1970) argues that the process of healing is a two-way street in helping followers become whole, servant leaders themselves are healed. Awareness is a quality within servant leaders that makes them acutely attuned and receptive to their physical, social, and political environments (Northouse, 2016, p. 228). Northouse (2016) claims that awareness includes understanding oneself and the impact one has on others. Northouse (2016) maintains that with awareness, servant leaders can step aside and view themselves and their perspectives in the greater context of the situation.

The fifth characteristic of servant-leadership is persuasion. Northouse (2016) notes that persuasion is clear and persistent communication that convinces others to change. Northouse (2016) indicates that as opposed to coercion, which utilises positional authority to force compliance, providing a clear sense of its goals and direction, persuasion creates change through the use of gentle, non-judgmental argument. According to Spears (2002), conceptualisation refers to an individual's ability to be a visionary for an organisation. Spears (2002) mentions that conceptualisation goes beyond day-to-day operational thinking to focus on the "big picture". Spears (2002) maintains that conceptualisation also makes servant leaders to respond to complex organisational problems in creative ways, enabling them to deal with the intricacies of the organisation concerning its long- term goals. Spears (2002), posits that foresight encompasses a servant leader's ability to know the future. Spears (2002) clarifies that foresight predicts what is coming based on what is occurring in the present and what has happened in the past. For Greenleaf (1970), foresight has an ethical dimension. He believes leaders should be held accountable for failure to anticipate what reasonably could be foreseen and act on that understanding.

Spears (2002) explains that stewardship is about taking responsibility for the leadership role entrusted to the leader. According to Spears (2002), servant leaders accept the responsibility to manage the people and organisation carefully they have been given to lead. Spears (2002) adds that servant leaders hold the organisation in trust for the greater good of society. In clarifying commitment to the growth of people, Spears (2002), perceives Greenleaf's conceptualisation of servant-leadership places a premium on treating each follower as a unique person with intrinsic value that goes beyond his or her tangible contributions to the organisation. Spears (2002), argues that servant leaders are committed to helping each person in the organisation grow personally and professionally. Spears (2002) maintains that commitment can take many forms, including providing followers with chances for career development, assisting them develop new work skills, taking a personal interest in their ideas, and involving them in decision making. Regarding building community, in conclusion, Spears (2002) explains that servant-leadership fosters the development of community. According to Spears (2002), community allows followers to identify with something greater than themselves that they value. Spears argue that servant leaders build a community to provide a place where people can feel safe and connected with others but still express their individuality.

3.4.1 Strengths of servant-leadership theory

The first strength of servant-leadership theory relates to Spears (2002), maintaining that research on servant-leadership has made several positive contributions to the field of leadership. For example, Spears (2002) insists that while leadership approaches such as transformational and authentic leadership included, Spears (2002) claims that in the servant-leadership approach, it is argued that leaders should put followers first and share control with followers and embrace their growth. Spears (2002) declares that it is the only leadership approach that frames the leadership process around the principle of caring for others. Secondly, Spears (2002) posits that servant-leadership provides a counterintuitive and provocative approach to the use of influence, or power, in leadership. According to Spears (2002), nearly all other leadership theories treat influence as a positive factor in the leadership process, but servant-leadership does the opposite. Spears (2002) asserts that leaders should not dominate, direct, or control; rather, leaders should share control and influence. Spears (2002), explains that to give up control rather than seek control is the goal of servant-leadership. Spears (2002) claims that servant-leadership is an influence process that does not traditionally incorporate influence.

Thirdly, research on servant-leadership has shown that there are conditions under which servant-leadership is not a preferred kind of leadership. Spears (2002), claims that findings indicate that servant-leadership may not be effective in contexts where followers are willing to being guided, supported, and empowered. Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson (2008) add that followers' readiness to receive servant-leadership moderates the potential usefulness of leading from this approach. Fourthly, Liden, Wayne, et al. (2008) posit that recent research has resulted in a sound measure of servant-leadership. These scholars, namely, Liden, Wayne, et al. (2008) used and developed servant-leadership questionnaire (SLQ) that measures aspects of leadership that are different from those measured by the transformational and leader–member exchange theories.

3.4.2 Criticism of servant-leadership theory

Spears (2002), maintains that the first limitation of servant-leadership theory is its paradoxical nature of the title "servant-leadership", which creates semantic noise that diminishes the potential value of the approach. Spears (2002), argues that since the name appears contradictory, servant-leadership is prone to be perceived as fanciful or whimsical. Spears adds that being a servant leader implies following and following is viewed as the opposite of leading. Spears (2002) expresses concern that although servant-leadership incorporates influence, the mechanism of how influence functions as a part of servant- leadership is not fully analysed in the approach.

Secondly, Spears (2002), states that there is debate among servant-leadership scholars regarding the core dimensions of the process. According to Spears (2002), servant-leadership is hypothesised to include many abilities, traits, and behaviours. Van Dierendonck (2011) expresses concern that researchers have not reached a consensus on a common definition or theoretical framework for servant-leadership to date. Spears (2002), thus concludes that until a larger body of findings is published on servant-leadership, the robustness of theoretical formulations about it will remain scanty. Spears (2002) indicates that many studies on servant-leadership have a prescriptive overtone that implies that good leaders "put others first”. Gergen (2006) explains that while advocating an altruistic approach to leadership is commendable, it has a utopian ring because it conflicts with individual autonomy and other leadership principles such as directing, concern for production, goal setting, and creating a vision. Spears (2002) perceives that, along with the “value-push” prescriptive quality, an almost moralistic nature seems to surround servant-leadership. Spears (2002) concludes that as a result, many practitioners of servant-leadership are not necessarily researchers who want to conduct studies to test the validity of servant- leadership theory. Finally, Spears (2002) argues that it is unclear why “conceptualising” is included as one of the servant-leadership behaviours in the servant-leadership model. Spears (2002), questions the rationale for identifying conceptualising as a determinant of servant-leadership. Spears (2002), maintains that conceptualising is undoubtedly an important cognitive capacity in all kinds of leadership approaches but wonders why it is a defining characteristic of servant- leadership. Spears (2002), therefore, proposes that a clearer explanation for its (conceptualising) central role in servant-leadership needs to be addressed in future research.

3.4.3 Application of servant-leadership theory

Northouse (2016) indicates that servant-leadership can be applied at all levels of management and in all types of organisations. Northouse (2016) claims that within a philosophical framework of caring for others, servant-leadership sets forth a list of behaviours individuals can engage in if they want to be servant leaders. Northouse (2016) also argues that the prescribed behaviours of servant-leadership are not esoteric; they are easily understood and generally applicable to a variety of leadership situations. Northouse (2016) notes that unlike leader–member exchange theory or authentic leadership, which are not widely used in training and development, servant-leadership has been used extensively in various organisations for more than 30 years. Northouse (2016) propounds that training in servant- leadership typically involves self-assessment exercises, educational sessions, and goal setting. Liden, Wayne, et al. (2008) suggest that organisations that want to build a culture of servant- leadership should be careful to select people interested in and capable of building long-term relationships with followers. Northouse (2016), states that servant-leadership is taught at many colleges and universities worldwide and focuses on numerous independent coaches, trainers, and consultants. In summary, Northouse (2016) posits that servant-leadership provides a philosophy and set of behaviours that individuals in the organisational setting can learn and develop.

3.4.4 Implication of servant-leadership theory for the study

Since servant-leadership theory speaks about a leader possessing particular personality traits such as listening, empathy, healing and awareness, to name but a few, the implication that it would have for the study is that the leader would be able to get into the shoes of the followers thereby having minimal hiccups in his/her leadership. The likelihood of improving school performance in this instance is high.

3.4.4.1 Implication of listening, empathy healing and awareness for the study

Like any theory, leadership theory has features through which it can be defined. These are, among others, listening, empathy, healing, and awareness. These features have a collective implication for this study. Spears (2010), for example, argues that the servant leader listens receptively to what is being said or unsaid in seeking to identify and clarify the will of the group. Listening together with periods of reflection is according to Spears (2010) essential for the growth of the servant leader. In the context of this study the servant leader should be a good listener so that he or she could understand what ever challenge his/her followers are facing and be able to take informed decisions. Greenleaf (2002) explains that intense and sustained listening is even more important because "true listening builds strength in other people and can help people find that "wholeness that is only achieved by serving" Spears (2010) maintains that servant leaders listen not only to what is being said and unsaid, but alsoto their inner voices. Within the school context, SMTs and educators do not work in silos they need to listen to one another to come up with novel collective ideas of managing school performance.

In defining empathy, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) claim that empathy extends listening when leaders can put themselves in the circumstances of others. Pescosolido (2002) adds by describing empathy as a crucial characteristic for managers of group emotions in self- managed teams. In this era where educators at all levels in schools are faced with challenges, such as learner-ill-discipline and poor coping mechanisms with the demands of curriculum changes, empathetic servant leaders might intervene to ease the situation. The servant leader could use his/her empathetic character to properly manage the situation lest burnout in teachers could be a possibility.

Brewer (2010) assets that leaders possess the ability to heal followers and they are a force of transformation recognising the human heart is fragile and life brings many tribulations into the work environment. Jit, Sharma and Kawatra (2017) maintain that a servant leader, with behavioural characteristics such as healing, builds not only a mentally and emotionally healthy workforce but also inculcates a sense of cohesiveness among the followers. For example, by addressing their feelings and emotions. In the context of this study, schools operate well if there is unity. It is therefore incumbent upon the principal as a leader to possess the healing features so that he/she may maintain cohesiveness among educators. Scholars such as Ebener and O'Connell (2010), Ehrhart (2004), Hu and Liden (2011) agree that a servant-led organisation increases pro-social and altruistic behaviour among followers that improves organisational performance.

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) claim that awareness is operationalized as the leader's astuteness for picking up cues in the environment. As a feature of servant leadership, Barnabas, Anbarasu and Paul (2010) regard awareness as aiding one in understanding issues involving ethics and values. Brewer (2010) posits that being aware of the organisational climate especially the moral and ethical issues enable leaders to better ascertain conflicts of interests.

3.5 Situational leadership theory

Various situations under which school performance occurs make situational leadership theory important in underpinning this study. For example, discipline, teaching and learning, punctuality and many other situations need to be led to realise good school performance. According to Northouse (2016), situational leadership theory is one of the more widely recognised approaches to leadership developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969). Northouse (2016) indicates that as the name of the approach implies, the situational approach focuses on leadership in situations. Northouse (2016) asserts that the theory's premise is that different situations demand different kinds of leadership. From this perspective, Northouse (2016) argues that to be an effective leader requires that a person adapt his or her style to the demands of different situations. Northouse (2016) maintains that the situational approach stresses that leadership is composed of both a directive and a supportive dimension and that each has to be applied appropriately in a given situation. Northouse (2016) claims that to determine what is needed in a particular situation, leaders must evaluate their followers and assess how efficient and committed they are to performing a given goal. Based on the assumption that followers' skills and motivation vary over time, Northouse (2016) argues that situational leadership suggests that leaders should change the degree to which they are directive or supportive to meet the changing needs of followers. Northouse (2016) clarifies that the principle of the situational approach demands that leaders match their style to the competence and commitment of the followers.

Northouse (2016) notes that situational leadership is illustrated in the model developed by Blanchard (1988) and Blanchard, Zigami, and Zigami (2013), called the situational Leadership II (SLII) model. According to Northouse (2016), the SLII model is an extension and refinement of the original model developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969). Northouse (2016) posits that the dynamics of the SLII model comprise two major dimensions, namely, leadership style and development level of followers.

Concerning leadership style, Northouse (2016) argues that it consists of the behaviour pattern of a person who attempts to influence others. For example, Northouse (2016), explains that it includes both directive and supportive behaviours. Directive behaviours, according to Northouse (2016) help group members accomplish goals by giving directions, establishing goals and methods of evaluation, setting timelines, defining roles, and showing how the goals are to be achieved. Northouse (2016) adds that directive behaviours clarify, often with one way communication, what is to be done, how it is to be done, and who is responsible for doing it.

Coming to supportive behaviours, Northouse (2016) indicates that they help group members feel comfortable about themselves, their co-workers, and the situation. According to Northouse (2016), supportive behaviours involve two-way communication and responses that show social and emotional support to others. Northouse (2016) asserts this claim by furnishing examples of supportive behaviours that include asking for input, solving problems, praising, and sharing information about oneself and listening.

Northouse (2016) argues that situational leadership styles can be classified into four distinct categories: directive and supportive behaviours. The first style is a high directive–low supportive style also called a directing style. Northouse (2016) asserts that the leader focuses on goal achievement and spends a smaller amount of time using supportive behaviours in this style. Using this style, a leader gives directives about what and how goals are to be achieved by the followers and then supervises them carefully (Northouse, 2016).

According to Northouse (2016), the second style is called a coaching approach and is a high directive–high supportive style. Northouse (2016) explains that the leader focuses on achieving goals and meeting followers' socio-emotional needs in this style. Northouse (2016) argues that this coaching style requires that the leader involves him or her with followers by giving encouragement and soliciting follower viewpoints. However, Northouse (2016) maintains that coaching extends the first category of leadership style. It still requires the leader to make the final decision on what and how of goal accomplishment.

A third style is a supporting approach requiring the leader to take a high supportive–low directive style (Northouse, 2016, p. 95). Northouse posits that in this approach, the leader does not focus exclusively on goals but uses supportive behaviours that bring out followers' skills around the goal to be accomplished. Northouse (2016) indicates that the supportive style includes listening, praising, asking for input, and giving feedback. Northouse (2016) claims that a leader using this style gives followers control of day-to-day decisions but remains available to facilitate problem solving. According to Northouse (2016), the fourth style is the low supportive–low directive style or a delegating approach. Northouse (2016) maintains that the leader offers less goal input and social support in this approach, facilitating followers' confidence and motivation about the goal. Northouse (2016) explains that the delegation leader lessens planning, control of details, and goal clarification. Northouse (2016) argues that after the group agrees on what it is to do, this style allows followers take responsibility for getting the job done the way they see fit. Northouse (2016) concludes by asserting that a leader using this kind of leadership style gives control to followers and refrains from intervening with unnecessary social support.

Other than leadership style as part of situational leadership model, Northouse (2016) also mentions development levels of followers as a major part of situational leadership. Blanchard (1988) defines development level as the extent to which followers have the competence and commitment necessary to conclude a given goal or activity. Put differently, Blanchard (1988) explains that it (development level) indicates whether a person has mastered the skills to achieve a specific goal and whether a person has developed a positive attitude regarding the goal. Northouse (2016) argues that the development levels describe various combinations of commitment and competence for followers on a given goal. Northouse (2016) indicates that they (development levels) are intended to be goal specific and are not intended to be used for labelling followers. Northouse (2016) illuminates that on a particular goal, followers can be classified into four categories, namely, D1, D2, D3, and D4, from developing to developed levels.

Northouse (2016) unpacks each of the four categories: D1 followers are low in competence and high in commitment. They are new to a goal and do not know exactly how to do it, but they are excited about its challenge. D2 followers are described as having some competence but low commitment. They have started to learn a job, but they also have lost some of their initial motivation about the job. D3 represents followers with moderate to high competence but may have variable commitment. They have essentially developed the skills for the job, but they are uncertain whether they can accomplish the goal by themselves. Finally, D4 followers are the highest in development, having a high degree of competence and commitment to getting the job done. They have the skills to do the job and the motivation to get it done. Northouse (2016) distinguishes between highly developed and developing followers as follows: Followers are at a high development level if they are interested and confident in their work and know-how to achieve the goal. On the other hand, followers are at developing level if they have little skill for the goal at hand but believe they have the motivation or confidence to get the job done.

3.5.1 Strengths of the situational leadership theory

Northouse (2016) argues that the situational leadership theory has several strengths, particularly practitioners. Northouse (2016) cites the first strength as having a history of usefulness in the marketplace. Northouse elaborates that situational leadership is well known and frequently used to train leaders within organisations. Northouse (2016) indicates that corporations perceive situational leadership theory as a useful model for training people to become effective leaders.

The second strength of situational leadership theory, according to Northouse (2016) is its practicality in that it is quick to understand, intuitively sensible, and easily applied in a variety of settings. Whereas some leadership approaches provide complex and sophisticated ways to assess your leadership behaviour, situational leadership provides a straightforward approach easily used (Northouse, 2016). Northouse (2016), claims that because situational leadership theory is described at an abstract level that is easily grasped, the ideas behind the approach are quickly acquired. Northouse (2016) adds that the principles suggested by this theory are quick to apply across a variety of settings, including work, school, and family.

Northouse (2016) notes that closely akin to the principle of practicality, the third strength of situational leadership is prescriptive. Northouse maintains that whereas many leadership theories are descriptive, the situational approach is prescriptive. Northouse (2016) points out that it tells you what you should and should not do in various contexts. For example, Northouse (2016) argues that if your followers are very low in competence, situational leadership prescribes a directing style for you as the leader. Northouse (2016) explains that on the other hand, if your followers appear to be competent but lack confidence, the situational approach suggests that you lead with a supporting style.

According to Graeff (1983) and Yukl (1989), the fourth strength of situational leadership emphasises leader flexibility. Northouse (2016) mentions that this theory emphasises that leaders need to learn about their followers' needs and then adapt their leadership style accordingly. Northouse (2016) emphasises that leaders should lead using a combination of leadership styles: They must be willing to change their style to meet the requirements of the situation. Northouse (2016) maintains that this theory recognises that followers act differently when doing different goals and may act differently during different stages of the same goal. Northouse (2016) thus claims that effective leaders can change their style based on the goals and the followers' needs, even in the middle of a project. The fifth strength is that according to Fernandez and Vecchio (1997) and Yukl (1998)) that situational leadership reminds us to treat each follower differently based on the goal at hand and to seek opportunities to help followers learn new skills and become more confident in their work.

Shriver (2017) cites more situational leadership strengths as follows: it is a multidirectional model that can be leveraged for influencing up, down and across the organisation; it creates a common language of performance; it accelerates the pace and quality of employee development; it is a repeatable process that your leaders can leverage to influence the behaviour of others effectively; utilises task specificity to serve as a mechanism through which leaders maximise their influence-related impact; it addresses situations where people are developing or regressing

3.5.2 Criticism of the situational leadership theory

The first criticism of situational leadership theory is, according to Northouse (2016), that only a few research studies have been conducted to justify the assumptions and propositions set forth by this approach. Northouse (2016) notes that, although many studies address dimensions of situational leadership, most of these research studies have not been published. Fernandez and Vecchio (1997); Graeff (1997); Vecchio and Boatwright (2002); Vecchio, Bullis and Brazil (2006) corroborate in noting that the lack of a strong body of research on this approach raises questions about the theoretical basis of the approach. A second criticism directed at the situational approach concerns the ambiguous conceptualisation in the model of followers' development levels. The model's authors do not clarify how commitment is combined with competence to form four distinct levels of development.

3.5.3 Application of the situational leadership theory

Northouse (2016) maintains that the situational leadership approach is constructed around the idea that followers move forward and backward along the developmental continuum, representing followers' relative competence and commitment. Thus, Northouse (2016) argues that for leaders to be effective, they must determine where followers are on the developmental continuum and adapt their leadership styles to match their style to that development level directly. Northouse (2016) portrays a scenario where the first task in a given situation is to determine the nature of the situation and then ask questions such as: what goal are followers being asked to achieve? how complex is the goal? are the followers sufficiently skilled to accomplish the goal? do they have the desire to complete the job once they start it? Northouse (2016) advises that answers to these questions will help leaders correctly identify the specific developmental level at which their followers are functioning. For example, Northouse (2016) notes that new followers who are very excited but lack understanding of job requirements would be identified as D1-level followers. Conversely, seasoned followers with proven abilities and great devotion to an organisation would be identified as functioning at the D4 level (Northouse, 2016).

When the correct development level of followers has been identified, Northouse (2016) posits that the second task for the leader is to adapt his or her style to the prescribed leadership style represented in the situational leadership model. Northouse (2016) states that situational leadership is used in consulting because it is an approach that is easy to conceptualise and apply. Northouse (2016) also points out that the straightforward nature of situational leadership makes it practical for managers to use. Northouse (2016) maintains that the principles of this approach can be applied at many different levels in an organisation. For example, Northouse (2016) posits that these principles can apply to how a CEO of a large corporation works with a board of directors, and they can also apply to how a crew chief in an assembly plant leads a small group of production workers. According to Northouse (2016), middle managers can use situational leadership to direct staff meetings, and DHs can use this approach in planning structural changes within an organisation. Northouse (2016) indicates that situational leadership applies during the initial stages of a project when idea formation is important and during the various subsequent phases of a project when implementation issues are important. Northouse (2016) points out that the fluid nature of situational leadership makes it ideal for applying to followers as they move forward or go backward (regress) on various projects.

Northouse (2016) insists that because situational leadership stresses adapting to followers, it is ideal for use with followers whose commitment and competence change throughout a project. Northouse (2016) concludes that given the breadth of the situational approach, it is applicable in almost any type of organisation, at any level, for nearly all types of goals. It is an encompassing model with a wide range of applications.

3.5.4 Implication of situational leadership for the study

The implication of situational leadership theory for this study is that the leader leads according to the dictates of the situation he/she is confronted with at that particular point in time. For example, if it calls for the leader to be authoritative, democratic, or permissive, that would be acceptable to attain the envisaged goal: good school performance. In the context of this study, teachers and SMT members are regarded as leaders in their own right.

3.6 Summary

All the three leadership theories (Transformational, Transactional, Servants and situational leadership theory) appeared to be appropriate in educational institutions like schools since they provide a comprehensive scope on the nature of each leadership type. The three theories collectively provide the theoretical framework for this study. Integrating the theories above was necessary to obtain a diverse complementary understanding of school performance from different leadership angles. The use of multiple theories to explore one phenomenon is referred by Flick in Wilson (2014) as theory triangulation which means approaching the data

with multiple theories or perspectives in mind to extend the possibilities for producing knowledge. This is also consistent with Olsen (2004), who talks about triangulation, saying that in social sciences, it is the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic. The three leadership theories also complement one another in that what is not addressed by the other leadership theory is addressed by the another. For example, situational leadership theory is applicable to all situations but could not address the issue of putting followers first, sharing control and advocating change which are addressed by servant leadership and transformational leadership theories respectively. The same can be said of servant leadership and transformational theories. In other words, the combination of the three theories in this study brings wholeness to the understanding of the dynamics of school performance.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the theoretical framework underpinning the study. This chapter describes and explains the research design and methodology I adopted. The chapter begins with positioning the study in the qualitative research paradigm, namely, the interpretivist paradigm. This chapter is designed as follows: First, I discuss the study's paradigm. Secondly, I explore the research design. Thirdly, this is followed by how I describe Qualitative research methodology. Fourthly I describe the trustworthiness and ethical considerations of the study.

4.2 Research paradigm

According to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006), the term paradigm describes a researcher’s ‘worldview’ in educational research. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) add that this worldview is the perspective, thinking, school of thought, or set of shared beliefs that inform research data's meaning or interpretation. Lather (1986) explains that a research paradigm inherently reflects the researcher’s beliefs about the world that s/he lives in and wants to live in. Lather (1986) further explains that a paradigm constitutes the abstract beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher sees the world and how s/he interprets and acts within that world. In agreement with Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), Rehman and Alharthi (2016) assert that a paradigm is a way of understanding the world's reality and studying it. These scholars (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017 and Rehman and Alharthi, 2016), state further that a paradigm is a conceptual lens through which the researcher examines the methodological aspects of their research project to determine the research methods that will be used and how the data will be analysed.

I locate this study in the interpretivist paradigm, in line with Rehman and Alharthi’s (2016) postulation that interpretivists believe in socially constructed multiple realities. As such, with this study, I sought to understand reality through the perspectives of various participants. Mack (2010) accentuates that the interpretivist paradigm is also called anti-positivist because it was developed as a reaction to positivism. Guba and Lincoln (1989) claim that the central endeavour of the interpretivist paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) claim that this paradigm (interpretivist paradigm) makes an effort to 'get into the head of the subjects being studied' and understand and interpret what the participant is thinking or the meaning s/he is making of the context. Pham (2018) insists that in the interpretivist paradigm, every effort is made to understand the subjects observed viewpoint rather than the observer's viewpoint. These authors assert that the interpretivist paradigm emphasises understanding the individuals and their interpretation of their world. Hence Bogdan and Biklen (1998) maintain that the key tenet of the interpretivist paradigm is that reality is socially constructed. As a result of this understanding, sometimes the interpretivist paradigm is referred to as the constructivist paradigm (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). In the interpretivist paradigm, Bogdan and Biklen (1998), Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) argue that theory does not precede research but follows it to be grounded on the data generated by the research act. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a paradigm comprises four elements: epistemology, ontology, methodology, and axiology. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) advise that it is important to have a firm understanding of these elements because they comprise the basic assumptions, beliefs, norms and values that each paradigm holds. Therefore, these authors maintain that in locating one's research in a particular research paradigm, the understanding is that his/her research will uphold and be guided by the chosen paradigm's assumptions, beliefs, norms, and values.

4.2.1 The epistemology of the interpretivist paradigm

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), epistemology originates in Greek, meaning knowledge. In research, epistemology is used to describe how we come to know something; how we know the truth or reality; or, as Cooksey and McDonald (2011) put it, what counts as knowledge within the world. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) assert that epistemology is concerned with the very bases of knowledge – its nature, forms, how it can be acquired and how it can be communicated to other human beings. It focuses on the nature of human knowledge and comprehension that the researcher or knower can acquire to extend, broaden, and deepen understanding in one's field of research. Schwandt (1997) defines it as studying the nature of knowledge and justification. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) advise researchers that when doing their research considering epistemology of the paradigm they adopt in their research, they need to ask the following important questions about knowledge, reality and truth: Is knowledge something which can be acquired on the one hand, or is it something which has to be personally experienced? What is the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the would be known? What is the relationship between the inquirer, and what is known? To Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) these questions are important because they help the researcher position him/herself in the research context so that he/she can discover what else is new, given what is known. My epistemological stance in this study is that to acquire knowledge about the dynamics of school performance, I had to interact with the participants in the three chosen schools. Interacting with the participants was crucial. It helped me understand and interpret how they perceived the dynamics of school performance, thus paving the way towards answering research questions.

