

**Stakeholder views of educational governance after a change in ownership of
independent schools**

By

Elizabeth Breedt

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Supervisor: Prof JL Beckmann

Co-Supervisor: Dr A du Plessis

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DECLARATION

I, **Elizabeth Breedt**, declare that the thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Philosophiae Doctor at the University of Pretoria is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

Signature: 

Date: June 2022

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

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INVESTIGATOR

Ms Elizabeth Breedt

DEPARTMENT

Education Management and Policy Studies

APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY

2 July 2019

DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

13 August 2021

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof Funke Omidire



CC

Ms Bronwynne Swarts

Prof JL Beckmann

Dr A du Plessis

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- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
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- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved husband Hentie and our two sons

Tjaart and Franco.

Thank you for all your love and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To be able to study is a privilege. To be able to study as a wife and mother with a full-time career is a blessing and only possible by the grace of God. I just realise again that with God everything is possible.

I would like to thank the following people:

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ABSTRACT

Independent schools became part of South Africa in 1994. The new educational system contributed to the freedom of the choice of language medium of education as well as the freedom of religion in education. In the last 10 years, many independent schools have become part of corporate companies which have invested in small, sometimes poor, independent schools including them as part of a larger business organisation. This corporate company investment has resulted in a change from educational governance to corporate governance in these schools. One of the concerns relating to this change is that the focus of governance could move from educational development to the increase of profit. The purpose of this study was to understand the views of some stakeholders when their schools changed from not-for-profit governance to a profit-driven governance. The primary question addressed was: What are the views of stakeholders in formerly independent not-for-profit schools of governance after a change of ownership to a listed organisation?

A multiple case study design was used. Semi-structured interviews were used to try to understand how the stakeholders viewed this change. The King III Report (2009) presented certain characteristics of good governance: responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency. These characteristics were used as a conceptual framework to obtain sufficient information on how different stakeholders viewed the change in governance. The stakeholders mentioned changes that were not anticipated beforehand and the differences in experiences regarding the different stakeholders were inevitable.

This thesis recommends that changes from not-for-profit governance to profit-driven governance need to be planned, monitored and supervised very carefully. Governors need to know and acknowledge that a school is a community. Compassion and empathy need to be shown to all stakeholders of the school. Attention needs to be given to communication with stakeholders, especially the teachers and parents. Relationships of trust take time to develop and need to be established between stakeholders. The

psychological effect of a transformation like this on all stakeholders, including the children and their families, needs to be addressed.

Key words: Independent Schools, Governance, Corporate Governance, Stakeholders.

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING



Language Editing & Educational Support Services

14 July 2021



To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I have completed the language editing of the thesis **Stakeholder views of educational governance after a change in ownership of independent schools** by **Elizabeth Breedt** submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR in Education Management and Policy Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria.

Disclaimers

1. I focused on language issues, including grammar, tenses, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, and consistency with regard to UK spelling.
2. I gave attention to the word order where necessary and made suggestions to improve the flow of the story line.
3. A complete edited copy was provided to the author. Final decisions rest with the student as to which suggestions to implement.
4. It is essential that any changes deemed necessary by the supervisor(s) be made before the document is edited. The editor is therefore not responsible for changes made after the edited document has been returned to the author.

Ailsa Williams
Language editor

 082 298 7115  williams.ailsa@gmail.com

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AICD	Australia's Institute of Company Directors
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DOE	Department of Education
FEDSAS	Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools
HOD	Head of Department
IEB	Independent Examination Board
ISASA	Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa
JSE	Johannesburg Stock Exchange
MS	Microsoft
NEPA	National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SASA	South African Schools Act 84 of 1996
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TFI	Teach for India
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 GENERAL

“One of the most powerful tools for empowering individuals and communities is making certain that any individual who wants to receive a quality education can do so”.

Christene Gregoire

Education in any country is important for everyone as well for the country’s success, more so in South Africa where education has a turbulent history. This thesis is underpinned by the belief that education (schools in this instance) plays and must legally a larger role in society than the author’s economic dilemma seems to convey. This belief resonates with the inspiring provisions about education and values contained in both national and international legal instruments such as the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution of 1996, Article 26(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 1(2) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.¹

After 1994, schools in South Africa had to transform into more democratic schools and the Constitution of 1996 (hereinafter the Constitution of 1996) (RSA, 1996a) envisioned quality education for all the children in the country.

In the transition process from the pre-1994 to the post-1994 system, one of the important changes was the distribution (delegation) of power to schools. Previously the Department of Education and school principals had the power to make all decisions regarding schools. These decisions were not always in the best interests of children. For this reason, according to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (hereafter SASA) (RSA, 1996b), each public school must have its own school governing body (hereafter SGB). Specific

¹ I gleaned the last part of this paragraph from a much appreciated and appropriate comment of one of the examiners of the thesis.

regulations were put in place to make sure that these SGBs comprised representatives of parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and the principal – people who form the stakeholders of a school. Decision-making and other powers were distributed to these representatives of all stakeholders to ensure that the teaching and learning and needs of each specific area of the school are met.

The introduction of SGBs into South African public schools was not always positive and successful in all respects. In general, research focused on the purpose and development of SGBs as well as the improvement and development of the democratic distribution of power. The distribution of power was not the only problem in South African public schools. A shortage of schools and overpopulated schools soon became a problem. There were too many learners in the classrooms and not even enough space for a teacher to walk around in the class. This situation is discussed in detail in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.3.

To help address this problematic situation, independent schools were welcomed and allowed in South Africa. According to Section 45 of SASA, any person can open an independent if they register the school with the Department of Basic Education. From there the Department of Basic Education does not seem to have any specific obligations towards the school although the Department may subsidise such schools.

The different reasons for starting an independent school are discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.3.3. One of the reasons for developing an independent school is to provide a specific service to children that parents would not find in public schools. For this overarching reason (with different services in mind) parents, who are important stakeholders in independent schools, are willing to pay a premium and to expect the services for which they paid.

Some of these independent schools started as not-for-profit schools, with a specific service in mind. The owners of these schools could be former teachers or people with educational backgrounds. Some schools (such as church schools) could also have owners with a specific religious background without educational experience. These independent not-for-profit “*church-schools*” are not only found in South Africa. This phenomenon is seen internationally – some such schools being successful, while others have failed.

More about independent schools, local and international schools is discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.4.2. The relationship between the government of a country and the governance of an independent school is also discussed. In South Africa, large private organisations listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) started to buy these small independent, not-for-profit church schools and the governance of these schools was transformed from not-for-profit governance to profit-driven governance. The purpose of this thesis is to sustain the claim that education plays (and must legally play) a larger role in society than the author’s economic dilemma seems to convey.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to understand how the school-based stakeholders (principals, HODs’, teachers and parents) of these not-for-profit independent schools perceived the change of ownership to profit-driven independent schools. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, parents enrol their children in an independent school with specific expectations. A change of ownership will affect all parties involved. The principal, HODs’ and teachers are now employed by a new organisation, which could result in a change regarding their working contracts, salaries, leave and working environment. In this multiple case study, the schools that formed part of the study was schools who did went through this change. The focus was especially on independent schools who changed from

not-for-profit governance (both these schools were governed by the same church) to two different profit-driven governance schools in two different organisations.

The purpose of this study is also to understand if profit-driven governance, or corporate governance, could still provide the service that was promised to the stakeholders when the parents enrolled their children or when teachers started to teach at the school under not-for-profit governance. Could this 'new' organisation provide the same service or an even better service than the previous not-for-profit owners?

At first glance, such a transfer of ownership does not seem to be problematic. However, if one bears in mind that South African education, as mentioned in Paragraph 1.1, is part of a tumultuous historical background, one could anticipate that a change like this could change the mission statement (ethos, culture, and vision) of the school. The history of South African education is discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.1 and from this, the importance of transparent governance to all stakeholders becomes apparent. The purpose of this study is therefore clearly linked to the problem statement of this research.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 2001 Professor Kader Asmal said the following:

Fear was replaced by hope, repression by democratic freedom, exclusion, and division by the possibility of inclusiveness and unity (DOE, 2001:4)

To help create democratic freedom in South Africa, the educational system was transformed into a system that would involve parents in the decision-making of the school. This transformation process is discussed in detail in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.3.

When smaller independent schools with strong religious influences change from not-for-profit governance to corporate governance, the educational focus of the schools could also change. The involvement of parents as decision makers could also be affected by the change. It could be problematic if the culture and ethos of the school changed to an institution that focused mainly on profit and not on the educational and emotional development of the child.

There is increasing doubt about the effectiveness and influence of the South African government on the governance of independent schools (Din, 2017). Many independent schools have shown a transformation in the past ten years from being relatively small private independent schools to becoming profit-driven schools owned by public companies. Hassenfuss (2017) wrote in the *Financial Mail* of 3 May 2017 that “[e]ducation appears to be a red-hot sector on the JSE at the moment”. This is indicative of the emerging prominence given to independent schools in South Africa

DeBoy (2015:15) explains how these corporate companies contribute to the existence of educational institutions as follows: “*Unless this university is run like a business, it will soon be out of business*”. In South Africa, some independent schools, especially not-for-profit schools, need more than just the contribution of their stakeholders to keep their schools running. Large corporate companies could invest more resources into bought-over schools. The composition of the governors could also include more qualified governors, with expertise in education or the field of pedagogy as well as the knowledge of an effective way to run an educational business. These kinds of expertise were not always found in the former “*church-schools*” which mainly catered for the emotional and religious needs of a community through church leaders and not education experts.

To achieve an appropriate balance between business-orientated and education-orientated approaches could be a skill that is not necessarily appreciated by the

organisation involved in the take-over process. The importance of comparing these two types of governance (not-for-profit and profit-driven) form part of the conceptual framework of the study. A not-for-profit school that is governed by church leaders could be linked to certain problems and misunderstandings. Church leaders do not necessarily have enough knowledge regarding education and could base their decisions purely on religious needs and dreams. The involvement of the stakeholders in the governance of independent schools after a change in ownership, most likely would lead to access to valuable information regarding the success of education under corporate governance.

The change of an educational institution to a profit-driven organisation could either improve the standard of education or change the focus of the institution to such an extent that the quality of the education is compromised. How stakeholders viewed this change would give an indication as to whether corporate governance and education can be combined and still meet the constitutional obligations of schools in South Africa. By viewing good governance as explained by Gayathri (2015) and stipulated in the King III Report (2009), some of those characteristics like transparency, responsibility, accountability, and fairness form part of the conceptual framework of the study

1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

When doing my master's degree (Breedt, 2016), I was fascinated by the recruitment, selection, and appointment processes in independent schools. As a former teacher in an independent school, informal discussions indicated to me that parents (stakeholders) enrolled their children in an independent school for specific reasons which included quality education. If the stakeholders expected quality education and highly qualified teachers, one could expect them to make sure that they appointed highly qualified teachers according to best practice.

The quality of education in an independent school could be compromised if and when the qualifications and experience of a candidate teacher were not considered by principals and governors as the most important criteria for appointment and they appointed someone known to them or referred to them by one of the staff members. The appointment of teachers could be even more of a handicap in the pursuit of quality education if principals and governors only appointed staff members with the same world view as the governors at the expense of other candidates who are better qualified and experienced. In such cases, the cultural fit to the school weighed the most when considering a candidate. It was therefore important to get the participants' views of the appointment of teachers in the profit-driven schools.

This research is also about how large corporate organisations started to buy small not-for-profit schools and changed them into profit-driven schools. Business and education became intertwined. In Chapter 2 paragraph 2.3, more information concerning education and the economy is discussed, including how these organisations, listed on the stock exchange, needed to show a profit to the satisfaction of the shareholders² and still provide the same or better-quality education as promised by the governors of the not-for-profit school. The question of the ability of a profit-driven business with corporate governance to govern a school and give proper attention to educational needs was one of the issues explored in this research.

The effect of the silence and lack of involvement of the government regarding the governance of independent schools was also researched. The question surfaced as to whether these independent schools with corporate governance would be able to govern an educational institution according to the expectations of the government. The

² It is important to note that this study explored the experiences and views of the **stakeholders** in the schools that changed to for-profit schools. The study excluded **shareholders** of the companies that bought the schools as they could not have been affected directly by the changes in the governance of schools like the stakeholders who were involved in and affected by the day by day educational activities in schools. They were primarily concerned about the profits that schools could make.

democratic distribution of power was also part of the research to determine if parents were still included in the decision-making process of the profit-driven schools. This aspect of school governance is discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.3. The research questions were used to access the participants' views regarding these issues which are vitally important in the provision of quality education to all the children of South Africa.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the preliminary literature review the following research questions were created to obtain information regarding the research problem. Each question was designed to address the possible experiences and views that school-based stakeholders and parents could report about the change in ownership.

1.5.1 Primary research question

What are the views of stakeholders in formerly independent not-for-profit schools of the governance of their schools after a change of ownership to a listed organisation?

1.5.2 Secondary research questions

Secondary research questions to support the primary research question were:

- How do stakeholders experience the governors' responsibility after the change in ownership?
- How do stakeholders experience accountability by the governors after a change in ownership?
- How do stakeholders experience the consideration of their legitimate interests in, and expectations of the school as an entity after a change in ownership?

