

**THE ASSUMPTIONS, VALUES AND BELIEFS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
REGARDING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Malesela Daniel Kekana, (student no: 04402014) hereby declare that this mini-dissertation for the degree Magister of Education at the University of Pretoria entitled **The Assumptions, Values and Beliefs of school principals regarding School Leadership and Management**, is my own work in design and execution; that it has not been submitted by me for degree purposes at this or any other university and that all sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references.

Signed:

August 2013

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ACRONYMS

NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
FET	Further Education and Training
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
NMLC	National Management and Leadership Committee
SMT	School Management Team
TMDT	Total Management and Leadership Committee
PD	Professional Development
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
ISC	International Study Centre
TIMMS	Third International Mathematics and Science Study
NSC	National Senior Certificate
LDoE	Limpopo Department of Education
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
ACE	Advance Certificate in Education

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ABSTRACT

THE ASSUMPTIONS, VALUES ANND BELIEFS OF PRINCIPALS REGARDING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT.

This study explored the assumptions, values and beliefs of principals regarding school leadership and management in Limpopo Province of South Africa. The study was necessitated by the fact that, although in South Africa, the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) invests so much resources on professional educator development programmes to build capacity among principals, every year a significant number of schools are declared ineffective. The study wanted to establish if the assumptions, values and beliefs of principals could have an influence on school leadership and management.

The Cultural Model was used in this study. This was because the model focuses on the values, beliefs and norms of individuals. The model also assumes that values and beliefs of individuals influence how they behave and view the behaviour of others. A narrative research design was used because it allowed the participants to share their life-stories and thus also their assumptions, values and beliefs with the researcher. Through the study, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the participants with regard to their assumptions, values and beliefs and how they may influence their leadership in schools.

For the purpose of this study, the extreme group sampling strategy was used to collect data. A total of six principals became part of this study. Three principals were drawn from effective schools and the other three from ineffective schools. After data analysis, it emerged that principals from effective schools are inner-directed in their approach to life and principals from ineffective schools are outer-directed. This means that the latter group is less assertive and lack self-esteem and do not believe that they can influence or change the situation within the school. This finding, amongst others, informs the authorities to consider introducing pre-principal training before appointing principals into posts. Only the assertive and confident trainees should be given posts.

Keywords

Assumptions, Values, Beliefs, School Leadership, Management, Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Professional Educator Development

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons that has always been given for the poor performances of many schools in South Africa is that principals are not properly professionally developed in terms of their school leadership and management (Legotlo *et al.*, 2002: 113). Bush and George (2006:339) maintain that appointment of principals in Africa is sometimes not based on leadership and management potential but on the teaching record of teachers. In Kenya, for example, it is a common practice to have deputy principals and good assistant teachers being appointed to principalship posts without being exposed to any real professional development. In countries such as Botswana and Nigeria, for example, appointment to principalship does not even depend on good classroom teaching. Some of the appointed principals have never been in the classroom. They are appointed on the basis of their political connections (*Ibid*, 2006). Mathibe (2007:523) contends that in South Africa, unlike in the United Kingdom and United States of America an educator may be appointed to a principalship post without having a school management and leadership qualification.

There appears to be consensus throughout the world about the need for principals to receive in-service professional development to enhance their leadership and management practices in schools (Mathibe, 2007:524). In the United Kingdom, for example, despite principals being appointed after achieving their management and leadership qualifications, a programme known as the New Vision was developed to support principals in their developmental needs in the first three years of their principalship (Mathibe, 2007:527; Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007:532). According to Parkay and Currie (1992:43) after assuming duty, principals in the USA are provided with a tripod of support to let them settle in the new job. This support consists of training, networking and coaching.

Realising that principals are not adequately trained to perform their leadership and managerial duties, Hallinger (2005:230) is of the view that there appears to be a new global interest among government agencies towards training principals to be instructional leaders. In South Africa the interest in training principals was shown in the Tirisano document (2000) where one of the priorities of the Department of Education (DoBE) was management capacity-building of school principals. As a result of this document all nine provinces of South Africa embarked on extensive management training programmes for principals. Currently the Advanced Certificate in Education (School Leadership) is offered to principals identified by their provincial department of education. According to Van der Westhuizen, Masoge and Van Vuuren (2004:3) the DoBE is expecting full value for the investment in this training. Questions are therefore being asked about the effectiveness of this training. Stakeholders of education all want to know if these professional development programmes really lead to demonstrated results; they want to know if they make any difference. If they do, what evidence is there to show any improvement?

Despite the questions posed, school principals have to guide their schools through the increasing challenges posed by the various stakeholders. They have a duty to meet the curriculum standards that are expected from them; they have a duty to meet the achievement benchmarks set up for them by the employing authorities and they have a duty to satisfy other policy directives from the various stakeholders of education (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003:2).

Broad and Newstrom in Van der Westhuizen et al. (2004:4) estimate that forty per cent of the contents of professional development programmes are transformed immediately after the presentation of the programmes, while twenty-five per cent would still be applied six months later after the presentation of *the programme* and only fifteen per cent at the end of the year. Much literature pays much attention to features of a good professional developmental programme. These features include, among others; ensuring that the professional development programmes have been designed to suit the context in which the principals find themselves (Van der Westhuizen *et al.*, 2004:4). Little attention seems to be paid to professional developmental programmes that would pay attention to the assumptions, values and

beliefs. (Van der Westhuizen et al., 2004:4; Leithwood & Rihl, 2003:4-5, Hallinger, 2005:233, Guskey, 1995:4-7, Mestry & Grobler, 2007:130-131; Curr, Drysdale & Mulford, 2007:20-20).

The interest in the proposed study initially arose when, as a principal in Limpopo Province in South Africa, I attended one of the meetings convened by the Circuit Manager for principals. The objective of the meeting was to analyse the 2009 Grade 12 results. To my surprise some of the secondary schools in the circuit had consistently been declared ineffective schools by the LDoE. This was because the same schools had achieved less than fifty (50) per cent in the Grade 12 results (fifty per cent was a benchmark put by the LDoE with which, if a secondary school performed below it, such a secondary school was declared ineffective). Many parents, teachers, learners and communities in South Africa regard the end of the year matriculation results as a straightforward measure of a school effectiveness or lack of it. Singh and Manser (2002) endorse this view when they say that whether “we like it or not, school results in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) are seen by parents and politicians as the most important indicator of school effectiveness.”

At the end of the meeting referred to I met with some of the principals of the ineffective schools and asked how many years in a row their schools had been declared ineffective. The principals indicated at least three years. I asked the principals if they had always attended the management training programmes conducted by the LDoE to empower them regarding school leadership and management. The principals answered in the affirmative. I decided to search for possible reasons which led these affected schools throughout South Africa to be consistently declared ineffective whereas the DoBE invests so much money in the training programmes to assist the schools to enhance their leadership and management capabilities.

Virtually every developed country has a policy to address schools experiencing persistent failure. According to Fullan (2000:17) failing or ineffective schools get what he calls “turnaround treatment”. Starting in 1997, England was the first country to focus on identifying and taking action in relation to schools that were deemed ineffective.

Through my studies I also noted that South Africa has over the past decade consistently underperformed in terms of international benchmarks at primary school level. I noted that the quality of learning in schools has been of concern for some time (Motala *et al*, 2010). Motala *et al*, 2010, states that in 1999 South Africa is one of the 38 countries that took part in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) tests in literacy and numeracy. This study was conducted by the International Study Centre (ISC) at Boston College. Results showed that South African learners were among the lowest on the scale in terms of their actual achievement levels. The studies furthermore point out that the most recent Grade 6 Systemic Evaluation Report (SER) resulted in similar findings and highlighted just how serious the problem of quality is in South African education. (Motala *et al.*, 2010) reports that the result of the study indicated a national mean score of 38% for South African learners in Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT); a 27% in Mathematics and 41% in Natural Sciences.

Given the consistent under-performance of schools and the fact that education departments have invested much in the management training of school principals, the question arises whether there could be a different explanation for this trend. It may be that the professional development programmes that are conducted for South African principals are not producing the desired results. Clark (2000:131) refers to professional educator development as *a process that involves the development or strengthening of three main aspects in educators*. These aspects are knowledge, skills and attitudes. Clark (2000:131) contends that *knowledge* (the “know”) and *skill* (the “do”) development overlap with the functional development of the educator while *attitudes* is seen as the second dimension of training. Clark (2009; 131) contends that the attitudinal aspect addresses the assumptions, values and beliefs of people. Very often professional development is focused on providing trainees with new knowledge and skills without addressing the deeper lying assumptions, values and beliefs. The problem is that we cannot readily see the assumptions, values and beliefs of people that influence behaviour (Nieuwenhuis & Potvin, 2005; Matthews & Crow, 2003:145). In other words, often we do not know or understand why people behave in the way they do. Much like the ears of the hippo in the water, the observable behaviour of people is just a small part of who they are. The larger parts

(their assumptions, values and beliefs) are hidden below the surface. Very little research has been conducted in South Africa to explore and understand the assumptions, values and beliefs held by school principals. However, Bussey (2006:1) suggests that school leaders' personal values and beliefs play an important role in leadership decision-making and instructional leadership.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The research question that will guide this study is what are the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management? The purpose is to explore the possible link between the assumptions, values and beliefs of principals and the performance of schools. To be able to answer this overarching question, the following sub-questions are addressed:

What management training have school principals received and what aspects are covered in these training programmes? This question deals with the knowledge and skills of training.

What do school principals perceive to be the main challenges faced by them in managing their schools? This question in part investigates their assumptions about their own role and their beliefs about other people (learners, educators and the community).

What are their perceptions regarding what it means to be a school principal? In asking this question I want to explore their own values and beliefs about leadership and management.

What personal aims do they have for their schools and how do these aims resonate with the training that they have received? In asking this question I want to establish the relationship between the principals' own assumptions, values and beliefs and its possible relationship with the training received.

In the light of the problem statement formulated above, the general aim of this study is to explore the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding their

school leadership and management and to find out if the professional development programmes they have received had any influence on their leadership and management. In order to achieve the general aim above, the following objectives need to be realised:

Determining the influence the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals have on their leadership and management.

Determining how the training the principals receive has any influence on their assumptions, values and beliefs on their school leadership and management.

Determining how the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals can be addressed with regard to their leadership and management.

1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study explores the assumptions, values and beliefs of principals regarding school leadership and management. It is undertaken against the backdrop of the majority of South African schools continuing to be ineffective despite the injection of huge financial resources in the leadership and management programmes of principals by the (DoBE). By exploring the deep-seated assumptions, values and beliefs of the participants, half of which represent the ineffective schools and of the other half that represent the performing schools, the study aims to establish whether the assumptions, values and beliefs of principals have a bearing on school leadership and management. If they do, the study will assist the (DoBE) in the planning of their leadership and management programmes. The implementation of programmes that take the assumptions, values and beliefs of principals into consideration will hopefully translate into improved performance by the majority of South African schools. The researcher therefore hopes that the results of the study will add value to how leadership and management programmes should be planned in South Africa. The main contribution this study makes is to explore a possible link between deeply held assumptions, values and beliefs and the underperformance of schools. Through my studies I noted that very little research has to date been

conducted on the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management. The study will also add to the already existing body of research into the principals' assumptions, values and beliefs regarding school leadership and management.

1.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The more deeply embedded our assumptions, values and beliefs, the more fixed are our ideas about the way things should be, and the more powerful are their influence on our behaviour and our professional practice (Matthew & Crow, 2003:144). Many of our assumptions may no longer be true or accurate, yet they can and do influence behaviour and professional practice. To influence management practices in schools, such as guiding principals or educators into practices that will improve their schools, means that their assumptions, values and beliefs should be addressed in some relevant and meaningful way. Real transformation starts by addressing the root causes of a problem. Too many people are trying to work on the symptoms (e.g. poor performance of schools) and not with the deeply embedded attitudinal problems (Nieuwenhuis & Potvin, 2005).

Our assumptions, beliefs and values have been developed over many years and have become who we are. Often they are resistant to change and involve the risk of leaving who we are behind and becoming what we were meant to be. It means constructing new meaning based on a significant emotional encounter or event that will lead to a new approach to our professional task. This may be a difficult task. It is therefore possible that training received by principals from ineffective schools does not succeed in addressing these deeper underlying dimensions, thus not bringing about meaningful improvement in these schools. It is for this reason that this study is focused on exploring the assumptions, values and beliefs of principals in schools and to find out if the professional development programmes they have received have had any influence on their assumptions, values and beliefs regarding school leadership and management (Nieuwenhuis & Potvin, 2005).

Buehl and Alexander (2005:697), and Hamre *et al.* (2012:97) contend that understanding the ways in which principals believe is the beginning of dealing with

the three pillars of successful learning – knowledge, skills and attitudes. This view is based on the understanding that beliefs influence the ways principals make their decisions in their management practices. . Pajares, (1992:307) quoting Arthur Combs, maintains that *perhaps the most single cause of a person's success or failure educationally has to do with the question of what he believes about himself*. It is against this background that understanding the belief structures of principals is important and warrants some investigation.

Thompson (2007:93) refers to beliefs as *ideas considered being true and on which people are willing to act*; for example, believing that children can learn (Bush, 2003:156). Beliefs are often difficult to see. This is because group members in the organisation share and understand them and therefore see no need to articulate them. Many of these beliefs are so deeply embedded in these members that individual members do not know what they are (Bush, 2003:156). Thompson (2007:93) holds the view that beliefs that principals hold as true about their leadership and management of schools, play an important role in the decision-making of their work. If what they learn or experience fit their existing belief system, then it becomes easy for them to accept it. Thompson (2007:93) regards values as *principles an individual considers to be important or desirable*; for example, honest communication. Research in education suggests that values and beliefs of principals strongly influence what they learn and how they learn it. This may mean that the training offered by the DoBE may appear to be ideal but may not be seen in the same light by the principals because it is not in accordance with their values and beliefs (Thompson, 2007: 93)'.

Principals as leaders of schools play an important role in the generation and sustenance of the culture of their schools. Aycan *et al* (2000:5) defines the term *culture* as *common patterns of beliefs, assumptions, values and norms of groups of people*. .As leaders of schools, principals are given the responsibility of communicating the school culture to all the stakeholders of the schools. Bush (2003: 169) refers to values of an individual as *the basic principles and tenets that guide a person's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours*. This means that attitudes are a reflection of what the person likes and dislikes. At school most principals have their own likes

and dislikes (values and beliefs) that arose from their many years of experience in their professional practice. This explains the reason why most principals' assumptions values and beliefs resist the change that they are brought to the in the form of professional development programmes. (Aycaan et al., 2000:6, and Treven & Treven, 2007:29-36).

1.5. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

I have chosen a narrative research study. This design is the most appropriate for this study because it describes real life experiences of principals and their real life stories in naturalistic settings (Punch, 2005:277; Somekh & Lewin, 2006:56). According to Clandinin and Conelly (1994) the narrative metaphor draws attention to the ways in which participants organise their experiences in a story form to make sense of their lives and relationships. Jarvinen (2004) states that the meaning of life cannot be comprehended outside the narrative process: *Life and story are not two separate phenomena. They are part of the same fabric, in that life informs and is informed by the stories.* This genre of research (Henning et al., 2004:124) gathers direct information about participants' present state, past experiences and their environment in an attempt to understand the participant in his/her environment (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1996).

Research indicates for an individual to learn about the inner world of people, one has to listen to the verbal accounts and stories of people as presented by individual narrators about their lived experiences (Creswell, 2007:214). Since the principals' experiences are educational experiences I have found it necessary that such experiences would be better understood if they were studied as narratives.

Polkinghorne (2007:1) regards narrative research as a strategy of inquiry in which a researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks participants to share stories about their lives. Being a school principal myself, I narrate my own story as my own values, beliefs and assumptions are important and I needed to sensitise myself to possible biases and filters that could subjectively cloud my analysis; I had to remain consciously alert to these biases and prevent them from distorting the stories of the principals. The data from the participants and my own story is then retold or re-

storied into a narrative chronology based on particular codes that emerged from the data. In the end I merge views as told by the participants with those of my personal life in a collaborative narrative. Narrative researchers study stories they solicit from others through interviews and written stories. Narrative research uses interplay between interviewer and interviewee to actively construct life stories (Punch, 2005:218; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:198). Through the interrogation and analysis of these narratives deeper lying values, assumptions and beliefs about what it means to be a principal and the influence of the training received could be inferred.

A more detailed discussion of my research design, sampling data collection and analysis is offered in Chapter 3.

1.7 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study took place in secondary schools in a particular Circuit in Limpopo Province. Only six schools were sampled and the participants were the six principals from the same schools. The study focuses on how the participating principals experienced leadership and management. The fact that the study focuses on the experiences of leadership and management by principals of selected schools in a particular province (Punch, 2006:69) means that the findings of the research are not necessarily generalisable to other contexts. It may, however, be that the principals' experiences recounted in my study reflect other principals' experiences elsewhere in the country and indeed in the world. It will hopefully uncover the importance of principals' values, assumptions and beliefs in terms of school transformation or lack of it.

1.8. STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1 serves as the orientation to the study. It sets the background and provides the context of the study. It includes the theoretical framework underpinning this research. It also outlines the research problem and the purpose of the study.

CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2 presents the literature review about the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management from international and South African studies.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 discusses the research design, methodology, data collection, analysis and presentation of data.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the data obtained from the interviews.

CHAPTER 5

This chapter deals with the findings from the data analysis and provides conclusions and recommendations as well as aspects for further research.

1.9 SUMMARY

The first chapter sets the background to the study and its significance. The problem statement is formulated. The theoretical framework underpinning this study is discussed in detail. The next chapter provides literature review on the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management from both international and South African perspectives.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss professional educator development as it applies to school principals. The focus is on what and how important professional educator development is and what should be included in it so that it addresses the values, beliefs and assumptions of school principals' leadership and management. I discuss the three pillars of professional development: knowledge, skills and attitudes. I will discuss trends in professional educator development. I provide an overview of what the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) in South Africa has done in providing professional development to school principals. I will end up with a new Advanced Certificate in Educational leadership (ACE) that has been introduced by the DoE to replace all other management training courses. In my discussion I use the term *leadership* as inclusive of management (Matthew & Crow, 2003:177).

2.2. Defining the term professional educator development

There is no one clear common agreement of what professional educator development entails. Various views have converged to describe its meaning. From the policy makers' perspective, and in particular (Moeini, 2008), professional educator development is a *tool that conveys broad visions, disseminates critical information and provides guidance to educators*. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) describe professional development as an *on-going development programme that focuses on the whole range of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to educate learners effectively*. It refers to the participation of educators or educational leaders in development opportunities in order to be better equipped as educators and educational leaders. The activities in professional development happen throughout the career of educators. During professional development the knowledge, skills and competence of the individual educator are enhanced. From the above definitions of professional educator development it is clear that, although the recipients are educators, the ultimate intended beneficiaries are the learners in the classroom.

Guskey (1995:1) regards professional development (PD) as a means to bring about needed change in an organisation. The question as to whether all forms of professional development will bring about the needed change in organisations remains to be seen. As indicated in chapter one, all stakeholders in education would like to know if professional development programmes do make a difference. If they do, the stakeholders would like to see evidence of the needed change. In order to address this question, professional developers recognise that PD must include both organisational development as well as individual development (Guskey, 1995:1).

Professional educator development, according to Burke, Heideman and Heideman (1990:4) offers a process of growth to all professional educators. It is designed to influence their knowledge, attitudes or skills, thus enabling them to create educational concepts and design instructional programmes to improve student learning. It involves adaptations to change with the purpose of modifying instructional activities. It is concerned with personal as well as professional and organisational needs.

It is important to know what professional development programmes are and to evaluate their impact on teacher learning. It is also essential to know the important directions and strategies for extending our knowledge. According to Borko (2004:4) key elements that make up any professional development system are the following: the educators, in this case, the principals, who are the learners in the system; the facilitator, who guides principals as they construct new knowledge and practice and the context in which the professional development occurs.

Borko (2004:5) contends that intensive professional development programmes can help principals to increase their knowledge and change their instructional practices. According to Earley and Bubb (2004:3) professional educator development refers to *any professional development activities engaged in by educators which enhance their knowledge and skills and enable them to consider their attitudes and approaches to the education of children, with a view to improving the quality of teaching and learning process*. Earley and Bubb (2004:4) continue to say that professional development of a principal starts with his/her initial teacher training,

continues with his/her in-service training, throughout his/her career as a principal, and concluding with preparation for retirement.

There are various forms that professional development may take. According to Mathibe (2007:523), these forms may include workshops and presentations skill demonstration, on-site training, networking, etc. Training may also involve support by an expert or experienced employee on job processes in an organisation. Training may as well involve providing employees with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to perform a particular job better.

2.3. Trends in professional educator development

Leithwood and Riehl (2003:1) claim that in these times of heightened concern for student learning, school leaders are being held accountable for how well teachers teach and how much students learn. They must respond to complex environments and serve all students well. Leithwood and Riehl (2003:2) further say scratch the surface of an excellent school and you are likely to find an excellent principal. Peer into a failing school and you will find weak leadership. The above quotations depict the extent to which the importance of school leadership is held (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003:4) view school leadership in the following ways:

Ainscow, (1996:8) is of the view that leaders do not have to impose goals on their followers, but have to work with others in order to create a shared sense of purpose and direction. Leithwood & Riehl, (2003:3) support the above view by saying that leaders have to work through and with other people. This means that leaders have to create an atmosphere that will be conducive for others to be effective in the performances of their duties. (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003:3). The views expressed above means that leadership is more of a function than a role. It further means that although leadership is always put in a particular person in a position of formal authority, leadership may be performed by any person in the school (Ainscow, 1996:8; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003: 3).

Research has shown that in many countries the following is the reality of the situation: it is not easy to attract qualified candidates to the position of principalship;

opportunities for training principals are insufficient; professional development programmes are not well-co-ordinated; obstacles to career pathing and satisfaction have increased and schools experience the departure of many committed educators at their earlier age than would previously have been expected (Petzko *et al.*, 2002 in Chapman, 2005:2):

At the same time, Chapman (2005:2) is concerned that although there appears to be no shortage of potential principals, there are concerns about the quality of those who would occupy those principalship roles and about whether the structures and cultures within which leaders would work, and through which they would be trained, are sufficient

Leithwood & Riehl (2003: 2) share the concern articulated by Chapman above by contending that quality education requires well qualified and experienced principals who would stay longer in schools. The challenge is that principals with good qualifications, good experience and good expertise are exiting the education system. Both Leithwood & Riehl: (2003:2) and Chapman (2005:5) identified the following as some of the reasons for principal mortality: poor working conditions; too much work load; poor salary scales; the increased amount of accountability principals have to deal with in their work and the increased demands of principals' work on individual lives and their personal responsibilities

Chapman (2005:8) is of the view that the roles and responsibilities of the principals have increasingly become complex and multifaceted in nature. He cites recent educational reforms that have added to the complexity of principalship and that demand that principals need new kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes. He argues that the change in and intensification of a principal's role have not always been accompanied by the provision of the necessary professional development programmes to support the principals in their new challenges. Chapman (2005:8) states that studies on principal turnover have found that there is a need for adopting new approaches to conceptualising the role of the principal and alternative strategies for redesigning and restructuring the position of the principal across the school.

Chapman (2005:8) identified different models which principals may adopt. The first is the co-principal model; the second is the principal/business manager model; the third is the multi-principal model; the fourth is the principal/associate model and the fifth is the principal/educational specialist model. .

Research studies have identified characteristics of effective leadership programmes that will assist school principals in the following roles (Blankstein, 2004:55; Griffith, 1999:208; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003:5-6): Developing a mission statement for the school; Believing that all students can achieve success; Ensuring that intervention strategies are in place; Ensuring that teaching takes place; Using different instruments, including the use of data to guide decision-making processes of the school and continuous improvement; Involving all stakeholders of education, including the community, in enhancing the quality of education at school; and Ensuring that there is sustained leadership capacity building of all employees;

Professional development of leaders, in the case of these study principals, according to Chapman (2005:18), has to take into consideration three things. They are the needs of individual principal, the expectations of the employing authorities and the appropriate knowledge relevant to top learning in the field of leadership and management. The assumptions, values and beliefs of principals need to be taken into consideration by those who are responsible for the development of professional development programmes of principals. This means that principals have to be allowed to have a say in the development of the professional development programmes. This would ensure that their aspirations would be represented in those programmes.

Having discussed what professional educator development for principals, entails, it is now necessary to focus on the three pillars of successful learning.

2.4. The three pillars of successful learning

Prawat (1992:360) contends that what individuals accept as knowledge is relative. This means that the acceptance of what is knowledge depends on the cultural context of those to which that knowledge is being articulated. . Prawat (1992:360)

further contends that knowledge claims are the result of a social process. The challenge is that while knowledge claims can be defended, they cannot be proved. Thus, any acceptance of knowledge claims must be regarded as relative. When there are no longer good reasons for accepting knowledge claim, Prawat (1992:360) suggests that they must be rejected.

Anderson (1993:10) divides knowledge into two categories. He calls the first category declarative knowledge, and the second one procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge is qualified as knowledge *what* and knowledge *how*. This is the type of knowledge with which, for example, an individual may seek to know the time of the day. While declarative knowledge is knowledge about something, procedural knowledge entails knowing how to do something. Prawat, (1992:376) regards procedural knowledge as the knowledge of *how* things or systems work. A person may, for example, looking at a clock, know what time it is but may not know how the same clock is made up. The same may apply to a principal who may have knowledge of school management as provided in the management and leadership professional development programmes but have no idea of how to put it into practice at school. Paris, Lipson and Wixson (1983:312) introduce a third type of knowledge, known as conditional knowledge. This is the type of knowledge that has to do with the conditions when, why and under which declarative and procedural knowledge has to be used. A principal may, for example, may have knowledge on school management practices and how to carry them out but be unsure as to when, why and under what conditions a particular management practice will be appropriate. In this case the principal may rely on his beliefs, attitude and values to opt for a specific management practice.

Pajares (1992:312) is of the view that beliefs underlie both declarative and procedural knowledge. As far as declarative knowledge is concerned, for an individual to know the time on the clock, that individual will require belief in his/her senses. In the case of procedural knowledge, an example of a principal having to discipline a learner who has committed an offence will be appropriate. The principal may start by looking at the nature of offence committed by the learner and the type of the learner involved in committing such an offence. As the principal tries to think of

the appropriate corrective measure for the learner, the principal will have to be faced with a number of judgements to make. These judgements may depend on the principal's belief system.

Lewis (1996:549) argued that our belief system gives rise to our knowledge and, that our knowledge helps us to choose our values. Pintrich (1990:826) points out that both *knowledge and beliefs influence our thinking and therefore our behavioural patterns*.

Nieuwenhuis (2007:130) differentiates between knowledge and character formation. According to him, knowledge and competence (skills) are acquired through continuous study and experience. Character development or formation of an individual is achieved through interaction with others and through the fact that an individual consciously or unconsciously chooses as he or she lives through experiences and reflects on them. For example, one can justify why honesty, diligence, courage and a positive outlook are important but we cannot make people honest, courageous or optimistic. This means that even if society plays a role in "who you are"; in the final analysis we choose to live or reject each of these traits.

Buehl and Alexander (2005:697), and Hamre *et al.* (2012:97) contend that understanding the ways in which principals believe is the beginning of dealing with the three pillars of successful learning – knowledge, skills and attitudes. This view is based on the understanding that beliefs influence the ways principals make their decisions in their management practices. . Pajares, (1992:307) quoting Arthur Combs, maintains that *perhaps the most single cause of a person's success or failure educationally has to do with the question of what he believes about himself*. It is against this background that understanding the belief structures of principals is important and warrants some investigation.

Thompson (2007:93) believes that it is very difficult to differentiate knowledge between knowledge and beliefs. On the other hand, Zheng (2009:74) claims that beliefs have four features, namely; existential presumption, alternativity, affective and evaluative loading, and episodic structure. Existential presumptions have to do with the personal truths that every person holds. These are things that people always

take for granted. They are things that people do not even question. This means they are beliefs that are deeply held by an individual person and are not universal. These beliefs are so personal that an individual holding them is not easily persuaded to abandon them. An example of such beliefs is when a principal believes that educators are failing learners because they are simply lazy. Pajares (1992:309).is of the view that existential presumption is personal truth that is existing beyond the control of an individual's knowledge. People have to believe it because, like Mount Everest, they are there

With regard to alternativity, Nespor (1987:317) maintains that sometimes individuals, for one reason or another, try to create an alternative situation that may be contrary to reality. Nespor gives an example of one student called Skylark, who during her student days had a traumatic experience. Skylark who later became a teacher, tried to create an ideal teaching atmosphere she had fantasised about as a child. Skylark later realised that her fantasies were carried out with teaching practices that were not consistent with effective classroom instruction. Her lessons ended without being finished and they were characterised by interruptions .The same experience that Skylark had might have happened with some of the participating principals in the current study, who as students went through traumatic experiences and who attempted to create the ideal school management environment they had fantasised about as children. Because their fantasies were carried out with school management practices inconsistent with effective school management procedures, they ended up with their schools becoming ineffective.

With regard to affective and evaluative loading, Matthew and Crow (2003:14) contend that beliefs have stronger affective and evaluative powers than knowledge. It is also interesting to note that affect of beliefs operates independently from the cognition associated with knowledge. Knowledge of a domain for example, differs from feelings about a domain. This distinction is similar to that between self-esteem and self-concept, between feelings of self-worth and knowledge of self. It may be that principals often manage their schools according to the values they hold about their schools. As with self-efficacy beliefs, this combination of affect and evaluation can determine the energy that principals expend on their management practices.

As far as episodic structure is concerned, Nieuwenhuis (2007:13) argues that beliefs, just the same as values, draw their power from events or episodes that took place in the past which had a lasting impact on the memory of individuals. Nieuwenhuis is supported by Pajares, (1992:310) who states that *unsystematic personal experience, taking the form of photographic images residing in long term memory, plays a key role in the process of creating and recreating knowledge*. Nespor (,1987:317) maintains that it may be that some of the participating principals, before they became principals, had experiences with very influential principals who left a lasting impact on their memories which later influenced them in their leadership management practices.. .

Prawat (1992:362) when differentiating between belief systems and knowledge systems maintains that the former, unlike the latter, do not need a group of people to declare that they are valid and appropriate. Beliefs are not easily changeable. When they do change, it does not require an argument or reason to change them. They change by a conversion of gestalt shift. This may explain the reason why professional development programmes for principals do not have the necessary impact to change their leadership and management practices, thereby enabling them to turn their schools into effective ones. It may therefore, not be incorrect to conclude that beliefs have more influence than knowledge in determining how principals organise and define their management tasks and that beliefs are stronger predictors of principals' behaviour than knowledge.

Having discussed the powerful effect beliefs have on the knowledge system of school principals, it is important to understand clearly what beliefs and their related sub-structures such as attitudes, values and assumptions are. The following discussion focuses on them.

2.5 Defining beliefs, attitudes, values and assumptions

Belief, attitude, value and assumption are some of the most frequently used terms in the social/behavioural sciences. They are also some of the most incorrectly used terms. Often an author will fail to say exactly what he means by these labels, wrongly

assuming that all readers will have common definitions (Rokeach, 1968:214). For the purpose of this research I prefer to use the following definitions:

Zheng (2009:74) defines beliefs as psychologically held understandings, premises or propositions felt to be true. Zheng (2009:74) continues to say that beliefs are the permeable and dynamic structures that act as filters through which new knowledge and experience are screened for meaning. From its definition, it is clear that beliefs serve to guide individuals in defining and understanding the world and themselves.

Rokeach (1968:113) defines *beliefs as any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase, I believe that... "*

Bussey (2006:2) refers to beliefs *as those things that an individual accepts as true.*

Thompson (2007:93) considers beliefs to be *ideas considered to be true and on which people are willing to act, for example believing that children can learn.* Beliefs are often difficult to see. This is because group members in an organisation share and understand them and therefore see no need to articulate them. Many of these beliefs are so deeply embedded in these members that individual members do not know what they are. According to Thompson (2007:93) a belief is therefore *held as truth by the one holding the belief and does not require external validation. If what we learn or experience fits our existing belief system, we easily accept it.*

Our belief structure shapes our attitude towards people and objects. If we believe that snakes are dangerous, we will treat all snakes as dangerous and will either avoid or kill them. If we hold a particular belief about a certain group of people we will treat all people belonging to that group in a similar manner. Attitudes thus stem from our beliefs. Rokeach (1970:112) refers to an attitude as *a relatively enduring organisation of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner.* According to Rokeach (1970:204) attitudes are thought of as being associated with some object or class of object. The fact that behaviour is performed within the context, of some situation, an individual's behaviour will in part be determined by his attitude toward that situation as well as his attitude toward the object. The principal's attitude towards a particular professional development, for

example, may be quite different depending on the situation – whether the professional development programme being conducted is taking into consideration assumptions, beliefs and values of school principal or not.

Bussey (2006: 2) refers to values as conceptions of the desirable that motivate behaviour”. Nieuwenhuis (2007) defines values as *abstract internalised conceptions of what is important, and [that] direct your choices in how you will behave in a certain situation and are closely related, but not the same as beliefs*. Rokeach (1970:204) identifies two classes of values: instrumental values and terminal values. Instrumental values, according to him, deal with preferred modes of conduct (means) such as honesty, courage and tenderness. Terminal values deal with preferred end states of existence such as a comfortable life, a world at peace and salvation. Each type of value may be organised into a value system. Value systems guide the formation of attitudes and attitude systems that are focused upon objects or situations that in turn are composed of sets of beliefs.

Bussey (2006:7) is of the view that the following values and beliefs are essential to effective instructional leadership: work orientation; beliefs about human potential; beliefs about the purpose of the schools; improvement orientation, decision-making orientation; sources of motivation and power orientation.

In terms of Paul and Elder (2012), assumptions are what we take for granted without questioning or reflecting on them. The assumptions may form part of our belief system but are based on our experiences and learning and, contrary to belief, may alter as we engage in new experiences or learning. Just like beliefs, assumptions also influence our attitudes and the manner in which we deal with others. Assumptions may be sound or unjust. If they are unfounded or formed on poor information or knowledge, they can act to our own disadvantage. People, and for that matter, school principals, often act on the basis of their personal assumptions. If I assume that other people do not like me, it will determine the way in which I treat them, whether that assumption is just or not.