4.2.2 The ontology of the interpretivist paradigm

Scotland (2012) argues that ontology is a branch of philosophy concerned with the assumptions that something makes sense or is real, or the very nature or essence of the social phenomenon being investigated. Scotland (2012) posits that ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of existence or reality, of being or becoming, and the basic categories of things that exist and their relations. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality are crucial to understanding how one makes meaning of the data one generates. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) argue that these assumptions, concepts, or propositions help orientate one's thinking about the research problem, its significance and how one might approach it to contribute to its solution. Ontology is so essential to a paradigm because it helps to understand the things that constitute the world, as it is known (Scott & Usher, 2004). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) explain that ontology seeks to determine the real nature or the foundational concepts which constitute themes that researchers analyse to make sense of the meaning embedded in research data. Mack (2010) adds on the understanding of ontology by maintaining that ontology refers to claims and assumptions about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other. In other words, Mack (2010) explains that if someone studies ontology, he/she studies what is meant when it says that something exists. Based on the assertions by Scotland (2012), Mack (2010), Scott & Usher (2004), my ontological stancein this study is that there are multiple realities about the dynamics of school performance. In the context of this study, these realities could only be obtained through interacting with various participants in the three chosen schools.

4.2.3 The methodology of the interpretivist paradigm

According to Keeves (1997) methodology is the broad term used to refer to the research design, methods, approaches, and procedures used in an investigation that is well planned to find out something. For example, data gathering, participants, instruments used and data analysis are all parts of the broad field of methodology, Kothari (2004), Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017, p.28). In summary, Kothari (2004), Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) posit that methodology articulates the logic and flow of the systematic processes followed in conducting a research project to gain knowledge about a research problem. It includes assumptions made, limitations encountered and mitigated or minimised. Moreno (1947) adds that methodology focuses on how we come to know the world or gain knowledge about a part of it. In this study, I adopted a qualitative research methodology using an interpretive lens in line with Jackson, Drummond and Camara (2007). Jackson et al. (2007) argue that qualitative research is primarily concerned with understanding human beings' experiences in a humanistic, interpretive approach. In an attempt to understand and answer the research questions, I adopted a qualitative research approach.

4.2.4 The axiology of the interpretivist paradigm

Finnis (1980) regards axiology as referring to the ethical issues that need consideration when planning research. According to Finnis (1980), axiology considers the philosophical approach to making value decisions or the right decisions. It involves defining, evaluating, and understanding concepts of right and wrong behaviour relating to the research. Finnis (1980) maintains that axiology considers what value we shall attribute to the different aspects of our research, the participants, the data and the audience to which we shall report the results of our research. Put simply, Finnis (1980) explains that axiology addresses the question: What is the nature of ethics or ethical behaviour? Mill (1969) explains that four criteria guide ethical behaviour cited: teleology, deontology, morality and fairness. In explaining what teleology is Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) argue that it is the theory of morality that postulates that doing what is intrinsically good or desirable is a moral obligation that should be pursued in every human endeavour, and consequently, *teleology* refers to attempts made in research to make sure that the research results in a meaningful outcome that will satisfy as many people as possible. Scheffler (1982) highlights that deontology understands that every action undertaken during the research will have its consequence, intended to benefit participants, the researcher, the scholastic community or the public. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), the morality criterion refers to the intrinsic moral values upheld during the research. For example, the researchers will be truthful in their interpretation of the data. Finally, Kivunja and Kuyini **(**2017) posit that the criterion of *fairness* draws the researcher's attention to the need to be fair to all research participants and ensure that their rights are upheld. In conducting this study, I did not lose sight of ensuring that the value of research is knowledge generation. In ensuring that knowledge was ethically generated, I adhered to ethical principles throughout my engagement with the participants. For example, I ensured that no harm was done to participants. I also ensured that privacy and confidentiality were maintained by concealing the participants' identities.

4.3 Research design: Case study

Akthar (2016) perceives a research design as the structure of research that “glues” and holds all the elements in a research project together. In short, Akthar (2016) asserts that it is a plan of the proposed research work. Zikmund (1988) defines research design as “a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for generating and analysing the needed information.” Bhattacherjee (2012) looks at it as a comprehensive plan for data collection in an empirical research project. Bhattacherjee (2012) further refers to research design as a “blueprint” for empirical research to answer specific research questions or test hypotheses and specify at least three processes. According to Bhattacherjee (2012), the data generation process, the instrument development process, and the sampling process. A case study has many definitions. For example, Harling (2012) perceives it (case study) as a holistic inquiry investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its natural setting. Sturman (1997) construes it (case study) as a general term for exploring an individual, group or phenomenon. Sturman (1997) further asserts that a case study comprehensively describes an individual case and its analysis.

Yin (1984) defines it (case study) as an empirical inquiry that focusses on a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident and multiple sources of evidence are used. Thomas (2011) argues that a case study analyses systems studied with a wide-ranging view where either one or several methods are used. In this study, the case was the dynamics of school performance. To explore this case this research inquiry adopted a multiple case study. Creswell (2013) defines a multiple case study as a method that explores a real life, contemporary bounded system over time, through detailed, in-depth data generation involving multiple sources of information. My adoption of a multiple case study is consistent with Gustafsson’s (2017) assertion that a multiple case study is needed when a study includes more than one case. Three chosen schools were the sites for this inquiry where the case of school performance was explored in each school. Gustafsson (2017) indicates that case studies can be single or multiple for different reasons**.** Another reason for embarking on a multiple case study is following Yin’s (2003) explanation that when the researcher chooses to do a multiple case study he/she can analyse the data within each situation and across different situations, unlike when a single casestudy is chosen.

Cronin (2014) argues that case study research is a legitimate research method appropriate for qualitative and quantitative research. I exploited the advantages of case studies, namely, that case studies are useful in providing answers to ‘How?’ and ‘Why?’ questions that were major questions for this study, Rowley (2002). I also took advantage of using case studies in this study consistent with Rowley’s (2002) claim that case study research uses a variety of evidence from different sources, such as documents, interviews, and observations, to answer research questions. In this study, interviews, observations and documents were used as different sources for data generation. Case study research deals mainly with “the understanding and change of interwoven complexities associated with interpersonal processes that emerge in a wider social context” (Cronin 2014). A sizeable number of scientists corroborate with Cronin in acknowledging that case studies indeed have advantages. For example, Flyvbjerg (2006) states that “The advantage of the case study is that it can “close in” on real life situations and test views directly about phenomena as they unfold in practice” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 235). Lindvall (2007) agrees that the most obvious advantage is that the case study provides a detailed analysis of the individual case. As such, in this study, I felt that the usage of multiple case studies assisted me in exploring in detail the cases of school performance in each of the chosen schools. Jacobsen (2002) argues that intensive study methods have their strength in obtaining detailed and relevant data. Jacobsen (2002) maintains that the information will not be taken out of context and the study includes multiple variables and runs deep. Jacobsen (2002) asserts that the internal validity is high, making these studies valuable. Jacobsen (2002) further asserts that one of the advantages of studying individual cases in-depth is that we can find the information we did not anticipate finding from the start and because of this, case study research is a very good method for creating hypotheses.

Merriam (2009) takes Jacobsen’s claim further and explains that these hypotheses help structure future research and case studies, therefore, play an important part in advancing a field’s knowledge base. According to Krusenvik (2016) case studies can also offer important evidence to complement experiments. Yin (2009) and Schell (1992) claim that case studies are very well suited to help explain the how and why questions by investigating and they are also highly useable when the investigator has little control over events. Merriam (2009) posits that case studies are preferable when investigating current or contemporary events when it is not possible to manipulate relevant variables. Yin (2009) argues that the need for case studies comes from the desire to understand complex social phenomena in all fields. Reis (n.d), maintains that the case study research provides great strength in investigating units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance. Yin (2009) correspondingly mentions that it (case study) allows explorers to retain a holistic view of real-life events. For example, individual life cycles, small group behaviour, organisational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, school performance, international relations, and industries' maturation, Yin (2009). Merriam (2009) asserts that case studies provide insight and illuminate meaning that expands the readers' experiences. Merriam (2009) argues that case studies allow one to get as close to one's area of interest as possible through direct observation in the natural environment. Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000), claim that case study research can explore casual processes "in the real world" rather than artificially created settings. Merriam (2009) points out that, case studies tend to have a wider web to catch information, while experiments and surveys usually have a narrower focus. Eisenhardt (1989) and Merriam (2009) emphasise the unique strength of case studies, namely, their ability to handle and combine multiple kinds of data generation methods (documents, interviews, questionnaires, objects, and observations). Murphy (2014) explains this strength by saying that case studies as a research method are non-prejudicial. In a nutshell, adopting a multiple case study enhanced my contextualised understanding of human experience through the intensive study of particular cases. The adoption of the multiple case study further helped me compare data about school performance generated from each of the selected schools.

Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that most critics indicate that the case study's theory, reliability, and validity are at issue; thus, the very status of the case study as a scientific method is questioned. Murphy (2014) for example, concludes that the findings and recommendations that case studies provide can neither be confirmed nor denied in terms of utility and veracity because of the nature of the case study. Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that there are five commonly discussed disadvantages concerning case studies cited as follows: One cannot generalise from a single case; Theoretical knowledge is more valuable than practical knowledge; The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building; it is often difficult to summarise specific case studies; The case study contains a bias towards verification. Stake (1978) points out that it is widely believed that case studies are useful in studying human affairs because they are down-to-earth and attention-holding but are not a suitable basis for generalisation. Krusenvik (2016) argues that this is one of the biggest concerns and most common critiques against case studies, its lack of scientific generalisability. Krusenvik (2016) mentions that the major problem is that the studies are highly specific, that is, that they only relate to a particular context or a few units.

Jacobsen (2002) and Yin (2009) raise a concern about the question that arises whether is it possible to generalise from the result, to say that what applies to the few also applies to all others? Soy (1997) explains that critics believe that the study of a small number of cases cannot offer any grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings. Solberg Søilen and Huber (2006) state that the area studied in case studies is often too narrow to draw scientific conclusions from. Jacobsen (2002) emphasises that case studies and intensive studies as a whole are therefore said to have low external validity. Schell (1992) argues that few would think to question the relevance of the case study as a basis for creating hypotheses for further research, but quite a few would argue that research based on case studies is unlikely to be anything more than storytelling.

Krusenvik (2016) maintains that critics of case study research believe that the study's usefulness is limited to, and only appropriate for, the exploratory phase of an phenomenon and that experiments are the only justified way of doing explanatory and casual inquiries. Yin (2009) asserts that case studies are seen as only a preliminary research method and cannot describe or test propositions. Miles (1979) argues and indicates that the analysis process during case-writing is intuitive, primitive, and unmanageable in any rational sense, leading to unreliable and invalid conclusions. Miles (1979) clarifies that these invalid conclusions also stem from the fact that people participating in a case study often feel that they are not anonymous and therefore give self-protective responses and self-aggrandising responses that are not true. Miles (1979) also refutes case research because collecting and analysing the data is highly labour-intensive, often causing much stress, even for skilled research staff. Merriam (2009) agrees that although a rich, thick description and analysis of a phenomenon may be desired, a researcher may not have the time or money to devote to such an undertaking. Yin (2009) and Merriam (2009) echo their sentiments that usually, the studies take a long time to execute and the product may be too lengthy, too detailed, or too involved for busy policymakers and practitioners to read and use. Yin (2009) mentions the case study's major concern: its lack of rigour. Yin (2009) argues that all too often, the case study researcher has so much freedom that he becomes sloppy and does not follow the systematic procedures or allows dubious evidence or biased views to influence the directions of the findings and conclusions. Yin (2009) states that this lack of rigour is less likely to be present when using other methods because numerous methodological texts provide investigators with specific procedures to be followed, which is limited in the case study method.

Krusenvik (2016) points out that the researcher's independence from the case study results is often questioned. In some case studies, the researcher plays an interactive role instead of acting at a distance. Garger (2013) argues that the researcher essentially becomes a part of the research itself and, knowing the expected results, the researcher may subconsciously guide the subjects towards those results, thereby confirming the expected results. Flyvbjerg (2006) refers to this act of confirming the expected research results as self-fulfilling prophecy and this is why the study becomes of doubtful scientific value. Despite the many disadvantages of case studies cited above, strategies to mitigate such disadvantages were used for this study. Among those mitigating strategies was the usage of triangulation.

4.4 Qualitative research methodology

According to Sarankos in El-Gohary (2011) research methodology is the theory of methods which is the way in which one makes sense of the object of enquiry within qualitative research. Robson in El-Gohary (2011) defines it further to mean the theoretical, political, and philosophical backgrounds to social research and their implications for research practice and for the use of particular research methods. Kothari (2004) defines research as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. To achieve this, Igwenagu argues that man uses the tools of experience and reasoning available to him/her. Igwenagu (2016) defines research as a process that came into being due to man's quest to be at tune with his/her environment and understand nature. Patel and Patel (2019) define methodology as the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. These scholars (Patel and Patel, 2019) asset that methodology comprises the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge. According to Igwenagu (2016) research methodology refers to a set of systematic techniques used in research. To this scholar (Igwenagu, 2016) research methodology simply means a research guide and how it is conducted. Goundar (2012) comparatively explains that the scope of research methodology is wider than that of research methods. It entails the logic behind the method used in the context of a research study (Goundar, 2012). Goundar (2012) posits that research methodology explains why a particular method or technique is used. Goundar (2012) also claims that research methodology explains why other techniques or methods are not used so that the researcher can evaluate research results. Patel and Patel (2019) posit that research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem that may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. Research methodology can either be quantitative or qualitative. The methodology for this study is qualitative because of the following distinct features as expounded by Kielmann, Castaldo and Seeley (2012): Qualitative research is said to be humanistic because it focuses on the personal, subjective, and experiential basis of knowledge and practice; It is holistic because it seeks to situate the meaning of particular behaviours and ways of doing things in a given context (as opposed to isolating these as a quantitative researcher would); Qualitative researchers are interested to what they see and hear in a specific context; their approach to understanding what is going on is interpretive, in other words. For example, their aim is more often to explain rather than to merely describe. According to Haradhan (2018) qualitative research methodology is characterised by, among others, the following features: The researcher has the opportunity of generating data directly from the participants through direct encounters with individuals, through one-to-one interviews or group interviews or by observation; Data are used to develop concepts and theories that help us to understand the social world; The sampling seeks to demonstrate representativeness of findings through random selection of subjects In the next section, I report on the delimitation of the study, selection of participants, data generation instruments, the pilot test, data generation procedures, data analysis procedures and sampling procedures.

4.4.1 Delimitation of the study

Three primary schools were selected for this study from GET band. In each selected primary school, the principal, the DP, the DHs and post level one (PL1s) educators were selected as participants for the study. In this study, not all primary schools had similar post levels. For example, at Sizabantu and Z primary schools there were no deputy principalship post levels due to their dwindling PPN.

4.4.2 Selection of participants

Mujere (2016) posits that sampling is the act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample or a representative part of a population to determine parameters or characteristics of the whole population. Mrtinez and Gonzalez-Chica (2016) argue that sampling can be defined as the process through which individuals or sampling units are selected from the sample frame. In this study, sampling did not only involve selecting schools where the study was conducted but also participants were selected representing different post levels in each selected school. For example, principal, DP, DHs, and post level one educators were purposively selected. Each category of participants was perceived to be knowledgeable about the issue of school performance, and thus they were selected as part of the sample. The selection of the three schools was based on their accessibility and convenience to the researcher. I regarded the selected participants in each of the participating schools as having rich information regarding their understanding of the dynamics of school performance. For example, these participants possessed vast experience in the teaching profession ranging from three years to fourteen years (refer to table 5.1).

The pseudonyms given to the three chosen schools were Ziningi, Z and Sizabantu primary schools, respectively. The participants in the selected schools were the three principals, namely, A1 for Ziningi primary school, B1 for Sizabantu primary school and C1 for Z primary school. There was one deputy principal, coded as A1 DP. The DHs previously known as heads of departments were coded as A2, B2 and C2. Finally, post level1 teachers were coded as follows: A3, B3 and C3 respectively (see chapter 5 section 5.2).

Post level one teachers (educators): Post level one teachers (PL1s) were chosen as participants for this study because of their vast knowledge of their respective school's performance and their willingness to participate in the study; refer to Appendix C. At Ziningi and Sizabantu primary schools, three educators volunteered to participate in the study. At Z primary school only one educator participated while two withdrew their participation. Teachers are the heartbeat of the performance of any school as such their input in matters related to school performance was inevitable. When selecting teachers as participants, their respective principals permitted me to meet them, and I explained the purpose of the study. I also explained that theywere free to withdraw from the study if they so wished.

DHs: According to Education Labour Relation Council (ELRC), Collective Agreement 1 of 2008, the duties of the DH are as follows: To engage in classroom teaching, be responsible for effective functioning of his/her department, supervision of educators and to organise relevant extracurricular activities to ensure that the subjects and education of the learner are promoted properly. Against this backdrop, the DHs were chosen as the most invaluable knowledge-rich informants in this study (see Appendix B). The selection of the DHs as participants in this study was vital as they played a pivotal role in the performance of the schools. The DHs are sometimes referred to as subject specialists. Therefore, it was logical to attribute the school's performance to the DHs partly. The DHs were chosen for this study from the selected primary schools: At Ziningi primary school, there were three, two at Sizabantu and one at Z primary school. The number of DHs varied from school to school because in the other school such as Sizabantu primary, one participant decided to withdraw her participation from the study. The other reason, particularly at Z primary school, was that as a result of the PPN issue, the school was entitled to only one DH.

DP: One DP at Ziningi primary school out of the three schools selected to participate in the study. Initially, it was hoped that each of the three schools would have a DP, but due to the changing PPN, the two schools, Sizabantu and Z primary schools, were no longer entitled to DPs. Only Ziningi primary school had the DP. The DP was selected as the participant in the study because he was the second in command in the school and thus deputised the principal in his or her absence. The expectation was that even the DP should have rich information about matters related to the school and for that reason, the deputy principal was also selected as the participant in the study.

Principals were chosen as participants in the study based on their presumed vast knowledge of all the processes and regulations of the school and because of their seniority in their schools. Principals were expected to know the pros and cons of running the schools. Principals were expected to have the appropriate knowledge to respond to the study's objectives. In the context of the selected schools, the principals were regarded as the custodians of the policies and regulations of the schools. Each principal was also expected to be accountable for every action in the school. The principal remained answerable and accountable when the school performed well or badly. Therefore, against this backdrop, I regarded principals as the most important participants in this study. The table below summarises and illustrates details of the selected schools and participants.

Table 4.1: Distribution of participants

School	Principal	Number of D principals	Number of Departmental Heads	Number of Post.level1 educators
Z. Primary school Individual interview	1		1	1
FG				
Ziningi primary Individual interview	1	1		
FG			3	3
Sizabantu Primary Individual interview	1		3	
FG			3	3
TOTALS	**3**	**1**	**10**	**7**

4.4.3 Data generation instruments

I adopted three data generation instruments to answer the research questions in this study. These instruments were interviews (individual and focus group), observations and document reviews. The reason for the adoption of three data generation instruments complied with Chako's (2017) assertion that one method of data generation cannot effectively reveal everything on every phenomenon. Annum (2017) maintains that data generation instruments are tools for data generation that enable the researcher to obtain relevant information or gain the experience of others from which he/she imbibes lessons for the enrichment of his/her report. It was against Annun's (2017) reasons for using the data generation instruments above that I also opted for their usage in this study. I deliberately started with interviews because they are, according to Ryan et al (2009), a flexible and useful method of data collection. The observation was used to check the nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate and check how much time is spent on various activities (Schmuck, 1997).

I used document reviews based on the values they have in research. For example, Bowen (2009) cites five of these values of document reviews in research as follows. First, document reviews can provide data on the context of research participants. Second, the information in documents can suggest some questions that need to be asked and situations that need to be observed as part of the research. Third, documents provide supplementary research data. For example, information and insights derived from documents can be valuable additions to a knowledge base. Fourth, documents provide a means of tracking change and development. For example, where various drafts of a particular document are accessible, the researcher can compare them to identify the changes. Fifth, documents can be analysed to verify findings or corroborate evidence from other sources. For example, Angrosino & Mays de Pérez (2000) argue that Sociologists, in particular, typically use document analysis to verify their findings. Bowen (2009) concludes that if the documentary evidence is contradictory rather than corroboratory, the researcher is expected to generate further. In the same breath, when there is a convergence of information from different sources, readers of the research report usually have greater confidence in the trustworthiness (credibility) of the findings.

4.4.3.1 Interviews

According to Denscombe (2010) and Silverman (1985), Interviews involve a set of assumptions and understandings about the situation that are not normally associated with a casual conversation. Kvale (1996) describes an interview as a conversation whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the lifeworld of the interviewee concerning the interpretation of the meanings of the 'described phenomena. Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin (2009) assert that interviews are widely used as a data collection tool in qualitative research. Lambert and Loiselle (2008) point out that interviews are typically used as a research strategy to gather information about participants' experiences, views and beliefs concerning a particular research question or phenomenon of interest.

It was partly against the claim above about using interviews as a research strategy that prompted me to employ them (interviews) as one of the data gathering tools for this study. My usage of interviews was also based on Denscombe's (2010) claim that when the researcher needs to gain insights into things such as people's opinions, feelings, and emotions, then interviews will certainly provide a more suitable method. Denscombe (2010) advises that the researcher should ensure that the interviews are viable regarding the costs in time and travel involved. In explaining the viability of the interview, Denscombe (2010) argues that with limited resources, the researcher needs to ensure that the people are not distributed too widely across a large geographical area. Denscombe (2010) warns that if interviews are not widely distributed in a large area, conducting the interviews will not incur prohibitive costs.Interviews are of different types: structured, semi-structured, unstructured, individual, group, and focus group interviews. For this study, I conducted semi-structured individual and focus group interviews. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the principals, the DP of Ziningi primary school, C2 and C3, while semi-structured focus group interviews were conducted with A2s, B2s, A3s and B3s. Fylan in Miles and Gilbert (2005) describes semi- structured interviews as simple conversations in which the researcher knows what he/she wants to find out about and therefore has sets of questions to ask and a good idea of topics to be covered. I audio recorded the interviews as per earlier agreement with the participants (see appendices B, C and D). This helped me during the data analysis process during and after the interviews. The order I followed in conducting interviews was as follows: Since there were three schools, in each school, I started with the principal, then the DP (if available), followed by the DHs and I concluded with post level one educators. It took me five days for each school to conduct the interviews, observation, and document reviews.

While, according to Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin (2009), interviews are a widely used data collection tool in qualitative research, they have both advantages and disadvantages. Denscombe (2010) indicates that interviews have multiple advantages. Among the advantages, as cited by Denscombe (2010) are the following: Depth of information, Insights, Equipment, Informants' priorities, Flexibility, High response rate, Validity and Therapeutic.

Regarding the depth of information, interviews are perceived to be particularly good at producing data that deal with topics in-depth and in detail. Subjects can be probed, issues pursued, and lines of investigation followed over a relatively long period. The researcher will gain valuable insights based on the depth of the information gathered and 'key informants' wisdom. In the case of equipment, the interviews require only simple equipment and build on conversation skills researchers already have. Interviews are a good method for producing data based on informants' priorities, opinions, and ideas. Informants have the opportunity to expand their ideas, explain their views and identify what they regard as the crucial factors.

Regarding flexibility, as a method for data collection, interviews are probably the most flexible. Adjustments to the lines of enquiry can be made during the interview itself. The high response rate is that interviews are generally prearranged and scheduled for convenient times and locations. As a result, this ensures a relatively high response rate. Concerning validity, Denscombe (2010) maintains that direct contact at the interview point means that data can be checked for accuracy and relevance as they are collected. Being therapeutic means that interviews can be a rewarding experience for the informants. In comparison with questionnaires, observation and experiments, there is a more personal element to the interviews, and people tend to enjoy the rather rare chance to talk about their ideas at length to a person whose purpose is to listen and note the ideas without being critical.

Denscombe (2010) explains the following disadvantages: time consuming, data analysis, reliability, interviewer effect, inhibitions, invasion of privacy and resources. Denscombe (2010) explains each of the disadvantages above: Time consuming, data analysis can be difficult and time consuming. In this study too much time was consumed when I conducted interviews. I started conducting interviews with principals in each school and spent the entire day in each case. This was due to our two-way communication based on the posed questions. Sometimes they asked me clarity-seeking questions regarding my study, and I responded to them. According to Denscombe (2010), data preparation and analysis are 'end-loaded' compared with, for instance, questionnaires that are pre-coded and where data are ready for analysis once they have been collected. Data preparation and analysis were indeed end- loaded in this study as the bulk of data were prepared and analysed after they were generated. This involved mainly audio recorded data whereby the audio recorder was replayed to recapture and analyse the proceedings of the interviews. Data preparation and analysis being end-loaded in this context meant that much work was done after completing the interviews. Denscombe (2010) has the following about transcribing, coding and data analysis: the transcribing and coding of interview data are major tasks for the researcher after the data have been collected. In the case of data analysis, the interview method tends to produce non- standard responses. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews produce data that are not pre-coded and have a relatively open format. Reliability is hard to achieve because the interviewer's impact and context mean that consistency and objectivity are hard to achieve. Regarding the Interviewer effect, the data from interviews are based on what people say rather than what they do. What people say they do, prefer, and think cannot automatically be assumed to reflect the truth. In particular, interviewee statements can be affected by the researcher's identity.

Regarding inhibitions, in the case of face-to-face (individual) interviews, the audio recorder can inhibit the informant. It is argued that although the impact of the recording device tends to wear off quite quickly, this is not always the case. Denscombe (2010) points out that the interview is an artificial situation where people speak for the record and on the record, which can be daunting for certain people. In connection with the invasion of privacy, Denscombe (2010) mentions that tactless interviewing can be an invasion of privacy and upsetting for the informant. Denscombe (2010) argues that while interviews can be enjoyable, the other side of the coin is that the personal element of being interviewed carries its kinds of dangers as well. When it comes to resources, Denscombe (2010) indicates that face-to-face interviews cost the interviewer’s time and travel can be relatively high, particularly if the informants are geographically dispersed. To minimise the drawbacks of interviews, such as the invasion of participants' privacy and costs involved when conducting interviews, I ensured that informed consent was done prior to the commencement of the study. Regarding minimising the effects of costs, I ensured that the selected schools were not too far apart from one another in terms of distance.