- How do stakeholders experience transparency in decision-making after a change in ownership?
- How do stakeholders describe the changes in the ethos and culture of the school after a change in ownership?

1.6 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The research aims and objectives were derived from the research questions and endeavoured to:

- understand how stakeholders experience the change in ownership from not-for-profit governance to profit-driven governance,
- determine how governors of independent education in South Africa show accountability towards school-based stakeholders.
- examine the consideration of stakeholders' legitimate interests in, and the expectations of the school as an entity after a change in ownership. .
- investigate the transparency of governors in decision-making after a change in ownership.
- explore the change in the ethos and culture of the school after a change in ownership.

1.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To be able to complete qualitative research, researchers have to use a conceptual framework as part of the research. The use of a conceptual framework contributes to the discovery of what is happening in the “real world” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this research project, the views of school-based stakeholders after a change in governance are explored with the focus on the change from not-for-profit governance to profit driven

governance. These schools were part of the same not-for-profit church governance and were bought by different companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. In Chapter 3 more information and an in-depth discussion will be provided on how the conceptual framework (derived from the King III Report (Institute of Directors, 2009) also contributed to the design of the research questions.

According to the King III Report (Institute of Directors, 2009) good governance includes certain characteristics these characteristics (namely, responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency) as well their functions in the research will be discussed as the conceptual or theoretical framework in Chapter 3.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

To understand the views and experience of stakeholders, a qualitative research approach was used. In qualitative research different methodologies are used and, since the quality of information is so important, most of the methodologies use samples of participants (Burns & Grove, 2011).

To understand the experiences of stakeholders after the change in ownership the principles of phenomenological inquiry were also used. Burns and Grove (2011:16) explain that this “*research approach, which is also a philosophy, seeks to understand the phenomena as a lived experience of individuals*”. This research was based on the experiences of the different school-based stakeholders concerning the change from not-for-profit to profit-driven governance. The perceptions gleaned from the literature were used to enhance the value of the responses of participants.

Two schools (School A and School B) participated in the research. Both these schools were part of the same not-for-profit governance (church school structures), but their

governance was taken over by two different profit-driven companies. They were the only two schools in the province in which the research is based that were previously not-for-profit schools that were bought by companies listed on the JSE. For this reason, a multiple case study design was used to be able to understand the stakeholders' views in two different schools. A multiple case study was used to research the different situations, experiences and observed similarities in both schools after the change in ownership (Gustafsson, 2017). This multiple case study strategy is described in more detail in Chapter 4, paragraph 4.3.3.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to collect data. Because the experience of different stakeholders was important in the study, the questions regarding the same theme were asked in a different way for the different stakeholders. In other words, questions for the principals differed from questions to for example the parents who participated in the study.

In the research questions the focus is on the experiences of the stakeholders after the change in ownership. The change in ownership happened approximately five years prior to the study and parents who had been part of the school for longer than five years were therefore able to recall their experiences. The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews to allow stakeholders to explain their experiences and possible expectations that were not covered in the initial questions. This process is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 paragraph 4.5.

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

1.9.1 Governance

According to the International Bureau of Education, “*governance*” refers to: “*structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness,*

rule of law stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment and broad-based participation. Governance is about the culture of the institutional environment in which citizens and stakeholders interact among themselves and participate in public affairs.” (www.ibe.unesco.org.).

The power of the governance of a school could contribute to the success of the school. Because education is a particularly important aspect of any society, the power distribution and the effective use of these powers could improve the success of independent schools. In this research, the governance of schools, the roles of school governing bodies as well as the governance by large companies came under scrutiny. Corporate governance is focused on in Chapter 2 to understand how corporate and education entities function in independent schools. This leads to the next point namely corporate governance.

1.9.2 Corporate governance

“Corporate governance includes the moral principles, values and practices and facilitates the balance between economic and social goals and between individual and common goals” (www.esds.co.in/blog/types-ofgovernance). According to the King IV: Report:

Corporate governance is used to differentiate it from other forms of governance, for example national or political governance. Corporate refers to organisations that are incorporated to form legal entities separate from their founders and therefore applies to all forms of incorporation whether as company, voluntary association, retirement fund, trust, legislated entity or other (Institute of Directors, 2015:11).

This type of governance needs to be balanced and not only focused on economic goals, but also on social goals when decisions are made. As discussed in the previous

paragraph, the power of governance in a school could contribute to the success of the school. Independent schools can be governed independently from the government.

As discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.1, more and more organisations have become the owners of previously small not-for-profit schools. The assumption can be made that corporate governance could contribute to economic success, and the long-term sustainability of schools could be a positive contribution to education (Armstrong, 2003). If the corporate world pursues the same goals as the not-for-profit governance, one can expect successful, sustainable educational entities with a focus on quality education.

1.9.3 Independent schools

In terms of Section 29(3) of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA,1996a): “*Everyone has the right to establish an independent school at their own expense if it does not discriminate based on race, is registered with the state, and maintains standards that are not inferior to the standards at a comparable public educational institution*”. The history of South Africa with the focus on education is discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.1.

One of the reasons why the government allowed independent schools was ostensibly to provide education and facilities that the government could not provide. The demand for schools and facilities in South Africa is much higher than the provision. In South Africa, after the demise of Apartheid in 1994, more communities used the opportunity to start independent schools with a specific purpose in mind. Religion was one of the reasons for the establishment of independent schools and these schools formed part of a church. In the next sub-paragraph, I address the concept of not-for-profit schools.

1.9.4 Not-for-profit Schools

“Not-for-profit status is what most private schools chose to organise under so that they may make money but also receive contributions which are tax-deductible to the extent provided by the law” (www.privateschoolreview.com/top-school-listings). A number of these not-for-profit schools were governed by a church. These schools allowed learners to learn about and teachers to teach a specific religion. The culture and ethos of the schools were specifically planned. Schools from religious groups started to appear all over South Africa after 1994. These schools were known for their small classes and individual attention and that soon became a highly effective business model, as explained by Mupunga (2019) in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.3.3. This led to the emergence of education as a business, namely profit-driven schools.

1.9.5 Profit-driven Schools

Profit-driven or for-profit schools are *“typically used by either a corporation or a private individual to make a profit but [are] not eligible for contributions which are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law”* (<https://www.privateschoolreview.com/top-school-listings>). As mentioned earlier, the fact that schools became an effective business model motivated corporate organisation listed on the JSE to either build and start independent schools under a brand name or invest in small independent schools and change them to be part of their brands. By investing in these schools, corporate organisations had to report to the stakeholders (staff members, parents, and learners) who became part of the profit-driven school with a certain expectation of quality education, individual attention, smaller classes or even a specific religious view. Shareholders are also discussed in paragraph 1.9.7. The expectations of shareholders could differ from those of stakeholders. In this research, stakeholders were the focus.

1.9.6 Stakeholders

“Stakeholders are bound to the company for a longer term and for reasons of greater need. These reasons often mean that the stakeholder has a greater need for the organisation to succeed over the long term” (www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/08/difference-between-a-shareholder-and-a-stakeholder.asp). In the quote “longer term” refers to the fact that if the school is a combined school, parents (stakeholders) could be part of the school for twelve or thirteen years if they only enrol one child. Expectations from the school will also become greater each year. These stakeholders namely, parents of children, principals, heads of department and teachers will be part of the school for a few years and for this reason they will be part of the research. In the context of this thesis the word “stakeholder” refers to specifically to a legal term denoting a person having a stake or interest in a school and its success or failure.

1.9.7 Shareholders

“Shareholders own part of a public organisation through shares of stock”. These shareholders are not involved in the organisation itself but need to be updated on the growth of their shares (www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/08/difference-between-a-shareholder-and-a-stakeholder.asp). Shareholders form part of the organisation to gain profit. They invest in an organisation so that the value of their shares will increase.

. . .shareholder means the holder of a share issued by a company and who is entered as such in the certificated or uncertificated securities register, as the case may be as defined in section 1 of the Companies Act (Institute of Directors, 2015:16).

In this research, shareholders refer to persons linked to profit-driven schools but who are not involved in the day to day running of such schools. However, they are not involved in the educational delivery of the school and only show interest in the profit margin and increase in the value of their shares. For this reason, the shareholders and the governors

were not part of the research. In this research, the experience of some of the stakeholders in the school situation were investigated. Because independent schools were researched, public school governing bodies will only be discussed as part of a comparison to corporate governance.

1.9.8 School governing bodies

Parents need to be involved in the education of their children. A change in South African education started when the main decisions, previously made by principals and inspectors, were devolved to the School Governing Body of which parents are the majority (Modisaotsile, 2012). The government is not prescriptive to independent schools regarding how they govern schools. As discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.3.3, if the independent schools comply with the constitutional requirements of the country, they can govern and manage the schools independently from the government. In this research, one of the concerns was the fact that parents did not participate in the governance of the independent schools and the effectiveness of profit-driven education therefore needed to be explored.

1.10 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Educational institutions and corporate institutions focus on different outcomes. The purpose of the study was to view the experience of school-based stakeholders after a change in governance. As discussed previously as well as in Chapter 2, parents have a specific reason why they enrol their children in an independent school. These parents have a certain expectation, and they also know that they pay a premium to ensure that the school will provide whatever they expect and were promised.

The purpose of the study was that try to discover if corporate governance would focus on a different element of a school, namely the financial profits that their shareholders could

get from the educational institution. This could also lead to information about a balance between profit and the quality of education and about the best facilities to serve as a marketing tool for prospective parents. These not-for-profit schools were previously governed by a church which in turn focused on the protection of culture and religion in the school.

The research questions mentioned in paragraph 1.5.1 focus on the experiences of different stakeholders in the school – the principal and HODs (who are the managing team of the school), the teachers and the parents. These questions were asked to better understand the experience of the different stakeholders after the change in ownership.

1.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In qualitative research, credibility and authenticity contribute to the trustworthiness of a study (Creswell, 2014). In Chapter 4 paragraph 4.6 more details are provided regarding the trustworthiness of the study. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data and that interpretations were correct, the triangulation method was applied by using different data collection methods. After data was collected through interviews and documentation analyses, I transcribed the data myself to make sure I acquired a deeper understanding of the data. This was a time-consuming process, but it was valuable in helping me to identify the different categories and how the different stakeholders experienced the change in school ownership. All the interviews were also recorded and easily accessible during the time of analysis. The data collection and data analysis process are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

1.12 CHAPTER PLANNING

1.12.1 Chapter 1

A summary of the research is provided in this chapter. More detail of each of the given parts provided in this research will be provided in each of the chapters. In Chapter one, only a brief summary is provided regarding the research.

1.12.2 Chapter 2

During the past ten years there has been an increase in the establishment of independent schools in South Africa and corporate organisations have bought small not-for-profit independent schools to become part of their profit-driven organisation. Chapter 2 focuses on the pivotal role of power in education by considering questions such as: Who makes important decisions in independent schools? How effective can corporate governance be in the education sector?

This chapter details the importance of education and how power over schools should be regulated, especially in independent schools. The history and transformation of education in South Africa is discussed. The study of the differences regarding the governance of public schools and governance of independent schools provided valuable insights into the experiences of the school-based stakeholders. The governance of schools internationally is also discussed with the focus being on the reason why the governments of different countries allow schools to function independently from the government.

1.12.3 Chapter 3

The conceptual framework will be discussed in detail in this chapter. The characteristics of good governance as explained in the King IV Report (Institute of Directors, 2015) will

be discussed in detail. Responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency will be explained and the relationship of the different characteristics to one another will also be discussed to provide a clear understanding of how these characteristics will contribute to understanding and analysing the stakeholders' views on the change in governance.

1.12.4 Chapter 4

The constructivist paradigm informed the research and the reason for this was to obtain data to construct a deeper understanding of, and insight into how the stakeholders viewed the change in ownership from a not-for-profit governed school to a profit-driven school governance approach. In Chapter 1 paragraph 1.7 all the different characteristics of good governance as expounded in the King III Report on Corporate Governance, published by the Institute of Directors in 2009 (hereafter referred to as the King III Report) are discussed and an explanation of how they were used in the research is given. A qualitative research approach was used to provide a creative analysis. The analysis of the data began after the data collection process was completed (Suter, 2012). In Chapter 4 paragraph 4.3.2 an explanation is given of the research process.

A multiple case study design was used to gain information through semi-structured interviews. Probability sampling was used because the research focussed on the change in ownership from not-for-profit governance to profit-driven governance. For this reason, it was important to invite stakeholders that were part of the previous and current governors to participate in the study. In Chapter 4.3.2 the research process is discussed to explain how the interviews and analysis of the data took place. After all the data was collected, transcriptions and analysis took place and are discussed in Chapter 5.

1.12.5 Chapter 5

Data analysis and the interpretation of data are presented in Chapter 5. The explanation of the in-depth analysis is discussed in this chapter and the different categories that were used to answer the research questions are identified. A thematic analysis was used in the data analysis. The places of the various positions of the stakeholders in the hierarchical structures of the organisation were clearly outlined to provide a better understanding of the transcription, coding, and thematic analysis.