From the exposition offered it is clear that values, assumptions and beliefs stand in close relation to one another and often act in tandem to determine our attitudes. It is

of course possible that there may be a disjuncture between the components. For example, one study found a group of individuals who reported holding strong attitudes favouring civil rights while at the same time placing a low rating on the importance of the value *equality*. When subjects were made aware of this incongruity they elevated the importance of equality to be more consistent with their civil rights attitudes. This means that it may happen that the values promoted by the professional educator development programmes meant for the school principals are in conflict with their value systems. If this is so, some measure of balance is needed. This may be achieved by establishing what their value systems are and incorporating them in professional educator development programmes (Rokeach, 1970:204). Nieuwenhuis (2007:10) contends that all beliefs, like values, have a cognitive component representing knowledge, an affective component capable of arousing emotion, and a behavioural component activated when action is required. When clusters of beliefs are organised around an object or situation, and predisposed to action, this holistic organisation becomes an attitude. Beliefs may also become values, which house the evaluative, comparative, and judgmental functions of beliefs and replace predisposition with an imperative to action.

Teacher cultures develop within educational institutions. These cultures are the product of the beliefs, values and characteristics of the staff, students and the community that combine to make up the shared understandings, the rules and norms that are “the way we do things here”. Because the beliefs and values of people in a school shape the school culture, the effect of school culture on school improvement is significant (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992:43). School principals may have an important influence on the school culture through the sort of management practices they use and by the values and beliefs their actions encourage (Matthews & Crow, 2003:14). It may as well be that the professional development programmes that principals attend are not in line with their school cult.

According to Fullan and Hargreaves (1992:44) beliefs, values and assumptions are created through a process of enculturation and social construction. They maintain that this cultural transmission has three components: namely; enculturation, education and schooling. Enculturation involves the process whereby individuals are

involved in learning throughout their lives and includes their assimilation, through individual observation, participation and imitation of all cultural elements present in their personal world. In the case of this study, the participating principals assimilated some of the practices from the influential principals of the past by observing them and sometimes imitating their practices.

In support of the above view Nieuwenhuis (2007:13) cites examples of children who look at the example set by others and imitate their behaviour. This means that we learn certain rules and appropriate them as the accepted behaviour of our culture. Nieuwenhuis (2007:14) maintains that as we grow older and mature we begin to impart unique personal meaning to the values and principles that underpin the rules that we had learnt to obey. In the words of Fullan and Hargreaves (1992:40) *the things that happen to us throughout our lives have an influence on the sort of people we become, upon our perspectives, understandings and attitudes, our beliefs and values, our ideologies and philosophies, and the actions we take*. School principals, like children, have examples of other school principals who have become their role models from their days when they were still very young, whose behaviour they want to imitate when they are in the position of school principals.

In support of the above argument Rath (2001:385) contends that beliefs about being a principal are well established long before one becomes a principal. They are developed through the process of observation that takes place during the many years a person spends as a learner at school. This observation includes questions such as what will it take to for one to be an effective principal. The observation also includes expectations such as how both learners and teachers ought to behave. Florio-Ruane and Lensmire (1990) caution that although some of the principals' beliefs are in line with effective management practices, others are not. This is because holders of those beliefs think that they will not face the problems encountered by other school principals. The reality of the situation is that they will.

Pajares (1992:316) regards education as the directed and purposeful learning, that is either formal or informal, that has as its main task as bringing behaviour in line with cultural requirements. Through education, which the participating principals received during their student days, they learnt certain behavioural patterns that later

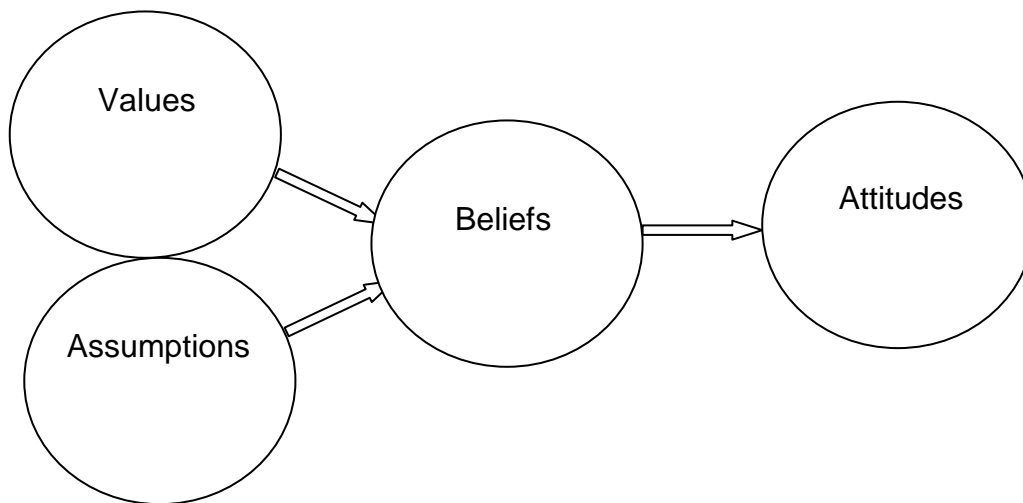
shaped their behaviour. This behaviour is now reflected in their leadership and management practices.

Schooling, according to Pajares,(1992:316).is *the specific process of teaching and learning that takes place outside the home*. This means that as the participating principals incorporated other peoples' ideas and mores, beliefs, values and assumptions were created. These beliefs, values and assumptions became part and parcel with these principals to an extent that to change them would be a daunting task.

The discussion above means it will be very difficult to change beliefs that became part of individuals when they were still young. This is because these beliefs, values and assumptions had become so deeply embedded in the individuals such that they had become the individuals' way of life. (Blankstein, 2004:33; Zheng, 2009:74). This means that the professional educator development programmes that the school principals receive now may not have the desired results for most of them because they have reached a stage where they can no longer be influenced.

An important aspect with beliefs, according to Rokeach (1970:203) is that they are not the same in terms of their intensity and power. The more central a belief are, the more they will resist change. A belief structure is like of an atom. At the centre of the system – the nucleus – are primitive beliefs about the self and reality. Removed from this nucleus at varying distances are constellations of less important beliefs that the individual has acquired from others. At the periphery of the system are “inconsequential beliefs” dealing with matters of taste with few connections with other beliefs. The more central a belief the more resistant it will be to change, and the more central the position of a changed belief, the greater will be the effect of the change upon the other beliefs in the system (Blankstein, 2004:33; Rokeach, 1970:203). This means that if what the school principals believe and value to be right is at the centre of their belief and value system, it will always be very difficult to change. It may as well be that the professional development programmes that the school principals are exposed to, are regarded as inconsequential and far removed from the centre of their belief systems and thereby as not being taken seriously.

Diagram 2.1: Belief Substructures/Web (Assumptions, Values and Attitudes)
Adapted from Rokeach (1970:203).



The structure above represents belief substructure or web. At the centre are the beliefs which are connected to values, assumptions and attitudes.

From the above structure, it is understood that if a central belief is changed, other beliefs within one's belief system are also affected. It has been argued that beliefs that are linked closely to one's ego – sense of self – are more important than others. For example, a principal may say to his or her teachers: "I am not criticising you, I am criticising your teaching". It seems very likely that some principals' beliefs about school management practice are very central beliefs and as such resist change (Thompson, 2007:93).

According to Blankstein, (2004:34) supported by Prawat, (1992:357). it is very difficult to change people' beliefs. There are several criteria that have been identified that have to be met in order to change peoples' beliefs. The first criterion is that people must, in one way or another be dissatisfied with their existing beliefs; the second is that they must find the alternative beliefs very attractive to them; third, they must find it easier to connect the new beliefs with the older ones.

As far as belief change is concerned, Posner et al. (1982) suggest the use of the concepts of assimilation and accommodation as advocated by Piaget... Posner *et al.* (1982:211) regard assimilation as the process whereby new information is absorbed

into the existing belief system.. Accommodation, on the other hand, takes place when the existing belief system has to be replaced because the new information cannot be absorbed into it.

Raths (2001:386) points out that in order to effect belief change in school principals, three central questions have to be addressed. The first relates to what technologies are available for school principals to change their beliefs; the second relates to what ethics comes into play concerning the beliefs of school principals, and the third, what beliefs should we teach the principals.

In tackling the question of what technologies are available for school principals to change their belief system, Raths (2001:386) recommends, among others, the following: belief as a criterion for employment as a school principal. This means that as a requirement for assuming a principalship post, the Department of Education can specify the beliefs that it holds as important that the prospective principal should have.

The other technology could be to confront the school principal with dissonance. Dissonance theory suggests that school principals are engaged in activities that arouse dissonance. One such activity is “past experiences” colliding with new cognitions (Raths, 2001:386). Another technology (Chapman, 2005:21; Prawat, 1992:375) is apprenticeship experience. In this technology, a new principal is supported by an expert principal in order to get used of good practices in school leadership and management. It is hoped that through this support, the new principal would absorb the correct beliefs.

Raths (2001:389) is of the view that if we are to systematically change the beliefs of principals receiving professional development programmes, a number of questions have to be answered. According to him changing the beliefs of trainee school principals looks like a hopeless task. For this reason Raths (2012:389) changes the focus. He argues that if trainee school principals’ beliefs are not in agreement with those presented through the professional development programme, and these beliefs are not for the benefit of their schools, efforts must be made to have the principals change their beliefs. Katz and Raths (1985:301) presents the notion of

dispositions. She suggests that beliefs can be regarded as *pre-dispositions* – or what is termed *assumptions* in my research. The term disposition is used to summarise all actions observed. She suggests that the term dispositions would help us to defocus our attention to beliefs themselves. The objective with this approach would be to strengthen dispositions that already exist in our trainee principals.

The dispositions that may be strengthened are the following: the school principal as a professional is characterised by three elements. The first element is that of knowledge. Raths, (2001:387) is of the view that principals as professionals, do not only act with knowledge, but also value it. In order to strengthen the disposition of principals, the knowledge that they possess has to be valued. The second element is that of collegueship. With this element, Raths (2001:287) maintains that for school to consolidate their leadership and management practices, they have to consult one another on matters related to their work. In that way trainee principals would assist one another in working for common. The third element is that of advocating for clients in the principals' care. This element calls on principals to take care of all the people under their care. According to Raths (2001:387) the people under the principals' care include the teachers, the learners, the parents the poor, etc.

Another aspect, according to Chapman (2005:16) that concerns the managerial aspect of principals is that when they assume duty most of them do so with their own well-established theories about their work. The classrooms, the learners and the teachers and other practices in the school are not new to them. The result may be that when they assume duty, they approach it with their belief systems. reality of their everyday lives may continue largely unaffected by their new jobs, as may their beliefs. Most of these principals chose the career because they had positively identified with it. Instead of approaching the work as a challenge, most of them become complacent and continue their work with the normal practices as they are used to them (Chapman, 2005:16) .

Having noted the importance of beliefs, values and attitudes of school principals, it is inevitable that for any professional educator development programme to succeed, it must take them into consideration. This view is supported by Salazar (2007:21) who

contends that *practising principals who are charged with improving their schools are the group that are most familiar with the continual and changing demands placed on them*. Buckley (1985: 30) supports the above view by stating that *it is very useful to discuss with participants not only 'what' they wish to learn during their training but 'how' they wish to learn it*. He further states such *mature and experienced adults often have clear views on their leadership needs*. In support of this view Atkin (1996:4) maintains that the challenge for those involved in the formulation of professional developmental policy, is to invite school principals to make their in-puts that would include their assumptions, values and beliefs in that policy. The challenge therefore, for the policy-makers is to include school principals in the policy formulation for schools.

The following is a diagrammatical representation of leadership for direction and control versus leading for coordination and support as adapted from Atkin (1996:5).

Diagram 2.2: Representation of professional development programmes dictated to school principals without taking into consideration their beliefs, values and assumptions

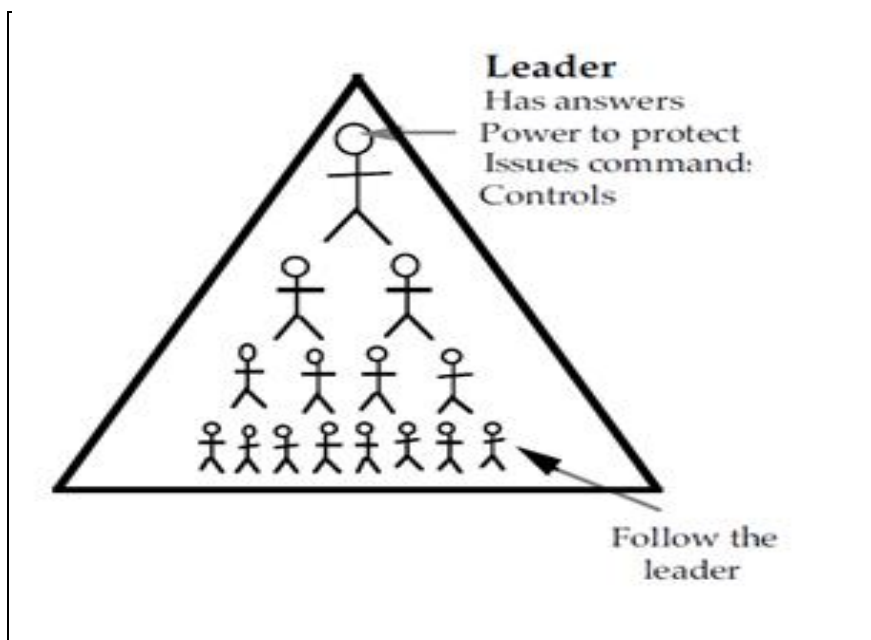
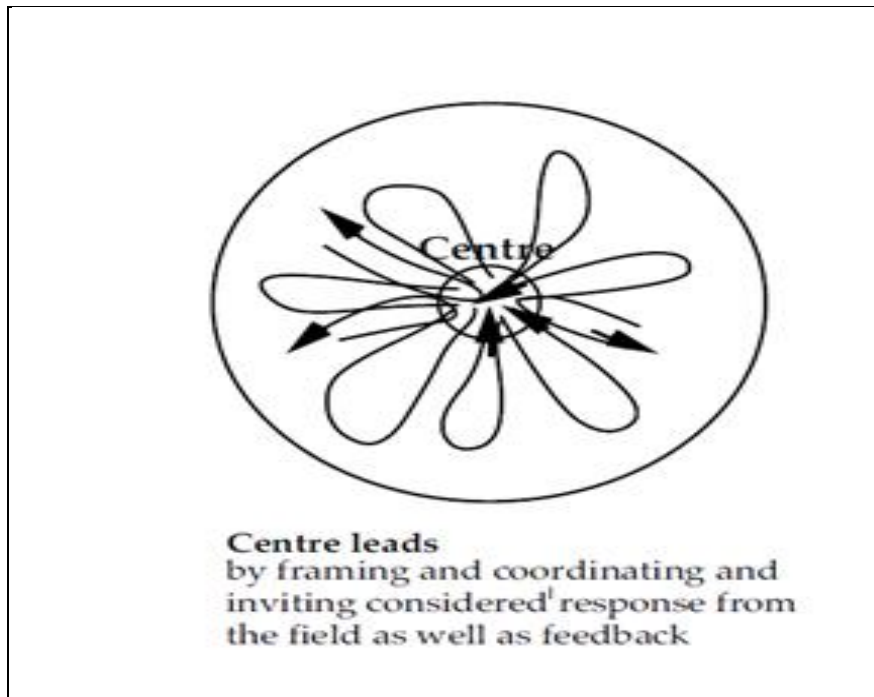


Diagram 2.3: Representation of a professional development programme that considers inputs from the school principals, thus taking into consideration their beliefs, values and assumptions



Adapted from Atkin (1996:5).

2.6. Management training in South Africa - brief overview since 1998

Realising that principals are not adequately trained to perform their managerial duties Hallinger (2005:230) indicates that there appears to be a new global interest among government agencies towards training principals to be instructional leaders. In South Africa the interest in training principals is shown in the Tirisano document (2000) where one of the priorities of the Department of Education (DoE) is the management capacity-building of school principals.(Implementation Plan for Tirisano, 2000a) As a result of this document all nine provinces in South Africa embarked on extensive management training programmes for principals.

The then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, in his statement – *Call to Action: Mobilising Citizens to build a South African and Training System for the 21st Century*, (www.education.gov.za), the minister calls upon all South Africans, in the spirit of Tirisano, which means togetherness, to join hands in shouldering the most urgent challenges in education; among others, the under-performance of many institutions. The minister's focus was the period 2000 to 2004. During this period the minister earmarked the implementation of nine priorities, which according to him, were needed to *accelerate service delivery and enhance the accountability of the public service* (Implementation Plan for Tirisano, 2000a). While mention of all the priorities may be important, for the purpose of this discussion, mention is made of one priority only, namely school effectiveness and educator professionalism ((Implementation Plan for Tirisano, 2000a).