4.4.3.1.1 Face-to-face interviews

In this study the concept of individual interviews was used interchangeably with one-to-one interviews (Mathers, Fox and Kunn, 2002). My usage of one-to-one interviews was based on Mathers et al (2002) assertion that they are preferable when the subject matter is very sensitive, if the questions are very complex or if the interview is likely to be lengthy. In this study, the issue of sensitivity featured when allowing the freedom of speech to prevail when asking participants questions that touched their seniors. For example, when asking either PL 1 educators, DHs or DPs questions that required them to talk about sensitive issues about their superiors, they responded fearlessly. Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin (2009) indicate that individual interviews offer the researcher the opportunity to interpret nonverbal cues through observation of body language, facial expression, and eye contact. This, according to Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin (2009) may enhance the interviewer's understanding of what has been said. Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin (2009) affirm that to this end, it (interpretation of nonverbal cues through observation) permits the researcher to probe and explore hidden meanings and understanding. After introducing myself and explaining the purpose of the interviews, I embarked on the actual interviewing activity with the participants. Interviewing participants was not strange as I practiced it during the pilot test in the school selected for the pilot test. As indicated earlier, the individual interviews were carried out with the principals of all three selected schools separately. The order I followed in conducting the interviews lasted approximately two days in each school. While the interviews were in progress notes were also taken in the field notes journal for things that I observed happening in line with observation schedule prepared earlier. As indicated earlier, the interview session with the principal of each school lasted for an entire day. The interview with the DP of Ziningi primary school lasted about half a day. I spent a day interviewing HDs and PL1s of each selected school respectively. Each interview session consisted of several sub-questions, for example, each group of participants were asked five questions apiece.

4.4.3.1.2 Focus group interviews

Dilshad and Latif (2013) argue that focus group interview is a qualitative technique for data generation that comprises individuals with certain characteristics who focus discussions on a given issue or topic. Denscombe (2010) adds that focus groups consist of a small group of people, between six and nine in number, brought together by a trained moderator to explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings, and ideas about a topic. In this study the usage of focus group interviews was informed by the following three distinctive characteristics as propounded by Casey and Krueger (2000): First, prompt/stimulus: this means that the sessions usually revolve around a trigger, some stimulus introduced by the researcher in order to focus the discussion. Second, moderator/researcher-not a neutral person: this indicates less emphasis on the moderator/researcher adopting a neutral role in the proceedings than is normally the case with other interview techniques. Third, interaction within the group means that interaction between group members is given a particular value rather than just gathering people's opinions. Casey and Krueger (2000) conclude that the collective view is more important than the aggregate view. As mentioned in section 4.4.3.1 above, focus group interviews were conducted with post level one educators and DHs for Ziningi and Sizabantu primary schools. At Ziningi and Sizabantu primary schools, three DHs and three post level one educators participated in the focus group interviews. The interviews with the departmental took two days per school, that is, one day for DHs and another day for PL1 educators. Each category of participants (HDs and PL1s) was given five turns to respond to the interview questions per five sub-questions.

4.4.3.2 Observations

In seeking to understand the dynamics of school performance, I used observation in this study as one of the data generation instruments that enabled me to complement, corroborate and verify information gathered during interviews. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), observation is perceived as the systematic description of the events, behaviours, and artefacts. Barker (2006) argues that the value of observation permits researchers to study people in their native environment to understand “things” from their perspective. Barker (2006) mentions that observation requires the researcher to spend considerable time in the field with the possibility of adopting various roles in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the people being studied. Denscombe (2010) argues that observation is not reliant on what people say they do or say they think. It is more direct than that. Instead, it draws on the direct evidence of the eye to witness events at first hand. In line with the earlier observation schedule, I observed staff meetings, SMT meetings, and assemblies. I particularly took notes of what was said in the meetings (staff and SMT) regarding the school's performance. During the assemblies I observed how the issue of performance was addressed to learners (see annexure B). Kawulich (2012) argues that participant observation involves being in the setting under study as both observer and participant while direct observation involves observing without interacting with the objects or people under study. Based on what direct observation is about as Kawulich (2012) described, I became a direct observer in the schools. Being a direct observer helped me to get first-hand information about most of the proceedings of the schools

When conducting observations, I used field notes to record what I had observed. I drew the map of the setting in line with Merriam’s (2009) advice that helped me describe the setting. The map also helped me remember what the setting looked like when I look at my field notes later (during data analysis stage). I recorded everything I saw, paying particular attention to those aspects of the social setting that provided me with information related to the topic understudy (Kawulich, 2012). This, according to Kawulich (2012) includes the various activities and interactions that occur in the setting. For example, what was happening, when, for how long, and with or by whom? I observed participants' nonverbal and verbal behaviours alike. I observed principals addressing teachers in the meetings, DH, and DP. I observed DHs holding phase meetings and subject meetings. I also observed selected teachers delivering lessons to learners in classrooms. I recorded all the data captured during observations in my field note journals to be used later during data analysis stage. Since my observations were conducted separately at different sites on different days, I drew similarities and comparisons on the participants' responses within and across the sites. In short, consistent with Marshall's (2016) claim, I immersed myself in each setting/school, which permitted me to hear, see, and begin to experience reality as participants do. Marshall (2006) emphasises that this immersion offers the researcher the opportunity to learn directly from his/her own experience. Marshall (2016) argues that this method of data collection is basic to all qualitative studies and forces a consideration of the role or stance of the researcher as a participant observer.

4.4.3.3 Document reviews

A document review is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents (Bowen, 2009). Bowen (2009) refers to document review as document analysis. Corbin and Strauss (2008) argue that document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted to produce meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge. For this study document analysis was adopted to complement data generated during interviews and observation. This is in line with Bowen's (2009) assertion that a qualitative researcher is expected to draw on multiple sources of evidence to seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods. Eisner's (1991) concurs with Bowen's (2009) assertion that by examining information generated through different methods, the researcher can verify findings across data sets and thus reduce the impact of potential biases in a single study. Patton (1990) argues that using multiple data sources helps the researcher guard against accusations that a study's findings are simply an artefact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator's bias. My usage of document analysis is that it mitigated and offset the weaknesses of other data generation instruments, namely, interviews and observations thereby promoting triangulation. Bowen (2009) justifies triangulating data that the researcher attemptsto provide 'a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility'.

Platt (1981) and Scott (1990) advise that documents need to be evaluated concerning four basic criteria. These criteria are authenticity, representativeness, meaning and credibility. For documents to subscribe to each of the criteria mentioned above, Platt (1981) and Scott (1990) recommend that: For verifying authenticity these questions should be asked: Is it the authentic article? Is it the real thing? Can we be satisfied that the document is what it claims to be not a fake or a forgery? In verifying representativeness, the following questions need to be asked: Is the document typical of its type? Does it represent a standard instance of the thing it portrays? Is the document complete? Has it been edited? Is the extract treated 'in context'? The basic questions that needs to be asked in verifying the meaning of documents are: is the meaning clear? Are there hidden meanings? Does the document contain jargon and subtle codes? Are there meanings that involve 'what is left unsaid' or 'reading between the lines?' In verifying credibility of documents, the researcher needs to ask the following questions: Are the documents accurate? Are they free from bias and errors? The following documents were reviewed in each of the three selected schools (Ziningi, Sizabantu and Z primary schools): Minutes of the meeting where issues of school performance were discussed, Mission and vision of each school, schedule of school performance over three consecutive years and IQMS scores for three consecutive years (refer to chapter 5, tables 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 respectively).

The sequence in which data generation instruments were administered per school was interviews, observations, and document reviews. The reason for sequencing these data generation instruments in that fashion lied on the fact that conducting interviews needed much time compared to either observation or document reviews. The choice to do observations prior to document reviews was also because observations took longer than document reviews. This was discovered when these research instruments (interviews, observations and document reviews) were pilot tested prior to the main study.

In conclusion, as indicated above, in this study I utilised the above named three data generation instruments, namely, interviews, focus groups discussions, observations and document reviews. The reason for employing these multiple data generation instruments was consistent with triangulation requirements. Heale and Forbes (2013) explain that triangulation in research uses more than one approach to researching a question. Using triangulation in this study increased confidence in the findings by confirming a proposition using two or more independent measures.

4.4.4 The pilot test

Schattner and Mazza (2006) define a pilot test as a ‘small study to test research protocols, data generation instruments, sample recruitment strategies and other research techniques in preparation for a larger study’. Schattner and Mazza (2006) posit that a pilot test is one of the important stages in a research project and is conducted to identify potential problem areas and deficiencies in the research instruments and protocol prior to implementation during the full study. It was very important for me to conduct the pilot test prior to the main study for the following reasons as cited by Welman and Kruger (1999) and Simon (2011): pilot test is needed to detect possible flaws in measurement procedures. A pilot test is also valuable to identify unclear or ambiguous items in a questionnaire (this study does not have questionnaires) and so I only pilot tested interviews, observations, and document reviews. The pilot test was done in one primary school at King Cetshwayo District. I pilot tested all the research instruments in that primary school with all the post levels (principal, DH, DP and post level one teachers) to get their perceptions about the dynamics of school performance. The pilot test warned me about where the main research project (study) could fail. It indicated where research protocols might not be followed. The pilot study helped me make some revisions, make adjustments where necessary, and fine-tune interview schedules, observation schedules, and document reviews schedules. For example, when pilot testing the interview questions. I discovered that some questions were not clear, leading to vague responses. For example, the following questions in the pilot test that were directed to the principals were vaguely phrased: “*What is the performance of your school?*” was changed into “*Share with me how you would describe the performance of your school*?” I changed such questions in the main study. The pilot test even helped me estimate the time spent in each research site. For example, it took me five full days to conduct the pilot test in one research site. When the full-scale study was undertaken, I knew that I would spend five days researching each of the three selected schools. When I pilot tested observations, I discovered that some guidelines were not related to school performance in the observation schedule. I had to change them in the full-scale study. I also learned that those documents should speak to school performance when selecting and analysing them.

4.4.5 Data generation procedures

Data generation procedure consisted of three sessions. The first session was when I conducted interviews with the participants in one school at a time. The second session was when I generated data through the use of observations. The third session was doing document analysis. On day one of the first session, I went to the school to introduce myself to the participants. Each school had its day for introductory purposes. The length of each session depended on the size of the school and time taken generating data. For example, interviews were done over two days per school while observations and document analysis were conducted. The cumulative number of days it took me to generate data per school was five days, translating into fifteen days for all the selected schools. I started with individual interviews with principals and post level one educators, DHs. The reasons for starting with individual interviews were multi-fold. Coughlan (2009) cites the following reasons as valuable in using individual interviews also called one- to-one interviews: One-to-one interviews provided valuable information about the social milieu in which people live. One- on-one interviews also provided insight into people's attitudes, experiences, and perspectives. Anderson and Ohlen (2005) add that one-to-one interviews effectively understand participants' meaning and experiences of a given phenomenon.

4. 4.6 Data analysis procedures

Flick (2009) defines data analysis as the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) define analysis as a process the researcher uses to reduce data to a story and its interpretation. Paton in Kawulich (2004) indicates that three things occur during analysis: data are organised, data are reduced through summarisation and categorisation and patterns and themes in the data are identified and linked. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) add by suggesting that data analysis be done as data are collected in the field, as soon as possible after the data have been collected, both while the researcher is still in the field, and later, while the researcher is no longer in the field.

In this study the process of data analysis unfolded as follows:

Phase 1: **Data summarisation**: Data were made available to analyse using three data generation methods (interviews, observations, and documents). In this phase I prepared data for analysis as per Denscombe's (2010) advice that before the data can be used for research purposes, they need to be collected, processed, and filed in a way that makes them amenable to analysis. I did this following Miles and Huberman (1994) that it is a serious mistake for researchers to put primary energy into data collection for weeks, months, or even years then retire from the field to "work over their notes. Denscombe (2010) regards simultaneous collection of data and its analysis as an iterative process. Iterative process (Denscombe, 2010) is when the analysis tends to be an evolving process in which the data collection and data analysis phases occur alongside each other. So, to avoid the weakness of piling up data until the last minute I decided to cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new and often better-quality data (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 49). After transcription was done, I summarised data and put them into meaningful chunks.

I analysed the transcripts, made field notes, and tried to make sense of the data generated. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. These annotations were based on the memories that came flooding back during transcribing. I ensured that these annotations included observations about the ambience of the interview and things like gestures, outside interferences, uncomfortable silences or other feelings that give a richer meaning to the words that were spoken (Denscombe, 2010). Denscombe (2010) argues that transcriptions help detailed searches and data comparisons. At first, I was tempted to regard transcription as a straightforward process, but little did I know that in practice it was contrary. Every hour of talk on an audio recording took several more to transcribe. I discovered that the process of transcription was certainly laborious (Denscombe, 2010, p. 275) however it was also a very valuable part of the research, because it brought the researcher (me) 'close to the data'. As indicated earlier, transcription of audio recordings was not a straightforward mechanical exercise in which I simply wrote down the words that research participants spoke. Denscombe (2010) contends that in practice, it can be quite challenging, and there are three main reasons for this: First, the recorded talk is not always audible, especially with group interviews, but also with one-to-one versions. Sometimes more than one person speaks simultaneously, or outside noises interfere or poor audio quality makes transcribing the words very difficult. Second, people do not always speak in predictably. Normally, the researcher has to add grammar and punctuation making it readable and understandable in the written form. This process is lengthy – it also means that the raw data is cleaned up to intelligible to a readership that was not present at the time of the recording. Third, intonation, emphasis and accents used in speech are hard to depict in a transcript. Denscombe (2010) maintains that established conventions allow these to be added to a written transcript, but the project researcher is unlikely to have time to learn these conventions. The result is that transcripts in small-scale research are generally based on the word alone, with little attempt to show intonation, emphasis, and accents. Nor are pauses and silences always reported on a transcript. The consequence is that, in practice, the data are stripped of some of their meaning. Tentative themes were identified. Observation notes (guided mainly by observation schedule, refer to Appendix C) were made and analysed. Data from documents were also analysed using pre-planned document schedules (refer to

Appendix D). The first day in each research site was very hectic and insufficient to conclude data generation and analysis processes. This compelled the data generation and analysis activities per school to be carried over to the next four days.

Phase 2: Data organisation and coding: Data generation and analysis continued in a back-and-forth process. Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasise that the ideal data collection and analysis model interweaves them from the beginning. The data were organised by reading and re-reading the transcripts to become familiar with the data. Denscombe (2010) mentions that this entails getting a feel for the data and becoming immersed in the minute details of what was said, what was done, what was observed and what is portrayed through the data. I cross-referenced the material with field notes to better understand the data in context. Subsequent re-readings of the data allowed me to identify themes in the data. As the analysis progressed, new things emerged as relevant or new interpretations sprang to mind. As new insights came, the ideas were noted and kept as memos. These memos were of practical value to log new thoughts and explore new possibilities concerning the data analysis. According to Denscombe (2010), such memos are valuable in the way they provide a documented record of the analytic thinking of the researcher as they refine the codes and categories. Denscombe (2010, p. 284) has the following to say about the role of a memo in data analysis:

> *Researchers should write memos to keep track of their decisions concerning the data analysis. The memos provide a permanent record and can be referred back to as a reminder about the researcher's thinking at specific points during the research.*

Data generated and analysed were coded. Denscombe (2010) maintains that codes are tags or labels attached to the 'raw' data. Denscombe (2010) argues that these codes can take the form of names, initials, or numbers; it does not matter as long as the code is succinct and is used systematically to link bits of the data to an idea that relates to the analysis. As such, the use of codes in connection with the interpretation of data was quite distinct from putting a reference code on the various pieces of data so that the parts can be identified and stored in an organised manner. During the interpretation of the data, I engaged in analytic coding. Denscombe (2010) advises that whatever the form of the data – interview transcripts, field notes, documents, photographs, or video recordings – the researcher needs to decide on the units used for coding the data. This process is sometimes known as 'unitising' the data (Denscombe, 2010, p. 284). Denscombe (2010) elaborates on the fact that with text data the units could be as small as individual words, they could be lines in the text, complete sentences or they could be paragraphs.

Phase 3: Data categorisation: In this phase, data codes established during phase 2 of data analysis were then grouped into categories and themes that acted as an umbrella term under which several individual codes were placed. Denscombe (2010) indicates that the terms 'taxonomy' and 'typology' are sometimes applied to this analysis stage, reflecting the general idea of classifying the various components of the data under key headings. I ensured that the various components were linked in adherence to Denscombe's (2010) assertion that the task for the researcher is to 'make the link'. The next task that I undertook was to reduce the number of codes and categories by merging them and bringing others together within a broader category (Denscombe, 2010). Each of the codes brought together within the category had a feature that was shared with others and, of course, that feature was particularly relevant for the emerging analysis. Denscombe (2010) argues that at this point, some decisions also need to be made about which parts of the data are more important than others. Denscombe (2010) asserts that attention has to be focused on these parts, with other parts of the data relegated to the side-lines. "The importance of such parts of the data is determined solely by their significance for the emerging analysis" (Denscombe, 2010). I made sense of the data through making some differentiations (Denscombe, 2010) among the established codes and categories. Denscombe (2010) advises that the researcher check the data's emerging codes, categories, and concepts. Denscombe (2010) maintains that the development of these concepts is the main purpose of the analysis because the concepts provide some new understanding of the data and constitute the foundations for any theory or general conclusions to emerge from the research.

4.5 Trustworthiness

The quality of research depends on its trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is defined according to its criteria, namely, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) define some trustworthiness criteria as follows: First, transferability is the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents. The researcher facilitates the transferability judgement by a potential user through thick description. Second, dependability is the stability of findings over time. It involves participants' evaluation of the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from participants of the study. Third, confirmability is the degree to which other researchers could confirm the research study's findings. It is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer's imagination but derived from the data. Fourth, reflexivity is the process of critical self-reflection about oneself as researcher (own biases, preferences, preconceptions), and the research relationship (relationship to the respondent, and how the relationship affects participant's answers to questions). I regarded trustworthiness appropriate for this study to maintain its high calibre. As such, in this research study I ensured that the above principles of trustworthiness were adhered to increase its truthfulness.

Credibility: Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. For this reason, in this study, I first ensured credibility was assured by using a pilot study which, according to Shenton (2004), assists in developing an early familiarity with the culture of participating organisations before the first data collection dialogues take place. This helped me to have "prolonged engagement" between the investigator (me) and the participants in order for both the researcher (me) to gain an adequate understanding of an organisation (school) and to establish a relationship of trust between the parties. In ensuring credibility, the pilot study usage also helped me resolve logistical issues such as checking that the instructions were comprehensible, checking that investigators and technicians were sufficiently skilled in the procedures, and checking the wording of the pilot study.

Triangulation of data generation instruments (interviews, observations, and document reviews) was among the strategies I utilised to ensure that credibility was not compromised. This was consistent with Guba and Lincoln's (1985) assertion that the use of different methods compensates for their limitations and exploits their respective benefits. In an attempt to maintain and ensure the credibility of this study I even triangulated the participants who were principals, DPs, DHs and teachers. Similar research questions were posed to each participant at different post levels. This is what Shenton (2004) calls triangulating via data sources. Shenton (2004) argues that here individual viewpoints and experiences can be proved against others and, finally, a broad picture of the attitudes, needs or behaviour of those under scrutiny may be constructed based on the contributions of a range of people.

Data were generated from three different sites (schools), which meant that site triangulation was done. This, according to Shenton (2004) reduces the effect on the study of particular local factors peculiar to one institution. Shenton (2004) argues that where similar results emerge at different sites, findings may have greater credibility in the reader's eyes. Fifth, when permission to conduct research was sought, it was accompanied by letters requesting voluntary participation by the participants in the research. No participant was coerced to participate, and, in the letters, it was mentioned that they (participants) were free to withdraw at any time if they so wished. These participants who willingly participated in the research were encouraged to be frank from the outset of each session and I tried, by all means, to establish rapport with them (the participants). Shenton (2004) refers to this strategy as the tactics to help ensure honesty in informants when contributing data to ensure data credibility. I used iterative questioning to uncover deliberate lies. Consistent with Shenton’s (2004) claims, I used probes to elicit detailed data and iterative questioning, in which I returned to matters previously raised by an informant and extracted related data through rephrased questions. Shenton (2004) argues that where contradictions emerge, falsehoods can be detected, and the researcher may decide to discard the suspect data because it lacks credibility. Seventh, frequent continuous debriefing sessions between me and my supervisor to safeguard the study from being non-credible. During these debriefing sessions corrective measures were suggested and implemented and as such the study was kept credible. Eighth, I adhered to what Guba and Lincoln (1985) refer to as member checking. Guba and Lincoln (1985) consider member checking as the single most important provision that can be made to bolster a study’s credibility. I checked the accuracy of data relating “on the spot” in the course and the data generation dialogues at the end. Participants were given the transcripts to check whether their responses were well captured. Ninth, in line with Shenton’s (2004), thick description of the phenomenon under scrutiny, I provided a detailed description of the phenomenon under investigation to the participants. Shenton (2004) argues that it is an important provision for promoting credibility as it helps to convey the actual situations that have been investigated and,to an extent, the contexts that surround them.

Transferability: Korstjens and Moser (2018) argue that transferability concerns the aspect of applicability (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). Korstjens and Moser (2018) further posit that transferability is the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents. In this regard, I ensured transferability by using triangulation of research instruments and spending a long time in the research sites generating data so that the reader could trust the research project and make transfers to their situations. Lincon, Guba, and Firestone in Shenton (2004) assert that the investigator's responsibility is to ensure that sufficient contextual information about the fieldwork sites is provided to enable the reader to make such a transfer. This, according to Korstjens and Moser (2018) implies that, the reader makes the transferability judgement because the researcher does not know their specific settings. In attending to thick description of this study, I addressed and explained the following: the context of the study that it was the dynamic of school performance. The settings were the three primary schools in South Africa regarding King Cetshwayo District. The sampling and size were three principals, 1DP, 7HDs and 7PL1 teachers. In this study the sampling strategy that I adopted was non-probability sampling. Non-propability sampling according to Taherdoost (2016) is associated with case study research design and qualitative research. Taherdoost (2016) argues that case studies focus on small samples and are intended to examine a real-life phenomenon, not make statistical inferences about the wider population (Yin, 2003). The participants' demographics were representative of their post levels within their respective schools (refer to chapter 5, Section 5.2. Table: 5.1). The interview procedures included focus group and individual interviews (refer to section, 4.6.2 above).

Dependability: Dependability according to Korstjens and Moser (2018) includes the aspect of consistency. Korstjens and Moser (2018) mention that to ensure dependability the researcher needs to check whether the analysis process is in line with the accepted standards for a particular design. Korstjens and Moser (2018) argue that the strategy needed to ensure dependability and confirmability is known as an audit trail. Korstjens and Moser (2018) indicate that the audit trail is the transparent description of the research steps taken from the start of a research project to the development and reporting of the findings. In this strategy Korstjens and Moser (2018), claim that the records of the research path are kept throughout the study. In line with Korstjens and Moser’s (2018) research trail, all the research steps of the research project were transparently described, and the records were well kept.

Confirmability: Korstjens and Moser (2018) maintain that confirmability concerns the aspect of neutrality. Shenton (2004) argues that the concept of confirmability is the qualitative investigator’s comparable concern to objectivity. Korstjens and Moser (2018) warn that the interpretation of data should not be based on the researcher’s particular preferences and viewpoints but should be grounded in the data. For this study, I ensured confirmability by not allowing my subjective influences and perceptions to interfere with the generated data.

4.6 Ethical considerations

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) refer to ethics as the appropriateness of one’s behaviour concerning the rights of those who become the subject of ones work or are affected by it. Cooper and Schindler (2006) define ethics as the ‘norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others’. Therefore, Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) define research ethics as relating to questions about formulating and clarifying our research topic. For example, we design our research and gain access, collect data, process, and store our data, analyse data and write up our research findings morally and responsibly. Based on Saunders et al (2009) definition of research ethics, it suggests that research ethics pervades every step of the research project. For example, Saunders et al (2009) mention that research ethics happen during the following stages: during design and gaining access, during data collection, research ethics associated with data processing and storage and ethical issues related to analysis and reporting.

4.6.1 Negotiating and gaining entry into research sites and the participants

In this section I elaborate on my experience of how I negotiated entry into the research sites amid ensuring compliance to ethical consideration. I discussed how the processes of getting in, getting on, getting out, and getting back unfolded as I approached the research sites.

Van Maanen (1998) best describes the process of gaining access as a continuous push and pull between the fieldworker / researcher and informants. Burgess (1984) posits that gaining access is a prerequisite and a precondition for the research. However, Van Maanen (1998) argues that **a**ccessing research sites and participants have continued to challenge fieldworkers since the days of Boas and Malinowski. According to Peticca-Harris, de Gama and Elias (2016) the existing literature emphasises the vital role of gatekeepers and informants in negotiating and gaining access into research site. Peticca-Harris et al (2016) argue that Gummesson (2002) and Lee (1993), for example, suggest that gatekeepers enable access, monitor, and control the activities of the researcher throughout the data collection process. Concerning this study, the gaining of access was negotiated through each of the three schools ‘principals, and permission was granted. Formal requests in the form of writing letters explaining the aim of the study weresought from the selected schools prior to the actual visits.

Burgess (1984) and Gummesson (2002) note that the literature identifies two key people in negotiating and gaining entry into the research site. These key people are according to Gummesson (2002) gatekeepers and informants. Gatekeepers provide and facilitate access for the researcher into the research site. Buchanan et al (1988) state that it all depends on the goodwill of gatekeepers for the researcher to access entry or not into the research site. Emphasising the importance of gatekeepers Gummesson (2002), notes that for political and personal reasons, gatekeepers can stop the access process into some parts of the sample organisation and prevent introductions to key informants who can provide valuable information. Okumus, Roper and Altinay (2007) mention informants as the second type of key people who can provide information about the investigated topic. Laurila (1997) arranges them into four groupings: survivors, disbelievers, cautious and candid analysers. Candid analysers talk about the investigated area openly and provide very detailed information. Cautious analysers talk about simple issues openly but do not provide sufficient information on the investigated area. Survivors provide basic information reluctantly and disbelievers only talk about general issues and do not provide useful information. Researchers must learn the social structure of a research site to successfully negotiate entry (Shaffir, Stebbins, and Turowetz, 1980); Burgess (1991; Feldman, Bell, and Berger, 2003) and Berg 2004). Burgess (1991); Maruyama and Deno (1992); Feldman, Bell, and Berger (2003) point out that negotiating access is based on building relationships with gatekeepers, which is an ill-defined, unpredictable, uncontrollable process. In the context of my study, I negotiated and gained entry into the selected schools through the principals and their permission I accessed teachers. It was important for me to create an atmosphere with the participants that will not jeopardise my study's continuation, for example,creating and maintaining good human relationships.