A multiple case study design was used to ensure that the experiences of the different schools were clearly explained to provide an in-depth understanding of the views and circumstances of the different stakeholders from the schools. The transcription of data also contributed to trustworthiness because I transcribed and analysed the data alone. Because all the interviews were recorded, the recordings could be revisited repeatedly to ensure that the information from a participant was transcribed correctly and that there was no misunderstanding before the conclusions were reached. Participants could ask to see the transcription should they wish to. These are discussed in Chapter 6.

1.12.6 Chapter 6

An overview of the study as well as a short description of each chapter is presented in this chapter. Findings related to the set research question and sub-questions are discussed. These findings were grouped as follows to answer the main and sub-questions:

- Governors' responsibility and accountability
- Change in ethos and culture of the school
- Democratic approach
- Dedication of teachers in independent schools

- Parents' involvement in decision making
- Business or education orientations of governors (board of directors)
- Independence from government
- Higher fees vis-à-vis quality of education
- The appropriateness of corporate governance in the world of education

Previous research, the limitations and the possible significance of the study are discussed as well as recommendations for the improvement of practice and the possibilities for further research.

1.13 CONCLUSION OF THE CHAPTER

Mr Nelson Mandela, the first President of South Africa after the end of Apartheid once said that: "*Education is one of the most powerful weapons for any individual to change the world*" (Mandela, 1990). Educators need to be willing to ask questions about the institutions and organisations that provide education to the youth of South Africa.

The history of South African education will be discussed in Chapter 2 and the importance of good governance will be evident in this research. South African educators experienced different challenges before 1994 and changes after 1994 that contributed to adaptations and changes to the education system to accommodate different parts of the community. This study examined the characteristics of profit-driven education and explored the possibility whether it could be approached differently to assure good governance, transparency, responsibility, fairness and accountability towards all the stakeholders. In this research the focus will be on school-based stakeholders.

CHAPTER 2

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN PUBLIC AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL CONTEXTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In post-Apartheid South Africa, the educational system needed to be changed to provide quality education to all the children in the country. In the United States of America, the Supreme Court has recognised the importance of education and emphasised the fact that the success of any child will be jeopardised if that child's opportunity to be educated is denied (Thro, 2006). The constitutional right to education paves the way for a successful country.

The inevitable question that arises is whether the power over schools should be regulated by the government to assure the quality of education. Several studies (Dunlop, 2012; Snyman, 2012; Hassenfuss, 2017; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020) have argued that independent schools have become the future in certain countries. However, very little has been written about the power of governance in those independent schools. There is no clear evidence of government involvement in independent schools and the effects thereof.

The power to regulate the direction schools are heading is in the hands of the people who oversee the school, and they will also influence the education taking place in the school (Saayman, 1991). This power is called the governance of a school. The concept of 'school governance' has a different meaning in different countries and in different schools. The research will focus on governance in independent schools in South Africa, and for that reason, governance internationally in public schools as well as independent schools will be part of the literature review to provide an insightful perspective on school governance.

Since 1994 the education system in South Africa has changed from a system that provided high quality education to an exclusive section of the population to an inclusive, equitable education system. This new education system had to rectify the inequalities of the education system that prevailed during the Apartheid-era. In order to realise the right to basic education for all as stipulated in Section 29 of the Constitution of 1996, changes had to be made to the educational system. These changes will be discussed in this literature review and how the new educational system tried to involve parents in the school system. This new educational system contributes to the freedom of the choice of language medium of education as well as the freedom of religion in education as stipulated in Sections 15, 29, 30 and 31 of the Constitution of 1996. Providing freedom of religion and the opportunity of being educated in one's mother tongue, contributed to the system that oversees how the power is distributed between the stakeholders who form part of the independent schools and the governors of a school.

Public schools are a prominent part of the government's provision of education through the Department of Basic Education and its nine provincial Departments of Education. Independent schools on the other hand, function relatively independently from the government, but are regulated by Sections 45 to 51 of SASA. These schools' budgets, value systems, cultures and ethos are determined by independent governance structures. Therefore, how the power in different kinds of independent schools is distributed can be a very complex issue.

During the last decade, independent schools have increasingly become part of corporate companies where companies invest in small, sometimes poor, independent schools including them as part of a larger business organisation. These corporate company investments resulted in a change from an educational governance approach to a corporate governance approach in these schools. One of the consequences of a shift of power from educational governance to corporate governance is that the emphasis could be on the generation of profit rather than on educational principles. The focus in this

research is therefore on the stakeholders' point of view on educational governance after a change in ownership to profit-driven corporates of the selected independent schools. The different stakeholders involved in the school, their expectations of the school before the change in ownership occurred and then the consequent results after the change in ownership is investigated.

The effect of power on education as explained in the literature review explores the meaning of the concepts 'govern', 'government', 'governance' and related concepts. The governing structures in independent schools will be prominent in this study. These governing structures will be viewed from a systems perspective. Governance in schools from an international perspective will be used to compare governance in South Africa, while governance of independent schools will be the focus point of this research. Governance in public schools in South Africa, as well as international schools, will be discussed briefly to place governance in independent schools in perspective, after which the concept of corporate or business governance will be discussed. The attractiveness of a business approach is its type of domination which cannot really be noticed and could be viewed as normal within a school. Schools could become business-like and that could lead to the misunderstanding of the purpose of a school.

2.2 GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Government, governance, and education are interlinked. The study is of relevance because the influence of the government on the governance of public and independent education is complex and takes on various forms. In this part of the literature review the different styles of governance are discussed and how the government, governance and education are linked to one another.

2.2.1 Conceptualising government

The concepts government and governance both derive from the verb 'govern'. 'Govern' comes from Latin '*gubernare*' which means "to *steer, rule*" and the Greek '*kubernan*' which means "*to steer*". Other synonyms for this word are 'control, regulate, direct, form and shape' (www.lexico.com/en/definition/govern). The term 'government' is referred to as "*[a] group of people with the authority to govern a country or state*" (www.livescience.com) whereas Rautenbach and Malherbe (2018:3) conceptualises government as the "*bodies which act and exercise the government authority on behalf of the state.*"

South Africa's government needs to act according to the provisions of the South African Constitution of 1996. This government acts with executive power and needs to regulate the country in terms of specific laws as stipulated in the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a). The South African government is divided into three different spheres, namely the national, provincial and local spheres. The responsibility of the national sphere includes the regulation of safety, security and foreign affairs. This includes policies regarding education. Development of policies also takes place at the national level to guide school activities such as curriculum delivery and school admission. The responsibility of education in South Africa is shared by the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training. The provincial sphere is primarily responsible for social service delivery, budgeting and the provision of health services, education, housing and social development. The local sphere is responsible for delivering of these basic services including municipal functions. (www.idasa.org.za)

Leadership, management, and authority are words connected to government. This leadership, management and authority may manifest in different formats, namely: autocracy; authoritarian; constitutional; constitutional democratic; or democratic (www.livescience.com)

2.2.2 Types of government

'Autocratic government' or a '*dictatorship*' is a form of government where one person or a small group of people, controls a country with absolute power (www.livescience.com). Power is used to the advantage of one individual or group with no effort to empower any other group. 'Authoritarian government' is where the state's authority is imposed onto many aspects of the citizens' lives. Since 2018 there has been a total of fifty nations who follow an autocratic style (www.worldpopulationreview.com).

'Constitutional government' is when a country is governed in accordance with an authoritative document, also known as a constitution, that sets forth the system of fundamental laws and principles determining the nature, functions, and limits of a government (www.livescience.com). This kind of government can be found in a republic or in a constitutional monarchy. In a republican country a president is the head of state, for example the Republic of South Africa, whereas in a constitutional monarchy, a monarch is head of state who is more of a figurehead than an executive officer, for example the United Kingdom and Australia. A prime minister is appointed as the leader of government and will focus on more political power (www.monarchist.org.uk). In this kind of government politics will dominate.

'Constitutional democratic government' is where the sovereign power of the people is spelled out in a governing constitution (www.livescience.com). 'Democratic government' is a form of supreme power which rests in the body of the citizens entitled to vote for officers and representatives responsible to them (www.livescience.com). With the application of this system all the citizens are represented in law-making bodies and have a say in the decisions made by the country. According to Alemán and Kim (2015), this form of government will increase educational growth and increase democratic levels of decision-making in a country. Alemán and Kim (2015:1) explain that "*[e]ducation is supposed to promote democracy by influencing the competence and cognitive*

orientations of individuals, and by providing experiences that instil democratic values”. These values include tolerance and participation which contributes to a country which supports change and, in the end, will provide an increase in the country’s revenue. This line of reasoning focuses on the influence a type of government can have on the educational system and, in the end, the economics of a country.

Questions have been raised as to whether the type of government also influences the governance of a school and whether a different governance (public, independent, not-for-profit, profit-driven) regime influences the quality of education. This highlights the importance of governance as well as the connection between government, governance, and education.

2.2.3 Conceptualising governance

“Governance encompasses the system by which an organisation is controlled and operates, and the mechanisms by which it, and its people, are held to account. Ethics, risk management, compliance and administration are all elements of governance” (Governance Institute of Australia, 2022:01).

In a country like South Africa, it is dictated by values that are entrenched in the Constitution of 1996 and in the case of an organisation or a company, it may be not-for-profit, profit-orientated, or corporate governance (www.differencebetween.net). According to the Business Dictionary, ‘governance’ includes a governing body which establishes policies and continuously monitors proper implementation. It includes a mechanism required to balance the powers of the members and their primary duty of enhancing the prosperity and viability of the organization (www.businessdictionary.com).

Governance includes structures and the processes of decision-making. A government runs a country with the use of a specific governance dispensation but, in the business sector, a certain governance style is also used to regulate businesses (www.weforum.org). The Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools (hereafter referred as FEDSAS) explains that governance is a long-term leadership, control system and creates policies to promote and legitimate the accountability of the governors to assure effective leadership and ensure sustainability and long-term continuity in an organisation (FEDSAS, 2015).

Governance is a complete process within different groups; namely social, political, economic, and private. In the governance process an organisation aims to facilitate participants in understanding the public policies. Governance can be democratic, economic, financial, corporate, environmental, and not-for-profit (www.esds.co.in/blog/types-of-governance).

All decisions, as well as the power to make decisions, will be in line with the type of governance, including the policies and code of conduct of the school, determined by the governors. The kind of governance that will be used in decision-making will be in line with the kind of institution and that will include the ethos and focus of the business. In this study, democratic governance is an important concept to understand because of South Africa's history in terms of Apartheid and how the new democratic government influenced the governance of education.

The King Report on Corporate Governance in South Africa used the formulation of the Cadbury Report as their working definition. According to Rossouw, Van der Walt and Malan (2002:289) "*implies that the responsibility for the corporate governance of publicly owned companies lies with the board of directors of such companies.*" Diamond and Price

(2010:65) explain the role of corporate governance reform in South Africa context as follows:

South Africa corporate governance reform has displayed a fascinating relationship between international factors and domestic political realities. The catalyst for this reform has been the recognition that South Africa is a developing economy, and as such, there is a particular need for South African companies to be more competitive in the international area. There are great similarities in the historical evolution of corporate governance reform in both South Africa and Commonwealth economy systems.

Corporate governance is also important in this study because independent schools have become part of the corporate world. Schools have become businesses and shareholders expect a certain amount of profit on their shares. The question has been raised whether corporate governance will be appropriate for the educational environment and if the corporate governance style would adapt to accommodate educational governance. Corporate governance embraces moral principles, values and practices and promotes a “*balance between economic and social goals and between individual and common goals*” (www.esds.co.in/blog/types-of-governance:01). Corporate governance also aims to adopt policies and codes of conduct to take care of human rights, social responsibility, and environmental protection. A code of ethics is also part of the aim of the company, which includes the fair and transparent way all stakeholders, shareholders, employees, and suppliers are treated.

Democratic governance coordinates the processes within the business or organisation by involving multiple role players. Economic and financial governance aims to promote economic growth in the decision making. All policies need to be transparent, and sound financial management principles need to be implemented to fight corruption (www.esds.co.in/blog/types-of-governance). With this kind of governance, transparency

is part of the decision-making process, and all the decisions are made to contribute to the growth of the company.

Environmental governance and natural resource governance base decision-making on the environment, conservation, and the exploitation of biodiversity. The ecosystem and mineral resources will be considered when decisions are made and influence the code of conduct of the company or organisation (www.esds.co.in/blog/types-of-governance). This kind of governance focuses on the moral principles and values to facilitate the balance between the economic and the social aspects of an organisation's activities. Very important in the definition is that this type of governance also considers the social goals of individuals and includes common social goals. This implies that the governors are not only focusing on the larger goals and principles but are also considering individual goals.

According to the Education-and-training-Service in the UK, “[e]ducational governance helps us to share good practice and assure board members and other stakeholders that education and training is well targeted and managed” (www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training:01). This means that board members and stakeholders need to ensure that quality education will take place. The fact that governance has an influence on education is cause for concern in that different types of governance may impact education in different ways and contribute to different views from the stakeholders’ perspective.