One of the performance indicators of the priority of school effectiveness and educator professionalism was that members of the teaching personnel that were in school management were supposed to receive capacity-building from the professional development programmes conducted by the DoE (Implementation Plan for Tirisano, 2000a).

The activities put into place to implement leadership and management objectives were; ensuring that schools have appointed principals and heads of department on permanent basis, developing training programmes and materials for school management teams, developing induction programmes and materials for new principals and strength support structures for principals in the provinces (www.education.gov.za).

In 2004, in line with Tirisano, the University of Johannesburg and the Matthew Goniwe School of Governance and Leadership and Management initiated an ACE course in Educational Leadership and Management for principals and for those aspiring to the post of principal. The course aimed to acquaint participants with theories and research in the behavioural sciences that are related to the studies of the organisation. It is a two-year part-time course aimed at providing management and leadership support through a variety of interactive programmes that improve the

students' practice, professional growth and ethos of leadership (Mestry & Singh, 2007:482).

The Tirisano programme was designed to provide participants with the knowledge base and experience to equip them to be effective principals. Principals should have insight into aspects such as dealing with school improvement, teaching and learning, legislation and policy issues relating to schools, and staff development (Mestry & Singh, 2007:482).

Most of the principals were happy with the ACE programme, especially its practical aspects. They felt strongly about the cohort sessions they attended, where they had the opportunity to meet and discuss with colleagues issues affecting them as school managers. Although the research by Mestry and Singh (2007:487) suggests that the ACE course can give effect to a coherent and sustainable approach to building leadership and management capacity throughout the educational system, no mention is made of its impact on the matriculation results. The ACE programmes are silent on the role played by the assumptions, values and beliefs of school managers with regard to their leadership and management of schools.

According to Van der Westhuizen (2010:5) the management training of educational leaders comprises two aspects, namely basic management training (the academic-professional component) followed by a management development programme (in-service training). Training institutions are responsible for the basic aspects of management training. The responsibility for the management development programmes is handled by the various education departments.

With regard to the nature of a basic management training programme, the view of Van der Westhuizen (2010:6) is that 90% of the courses cover a variety of topics that contribute very little towards developing the manager's skills for his or her primary leadership role. The drawback, according to Van der Westhuizen (2010:6), is that a wrong approach is applied to the training and the development of a leader group in South Africa and in most cases basic management training courses last only a couple of days as short courses. Van der Westhuizen (2010:6) recommends that the various departments should pay particular attention to the compilation of a total

management development programme (TMDP). The TMDP should link with the basic management of training institutions but should have its own unique character. The problem with management training discussed above is that it is silent on the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management.

Having discussed management training in South Africa since 1998, with special reference to Tirisano, it is necessary to discuss how the Department of Education (DoE) conceptualises management training with special reference to the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in Leadership and Management.

2.7. ACE in Leadership and Management

In 2007 the Department of Education (DoE) introduced a new threshold qualification for aspiring school principals as part of its wider strategy to improve educational standards. The course is an Advanced Certificate in Education: School Leadership (ACE). From its inception in 2007 the course has been tested nationally with candidates, including serving principals as well as members of the School Management Teams (SMTs) (Bush et al., 2009: iv). The ACE is being delivered by universities through a common framework agreed with the National Department of Education and the National Management and Leadership Committee (NMLC). The first cohort of the field tests involved five universities, namely the universities of Pretoria, Johannesburg, Western Cape, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan and KwaZulu-Natal, as well as the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (Bush et al., 2009:ii).

Tuition is offered mainly through contact sessions that may be done in one or more of the following ways: block teaching over several days; Friday afternoons/evening sessions and Saturday sessions (Bush et al., 2009:iv)

The teaching material is prepared under the auspices of the National Management and Leadership Committee (NMLC). Ndebele (2010) states that ACE school leadership seeks to empower educators to develop skills, knowledge and values in order to improve education delivery in schools. To achieve this, the programme uses mentoring, networking and site-based assessment as its tools. Mentoring is a

distinctive and central feature of the ACE programme. Mentors are responsible for a number of candidates, ranging from nine in the Eastern Cape to 38 in some institutions in the Western Cape. Networking is another principle underpinning the ACE programme. It includes school managers working and learning together in networks or clusters. Another distinguishing feature is site-based assessment. The main assessment tool applied by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is the portfolio, which is intended to include all assignments and school-based documents, student reflection and a research project (Bush et al., 2009:iv; DoE, 2008:1).

The above ideas are in line with examples of best practices. . Fink and Resnick (2001:598) refer to one of these best practices as nested learning communities. With nested learning communities, the school is seen as a learning centre which always strives to provide quality education to its learners. Under its principal, the school is expected to foster the culture of learning and teaching. The school is also expected to provide specialised professional development programmes for all its stakeholder. The other best practice is what Fink and Resnick (2001:598) call inter-visitations and buddying. With this practice, trainee principals are provided with opportunities to increase their own leadership and management capabilities. This they do by offering their schools as learning centres in which learning takes place for all members of the learning community (Chapman, 2005:28).

With regard to school improvement as a result of the introduction of the ACE programme, the research that has been undertaken shows that 75% of the respondents claim that their schools are improving. The secondary school case studies show that only 12% have produced clear improvements in Grade 12 results while performance has declined slightly at 38% and fallen significantly at 50% of them. Although it is not possible to reach firm conclusions on such limited data it is clear that the ACE programme has not led to the short-term gains in Grade 12 results as research has indicated (Bush et al., 2009:iii).

The programme seeks to produce school principals who can apply critical understanding, values, knowledge and skills to their leadership and management practices. The aspects covered in the ACE Leadership programme include

mentoring school managers and developing mentoring programmes (Bipath, 2008:14).

It is important to indicate that the values referred to above are not the same as the values defined earlier in this discussion. They are values entrenched (Beckmann, 2002) in the Bill of Rights contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. They include values such as honesty, teamwork, respect, commitment, etc. (Bipath, 2008:14). The ACE Leadership and Management programme as a professional educator development initiative does not make provision for the assumptions, values and beliefs of principals in their management practices.

2.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to explore what professional development entails and what constitutes good development programmes. I have argued that professional educator development programmes rest on three pillars, namely knowledge, skills and attitudes. Of importance to my research is the third pillar, namely attitude. I have argued that attitude can be seen as the second leg of training and that it addresses the assumptions, values and beliefs of people; that very often training is focused on providing principals with new knowledge and skills without addressing their deeper lying assumptions, values and beliefs. I argued that the problem is that we cannot readily see the assumptions, values and beliefs that influence the behaviour of principals. In other words, often we do not know or understand why they behave as they do. I have indicated that our belief structure shapes our attitude towards people and objects and that the principal's attitude towards a particular professional educator development may be quite different, depending on the situation; for example, whether the professional educator development takes into consideration the assumptions, beliefs and values of school principals or not. The next chapter focuses on the research design and methodology employed in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In Chapter 1 it is indicated that the focus of the study is on *the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding leadership and management*. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research design and methodology used. In Chapter 3 I discuss the qualitative research approach used and the phenomenological design employed to answer the research question. I also discuss the sample of the study, the data collection strategies and data analysis used, and highlight the ethical issues considered for the study. The limitations of the study are outlined.

3.2. Research design

3.2.1. Qualitative approach

Qualitative research, according to Marshall and Rossman (2011:3) is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena with genres which are naturalistic, interpretive, and increasingly critical, and which typically draws on multiple methods of enquiry. Creswell (2009:4) refers to a qualitative research approach as a means for exploring and understanding the meaning the individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. In my study I want to understand the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding leadership and management and qualitative research appears to be the appropriate approach. The qualitative research process, according to Marshall and Rossman (2011:214) involves questions and procedures, and data analysis that inductively builds from the particular to the general themes and the researcher makes interpretations of the meaning of the data.

One of the assumptions underlying qualitative approach is that reality is holistic, multidimensional and ever-changing. This means that reality is not seen as a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed and measured (Merriam, 2009:213). Nieuwenhuis (2007) supports the view that the world is made up of people with their own assumptions, intentions, attitudes, beliefs and values,

and that the way of knowing reality is by exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon – an attempt to see how others have constructed reality by asking about it.

The intention of this study is to enable principals to share their point of view, and to hear their voice. In other words, the focus is on the meaning of events and actions as expressed by the participants. It attempts to explore what is in the participant's mind so as to understand the participant's perspective (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010: 323).

In qualitative research (Patton, 2002:48) the researcher goes into the field -- into the real world of programmes and gets close enough to the people and circumstances to capture what is happening. In this study, the researcher visited the principals in their respective schools. The objective was to immerse myself as the researcher in the natural setting of the principals, by spending time with them in their schools. With this approach it is possible for the researcher to describe and understand both the externally observable behaviours and internal states of principals (their worldview, opinions, values, attitudes and symbolic constructs (Patton, 2002:48). The purpose of qualitative research is therefore more descriptive than predictive. The goal is to understand in depth the viewpoint of the research participant. To this effect, VanderStoep and Johnston (2009:166) are of the view that, realising that all understanding is constructed, different research participants will have different interpretations of their own experience and the social system within which they interact.

The ultimate aim of qualitative research from an interpretivist perspective is to offer a perspective of a situation and to analyse the situation under study to provide insight into the way in which a particular group of people makes sense of their situation or the phenomena they encounter (VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009:166). In the context of this study this approach assisted me in understanding how the principals experience the professional educator development programmes that are conducted by the provincial department of education to enhance their leadership and management practices in schools.

This study is based on interpretivism which has its roots in hermeneutics (the study of the theory and practice of interpretation). One of the strengths of interpretivist research, according to Nieuwenhuis (2011), is the richness and depth of explorations and descriptions it yields. This means that the researcher becomes the instrument through which the data is collected and analysed. The product of qualitative research is usually a narrative report with rich description, vivid and detailed writing (Johnson & Christensen, 2012:377).

Nieuwenhuis (2011) further maintains that the social world does not “exist” independently of human knowledge. Our knowledge and understanding are always limited to the things to which we have been exposed, our own unique experiences and the meanings we have imparted. As we proceed through the research process, our humanness and knowledge inform us and often direct us, and often subtleties such as intuition, values, beliefs or a-priori knowledge influence our understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. To conceive the world therefore as external and independent from our own knowledge and understanding is to ignore the subjectivity of our own endeavours.

For the purposes of the study I had to assume that when the professional educator development programmes are offered to the principals, they already possess a rich set of their own unique assumptions, values and beliefs as well as prior knowledge and experiences that were formed long before they received the training. As was explained in Chapter 2, these may be deep seated assumptions, values and beliefs that not only influence their existing attitudes towards the management of schools, but which will also influence them in their interpretation of the professional educator development programmes offered. In this study it is argued that these pre-assumptions, values and beliefs may be so dearly held that they could create a barrier or filter that may hinder or filter out parts of the training to which they are to be exposed.

3.2.2. A phenomenological study

As this study deals with the act of interpreting utterances of principals during the in-depth interviews in order to understand how they interpret their experiences of

professional educator development programmes means that the study is best located within phenomenology (Schwandt, 2007:135). The field of phenomenology was established by Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl, a German philosopher. Phenomenology refers to *the description of one or more individual's consciousness and experience of a phenomenon* (Johnson & Christensen, 2012:383). By phenomenology Husserl meant the study of how *people describe things and experience them through their senses* (Patton, 2002:105)

Phenomenology insists on a description of everyday life experiences of people in the world. It insists on all experiences that we come across in our daily life as a result of the action of the body. Examples of these experiences include seeing, hearing, feeling, evaluating, judging, believing, etc. With phenomenology, the focus is on attaching meaning to these experiences. Attaching of meaning can be accomplished by certain phenomenological reduction or epoché that entails 'bracketing' or suspending what Husserl calls the "natural attitude". The natural attitude is the everyday assumption of the independent existence of what is perceived and thought about (Schwandt, 2007:225).

The aim of phenomenology is to gain a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences. Its purpose is to describe and understand the essence of lived experiences of individuals who have experienced a particular phenomenon (Lichtman, 2010:75). According to Johnson and Christensen (2012:383) the *purpose of phenomenological research is to obtain a view into the participants' life worlds and to understand their personal meanings*. This means to gain access to individual's life worlds and to describe their experiences of a phenomenon.

Patton (2002: 104) maintains that the focus of phenomenology is on exploring how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning, and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon – how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it and talk about it with others

Johnston & Christensen (2012:385) are of the view that phenomenological researchers assume that there is some commonality in human experience, and that these researchers seek to understand this commonality. This commonality of experience is called an essence, or invariant structure, of the experience (a part of the experience that is common or consistent across the research participants). An essence is an essential characteristic of a phenomenon being experienced (Johnston & Christensen, 2012:385). The search for the essences of a phenomenon is probably the defining characteristics of phenomenology as research technique. According to Slavin (2007:150) conducting phenomenological study is most appropriate when the researcher has a complex situation or setting he wants to understand in depth and also wants to investigate others' perspectives of that situation. It allows the researcher to determine whether there are patterns in the experiences of others.

For the purpose of this study phenomenological study was appropriate. It was my intention to understand the inner-being of school principals – their values, assumptions and beliefs. These are not easily measurable, but depend on how participants describe their experiences within the context they are situated in. In essence they need to articulate their inner-being in words that have to be deconstructed to distil the possible meaning so that I can understand the world through their eyes and how these inner-being filters out or hinders the assimilation of new knowledge that could change their assumptions, values and beliefs about school management.

3.3. Research Methodology

3.3.1. Sampling

In this study I had to use a particular sampling approach that would enable me to get to the participants who could best share their views on the phenomenon under investigation. From the onset it was not my intention to generalise the findings, but rather understand the phenomenon in a specific context. As stated in Chapters 1 and 2, on an annual basis, the provincial Departments of Education invests huge financial resources in professional educator development programmes for school

principals in order to enhance their leadership and management practices. Despite this, the majority of schools are declared under-performing by the national Department of Education as evidenced, among others, by the majority of the secondary schools achieving poor end-of-the-year Grade 12 results. It is this unfortunate pattern of events that motivated me to undertake this study. I wanted to explore how the school principals in both performing and under-performing schools experience leadership and management programmes and what inter-person barriers could hinder or filter out important parts of the new knowledge offered.

In the light of the considerations above, purposeful sampling was used. Patton (2002:230) maintains that *the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth*. Patton (2002:230) further maintains that these are cases from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the study. There are several different sampling strategies from which to choose. I found the extreme group sampling strategy to be the most suitable sampling strategy for my study. This sampling strategy, according to Patton (2002:231), *involves selecting cases that are information rich because they are unusual or special in some way, such as outstanding successes or notable failures*. Cases of outstanding successes, in the context of this study, are well-performing schools, and those of notable failures are poorly performing schools.

The rationale behind my choice of the extreme group sampling strategy is that Patton (2002:232) advises that with extreme group sampling strategy lessons may be learned about unusual conditions or extreme outcomes that are relevant to improving more typical programmes. In the context of this study I was interested in studying the assumptions, values and beliefs of principals of both effective and ineffective schools regarding school leadership and management. Being one of the principals in our area, I had information from the local circuit office about schools that were performing well and those that were not. According to Patton (2002:232) the benefit of extreme group sampling is that *one might learn more by intensively studying one or more examples of really poor programmes and one or more examples of really excellent programmes*

In the context of this study my sample consisted of six principals of secondary schools in one circuit in Limpopo Province. My sample met the criteria of extreme group sampling because of the six principals, three were from schools that consistently under-performed according to the Department of Education. The three remaining principals were sampled from schools that consistently performed well according to the Department of Education.

The principals selected were based in the same circuit. The socio-economic milieus of the schools are therefore similar. Most of the parents in the area are not educated and are dependent on subsistence farming. Typical socio-economic problems in this area are illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, crime, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and learner drop-out from schools. Challenges faced by learners are very similar. They are all subjected to the socio-economic problems mentioned above.

In looking at each case separately, it should be noted that participant Nthuthushi is a principal of the same school for the past ten years. As a principal she attended countless professional educator development programmes provided by the DoBE. In the past five years, her school has never achieved more than 50%, an indication of ineffective schools in terms of DoBE benchmark.

Participant Lesetja has been the principal for the past fourteen years. Like Nthuthushi, he attended professional educator development programmes provided by the DoBE. In the past four years his school has never under-performed.

Participant Mochichi has been a principal for seventeen years. Like all the participants, Mochichi attended the professional educator development programmes. In the past four years his school has been declared ineffective.

Participant Dikgale has been a principal for the past ten years. She also attended professional educator development programmes presented by the DoBE. In more than four years her school has never been declared ineffective.

Participant Moshale has been a principal for the past twelve years. As a principal he has attended professional educator development programmes presented by the DoBE. In more than four years his school has never under-performed.

Participant Mangena has been a principal for the past seventeen years. As a principal, Mangena attended professional educator development programmes provided by the DoBE. For more than four years his school has under-performed.

3.3.2. Data Collection Strategies

The data collection strategy used in this study is unstructured in-depth phenomenological interviews (Slavin, 2007:149). The advantage with this type of interview in my study that as the researcher I had direct contact with and got as close to the participants as possible. My questions were directed at the participants' experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions concerning school leadership and management. Data relating to the participants thoughts and feelings about school leadership and management was obtained. I focused on what was going on within the participants' life worlds and got them to describe the "lived experience" in a language as free from the constructs of the intellect and society as possible. This type of approach, according to Groenewald (2004:12), is called bracketing.