Laurila (1997) identifies three types of access. Firstly, formal access refers to achieving an agreement between the organisation and the researcher on specific terms including what, when, and how empirical data are collected and the return. Secondly, personal access refers to the researcher getting to know relevant executives, managers, and individuals. Thirdly, fostering individual rapport refers to developing an understanding and collaboration between managers and the researcher. Gummesson (2002) on the other hand identifies three more different access types. For example, physical access means the ability to get closer to the object of the study; continued maintaining an on-going physical access to the research setting and understanding what is happening and why in the investigated settings. Buchanan, Boddy and McCalman (1988) combine Laurila and Gummesson three types and propose a four-stage access model known as getting in, getting on, getting out, and getting back. To me as a researcher, it was not sufficient to secure permission from the principals but had to foster good relationship with SMT and teachers as inevitable participants to the study. Formal letters were written to the participants mentioned above pleading for their voluntary participation in the study. I did this to avoid possible situations where the principal, as the gate keeper, would be regarded as the sole authority in allowing the research to be done in the school.

4.6.2 Getting in

Buchanan, Boddy and McCalman (1988), claim that negotiating access to organisations for research is a game of chance, not skill. Because negotiating access to organisations is not easy, Buchanan, Boddy and McCalman (1988) offer five specific advice on negotiating access: First, allow this to take time. Second, use friends and relatives wherever possible. Third, use non-threatening language when explaining the nature and purpose of your study. Fourth, deal positively with respondents' reservations concerning time and confidentiality. Fifth, offer a report of your findings. Buchanan et al (1988) warn that the two most common reservations which can block research access concern time and confidentiality. Buchanan et al (1988) argue that access will not be granted where it is felt that normal operations are likely to be disrupted, and where commercially sensitive material is likely to be disclosed. Buchanan et al (1988) say that gatekeepers in organisations often view these matters quite differently from researchers' expectations. Buchanan et al (1988) suggest that the researcher thus has to respond positively to such fears, reservations and questions. Buchanan et al (1988) mention that in the getting in process, the researcher is dependent on the goodwill of organisational gatekeepers. Buchanan et al (1988) say that this dependency creates risks beyond the researcher's control and is difficult to predict or avoid. I also took heed of maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity (discussed in section 4.10.5) of both the school and the participants in each research site.

The researcher should be flexible in anticipating delays, for example, Buchanan et al (1988) suggest that the research timetable must therefore take into account the possibility that access will not be automatic and instant but may take weeks and months of meetings and correspondence to achieve. Against this backdrop, Buchanan et al (1988) advise that the researcher must also be prepared for disappointment where the time and effort in making and following through an approach to an organisation are wasted. Buchanan et al (1988), argue that there are two most common reservations which can block research access and these concern time and confidentiality. Access will not be granted where it is felt that normal operations are likely to be disrupted, and where commercially sensitive material is likely to be disclosed (Buchanan, 1988, p. 72). Buchanan et al (1988) maintain that gatekeepers in organisations often view these matters quite differently from researchers' expectations. Buchanan et al (1988) indicate that the researcher thus has to respond positively to such fears, reservations, and questions. Buchanan et al (1988) recommend that when negotiating access, it is helpful to offer a tangible product in return for cooperation. These scholars, Buchanan et al, report suggest that this should the findings in a form useful to the recipients suggest that this should the findings in a form useful to the recipients.

4.6.3 Getting on

Buchanan et al (1988) reveal that the nature of the relationship between researchers and researched is a topic that has attracted a lot of commentary and analysis. Buchanan et al (1988) focus on two aspects of that relationship which are not often explored but which they have found important. Buchanan et al (1988) cite them as follows: The first of these concerns is the highly personal relationship established with respondents. The second concerns is the nature and use of feedback. Buchanan et al (1988) mention that once research access to an organisation has been negotiated successfully, it becomes necessary to constantly renegotiate access to the lives and experiences of the individual members of that organisation. Buchanan et al (1988) maintain that getting on' with respondents is fundamental to the quantity and quality of data collected. Buchanan et al (1988) assert that the permission of senior management, a letter of introduction, and academic affiliation, do not themselves achieve sustained levels of cooperation. Buchanan et al (1988) affirm that respondents must be satisfied in two respects. For example, first, they must understand the aim of the study and feel that they can contribute to it. Second, they must feel that the researcher is trustworthy, and has a genuine desire to listen to what they have to say. In addressing the process of getting on, I spent most of the time in the research site creating conducive conditions for participants to contribute freely to the research question. For example, I regarded every response from each participant as crucial to the success of the study. Every participant was given the necessary respect and attention when responding to interview questions. The prevalence of my positive attitude towards the participants ensured that there were no participants who decided to withdraw their participation in the research before completing the site visits.

Buchanan et al (1988) maintain that the success of this renegotiated access depends on the researcher's personality. Buchanan et al (1988) posits that the standard advice to the interviewer covers basic skills and procedures, such as adopting styles of appearance and speech appropriate to the setting and responding in a non-evaluative and non-partisan manner to requests comment and advice. Buchanan et al (1988) indicate that the term personality means the individual's characteristic ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. However, as an individual with needs, interests, and preferences, the researcher is usually missing from the interview's conventional, ‘technical’ accounts (Buchanan et al. 1988). While the personality and preferences of the researcher are typically overlooked, Buchanan et al (1988) insist that they are central to the progress of fieldwork. Buchanan et al (1988) argue that the interpersonal skills required in research interviewing can be taught or acquired through experience. Buchanan et al (1988) assert that they are of limited value where they are used mechanically, as a guide to the sequence of steps to be worked through, or to different types of questions and modes of speech. Buchanan et al (1988) mention one personality prerequisite for dealing with the demands of organisational research: a sincere curiosity about the lives and experiences of others. Buchanan et al (1988) warn that it is difficult to conduct this type of research successfully without such a disposition. Buchanan et al (1988) mention a second personality prerequisite that concerns the deployment of interpersonal skills that establish the close relationship with respondents necessary to elicit personal, and potentially sensitive and embarrassing information. Buchanan et al (1988) posit that interviewing skills have to be supported by considerable interpersonal sensitivity and therefore the researcher has to do more than follow rules and procedures. Stephenson and Greer (1981) affirm that researchers must be alert to the problem of ignoring data because of the ‘ordinariness’ of the contexts and conversations in which it arises.

4.6.4 Getting out

Buchanan et al (1988) assert that the best strategy for withdrawal from an organisational research site is to agree, and to keep, to a deadline for the data collection. Buchanan et al (1988) argue that the amount of information gathered concerning an organisation and its members is potentially infinite. As a result of that, Buchanan et al (1988) mention that it can therefore be difficult for the researcher to decide to leave the organisation finally, gather no more information, and begin the process of analysing and documenting what data have been collected. Buchanan et al (1988) say that this can be an awkward psychological leap on the researcher's side, as there is always the possibility that vital information has been overlooked, usually a strong probability. However, Buchanan et al (1988) argue that the withdrawal process must be managed to maintain the option of returning for further research or future researchers if not in the interests of the project at hand. Buchanan et al (1988) warn that action that could close the site for further research must be avoided, such as failing to meet commitments in the form of a report of the study, or publishing information without the permission or knowledge of the organisation. When getting out arrived, I was very mindful of and adhere to the initial agreements I made with the gate keepers (principals) about the duration of the entire visit. This ensured credibility reliability and trustworthiness on my side as the researcher. This act paved the way for possible revisits to the research sites.

4.6.5 Getting back

Buchanan et al (1988) assert that getting back to continue research is not necessarily simple and automatic. Buchanan et al (1988) maintain that getting back is a matter for renegotiation, and once again this process has to be managed effectively. Buchanan et al (1988) argue that the first entry negotiation forms a ‘contract’ which may be perceived by organisation gatekeepers to be broken by the researcher who assumes that access has been granted permanently, and not on a time-bounded basis for a specific purpose. Buchanan et al (1988) emphasise that re-entry into the research site has to be renegotiated, unless this was part of the initial arrangement, or unless the researcher is invited to continue the work for some reason. The process of getting back to the research sites necessitated that if there are gaps in the information generated during site visits, those gaps are filled through returning to the sites. Bryman (2012) indicates that four ethical principles need to be heeded when researching. These principles are protection from harm of participants, informed consent, ensuring participants' privacy, and deception.

Protection from harm of participants: Bryman (2012) mentions that harm can entail several facets, such as physical harm, harm to participants’ development, loss of self-esteem; stress and ‘inducing subjects to perform reprehensible acts. In the current study I was extra careful not to subject the participant in any facet of harm as cited by Bryman. For example, when I first visited the research sites, I spoke with the participants requesting their voluntary participation. Those participants who were willing to participate were given formal letters in which they appended their signatures accepting their participation. In the letters, among other things, it was stated that they were free to withdraw their participation from the research at any time they might so wish. Other than that, I took cognisance that there was nothing from my side as the researcher that could harm the participants, physically emotionally, through loss of self-esteem, stress or inducing the participants to perform reprehensive acts. Since I continued with the same participants in all research sites until the conclusion of data collection processes, it suggested that no participants were harmed in one way or another. The other strategy that probably helped protect participants from harm was keeping their names unidentifiable and anonymous by using pseudonyms. I also promised participants that even the generated information was kept strictly confidential.

Voluntary and informed consent: Nnebue (2010) defines informed consent as a legal procedure to ensure that a participant or client knows all the risks and costs involved in an intervention or study. The Southern University of California (SUC) (n.d) postulates that informed consent is the process of informing and obtaining permission from an individual before conducting medical or research procedures or tests. SUC (n.d) expands further on informed consent that it is the process through which researchers respect individual autonomy which is the fundamental ethical principle. Denscombe (2010) recommends that when the researcher seeks informed consent from the participant, he/she should follow the following guidelines: participants must be given enough information about the research to decide whether to participate in the research. Denscombe (2010) argues that consent should be in writing to record the researcher's and the participant's agreement. According to Denscombe (2010), the agreement protects the researcher from any possible accusation in recruiting participants. Accordingly in this research study I observed the principles of informed consent through letting the participants read and sign the consent form. As indicated earlier, the participants were told that their data would be confidential and anonymous.

Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity: According to Mohd Arfin (2018) anonymity and confidentiality of the participants is when preserving these principles by not revealing the participants' real names and identity in the data generation, analysis, and reporting of the study findings. In this study I ensured that privacy and confidentiality of the participants were always maintained and kept private through assigning the participants pseudonyms to conceal their identity.

Fabrication and falsification or fraud

Fabrication refers to creating, inventing or faking results or data that are then reported or recorded while falsification is the manipulation of materials, equipment or processes by changing results so that the research does not seem well presented (Mugenda,2011; Kour,2014). To avoid this malpractice and maintain the integrity of this study, I have ensured that in every section of the study I acknowledged the sources consulted. For example, the selected research sites and participants were in real existence. There was no fabrication or falsification regarding selecting research sites and participants.

Deception

Adair, Dushenko and Lindsay (1985) define deception as the provision of information that actively misled subjects regarding some aspect of the study, for example, failing to disclose the purpose of the study to the participants. Nicks, Korn, and Mainieri (1997) define deception as an explicit misstatement of fact. For this research study, I made every attempt to avoid deception by indicating to the participant that they were at liberty to ask any question they might have about the study's credibility.

4.7 Summary

In this chapter I positioned the study in the interpretive paradigm on the basis that this paradigm assisted me in better understanding of the perceptions and experiences of the participants. I reported that the case of the study was dynamic of school performance. The chapter explained the study participants as involving school principals, DP, Ds and Level 1 teachers in three selected primary schools. I reported on three data generation instruments: interviews, observation, and document reviews.

CHAPTER FIVE
DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is about the presentation and discussion of generated data. This study was about the dynamics of school performance. School performance refers to how teaching and learning is executed to produce good or bad results, refer to chapter 2 section 2.3.2. I purposively selected three primary schools to access knowledgeable participants in line with Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2009) who assert that:

> *…. purposive sampling is used to access knowledgeable people who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues.*

Although the main instrument for generating data was interviews, I also used observations and document reviews as supplementary methods. The focus of this chapter is the presentation and discussion of data generated from three primary schools. The names of the schools and those of the participants are all fictitious. This is in line with Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) that participants' confidentiality, anonymity, and non-traceability must always be guaranteed in research. I then discussed the themes related to school performance in the three chosen primary schools. These themes include quality of teaching, nature of school community relationship and the role of school culture on performance

The main theoretical lens underpinning this study is transformational leadership as propounded by Smith and Bell (2014) discussed earlier in chapter 1 section 2.3.4. When presenting and discussing data I was constantly guided by the following research questions as presented in chapter 1 section 1.4:

1. What do teachers and SMT members regard as factors influencing school performance?
2. How do teachers and SMT members see these factors influencing school performance?
3. How can school performance be enhanced?

The process of presenting and discussing data unfolds as follows: Within a theme, I present data school-by-school. I present in a specific order within each school, from the principal, HoD and PL1 teachers. At Ziningi primary school the principal and DP were interviewed together**,** because of the similar nature of their responsibilities. The responsibilities of the DP, according to Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 are similar to that of the principal in that he/she deputises during the principal’s absence. In other participating schools the DP’s posts were either vacant or non- existence. The reason for adopting the pattern of moving from school to school was based on the fact that I wanted to obtain the diverse perceptions of the participants on certain issues within a particular school before moving to the next school. At Sizabantu primary school, the DP was not yet available because the post was still advertised. At Z primary school, instead of doing focus group interviews with PL1 educators and HoDs as planned earlier, I ended up doing individual interviews due to the size of the school which entitles it to have one HoD. Regarding interviewing only one PL1 educator, the three educators decided to withdraw their participation from the study.

5.2 Biographical profiles of the participants

The participants consisted of three principals (A1, B1 and C1), one DP (A1 DP) seven heads of department (A2s, B2s and C2) and nine PL1 educators (A3s, B3s and C3) all of whom were from the three selected primary schools. I individually interviewed the principals and in focus group I interviewed HoDs (DHs) and PL1educators. The participants were heterogeneous regarding their ranks, current teaching experiences, and gender. I hope this richness in their heterogeneity would profoundly contribute to the better understanding of the dynamics of school performance through the perspectives of these participants. Table 5.1 reflects the actual biographical profiles of the participants.

TABLE 5.1: Biographical profiles of the participants

School name	Grades	Rank	Code	No. of participants	Experience in current post (years)	Gender
Ziningi Primary school	5-7	Principal	A1	1	7	Male
		DP	A1 DP		3	
		DH	A2	3	4	
					14	Female
					3	Male
		PL1	A3	4	5	Male
					6	Female
					5	
					8	
Z Primary school	5-7	Principal	C1		10	Female
		DH	C2		6	Male
		PL1	C3		7	
Sizabantu Primary school	R-4 R-4	Principal	B1	1	8	Female
		DH	B2	3	12	Female
					9	
					8	
		PL1	B3	4	6	
					4	
					8	
					7	

Key:

PL1 =Post level one educator

DH =Departmental Head

DP =Deputy principal

The schools reflected in table 5.1 are all primary schools, but they start at different grades. I sought to understand if the participants' experiences would constitute factors that would impact the dynamics of performance of the chosen schools. I sought also to understand how the participants go about teaching these grades. The participants' diverse experiences in the current posts made me anticipate vast knowledge in school performance. As indicated earlier, I commenced with data generation at Ziningi primary school. In the ensuing section I present and discuss quality of teaching which according to the participants forms the backbone their responsibilities.

5.3 Theme 1: Ensuring quality of teaching

The key issue in this theme was to find out how quality of teaching was ensured. At Ziningi primary school I interacted with A1 participant (principal) and inquired about how quality of teaching was ensured.

In this regard the principal had the following to say:

> *We ensure that quality of teaching occurs by devising strategies to improve our learners' performance. These strategies include each teacher identifying problem areas experienced by learners in his/her subjects. When the problem areas have been identified, teachers categorise learners according to their abilities. Usually, when these strategies are employed, the quality of teaching is enhanced. If quality of teaching is not improved despite categorising our learners according to their abilities, we involve staff development team (SDT) whose responsibility is to develop teachers.*

The principal explained how the SDT worked in developing teachers to ensure the quality of teaching in the school. He explained as follows:

> *The SDT assists teachers in establishing developmental support groups (DSGs) for each teacher. The responsibility of the DSG is to mentor the teacher so that the teacher eventually improves his/her teaching.*

The principal described how a teacher was developed by his/her DSG to improve quality of teaching as follows:

> *The teacher first chooses one teacher among his/her peers and his/her superior who might be the HoD, DP or the principal as his/her DSG members. These DSG members are responsible for mentoring and developing that particular teacher. Each teacher at school must establish his/her DSG structure for continuous in-service development. As the principal of the school, it is my responsibility to ensure that all teachers are developed to improve the quality of teaching in the school.*

I probed the principal further regarding the impact of teacher development by the DSGs on the quality of teaching and its impact on the school's performance. The principal had the following to say:

> *Quality of teaching improves when teachers are engaged in continuous development by their DSGs. The evidence of the improvement of quality of teaching is seen by good performance of our learners. There are, however, teachers whose teaching is not improved despite the development they are engaged in. in that case we continue seeking*

help through networking with good performing schools. This also helps a lot in the improvement of our school's performance.

According to the principal part of how they ensured quality of teaching was that they implement IQMS policy and networking with good performing schools. That had paid them dividends since Ziningi primary schools' performance was, according to learners' performance records, above 70% mark, refer to table 5.2.

I further probed the principal to explain how they strategised to improve quality of teaching, which eventually improved school performance. The principal reiterated strongly that their improvement strategies involved the implementation of Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) as per the dictates of the policy. In this regard this is what he had to say:

The first and foremost strategy for us is to implement IQMS policy. This policy requires that teachers develop one another to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There is a committee that we established that oversees the implementation of IQMS. That committee is known as SDT. Further DSGs are established. It is these support groups that are directly responsible for developing individual teachers. After each teacher has been developed, he/she is evaluated to ascertain the extent of improvement in his/her teaching. The teacher is evaluated against four performance standards based in the classroom. If through evaluation it is found that the teacher's performance is not good, immediate intervention programmes are done to help the teacher to improve his/her teaching. There are of course other strategies that we employ to assist teachers in improving quality of teaching, for example, subject and phase meetings.

I made a follow up probe to the principal regarding how the strategies of ensuring quality of teaching assisted in improving school performance: The principal responded as follows:

During the IQMS implementation, teachers select any subject to be evaluated in. After evaluation, the DSG sits down with the teacher to discuss the findings of the DSG. The DSG suggests to the teacher what and how the teacher should improve his/her quality of teaching. As I mentioned, we utilise many strategies to improve the quality of teaching. These strategies involve holding subject meetings where we discuss how specific subjects are to be taught to benefit the learners from quality of teaching.

After the principal had explained their strategies to improve teaching, he mentioned IQMS score for his school. Fortunately, I had a list of IQMS scores among the documents I requested from him earlier. The following tables contain IQMS evaluation scores for Ziningi primary school for three consecutive years (2015, 2016 and 2017). I compared teachers' IQMS scores with school performance records, as reflected in tables 5.2., 5.3 5.4 and 5.93 below. The IQMS scores evaluation tables reflected that teachers' performance on IQMS are much higher than school performance. This raised serious concerns to me. The IQMS scores were supposed to corroborate with schoolperformance records, but this was not the case.

<u>TABLE 5.2: Summary of IQMS scores: 2015</u>
Details in respect of educators with assessment
(Ziningi primary school)

Educator name	Post level	Score
xx	4	149
xx	3	139
xx	2	115
xx	2	117
xx	1	85
xx	1	88
xx	1	97
xx	1	95
xx	1	98
xx	1	94

Overall performance in % = 85

<u>TABLE 5.3: Summary of IQMS scores: 2016</u>
Details in respect of educators with assessment
(Ziningi primary school)

Educator name	Post level	Score
xx	4	141
xx	3	137
xx	2	120
xx	2	119
xx	2	118
xx	1	81
xx	1	87

xx	1	83
xx	1	100
xx	1	96
xx	1	95
xx	1	92
xx	1	87

Overall performance in % =88

TABLE 5.4: SUMMARY OF IQMS SCORES: 2017

Details in respect of educators with assessment

(Ziningi primary school)

Educator name	Post level	Score
xx	4	184
xx	3	175
xx	2	120
xx	2	123
xx	2	132
xx	1	99
xx	1	79
xx	1	94
xx	1	96
xx	1	87
xx	1	88
xx	1	89

Overall performance in % = 86

After interacting with the principal of Ziningi primary school, I interacted with the DP to ensure quality teaching and learning. The DP responded as follows:

> *We hold staff meetings where we brainstorm regarding the mechanisms to be put in place to ensure that the school performs well. Through brainstorming, we develop a variety of strategies that enable us to keep our school performing well. For example, arranging extra classes and networking with good performing schools.*

I took the same issue to the HoD/DH focus group, namely, the issue of how quality of teaching was ensured and how school performance was impacted. One A2 (HoD/DH) participant among the group had the following to say:

> *Thank you for the opportunity first and foremost, yearly we ensure quality of teaching through prior planning for the first two days on the opening of the school. It is often said*

that when one fails to plan, he/she plans to fail. It is for this reason that we do not compromise planning. We ensure that teachers have the CAPS documents for those specific learning areas they teach during those two days. We also make sure that they all have annual teaching plans which play a major role in dissecting the learning areas per term. Also when that is done, we make sure that submission of daily preparations for lesson are submitted on the stipulated due dates., We make sure that class visits are done per term. These activities form the gist of ensuring quality of teaching in our school and it contributes to the good performance of the school.

The views by the HoD focus group on how to ensure quality of teaching prompted me to want to find out how class visits, for example, helped in ensuring quality of teaching. One HoD expressed the shared views of the rest of HoDs went as follows:

Class visits help develop teachers on how to teach effectively, learners' performance is automatically improved. During the class visits, teachers are mentored and helped to teach effectively eventually. To me class visits are indispensable in improving quality of teaching and thus learners' performance is improved. When learners' performance is improved so is the entire performance of the school.

The other HoD from the focus group commented as follows on the same probe of how class visits helped in ensuring quality of teaching:

Through class visits, teachers are helped not to be complacent with their work. They are made to understand that they are always accountable for the subjects they teach. Whatever performance learners achieve in the teacher's subject, the teacher must explain why the subject is performed in a particular way. We, as HoDs, make sure that we always provide teachers we supervise with necessary support for them to ensure that quality of teaching always exist.

From the responses of these participants, it was obvious that there was no one way of supervising teachers towards improving their teaching. These HoDs ensured that teachers under their supervision were equipped with the necessary resources needed for teaching. Besides ensuring that educators had teaching resources, HoDs also ensured that class visits were strictly done. This suggested that if educators were given the necessary support for teaching, school performance was likely to improve**.**

I then interacted with A3 focus group (PL1 participants) on how they ensured quality of teaching. The shared response of the focus group was reported by one A3 participant as follows:

> *To ensure that we maintain the quality of teaching, the first thing that we do is make sure that we make lesson preparation available. We honour the periods all the time. We are always in the class on time and make sure that we teach learners. Whatever we do regarding teaching learners, we make sure that they are involved. We develop strategies to assist learners who experience challenges with learning. By devising multiple teaching strategies such as networking, teaching and learning are improved.*

The other A3 participant responded on behalf of the group as follows:

> *To ensure that we ensure quality teaching, we keep in our minds that the learners we teach have different abilities. With that in mind we divide them by their abilities. It thus becomes easy for us to adapt our teaching according to the diverse abilities of our learners. For example, in any classroom, we have the following groups of learners: below average learners, average learners, and above average learners.*

This A3 participant response covered the entire group since the focus group signaled their agreement by nodding their heads. These participants knew what was expected seemed to suggest that they had the necessary capabilities to carry out their duties successfully. The participants indicated that when teaching they catered for learners with different abilities. This response shed light on the issue of performance in this school. The adage “knowledge is power” was proven true by the responses of these participants in that when you know something, the possibility is that you would be able to do it well. Even with school performance, there could be a likelihood of good performance when there were knowledgeable educators. I then probed PL1 participants’ focus group on how quality of teaching was ensured in the performance of Ziningi primary school. One PL1participant expressed the views of the group as follows:

The manifestation of quality of teaching is seen when the learners we teach can understand the subject content we teach. In the mornings during the assemblies, we usually make our learners present and dramatise certain subject contents in front of the entire school. When they can do the presentations confidently, we know that learners can perform well as a result of our teaching.

The other PL1 participant added as follows:

When there are parents' visitations to school to view their children's schoolwork, each teacher prepares his/her learners to make presentations to parents. The efficiency that learners in their presentations normally show shows that learners are mastering the learning content and this according to me displays the good performance of our school.

What followed after deliberating with the participants of Ziningi primary school were the emerging issues. These emerging issues were as follows: a school needs to do prior planning for effective teaching to occur, learners need to be taught according to their abilities, and teaching resources are essential for ensuring quality of teaching.

My next destination was Sizabantu primary school where I interacted with participant B1, B2 and B3 respectively about how quality of teaching was ensured. The principal's (B1) response went as follows:

Teaching has become our culture. We spend most of our time teaching and using many strategies to quality teaching. These strategies involve dramatisation of our teaching to understand the lesson easily. There are many approaches that we use in teaching our learners, like I have said we are dealing with young learners here. The testing and evaluation of learners is done through tests of course, orally which is done mainly in grade R.

This participant emphasised that they regarded teaching as their culture. This suggested that teaching them was something that defined them since culture. The B1 participant indicated that Sizabantu primary school taught very young learners, so their teaching has to be adapted to suit their learners' developmental needs.