Australia’s Institute of Company Directors (AICD) explains the purpose of not-for-profit governance as follows: “*Protect our environment, educate our students and enable us to practice our faith, celebrate our cultural heritage and protect the most vulnerable in our community*” (www.aicd.companydirectors.com:04). The AICD refers to specific principles regarding a not-for-profit governance which include:

There are ten specific principles. Principle 1 – Purpose and strategy. The organisation has a clear purpose and a strategy which aligns its activities to

its purpose. The organisation's purpose is clear, recorded in its governing documents and understood by the board. Principle 2 – Roles and responsibilities - There is clarity about the roles, responsibilities, and relationships of the board. Principle 3 – Board composition. The Board's structure and composition enable it to fulfil its role effectively. Principle 4 – Board effectiveness. The board is managed effectively, and its performance is periodically evaluated. Principle 5 – Risk management. Board decision-making is informed by an understanding of risk and how it is managed. Principle 6 - The organisation uses its resources appropriately and evaluates its performance. Principle 7 – Accountability and transparency. The Board demonstrates accountability by providing information to stakeholders about the organisation and its performance. Principle 8 - Stakeholder engagement. There is meaningful engagement of stakeholders, and their interests are understood and considered by the board. Principle 9– Conduct and compliance. The expectations of behaviour for the people involved in the organisation are clear and understood. Principle 10 – Culture. The Board models and works to instil a culture that supports the organisation's purpose and strategy. (www.aicd.companydirectors.com).

These represent the principles that the boards of the church-owned schools which were sold to commercial companies could have been expected to practice. The way these principles were adhered to by these boards provided a frame of reference for assessing the governance performance of the newly-formed schools and would influence their responses to the interview questions.

The different forms of governments and the different forms of governance all seem to have a specific goal, a specific agenda, and a specific vision. Accountability and transparency are some of the characteristics which are found in the mission and vision of

both corporate governance and not-for-profit governance. According to Section 29 of the Constitution of 1996, (RSA,1996a) everyone has the right to establish an independent school. The government needs to make sure that these schools are run according to the regulations determined by the Department of Basic Education even if they are independent from the government. This independence could involve finances alone or it could include the curriculum. Very little has been written on the involvement of the South African government in the control of the power given to the governance of independent schools.

Governance of schools in South Africa is linked to the political history discussed in Chapter 2. School governance also needs to be linked to the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a). Buckland and Hofmeyr (1993:17) define governance as follow:

. . . not simply the system of administration and control of education of a country, but the whole process by which education policies are formulated, adopted, implemented, and monitored. Governance is an issue not only at the national level, but also at every level of the system down to the individual school. Because it is centrally concerned with the distribution of power, it is often summed up to be the question: who decides?

2.2.4 Decentralisation in education

The notion of decentralisation is not new and is described by Rodden, Eskeland and Litvak (2003:5) as the “*increased autonomy and responsibilities to the lower-level entities in one dimension to another*”. Some authors (Maile, 2002, Heystek, 2004 and Deacon, 2019) focus more on decision-making powers and responsibilities that are transferred to different entities, which may result in different levels of authority.

The Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) entrenches the rights of all South Africans. Where schools are concerned, these rights lead to a decentralisation of power in the South African school system as provided for in Section 41 (1) of Chapter 3 of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA,1996a) which deals with, among other things, cooperative governance between the various organs of state in the governance system of the country. In public schools, cooperative governance manifests in the form of a school governing body (SGB) because public schools are classified as organs of state as defined in Section 239 of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA,1996a).

In public schools' parents form the majority the SGB who in terms of Section 15 of SASA, have the legal capacity to act according to the prescribed functions and obligations granted to them in terms of SASA. In terms of section 16 (1) of SASA, the governance of public schools is vested in their SGBs (Beckmann and Prinsloo, 2009) who, in addition to the prescriptions contained in SASA, also have to apply the principles as guided by the Constitution of 1996 which is the supreme law of the country. A public school is a legal organisation ("juristic person") as stipulated in section 15 of SASA (RSA, 1996b). Although this narrows the power of SGBs in public schools (organs of state) to only act in terms of the regulations of SASA, they have a strong voice in terms of religious matters at their schools, language policy formulation, adoption of a code of conduct for learners and the financial affairs of their schools (Beckmann and Prinsloo, 2009).

Winkler and Yeo (2007) argue that one of the most important reasons for decentralisation is to provide a voice for citizens and improve the quality of education. The 2004 World Development Report (Winkler and Yeo, 2007) provides a Public Education Accountability Framework according to which decentralisation will increase the decision-making and responsibilities will be shared with provinces, and districts (Winkler and Yeo, 2007). By doing this, the gap between policy makers and the school will lessen and make parents more involved and accountable for their children's education. Parents will also have a voice (Winkler & Yeo, 2007). Decentralisation will then mean that the government will not

only share their power over education, but also their responsibility with the community. Reference to this kind of partnership between the government and the community is also mentioned in the Preamble of SASA as follows:

. . . promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State; and whereas it is necessary to set uniform norms and standards for the education of learners at schools and the organisation, governance and funding of schools throughout the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996b:2)

Malawi is an example of a country where they tried to implement decentralisation of education to alleviate the financial burden on the state and better the democratic environment of the country. With its implementation they also focused on accountability and good governance (Thomas, 2017). Chiweza (2010: 53) explain as follows:

On a positive note, education planning is done at local level with the District Education Plan as the final product. Through this process, the District Education officers have acquired the capacity to analyse and know their needs and even market their plans.

Decentralisation is therefore not only a process to try to give parents and the community a voice, but also to make them more accountable for their children's education and in the process, educate parents. Parents still have the option to enrol their children in a public school (normally less expensive) or in an independent school.

Dunlop (2012) mentions a few reasons why parents choose independent schools over public schools. Overcrowded classes and inadequate individual attention are two of the major reasons. This raises questions about the educational value of schools. In an article about the reason for being a public-school teacher and a private-school parent, Godsey

(2015) explains that the culture in an independent school is more focused on quality education and that children are better behaved with minimum interruptions during lessons. However, he acknowledged that in public schools, teachers are more experienced and have higher qualifications than teachers in independent schools. This is Godsey's view, and he does not provide scientific evidence to prove his view.

One question comes to mind and that is, if parents enrol their children in an independent school, do they also demand better education because they normally pay more for independent education than for public education? This notion is supported by Winkel and Yeo (2007) who argues that "*parents also want to demand better education in return for the taxes they pay*". Communication and a direct line to the policy makers as well as more instructional service are some of the main aspects that parents want in education. However, understanding of the decision makers and those who evaluate performance at independent schools is limited.

Performance management could be one of the methods to evaluate teachers and to improve teaching and learning at a school. Performance management could change productivity and the way teachers think about their work and their relationships with the learners (Ball, 2007). Performance-based evaluations at schools contribute to higher performing teachers, and increase professionalism in their job and tasks, as well as their responses to expectations (Larsen, 2005). Parents want to know what they are paying for; they would like to be involved in decisions regarding teacher salaries and training. Delegation from the parents' side will also influence how the school sees them as the client (Winkler & Yeo, 2007). It seems as if the vision of stakeholders regarding the privatisation of education could change the attitude of teachers towards teaching, maybe because they also share a specific vision for the school and they as teachers are being evaluated against the expectations of the parents of the school. All these expectations may enable teachers to perform in the field that they are good at, knowing that the

decision makers of the school will provide whatever equipment and resources they need to deliver the best possible education to the learners.

I presume the governance and the vision of the governors in independent schools may also differ from those of public schools. The question also arises whether the vision of governance of a not-for-profit school will be different to that of a profit-driven school. Rhodes (1996) argued that governance is a structure in which leadership comes alive. Legitimate regulations and leadership abilities are some of the key principles of governance to assure co-operation between the organisation and the rest of the company. Research results led Rhodes (1996) to conclude that the privatisation of a civil service may lead to the control of staffing. It could also lead to a reduction of over-staffing (one of the biggest challenges in the civil service), improvement of service, strengthening of budgetary discipline and reducing the decentralised administration of organisations.

Generally, parents want to be part of their children's education. This study questions the widely held view that privatisation of schools will give parents a better voice as compared to public schools. Parents are prepared to pay higher school fees in return for a transparent educational system, where the school management, teachers and parents can work together to provide quality education for their children. In short, parents would like to have the power to make decisions.

The importance of the view of stakeholders in the governance of a school becomes more prominent. Parents who have experienced and observed a change in governance of a school, together with teachers who have taught under the leadership of different kinds of governance, would add valuable insights to this study. The impact of governance on education is not easy to determine. By looking at the different characteristics of governance, as mentioned by the King III Report (2009), responsibility, accountability, fairness, and transparency will surely have a different meaning for different types of

governance approaches. Referring to governance powers and responsibilities in public schools, Maile (2002:327) explains as follows:

The education service is an interlocking set of statutory powers and duties, and non-statutory responsibilities. The education service can work effectively and develop creatively only if stakeholders grasp their responsibilities and act accordingly.

Because all the stakeholders need to grasp their responsibilities and act accordingly, it is important in corporate governance contexts, that those who are involved are aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities and conscious of the importance of transparency in educational settings. To come to an understanding of how a corporate governance system (profit-driven), an educational governance system (education driven) and a democratic governance system could work effectively, one needs to look at both South African and international education systems.

2.3 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

According to the South African Department of Education³ there were a few achievements in the first decade after the political change in the country in 1994 (DOE, 2001). The planning to implement the new educational system started in 1994, but the system was only introduced in 1996 when the main purpose of this change was stipulated by the Department of Education:

Our vision is for a South Africa in which all people have equal access to lifelong education and training opportunities which will contribute towards improving the quality of life and build a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society. (DOE, 2001).

³ From 1994 the national education department in South Africa was called the Department of Education. In 2009, it was divided into two departments: the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training.

This transformation process happened during different time periods. During the first period (1994 to 1997) a framework was created to indicate what specific processes needed to be put in place, followed by the innovation, and change in education and thereafter the transformation of learning and teaching. Improving South Africa's approach towards education was also seen as a process to create economic prosperity. This transformation not only covered education but also included legal aspects as well as other policies to be revised and transformed. In May 2001 (DOE, 2001), the Minister of Education at that time, Professor Kader Asmal, explained as follows:

Fear was replaced by hope, repression by democratic freedom, exclusion, and division by possibilities of inclusiveness and unity. A massive national project to take down the scaffolding of apartheid and replace it with a system that promised wellbeing, respect and expression for all South Africans began. The project challenged us to rethink every aspect of our nation, from concepts of democracy, justice, and prosperity, to the Constitution and its expression in policies, law, and management. It challenged us nationally and personally to reconstruct our basic understanding of what it means to be South African (DOE, 2001:4).

For the educational system to be fully transformed, applicable and available to all South Africans, the Constitution of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a), the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (NEPA) (Republic of South Africa, 1996c), the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) (Republic of South Africa, 1996b), the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998), the Adult Basic Education and Training Act 52 of 2000 (Republic of South Africa, 2000), the South African Qualifications Authority Act 58 of 1995 (SAQA) (Republic of South Africa, 1995) and the new Curriculum 2005 (Republic of South Africa, 1997b), all needed to be developed, refined and designed to assure the transformation.

The transformation was not an easy process and the implementation of these processes included difficulties which the Government needed to overcome. One of the important changes was the change to a “*Co-operative governance and stakeholders’ participation*” approach which formed part of the commitments of the National Education Policy Act (NEPA). The new system, according to White Paper II of 1996 (DOE, 1996d) tried to recognise and incorporate parents as stakeholders in school governance to ensure a partnership between the government and the community.

Maile (2002:326) explained that “[g]overnance in the South African education system [was] still in a transformation process” and that the establishment of school governing bodies gave public schools more autonomy and freedom regarding day-to-day decisions.” According to White Paper II (DOE, 1996d) these ‘freedoms’ also come with responsibilities and public schools are being governed according to different models. The first model is public schools on state property where the state owns the school and the property. Public schools can also be built on private property where the governance model will differ slightly from public schools on state property. In terms of Section of SASA, there needs to be an agreement between the Member of the Executive Council and the owner of the private property. The governance of public schools is vested in the governing body and a governing body may govern two or more schools depending on the circumstances of the school and the capabilities of the governing bodies (RSA, 1996b). These models can be linked to the hybrid model as mentioned below. Ranson and Crouch (2009:54) suggested three possible governance models namely:

A business model where the governing body is required to have experience in running a business. An executive and stakeholder’s scrutiny model, which is a hybrid model incorporating an executive group who are accountable to a wider stakeholder group. A community governance model, through which governors become leaders and enablers of community development through schools working together in an area with families.

It is, however, important that school governors have the appropriate attributes, skills and commitment to contribute to the governance of a school in a meaningful way. McCrone, Southcott and George (2011:5) explain as follows:

... the type of model is not as important as the recruitment of governors with the appropriate personal attributes. Many schools overlook the importance and just recruit and appoint whoever is available. For parents who want to be part of the School Governing Body, interest, skills, and commitment to the governing body need to be some of the characteristics of the candidates...