There is also a second form of bracketing, in which, (Groenewald, 2004:13) the researcher has to bracket his or her preconceptions. The idea behind this is to enter into the participant's life world and use the self as an experiencing interpreter. This type of bracketing is called an *epoché* (Creswell, 2007:62; Patton, 2002:104). I was actually engaged in an informal interview. According to Bailey (1996) in Groenewald (2004:13) the *informal interview is a conscious attempt by the researcher to find out more information about the setting of the person*. The interview is reciprocal: both the researcher and the research subject are involved in the dialogue. I experienced that the duration of the interviews and the number of questions varied from one participant to the next (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:346).

Kvale (1996:124) holds the view that data capturing during qualitative interview is literally an exchange of words between two persons talking about a topic of mutual interest where the researcher attempts to understand the world from the participant's point of view. At the root of phenomenology, according to Groenewald (2004:13) *the intent is to understand the phenomena in their own terms ... to provide a description*

of human experience as it is experienced by the person herself [himself] and allowing the essence to emerge.

Phenomenological studies of lived experiences also emphasise textual descriptions of what happened and how the phenomenon was experienced (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:383). Because the experience is one that is common to the researcher and the interviewees, data is drawn from both the researcher's written record of his or her own experience and records of the interviewees. The report includes a description of each participant's experience, including the researcher's, followed by a composite description and the essence of the experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:383). This view is supported by Johnson and Christensen (2012:387) who contend that rather than have research participants describe the meanings and structure of their experience to the researcher in an in-person interview, they can also have them written and then given to the researcher as written narratives. Both approaches work, but interviews are better (Johnson & Christensen, 2012:387).

One effective strategy for eliciting data from participants, according to Johnson and Christensen (2012:378) is to tell each participant to recall a specific experience he or she has had, think about the specific experience carefully, and then to describe the experience to the researcher. I used the following general question to get participants talking about their experience: *"Please carefully describe your experience with the professional educator development programme you attended which was organised by the Department of Education.* As the researcher, if I needed to probe the participant during the interview for greater detail, I did so. I always made sure I remained neutral by showing openness, sensitivity, respect, awareness, and responsiveness towards the participants.

After a discussion of data collection strategies, attention is paid to data analysis, which Groenewald calls explication of the data.

3.4. Data analysis

Dey (1993:30) refers to data analysis as *a process of resolving data into its constituent components, to reveal its characteristic elements and structure*. He further maintains that to analyse literally means to *take apart words, sentences and paragraphs, which is an important act in the research project in order to make sense of, interpret and theorise about the data*. Data analysis in this study will be done by organising the data, reducing it into themes, and describing it to get its meaning. In this regard Schwandt (2001) adds that data analysis ought to be rigorous, systematic, disciplined and carefully methodically documented.

Henning (2004:128) states that one of the aims of data analysis is to describe both data and the objects or events to which the data refers. Sometimes more than mere descriptions are needed and interpretations, explanations or predictions are required. In data analysis the questions *how, why* and *what* needs to be answered. These questions are answered through the analysis, moving beyond the initial description, transforming the data into something it was not (Henning: 2004:128). Slavin (2007:149) maintains that data analysis in qualitative research is *an on-going, emerging and iterative or non-linear process*.

In analysing the phenomenological data I used Creswell's approach (Creswell, 2007:159) as a simplified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method. The following steps were followed:

First, I discussed personal experiences about the assumptions, values, and beliefs of school principals regarding leadership and management by giving a full description of my experience in school leadership and management. This was an attempt to set aside my personal experiences (which could not be done entirely). The aim of doing this was to ensure that the focus was directed to the participants only.

I developed a list of significant statements from the interviews or other data sources about the values, beliefs and assumptions of principals with regard to school leadership and management (Johnson & Christensen, 2012:387). I listed these statements (horizontalisation of the data) and treated each statement as having equal worth, and worked to develop a list of non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements.

I took the significant statements as suggested by Johnson & Christensen, (2012:387) and then grouped them into larger units of information, called “meaning units” or themes.

I wrote a description of “what” the values, beliefs and assumptions of the participants with regard to school leadership and management are as recommended by Creswell (2007:159). This is called a “textural description” of the experience – what happened – and includes verbatim examples.

I wrote a description of “how” the experience happened. This is called “structural description,” and as the researcher I reflected on the setting and context in which the professional educator development programmes were experienced (Creswell (2007:159)). .

Finally, I wrote a composite description of the phenomenon incorporating both the textual and structural descriptions. This passage is the “essence” of the experience and represents the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study. It is typically a long paragraph that tells the reader *what* the participants experienced with the phenomenon and *how* they experienced it (i.e. the context) (Creswell, 2007: 15; Slavin, 2007:150; Henning, 2004:128).

3.5. Trustworthiness and credibility

Nieuwenhuis (2007) has the following to say about trustworthiness: that trustworthiness and credibility in a qualitative research are equivalent to validity and reliability as used in quantitative research; that credibility, applicability, dependability and conformability are key criteria of trustworthiness and that they are constructed to parallel the conventional criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and neutrality respectively; that it is generally accepted that engaging multiple methods of data collection such as observation, interviews and document analysis will lead to trustworthiness.

In this study I used multiple sources of data collection. I prepared questions that addressed the assumptions, values and beliefs of the participants at three different stages of their principalship, namely the period before they became principals, the period after they became principals and lastly, the current period as principals.

Having discussed this aspect, attention will now be turned to the credibility of the data. I spent time with the participants in their schools; I made informal observations and wrote field notes based on those observations. In this way I was able to see if what they told me in the interviews was supported by what I saw while at the schools.

According to Schwandt (2001:279) credibility refers to a demonstration that it is possible to sustain by data an explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides. The data is credible if it is trustworthy and the results can be verified. To enhance credibility member checking was used. Member checking, according to Creswell (2002:252), refers to a process where the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account. In my study the transcripts of the interviews were taken back to the participants for comment and to determine the accuracy of the account. In this way participants added credibility to this study. The next aspect is the transferability of the results of the study.

Cohen et al. (2007:109) refer to transferability as the degree to which results may be generalised to a wider population, cases or situations. Schofield (1990:209) suggests that in qualitative research it is necessary to provide clear, detailed and in-depth descriptions to enable readers to decide the extent to which findings from one piece of research are generalisable to another situation. At the same time Lincoln and Guba (1985:316) argue that it is not the task of the researcher to provide an index of transferability but they suggest that researches should provide sufficiently rich data for readers and users of the research to determine whether the study is transferable. In this study the researcher provides sufficient data on the views of the participants on their assumptions, values and beliefs regarding school leadership and management. The next aspect for discussion is dependability.

Creswell (2002:253) refers to dependability as ensuring that the same study conducted all over again will arrive at the same findings and conclusions. In this study, "external audit" was employed to achieve dependability. The supervisor acted as the external auditor and all raw data was made available to the supervisor for scrutiny. External audit, according to Creswell (2002:253), refers to *the auditor*

outside the study to review different aspects of the research. The researcher provides the auditor with the transcripts, interview questions guide, lists of interviewees and notes from documents used when analysing the data. The external auditor acknowledges that the findings of the researcher are supported by data after going through the documents provided by the researcher.

Babbie, Mouton and Prozesky (2001:278) refer to confirmability in qualitative research as a criterion that indicates that the findings of the research are the product of the inquiry, and are not based on the researcher's biases. The researcher guarded against his biases that may have been influenced by his position as principal of a school. He reported on the views expressed by the participants in the study, not his views. Furthermore, the researcher engaged a qualitative analyst to review the interview transcripts and critique the researcher's interpretations, and to determine whether they were supported by data or not. The researcher also shared the themes from the study and the final report with the participants in order to check the accuracy of representation of data.

3.6. Ethical considerations

The first step in gaining access to schools was to get the clearance certificate from the University's Ethical Committee. Ethical committees, according to Somekh and Lewin (2006: 57) exist to ensure that researchers have considered the ethical issues that are likely to arise and have developed protocols to protect participants from harm. The ethical clearance certificate (Appendix A) for conducting this study was obtained from the University of Pretoria. Permission to conduct the study in a particular circuit within the province was given by the Head of Limpopo Department of Education (Appendix B). I further requested and got permission to conduct the study from the circuit manager (Appendix C) and principals of participating schools (Appendix D). The next step was to get informed consent from the participants.

Schwandt (2007:149) refers to informed consent as the notion that the research subjects have the right to know that they are being researched, the right to be fully informed about the nature and purpose of the research, the right to know the risks and benefits of their participation and the right to withdraw from the participation at

any time. Creswell (2009:89), Punch (2006:56), Henning et al. (2004:73), Silverman (2005: 257) and McMillan and Schumacher (2010:15) advise the researcher to develop an informed consent form for participants to sign before they engage in the research (see Annexure E). The form acknowledges that participants' rights will be protected during data collection.

I had a meeting with the participants in their respective schools to explain what I was intending to do, the reasons for my intentions and how I planned to go about doing it. I made it clear to the participants that the purpose was to explore their assumptions, values and beliefs with regard to school leadership and management (Punch, 2006:56). I explained to each of them that there were no risks involved in taking part in the study and that the study would not only be of benefit to their school but to other schools as well. The participants voluntarily took part in the study without pressure or manipulation. They gave their informed consent (See Annexure E). The next ethical aspect was to deal with the question of confidentiality of the findings of the study and the protection of the participants' identities.

Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2010) state that an important ethical aspect is the issue of confidentiality of the results, the findings of the study and the protection of the participants' identities. Somekh and Lewin (2006:57) add by indicating that *confidentiality is a principle that allows people not only to talk in confidence, but also to refuse to allow publication of the material that they think might harm them in any way*. Anonymity, according to Somekh and Lewin (2006:57), is a procedure to offer some protection of privacy and confidentiality.

Realising that narration of the selected principals may affect them either positively or negatively if their identities were known, I did not use their real names or names of the institutions they were managing. I used pseudonyms for the participating principals and their institutions. In this way I guaranteed my participants' protection of privacy and confidentiality.

3.7. Summary

This chapter presents the research approach and the methodology of the study and the reasons for my choices of both. I indicated why phenomenology was chosen as

research design for collecting data and I how I planned the data collection strategy. I have discussed the rationale behind using in-depth phenomenological interviews with principals to explore their assumptions, values and beliefs regarding school leadership and management. The next chapter (Chapter 4) presents the data analysis and the findings of the study.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In chapter 3 I discussed the phenomenological design used to answer the research question. I also justified the choices I made with regard to the selection of the participants. This chapter analyses the data of the study regarding the assumptions, values and beliefs of principals with regard to school leadership and management. The interviews were transcribed and data was coded, analysed and interpreted. In this chapter I first present my own story as a school principal depicting my own values, assumptions and beliefs before presenting those of the participants. I then distil from their stories the values, assumptions and beliefs they hold and reflect on the data to see if the values, assumptions and beliefs could explain some of the trends found in education.

4.2 My own story

As a researcher I am aware of the possible biases that my own experience as an educator and school principal may exert on the research. For this reason it is important to share my own story so that my own assumptions, values and beliefs are clearly stated. In the research I have made every effort to try not to allow my own biases to cloud the research.

I have been an educator for twenty-six years. Before I became a principal, I acted as deputy principal at the same secondary school at which I am currently a principal. The school is situated in the centre of one of the rural villages of Limpopo Province. In addition to catering for the mainstream learners, the school also accommodates the physically challenged, more especially wheel chair-bound learners and Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) learners. On Saturdays and some days during school holidays, the premises of the school are also utilised by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to help learners in the Further Education and Training (FET) Band with subjects such as Physical Science, Mathematics and Accounting.

Learners from the catchment area of four neighbouring secondary schools also attend our school because of the good reputation of our school.

The front of the school is decorated with a beautiful garden, with lawn and flowers. The school also has enough trees that surround it, offering shade to the learners where they can relax during breaks. I believe that it is important to create an inviting atmosphere at a school so that children learn in an environment that is attractive and sends a message to visitors that those in the school love the school and appreciate its surroundings. During lesson time learners and educators are actively engaged in teaching and learning. I believe that school discipline is positively enhanced when learners are constructively engaged in teaching and learning. Although the school buildings show signs of decrepitude as the school is very old (built in 1968), plans are in place to have the school renovated. The school falls under the category of performing schools, that is to say that the Grade 12 national examinations results compare favourably with other schools that achieve good results.

Some of my colleagues did not accept my rise to leadership and management since I was promoted while I was younger than most of them. In an attempt to challenge my leadership and to display their non-acceptance of my leadership and management, one of my colleagues went to the extent of confronting me, accusing me of allocating her to be a class teacher to the worst behaved class at the school. I have resolved the conflict in an amicable manner and secured her continued support for the school. On taking up my position as school principal I thought prospects did not look good for future principals if the powers of trade unions are not curtailed. Many educators belonging to certain trade unions always call on members not to cooperate with the DoE and therefore to resist and oppose school principals. As school principal I therefore assume that many educators do not have the best interests of the learners at heart.

I have always seen myself as a self-starter and I value leaders who are disciplinarians, who practise a situational leadership style, who take initiative, who are committed to their work and who share the management responsibilities with their colleagues. That is what I aspire to be. I see schools as learning organisations and support all efforts geared towards the professional development of teachers.

I believe that most educators would be willing to work with me to improve teaching and learning in the school. My attitude towards educators is that, although there may be one or two of them who would challenge my management style, the majority of them do co-operate.

I hold the belief that my predecessor committed many leadership and management mistakes; after I was appointed as a principal, I was determined to correct those and other mistakes. I also hold the belief that in order to make professional educator development programmes to be more meaningful and effective to principals, sufficient time had to be allocated to the programmes and more follow-ups have to be done on key aspects of the programmes.

4.3 Stories of school principals

INTERVIEWEE # 1 (Nthuthushi)

Nthuthushi has been an educator for more than thirty years. Before she became the principal, she was a deputy principal at the same secondary school at which she currently is the principal. The school is situated in one of the rural villages of Limpopo Province. It is characterised by overcrowded classes, mostly by learners who have failed several times from their previous schools and who have been admitted by the school. In my observation the school admitted these learners in order to save the jobs of its teachers who would otherwise be rationalised and redeployed to other schools. There is continuous movement of learners between classes and the toilets so that is very disruptive to the school and teaching and learning. The physical appearance of the school is not up to standard as it lacks trees, lawn and other amenities. The school's management seems to be struggling because the circuit manager always visits the school to support its management. For more than three consecutive years, the DoE has declared the school as ineffective because it could not reach its benchmark of 50% performance in their end-of-the year Grade 12 results.

Nthuthushi felt that she was rejected by some of her colleagues. According to her some of her subordinates were suspicious of and distrusted her, possibly because she was not coming from the same geographical area. *You know sometimes when*

you ... you arrive in a school like this one ... you know ... the people of Moshongo (referring to the people of the local village) – yes ... you are not one of them, the ‘son of the soil’ yes ... even though you can be educated or be a leader for that particular session they will still undermine you.

Nthuthushi noticed that after she was appointed as the principal she experienced resistance from most of her colleagues to the extent that the culture of teaching and learning deteriorated. She said, for example: *I had a challenge of a teacher who did not want to go to class. This teacher sabotaged everything that the SMT was doing. He was influential to other staff members as well as to learners.*

Nthuthushi felt that principalship belonged to a certain group of selected people. She said: *We never thought that one day we can take up a higher position ... we never thought that you will become a teacher because in your family there was no one who ever became a teacher, because in my family I was the first person to become a teacher.* She also sensed that the relationship between educators and school management was not good so that the unions were controlling the educators more than the principals and they want them to overpower the principals. As a result of this tendency of the unions to control principals, today’s principals do not enjoy their leadership responsibilities as much as principals did in the past. *You know before the politics ... people were enjoying the work ... yes people were enjoying to be in leadership.* This was the reason why Nthuthushi assumed that, according to her, the future looks bleak to them for as long as the DoE listens to unions more than it does to school principals.

Nthuthushi experienced that the Circuit Manager was not supportive of her as a school principal. She said: *Let me say somebody has done misconduct – when you go to the circuit manager she will not help you ... she will never come to school to come and support us and to solve some of the problems we are having.* This is contradictory to my observation that the circuit manager frequently visits the school.

Nthuthushi appreciates being a female principal and from her own experience she became convinced that women can also lead. *I never worked with a lady principal, yes, but I could see that ladies can also lead.* She felt that a school should be

beautiful with clean learners who would always be in school uniform. However, she did not spell out her own efforts in creating such a school as the school environment attests to the contrary.

Nthuthushi does not value sharing the responsibilities.*you need to do things not looking at somebody...* She is, however, in favour of professional educator development programmes for principals, *especially on how to manage the SMT and School Financial Management*. I sensed that even though she has been a principal for a number of years, she still is uncomfortable in the position, realising that she lacks certain skills and knowledge.

Nthuthushi's attitude towards the educators' unions is that the unions do not do enough for principals. *They do not negotiate better working conditions for principals*. This is the reason why, *if she was to be given an alternative career choice, she would consider taking it*.