The principal explained how they achieved and ensured quality of teaching and the resultant impact on school performance. The principal explained as follows:

We have various programmes aimed at improving quality of teaching, for example, class visits and the implementation of IQMS. As an incentive to teachers, the DoE allocates 1% increase to the teachers' salary for quality of teaching.

Among the performance records for Sizabantu primary school at my disposal were IQMS summative evaluation scores for the whole school. I then became interested in knowing how teachers' teaching performance compared with the school's performance. To me the logic should be that if teachers performed well in IQMS evaluation so should it be with the performance of Sizabantu primary school. The tables below reflect summative evaluation scores for Sizabantu primary school for three successive years refer to tables 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7:

TABLE 5.5: SUMMARY OF IQMS SCORES: 2015
Details in respect of educators with assessment
(Sizabantu primary school)

Educator name	Post level	score
xx	4	181
xx	2	144
xx	2	143
xx	2	135
xx	1	77
xx	1	88
xx	1	83

Overall performance in % = 88

TABLE 5.6 SUMMARY OF IQMS SCORES: 2016
Details in respect of educators with assessment
(Sizabantu primary school)

Name	Post level	score
xx	4	177
xx	2	145
xx	2	136
xx	2	139
xx	1	71
xx	1	82
xx	1	82

Overall performance in % = 82

TABLE 5.7 SUMMARY OF IQMS SCORES: 2017

Details in respect of educators with assessment

(Sizabantu primary school)

Name	Post level	score
xx	4	185
xx	2	149
xx	2	148
xx	2	139
xx	1	79
xx	1	90
xx	1	92

Overall performance in % = 92

Key to tables

xx = educators

% = percentage

The tables represent scores obtained by individual educators in three successive years (2015, 2016 and 2017). IQMS evaluation is mainly meant to develop educators to perform their duties efficiently. From the summary of IQMS evaluation scores, educators' performance scores at Sizabantu primary school are higher than school performance in each of the three years refer to tables 5.5, 5.6, 5.7 and 5.94 respectively. According to these tables, the performance of educators is not consistent with the performance of the school. This could be attributed to the pay progression percentage attached to IQMS scores. Comparatively, on the above tables it looks like educators scored themselves in a way that favoured them getting salary progression.

The IQMS scores for each of the chosen schools are listed here to compare and make sense of each school's performance in terms of its learners' results with teachers' performance in IQMS. The other reason why the teachers' IQMS scores are listed here is to find out whether the performance of teachers in IQMS is consistent with the purposes of IQMS that include the following: to identify specific needs of educators, schools and district offices for support and development; to provide support for continued growth; to promote accountability; to monitor an institution's overall effectiveness; and to evaluate an educator's performance (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003).

I then interacted with the HoD focus group (B2 participants) about the main question on how quality of teaching was ensured at Sizabantu primary school. One HoD expressed her group views as follows:

Firstly I may say we have a strong focus on supporting teachers to improve quality of teaching. We have curriculum supervision planning for teachers where teachers are made aware of what they will be supervised on. We have a calendar for each category we want teachers to focus on. We monitor the curriculum coverage to ensure that it is following the plan. We also encourage and make sure that they reflect on their work that they have done well and identify the areas that need improvements. We hold internal workshops aimed at discussing better ways of teaching. Apart from internal workshops we collectively make demonstration lessons on teaching particular subjects effectively.

I picked from the response to acknowledge the strength of supporting teachers these HoDs had. The direction of that strength was towards improving teaching practice. The implication here was that through improving teaching practice quality of teaching is inevitably improved**.** The other HoD also added her group views regarding how they ensured quality of teaching at Sizabantu primary school by saying the following:

As HoDs at Sizabantu primary school we devise strategies for educators we supervise that would motivate them to improve and maintain quality of teaching. In devising those strategies we involve teachers so that they also own them. In involving them we subscribed to the principle that goes as follows: "Nothing for us without us" This simple means that for a person to buy in to your idea, you need to involve him/her. We devise strategies like, teacher of the month. This is where the teacher who has produced good results is incentivised together with the class he/she teaches. This triggers eagerness in teachers to want to perform well. As a result of that the quality of teaching is enhanced. The healthy competition that grows among teachers has yielded positive results on the performance of Sizabantu primary school.

After interacting with the HoD focus group, I interacted with the PL1 focus group. The performance for this school showed that in 2017, they scored the average of 71%. To me this was undoubtedly quality achievement for that year. During our interaction, I requested them to tell me more about how quality of teaching in the school was ensured. One PL1 participant articulated the shared views of the focus group. In this regard he had the following to say:

In order to improve quality of teaching we convene meetings for parents where they are told how they could support their children with school work. We also attend workshops arranged by the DoE in which we are developed on how to develop strategies that would *enhance the performance of our school. We develop one another using IQMS. We also network with other schools to share how teaching could be improved.*

This PL1 participant mentioned several strategies that enabled them to improve teaching quality. He cited parents for supporting their children in doing schoolwork, workshop attendance and networking with other schools. This response seemed to indicate that educators alone could not single-handedly improve quality of teaching without the support from learners' parents. The issues that emerged from my interaction with the participants of Sizabantu primary school regarding ensuring quality of teaching involved: adapting teaching learners according to their abilities and the necessity of parental support. The other PL1participant of Sizabantu primary school had the following to say on how they ensured quality of teaching:

We organise some tokens to be awarded to best performing learners, such as dictionaries. This stimulates them and increases their enthusiasm in learning. We also teach them according to their abilities. In the classroom there are high achievers, average achievers and poor achievers. We design the learning content in a way that will benefit all these groups of learners. In so doing the teaching and learning is improved thereby improving their performance.

I concluded the quality of teaching by interacting with the Z primary school participants that are C1, C2 and C3 respectively. On the issue of how quality of teaching was ensured. The C1 participant (principal) responded as follows:

The quality of teaching is ensured through using multiple strategies to improve the academic performance of our learners. Among the strategies that we use are the following: we engage our learners in internal debates, essay writing and reading newspapers written in English. Teaching quality is improved by consistently engaging our learners in the above teaching strategies. These strategies make the success rate of our children shown when they can speak English well. When they leave to study elsewhere, they come back and confide in how they coped well with post primary school education. We lay solid foundation to learners so that when they reach higher levels of their education, they do not experience hardships in understanding what they are taught. So the school is working fine. I am happy so far, but I know that better is not good when there is still best. After having taught our learners, we assess them and make them *compete by announcing the top performers in every subject. This motivates them to perform well. Therefore, the school's performance is improved through us improving the quality of teaching.*

The C1 participant summarised the quality of teaching by saying it was good but still she expected more to be done. The manifestation of quality of teaching was reflected when the learners could express themselves in English fluently. English was the language of teaching and learning (Lolt) for Z primary school. Mastery of it according to the principal was a sign of quality of teaching. The principal of Z primary school further added on how quality of teaching was ensured in the school and its impact on school performance by saying the following:

In this school, we have decided to hold weekly subject and phase meetings to discuss strategies for improving teaching and learning. For example, in the subject meetings, we discuss specific issues about teachers' approaches to successfully teaching a particular subject. During these meetings, we assist one another in possible problem areas regarding teaching particular concepts in different subjects. In the phase meetings, we look at what challenges need to be attended to that possibly impede teaching and learning.

The quality of teaching at Z primary school to me was good when considering the schools learners' performance over three years, refer to table 5.13. After interacting with the principal of Z primary school, I then interacted with the C2 participant (HoD). The HoD shared his views on how quality of teaching was ensured at Z primary school. In sharing his views in this question, the C2 participant responded as follows:

In order to ensure quality of teaching we organise internal workshops. These workshops assist educators in their teaching. These workshops give them more love for teaching so that educators can love the subjects they are teaching. These workshops give them guidance as to how to teach well. You will find that some educators skip some chapters of what they have to teach because of lack of knowledge. The workshops come to the rescue of such educators and provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach. In the workshops organised by the school, teachers are given opportunities to raise challenges they face in teaching their subjects. The frequency of these workshops is *on weekly basis so that the knowledge gained from the workshop always remains fresh in the minds of teachers. The organisation and holding of these workshops do not only improve the quality of teaching but it also improves the performance of the school.*

The HoD spoke about the school exposing educators to workshops. That exposure contributed to teaching prowess of educators. This suggested that quality of teaching was ensured by exposure of teachers to the workshops, which positively impacted school performance. The HoD further responded as follows:

The quality of teaching has an impact on school performance. In three successive years (2015, 2016 and 2017) our school has never performed below 50%. This year, we are anticipating our performance to be even higher than the previous years' performance.

When the HoD participant mentioned the performance of Z primary school, I comparatively looked through IQMS educators' performance records and schools' performance records as illustrated in the tables (5.8, 5.9, and 5.91) and table 5.92 respectively below:

TABLE 5.8: SUMMARY OF IQMS SCORES: 2015
Details in respect of educators with assessment
(Z primary school)

Name	Post level	score
xx	4	137
xx	2	119
xx	1	79
xx	1	86
xx	1	85
xx	1	77
xx	1	85
xx	1	83

Overall performance in % = 81

TABLE 5.9 SUMMARY OF IQMS SCORES: 2016

Details in respect of educators with assessment

(Z primary school)

Educator's name	Post level	score
xx	4	139
xx	2	120
xx	1	85
xx	1	81
xx	1	84
xx	1	79
xx	1	80
xx	1	82

Overall performance in % = 79

TABLE 5.91 SUMMARY OF IQMS SCORES: 2017

Details in respect of educators with assessment

(Z primary school)

Educator's name	Post level	score
xx	4	140
xx	2	126
xx	1	88
xx	1	83
xx	1	87
xx	1	89
xx	1	83
xx	1	87

Overall performance in % = 82

The HoD further mentioned other strategies that he used to ensure quality of teaching. In this regard this is what he had to say:

> *I do class visits and ensure that close supervision is done. I also network with other schools to share with our school the way they teach their learners. Sometimes we invite subject advisers to come and develop us.*

Similar to Ziningi primary and Sizabantu primary schools, teachers' performance at Z primary school on IQMS evaluation scores does not corroborate with the school's performance during the mentioned periods. In concluding the quality of teaching, I ultimately shared views with PL1 participant of Z primary school. On the same issue of how quality of teaching was ensured at Z primary school. The PL1participant had the following to say:

> *To ensure quality teaching I work as a teacher librarian teaching learners library skill. As a teacher librarian, I ensure that learners are exposed to reading that is part of teaching. Because I am so dedicated to my work, I just tell myself that I have to push. My learners are proficient readers. Mastery of reading by my learners provides good foundations for further studies for my learners. Sometimes I have to open the library as early as seven o'clock in the morning, during the break I am with the children. I teach English at school and there are so many tasks involved in teaching English such as debates and unprepared speeches. I have to push and push so that I do not fall behind with my work.*

I probed C3 participant further regarding how her dedication and commitment impacted on quality of teaching. She responded as follows:

> *As a result of my dedication and commitment the learners I teach perform well in the subjects I teach. I teach them English First Additional Language, Social Sciences and Life Skills. However, some learners seem to be slow learners, but working extra hours teaching them benefits from my teaching. The improvement that learners acquire from the subjects I teach pushes the school's performance upwards. Remember that teaching is a collective effort. One teacher cannot unilaterally improve the performance of the school, but teachers as a collective can.*

If the dedication of this participant was of that magnitude, no wonder Z primary school performs as shown in three successive years, namely 2015, 2016 and 2017 refer to table 5.92 below.

Table 5.92 Academic performance of Z primary school

GRADE	2015				2016				2017			
	TERM											
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
5	67	49	55	59	60	57	60	66	58	56	50	53
6	58	65	59	61	65	63	59	59	65	62	57	64
7	60	58	63	64	63	66	62	60	66	61	65	63
AV PERF. PER GRADE	62	58	59	61	63	62	60	62	63	60	57	60
AV. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE = 60					**AV. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE = 62**				**AV. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE = 60**			

Key:
T1-T4 =Term 1 to Term 4
%= Percentage
T1 –T4 = Term 1 to Term 4
Av. Performance. =Average performance

From the responses of this PL1 participant, one could count dedication on her intrinsic motivation. This intrinsic motivation seemed to impact the good performance of Z primary school positively. The table above is extracted from school performance records of Z primary school. It shows that Z primary school's performance was stable at the average of 60% over three years. Although the performance of Z primary school was above average, there was still a lot to be done in terms of improving the school's academic performance. In the process of C3 participants' deliberating about ensuring quality of teaching at Z primary school, the following issues emerged: proficiency in the language of teaching and learning as a necessity and exposure of educators to workshops by the school to improve teaching.

5.4 Theme 2: The role of school culture on school performance

The key issue in this theme was to examine how the participants described the culture of their schools and its impact on school performance. I am aware that the concept culture is open-ended in its meaning. However, it is used in this study to illuminate the participants' perceptions about their schools. Stoll (1998) describes culture as how things are done and it acts as a screen or lens through which the “world” is viewed. The word “world(s)” is used in this context to refer to the institution (school). In chapter two, section 2.3.2.1 the overarching definition of culture goes as follows:

> *...a system of ordinary, taken-for-granted meanings and symbols with both explicit and implicit content that is, deliberately and non-deliberately, learned and shared among members of naturally bounded social group. (Erickson, 1987, p.12)*

For this study, these two definitions depict many participants’ voices and perceptions about their schools' cultures. With these descriptions in mind, at Sizabantu primary school, for example, I inquired from the principal how she could describe her perception about the culture of her institution (school) concerning its performance. In this regard the principal responded as follows:

> *I would describe our school culture as focusing more on achievement and success in every aspect of the school community. When we teach, we strictly adhere to the notional time set by the DoE. We devise turn around strategies that assist us to even come to the rescue of even the slow learners in our classrooms. This does not only improve the performance of individual learners but also of the entire school. By school community I mean even teachers and learners. The culture of our school is not only focused on achievement and success and how our learners perform but also on the ways and means of achieving good performance.*

In describing the culture of Sizabantu primary school, the principal indicated that their culture was mainly focused on achievement and success. The implication of this description had to do with school performance. I probed further the principal wanting to find out how culture of the school had impacted on teaching. In this question the principal had this to say:

> *Culture has an impact, a very big one like, for instance, the way we do things here like I said we teach a total child. When we encourage our children, we make sure that we motivate them we also encourage teachers. We do so many things, for example, as soon as the child enters the school, we make sure that the teacher is there. We have ground duties everyday there is a teacher who is on duty. In the mornings there is a teacher who is on duty. During break time, a teacher is on duty even me, every Friday I am on duty. On Fridays, when I step my foot here, I start my duties. So in that way, it encourages, you know, the learners get encouraged that they are welcomed and taken care of. Being welcomed encourages them, it motivates them to perform, you know, to love their school. Also the way we keep our school we make sure that it is clean. Most of the things that we*

do we encourage them. They are made to love our school culture like it is not focused on achievement only but also it is focuses also on motivating people to achieve. Even teachers motivate them to give the best, so we have many activities in place that encourage them to do that.

The principal insisted that school culture profoundly impacted how Sizabantu primary school functioned. She mentioned numerous motivational activities done at school that defined their culture but having a bearing on teaching. I went further probing the principal on what she regarded as strong pillars of the culture of Sizabantu primary school. The principal responded as follows:

The strong pillars of our culture are the policies in place in the school and good human relationships in our school. We try our best to make sure that our relations are very good to relate with one another in a very positive way. As much as policies are guiding us, we also keep good relationships.

The principal did not hesitate to mention policies and good human relations as strong pillars for the culture of Sizabantu primary school. I took the issue of school culture to the HoD focus group. Another question posed to them was, how would their school culture be described? One HoD expressed their shared view as follows:

I can describe the culture of our school through both teachers and learners knowing that we have to be at school on time. Learners are expected to be always punctual at school not to miss teaching periods. Teachers have to be in class teaching on time. Teachers have to make plans to improve learners' performance. Teachers have to communicate with parents of absent learners. Teachers know that it is a culture that we have dates set for the submission of work as SMT members. They also know that we check them regularly regarding how far they have gone with curriculum coverage. We always hold phase meetings, it could be SMT meetings held weekly.

The above response indicated the culture of Sizabantu primary school in that the above B2 participant**s** illustrated time as one of the dynamics that manifested in the culture of Sizabantu primary school. I probed the HoD participants further regarding how culture was regulated if it was found that there were personnel who could not conform to it. One HoD participant's shared group response went as follows:

If the teacher knows that he/she will be late for work, our culture is to report to the principal. We normally call the principal and report that I will be running late. If I have realised that it has become a trend to be late, it is my responsibility to talk to that particular teacher as an SMT member. I have to tell him/her the consequences of that behaviour.

The above response indicated that the culture of Sizabantu primary school was agreed upon by all staff members and was binding. The response also indicated that if there was deviation from the expected behaviour, certain corrective measures were followed to correct non-conformity. Soon after interacting with the HoD focus group I met with the PL1 educators' focus group**.** I inquired from them how they described the culture of their school. Their shared response as expressed by one PL1 participant went as follows:

Our school culture manifests in the following ways: When we realised that learners are alone in the class, as individual teachers, we need to go to that class to find out what is going on. If we find that the teacher is not in the class but present in the school, we go around looking for that particular teacher so that he/she can occupy that class. In short in our school, it is our culture that learners are not left in the class.

The PL1 participants corroborated with the principal and the HoDs in acknowledging factors that constituted their school's culture. These factors ranged from supervising learners at school to how they taught learners. The PL1 participants had common views regarding how the school's culture impacted school performance. One PL1 participant related the groups' shared views as follows:

As teachers we turn our routine duties into our culture. We are indeed expected to teach learners, but there could be loopholes in our teaching until we assimilate teaching as our culture. Absenteeism can be rife among teachers if they do not see teaching as their culture. Late coming can also be prevalent among teachers if we do not observe the culture of punctuality to strengthen our teaching. The possibility of improved school performance can be assured if teachers take their work seriously through perceiving it as their culture.

After having made sense of the views by PL1 participants (B3) regarding the culture of Sizabantu primary school and its impact on school performance, I then probed them on what they perceived as pillars of their school culture. This was how one B3 participant expressed the views of the group:

The pillars that define our school involve respect for colleagues, accepting learners as they are and being accountable for one's responsibilities. Respecting one another *promotes team spirit. It is within that teaming up that teachers can learn from one another. As teachers we teach learners from diverse backgrounds. If we teach those learners with that conception in our minds, we easily adapt our teaching following the diversity of our learners. If we adhere to the pillars, I have mentioned the possibility would be to improveschool performance.*

The emerging issues that transpired from my interaction with Sizabantu primary school participants were as follows: achievement and success as elements of culture at Sizabantu primary school, uniqueness of school culture and accountability of each teacher to his/her teaching responsibilities.

After interacting with all the participants at Sizabantu primary school, I went to Z primary school and interacted with the participants. The mother question that I asked C1 participant was how she could describe the culture of Z primary school. The principal (C1) responded as follows:

In describing the culture of my school, I would say it is to strive for the best and we do not settle for less. This means that we dedicate ourselves to our teaching responsibilities to teach our learners in the best possible ways. We look after each other, for example, ifa parent comes here annoyed because a certain teacher did blur, blur. I cannot just say there is a teacher. We look after each other, it does not matter whether there are clashes within, but we look after each other. We live like a family. In our teaching our culture is seen through caring for our learners' needs. Through our culture of caring, we can diagnose learners needing attention.

The principal emphasised that the culture of Z primary school was to strive for the best through being dedicated to her work. She even added that they did not settle for less as educators in striving for the best. The responses from the principal seemed to signify commitment and dedication among staff members. I probed the principal further on how school culture impacted on teaching. The principal had the following to say:

Apart from the culture of caring for our learners, we ensure that we devise and employ new strategies for teaching learners. Part of these strategies is to group our learners according to the levels of their abilities. In a normal classroom environment learners do not perform in the same way because of their uniqueness. Adopting the culture of grouping learners according to their abilities improves teaching.

The principal illuminated the culture of grouping learners according to their abilities at Z primary school as paramount to improving teaching. The issue here of different cultures is consistent with Stoll's (1998) stance that culture could take different forms. Stoll (1998) mentions pupil, teacher, leadership, non-teaching staff and parent culture as some of the cultures in schools. The responses by the principal suggested that there were different cultures at Z primary school from which teaching was carried out. I probed the principal further regarding what she regarded as pillars of culture at Z primary school. She went on and enumerated the following:

> *I regard pillars of our school culture as strong positive human relations, dedication to the teaching of learners, being resilient, and being calm under difficult situations. These pillars of culture to me propel the school's performance forward. These pillars make teachers want to impress me whether I see them or not.*

In her responses, the principal revealed the strength of the pillars of their school culture on the performance of Z primary school as that of caring for one another. Immediately after having shared views about school culture with the principal, I asked the HoD how the culture of Z primary school could be described. The HoD had the following to say:

> *We have a good culture of making teaching resources available by making our learners bring material from their homes to make teaching aids. Teachers I supervise exhaust every resource available for the sake of teaching. They even go to the extent of improvising for the sake of soliciting teaching resources. This has made us excel in readathon competitions. Whatever we do we excel, for example, in astroquiz we excelled. We even competed successfully with former model C schools.*

The HoD responses indicated that they have a multiplicity of cultures that made them excel in their teaching as a school. He mentioned readathon, astroquiz and entire teaching and learning as areas where the school excelled. Briefly the HoD participant concurred with his principal in that the culture of Z primary school is to excel in whatever they do as teachers.

I probed the HoD participant on the pillars that define their culture at Z primary school and their impact on school performance. The HoD responded as follows:

> *To me respect and unity are the two main pillars on which our culture is based. Without respect for learners, colleagues, parents and the entire school community the culture to excel will cease to exist. Similarly, if there is no unity among the stake holders and role players in the school, the culture of excelling will not be possible because everything will be in disarray. As a result of not upholding the culture of respect and unity, good school performance would be a far-fetched dream.*

I eventually interacted with (C3) PL1 participant at Z primary school. On the main question of how school culture could be described, she reported as follows:

> *I think the culture of our school is attributed to the personality of our principal. Our principal is a good lady very allowing us to do whatever we think will improve the standard of teaching and learning. Working with that kind of person makes things very easy for us because she allows us to explore various avenues to improve teaching and learning in the school. If you have something that you want to do she does not say no, soI think that pleases me. She gives us support all the time, so even if you go for cultural activities, even for netball, for debates with other schools or wherever. As long as it improves the standard of learning, she allows that to happen at school, so she is a guru. If she is around us we know that we are safe. We know that whatever we do, she will recognise it and show us direction.*

The PL1 educator indicated that her principal was very supportive of them when doing something that would improve the standard of teaching. According to Stoll (1998), culture is how an organisation does its activities. This suggested that the principal allowed culture at Z primary school through educators for its performance to improve. Also, from the PL1 participant's point of view, the principal's character determined the culture of Z primary school. From the interaction with the participant of Z primary school, I learned that culture was cultivated through a school developing various programmes**.** I then probed the PL1 participant at Z primary school on what she regarded as pillars of her school's culture. She responded as follows:

> *I regard one of the pillars of our school culture is the ability of our principal to have trust on us. If we work under that atmosphere of being trusted, we unleash all our potential. Through trust, we can develop novel ideas of carrying out our teaching responsibilities successfully*.

Issues emerging from my interaction with the participants of Z primary school were the following: striving for the best, not settling for less, caring despite differences, commitment and dedication, strong human relationship among staff members and the principal being supportive.

My next destination was at Ziningi primary school. At this school I first interacted with the principal and the rest of the participants. The main question to the principal was how he would describe the school's culture. The principal had this to say:

In describing the culture of Ziningi primary school I would say it is versatile. It is not rigid. It is open for every individual with different skills. Those who like to engage learners in extracurricular activities are allowed to do so. Those who are willing to improvise for the sake of uplifting the standard of teaching are allowed to do so. The culture is accommodative of all people. The culture is vibrant, for example, in the early hours of today our learners were participating in athletics.

The principal confirmed that their school culture allowed everyone within the school to display his/her capabilities and talents. The motive for the allowance was to solicit different talents from different staff members for the benefit of the school. I probed the principal further on what he regarded as the pillars of his school's culture. The principal described what he regarded as pillar of the culture of his school as follows:

Our school stands on one pillar. This pillar is versatility. Through versatility everyone in the school is allowed to be innovative in doing things as long as he/she is within the confines of the policies and procedures. When, for example, resources are insufficient, teachers are encouraged to improvise to solicit resources. This allows teachers to be flexible in terms of carrying out their responsibilities.

After communicating with the principal, I communicated with the HoD focus group regarding how they could describe the culture of Ziningi primary school. The shared response of the restof the HoDs was expressed by one HoD who responded as follows:

The culture of our school manifests mainly in teaching and learning when teachers are allowed to improvise. This happens mainly if teaching and learning material are not enough. Teachers' improvisation enables them to show their originality in teaching and learning.

The common views of the HoDs of Ziningi primary school regarding what they regard as pillars of their school's culture was further extended and expressed by one HoD as follows:

We regard sharing of information and knowledge as pillars of our culture. Through knowledge and information sharing, our school advances to greater heights in terms of performance.

These responses were seemingly a reflection of the necessity for an educator to be original to make teaching as meaningful as possible. After that I concluded my interaction with all the participants of Ziningi primary school by interviewing PL1 focus group. When interacting with the PL1 participants, they describe their school's culture. One PL1 participant responded on behalf of the rest as follows:

In describing the culture of Ziningi primary school, everything we do at school describes our school culture. Whatever we do defines our culture because we do it uniquely. Whatever, we do as teachers we regard that as our culture. For example, daily, teachers are expected to be with their learners teaching. Teachers are expected to be punctual for their duties therefore we also have to comply with that culture. We do ground duties where learners are supervised in the classrooms and during break times. Doing ground duties help in ensuring the safety of our learners within the school. If the school culture is not followed strictly, teaching and learning is compromised. We regard school culture as the school's heartbeat without which the school could fall apart.