The different stakeholder models need flexibility and should be the most applicable model to fit a specific school. The governors are elected to ensure accountability and wider representation. Governors need to clearly understand their roles, as well as their relationship with the principal and teachers who form part of the governing body. The teachers and principals also need to understand where the governors fit into the management and governance of the school to assure a good working relationship (McCrone, Southcott & George, 2011).

Independent schools in South Africa may receive a subsidy from the government after consultation with the Council of Education Minister, the Financial and Fiscal Commission and with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance (RSA, 1996b). Private companies start independent schools each from their own perspectives with their own expectations. Church-schools, schools' part of a trust and schools that use international curriculums are considered as independent schools.

In recent years, a new governance style entered independent schools, namely corporate governance. School governance involves much more than corporate governance. Responsibility and accountability for the effective operation of an organisation are part of

the functions of a governing body. Decisions and all actions should be made in such a way that they will define the organisation's mission, culture, and structure. Corporate governors need to look after the interests of the owners of the organisation. This type of governance will be discussed in more detail later.

Governors of independent schools' responsibilities are much more than only ensuring the best interests of their school's owners. In public and independent schools, the parents form part of the school governing who take up these responsibilities. They also have legal and moral responsibilities towards the stakeholders, for example the teachers, learners and parents. School governors' responsibility is therefore to assure that the academic standard of the school complies with the rights of children, namely, to enable learners to develop as young adults and become well educated citizens of the country (McCormick, Barnett, Alavi & Newcombe, 2006).

Decision-making power and authority are not only vested in the management structure of a company. Governing bodies are the groups of people who should act and make decisions in the best interests of the stakeholders. They should also ensure that managers make operational decisions according to applicable policies. The governing body should always be informed of decisions made by management, as well as the factors which might influence company shares (Bader, 2008).

An unhealthy relationship between school governance and school management structures can cause or contribute to tension between governors and the principal (Ranson, 2012). Caldwell (2004:28) explains that *“[p]arents are partners in the governance of the school, and this makes them accountable as stakeholders of the school to ensure that all school functions work towards the best interests of the children, as well as the best academic achievement possible”*. In McCormick *et al.* (2006), Monks and Minow (2001) explain the importance of the relationship between the board and the

principal to ensure effective control without diminishing the initiative and motivation of either. According to Monks and Minow (2001:33) *“[i]t is very important that the relationship between those two sets of role-players is positive and characterized by respect, trust and confidence, as well as by mutual support to ensure the best decisions for the school and learners”*.

Zaccaro and Klimoski (in McCormick *et al.*, 2006) emphasise the importance of leadership and that leadership has a direct influence on group performance. Thus, the performance of the school and its learners will be affected by the leaders, both management and governors, and the stakeholders' relationships with one another (McCormick *et al.*, 2006). This suggests that in the governing body of a school will be the group of people who act on behalf of the school and who, in the case of public schools must promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school as stipulated in section 20 (1) (a) of SASA (RSA, 1996b). In independent schools, the governing body would include the group of people who started the school, and the stakeholders would include the teachers, parents, and learners. However, in some schools, it will also include shareholders who own shares in the company that owns the school. These shareholders sometimes do not have any interest in the independent school other than their share investments and the profit they anticipate deriving from their investments.

Different people are connected to a school in different ways, each having their own expectations. These expectations may vary from quality education to the performance of shares on the market (Godsey, 2015). The main purpose of the transformation in the South African education system post-1994 was to provide access to quality education to all children in South Africa. With the introduction of corporate governance in schools, the collection of stakeholders changed, and one can only think that there may be a change in focus of the main purpose of education. Surely corporate governance could lead to a change in the composition of a school governing body. At present, little is known about

the participation of stakeholders in a corporate governance system or of the kind of decisions in which these stakeholders are involved.

Governance in independent schools is the focus point of this study. An international perspective on school governance is also included in this literature study to enhance the level of the argument. The difference between public school governance and independent school governance, as well as the extent to which these schools are independent from the government, is discussed in the following sections.

2.4 AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

2.4.1 Governance in public schools: An international perspective

It is important to determine how the international educational community distinguishes between public schools and independent schools and how the involvement of the government manifests itself in public and independent schools. Governance may differ all over the world and for this reason I think that it is important to investigate different governance models in different countries. It will explore ways of governing a school and assuring high quality education, especially in independent schools.

Namibia experienced a: *“unfair schooling system characterised by racial and ethnic segregation and inequality, undemocratic participation, low levels of bureaucratic accountability and transparency and top-down policy implementation”* (Pomuti & Weber, 2012:2). To rectify this unfair system the government introduced a cluster-based school management. Schools were grouped together in clusters. The management of these schools were reformed and the idea behind this clustering system was to provide opportunities for collaboration among schools. Unfortunately, this process had limited success. A demand for greater say in decision -making were identify and because *no mechanisms were provided to enable regions, districts and schools to change the*

government form the bottom up (Pomuti & Weber, 2021:7), public schools was still not successful and democratic (Pomuti & Weber, 2012).

In the United States of America school governance forms part of a greater democratic practice and the decision-making processes at schools are considered the ideal site for children and parents to take part in the process of civil government (Berkman and Plutzer, 2005). Decision-making and those who have the power to contribute to these decisions are regarded as a crucial part of the governance of a school. The parents, as stakeholders of the school, form an important part of the school environment. If they are also given the power to make decisions, it will increase their involvement in their children's education and will improve the communication between the school and the home. However, public schools are faced with fundamental changes in control and decision-making (Allen and Mintrom, 2010). In some states governance of urban schools has reverted to the office of the mayor to address the problems regarding irresponsible school boards (Pettit, 2007). With reference to the "*irresponsible school boards*", it will be important to establish who is on the school board and why their behaviour is regarded as "*irresponsible*".

Parent involvement can unfortunately also result in disputes and a complex decision-making process if all the governing board members do not know what is crucial or irrelevant regarding education. I assume that the responsibility of those who influence the decisions is a very important aspect of good governance, and good governance will result if all the decisions are made in the interests of the educational growth and development of learners that takes place in that school. The structure of the school governing body is important, but the members' understanding of what is important in education is much more crucial.

In the publicly funded schools in England, the governing bodies are almost the same for primary schools and secondary schools. Research on the functioning of school governing

bodies in England has revealed several consistent categories like the difficulties of working strategically and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the managers (Farrell, 2005). The governing bodies in public schools in England can be compared to the boards of directors of private companies (Farrell, 2005). This is an example of where public institutions are also run as businesses. This study questions the widely held view that the board of directors of a profit-driven governance school will direct the school to achieve excellent educational results as opposed to being an excellent business. It seems as if governors evaluate the effectiveness of the managers in school as well. Effectiveness could be a misleading concept. The problem with this concept is the fact that effectiveness can on the one hand be associated with high classroom or academic standards or on the other hand, high profit margins that that determines whether an academic year is successful or not.

James, Brammer, Connolly, Fertig, James and Jones (2011) explain that the primary role and responsibility of governing bodies in public schools in England is to make governance more transparent and open for wider public involvement. Even though these are “*publicly funded schools*”, researchers (James *et al.*, 2011) suggest that their governing bodies should be more transparent. This could refer to transparency in how they spend the money that they have on the education of the children, maintenance of the school grounds, equipment, and the salaries of staff.

It seems as if throughout the world parents want the best possible education for their children. With reference to schools in the United States of America, responsibility and transparency are very important when it comes to school governance. Responsibility and transparency are two important elements in the trust relationship between the parents and the school. Parents need to know who makes the decisions and what could be the result of the decisions that they make and if they can understand and trust that those decisions are for the benefit of their children (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005).

These open structures to involve the public in school governance can also contribute to conflict between the different interest groups within a governing body. Allowing people to have a say or opinion about something in which they have not been properly educated or trained can also be very dangerous, especially if they are involved in the decision-making regarding education and the way that teaching, and learning are managed in a school. In this regard McCrone, Southcott and George (2011:30) remark that “*governor development in England stresses the fact that specific training in key areas such as data interpretation is very important*”. This ties in well with the findings of South African studies about the lack of skills and training among SGB members (Heystek, 2004). Parent involvement is very important, but if parents are not knowledgeable education and what is needed for educational growth and development of learners, those parents can contribute to bad decisions that are made and to the development of a governing body that does not agree on decisions. Conflict and distrust between governing body members may result in ineffective governance. If their decisions only focus on the management of funds and buildings, this may contribute to the development of a business approach.

An article by Aditya Chakraborty (2019) reported parents’ concern about the takeover of their children’s school and the different aspects which could change, for example the special attention their children received from the previous governors. A typical example is an autistic child receiving special attention and care in the previous school setup, but his mother fears that it might change under the new governing structure of the school.

The changes started off in March 2018 and parents explained that big decisions were made regarding the school’s future without consulting any of the parents and stakeholders. Parents were just informed that the school was under new management. What aggravated their concern was the fact that, in the takeover process, other schools that also belonged to the main company were ranked “inadequate” but still came and took over “their” school even if they couldn’t manage other schools (Chakraborty, 2019:01).

The case above is an example of stakeholders who enrol their children in a school with certain expectations regarding the culture and structures of a school. These parents, who are the stakeholders, also have a specific expectation of the service that will be provided for their children, especially in the case of children who have special needs. These parents who enrol their children with special needs in a school, need assurances that their children's needs will be addressed and need to be able to trust the governors that their children will be looked after and receive the attention that they deserve. For these parents it is not only enrolling your child in a school; this is enrolling your child in a specific school which would provide for the needs of that child.

According to the above scenario, the people or company impacts the way that the school is being governed. If the way of governance changes in a school, the way of how the school is managed will also change. Also, when the governance of a school changes, parents feel unsure, insecure and concerned that everything will not be the same as in the past. This problem merits further investigation. The question being raised is whether new owners of schools communicate these changes before they buy school and whether they deviate from their promises. In this specific situation, important stakeholders, for example the parents, were not even informed that there would be a change in ownership. There are increasing doubts that the parents experienced transparency from the previous and new governors. The view of those stakeholders regarding the change in ownership and governance would indubitably influence their trust in the governance style of the school.

In the first few examples of internationally public schools, as discussed earlier in this literature review, the researchers did not say much about the involvement of the government regarding the governance of the school. They only referred to the fact that, even though it is a publicly funded school, parents and the public are involved in the decision-making. Farrell (2014) discusses the control of the government over the school.

This will also be applicable when I look at the influence of the South African government over independent schools.

Farrell (2014) conducted a study on the involvement of governors in schools in Wales in which she focused on two key themes. The first was the greater control and direction from government over school governors, specifically in the way they carried out their governance roles. The second theme focused on the expectation that governors would collaborate with one another in the governance of different schools (Farrell, 2014).

In Wales, the education policy was previously directed by the Welsh Office rather than the Department of Education in London. This resulted in conflict between the Welsh Office and the schools. Therefore, the selection of a governing body was one of the changes which took place to put the emphasis on the voice of the public in the education of their children (Farrell, 2014). The Welsh Assembly Government (2010) suggested, much as is the case in South Africa, that the role of the governing body is essentially strategic, while the day-to-day management matters should be performed by the principal and his or her management staff. According to Farrell (2014), the governance role includes setting the school's strategic direction, securing accountability, and monitoring and evaluating the school operations. Farrell (2014) also mentions that the current Welsh school governance model needs to improve support to governors and strengthen the capacity of governing bodies through better training, advice, and support from local authorities.

It is evident that parents want to know who is accountable for their children's education and they want transparency regarding decisions made. Internationally, where the government has a much greater power regarding decisions in public schools, it has been proved not to be ideal regarding the needs of the school (Heystek, 2004). Schools do not need decisions to be made on behalf of the school by someone, a governance or government that do not really know what is happening on ground level. According to

information gained from the Simple, Affordable, Flexile School Management Software (SAFSMS), done in Nigeria in 2017, transparency is very important:

More than just to aid decision-making procedures, but transparency in school administration is also necessary to provide a solid answer to such questions as to where most of the budget is being directed and what percentages of students are failing or passing each year (Rashidah, 2017:2).

Rashidah (2017) therefore stresses the importance of the availability of information to parents to be updated on what is happening in the classrooms and to provide information to explain the level of staff expertise and how they will contribute to the development of the learners. In the following section, an international perspective of governance in independent schools is presented.

2.4.2 An international perspective on governance in independent schools

The connection between research on the stakeholders' views of educational governance after a change in ownership of independent schools is used to evaluate the South African situation within an international context. In the previous discussion, I explored the way public schools are governed internationally. Even though governments fund public schools, the impression is that public often schools' function independently from the government. The government provides the schools and the funds, but the schools manage the education that takes place. In countries where the government interfere and make and centralise decisions, it often leads to conflict between the school governing body, the parents and education authorities. Parents then feel that decisions were not made in a trustworthy and transparent manner. The question has been raised whether independent schools demonstrate the required transparent decision-making parents expect.

The classification of schools differs from country to country. For example, Kennedy (2019) explains that schools in the US are classified as government, independent or private schools. Technically there is also a difference between an independent school and a private school. Independent schools can also be called private schools, but according to Kennedy (2019), a private school is not the same as an independent school.