One of Nthuthushi's concerns is that educators must also take care of the welfare of the poor learners. This caring attitude pronounced could not be established through my own observations. She believes that the changing of the curriculum by the DoE from time to time is a big challenge for principals. According to Nthuthushi, *when the DoE workshops educators on their specific subjects, it does not do the same with the principals. This therefore makes it difficult for us school managers to control educators' work. It is my feeling that before the DoE can train educators, it should train school managers so that they are in a position to effectively control the teachers' work*.

In summary, Nthuthushi appears to be a person promoted to a level where she experiences that her own skills and knowledge is insufficient to perform the task allocated to her. An overriding feature of her story is searching for help and support and a lack of the leadership skills to manage a school effectively. Although she is clear on the things that she values and believes in she is at a loss to translate them into actions that will make it possible to achieve these values and beliefs.

INTERVIEWEE # 2 (Mochichi)

Mochichi has been an educator for twenty six years. Before he was appointed as principal he acted as the principal of Sarone Secondary School. Sarone Secondary School is in the same circuit as the previous one. It is home to many learners because it is situated in the new village which is growing in size because of the platinum mine nearby. The school's three blocks are supplemented by mobile classes supplied by the Limpopo Department of Education (LDE). Although the general cleanliness of the school is satisfactory, there are no trees to offer shade to learners. The principal seems to be office-based. I have noticed during my visits to the school that noise from classes is one of the worrying factors at the school. My observation is that there is no effective teaching and learning at the school. For the past three consecutive years, the school has been declared ineffective by the LDoE.

During the interviews Mochichi claimed that educators are not committed to their work, that they defying school managers, and that there is a relationship of conflict and mistrust between educators and school management. According to Mochichi, as a result of the afore-mentioned factors, the culture of teaching and learning has virtually collapsed. It appears that he does not appreciate his own role in restoring discipline and order in the school.

Mochichi places emphasis on the provisioning of infrastructure and training to be a principal. He stated that *initially we were accommodated in a church structure. That was the first challenge. The other challenge was that we were never work-shopped or trained to be principals.* He admires two schools, which he personally has never seen but that he has heard of because of their academic performance. Apparently he has made no effort to visit these schools or to talk to their principals to establish what they are doing to achieve good results. He likes professional educator development programmes because they have taught him school finances and curriculum delivery. Although Mochichi claims that self-confidence and strictness are important assets for a school principal, in practice he does not live the two values. Rather than attending to the noise in the school and the lack of effective teaching, he prefers to hide in his office. He also does not want to share responsibilities, but prefers to take care of whatever needs to be done. This is the reason that as a CS1 educator he ... does not take effort to mediate in conflict situations. He believes that conflict situations

challenge the competence of the School Management Team (SMT). He fails to understand that without delegating responsibilities, the SMT will not dispose of these responsibilities.

In the interviews it became apparent that Mochichi has a negative attitude towards teaching. He does not want to be a teacher, let alone a principal. *I was approached by the circuit office. The circuit informed me that the people were talking outside that I was the right person to take the position (referring to that of a principal). I accepted it because it appeared that the circuit had confidence in me.* He has a negative attitude towards educators who want to have fewer subjects to teach. This is what Mochichi said: *Teachers want to have fewer subjects, yes, and teachers want to make their own choices. They would tell that they do not want to teach this and that class. They want lower grades (referring to Grades 8 and 9), and, based on his unwillingness to mediate conflict, he would give in to their demands.* He also has a negative attitude towards educators' work ethics and claims that *educators are incompetent in teaching and also refuses to be professionally developed.* He appears to be blind to his own responsibility in this regard. His poor self-image has resulted in Mochichi looking down on being a principal in a rural area. He made the sweeping claim that *rural principals do not enjoy their work.*

Because of his own prejudice towards people living in rural areas, Mochichi believed that, as a rural principal, he had challenges with unenlightened people. He also believes that for as long as the situation does not change (i.e. that rural people became enlightened), the relationship between the school and the community will not be sound. *He says, first of all, being a principal in a rural school, led by the chief, is something that I have never thought of before.* As with his other perceptions and prejudices he fails to see his own role of uplifting the community.

Contrary to the views held by other principals, he is of the opinion that unions do not have a serious impact on school management. He, however, believes that the Limpopo Department of Education is an unfair organisation. He said: *The unfairness by the Department of Education to allocate a block of classes in the bush without toilet facilities, without water and without fence around the school and expect the school to run normally is upsetting.* As a result of these factors Mochichi finds his

present post as principal uninteresting. He *would consider following an alternative career path if it could be made available to him.*

In summary, Mochichi appears to be a principal with little vision, low self-esteem and someone who sees his task as simply that of executing tasks assigned to him. He appears to lack verve, leadership skills and the ability to manage a school effectively and he holds the belief that if infrastructure is in place, teaching and learning will automatically happen.

INTERVIEWEE # 3 (Mr Mangena)

Mangena has been an educator for more than thirty years. Before he was appointed as a principal of a secondary school, he was an appointed HoD in the same school situated in one of the rural villages of Limpopo Province. The school accommodates an average of five to six hundred learners. Although the school was recently built, most of buildings are becoming dilapidated. Little evidence has been found of attempts to beautify it with the result that there is a lack of vegetation. Upon entering the school, one is met by a dry environment that is characterised by the absence of trees, lawns and flowers. As far as the culture of learning and teaching is concerned, one differentiates between whether it is lesson time or school break. One sees one or two classrooms that seem to be very busy with lessons while in other classes there are high noise levels and learners are roaming around the school. The first impression gained when entering the school is that the principal appeared not to be in control of the school. In the past three years the LDoE declared the school ineffective because it has achieved less than the 50% pass rate in its Grade 12 final year examinations.

I was struck by the apparent lack of strong leadership emanating from the principal. During the interviews Mangena lamented that colleagues undermined his authority and he attributed this to his younger age. He also complained that there was a division between school management and educators. According to him, some *educators* often claimed that they *are intimidated by the principals* – something that he apparently tried to avoid by not acting against educators and thereby

circumventing the important role of taking control of his school. He also claimed that some educators hide behind unions in order not to do their school work.

Mangena places a high premium on good school infrastructure. He said: *Obviously a good school should have a good infrastructure.* It is sad to note that although the school has the required infrastructure it is not well-maintained. He also thinks that *putting together a stronger SMT that would be effective* will be important in moving a school forward, but he seemed to be unable to create such a strong SMT in his school.

During the interview Mangena claimed that strictness and firmness are important, but he was at a loss to create such an environment in his school. He asserted that attention to sporting activities was also important to be effective as an instructional leader. He reflected on his own experience as a learner and how one of his educators made a lasting impression on him. He said: *You know the way he taught literature was marvellous to me. Even up to now I can still remember aspects of literature [he] taught us*". Sadly, he could not distil any important aspects of that educator's approach to infuse in his own practice but thought that a good professional educator development programme would resolve the labour tensions that he encountered. He thought that such programmes should be conducted on a regular basis as, according to him, *law changes time and again.* However, he did recognise his own responsibility in this regard and did not see the importance for educators to share their staff development experiences with other educators

It is possible that Mangena was a good educator as he was encouraged by his colleagues to apply for the post of school principal *after obtaining an academic degree.* This was also in line with his own personal ambition.

As has been indicated earlier, Mangena had a negative attitude towards the unions, especially when they were making certain demands on the Department of Basic Education. He recalled that previously, when there was no agreement between the Department and unions, the unions ended up embarking on an industrial action, and principals were at the receiving end because *we saw learners suffering.* For this reason, if Mangena were to be given an alternative career path, he would consider

accepting it. Mangena believed that principals should play a pastoral role and educators should not hurt learners.

Mangena was worried by the fact that school principals had to manage and teach at the same time. He said: *If managers are to be relieved from their teaching responsibilities they will have enough time to concentrate on management.* He was against the present system of interviews as a way of appointing educators to promotional posts. He *is in favour of the system whereby the circuit managers look into the profiles of educators and then appoint them to promotional posts.* In effect, such a move would take away the SGB's responsibility in this regard. Judging from the worried expression on his face throughout the interview it was obvious that he was uncomfortable in his position as principal but that it has possibly reached a stage where he fears the power of educators.

To summarise, Mangena appeared to be a person who was appointed to a level that he was not adequately prepared for. He was totally out-directed and lacked the inner-directedness needed to move his school forward. He had certain idealistic ideas about what a good principal should be, but failed to provide the type of leadership and management that would enable him to realise his dreams. He lacked the skills to take command of the situation and was hoping that some external intervention, such as professional educator development would resolve his unenviable situation.

INTERVIEWEE # 4 (Lesetja)

Lesetja has been an educator for more than thirty years. Before he became a principal of a secondary school, he was acting as Head of Department (HoD) at the same school. Like the school discussed above, the school at which Lesetja is the principal is situated in the rural part of Limpopo Province. Even from a distance the school's infrastructure is attractive. At a closer look, the school looks clean and well-taken care of. The flowers, the lawn and the buildings seem to be well looked after. The trees that decoratively line the entrance to the school provide a rich shade to the learners. Upon entering the premises of the school, one experiences tranquillity and an atmosphere conducive to learning and teaching. There is no continuous

movement of learners as experienced at some of the other schools discussed above. The principal seems to be in full control as he walks with confidence between the classrooms and then teachers seem to be respecting him. Teaching and learning seem to be the only business of the day. For the past three consecutive years, the school has been declared a effective school by the DoBE as it achieved far more than the 50% cent benchmark set by the DoBE.

When interviewed Lesetja stated that some educators lack the culture of teaching. Reflecting on educators in his own school he said that: *... most of the teachers were not spot on in terms of teaching; they have to be pushed from behind.* He held the view that most principals are office-bound and do not do proper management. For him effective management implies being visible in the school by walking around and just being available. As a result he expressed his wish to be a principal of an effective school where he would make efforts in realising such a type of a school. *I want to see a school that is organised, so that every person knows his or her role and can do his or her job; then I will be very happy.* From my own observations I could see the deliberate attempts that he was making in being visible and in motivating his educators.

Reflecting on his preparation for his role as principal he said that as acting HoD he experienced a number of management flaws in the school. These flaws acted as motivation for him to become a principal and he had firm ideas about rectifying them. He said: *Because of the challenges I have met, the way the leadership of the school was running the school, I said if I could become the principal, I would rectify this.* In the interview he could provide examples of some of these things that he noticed and how he had addressed them. *I wanted to see a school which organised, so that everyone knew his or her role and could do the job, then I would be very happy.* So he invested time and energy to ensure that the school is well-organised and educators knew what he expected from them. From my own observations it was clear that the school was well-organised and that educators knew what was expected from them. They were in class and were actively busy with teaching; the successes of the school in terms of its Grade 12 results attest to this.

Lesetja values both democratic leadership and distributed leadership styles. Regarding the latter he believes that educators and other stakeholders of the school should share the responsibilities of the school. *They should share whatever problems they have because the school is not a one-man school; as long as they are people, people should sit around the table, share their problems, share their aspirations and even share their joy.* This is practised at his school and it is obvious those educators respect and trust him and that there is a culture of openness and sharing.

With regard to what professional educator development programmes he received, Lesetja said: It taught me that, before you can do anything, you have to engage the SMT and you iron out whatever problems you may be having with the SMT before you can engage the other staff members.

The other important aspect that Lesetja highlighted is the importance of boarding schools because, according to him, they make it easy to achieve excellence in academic performance. From his experience ... *a boarding school bears witness that if you want learners after six o'clock you would get them.*

Lesetja values the importance of motivation, well-behaved learners, good organisation and parent support, educators who are committed to their school work and school. He said: *To produce wonderful results, learners should be well-behaved, be motivated and the staff should be organised, the parents should be organised, the parents should support the school in whatever form and everybody happy and much motivation should be gleaned from the leadership.*

Lesetja has a positive attitude towards being a principal. He said: I see principals to be dignified people ... I always thought that when I became a grown up I would just straight become a principal. What I saw when talking and interacting with him was an assertive and dignified person worthy of respect. As many others he had a negative attitude towards educators' unions. When the unions were engaging with the DoE on conditions of service of educators and there was no agreement, and this resulted in a protracted industrial action, according to Lesetja, that had a direct negative bearing on school management. The industrial actions that unions may engage in as a result

of the disagreement with the DBE may have a negative impact on school management. As long as both the DBE and the unions do not find an amicable mechanism of resolving their differences, school management will always be negatively affected and this will not auger well for future school principals. Lesetja's concern about the amount of time lost for learners as a result of educators' strikes is a reflection of the passion he has for his work and the jealousy he has against anything that would take away the learners' productive time for learning.

Lesetja's attitude towards future principals was that prospects did not look good for them. He said: *To me the future looks bleak for future school managers.* This was why if he were to be given alternative career choice he would definitely take it. He said: *I would engage in a different career path because this sector nowadays does not auger well with the old horses like me. When we started working, teaching was a wonderful career but these days it has so many thorns. For this reason I would consider opting for a new one.*

Lesetja's belief was that if the professional educator development programmes were to engage the experienced principals, who would come with some bit of coaching they would even be more meaningful to principals.

In summary, Lesetja could be described as a highly motivated and value-driven school principal who places a high premium on teaching and learning and performance. He is respected and trusted and is able to lead and direct his staff to achieve the high standards that he is setting.

INTERVIEWEE # 5 (Dikgale)

Dikgale has been an educator for twenty-two years. Before she became the principal of Mmasekgaola Secondary School, she served as a CS1 educator at two different schools. Mmasekgaola is one of the most attractive schools and is situated in the same circuit as the previous schools. The school has enough plants to provide shade to all learners. It has a well-looked after lawn with beautiful flowers. Upon entering the school one cannot help but admire the atmosphere prevailing there that is conducive to learning and teaching that was. Whether the principal is in her office or walking among the classes, lessons in classes seem to go on very well. Although

the school has a staff complement of forty-four educators, the principal seems to be in control. The facial expressions of the vast majority of the educators reflect a sense of happiness. In the past three years the school has achieved far above the 50% benchmark set by the LDE and therefore is an effective school.

Although Dikgale felt that she is being rejected by some of her colleagues, the interesting thing is that she does something with those who reject her. She said: *There are still those educators who feel that they do not accept me as a principal because I am a woman. The division is still visible though it is minimal now because I am managing it.* She claims that the SMT, especially the Heads of Departments, lack the capacity to work. She said: *With them not knowing what to do, it becomes very difficult for the curriculum to be well-managed.* My observation of her was that she would not rest until capacity building of her SMT has been achieved.

During the interview Dikgale placed a high premium on both excellent academic and sports performance. She said that she also liked good motivation. What Dikgale said in words is backed by trophies that decorate her office and pictures of some of her learners who have received diplomas and trophies for their excellent performance in both academic and sports fields. Dikgale herself inspires both educators and learners alike because she leads by example. She is highly qualified, holding a master's degree in Educational Management. She is also a renowned sports person.

It is clear that Dikgale is in favour of situational leadership style. She said: *I like a principal who practises situational leadership.* In shadowing her I could see that she first assessed a situation before she chose the leadership style that would be relevant to the situation. She also prefers dealing with conflict directly and by involving others. *She said ... finally, the circuit manager came with us to the school and the conflict was resolved...* From my observation this affirms that Dikgale is not prepared to sweep conflicts under the carpet and that she stands her ground well in enhancing her leadership and management of her school.

Reflecting on her preparation for his role as a principal, Dikgale said that while she was a CS1 educator she experienced leadership and management challenges from her former principal. These challenges became her sources of inspiration to become

a principal and her determination to correct the mistakes committed by other principals. She had this to say: *That is what I said that if one day I become a principal, I would not do what this principal was doing.* This statement testifies that Dikgale's passion to be an effective principal started when she was still young. My observation is that what she is doing in her school management is a fulfilment of something that she has treasured for a long time.

She has a negative attitude towards working in a school where the job description for the educators is not clearly spelt out. She said: *There are no clear-cut roles between what educators are to do and what the SMT is to do. We are working. It is just a working situation – we are working.* This shows that Dikgale is determined to rectify the afore-mentioned anomaly by coming out with a clear programme of job description for all the stakeholders of the school. It is evident that every educator in the school knows what she expects from them.

Dikgale's attitude towards the educators' union is that it has a marked negative impact on school management. She states that at their school, the union is very militant and implements the union activities decisively. She said: *For example, now we have disengaged, it is a full disengagement at our school. The running of the school becomes difficult because we are no longer working hand in hand with the departmental officials. The educators take me as the departmental official whereby they do not want to work directly with me, but in one way or another I manage to work with them.* Despite the above-stated attitude by Dikgale I could see resilience on her face and the courage to forge ahead with the education of the learners.

When interviewed on what prospects look like for future principals Dikgale said: *They will be coming believing that no preparation should be done, no moderations. Most of them will not know their roles. I think the DBE is going to be in trouble.* Despite these conditions, Dikgale would still remain in her present career path even if she were offered another career choice. She said: *I am satisfied to be the school principal. Looking back and seeing the people who passed through my hands, especially those who have achieved, makes me feel proud and I really enjoy my present career path.* My observation in this regard is that Dikgale is proud of her work and achievements and that she is ready to confront her challenges for the benefit of the learners.