The PL1 participants at Ziningi primary esteemed the culture of the school highly. Culture drives and steers them into performing their routine duties with distinction. In interacting with the participants of Ziningi primary school, the following issues emerged: school culture at Ziningi primary was versatile and tended to be the backbone of educators' routine responsibilities. From the entire communication with the participants of Ziningi primary school, I learned that policies and procedures regulated the school. While it is common knowledge that this was true to almost all the schools, policies and procedures alone were not enough to regulate the Ziningi primary school. Added to policies and procedures educators were allowed to improvise to improve their teaching**.** I finally probed PL1 participants regarding their perceptions about their school's culture pillars. The shared views of the PL1 participants were expressed by one participant as follows:

I think the pillars of the culture of Ziningi primary school are based on being transparent, committed and dedicated to our duties. These three pillars vigorously propel us teachers to even work beyond the call of duty. The school's performance has over the years been improving as a result of that.

At Ziningi primary school, unlike the other two schools (Sizabantu primary and Z primary), the participants regard their culture as versatile, based on routine duties and teaching and learning. These cultural features needed to be within the ambit of the policies and procedures for the participants. The other PL1 participant expressed shared views of the focus group regarding what they regarded as the pillars of the culture of Ziningi primary school. In this regard he commented as follows:

To me one pillar of our culture is to be versatile. We have taught ourselves the ability to adapt to changes. The curriculum changes quickly and so if we as teachers are rigid and do not adapt to those changes, our teaching could easily become obsolete. That ability to adapt assists in the improvement of our school's performance.

As I communicated with the participants from all the three chosen schools from the participants' point of view it became clear that the nature of school community relationship needed to be addressed. In the next section, I addressed the school community relationship and its impact on school performance.

5.5 Theme 3: The nature of school-community relationships

In this theme I explored how the school community relationship impacted school performance. Educators are expected to form relationships with stakeholders consistent with the South African council of educators' Act 31 of 2000. Throughout my interaction with the participants, relationship with the community appeared to be the strongest factor. For this reason, I chose the nature of school community to be one of the themes.

On my arrival at Ziningi primary school, I waited for the participant A1 in the reception area where there was an administration clerk. In my possession there was a list of documents to be analysed and things to observed among which was the vision and mission of the school. The principal allowed me to proceed to his office and that was when our conversation began.

Considering that relationship was at the heart of the functioning of any institution, the main question was how the nature of relationship between the school and the community impacted the performance of Ziningi primary school. In this regard the participant AI (principal) responded as follows:

The nature of the relationship between the school and the community on our school's performance is that we have a strong bond with the community through different structures of the community. The strong bond translates into the school being respected and trusted by the community. That includes Izinduna and a councilor. We sit together in a government structure called Operation Sukuma Sakhe. Operation Sukuma Sakhe isa service delivery model initiated by KwaZulu-Natal provincial government. At the centre of Operation Sukuma Sakhe is the War Room. The War Room is the service delivery engine set up at ward level to deliver a fully coordinated and integrated basket *of services by different stakeholders. As a school within the community, we form part of the War Room. In the War Room I, as principal represent the school. When there is an issue that needs to be reported, such as school physical development, I report that to the ward councilor to become the item of the agenda in the War Room meeting. The procedure in the community is that when there is any development taking place that needs to be reported to the relevant structures in the War Room for protection purposes, that development is reported through the councilor.*

On the same issue of the school community relationship I probed, participant A1 further concerning how Ziningi primary school benefitted from its participation in the War Rooms processes and its impact on school performance. Participant A1 had the following to say:

As a result of the school's participation in the War Room activities, our school benefits in several ways, for example, the school does not experience vandalism to school property. Discussions are held in the War Room regarding protecting and safeguarding community institutions such as schools, clinics, and churches. Teachers are also not victimised by members of the community. The school's participation in War Room's activities anchors the relationship even stronger. The school's benefit is that security is provided by participating members of the community in the War Room. These members include the ward councilor and traditional leadership such as Izinduna and ward committee members. When the school is operating under a safe environment, the impact is that the school is likely to perform well.

Since the school community was confined to the outside stake holders and stake holders within the school. I then inquired from A1 participant how the nature of school community relationship among the stake holders (as part of school community) within the school was concerning school performance? The A1 participant responded as follows:

The nature of relationship among us as staff members is good and characterised by honesty, teamwork, respect for one another and *professionalism. Once you adhere to these ethos, then it is very easy to work harmoniously. Even if you are not on good terms with one another, it clicks that you are in the work situation where you must comply to the workplace ethos. When honesty, teamwork, respect for one another and professionalism are maintained at workplace, there are greater chances for the school to perform well. Each staff member adheres to his/her work responsibilities without being coerced or followed behind. In short, I can say the relationship we have with one another creates a conducive atmosphere for our school to perform well.*

The principal spoke about adherence to workplace ethos, namely, honesty, teamwork, and respect for one another as contributory factors to school performance. I probed a follow up question regarding what mechanisms were in place to ensure continued adherence to that ethos. In this regard, the A1 participant had the following to say:

> *The mechanisms to ensure that, ethos are strongly adhered to by every individual within the school are cascading information through holding staff meetings. Meetings are held weekly according to different structures in the school. In the meetings, honesty, teamwork, and respect for one another are emphasised. We hold various meetings for different purposes. There is usually no meeting where we do not emphasise the importance of adhering to ethos. There is, for example, staff meetings, SMT meetings, phase meetings and committee meetings. In each of these meetings these ethos are made to be the standing items of the agendas. The reason for making these ethos standing items of the agenda of each meeting is that we want every staff member to internalise them. The school cannot perform well if the school does not adhere to ethos.*

On the same question of how the relationship between the school and its community impact on the performance of the school, participant A1DP (DP) had similar views as that of his principal but went on to add that the relationship between the school and the community had a major impact on school performance. In this regard, the participant added as follows:

> *Maybe to add on what the principal has just said we have a positive relationship with the community we serve. This relationship contributes immensely on the performance of our school because it provides a conducive environment under which the school operates. This is evident when we invite the community to school functions. The turn up is normally overwhelming. This is a sign that the community has vested interest in the school. For instance, quarterly we use to invite parents as part of the community to come and view their children's academic performance. Their response is always positive. When we call for instance the meetings of the SGB the turn up is also very good. We teach our leaners to respect school property and as a result we do not experience vandalism of school property by our learners. This indicates that even with our learners we have sound relationship, and they comply with whatever directive we extend to them. The positives that the community shows to the school provide enabling environment for our school to perform well.*

I then interviewed A2 (HoDs) participants connected with their views regarding the relationship between the school and the community. One participant expressed their response who started with the relationship within the school and then moved to the relationship between the school and its outside community. This was how one of the A2 participants responded:

The nature of relationship between us and teachers we supervise is strong. We have never been at logger heads with them. We can say it is a positive one. We ***respect*** *one another. We communicate whatever that comes from the DoE to teachers. We always sit together to tackle directives and discuss the way forward. With the community we do not experience lots of problems except when giving homework to learners. Sometimes we find that other learners do not do homework given to them at school. This becomes obvious that that particular learner does not get support from home. When we write letters to parents, we sometimes do not get positive responses.*

From the responses of one of the A2 participants, it was clear that there was mutual respect between them and PL1educators. This seemed to suggest there was a conducive environment for good performance to occur at Ziningi primary school. According to A2 participants, it was only when the HoDs related with parents that sometimes their relationship became problematic due to some parents not supporting their children with schoolwork such as homework. I then probed further as to what they thought could be the reason why some parents failed to give necessary support to their children. The shared views of the rest of the HoDs were articulated by one A2 participant and had the following to say:

I think the reason why some parents fail to give necessary support to their children regarding schoolwork is because of my lack of active communication with them. Since I came here in 2014 for the position of being the HoD, my relationship with the community was average. I am saying it was average because of the number of years of serving this school. Since I came here, I discovered that when you communicate with the community, especially parents, some respond to some. That is also why I say it was average. This has a negative impact on learners' performance because to parents who do not respond to the messages sent, their children usually lag in schoolwork. So, I presume I have not yet developed the necessary strategies of successfully communicating well with the parents. This could be due to the minimal experience I have acquired in this community. In years to come, I hope to learn to develop enough strategies of relating well with the community.

The other A2 participant expanded and expressed the views of the group as follows:

My view regarding parents' failure to give necessary support to their children is that most of our learners do not live with their biological parents. They mostly live with their grandparents who are mostly sickly and ageing. It is probably difficult for an ailing grandparent to assist the child with schoolwork.

Failure to support learners with schoolwork by parents enthusiastically triggered the other A2 participant into commenting on behalf of the rest as follows:

We have devised a strategy of identifying learners who do not have anyone to help them with schoolwork. We let them remain behind for half an hour after school and help them with schoolwork. This strategy helps a lot as these learners' performance improves. Apart from helping these learners, our relationship with their guardians improves due to the implementation of this strategy.

From the perceptions of the above participants, I noted the attempts of Ziningi primary school to uphold good relationships with its community to maintain good performance. These attempts to forge good relationships between the school and the community made me hope for good school performance to manifest at Ziningi primary school. When the school related well with its community, one would expect it to be a haven for good performance. This is aptly captured by O'Brennan and Bradshaw's (2013) assertion regarding the safety of the school. To these scholars, safety forms part of school climate. O'Brennan and Bradshaw (2007) define climate as "norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe". The school climate as the determinant of school performance has also been echoed by Milner and Khoza (2008**)** earlier in the study, see section 2.3.2 above. I probed further on this issue (how school climate impacted school performance). One A2 participant expressed the group's views and had the following to say about how school climate impacted school performance.

I think the school's climate provides a pivotal space under which the school can perform well. If the community in which the school is situated is safe for the school to function, the chances of good performance are high. The contrary is true, if the community in which the school is unsafe the school's performance is likely to drop.

Based on the above comments, I would expect that a school that operated where the resources are not safe guarded would likely be rife with the school underperforming.

The A2 (HoDs) participants attributed the failure of parents to support their children to the lack of experience of some teachers in the community. The participants asserted further that when the teacher was new in the community, that negatively impacted the relationship with the community. This seemed to suggest that the A2 participant experiencing that challenge needed to devise ways of adjusting and adapting in that community lest there would be a communication breakdown with the parents.

Still on the question of how the nature of the school community relationship was and its impact on school performance, the other HoDs confirmed that their vast experience with the community positively impacts school performance. One A2 participant's shared group's input emphasised as follows:

> *I think the nature of our relationship with the community is good because we have been with this community for quite some time. We have adapted well in this community. The learners we teach currently we have taught their parents. So, their parents know us very well. If the community's trust is not there, I doubt if the community would have sent their children to our school. The community involvement with teaching and learning is good, although most learners stay with their grandparents. So, you will find that as a teacher you want to engage with the parent, but the grandparent will excuse her/himself, may be a result of ill-health. This sometimes compromises teaching and learning and eventually school performance.*

According to most responses of the A2 participants, their relationship with the community was well established because of the vast experience they had in the community and the school. This seemed to suggest that the more experienced the educator was in the community, the better were the chances of improved relationship with the community. This also seemed to suggest that the nature of an educator's relationship with the community can be impacted positively by the educator's experience in that community. This further suggested that if the relationship between the community and educators were poor, teaching and learning would likely be poor. Poor teaching and learning could likely result in poor school performance. Sometimes school community relationship was shown in how the outside community involved itself in its activities. Based on this understanding**,** I further probed the A2 focus group on how they perceived the nature of community involvement in the school's activities. The collective views of A2 participants were expressed by one A2 participant as follows:

Our perception of the nature of community involvement in the activities of the school is excellent. I say it is excellent because whatever activity the school plans for learners, the learners, supported by their parents, come in big numbers. Just to cite one example, we had an educational excursion to Durban last year. The organising committee managed to get two buses. Those two buses were full. This shows how interested and involved the community is in the school's activities.

I then interacted with A3 participants on the nature of the school community relationship at Ziningi primary school and its impact on school performance. One A3 participant (PL1) expressed the views of the entire group and responded as follows:

The nature of my relationship within the school is good. Starting from learners, I relate well with them. When I say my relationship with learners is good, our learners do not display behavioural problems. Coming to the SMT, as PL1 educator, I also have good relationships with the entire SMT. Sometimes I do not meet the deadlines for submissions, but my HoD keeps on developing me on time management. I after that do my duties as expected. If I need help regarding my duties, I report that to the HoD who resolves whatever challenge I might face in my routine responsibilities. Even amongst ourselves as post level one educators we do not experience the problem of bad human relations. If one amongst us has a problem with a particular concept, we always network and find solutions. If our relationship is bad, that would suggest working in isolation. Teaching profession requires teachers to work as a team. Then coming to the relationship with the community, I as an educator do not directly relate with the community except when parents are invited to school to come and check their children's schoolwork. It is mainly during this time that I relate direct to parents as part of the community. My relationship with parents is mainly dependent on trust for one another and trust from the outside community. Trust is reciprocal, which means that it is a two-way process. For example, teachers with students, teachers with other teachers, teachers with parents, and all groups with the school principal. Each party in a relationship maintains an understanding of his or her role's obligations and holds some expectations about the obligations of the other parties. Trust is like glue that keeps relationship among us and community group intact.

Considering these responses, there were no problems concerning the nature of school community relationship amongst staff members, SMT and learners of Ziningi primary school. Ziningi primary school performed very well, and this was corroborated by the records for learners' performance that I requested from the principal for 2015, 2016 and 2017. Refer to table 5.2 below. This table suggests that where there is a good school community relationship, the likelihood would be good performance.

TABLE 5.93 Academic performance of Ziningi primary school

GRADE	2015				2016				2017			
	TERM											
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
5	81	85	75	78	79	73	83	84	81	85	83	79
6	79	77	76	80	76	79	75	78	74	77	72	76
7	69	70	73	77	81	74	76	75	77	75	76	81
AV. PERF PER TERM PER GRADE	76	77	75	78	79	75	78	79	77	79	77	79
AV. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE = 77					**AV.SCHOOL PERFORMANCE= 78**				**AV.SCHOOLPERFORMANCE = 78**			

Key:
T1, T2, T3, T4 =Term 1 to Term 4
% = Percentage
AV. = Average
AV. Performance = Average performance

The table above indicates the performance of Ziningi primary school for three years. The average performance in the three consecutive years is above 70%. At face value, this performance is very good, but when considering the actual enrolment of this school which is 532, you could see that it is deceiving and hiding the real facts. When one translates the performance of 78% of 532 learners, one finds that, on average the learner pass rate in each of the three years (2015, 2016 and 2017) is 415 and the failure rate is 117. The message portrayed by this scenario is that almost two classrooms failed to perform in each of these years. Urgent improvement strategies seem necessary to turn the performance around for the better at Ziningi primary school.

Still at Ziningi primary school, one A3 participant came up with their shared views regarding their feelings about the nature of the relationship between the school and the community and its impact on school performance. That participant brought the issue of support staff to the fore. According to that A3 participant, support staff at their school had a role to play in the school's performance, but the role of support staff on school performance was often ignored. As a component of the school community, support staff needed to be brought on board when the relationship was to be considered in matters concerning the community and school. One A3 participant illustrated the group views as follows:

> *The nature of school community relationship in this school seems to exclude the support staff. Security personnel, administration clerk, general attendants and cooks are often neglected when issues about school performance are discussed. These staff members contribute indirectly to the school's performance in the following manner. Without the security guard at school, the school would be at risk and prone to insecurity. The administration clerk is at the heart of collating school data and records without which school performance cannot be measured. The general attendant ensures that the tone of the school, in terms of outward appearance, is improved and maintained. Cooks, especially in schools where NSNP is implemented, play a role in feeding learners. Without the availability of cooks in schools with nutrition programme, the objectives of the NSNP cannot be realised. These objectives are, for example, to improve education by enhancing active learning capacity, school attendance and punctuality by providing early morning snack. I therefore feel that without the support staff taken into consideration, school performance cannot be improved.*

At Ziningi primary school, it emerged from the participants' perspectives that for their school to perform well, the following aspects were upheld good human relations within the school and in the community; creation of a conducive climate for teaching and learning; the prevalence of mutual respect among staff members and the community; taking good care of learners by teachers and non-exclusion of support staff in matters relating to the performance of the school. One PL1 participant concluded the shared views of the focus group as follows:

> *As teachers we are compelled by our school's internal policies always to keep school community relationships positive to make the school an enabling environment for good performance to thrive. If there are infightings among the stake holders, the prospects of poor school performance are likely to happen.*

After being at Ziningi primary school, I made my way to Sizabantu primary school.
At Sizabantu, before I could even interact with the participants, part of my task was to note my observations that would corroborate with the interviews and documents related to school performance. I observed the high level of discipline among educators and learners. I further observed that the school was well fenced with the welcome sign board at the gate bearing the school's name. When the school started, all educators and most learners were already at school by 07h30. This was evidenced by the attendance register showing the maximum attendance of teachers on each working day. That level of punctuality suggested that teaching and learning started on time and set the tone for good performance. This further suggested that the school's core function was not compromised and probably that would translate into the school's good performance. Before getting to the school's administration building, the principal took me around to introduce all school staff members. The whole exercise took at least 2 minutes. The principal introduced me to the staff members to familiarise me with the entire school. When I approached each classroom, I observed that educators were seriously engaged in teaching learners. We entered the principal's office and started with our interaction. On interacting with B1 participant (principal), regarding the main question of how was the nature of school community relationship and its impact on school performance, she had the following to say:

> *The nature of school community relationship is that of mutual benefit. There are times when the community hires the school facilities to hold meetings and religious activities. In return, the school benefits monetary contributions from the community to augment the school coffers. The school is not an entity divorced from the community. It is part of the community. Regarding my personal relationship with the community of this place, this place has become like my home. It even seems like I grew up in this area because of how I relate with the community. I know most of the people even the parents we have now are our former learners, so I relate very well, when they come I even talk with them about my personal issues. About the issue of school performance, yes the school is performing well,but it is not performing at the level I expect it to be.*

The B1 participant touched on the issue of school performance that it was not at the level that she wanted it to be. I probed her further to determine what level of performance she wanted Sizabantu primary school to perform? The B1 participant explained as follows:

> *I wish the school performance is nothing less than above 80% for a start. I know to achieve that kind of performance would be an uphill battle because we need to adhere to policies strictly. We also need to network with good performing neighbouring schools in order for us to up our level of performance. We need to be very vigilant when it comes to non-compliance to policies by staff members. To achieve that percentage (80%), we need to*

work collectively. In order to push our learner performance to that level, it will call for dedication and commitment from each staff member.

The response by the principal of Sizabantu primary school on the issue of the nature of the relationship between the school and the community seemed to be strong and deep-rooted. It seemed strong and deep-rooted because it went beyond teacher community relationships. According to the principal her relationship with the community was like a family member relationship. That was why she said she even confided her private personal matters to the community members. This had created a strong bond of trust between the principal and the community. This kind of relationship between the community and the principal was likely to usher good performance to the school. On the issue of how she thought good performance could be achieved, all she mentioned amounted to their dedication as staff. The principal also pointed out the issue of the relationship between the management and the entire staff, that it was acceptable. The principal further explained as follows:

The relationship in a workplace can never be said to be perfect. So, I would be lying to say it is perfect, but it is manageable, we can relate very well. We are working so that the management can give instructions to the teachers, and they can follow the instructions. So I can say it's a relationship that is very manageable. There will be those cases where you know there will be a little bit of misunderstanding, but it is very controllable.

The B1 participant responded quite frankly about the nature of the relationship between management and the staff that it could never be perfect. She brought the element of human nature to the fore that there would be those likely to deviate from the routine when people were together. As a principal and school leader, she needed to manage well despite challenges. This suggested that the principal had to be resilient. This also brought a principal's character to lead the school successfully. The school's programmes, inclusive of the programmes that led to good performance, seemed to need to be overseen by the principal with a very strong character. As part of my preparation, I requested the principal to show me some of the performance records for her school. I have summarised her school's performance record in table 5.3 below.

TABLE 5.94 Academic performance of Sizabantu primary school

GRADE	2015				2016				2017			
	TERM											
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
R	72	69	65	60	71	70	78	74	73	68	69	75
1	68	66	69	68	70	66	71	68	74	71	70	68
2	69	71	70	73	69	71	70	72	69	70	67	71
3	66	67	68	69	70	67	69	71	72	70	69	70
4	70	69	71	68	69	69	70	72	73	69	71	73
AV. PERF.	69	68	69	68	70	69	72	71	72	70	69	71
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE = 69					**SCHOOL PERFORMANCE=71**				**SCHOOL PERFORMANCE = 71**			

Key:

T1 – T4 =Term one to term 4
% = Percentage
AV. = Average
AV. Performance = Average performance

Like Ziningi primary school, Sizabantu primary school's performance is very good and improving. The actual enrolment for this school is 620, and if one works out the percentage of eighty-one for 2017 performance, one discovers the same scenario as at Ziningi primary school, see table 5.3 above. The performance of Sizabantu primary school is, according to table 5.3, taking an upward trend. One would hope that the failure rate deficit would gradually diminish and thus increase the prospects of good performance. While perusing the performance records for Sizabantu primary school, B1 (principal) participant commented as follows:

> *I attribute this kind of upward improvement of our learners' performance to the nature of our relationship with one another which is dedication and commitment. I also think that adhering to the policies positively impacts the school's performance. The most important policy we adhere to is IQMS. This policy helps us develop one another especially in areas where teachers feel they are not competent and consequently school performance improves.*

I probed participant B1 regarding how adhering to IQMS policy helped enhance its performance. The principal explained as follows:

Adhering to IQMS policy helps teachers to identify areas where they need support. They do this through self-evaluation. After they have done that they engage their DSG which devises strategies on how that particular teacher should approach teaching of learners. In consultation with the teacher being assisted, the DSG then arranges time to evaluate the teacher in the classroom teaching learners. Immediately after the teacher has been evaluated by his/her DSG, a discussion is arranged where the strengths and weaknesses are identified and brought to the teacher's attention. The performance of teachers in teaching learners is mostly improved through IQMS exercise.

After interacting with the principal of Sizabantu primary school, I interacted with the B2 participants (HoDs) about the nature of their relationship with the community concerning the school's performance. One B2 participant expressed the views of the group and commented as follows:

The nature of relationship with the teachers that we supervise is strong. We have never been at loggerhead with them. I can say it's a positive one. We respect each other and we communicate whatever comes from the DoE. We always sit together to discuss the way forward and as an HoD I see that that directive is implemented. Regarding how the nature of the school community relationship impacts school performance, I can say that

when the school relates well with the community, it gets supported in most of the activities it undertakes. For example, if the school conducts extra classes with learners under good school community relationship that maximises the prospects of good performance.

If I closely studied the response by this B2 participant, I noted that respect and communication tended to be the catalysts towards maintaining a good relationship between the school and its community. Mutual respect among these participants ensured success in the school's performance. On the main question of how the HoD focus group perceived the nature of the relationship between the school and the community and its impact on school performance, one B2 participant spoke on behalf of the focus group and started with the relationship among themselves as SMT members and finally went to the outside community, for example, parents. In that regard, the B2 participant responded on behalf of the focus group as follows:

Our relationship with teachers is strong and healthy because we always work together harmoniously. We always share ideas and teachers are always willing to learn from us. At times we learn from them. We help one another when need comes and assist each other *in everything we do. The harmonious working together alleviates the burden experienced if we work in isolation. As HoDs we complement one another on how to do our work effectively. If we experience challenges in our work as HoDs we network and find solutions. The strategies of sharing ideas and networking as HoDs, we share them with the teachers we supervise. We believe that it is through working together as a collective that the school's performance could be improved.*

From the response of the B2 participants, it became evident that a collaborative working atmosphere was a necessity in the success of the institution and specifically in the case of this study, school performance. During that collaboration, these participants could share ideas and learn. The B2 participants of Sizabantu primary school had a collective feeling regarding the relationship between the community and the school and its impact on school performance. One B2 participant felt that the community, especially parents had a major role in the school's performance. In describing the nature of the relationship between the community and the school, one HoD participant shared the views of others and described the nature of their relationship as follows:

The relationship between us in the school features when the school allows the community to utilise school facilities to hold their functions. In cases when there are community meetings to be held, the school offers these meetings to be held in its premises. When the local churches request permission to hold their services within the school premises, they can also hold them.

Apart from B2 participants at Sizabantu primary school, I interacted with the PL1 focus group (B3 participants) regarding how their relationship was with the rest of the school community and its impact on the performance of the school community the school. In this regard, the collective views of the entire B3 participants were articulated by one participant as follows:

The relationship among us as staff within the school is good and acceptable. To nurture and grow our relationship, we have secret pals giving one another gifts. Concerning schoolwork, we intervene when one of us is experiencing difficulty with work. Everyone has a role to play when it comes to our core duty. No one is reminded to go and teach. We know our duties. We assist one another with disciplining of learners. Our learners are respectful. Maybe it is because they are not yet grown-ups, unlike learners at adolescent stage. Learners at adolescent stage are mostly preoccupied with behavioural problems. I can safely say I attribute our good performance to the healthy human relations amongst *ourselves, learners, community, and SMT. We relate well with parents, as they are part of the community, for learners we teach. Our relationship with parents happens when we mainly help slow learners. We usually ask parents to assist their children with extra work. As a result of good human relationships among us and the community, we do our job unhindered. Apart from relating well with the parents for our learners, we also relate well with the local councilor and local leadership.*

One B3 participant at Sizabantu attributed the good relationship between them and the entire school community to unity and partnership. They prided themselves on being dedicated to their responsibilities. They ensured that they came to the rescue of one another when maintaining learners' discipline. According to this B3 participant, they were not pushed from behind when doing their duties. In short, these participants regarded themselves as committed and diligent. When looking at the performance of Sizabantu primary school from its assessment records given to me by the principal, the school scored an average of 76%, as indicated in table 5.3 above. This performance was consistent with the dedication these participants purported to be displaying.

At Sizabantu primary school, it emerged that for a teacher to work successfully in the community, they needed to be immersed in the community, that is, to be part of the community. It also emerged that educators and SMT members needed to manage diversity, for example, the ability to manage people with diverse views. Green, López, Wysocki, and Kepner (1995) define diversity as acknowledging, understanding, accepting, valuing, and celebrating differences. Diversity is critical for an organisation's success (Esty, Katharine, Richard Griffin, and Schorr-Hirsh, 1995). It also emerged that one needed to accommodate and welcome different ideas and suggestions to carry out duties successfully.