An independent school has a truly independent board of trustees that oversees the school's operation, while a private school can theoretically be part of another entity, such as a for-profit corporation or a not-for-profit organisation such as a church or synagogue (Kennedy, 2019:2).

In a country like Botswana, independent or private schools are an essential part of the country but unfortunately but not all parents can afford to send their children to these schools. The cost of these schools is very high because the government do not subsidise independent schools and the schools know that they form an important part of education in the country. *“Government does not regulate the cost of private education in Botswana. No wonder Botswana private schools continue to take liberties”* (Modise, 2018:01). A crisis could develop if parents cannot afford to pay the school fees of an independent schools and there are no public schools , who provide quality education that they can send their children to (Modise, 2018).

India started a programme called Teach for India (TFI) to reform the under-resourced government schools with a partnership between the private sector and the government (Subramanian, 2018). In this process, the focus was to improve the performance of the municipal school administrative bodies and focus on school management, school leadership, advocacy, and teacher training. This public-private partnership (PPP) was a process where the inequalities among children from low-income and marginalised communities were addressed. These private not-for-profit organisations focus on teaching and bringing education to everyone (Subramanian, 2018).

With this movement away from public or state-provided service, the state deliberately stops providing for education. This action highlights that the responsibility for funding in private education becomes important. Education was not the only focus point, but to get enough money and resources became as important to assure proper education. This is an example of a government trying to better the education by involving the private sector to contribute financially and to accept greater responsibility to provide better resources to improve the quality of education. The government transfers its responsibility and accountability to companies to better the educational system of the country (Dunlop, 2012).

In Australia, public schools, Catholic schools, and independent schools are governed differently. Independent schools make up 12,5% of all schools in Australia. According to McCormick, Barnett, Alavi and Newcombe (2006), most independent schools are separately incorporated as "*not-for-profit*" schools. McCormick *et al.* (2006) explain that the general responsibility and accountability for the overall operation of an independent school rests with a board of directors, also called the school council. School councils are responsible to share organisational processes of leadership and policy development with the school board. McCormick *et al.* (2006:438) elaborate as follows:

Effective governance includes (a) a focus on learner achievement and policy, (b) making sure that effective management takes place, (c) developing the conditions to help the principal to manage the school, and (d) fostering good communication, trust and collaboration between the principal and the rest of the board members.

The school council, in turn, is responsible for the legal and moral responsibilities towards the learners and the parents who are stakeholders in the school. This includes developing the mission and purpose statements of the school, because school councils know what the reason for the existence of the school is and what the main purpose of a specific school is. The school council or governing board needs to support and evaluate the

principal, determine the strategic direction, and ensure all programmes offered at the school are in line with the mission of the school (McCormick *et al*, 2006).

Lastly, school councils or school boards are also responsible for the management of their school's resources (McCormick *et al.*, 2006). The governance task is specific to a school's context and the fact that the culture of a school is taken into consideration about strategic decision-making, is relevant to this specific study. This example illustrates the need to involve local communities to improve the quality of education as well as to establish a direct line of communication between parents and schools. The fact that parents have a say and the power to contribute to the governance of the school is noteworthy.

Chapman and Salokangas conducted a comparative case study in England in 2012 on school governance in academy schools and classified the governance in these schools as follows:

Stand alone, individual schools or as a member of chains of schools or the other, as members of chains of schools under the control of a strategic management executive comprising, for example, private sponsors or parental groups (Chapman & Salokangas, 2012:475).

Chapman and Salokangas (2012) focused on the models of governance and the position that individuals perceive for themselves within the construction of the different governance models. Governing an academy, as described above, did not go without issues. For example, Chapman and Salokangas (2012) found that the association with a specific branding and corporate image of their sponsor created certain challenges and that the branding of the sponsor was supported more strongly than the academy (the school). The problem with the “*branding focused*” models was that some of the models made it difficult for governors to determine where their focus needed to be (Chapman and Salokangas, 2012:483). The sponsors also suffered from political pressure and

interference. In addition, Chapman and Salokangas (2012) found that the academy system does not encourage or allow for freedom of choice and decision-making, but that it is rather a system created by the sponsors to meet the needs of the sponsors and not the needs of specific individual academies. This example highlights that this issue of branding may connect to issues that are also emerging in South African independent schools, particularly when schools are bought by companies that are listed on the stock exchange.

Different countries promote independent schools for different reasons. In India there is unique approach by the government to improve education and to simultaneously relieve the financial burden on the government. Australian parents prefer a closer connection with the governors of a school and for that reason independent education has started to flourish. In England greater independence granted to their academy schools seems to not always to be in the best interests of learners but could result in brand advertisement where the brand becomes more important than education. In the next section, the South African schooling systems discussed.

2.5 THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLING SYSTEM

Education in South Africa is a very complex environment, and the history of the country cannot be separated from the education system. Before 1994, education was part of the apartheid era. Good education was only provided to a certain part of the population. White, Indian and Coloured education were designated as own affairs and represented by the House of Assembly (HoA), the House of Delegates (HoD) and the House of Representatives (HoR) respectively. African people had no direct representation in parliament and were not regarded as part of the other cultural groups. Education for African people was administered as a “general affair” together with defence and health. Independent schools were part of the education system even before 1990 (Sedibe, 1998).

2.5.1 The history of South African education

Prior to 1994, education in South Africa was known as a system characterised by inequality in social and economic terms. Racially-based systems allowed the advancement of a certain racial group in the country and the disadvantaging of other groups (Nel & Binns, 1999). Educational administration includes the racial groups as indicated below and excludes independent schools

- *White education was administered by four provincial education departments and a national ministry*
- *Black education in the then Homelands was administered by the respective Homeland Education Ministries.*
- *Black education outside the Homelands was under the control of a national ministry called the Department of Education and Training based in Pretoria.*
- *Asian education was controlled by a national 'Own Affairs' ministry for Asians based in Durban*
- *Education for the so-called 'Coloured' population was controlled by a national 'Own Affairs' ministry based in Cape Town." (Nel & Binns, 1999:120)*

Change and transformation did take place after the 1994 election, but the change and transition did not happen overnight. Sedibe (1998:272) said the following:

The transition from the old system of many departments to a one-plus-nine structure was complex. From 1994 to 1995, the old departments continued to operate separately on an agency basis for the provinces. The powers between national powers and provincial autonomy were not very clear.

After the change from an autocratic government where only certain people had access to quality education to a democratic country where education was available to all children of the country, transformation, largely in education, had to take place. Different models and policies had to be put in place to provide this transformation and to try to rectify the under-privileged and disadvantaged background of certain cultural groups that had not had the privilege of quality education in the past. Professor Kader Asmal (DOE, 2001) explains, as mentioned in paragraph 2.3 that the change in education need to benefit all the children in South Africa. Transformation in South Africa happens on different levels and is intended to create an environment in which every child can access the right to the best possible education as referred to above. With the history of South Africa taken into consideration, the government used governance structures in schools as part of the transformation process to change the previous pattern of apartheid in education and to add democratic principles, values, and democratic standards to the system. The involvement of the government in schools differs from school to school according to their ethos and ownership to benefit all children (Duma, 2013) and would appear to be necessary.

Transformation of the education system after 1994 took a while to be put in place. According to a document of the Department of Education (DOE, 2001), the first period was called “*Creating Framework (1994 – 1997)*” during which the foundation was laid for the transformation of the South African education system. During this timeframe, systems and procedures had to change. The Apartheid system and structures had to be dismantled and equity was a high priority. The South African Constitution of 1996 also required that education needed to be available and accessible to all South Africans. For this reason, policies were put in place to also provide education opportunities for older South Africans who were previously denied access to education. New policies and laws were introduced, for example: the Further Education and Training Act 98 of 1998 (RSA, 1998(b); Education White Paper 4 – A Programme for the Transformation of Further Education and Training (DOE, 1998(a); and the National Strategy for Further Education and Training (www/dhet.gov.za). These documents provided the basis for developing a

nationally co-ordinated further education and training system comprising of a secondary component of schooling and technical colleges. (DOE, 2001).

The Government therefore tried to ensure basic education for all South Africans and to transform the system in such a way that every child would have the same educational opportunities. According to the White Paper II (DOE, 1996d) the Government also tried to involve parents in school governance to ensure a partnership between the government and the community as contemplated in the Preamble to SASA (DOE, 1996b). With these governance strategies and democratically elected school governing bodies, the government tried to infuse democracy in schools to allow stakeholders to be able to participate in the governance of the school (Duma, 2013). This governance structure required the power of decision-making to be decentralised from the government, or in this case the Department of Education, to the community and parents.

The educational system in South Africa is still undergoing transformation and the levels of power at schools are affected as the emphasis shifts from management and governance to accountability (Maile, 2002). Accountability, according to Maile (2002), is an essential element of school governance as it helps to strengthen the position of school managers and share much contested power without losing it. Various studies have been done with the focus on the SGB and especially on the relationship between the SGB and the principal (Heystek, 2004), with many of them focussing on rural school principals and parent participation in school governance in these areas (Duma, 2013). In these studies, the main concern has been the lack of education amongst parent members of SGBs. When decisions need to be made on behalf of the school, including financial decisions, parents who lack an understanding of financial management may possibly make wrong decisions and it can ultimately disadvantage the learners at the school. Furthermore, a lack of formal education is no proof of an inability to make decisions that will be in the best interests of the learners. SASA (RSA, 1996b) also provides in section 19 and 16A

that provincial education departments and principals need to provide SGBs with as much guidance and support as possible.

Another concern is the fact that parents do not always receive introductory and continuing training to enhance their capacity to act as part of the SGB as contemplated in section 19 of SASA (RSA 1996b) and may sometimes feel intimidated by other members who are more knowledgeable (Xaba, 2011). This contributes to the fact that all parents are not equally part of the decisions made as a school governing body. The higher qualified parents or those with more money could be more knowledgeable and could dominate other parents, but these parents could also contribute to effective decision-making. Mestry (2004) explains that, without financial skills, problems may develop in the managing of the finances of the schools, which in turn may have a negative impact on the quality of education. Duma (2013), for example, suggests that there need for programmes and workshops to empower the parents who serve on an SGB.

One needs to point out that, if parents do not receive the necessary training, it is the Department of Basic Education and the principals that must be held accountable. This alleged lack of knowledge of parents should not be used as an excuse to exclude them from the decision-making that concerns their children's education in which they have a legal stake. It should also be noted that studies about governing bodies in quintiles four and five schools (so-called "fee-paying public schools") seem to indicate that parents in such schools could dominate SGBs and principals (Aina & Bipath, 2020). Therefore, process of sharing responsibility and accountability between the government and the parents of public schools is not as successful in all public schools as planned. Schools in rural areas, where parents cannot afford to pay school fees and whose children attend so-called non-fee-, paying public schools, do not have the means to meaningfully contribute to the process of appointing qualified teachers and deciding on the use and application of resources like textbooks and learning material in the school (Du Plessis, 2020a).

It is thus clear that there is an uneven implementation of legislation on governance in public schools and that it is to a large extent influenced by the specific location in which a school is situated. Socio-economic status influences parents' involvement and power regarding decision-making in schools. The government aims at strengthening the involvement of parents in schools as well as the transparency with which schools are governed. Although this approach appears to promote shared responsibility for the management and governance of public schools in ensuring that the educational needs of the learners are met, the contextual realities in which public schools must function is impeding the implementation of a uniform policy (Du Plessis, 2020a).

Accountability is an important part of democratic school management and governance and is connected to concepts such as decentralisation, empowerment and transparency (Beckmann, 2000). Accountability requires that continuous checks, oversight, surveillance and institutional constraints are exercised (Schelder, Diamond & Platter, 1999). According to these authors, accountability is therefore a question of democratisation. Maile (2002) contends that power struggles are also part of accountability, and where in the past only principals took decisions, this is no longer the case in the current model of school governance as parents must be form the majority in a governing body of a public school.

Parents desire accountability and the power to make decisions on behalf of their children, but rather ironically these decisions are not always a true reflection of transparency and a sharing of responsibility. The next section will focus on governance in public schools and how the changes in the education system impacted public education in South Africa.

2.5.2 Governance in South African public schools

The reason for discussing the governance of public schools is to compare it with governance in independent schools in South Africa. The question that remains is why South Africa would allow schools to become independent if South Africa wanted equal and equitable education for all learners? The rationale for the establishment of school governing bodies is to give the citizens of the country a voice, a share of ownership as well as distributed power and the ability to contribute to policies. Decisions regarding the policies should also include the implementation stages as part of the responsibilities of the governing bodies. How these policies are set up reflects each country's own culture and circumstances (Farrell, 2014).

The SGB is the 'government' of the school, established in terms of the SASA (Act no 84 of 1996). It is mandated to set policies and rules that govern the school and monitor the implementation of the rules. The SGB gets its mandate from the different members (learners, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff) of the school community. And SGB must ensure that the school is governed in the best interest of all the stakeholders (Modisaotsile, 2012).