Dikgale's belief is that educators should not have to wait to become principals before they become involved in the school's leadership and management. They should assist the school management with its managerial responsibilities. She said: *Educators must always aspire for something more and in doing so, they will be assisting the management of the school, and so one day when they become the HODs or principals, they will know something in that field.* This belief is in line with the situational leadership which Dikgale has alluded to above. Through delegation educators can perform some of the management responsibilities, thus easing pressure on the principal and at the same time ensuring efficiency in school management.

Dikgale has the attributes of an effective principal. Her values, beliefs and attitudes correspond with what you find at her school. She is a role principal herself. If she can continue with her present management approach, she would lead her school to greater heights. This augers well for the education of our learners.

INTERVIEWEE # 6 (Moshale)

Moshale has been an educator for thirty years. Before he became the principal Moshale was an appointed HoD. The secondary school at which Moshale is a principal, is situated in the same geographic area as the other participating schools in the research study. The physical buildings of the school are well-maintained. Overall, the school gardens are well looked after. There are enough trees for shade; the garden looks attractive with evergreen grass and flowers. As a result of a shortage of classrooms, the LDoE has supplemented the school with mobile classrooms. On entering the school I was aware of a very good atmosphere of learning and teaching. All the classrooms were a hive of activities with learners and educators engaging one another. The principal was in and out of the office. When in office he would be busy with moderating educators' work. When he was out of office he would do management-by-walking. In my observation the principal has control of his subordinates. For the past three years, the school has always achieved far more than the benchmark set by the DoE. The school is therefore a effective school.

Before he was appointed as the principal Moshale was concerned about two things. The first one was educators who undermined those who were promoted while they were younger than other colleagues. The second concern was principals who did not share management responsibilities with educators. According to him, *in most cases a principal acted as the sole entity*. The interesting thing about Moshale is that as an appointed principal he is ready to tackle the two anomalies identified above. He is ready to discourage any form of undermining of one by another. Moshale believes in distributed leadership. According to him *educators should support school management*. While in his office with Moshale, there came a CS1 educator who was submitting a report on a management task delegated to her by Moshale. To me Moshale practised what he preached.

During interviews Moshale placed a high premium on discipline and excellent academic performance. He said that *effective discipline is a prerequisite for effective learning and teaching*. True to his words, my observations are that Moshale's school is one of the most disciplined schools and one of the best effective schools in the circuit. This means that Moshale lives by his values and beliefs about education. At the same time, for his school to achieve excellent academic results, in addition to good discipline, Moshale maintains that *educators must be good in delivering subject content, motivating learners, have very good organising skills and have good work ethics*. My observation revealed that Moshale works very hard to ensure that the afore-mentioned values are evident at his school.

Concerning his preparation for the role of a principal, Moshale had a positive attitude towards becoming a principal. He said that *he realised that he could be a principal and was motivated by the determination to change the lives of people*. When interacting with him I saw a man full of passion and confidence in his work. I found him to be having an uncompromising attitude in ensuring that he added value to the education of our learners.

Moshale is concerned about unions taking a lead as to who should be appointed in promotional posts at school level or not. In most cases, according to Moshale, a certain union makes sure that its members are appointed in promotional posts. He said: *It is therefore my feeling that if this tendency is not arrested then South Africa is*

going to have poor school managers in the future. And I think this needs an intervention by the DoE and other stakeholders. My understanding is that he finds this practice unacceptable and that he will use every avenue available to register his dissatisfaction of this practice. Outspoken leaders like Moshale are needed in the field of education. When interviewed if he would consider following a different career path if given an opportunity, Moshale did not think of following a new career path if he was to be offered one. He said: *To think of a new career at my age is unthinkable. When I followed teaching it was coming from my heart.* My interaction with him convinced me that he meant what he said. I was left with a conviction that this is one man who was prepared to sacrifice everything for education of the learners.

One of Moshale's beliefs was that principals should take the lead in transformation. He himself took the lead in mediating between the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) and the school management that were having differences. Reflecting on his experience at a previous school he said: *I had to battle around to have the RCL accepted but finally the principal relented and then accepted to have it recognised.* In my interaction with him, it became apparent that Moshale moves with time, a skill that is needed from any effective principal. The relevance of this skill is backed by the fact that, currently South African education system is undergoing transformation. Moshale is therefore suitably placed to deal with any transformational challenges at school.

Moshale was concerned about the frequent curriculum changes by the DBE and the manner in which the changes are cascaded to various stakeholders of education. His belief was that, instead of work shopping subject educators first, the DoE should always start with principals. He said: *It is my belief that if teachers are trained in their subjects, and I, as their overseer, must be trained before they are trained.* Moshale's outspokenness on this issue convinced me that he is raising this concern with the authorities.

In summary, Moshale is one of the hardworking and committed principals with a clear vision of what he wants to achieve for his school. He appears to be enjoying his work and appears to be still looking for more productive days in the future. With the

amount of determination to succeed that he has, his school is going to sustain its effective status for a long time.

4.4 MAIN TRENDS IDENTIFIED

Based the narratives, I had to infer the main values, beliefs and attitudes of school principals. It is important to state at the outset that when a school is ineffective it does not imply that the school principal displays only the negative characteristics identified in terms of an effective school. Some of the principals from ineffective schools do hold good values, assumptions and beliefs but when analysed in terms of all the participants combined, certain important insights did come to the fore. Although I found it a challenging task, I have summarised the main conclusions drawn in the tables below.

TABLE 4.1: SUMMARY OF THE ASSUMPTIONS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Theme	Successful school principals	Ineffective school principals
Assumptions	<p>Assume that they can turn school around (Interviewee 4, 5 & 6).</p> <p>Assume that they can correct the mistakes committed by other principals (Interviewee 4, 5, 6).</p> <p>Have firm ideas about how to address the challenges faced by schools, i.e. they have a clear vision (Interviewee 5, 6).</p> <p>Assume that educators respect and trust them (Interviewee 4, 5).</p> <p>Believe that principals should not be office-bound but should be visible in the school (Interviewee 4).</p> <p>Believe in their ability to lead schools; (Interviewee 5, 6).</p> <p>Assume that good working relations are important and although sometimes opposed or rejected by colleagues, they work on improving relations; (Interviewee 5).</p>	<p>Assume that someone else or the Department must provide desired change (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Feel at a loss to address what is wrong (Interviewee 3).</p> <p>Have no idea how to deal with challenges (Interviewee 2, 3).</p> <p>Feel that they are not accepted and trusted as a principal (Interviewee 1, 3).</p> <p>Lock themselves in office and avoid conflict (Interviewee 2).</p> <p>Doubt their ability to lead (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Think unions control the educators more than the principals and that they have no control. (Interviewee 1, 3).</p> <p>Do not focus on improving</p>

	<p>Have firm ideas about what is needed to transform education (vision) (Interviewee 6).</p> <p>Assume that they have to create a positive teaching climate in their schools (Interviewees 4, 5).</p> <p>Assume that educators can be successful in their work (Interviewee 4, 5, 6).</p> <p>Assume that effective learning and teaching require well-disciplined learners (Interviewee 4, 5, 6).</p> <p>Assume that a well-maintained school environment is supportive of effective teaching and learning (Interviewee 4, 5).</p>	<p>relations in school (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Feel disempowered (Interviewee 2, 3).</p> <p>Allow teaching and learning to collapse in their school (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Assume that educators are not committed or able to do their work (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Allow school discipline to collapse (Interviewee 2, 3).</p> <p>Display no concern for school environment (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Educators are not committed to their work (Interviewees 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Some educators hide behind unions in order not to do their school work (Interviewee 3).</p>
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From Table 4.1 above it emerges that successful school principals are assertive and self-confident; they have a positive self-image, are pro-active, and are able to turn-around situations, can create positive environments for teaching and learning, and believe in their subordinates. However, ineffective school principals do not believe in themselves, are not resourceful, think that they are being marginalised, cannot deal with challenges, are afraid to deal with outside threats, do not enjoy their work, do not believe in their subordinates and are not in control of their schools.

The fact that values are abstract internalised conceptions of what is important, and that they direct one's choices in how one will behave in a certain situation, means that what principals regard as important, direct their choices of how they behave. If, for example, successful school principals have passion for their work, they will behave accordingly. If ineffective principals lack passion for their work, they will also behave accordingly. Nieuwenhuis (2007) states that value systems guide the formation of attitudes and attitude systems that are focused on objects or situations, which in turn are composed of sets of beliefs.

TABLE 4.2: SUMMARY OF THE VALUES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Theme	Successful school principals	Ineffective school principals
Values	<p>Have compassion for education (Interviewee 5, 6).</p> <p>Value learners being successful and well-effective (Interviewee 4, 5, 6).</p> <p>Value comprehensive education that focuses on academic and extra-curricular activities (Interviewee 5).</p> <p>Value respect (Interviewee 4, 5, 6).</p> <p>Value well-behaved learners (Interviewees 4, 5, 6)</p> <p>Valued a positive school culture and openness and are involved in its creation (Interviewee 4, 5, 6).</p> <p>Valued distributed leadership (sharing responsibilities) (Interviewee 4, 5, 6).</p> <p>See themselves as self-starters, disciplinarians, committed principals who practise situational leadership and motivate the</p>	<p>Have no compassion – will leave if possible (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Do not care whether teaching and learning takes place (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Do not see or value the importance of education (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>They allow disrespectful behaviour (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>They allow noisy and rowdy learners (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>They are not interested in creating a positive school culture (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Although they see the importance of distributed leadership, they lack personal strength to create it (Interviewee 1, 3).</p> <p>Value strictness and firmness but are unable to create such an environment in the school (Interviewee 2, 3).</p>

	stake-holders (Interviewees 4, 5, 6). Value self-confidence and strictness (Interviewees 4, 5, 6).	Value self-confidence and strictness but do not live the two values (Interviewee 2, 3).
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Table 4.2 reveals that successful school principals believe in distributed leadership, the creation of an inviting environment for effective learning and teaching, that school principals should be exemplary in their leadership and that communities should be positively involved in the affairs of the school. Ineffective school principals do not trust others. They neglect their pastoral roles, do not take the initiative to beautify their schools, have no confidence in their school communities, are always lamenting over the unfairness of the DBE and always complain about the workload of the school principal.

TABLE 4.3: SUMMARY OF THE BELIEFS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Theme	Successful school principals	Ineffective school principals
Beliefs	Believe educators should assist school management with its managerial responsibilities; (Interviewee 5, 6). Principals should play a pastoral role and educators should not hurt learners (Interviewee 4, 5, 6). It is important to create an inviting atmosphere for all the stakeholders (Interviewee 4, 5, 6).	Distrust educators and union and believe that educators will undermine them (Interviewee 1, 2, 3). Neglect the pastoral role of a principal (Interviewee 1). Do not believe or see value in maintaining school grounds (Interviewee 1, 2, 3). Although

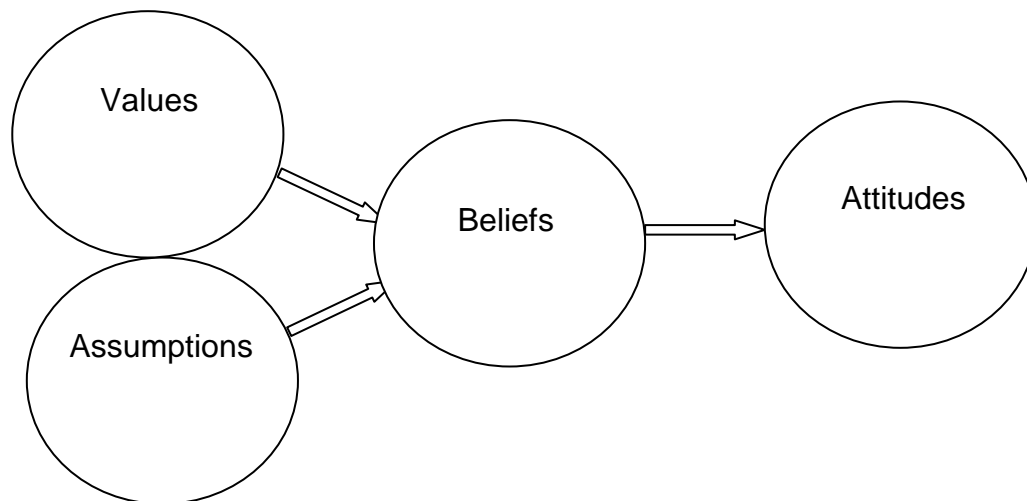
	<p>School discipline is enhanced when learners are constructively engaged in teaching and learning (Interviewee 4, 5, 6).</p> <p>Believe in the importance of professional staff development for educators and school principals (Interviewee 4, 5, 6).</p> <p>Believe that most educators have the capacity of improving teaching and learning (Interviewee 6).</p> <p>Believe that principals should lead the transformation agenda in education (Interviewees 6).</p> <p>Believe that communities can make a positive contribution to the school and sought positive relationship with them (Interviewees 4, 6).</p> <p>Embrace their leadership roles irrespective of the demands placed on them.</p>	<p>they do underscore the importance cleanliness of the school, no visible signs of practising it are to be found. (Interviewee 3).</p> <p>Do not realise the importance of learners being actively engaged (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Do not believe in capacity of educators to do their job (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Think that principals should wait for others to lead transformation (Interviewee 1, 2, 3).</p> <p>Have no confidence in community or parents to make a contribution to school (Interviewee 2).</p> <p>Think that the DoE is an unfair organisation because it allocates a block of classes in the bush without toilet facilities, without water and without fence around the school and expect the school to run normally (Interviewee 2).</p>
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		Are worried by the fact that school principals have to manage and teach at the same time (Interviewee 1, 3).
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Buehl and Alexander (2005:697), and Hamre et al. (2012:97) contend that beliefs are the best indicators of how principals make decisions in their management practices. This means that successful school principals make their decisions based on the positive beliefs they hold. It also means that ineffective school principals make their decisions based on the negative beliefs they hold. The beliefs that principals hold influence their perceptions and judgement, which in turn, affect their management practices.

The following diagram illustrates that school principals have differing beliefs of differing intensity and complex connections that determine their importance (Raths, 2012:386).

Diagram 4.1: Belief Sub-structures/Web (Assumptions, Values and Attitudes)



The above belief sub-structure/web means that beliefs within attitudes have connections to one another and to other beliefs in other attitudes, so that a principal's attitude about a particular educational issue may include beliefs connected to attitudes about other aspects of life. These connections create the values that guide the principal's life, develop and maintain other attitudes, interpret information, and determine the principal's behaviour (Pajares, 1992:319). During data collection it became clear that when the assumptions of ineffective principals are negative towards education, so are their values and beliefs. However, when the assumptions of effective principals are positive towards education, so are their values and beliefs?

From my reading of the data gathered during the interviews it appears that the main distinguishing feature is whether principals are inner-directed (meaning that they believe that they can make a difference) or outer-directed (they have no influence over what happens) (Reisman et al., 2001). Those who are inner-directed are self-starters who believe in their own abilities and skills to make a difference. They are self-confident, assertive, and have a positive self-image. They have a strong value base: they value education, discipline, respect, etc. Therefore they display in their attitude a certain positive drive. They implement what they believe in, practise what they preach, and it shows in their attitude towards educators, learners and the school in general. Those who are ineffective are outer-directed and lack these attributes.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter deals with phenomenological data analysis. The interviews, including my own story, were analysed and compared with themes that have emerged from stories of the participants. From the data analysed certain trends have emerged that are summarised in terms of three important aspects that form the basis of the study: the assumptions, values and beliefs of principals. The data has also revealed that there are certain distinct differences in these three important attributes that could partly explain the differences between effective and ineffective schools. The findings and recommendations are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Findings and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study with reference to the literature review, research questions and the findings. The purpose of conducting the study was to explore the assumptions, values and beliefs of principals regarding school leadership and management. The conclusions, recommendations and topics for further research are discussed in this chapter.

5.2 Insights gained from literature

My focus in literature review was to look at professional educator development as it applies to school principals. For the purpose of the study professional development was described by Steyn and van Niekerk (2002:250), as an ongoing development programme that focuses on the whole range of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to educate educators effectively. In the case of school principals, it refers to the participation of educational leaders in development opportunities in order to be better equipped as educational leaders. It was also pointed out that principals are held accountable for how well teachers teach and how much students learn and that there are effective schools led by effective principals and ineffective schools led by ineffective principals (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003:2).

During the professional development of school principals, the knowledge, skills and competence of the individual principal are enhanced. In the review of the literature, I have pointed out that legislators, policy-makers, funding agencies and the general public, all want to know if professional development programmes do make a difference in the effectiveness and quality of education being offered. If it does, what evidence is there to show that they are effective? To address these questions, professional developers recognize that PD must include both organisational development as well as individual development (Guskey, 1995:1)

According to Borko (2004:4) key elements that make up any professional development system are the following: the professional development programme;

the educators, in this case, the principals, who are the learners in the system, and the facilitator, who guides principals as they construct new knowledge and practice and the context in which the professional development occurs. Despite the declarative knowledge and skills required, professional educator programmes should address values, beliefs and assumptions of school principals (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003:3)

Based on the previous observation I have discussed the three pillars of professional development: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Of importance to my research is the third pillar, namely dealing with the attitude of school principals. I have argued that the attitude is seen as the third dimension of training; that it addresses the assumptions, values and beliefs of people; that very often training is focused on providing principals with new knowledge and skills without addressing their deeper lying assumptions, values and beliefs. I have also argued that the problem is that we cannot readily see the assumptions, values and beliefs that influence the behaviour of principals. In other words, often we don't know or understand why they behave the way they do. I have shown that our belief structure shapes our attitude towards people and objects and that the principal's attitude towards professional educator development, may be quite different, depending on the situation; for example whether the professional educator development is taking into consideration the assumptions, beliefs and values of school principals or not. .