The shared views of the B3 focus group on how the nature of their school community relationship was and its impact on school performance were extended further by one participant in terms of how they related with stakeholders, like parents, councilor, and local leadership. I probed them further regarding the details of their relationship. In this regard one participant had the following to say:

The details of our relationship with parents, the councilor and local leadership is that during prize giving function for our school, the councilor donates prizes for best performing learners. This gesture motivates learners always to want to excel. Even those *learners who do not excel would want to strive for excellence. The local leadership, such as Inkosi, Izinduna and traditional police help alert the community during izimbizo (meetings) to respect the school as their property. Parents are part and parcel of all the activities done at school. They are always kept informed of all the decisions that affect their children for their support. This constant consultation with all stake holders enhances the performance of our school.*

I probed the B3 focus group regarding how the school's performance was shaped by relating well with parents, councilor, and local leadership (community). One B3 participant expressed the views of the focus group, and she had the following to say:

The school's performance is perfectly shaped by the good relationship between the school and parents, councilor, and local leadership in the following manner: Ever since

we started involving different stakeholders in the activities of the school, we have seen a remarkable improvement in the way our learners perform. Opening the school up to outside positive influences shapes school performance in a positive direction and makes it to be prone to growth.

My next and last move was at Z primary school. At Z primary school, I arrived during break when all learners were outside playing. As I made my way to the principal’s office, I observed that Z primary school is a small school, there were a handful of learners in the school yard. The size of Z primary school suggested that the school consisted of the principal and one HoD. Among the documents that I requested from the principal was the vision and mission of the school. These documents were going to help me understand whether there is any mention of how the school community relationship was and its impact on school performance in the vision and mission statement. After introducing myself, I explained the reason for my visit. I then requested the vision-mission statement from the principal. On the vision-mission statement, the following words were written:

Fig 5.1: Vision and mission statement for Z primary school

VISION: Striving for perfection **MISSION STATEMENT** To achieve the mission, we will do the following: Work beyond the call of duty Be dedicated to our responsibilities Be respectful of the community inside and outside the school Be committed and dedicated to our duties Be role model to our learners Be punctual for our duties Be sympathetic to the needs of our learners To regard parents of our learners as partners in education To always show love to all stakeholders with interest in education

Out of the vision-mission statement document, I observed that it describes the school's activities to improve its performance.

Seeing that my eyes were still on the document, the C1 participant irresistibly said the following:

> *This document is our school's vision and mission. The vision is the goal we strive to achieve while the mission is how we strive to reach that goal (vision). The vision and mission are our driving force towards wanting to perform well.*

When our conversation commenced, the C1 participant indicated that she wanted to take me on a mini tour around the school to see what was going on. I saw a beautiful combo court erected adjacent to the three-class-roomed building as we walked around. The C1 participant indicated how the combo court was donated to the school by the local businessmen. She narrated the story as follows:

> *Local businessmen donated this combo court to the school to expose the children to different sport codes. This was a sign of their affection and ownership of the school. During the official hand over of this combo court held in 2016, they said they would do whatever it takes to make the school grow. This combo court is a sign that the school is having sound relationship with the community. The businessmen promised us that they would look for the experts in the community who would train our learners in various sport codes.*

I then interacted with the C1 participant on how she perceived the relationship between the school and the community and its impact on school performance. The participant described her relationship with the community before the school's relationship with the community. In this regard she narrated her perceptions as follows:

> *My relationship with the community is so intimate that this community is like my second family. Whatever I do in this community is to intervene in times of crises, just as I would do in my family. I intervene for orphans, for destitute families, for needy families. I coordinate with Home Affairs and Social Welfare so that orphans can get social grants. The strong relationship of trust between me and the community builds confidence in me in developing strategies that enhance school performance. Among those strategies I can cite teachers arranging extra lessons for our learners and parents allowing their children to attend those extra classes. I am open to suggestions that are aimed at improving the performance of the school. Everybody can come to me; the door is always open and I am always willing to help. I even help with my own money for activities to improve school performance. I even help with support as I always tell people in the community that I care. Like the community, the school is like a second family to me.*
>
> *Regarding educators our relationship is healthy. I always teach educators not to speak ill of other fellow educators because that damages human relations within the school. When human relations are damaged, school performance could also be damaged. As a result of good human relations with the community and educators, we do not experience poor performance. The community approaches the school if they feel something is not going right that might compromise the performance of the school.*

The above C1 participant regarded herself as a family member of the community around the school because of the bond she had created over the years with the community. She intervened when crises were befalling the community. This suggested that there was mutual trust between her and the community. Bryk and Schneider (2003) define trust as the connective tissue that binds individuals together to advance the education and welfare of students. The learners' performance of Z primary school showed that the school was performing well. Good performance of Z primary school cemented the relationship between the school and the community. This relationship is aptly captured by Bhengu and Mthembu (2014) in their study regarding the relationship shown by the community to the two schools serving the same community. The community highly esteemed one school because of its track record of high learner achievement. In the case of Z primary school, the principal outlined good human relationships as the basis of their school performance. I then became interested on how school community relationships formed the basis of school performance**.** I probed the principal to unpack further her views about how school community relationships impacted the performance of Z primary school. The C1 participant responded as follows:

My views on how school community relationship impacts on the performance of Z primary school, is that the school is not an island. It is a structure that is established in the community for the community. It is therefore important for the school to relate well with the community. For example, there are parents, a councilor, local Inkosi, local Induna's, and ordinary community members in the community. Each one of these components in the community has a role to play in the performance of the school. We bring these components on board regarding the functioning of our school and a synergy is created that maximises the performance of our school.

I probed the principal further regarding how the local leadership contributed to the school's performance. The principal responded as follows:

When talking about the contribution of the local leadership, I am reminded of an incident in 2017 when our learners had performed well in readathon competitions. We did not have enough money to hire transport to take learners to the competitions. The councilor assisted us by hiring a minibus that took our learners to the competitions. Our learners performed well in those readathon competitions by obtaining position 2.

As indicated earlier, because of the size of the school, it was entitled to one HoD. For that reason, I interviewed C2 (HoD) participant of Z primary school individually, refer to section 5.1 above. I interacted with the HoD regarding his views about the relationship with educators and the community. I further wanted to find out the impact of that relationship was on school performance. The C2 participant responded as follows:

…… I have good relationship with the teachers I am supervising. You know as HoD sometimes you find some problems with the teachers. You need to supervise them closely. You need to guide them into performing their duties in an acceptable way. You need to monitor them in as far as teaching is concerned. You need to go to classes when they are teaching at times just to see what they are doing? At times you will find that he or she is there in class but he or she is doing nothing. Maybe he or she is saying something irrelevant to the topic that is supposed to be taught on that day. In that way, as a result of this close supervision, the teaching performance of that particular teacher improves. That kind of supervision needs to be done consistently for school performance

to be consistent. As far as the relationship with the community is concerned, I have never experienced any hiccups.

The C2 participant did not explicitly explain the impact of his relationship with the school and the community until I probed him further. I probed him regarding the impact of his relationship with the community. Regarding the impact of his relationship with the school community, the C2 began by unpacking the components of the school community and his relationship with each of those components. In this regard, he had the following to say:

The components of the school community are learners, fellow staff members, SMT and parents and local leadership. As I have indicated earlier, I supervise teachers closely. The impact of close supervision has always been teachers teaching according to plans. Teaching in accordance with the teaching plans enables teachers to finish their teaching plans on time and ensure that learners have understood the learning content properly. When teachers have taught their subjects according to the teaching plans, the likelihood would be improved school performance.

I ensure that teachers I supervise prepare well before class to teach learners regarding relationships with learners. If the teacher is well prepared it might not be difficult for learners to understand the learning content. Finally, my relationship with the SMT especially the principal, parents, the community, and local leadership, supports me as HoD. If I get the necessary support from these structures, I do not experience any challenges supporting teachers to support learners. In a nutshell, the community within which the school is situated provides enabling environment for school's good performance to occur.

From the responses by this HoD participant, it indicated that he had a close relationship with all the school structures, ranging from structures within the school to structures outside the school. From what the participant said, I learned that he was always available for teachers when needed. This HoD participant made sure that he was not detached from the teachers he supervised. He made it a point that teachers he supervised worked following the requirements of the school policies. He mentioned the necessity of support as ensuring the school's good performance. The participant also mentioned the school's support sometimes obtained from community members such as councilors and local businessmen. He detailed the support as follows:

It is encouraging to mention that the councilors and local businessmen are determined to support the school in its attempts to perform well. During the school's prize giving function held annually, the councilor presented motivational speeches to grade 7 learners. These motivational speeches motivated our learners to perform well in their current year of study and even in post primary schools. In 2016 a group of businessmen donated a combo court to our school to support the school in an endeavour to introduce various sport codes. As I speak, volunteer parents help train our learners mainly in sport codes like netball, volleyball, basketball, and soccer.

I finally interacted with C3 participant of Z primary school on the same issue of how the nature of school community relationship was and its impact on the school's performance. Similar to C2 participant of Z primary school, I had to do individual interviews with C3 participant, refer to section 5.1 above. This was what the participant had to say:

The nature of my relationship with the school community goes as follows: Firstly, learners are my priority. I like children; I can do anything so that they can benefit from me. I work with any kind of children, and I always make sure that I leave no stone unturned when teaching them. I spend more time with children more than the other teachers. I am also getting along well with the other educators and SMT. I respect my principal and my HoD. When there is work to be submitted, I respond immediately. I work in a way I would like them to benefit from me. Regarding my relationship with parents and other community members, the degree of cooperation is amazing. When we organise functions such as prize giving for our learners, parents and other community members are very supportive.

From the responses of this C3 participant, it was clear that she did not have any problem relating with the personnel within the school. She also indicated that when she was given a responsibility to carry, she did it quickly and accordingly. The C3 participant did not mention how the learners she taught performed. Her school's academic performance records I requested from her principal showed that the overall learner performance was 61%. The implication was that if she got along well with her learners, their performance improved. What emerged from my interactions with Z primary school participants was that for the relationship to be optimum in the school, there needed mutual trust among all role players. It also emerged from the HoD that educators were to be closely supervised for performance to be enhanced. Close supervision could not be possible if relationships were in disarray, which probably greatly hamper school performance**.** I probed the PL1 participant about how she perceived the impact of the school community relationship on the school's entire performance. In this regard, the PL1 participant responded as follows:

> *The impact of our relationship with the school community starts from our adherence to the vision and mission of the school. The mission of our school is to strive for the best. Whenever we do any task the school's vision always echoes in our ears and that propels us to go an extra mile in executing our duties. We engage, for example, learners in morning classes. Their parents support me by making their children attend those morning classes. Attendance of morning classes pays dividends in learners' performance, for example, there were once readathon competitions, our learners excelled in those competitions. I attributed their good performance to how their parents support us in allowing them to attend morning classes.*

The C3 participant continued explaining how the school community relationship impacted their performance. In this regard, she explained as follows:

> *As part of encouraging our learners to perform well, the local taxi association donated trophies to learners who perform well in English, mathematics, and science. This stimulated the interest of our learners to want to do better in these subjects with the knowledge that they would get prizes. In the process of our learners striving to get prizes, school performance is pushed up. The relationship of the school with the entire community is very positive. This is seen mainly when community members volunteer to safeguard the school without anticipating any monetary incentives. This on its own provides an enabling environment for our school to perform well.*

I also requested the vision and mission statements of both Ziningi primary and Sizabantu primary schools. These documents further assisted me in establishing whether there was any synergy and corroboration among the other data generation instruments used in the study (observations and interviews).

Fig 5.2: Vision and mission statement for Ziningi primary school

VISION: Providing the best quality education **MISSION STATEMENT** To practicalise our mission, we will do the following: Involve all role players in decision making Observe "Bantu Pele principle." Respect the views of the community in matters relating to the school Being committed and dedicated to our teaching responsibilities Accept learners as they are Respect the rights of learners to education Be compassionate and sympathetic to the needs of our learners Be role models for our learners Being always strategic in executing our responsibilities

Fig 5.3: Vision and mission statement for Sizabantu primary school

VISION: Striving for excellence **MISSION STATEMENT** To actualise the mission of the school, the following will be done: Work beyond the call of duty Be dedicated to our responsibilities Be respectful of the community inside and outside the school Be polite in attending to possible challenges Be exemplary at all times Being able to keep time punctual Being abreast with new developments in education To take into consideration the developmental needs of all learners in the school To provide the necessary support to all learners at our disposal

The above figures are the vision and mission statements of both Ziningi primary and Sizabantu primary schools. These figures represent the documents requested from the principals of the two schools for analysis purposes. As indicated earlier in this chapter, the major data generation instruments were interviews and the subsidiary ones were observations and document reviews. I discovered that these three data generation instruments perfectly corroborate and supplement. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) term this triangulation.

Triangulation, according to these scholars, is the use of two or more methods (instruments) of data generated in the study of some aspects of human behaviour (Cohen et al, 2007).

In terms of exploring the three themes regarding the participants' perceptions, I had to draw parallels as well as differences in the responses of the participants. Finally, I had to cite what I regarded as the dynamics emanating from each theme.

The school community relationship discussed so far seemed to be one of the foundations on which quality of teaching thrived. When analysing and comparing the participants' perceptions about this theme (school community relationship), I established that in some cases, the participants differed, while in others, they concurred. The principals of the three schools, for example, concurred that for school community relationships to have an impact on school performance, there should be trust between the school and the community. All participants from the three chosen schools had similar perceptions regarding respect as an element for school community relationships to impact school performance positively. As said earlier on, due to differences in post level participants occupied, their perceptions differed dramatically. For example, some principals believed that teamwork, holding staff meetings, networking, dedication, and parental support contributed to the nature of the school community relationship. If the participants did not work as a team, did not hold staff meetings and did not network, the likelihood would be that the nature of school community relationship would yield poor school performance. The HoDs believed close supervision of teachers, avoiding working in silos and community involvement resulted like the school community relationships that yielded improved school performance. The PL1educators had their respective perceptions about the nature of school performance that yielded good school performance ranging from constant teacher development, the inclusion of all role players in the school, adherence to policies, discipline, provision of safety to the school and incentivising good performance.

Regarding ensuring quality of teaching as a theme, again the participants agreed that devising strategies such as invoking IQMS policy and its application improved quality of teaching and ultimately school performance.

5.6 Summary: An overview of the themes

This chapter was about data presentation and discussion. It was categorised into three themes ensuring quality of teaching, the role of school culture on school performance and the nature of school community relationship. Regarding biographical data, I reported that the participants (principals, Deputy principals, HoDs/DHs and PL1 educators) all had convincing experiences that would shed more light on the dynamics of school performance. Indeed, as a result of the vast experiences of the participants, the knowledge about their schools would probably be easily acquired.

The first theme dealt with the description of ensuring the quality of teaching t o enhance school performance. Among the findings, it was clear that many factors interplayed for quality of teaching to be ensured in the chosen schools. These factors are what I regard as dynamics. In section 2.3.1, I defined dynamics as various factors influencing a school's performance. In all the schools studied the following dynamics were found to be having an impact on school performance: grouping learners according to their abilities when teaching, mentoring teachers, accountability, time usage and provision of support to the supervisees by the supervisors. Some dynamics were unique to particular schools, while others occurred in all three. For example, at Ziningi primary school, the principal indicated that their school allowed flexibility to glean new ways of doing things that eventually helped improve its performance. At Z primary school, one participant mentioned debates and newspaper reading as dynamics that helped the school perform well. At Sizabantu primary school, on the one hand, the principal mentioned incentivising learners for good performance as one of the dynamics that propelled learners to perform well. The findings were that the impact of these dynamics on the three themes as perceived by the participants resulted in either poor or good performance of the chosen schools.

In chapter two I reported that the policy was developed in the Education Relation Labour Chamber (ELRC) called IQMS (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003) that oversees the quality of teaching as one of its objectives to improve performance. I compared teachers' evaluation scores and the chosen schools' performance in theme one. I wanted to find out whether there was any synergy between the two performances. My findings were that there was no synergy. Teachers' IQMS scores were higher than the performance of their respective schools. Lastly, I learned that IQMS scores for teachers did not corroborate with the performances of the chosen schools. The schools' performances were much lower than the performance of the teachers. This raised serious concerns about the fulfilment of the aim of IQMS which is partly to improve the standard of teaching, which would improve the schools' performance.

The second theme dealt with the role of school culture on school performance. As per the definition of culture by Stoll (1998), culture is how things are done in an institution. This suggested that one activity can be done differently by different institutions. That uniqueness was what defined, among other things, the details of the nature of the activities done in each of the chosen schools. It propelled teachers to do their routine activities in a way that might not be similar to that of the other schools.

The third theme dealt with the nature of school community relationship. Out of this theme, from the participants' point of view, I learned that good school community relationships enhanced the school's performance. I also learned that good performance did not come easy, the school has to work for it. For example, the participants from Ziningi primary school mentioned adhering to ethos, respect, and creating an enabling environment as part of features for school community relationship that enhanced school performance. Studies in the literature reveal that school performance is both a national and international concern. For example, in the reviewed literature several performance-improvement strategies are cited and discussed. Until standard of education world-wide is improved there will still be a need to improve school performance. In a nutshell, I learned that school performance is heavily dependent on how various factors (dynamics) are handled at school level, resulting in either poor or good school performance

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I reflect on the findings concerning the dynamics of school performance in the three primary schools studied. To understand this issue, I first summarise the study indicating the essence of each chapter of this research report. I highlight the findings as they relate to the study’s research questions. Central to my discussion of the dynamics of school performance, I explain the pivotal role played by culture in influencing every activity of an institution. I discuss lessons learned based on the last critical question, after which I discuss the study's limitations.

6.2 Summarising the research journey travelled

This section pays attention to the journey and summarises my movement throughout the chapters. The research report comprises of six chapters. In Chapter One, I introduced the study. Therein, I explained in the background section that prior to 1994, education was severely segregated such that its provisioning was sub-standard for the black population. For example, there was inequality in the provision of education in South Africa in that it was provided according to specific racial groups.

Consequently, public schools’ performance in the post-1994 era has remained highly uneven, with a few schools doing well while the rest underperforming. I then argued in the problem statement that the knowledge gap I pursue has to do with understanding the dynamics of primary school performance. By ‘dynamics’ I refer to the factors that affect school performance positively or negatively. Out of that research problem came the research questions. This study was guided by the following research questions: What do teachers and SMT members regard as factors influencing school performance? How do teachers and SMT members see these factors influencing school performance? And how can school performance be enhanced? These questions centred on what teachers and SMTs saw as factors influencing such school performance. In the chapter, I also reported that my passion for undertaking the study lay in my earlier experiences, as a novice teacher and subsequently as a school principal, of wanting to understand how school performance could be managed and improved.

In chapter two, I reviewed the literature. The key concepts I clarified in the first theme were ‘performance’ and ‘dynamics. I explained that ‘school performance’ refers to the learner’s academic achievement (see chapter 2, section 2.2.1). Key issues emerging out of this section include local attempts to gauge school performance using a variety of assessment strategies and measures such as, among others, SE, and ANA. These strategies are measures to identify gaps in school performance and achieve its sustainability and work towards its enhancement. The second theme emerged that even at an international level, the issue of school performance was a leading role in the quest for ways and means to manage and monitor it. If school performance were not an intriguing issue both internationally and nationally, there would not have been assessments such as PIRLS, TIMSS and SACMEQ. Lamas (2015) argues that it (school performance) is an issue that deeply concerns students, parents, teachers, and authorities in South Africa and globally. The nature of school performance revolves around school culture. In the third theme, I conceptualized ‘management’ as ensuring that all the processes of an institution are run properly and in a well-coordinated manner concerning its mission and vision to ensure that the envisaged performance is achieved. Leadership on the other hand is defined as practices that lead to positive influence, growth, and development of both the individual and groups for a collective purpose (see section 2.2.6). In the context of this study, the terms leadership and management are interchangeable because they are intertwined. School culture emerged as the major dynamic that shapes school performance. Within the major dynamic of school culture, other sub- dynamics also affect school performance, such as school community relations (SCR), and leadership and management (L&M). Key theories I examined include transformational, servant and situational leadership. These theories collectively complement one another in illuminating leadership's essence in school performance.

Literature suggested that L&M are crucial in shaping the quality of school performance. For example, how SCR are and how quality teaching is achieved in a school depends firmly on the school’s L&M quality. Thus, sound L&M provide a school environment conducive to teaching and learning. For example, scholars such as Stogdill (1974) explain among other things, that L&M have a collective influence on organisational culture. By shaping school culture (organisational culture), L&M determines its direction in terms of its performance. The fourth theme deals with how L&M in a school impact its performance. As I have already indicated above, literature shows that how a school performs depends on L&M. The fifth theme deals with approaches to management, such as classical and modern approaches. In this theme, the historical evolution of management approaches is discussed to aid thorough understanding of how management has evolved and changed over the years and the impact the change has had on management responsibilities. The sixth theme talks about accountability and its impact on school performance. Kelly (2018) argues that it is often assumed that a greater level of accountability will positively affect the performance of employees in an organisation. It thus suggests that accountability drives performance. This section identified different accountability categories, including political, legal, bureaucratic, professional, and market accountability. The seventh theme is about factors affecting school performance. Such factors include goal clarity, repertoire, structure knowledge, feedback, mental models, motivation and environment. In ending this chapter, I identified emerging issues. These include how school performance is perceived internationally and nationally and its factors. The knowledge of how school performance is perceived both internationally and nationally has not only contributed to the advancement of schooling globally but has also infiltrated the understanding of the functioning of schools.

Chapter three is about the theoretical framework of the study. The framework is three- pronged, comprising the following theories: transformational leadership, servant-leadership and situational leadership. The adoption of more than one theory in this study is consistent with Ngulube, Mathipa, and Gumbo's (2015) view that theories are combined to explain a setof data, to achieve fidelity. Krishnan (2005) argues that the major premise of the transformational leadership theory is the leader's ability to motivate the follower to accomplish more than what they planned to achieve. In drawing from this theory, motivation, according to the participants, was one of the factors that enhanced school performance. The servant-leadership theory, as was reported, is about serving others by working towards their development and well-being in order to meet goals for the common good (Page & Wong, 2000). This theory is relevant to this study as it deals with developing others towards helping them meet their responsibilities. As Northouse (2016) perceived, the situational leadership theory is about different situations that demand different kinds of leadership (see, section 3.6). Since numerous school level situations evolve and require the application of different strategies and control measures, this leadership theory is useful in my seeking to understand the dynamics of school performance. In chapter four, I presented and discussed the methodological toolkit of the study. I positioned the study within the interpretivist paradigm. Rehman and Alharthi (2016) argued that interpretivists believe in socially constructed multiple realities. This paradigm construes truth and reality as being created, not discovered. Thus, this understanding of truth and reality was made real in this study by generating data about school performance dynamics from multiple participants (PL1 educators, DHs, DP and principals of the selected schools). Rehman and Alharthi (2016) maintain that it is not possible to know reality as it is, because our senses always mediate it. I reported that the study utilised three data generation instruments to capture the essence of the dynamics of school performance: face-to-face interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis. I also reported that the reason for using more than one data generation instrument in this study was consistent with Chako's (2017) assertion that one method of data generation cannot effectively reveal everything on every phenomenon. I indicated that qualitative data generated from each instrument were analysed separately and then merged to develop a full picture. The qualitative data was categorised into themes. I discussed the research design as a multiple site case study. I discussed and clarified the processes of trustworthiness and ethical considerations as they relate to the study.

In Chapter Five I presented and discussed data. The data were presented and discussed through the themes that emerged. Such themes include quality of teaching (QT), school culture (SC), SCR and L&M. In the next section I highlight the key findings of the study.

6.3 Key findings of the study

The study has three critical questions. I discovered that the nature of the findings is such that they are better presented as cutting across the research questions. Thus, this section highlights the study's key findings in that fashion. The first two critical questions of the study are presented through the following factors or dynamics that emanated from the generated data: QT, SC, nature of SCR and L&M. The third critical question, about how school performance can be enhanced, is my instrument in presenting and discussing lessons learned in section 6.4.SC is found to be the major dynamic encompassing the other dynamics, namely, QT, SCR and L&M. Regarding the critical question about what teachers and SMT regard as factors influencing school performance, QT is one dynamic or factor influencing school performance. For example, when teachers fruitfully exhaust all available teaching resources at their disposal, teaching is likely to be enhanced thus becoming more qualitative. When QT happens, it is shaped by the unique culture of each school. As a result of the unique culture-shaping QT of each school, it is found that even the performances of these researched schools were not the same (see tables 5.92, 5.93 and 5.94). Like QT, the SCR that each school creates with its community is influenced by its unique culture and contributes to the nature of that school's performance. This suggests that SCR could either be good or bad depending on the nature of relationships that the school creates with its community. The L&M is also found to be among the key factors influencing school performance in that within the school context, leadership and management are structures and processes that decide what, when and how QT and SCR are to proceed within the school. While L&M occupies the leading and managing roles in the school, the findings are that SC always colours their (L&M) functioning, thereby assisting in the realisation of the envisaged performance of the school. This is consistent with the transformational leadership theory that, according to Bass and Avolio (1990), during implementing QT in the researched schools, it is found that the principles of transformational leadership theory are applied (see section 3.4.4). For example, one of the principles of this theory is proactivity which entails that the teacher employs strategies to guard against things that would impede learners from understanding his/her lessons. Applying this principle ensures the QT, and more importantly, enhances learning. Similar to transformational leadership theory, the servant-leadership theory as cited in section 3.5 is found to be framing the conduction of QT in the researched schools as expounded by Page and Wong (2000) who assert that it entails serving others by working toward their development.

On the second critical question relating to: in what ways teachers and SMT members see these factors (QT, SCR, SC and L&M) affecting school performance, it is found that: firstly, in QT, dedication and improvisation prevail among teachers and SMT members to improve school performance. This is made possible by teachers and SMT members not rigidly following the conventional ways of teaching learners but going the extra mile of soliciting novel teaching strategies from teaching experts. Secondly, SCR is ensured through the researched schools creating platforms where their communities are allowed to air their views in matters about the development of the schools. For example, it is found that SCR is formed through the researched schools establishing platforms with the community through which matters related to the proper functioning of the schools are discussed. It is also found that the SCR is strengthened through the school and community devising strategies that promote teaching and learning, for example, the 'adopt a grade' strategy. This is when members of the community pledge to assist any grade chosen with teaching and learning resources. Thirdly, SC is found to permeate and encompass all the other factors. It is found to shape how QT, SCR and L&M operate. SC adds "flavour" to the other factors. Whether these factors are effective or ineffective, that is determined by SC. Lastly, L&M initiates and directs the functioning of QT, SC and SCR towards achieving the envisaged school performance. Without L&M, it is found that there would be no school performance in schools.