The control of the South African Government over the South African school system needs to be scrutinised to evaluate South African independent schools in relation to the national education policy to provide a uniform school system in South Africa to all children. In this regard, the Preamble of SASA states the following:

The main purpose of the Schools Act is to provide a uniform system for the organization, governance, and funding of schools; to amend and repeal certain laws relating to schools and to achieve democracy in South Africa. This national system for schools is to redress past injustice in educational provision and provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all

our people's talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society (RSA,1996b).

A public school is a school as contemplated in section 12 of the SASA (RSA, 1996b). According to section 16 (1) of this Act, the governance of each public school is vested in its governing body which may only exercise the powers conferred on it in the Act. The Act stipulates exactly who may and may not serve on this governing body - referred to as a School Governing Body (SGB). According to section 16 (3) of SASA, the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the Head of Department. In terms of section 23 of SASA, the school principal of a public school is an *ex officio* member of the school governing body, while members must be elected from the parents of the learners of the school, the teachers at the school, members of staff who are not teachers, and learners in the eighth grade or higher at a school. Parents must always form the majority. Section 29 of SASA (RSA, 1996b) further stipulates that a governing body is required to elect office bearers from amongst its members, including at least a chairperson, a treasurer, and a secretary. Only a parent member of the governing body who is not employed at the public school may serve as the chairperson of the governing body.

It is thus true that in public schools in South Africa the stakeholders (staff, parents, and learners) are represented in the SGB. Accountability is linked to democratic governance and related to participation, empowerment, and transparency (Beckmann, 2000). If the staff, parents, and learners are represented in the governance of the school, accountability is shared, and transparency can flow from this partnership.

In South Africa, specific regulations are in place to regulate the power of decision-making and specific policies indicate what should be open for decision-making by the stakeholders. Although all the stakeholders of public schools need, by law, to be

represented in the SGB, and although SGBs in South Africa face several challenges as discussed below, the inclusion of all parties in school governance increases transparency of decision-making as well as accountability for the education standard at a specific school. To govern a school in such a way as to ensure fairness, accountability, transparency and the acceptance of responsibility is very important, and one can assume that this is what the government envisaged with the legislation on public school governance contained in SASA (RSA, 1996b). It is worth emphasising that SGBs do not represent parents and learners and educators who can dictate to it but that, according to section 20 (1) (a) of SASA their sole purpose is to promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school. In addition, section 16 (3) stipulates that the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal. SASA therefore clearly distinguishes between governance and professional management of public schools.

Drawing on the earlier discussion of governance of schools internationally, it is clear that powers given to stakeholders (in this case parents) was a good decision, since the parents are knowledgeable about what was happening with the money they spent on their child's education. It is, however, also clear that decisions made by parents are not always in the best interests and to the advantage of the school and the learners. In South Africa, democratising society and the process to involve parents as partners in the decision-making process in schools did not go smoothly (Duma, 2013). Each school has its own unique culture and identity which is influenced by the socio-economic context of the community which a school serves. Duma (2013:106) explains as follows:

The government tried to create one system to fit all schools no matter their culture and background. This system did not work in all schools and led to conflict between parents and principals and resulted in a lack of trust between the members of the Governing Body. As a result of the history of South Africa, some parents are illiterate, which contributes to difficulties.

Parents have been included in the major decision-making processes of the school including decisions regarding finance, budgets, appointment of teachers, changes in policies and much more and all of this placed a huge responsibility on the shoulders of the parents. These difficulties made parents feel incompetent. School principals who had to share their power of decision making with parents, who do not know much about the management of a school, also contribute to more uncomfortable situations and dissatisfaction from principals and parents.

Although the post-Apartheid legislative and policy reforms changed the distribution of power and decision-making in public school governance, it also created many challenges. At many schools' parents did not understand what the governance process entailed and tried to dictate to the principal how he or she needed to manage the staff and the school and interfered in the professional management of the school. Often, decisions and alterations to policies were made without sufficient knowledge of the educational system. In many instances, some parents who were more qualified than others dominated decision-making processes and overruled other members of the SGB (Xaba, 2011). This is perhaps the reason why the powers originally given to SGBs in section 16 (1) were amended and limited by the addition of the following words: "... *it may perform only such functions and obligations and exercise only such rights as prescribed by the Act*" (RSA, 1996b).

A trust relationship between the principal and the SGB is very important for school governance to succeed. Unfortunately, competency and literacy levels of parents sometimes appear to restrict the functioning of governing bodies in such a way that misunderstandings and differences between the principal and the SGB occur (Heystek, 2004). Although this Heystek's (2004) research was ten years after Apartheid when school governing bodies were still a relatively new phenomenon, similar issues still occur today. The Governing Body of the Grey College Secondary School in Bloemfontein

approached the High Court to dismiss the principal from many of his duties. Henry Bücher, Chairperson of the Grey College Secondary School's Governing Body argued that the trust relationship between the governing body and the principal has broken down because of the principal's management decisions (Human, 2018). Because Grey College is one of the leading schools in South Africa, one cannot help but wonder whether the decisions that the school governing body did not approve of, reflected personality differences between members of the school governing body and the principal. One should also ask which criteria could underpin a school governing body's decision that the principal was not capable of managing the school. Even if the principal's management style differed from the previous principal's, it is not necessarily the wrong way of management. The question is whether the principal's management style influenced the academic standard of the school in such a way that the learners could not excel academically. Such challenges can occur when a governing board focuses on something other than education. In this regard Alexander (2018:1) argues the following:

Like any business with competition, it's important that schools look at themselves critically. Why would someone choose this school? What makes you different and are you telling your story

Hence the question: Is the main function of a school governing body embedded in marketing and reaching a profit target or to assure quality education? The questions about the decision-making and priority of governors need to be considered in context. It is important to understand which decisions are made by which stakeholders and if education specialists are involved in any decision making.

2.5.3 Governance in South African independent schools

This research focuses on the view of stakeholders regarding specific changes in governance in independent schools. In 2012, Dunlop wrote an article in Parent 24 in which he made the following statement: *"While government schools are vanishing, more private*

schools are opening". He referred to data published by the South African Institute of Race Relations. The opening of independent schools is, however, not completely immune to government control because these schools still need to be managed and governed according to regulations stated in SASA. For example, Section 46(2) of SASA clearly states that independent schools need to be registered by the provincial Head of Department. In addition, Section 50 of SASA determines that the member of the Executive Council for Education of a province (MEC) must determine requirements for the admission of learners to examinations conducted under supervision of the Department of Basic Education. This adds to the importance that independent schools also need to contribute to the aim of the Government to provide education to all learners in South Africa.

2.5.3.1 Who can start an independent school?

Section 29 (1) (a) of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) stipulates that everyone has the right to a basic education. The regulations and laws governing education include public or independent schools as provided for in the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) and SASA (RSA, 1996b). In terms of Section 29 (3) of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) everyone has the right to establish an independent school.

3) Everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that-

(a) do not discriminate based on race

(b) are registered with the state; and

(c) maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions.

(4) Subsection (3) does not preclude state subsidies for independent educational institutions.

The purpose of independent schools in South Africa is to provide education of the same standard or even a better standard than the education provided by public schools. These independent schools need to adhere and contribute to the constitutional requirements of the country. Educational standards in independent schools should therefore be comparable with the standards of public schools and need to contribute to South African education. According to Education White Paper II (DOE, 1996d:24) there are several prescriptions with which independent schools need to comply:

Schools in the independent sector have been established as educational trusts, Section 21 companies not for gain, closed corporations, or under proprietary ownership. They must comply with educational laws and regulations and register with provincial educational departments. Conditions of registration should include approval of the school constitution, which should include provisions for governance. The Ministry will support provincial legislation or other measures to encourage private school owners, directors, or trustees to introduce representative governing bodies or consultative arrangements in their own schools, if they have not already done so.

School fees of independent schools are often much higher than those of public schools because they not only have to build and maintain their own buildings and grounds, but they also have to carry the whole salary budget of both teaching and non-teaching staff. As a result, only learners whose parents can afford these schools will attend independent schools in South Africa – this, some would argue, could militate to an extent against the provision in Section 29 of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) which contemplates basic education for all. However, Education White Paper II (DOE, 1996d) envisaged that independent schools needed to form part of the educational enterprise of South Africa. This indicates that independent schools could contribute to filling the gap where the government cannot provide education. By only providing education to more privileged learners, one could argue if it is in a sense the start of a new socio-economic “apartheid”.

Education White Paper II stipulates that these schools need to be non-discriminating and provide high quality education (DOE, 1996d).

There is at present no general agreement whether the country will benefit from independent schools which could discriminate against learners based on their socio-economic status while it still has difficulties in transforming from the previous Apartheid-system. However, freedom of language and religion could also serve as justification for the establishment of independent schools. Many children need education, and the available number of schools are perhaps not sufficient to adequately address this need as is clear from how the government's struggles to find enough school places for learners every year (Dunlop, 2012). This could be the major contribution of independent schools in South Africa, namely, to fill the capacity gap.

2.5.3.2 The value of independent schools in South Africa

Modisaotsile (2012) explained that education in South Africa is facing a crisis. She referred to the press release of the Annual National Assessments of 2011 where Mrs Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education (DBE, 2011), stated her concern about the results of literacy and numeracy assessments in our country. In 2011 the National Planning Minister, Trevor Manuel, also said: "*The quality of schooling is substandard, especially in the township schools*" (Diagnostic Overview, 2011). In an article published in the *Mail and Guardian* on the 2nd of August 2019, Mupunga (2019:01) stated the following:

Private education companies address the critical education issue in South Africa, which is an important investment consideration, giving growing investor awareness of environmental, social and governance consideration in the investment process.

This emphasises the fact that the independent schools invest in the educational enterprise of South Africa to improve the educational environment in the South African schooling system. The Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) is a non-profit, voluntary association that advises the wide range of independent schools on matters relating to school governance, curriculum, the appointment of staff, etc. ISASA's vision is articulated as follows:

ISASA's vision is of a Southern Africa in which quality education is available to all learners, the value of independent education in contributing to this goal is recognised, and a value-based, public-spirited community of diverse, high quality independent schools is developed (www.isasa.org/what-is-isasa).

In September 2003, Bernstein of the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) which focuses on the role of business and the market in economic development published argued that: *"For-profit education companies are generally the product of entrepreneurial talent responding to a public education system that is widely understood to be inadequate"* (Bernstein, 2003:01). Like ISASA, profit-driven companies' vision could be linked to an improvement of education in South Africa.

One of the biggest concerns in South Africa's public educational system is the high absenteeism of teachers in these schools (Jordaan, 2019). One of the reasons for this is the high teacher-to-learner ratio. Teachers feel overwhelmed and do not have adequate time and energy to attend to a class of sixty learners simultaneously (Jordaan, 2019). The South African Minister of Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, said during a conference in April 2019: *"The government needs to support teachers"*. She referred to a lack of infrastructure, learning materials and sanitation in many public schools (Jordaan, 2019). It seems as if the establishment of independent schools might be a way of assisting the Department of Basic Education to supplement the shortage of classrooms from private funds and in so doing, alleviate the plight of public-school teachers in an indirect manner.

The question has been raised as to whether teachers would work harder and be more inspired if a private company could assure a lower teacher-to-learner ratio and an effective up to standard education environment. Researching high-achieving schools in low-income environments in a sample of South African primary schools, Sailors, Hoffman and Matthee (2007), found that those resources and financial support are not the only factors which contribute to quality of education. The environment in which teaching takes place influences the achievement of the learners. Strong and effective leadership is required to guide the academic programme in a school. In addition, a healthy relationship with the community contributes to the success of the school. Committed, competent and caring teachers, as well as participation and engagement from the community, contribute to a learner's achievement. Therefore, good governance and engagement by the community would contribute to quality education.

The chief executive of the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA), Lebogang Montjane, said that independent schools started after 1994 with democracy in South Africa (Din, 2017). Montjane, as quoted by Din (2017) in his article in *The Star*, refers to low-cost independent education. The socio-economic status of families differs and that influences their ability to send their children to an independent school, even if it is regarded as a low-cost independent school. The danger, however, is that it results in an inequality in education and that an independent school offers so much more for parents who are willing and able to pay more for their child's education.

Referring to Ryan (2019), *Moneyweb*, The Citizen indicated that:

[f]igures from South African Market Insights show there are just short of 2000 independent schools in South Africa with slightly more than 400 000 students [learners]. About 8% of schools in South Africa are independent, accommodating 3% of the student population. The public sector has about 23 800 schools with 12,5 million students. This means the public sector is

carrying a huge burden with nearly three times as many students [learners] per teacher as in the private sector (Ryan, 2019:01).

These statistics illustrate that the South African government needs these institutions to provide enough education opportunities. A publication released on 9 January 2019 refers to the number of learners per teachers in public and independent schools (www.southafricanmi.canmi.com/education-statistics.html). The survey indicates that there are about 31.3 learners for each teacher in a public school, while in independent schools it is about 11.8 learners for each teacher. At the time of this research, there were 23 796 public schools for 12 490 132 learners and 1966 independent schools for only 402 141 learners (www.southafricanmi.canmi.com/education-statistics.html). Based on these statistics it is evident that South Africa needs these independent schools to supplement the resources of the state.