In Chapter 2 I have also briefly discussed trends in professional educator development in the world. One of the trends foregrounded is that, there is a new global interest amongst government agencies towards training principals to be instructional leaders. In South Africa the interest of training principals was shown in the Tirisano document (2000) where one of the priorities of the Department of Education (DoE) was the management capacity-building of school principals. As a result of this document, all the nine provinces of South Africa embarked on extensive management training programmes for principals (Hallinger, 2005: 230)

In line with the Tirisano document of 2000, the Department of Education (DoE) in 2007 introduced a new threshold qualification for aspiring school principals as part of its wider strategy to improve educational standards. The course is an Advanced

Certificate in Education: School Leadership (ACE). From its inception in 2007, the course was tested nationally with candidates, including serving principals, as well as members of the School Management Teams (SMTs) (Bush *et al*, 2011:33). The ACE is being delivered by universities, through a common framework agreed with the National Department of Education and the National Management and Leadership Committee (NMLC). The first cohort of the field tests involved five universities namely: Universities of Pretoria, Johannesburg, Western Cape, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan, KwaZulu-Natal and Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (Bush *et.al.* 2009: ii).

Although the research by Mestry and Singh (2007: 487) suggests that the ACE course can give effect to a coherent and sustainable approach to building leadership and management capacity throughout the educational system no mention is made on its impact on the Grade 12 results. The ACE programmes are silent on the role played by the assumptions, values and beliefs of school managers with regard to their leadership and management of school.

5.3 Main findings and recommendations

The purpose of this section is to highlight the main findings of this study as reported in chapter 4 and presented according to the four sub-questions underpinning this study.

Research question 1

What management training have school principals received and what aspects were covered in these training programmes?

All the participants expressed the view that before they became principals they never received any form of professional educator development programmes. Some of them stated that they had to use the experience that they had accumulated before they became principals in order to perform their leadership and management responsibilities. They further stated that they had to think back about the principals

that they remembered and tried to emulate them. Others indicated that on their appointment, they were not even inducted.

All the participants agreed that they received professional educator development after they were appointed as principals. The participating principals pointed out that they received the professional educator programmes in the form of seminars and one to three days workshops in which issues of educational management and governance were tackled. The principals indicated how they benefitted from the programmes. Although the participants differed on how they benefitted from the programmes, the popular views were that the programmes assisted them in building their capacities in terms of school leadership and management as well as governance.

All the participating principals expressed the view that although the programmes assisted them in their management and governance of the schools, they suggest that there is more that the programmes could do. One of the suggestions is that amongst, the facilitators of the programmes, use could be made of experienced effective principals. These principals, it is hoped, will bring with them real lived good practices to the programmes.

The other suggestion is that, the fact that principals are expected to be managers of the curriculum, principals should always keep themselves abreast with developments of the curriculum. This view is not in line with what the DBoE does when it introduces a new curriculum. The reality of the situation is that the DBoE always builds capacity of subject educators before it does so or does not do it at all with principals. This arrangement leaves the principals with a difficult task of managing the work of their educators. The same applies with labour matters. More often than not, educators who are members of unions, more especially site stewards, are the ones to become clearer with the latest developments on labour matters than the principals. This is because the union leaders, after a particular labour matter has been agreed upon in the chamber, quickly cascade the matter to their members. The BDoE takes a lot of time to cascade the same labour matter to principals. This situation leaves principals in a situation where their subordinates are better informed about a matter than they as leaders. Principals are left embarrassed and this erodes the confidence their

subordinates have in their leadership and management. The principals therefore, express the view that the DoE should find a way of building capacity with the principals before it could do so with educators.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings, three important matters came to the fore: firstly, principals may be appointed to principalship positions prior to receiving any management training, secondly, that there are no compulsory induction programmes in place, and thirdly, that principals are often excluded from training on new curriculum changes and innovations. It is recommended that the DoE seriously consider:

Developing a succession planning model where principals are trained prior to taking up school principal positions.

Developing and implementing induction programmes for school principals.

Consider including principals as first line trainees in terms of new curriculum developments and changes. If this is done, principals would then be in the position to oversee the subject educators' work. If training is offered to subject educators before it is or it is not offered to principals, it will be very difficult if not impossible for the principals to monitor educators' work. It is therefore recommended that principals, as instructional leaders should be afforded an opportunity to take the lead in curriculum matters.

Research Question 2

What do school principals perceive to be the main challenges faced by them in managing their schools?

One major challenge that emerged from the data was that principals are being overloaded with work whereby some of them have to do both administrative and management work.

Recommendations:

The problem of principals being overloaded with work seems to be a legitimate one and needs be given attention. The fact that some principals have to do both managerial and administrative work while often also to be handed a teaching load may be unfair. This may be one of the causes of burn-out amongst some principals. The DoBE should undertake a proper audit of the workload allocation model of school principals and reduce the workload in an amenable manner by for example, providing all principals with administrative personnel..

Although the role and functions of teacher unions and shop stewards did not form part of the study, it did emerge as a particular concern. It is recommended that further research be undertaken into the role and the influence of the unions particularly as far as appointments into promotion posts are concerned.

Research Question 3

What are the perceptions of principals regarding what it means to be a school principal?

From the data in Chapter 4, it is clear that schools could be divided into effective and ineffective schools based on the management approaches and styles of the school principals. It is clear that generally, effective principals hold positive assumptions, values and beliefs regarding school leadership and management. It is also clear that ineffective principals, generally do hold negative assumptions, values and beliefs regarding school leadership and management. The trend that is observed with the effective principals, for example, is that they assume that they can turn around situations in their schools; they can do this and that, have firm positions, etc. In other words, they have a strong sense of inner-directedness. On the other hand, ineffective principals assume that someone else has to do something for them, that they do not have firm positions on issues, that they feel marginalised, etc. They thus tend to be outer-directed.

With regards to values, effective principals are passionate about education; put high premium on all stakeholders of education; create a positive school culture; share management responsibilities with their colleagues; see themselves as self-starters, etc. On the other hand, ineffective principals, generally, do not have passion for

education; do not value stakeholders of education; do not create positive school culture for learning and teaching; do not share management responsibilities; value strictness and firmness but do not practise these values.

With regards to beliefs, the trend that is observed with effective principals is that school discipline is a prerequisite to effective learning and teaching; believe in the importance of professional educator development programme; believe in the potential of educators; are able to work under pressure, etc. On the other hand, ineffective school principals are unable to create school discipline; do not believe in the potential of their educators; believe in cleanliness but seem to lack ideas to achieve that; have no confidence in the community; are unable to absorb work pressure, always blame others for their own shortcomings, etc.

Recommendations

One of the main limitations of a study of limited scope is that the findings cannot be universally applied or generalised, but it does bring to the fore new hypotheses that will require further research on a much wider scale. From the limited data it emerges that the values, assumption and beliefs of people stand in a definite relation to people's sense on inner or outer-directedness. This is something that should be subjected to further research as it may reveal important data about how we could possibly select school principals better or prepare them better for their roles as leaders.

From the discussion above, there may be no specific recommendations to the DoBE. However, a general appeal to the DoBE is that it should be sensitive towards the diversity of people in terms of their assumptions, values and beliefs and employ better screening and selection methods to weed out those applicants who may not be able to cope with the responsibilities of a principal or provide them with additional support and development opportunities.

Research Question 4

What personal aims do the principals have for their schools and how do these aims resonate with the training that they have received?

In this question I wanted to establish the relationship between the principals' own assumptions, values and beliefs and the possible relatedness to the training received.

From the data presented in Chapter 4, it became clear that all the participating principals had their own assumptions, values and beliefs which manifested themselves in their personal aims. They wanted to have organized schools, with well-behaved learners, disciplined, motivated staff and learners, they wished to be in schools where there would be a positive culture of learning and teaching; they wanted to be in a schools which would excel in both academic and cultural activities and where there would be a harmonious relations between educators and school management;

The participating principals, especially from the effective schools expressed the views that they would adopt a situational leadership style; that they would use management by walking and not be office-bound all the time; where management would have a good working relations with labour unions; where all educators would be taught to aspire to be ready to assist school management in carrying out management responsibilities; where all stakeholders of the school would support turn-around strategies that management would come up with when necessary; where the SMTs would be fully capacitated to carry out their activities for quality curriculum delivery; where the principals would be the first to be trained on any new curriculum or labour changes before their subordinates are. This would enable them to monitor and manage their subordinates.

All of the personal aims of the participating principals, except the last one, resonate well with the training they received. The reasons why some principals implement these assumptions, values and beliefs of principals and others do not emphasises the point that was highlighted elsewhere in the chapter that this study has to do with two types of principals; namely, the inner-directed and the outer-directed. The inner-directed found that most of their personal aims resonated well with the training they received whereas the outer-directed, although the training resonated with their personal aims, they lacked assertiveness and had weaker self-image to provide effective leadership and management in their schools.

Recommendations:

The recommendations for the discussion above is the same as articulated in question one; namely, developing a succession planning model where principals are trained prior to taking up school principal positions; developing and implementing induction programmes for school principals and including principals as first line trainees in terms of new curriculum developments and changes.

5.4 Conclusion

For too long training and in particular professional development training was seen myopically as dealing with knowledge and skills thus ignoring the important dimension of personal values, assumptions and beliefs. Although this study was of a limited scope, it did tackle this complex puzzle and from the data presented, it became evident that personal values, assumptions and beliefs of school principals are important determinants in effective schools. This resonate with the views of people like Bussey (2006) who claims that while values – individual, organizational, and social – are inherent to all leadership decisions, the literature suggests that a particular constellation of personal values and beliefs is essential for effective leadership of schools with high populations of at-risk children. Too little research in this field has been done in South Africa and it is hoped that this study would stimulate further research into the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals.

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APPENDICES

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RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

DEGREE AND PROJECT

INVESTIGATOR(S)

DEPARTMENT

DATE CONSIDERED

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE NUMBER :

EM 11/07/01

M.Ed

The assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management

Malesela Daniel Kekana

Education Management and Policy Studies

12 September 2013

APPROVED

Please note:

For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years

For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS
COMMITTEE**

Prof Liesel Ebersöhn

DATE

12 September 2013

CC

Jeannie Beukes

Liesel Ebersöhn

Prof FJ Nieuwenhuis

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.

APPENDIX B.

APPLICATION LETTER TO THE LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**Faculty of Education
Education Management and Policy Studies**

Enquiries: M D Kekana PO Box 2152
0795149678 Mahwelereng
0626
22 June 2011

TO: HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

I, MD Kekana, a Masters student (04402014) at the University of Pretoria hereby request to conduct research in Mokopane circuit schools.

I am conducting a research on the topic: What are the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management?

The purpose of the study is to understand how the personal assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management influence the management of the school. The research is based on a narrative approach. It will look on the personal stories of six school principals. Three of the principals will be from effective schools while the other three will be from ineffective schools. Interviews will be conducted with principals where they will talk about their ideas and experiences in managing schools. Each principal will be shadowed for one day to observe how she/he manages the school.


Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants will be considered and the schools' names in the study will not be disclosed. In case there is additional information needed or any clarity, the researcher will gladly provide it.

Yours truly

M D Kekana

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION LETTER FROM LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

 **LIMPOPO**
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

Enquiries : Nemailli Eastern (Manager: Office of the HOD)
Tel Ext : 015 290 7702
Date : 14 September 2011

Mr.M.D.Kekana
University of Pretoria
Faculty of Education
Education Management and Policy Studies

Dear Sir Cell No: 079 514 9678

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE ASSUMPTIONS, VALUES AND BELIEFS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL REGARDING LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

1. Thank you for your letter regarding the above mentioned subject of which the content is noted. We are indeed humbled by the interest displayed by you on matters which of course affect our Education system.
2. In the light of your request, I therefore grant you permission to conduct a research in Mokopane Circuit situated in Mogalakwena District in Limpopo Province.
3. It is however important to indicate that prior arrangements to conduct the latter should be arranged in advance so that teaching and learning is not sacrificed.
4. After the completion of the study, we will appreciate a copy of your research which will serve as a resource for the Department.

Research Letter : Kekana M.D. Page 1

Cnr 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700 Private bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700
Tel.: (015) 290 7802/7855, Fax: (015) 297 0937, E-mail: mnisivv@edu.limpopo.gov, ramukhadim@edu.limpopo.gov

The heartland of Southern Africa - development is about people!

5. Once more, we wish you all of the best in your studies and assure you of our cooperation in this regard.

Yours Sincerely



Mr.M.J.Thamaga

Head of Department

Department of Education-Limpopo Province



APPENDIX D

APPLICATION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS



Faculty of Education Education Management and Policy Studies

Enquiries:

M D Kekana
0795149678

PO Box 2152
Mahwelereng
0626
22 September 2011

Dear Principal

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

I hereby request to conduct a research in your school on the topic:

What are the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management?

The purpose of the study is to understand the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management. I request to conduct interviews with you as the principal of the school. I will also spend a day with you in order to observe how you manage the school.

You are assured of confidentiality and anonymity and the name of the school will not be disclosed in the study. A permission to conduct the study in your school has been granted by the Head of Department in the Limpopo Department of Education. A copy of the permission is attached for your reference.

Thanking you in advance

M D KEKANA

APPENDIX E

LETTER OF CONSENT

100
1908 - 2008



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**Faculty of Education
Education Management and Policy Studies**

Enquiries:

M D Kekana
0795149678

PO Box 2152
Mahwelereng
0626

Date:

TO:

The Principal

RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

You are invited to participate in a research aimed at collecting information about the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management.

Your participation will be voluntary and you will not be subjected to any risk or harm of any kind. Your names and that of your school will remain confidential. You will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Title of research project: The assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is to understand the assumptions, values and beliefs of school principals regarding school leadership and management
Expectations from you as the participant: You are expected to participate in three interview sessions of approximately 30 minutes each divided firstly, in the period before you became a principal, secondly, the period immediately after becoming a principal and thirdly, the current period. The researcher will also spend a day with you observing how you manage the school.

Benefits: Although there are no ideal set of values and beliefs, participating in this study, will assist you in reflecting on them and thereby standing to gain as individuals and as researchers we will be able to understand the management of schools better.

APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM

I, Mr/Dr/Ms hereby voluntarily agree to take part in a research study being conducted by Malesela Daniel Kekana, a student of the University of Pretoria.

I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the invitation. All the procedures, any risks and benefits have been explained to me. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions and to receive any additional details I wanted about the study. If I have questions later about the study I can ask the principal investigator, Malesela Daniel Kekana, the student at the University of Pretoria, cell phone number 0795149678 and the e-mail address: malesela4@webmail.co.za or the supervisor (Prof Jan Nieuwenhuis)

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by telling the researcher.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethical clearance through the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Pretoria. I am aware that I may contact this office if I have any concerns or questions resulting from my involvement in this study.

Printed Names of Participant

Signature of Participant

Signed at

Date

Witness

Date

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARTICIPANTS BEFORE BECOMING PRINCIPALS



Faculty of Education Education Management and Policy Studies

How long have you been an educator?

What position did you hold before becoming a principal?

What were your challenges in the position you held?

Did you have any principal as your role model? Please elaborate?

What were your expectations about a good school?

Did you experience any good teacher? Please elaborate.

Did you experience any bad teacher? Please elaborate.

Did you encounter any serious conflict situation? How did you address it?

Did you receive any professional development programme?

As a child or student, did you ever think that one day you become a principal?

How did you become a principal?

As there anything that you would like to say?

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARTICIPANTS IMMEDIATELY AFTER BECOMING PRINCIPALS



**Faculty of Education
Education Management and Policy Studies**

What were your challenges after becoming a principal? Please elaborate?

Did you receive any professional educator development programme?

Did you benefit from the programme?

What recommendations did you have for the programmes? If you were to assess the programmes, how would rate them? Please elaborate.

What were your personal aims for the school?

Did you achieve any of your personal aims? Please elaborate

How would you evaluate the professional educator development of the time?

Did the programmes address your personal aims? Please elaborate.

If you had an alternative career choice, would you consider following it? Why?

Do you have anything to say?

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE CURRENT PERIOD AS PRINCIPALS



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**Faculty of Education
Education Management and Policy Studies**

How long have you been a principal?

What are your current challenges in school leadership and management?

Are you still receiving professional educator development programmes?

What are your personal aims about your school?

Do these aims resonate well with you're the professional educator development programmes?

Are you presently enjoying your position as a principal?

Which aspects would you wish should be included in the programmes?

If you had an alternative career choice, would you follow it?

Do you have anything you would like to say?