In the researched schools, as already indicated, SC, SCR, QT and the role of school L&M are the central dynamics in influencing school performance. According to the participants, being at the centre of school performance meant that these factors control their daily activities. In some cases these dynamics differ from participant to participant and from school to school while in other instances they are similar. There are sometimes commonalities in the way participants perceive the influence of the above factors on school performance. For example, they attribute how a school performs to collective strategies applied by different educators as contributory factors to school performance. Other participants attribute school performance not only to internal factors such as QT, SCR, role of L&M, and SC but also to external factors such as help to the school obtained from private sector. For example, donations made to the school such as classrooms that assist in alleviating possible congestions in classrooms for effective teaching to occur. Dynamics that are unique to each participant in each school include, for example, the principal of Ziningi primary school mentioning frequency in holding extraordinary meetings to discuss school performance-related issues.

On the other hand, the DHs identify the following factors as influencing school performance: prior planning of teaching activities, supporting teachers with necessary resources that would enhance the school's performance, doing class visits and being versatile and flexible in the employment of a variety of school improvement strategies. These responses (factors) by the participants of Ziningi primary school are consistent with the tenets of situational leadership. Drawing from transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978), the SMT and teachers need to be inspired to perform well for school performance to be positively influenced. Findings across all three schools reveal that teachers are inspired to continue performing well by giving incentives for good performance. Drawing from servant-leadership theory, in each of the three researched schools the findings are that the SMT led by example. They exemplify their followers (teachers) through them (SMT) having subjects of their own to teach. The SMT "walked the talk." As indicated earlier, findings reveal that SC strongly influences school performance. Each school has its own unique culture. Thus, the resultant school performances are also unique (see chapter 5, section 5.3). For example, while the findings indicated that all the three researched schools had cultures of their own, in one of the schools, the principal emphasized the teaching of the whole child as one aspect of their culture. The uniqueness of the SC is aptly captured by Deal and Peterson (1999) when they argue that SC influences what people pay attention to (focus), how they identify with the school (commitment), how hard they work (motivation), and the degree to which they achieve their goals (productivity). Peterson, Kent, Deal and Terrence (2002) argue that culture influences and shapes the ways teachers, students, and administrators think, feel, and act. This implies that school performance in a school is regulated by culture. Insisting on the importance of positive SC, Deal and Peterson (1999) maintain that schools flounder and die without a strong, positive culture.

In inquiring from the DP of Ziningi primary school about how QT contributed to school performance, the DP indicated that they believed unity was a strength. That belief kept them going. Whatever they did related to teaching and learning, they did that as a unit. According to the DP, nothing failed when their teaching staff was united. The DP indicated that what enhanced their school's performance was the implementation of IQMS with all its processes. The participants of Ziningi primary school agreed that following the processes of IQMS assisted them in the improvement of performance for their school. This was evidenced by IQMS documents that I perused, such as individual educator score sheets kept by the school (see chapter 5, tables 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6). These documents showed that although educators' scores were not tallying with the overall school performance scores, they collectively reflected good performance for the school.

Apart from the SC, educators and SMTs in the studied schools regarded the nature of community as a factor influencing school performance. According to Muturi and Said Samantar (2018),, the success of schooling depends largely upon the value that communities attach to education where the school's mission and goals are shared and supported by the community. Since schools are an integral part of the community, the researched schools need safeguarding by their communities for their performance to thrive and flourish. Mutiri and Said Samantar (2018) confirm the importance of schools in communities by asserting that the purpose of the school is to educate, train, create good citizens and equip the rising generation with skills. As such, the nature of the communities within which the researched schools were found played a major role in the enhancement of performance of these schools. For example, all schools are found in communities, but how those individual schools relate to their communities determines their performance.

6.4 Lessons learned

The third critical question regarding how school performance can be enhanced is the thesis question of this study. In other words, I advance what I humbly believe is my contribution to new knowledge in addressing this question. Thus, I am presenting answers to this critical question as the lesson learned regarding the dynamics of school performance. To present the lessons, I developed the School Performance Model (see Figure 6.1).

Fig 6.1: School Performance Model (SPM)

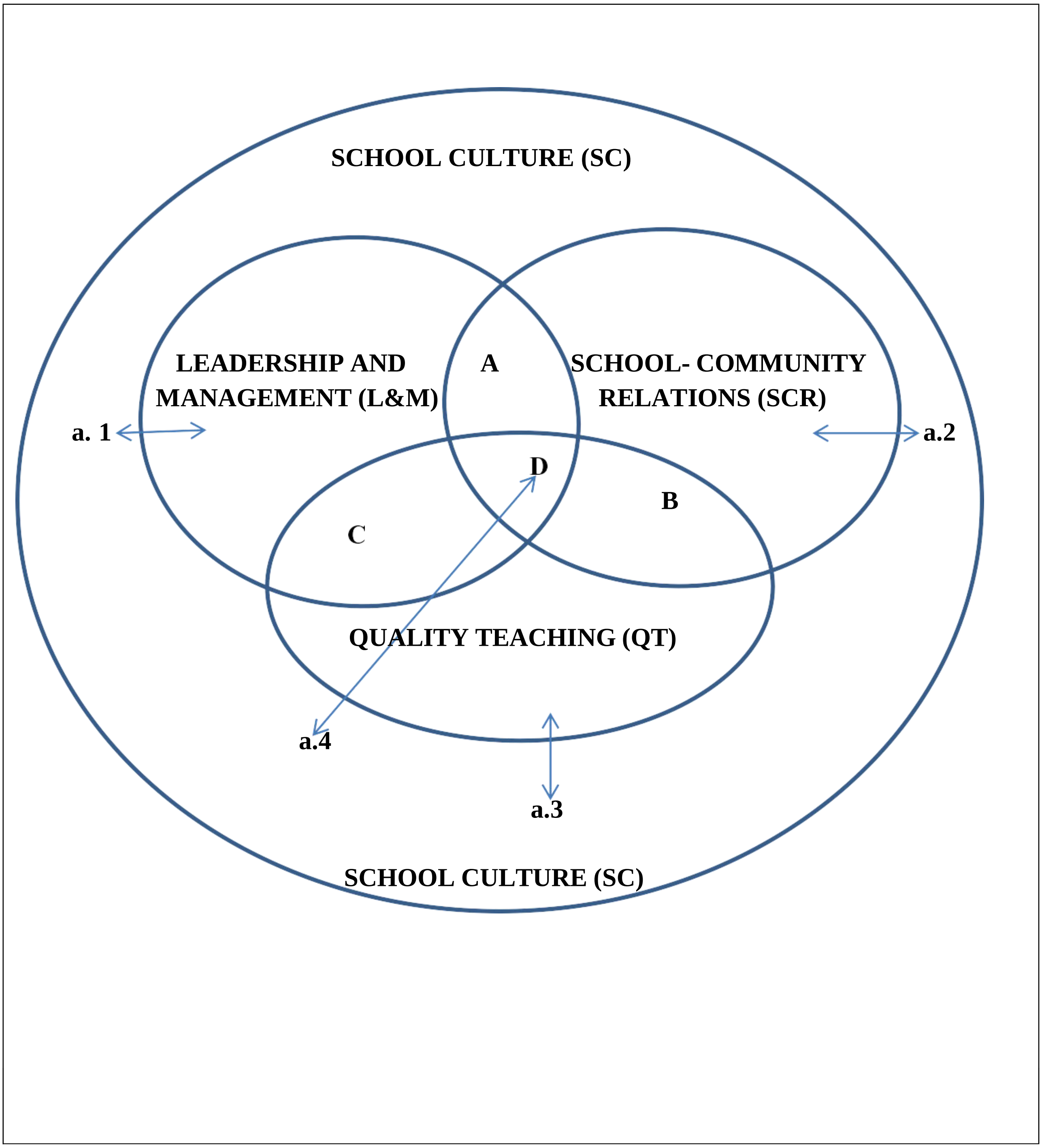


Figure 6.1 shows four circles, each depicting a dynamic of school performance. The large circle within which there are three intersecting ones represents SC. SC is the major dynamic, while SCR, QT and L&M are sub-dynamics. The study reveals that the culture of a school is what determines what that institution can or cannot do. While QT, SCR and L&M are key dynamics of school performance, they are all determined by the school culture. The points of intersection of the sub-dynamics are spaces of profound influence. The intersections illustrate

that each sub-dynamic, apart from playing an individual role in influencing school performance, co-influences the same with each sub-dynamic and is influenced by them.
For example, the intersection points of L&M with SCR is segment A, SCR with QT is segment B and QT with L&M is segment C, respectively. Segment D is the focal point where the sub-dynamics converge. In that segment lies the performance of a school, which is a function of SC. As I have said above, SC influences all sub-dynamics while at the same time it is influenced by each one of them individually and collectively. The two-way arrows illustrate this relationship. Segments a.1, a.2 and a.3, for example, indicate the two way interaction and influence of the three sub-dynamics with SC to produce segment D while a.4 indicates the interaction between SC and segment D to produce a certain kind of school performance. D is the function of all the dynamics. Sound SC is what determines school performance. L&M play an important role in causing the other sub-dynamics to function. For example, the L&M ensures that the environment or space under which effective QT is conducive. This is consistent with the situational leadership theory, which, according to Northouse (2016) demands different kinds of leaderships to be applied in different situations. As such, since there are different situations at the school level, different situations demand different leadership styles to be applied. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that situational leadership is appropriate in enacting various school performance dynamics (L&M, QT, SCR, and SC). It is through efficient and effective L&M that sound SCR is ensured.

How each dynamic influences the others can be illustrated further: Firstly, sound L&M influences SCR so that teachers can perform their teaching duties when the community is willing and positive in partnering with the school. Secondly, responsible L&M influences QT to provide fertile ground for teachers to perform their teaching activities. This will range, for example, from motivating devising strategies for teachers to excel in their teaching. Thirdly, as indicated earlier, school performance is influenced by all the dynamics therefore it possesses qualities of each dynamic. Through school performance one can tell what kind of SC, L&M, QT and SCR the school is likely to have. Therefore, a school that invests in shaping its culture for the better is guaranteed to achieve high school performance.

6.5 Limitations of the study

The study was successfully conducted in the three researched schools but with some limitations. The first limitation was that the number of schools chosen for the study was limited and therefore, the magnitude of data generated was not as initially thought it was going to be. Secondly, when the study was first undertaken, it was hoped that all the educator post levels were going to be available in all the researched schools, but this did not happen because of the post provision norm policy of the DBE. The initial expectation was that each researched school would have a principal, a DP, DH(s) and post level one posts. The absence of some educators in some portfolios compromised the breadth of the data available for the study.

6.6 Conclusions reached

The quest for wanting to understand the dynamics of school performance led to the exploration of literature to learn what different scholars regard as factors causing dynamics of school performance. The views by scholars both nationally and internationally show that school performance is influenced by multitude of factors. Three-pronged theoretical framework used in Chapter Three provides lens through which the dynamics of school performance is investigated, explored, and understood. These theories include transformational leadership, situational and servant leadership theory respectively. Each theory contributes meaningfully to how school performance could be managed (refer to Chapter Three, sections 3.3 to 3.5). The qualitative methodological toolkit used in the study illuminates how data is generated and what methods are used in the study and why. Details of participants and methods selection are shown within the methodological toolkit. While literature review assists in understanding of the views of various scholars about school performance, live interaction with participants ensures participants' first-hand perceptions about school performance. This strengthens and augment my understanding of school performance.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: <u>ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE</u>

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL™
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

03 July 2017

Mr Enock Bhekokwakhe Mtshali (209529039)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Mtshali,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0611/017D
Project title: The dynamics of school performance in South Africa: Evidence from three primary schools

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 22 May 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

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

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

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

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

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Vitallis Chikoko
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
Cc School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

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APPENDIX 2: LETTER CONFIRMING LANGUAGE EDITING AND PLAGIARISM CHECKER

EISHexpressions
ALL THINGS MEDIA

1 Sycamore Crescent • Silverglades • Cape Town • 7975
084 240 3516 • cathyd.eish@gmail.com

15 December 2021

To whom it may concern,

This document is to certify that I have edited **Enock Bhekokwakhe Mtshali's** thesis for his Ph.D. titled: **THE DYNAMICS OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS,** checking for grammar, spelling, punctuation, tense and sentence construction, repetition/redundancy, references and plagiarism. According to my Grammerly plagerism checker this thesis stands at 10% plagerism. It has also been checked using UK language.

I wish him all the best.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Cathy Dippnall

APPENDIX 3: <u>PERMISSION LETTER TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS (PRINCIPALS</u>)

P.O Box 1216 Mtubatuba 3935

10 March 2017

<u>Attention:</u> The Principal

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Enock Mtshali, a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) student in the School of Education and Development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree fulfilment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek your permission to conduct research in your school. The title of my study is: **The dynamics of school performance in South Africa: Evidence from three primary schools**.

This study aims to explore:

1. What teachers and School Management Team members regard as factors influencing school performance?
2. In what ways teachers and School Management Team members see these factors influencing school performance.
3. How school performance can be enhanced.

The planned study will focus on teachers and SMT. It will use, observations, document reviews and interviews. Observations will be used during the meetings held by SMT and the entire staff separately. Document reviews will be done on documents such as the minute books, policies and any source document used to regulate school functioning. Interviews will be done with SMT and teachers separately. The aim would be to get the overall feelings from each structure on dynamics of school performance.

Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without causing any misunderstanding.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Prof. Vitallis Chikoko on (031 260 2639 / 076 376 7836), Email: chikokov@ukzn.ac.za

For any queries please contact me on the following details: Enock B. Mtshali; Tel: 035-580 9008; Cell: 083 590 1967; Email: ebsm@telkomsa.net.

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response in this regard will be extremely appreciated. Thank you

Yours sincerely Mr E.B. Mtshali

Declaration

I,.............................. (Full name of principal) here by confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **The dynamics of school performance in South Africa: Evidence from three primary schools**. I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent that the school take part in the study. I understand that the participants are at liberty to withdraw from the research project at any time should they so desire.

Signature of principal:……………………Date____________

Signature of witness / Research assistant: ------------------------- Date----------------------

Thank you

Mr Enock B. Mtshali

APPENDIX 4: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT)

P.O Box 1216 Mtubatuba 3935

10 July 2017 Dear Sir/Madam

A REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

I am currently studying for a PhD with the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am required to conduct research as part of my degree. I therefore kindly seek your participation in this research project. The title of the research project is: **The dynamics of school performance in South Africa: Evidence from three primary schools**. The purpose of this research is as follows:

1. To find out what teachers and School Management Team members regard as factors influencing school performance.
2. To find out how teachers and School Management Team members see these factors influencing school performance.
3. To find out how school performance can be enhanced.

This project involves SMT interviews, document reviews and observations. Interviews will be done with a sample of selected teachers who are SMT members to get their perceptions about what they see as factors influencing school performance. Observations will be done by observing most of the activities done by the school that could influence school performance. Document reviews will be done on documents such as staff meetings minute books, school policy, and school sub-committees' meetings minute books. The duration of interviews will be 15 minutes per group of SMT. Interviews will be recorded. The duration of observation will last for the duration of a particular meeting. The findings will be used in writing my thesis. Confidentiality and anonymity will be highly taken care of. I also assure you that pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity.

As a member of the SMT, I feel you are a relevant source for this research. Please be informed that your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time should you so wish. There will be no financial benefits for your participation in this research project. The findings may be useful to your school and Quality Assurance Component in the Department of Education. The findings will be forwarded to the Department of Education. The University of KwaZulu-Natal will keep the gathered data for 5 years. After this period, audio recorded items will be incinerated and the transcribed copies of interviews, observations and document reviews will be shredded.

This study is supervised by Prof. Vitallis Chikoko (031 260 2639/ 076 376 7836), Email: chikokov@ukzn.ac.za

For any queries regarding this study, please contact me on the following details: Enock B. Mtshali; Tel: 035 580 9008; Cell: 083 590 1967; Email: ebsm@telkomsa.net.

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated. Thank you
Yours sincerely Mr E.B Mtshali

Declaration

I, ………..…………...on behalf of the SMT ....(Full name of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose, and procedures for the study: **The dynamics of school performance in South Africa: Evidence from three primary schools**
I have also received, read, and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I we are at liberty to withdraw from the research project anytime should we so desire. I hereby consent to have this interview recorded. I hereby consent/do not consent to have this interview recorded.

Signature of participant…………………………………Date…………………

Signature of Witness / Research Assistant…………………Date……………...

Thanking you in advance Mr Enock B. Mtshali

APPENDIX 5: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER: TEACHERS

P.O Box 1216 Mtubatuba 3935

10 July 2017 Dear Sir/Madam

A REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

I am currently studying for Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) with the University of KwaZulu- Natal. I am required to conduct research as part of my degree. I therefore kindly seek your participation in this research project. The title of the research project is: **The dynamics of school performance in South Africa: Evidence from three primary schools**. The purpose of this research is as follows:

1. To find out what teachers and School Management Team members regard as factors influencing school's performance.
2. To find out how teachers and School Management Team members see these factors influencing school performance.
3. To find out how school performance can be enhanced.

This project involves interviews, document reviews and observations. Interviews will be done with a sample of teachers to get their perceptions about what they see as factors influencing school performance. Observations will be done by observing most of the activities done by the school that could influence school performance. Document reviews will be done on documents such as staff meetings minute books, school policy, and school sub-committees' meetings minute books. The duration of interviews will be 15 minutes while the duration of observation will last for the duration of a particular meeting. The findings will be used in writing my thesis. Confidentiality and anonymity will be highly taken care of. I also assure you that pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. Interviews will be audio recorded.

As teachers, I feel you are a relevant source for this research. Please be informed that your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time should you so wish. There will be no financial benefits for your participation in this research project. The findings may be useful to your school and Quality Assurance

Component in the Department of Education. The findings will be forwarded to the Department of Education. The University of KwaZulu-Natal will keep the gathered data for 5 years. After this period, audio recorded items will be incinerated and the transcribed copies of interviews, observations and document reviews will be shredded.

This study is supervised by Prof. Vitallis Chikoko (031 260 2639/ 076 376 7836), Email: chikokov@ukzn.ac.za
For any queries regarding this study, please contact me on the following details: Enock B. Mtshali; Tel: 035 580 9008; Cell: 083 590 1967; Email: ebsm@telkomsa.net.

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated. Thank you
Yours sincerely Mr E.B Mtshali

Declaration

I....................................... (Full name of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **The dynamics of school performance in South Africa: Evidence from three primary schools**. I have also received, read, and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study. I hereby consent to have the interview recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project anytime should I so desire. I hereby consent/do not consent to have this interview recorded.

Signature of participant…………………………………Date…………………

Signature of Witness / Research Assistant…………………Date……………..

Thanking you in advance.

Mr Enock B. Mtshali

APPENDIX 6: <u>INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</u>

<u>FOCUS GROUP</u> AND <u>FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS</u>

Study title: The dynamics of school performance in South Africa: Evidence from three Primary schools

<u>INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</u>

A. THE KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What do teachers and School Management Team members regard as factors influencing school performance?
2. How do teachers and School Management Team members see these factors influencing school performance?
3. How can school performance be enhanced?

B. SELECTED PARTICIPANTS

1. Principals: individual interviews
2. Deputy Principals: individual interviews
3. Head of Departments (HoDs/ HDs): focus group interviews
4. Level one educators: focus group interviews

C. Purpose of the study (I will explain the purpose of the study to all the participants)

As I indicated in the letter requesting your participation in the study, it is about the Dynamics of school performance in South Africa: Evidence from three Primary Schools

D. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

- Biographical questions
    - ➢ How long have you been a principal of this school?
    - ➢ Share with me your relationship with the community of this area over the years since you became the principal?
    - ➢ How is the community of this area involved in the school's activities?
- Quality of teaching and learning
    - ➢ How is time utilised to the maximum benefit of the school?
    - ➢ How is testing and evaluation done in this school?

  - How would you rate your teachers' subject knowledge?
- School performance
  - Share with me how you would describe the performance of your school?
  - How do you think the learners' outcomes in your school can be improved and sustained?
  - Would you give me examples of instances where SMT workshopped educators on improving school performance?
- School culture
  - How would you describe the culture of your school?
  - In what ways does this school conducts teaching and learning?
  - Based on your response above, why is this school conducting teaching and learning the way you have just explained?
- Professional development
  - Share with me how is professional development done in this school?
  - In what ways is professional development helps in improving school performance?
  - Why is it necessary for SMT members and level one educators to be engaged in professional development?

E. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

- Biographical questions
  - Share with me how your experience has been as a DP of this school?
  - How long have you been the deputy principal of this school?
  - How is your relationship between yourself and the people you are supervising?
  - Share with me the impact of your relationship between yourself and your supervisee's to the entire performance of your section of supervision?
- Quality of teaching and learning
  - How do you ensure that HoDs always adhere to high performance standards in supervising educators to deliver quality teaching and learning?
  - Share with me how your HoDs monitor and supervise testing and evaluation?

- Would you give me examples of specific instances where HoDs supervise teaching and learning?

- School performance
    - Share with me how you would describe the performance of the HoDs under your supervision?
    - In what ways do you think the performance of the HoDs could be improved?
    - Would you give me examples of instances where educators improved their performance?
    - Why do you think the HoDs must improve their performance?

- School culture
    - How would you describe the culture of HoDs work?
    - In what ways does the culture of HoDs work impacts on school performance?
    - Based on your response above, why do you think the culture of HoDs work is important for school performance?

- Professional development
    - Share with me how is professional development done on the HoDs?
    - In what ways do you think professional development of the HoDs is important for school performance?
    - Why do you think the HoDs should be professionally developed?

F. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMs (SMTs)

- Biographical questions
    - Share with me how you have experienced being in an SMT position?
    - How long have each of you been an SMT member in the school?
    - How is each one of you relates with the structure you are supervising?
- Quality of teaching and learning
    - How do you ensure that your supervisees maintain high standard of quality teaching and learning?
    - Share with me how you maintain quality of teaching and learning through supervisees?

- Give examples of instances where you supervise and manage teaching and learning by your supervisees?
- Why do you think it is necessary to supervise and manage teaching and learning through your supervisees?

- School performance
  - Share with me how you would describe school performance in terms of the sections you are supervising?
  - In what ways could performance of your supervisees be improved?
  - Give examples of how you think your supervisees' performance could be improved?
- School culture
  - How would you describe the culture of your supervisees work?
  - How does the culture of your supervisees work impacts school performance?
  - Based on your response above, why do you think the culture of your supervisees work is important for school performance?

- Professional development
  - Share with me how professional development is done to your supervisees?
  - In what ways do you think professional development of your supervisees is necessary for school performance?
  - Why do you think your supervisees should be professionally developed?

G. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR POST LEVEL ONE EDUCATORS

- Biographical questions
  - How long have each one of you been the educator of this school?
  - Share with me how you relate with learners, fellow educators and SMT?
  - How does each of you cope with your responsibilities as level one educator?
- Quality of teaching and learning
  - Share with me how you ensure that quality of teaching and learning is upheld to learners?
  - Why do you think it is always necessary to maintain quality teaching and learning?

- Give examples of instances where you maintained quality of teaching and learning in your classroom?

- School performance
    - How would each one of you describe indications of school performance within the classroom?
    - In what ways would performance of your learners be improved?
    - Give examples of how you think your school performance could be improved through learners?
- School culture
    - How would you each describe the school culture in terms of learner performance?
    - In what way does school culture manifest in each of your classroom?
    - Why do you think school culture is important for school performance based on your response above?
- Professional development
    - Share with me how is professional development done to you?
    - In what ways do you think professional development is important for school performance?
    - Why do you think each one of you needs professional development?

H. Concluding remarks

- Allowing participants to be free to add their ideas on issues relating to the dynamics of school performance should they so wish in future.
- Thanking the participant

APPENDIX 7: <u>OBSERVATION SCHEDULE</u>

1. This observation schedule is aimed at observing meetings for the following structures:
   a. One-on-one meeting between the principal and his/her DP or departmental head
   b. School management team (SMT)
   c. Teachers (staff meetings)
2. In observing meetings of these structures, I will note how their discussions impact school performance. I will take detailed notes on:
   a. What was said during the process of each of their meetings
   b. Notes will be taken on how long the meeting lasted
   c. How each member in the respective structure contributes in the discussion during the meeting
   d. I will take notes of the frequency of each structure's meeting where issues of learners' performance are discussed
   e. I will observe how performance results are analysed
   f. I will observe and take note of the strategies employed for improving learner performance
   g. Regarding SMT meetings, I will note how consensus is reached. I willalso observe how the decisions reached are implemented and how those decisions have a bearing on school performance.

APPENDIX 8: Documents Review Schedule

Documents analysed are:

1. Mark schedules
2. Minutes of SMT
3. Minutes of staff meeting
4. Leaner assessment documents
5. Subject meetings minutes
6. Phase meetings minutes
7. Subject policy documents
8. Mission and vision of the school
9. Work schedules: Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs)
10. Teaching timetables

The above documents will not be older than two years. These documents will be used to corroborate the observation and interviews so that trustworthiness of the findings could be established. To aid the quick analysis of the above documents, the following questions will be responded to:

1. What assessment documents are kept in the school?
2. Is there any evidence of minutes?
3. 0If so, what is the purpose of such minutes?
4. Is there any evidence of learner assessment documents if so, what those documents are and their purpose?
5. Are teaching and learning resources available in the school?
6. How are learner results communicated to learners and their parents?
7. How is the final reporting about the learners' performance done?
8. What role does the SMT have in the school performance's final reporting?
9. How long are the instruments for evaluating teachers kept in the school?

10\. Does the school have any vision and mission?

10\. How is the school's vision and mission communicated to learners?

11\. Are subject policies available?

12\. Are work schedules for each subject available?

13\. Are teachers teaching according to work schedules?

The documents may reveal aspects that were not found through observations and interviews. These may even “shape new directions for observations and interviews” (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992, p.52).