Independent schools are not only filling the school-learner-teacher capacity gap which the government is struggling to fill, but they are also regarded as a good method of investing in the education of South Africa to improve the socio-economic status of more of its citizens. In the *Mail and Guardian* of August 2019:01 Mupunga wrote the following regarding investing in independent education in South Africa: “*The business model is simple but effective. Once a school is built in a good location and the cost structure is right, it becomes a case of bums on seats. The operational leverage is high and after a school break even, additional enrolments fall through to the profit line*”.

2.5.3.3 Public school governance versus independent school governance

Independent schools started with the mind-set that the parents or the founders of the school could create a school based on the standards and culture they chose, and then govern the school according to these. Considering South Africa’s tumultuous history in

education, there is no doubt that parents would like to assure the best possible education opportunities for their children. South African public schools are funded according to different categories referred to as different quintile schools. The poorest schools are the quintile one schools whereas the schools in the least poor communities are the quintile five schools (van Rooyen, 2012.) However, van Rooyen (2012:16) explains that “[t]he assumption that more funding should lead to better quality education has not been proven conclusively. This is a continuing international debate”. This is also a problem with independent schools. Montjane explained, as quoted by Din (2017), that the perception around independent schools is not always valid. Certain independent schools out-perform public schools, but there are public schools which are very high-performing and can offer what certain independent schools cannot (Din, 2017).

Situations like this can result in a danger zone for South African education. If the government allows independent schools without proper regulation and control of what their boards set out to do, it could result in a situation where quality education is only possible for a certain socio-economic class in the country. Companies can then open and register an independent school which does not contribute to quality education in line with the educational needs of South Africa, while parents pay a high monthly fee with a specific expectation.

Jonathan Snyman from the Institute of Race Relations explained various reasons why parents preferred independent schools. Some of the reasons were a smaller number of learners per class and that learners received more individual attention compared to government schools where the teacher-to-learner ratio is almost double that of independent schools. Another reason was to gain more power in the way the school is governed (Snyman, 2012).

According to Section 1 of the National Education Policy Act (RSA, 1996c) the teacher-to-learner ratio in public schools is determined by the government after consultation with all the stakeholders. These stakeholders include parents as prescribed by SASA (RSA, 1996b). Modisaotsile, (2012:3) explain as follows

It should be noted that good school performance is linked to the participation of all stakeholders in education. These stakeholders include parents, teachers, learners, School Governing Bodies, government departments and the private sector. It is therefore submitted that building relationships of mutualism among the stakeholders in education will improve the quality of education.

The fact that the government is involving parents in the governance of schools and spending money on education indicates a desire to improve the quality of education. Unfortunately, these efforts are not rewarded by an increase in educational quality which contributes to parents' concern regarding the quality of education for their children. Van Staden and Howie (2010) analysed data from the 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) which indicates that more research needs to be conducted on for example the quality and availability of reading materials in the Intermediate Phase. Compared internationally, South Africa's grade four learners do not spend enough time on frequent reading instruction. This is just one of the sources that show that South African education is not providing quality education. The 2018 *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)* released the following in their report:

Although South Africa is still one of the lower performing TIMSS countries, from 2003 to 2015, the country has shown the largest positive improvement of all participating countries in Mathematics. We recognise that South Africa started from a very low base and thus had the greater potential to improve. (www.hsrc.ac.za/en/review/hsrc-review-april-june-18/timss-in-sa).

According to Minister Angie Motshekga (2018), education in South Africa has shown progress, but regarding foundational skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, quality is still a problem (www.gov.za/speeches/minister-angie-motshekga-basic-education). It is important to recognise the input from the government to improve the quality of education. Even though the government implements policies to shift the power from the government to the community by involving parents in school governing bodies, the parents and other stakeholders in public schools still feel this is not enough to ensure quality education for their children. The Department of Basic education sometimes interfere in schools regarding their language policies and force public schools to change their policies. By doing this, the SGB experience too much interference from the DBE. In an article, du Plessis (2020) refers to this misuse of decision-making power regarding language policies. *“In an approach to centralise the decision-making powers of SGBs, the Bill [Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill] proposes that SGBs must submit drafts of any amendments to their language policies to the HOD for approval”* (Du Plessis, 2020b:13). For this reason, the government thought it was necessary to introduce the Bill (which has not yet been promulgated into legislation) and restrict certain powers of SGBs. This contributes to the reason why parents would like to take their children to independent schools where the government have less power regarding decision.

Considering the problems pertaining to quality of education, the important role of independent schools is evident. If independent schools try to fill the capacity gap that the government cannot provide, the government needs to ensure that independent schools will provide quality education in line with the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a), Section 29(1) and the provisions in Chapter 5 of SASA. Even though there are not specific regulations for the governance of independent schools, they have access to the guidelines of the King Commission (King III Report on Governance, 2009) which provides guidelines for good governance, including governance in public schools and independent schools. However, although governance structures of profit-driven independent schools are likely to use corporate governance approaches, they also need to govern in the

interests of the school and learners. The Federation for South African School Governing Bodies (FEDSAS) explain this principle as follows (FEDSAS, 2015:4):

Corporate governance is concerned with holding the balance between economic and social goals and between individual and communal goals. The aim is to align as closely as possible the interests of individuals, corporation, and society.

Education laws and policies apply to all schools in the country - public or independent – unless a type of school is specifically excluded. Therefore, even though there are no specific regulations regarding the governing bodies of independent schools, they still need to inform the stakeholders on matters of common interest, for example quality education. Independent schools need to be registered with the Department of Basic Education to ensure they are connected to the government. The present understanding of the government’s involvement as a stakeholder in independent schools is limited. The controversial question that has not been answered, is whether independent schools can be allowed to govern their schools independently from the government if their main purpose is to step into the capacity gap of the Government. The question has been raised whether specific guidance needs to be provided regarding the interaction between the governance of independent schools and the South African Government. Independent schools are proud to announce that they operate independently from the Department of Education, but Chapter 5 of SASA is clear that they do not have *carte blanche*. Walton, Nel, Hugo & Muller, 2009:6) describe this autonomy of independent schools as follows:

Unlike state [public] schools which are bound by Departmental policy, independent schools enjoy relative freedom and are well placed to respond innovatively to the challenges for inclusive education. They are not lock-stepped into Departmental timetables for change, have relative freedom in recruitment and are accountable primarily to their boards and owners.

As mentioned earlier, independent schools were formed and introduced for several reasons. If an independent school is focused on a specific religion, several questions arise. One question is how it impacts those children who are not affiliated to that specific religion. Another is what the school's focus area will be - the practising of the specific religion or quality education? How will the handover of the school to a company listed on the stock exchange impact its religious culture and approach? Today large companies invest in education and several schools might form part of one large company. The question arising from this approach is whether companies do that to improve the education opportunity in South Africa or are they only interested in a good investment opportunity.

Educational progression in any country will influence the economy of the country. In this regard Hanushek and Woessmann (2020:1) contends that "*[e]ducation has long been viewed as an important determinant of economic well-being*" Previous discussions regarding decentralisation and how independent schools can alleviate the financial burden of a country regarding education underlines the fact that the economy and education are related to each other. If the education of a country is of a high standard, the economy of the country will also improve. Hanushek and Woessmann (2020) refer to some growth theories where education can influence the economy of a country. They refer to three main influences of education.

Firstly, high-quality education will contribute to a more educated community. Better educated learners who would like to further their studies could lead to an increase in skilled and knowledgeable members of the labour force, because the demand for higher qualified workers could increase, which could lead to higher labour productivity in a country (Mankiw, Romer & Weil, 1992).

Secondly, together with education, new developments and technology will also start to develop, as mentioned in theories of endogenous growth (Lucas 1988; Romer, 1990; Aghion and Howitt, 1998). In terms of the theory of endogenous growth, systems that are directly linked to the economy could influence economic growth. This also links to the first influence on economic growth, namely quality education. If a country produces high-quality education and keeps up with technological development, the country could benefit from resolutions to help increase the quality of living.

Thirdly, the diffusion of knowledge in a country will also contribute to the economic growth of a country if it contributes to the labour force as well as the technological development in a country (Nelson and Phelps, 1966; Benhabib & Spiegel, 1994). This foundation (education) forms the building blocks of any country. Education enhances a nation's human capital, and these three influences could all contribute to a better developed country. A healthy economy needs quality education. For these reasons, education and economy cannot be separated in any country. Even though the Government is not directly involved in the governance of independent schools, independent schools still need to contribute to high quality education, in line with the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a).

In 2017, Paul Theron from Vestact⁴ predicted that *“[t]here is going to be a listing boom in private education, it is obvious - unfortunately, the state isn't getting it's (sic) game together these (state) schools aren't going to get better any time soon, so it is a good opportunity for the private sector”* (Theron, 2017). If businesspeople talk about the stock exchange, investment and advantages and education at the same time, one can speculate that this tendency means that, for the businesspeople, the focus of education is a profit-driven business. The impact of higher school fees and the influence of profit-driven governance are not easy to determine in relation to quality education. The

⁴ Vestact was established by Paul Theron in 2002. His company looks after the money of private clients and not institutions. They manage their investments in Rands in Johannesburg and in US Dollars in New York. They offer individualised investment accounts.

controversial question of whether the corporate world will be compliant with the demands of the educational world remains unanswered.

The impact on the stakeholders of a school which changed from not-for-profit governance to profit-driven governance is not yet determined. People will focus on different parameters and goals when they manage a not-for-profit school as opposed to a profit-driven school. Not-for-profit schools are widely perceived as schools which act in the best interests of the child. As mentioned previously, research by Sailors *et al.* (2007) suggested that low-income schools do not always underperform. However, the quality of leadership and governance of a school could contribute more than financial support. An issue that must be resolved during such a take-over of a school will be who will regulate the governance of the school.

The fact that SASA (RSA, 1996b) is not prescriptive regarding governance structures of independent schools might be interpreted as giving independent schools a great deal of freedom to employ corporate governance principles from the private sector to ensure schools function optimally. Corporate governance plays an important role in helping to create a credible and professional business system (King III, 2009). According to Gayathri (2015), the key elements of good corporate governance include honesty, trust, transparency, responsibility, accountability, and mutual respect. Sir Adrian Cadbury (1992), Chairman of the Cadbury Committee, explains corporate governance as follows:

Corporate governance is defined as holding the balance between economic and social goals and between individual and communal goals. The governance framework is there to encourage the efficient use of resources and equally to require accountability for the stewardship of those resources. The aim is to align as closely as possible the interests of individuals, corporations, and society (Cadbury, 1992:14).

Corporate governance plays an important role in helping to create a credible and professional business system (King III Report, 2009). According to Gayathri (2015) the key elements of good corporate governance include honesty, trust, transparency, responsibility, accountability, and mutual respect. Gayathri (2015) suggests that there need to be disclosures to help stakeholders come close to the company to reduce the gap between management and stakeholders. If applied to independent schools, it will also be to reduce the gap between the governors, the management, and the parents. Governance, according to the King Principles (King III, 2009), also forms part of effective leadership. This method of leadership can be used to create applicable processes, systems, and controls. The organisation, in this case an independent school, will also be assured of sustainability and long-term continuity. Governors act in the best interests of the stakeholders who serve the organization's mission. Most of the high-level organisational goals and policies must be approved by the governors. The temptation does exist for governors to co-manage and get involved in the management and day-to-day running of the organisation, but this leads to severe negative consequences (Bader 2008). This thesis will provide answers to the question of governors interfering with the professional management of schools and, as a result, having a negative influence on the quality of education.

In public schools this dilemma is avoided by the clear distinction between the governance of the school, which is the responsibility of the SGB, and the professional management of the school, which is the responsibility of the principal and his or her school management team (SMT) under the authority of the provincial Head of Department. In the King IV Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa, 2015 (hereafter referred to as King IV Report, 2015), the Institute of Directors in South Africa conceptualised good governance as follows: further explains the following (Institute of Directors, 2015:24)

Good governance involves both ethical governance and the governance of ethics. Effective governance can only be achieved if the governors see their commitment as an essential part of the functioning of the school. The

specific framework of the governance needs to be implemented in a manner that is both proportionate and realistic. The most important role of the governance is to add value and provide continuity to ensure that the diversity in schools is taken into consideration.

It is thus clear that governance consists of a specific framework against which all decisions are made. All governors need to work towards the same end goal to guide the direction of decisions made. According to the King III Report (2009), ethical aspects are very important. If governance is corporate- or business-orientated, one can assume the decisions that are made are with the best interests of the business in mind. Even if it is an educational institution, decisions would be made mainly for the advantage of the business, therefore not necessarily advancing the standard of education, or it could advance both. One of the purposes of this study is to explore participants' views on this issue, namely whether the governance of the newly established corporate style independent schools will contribute to the standard of education and/or the interests of the business.

Governance and education are complex environments with many different aspects which need to be taken into consideration when education is provided to learners. Quality education is also a very important goal in South Africa and the correction of past discriminatory practices is as important. The economic growth of the country and education in South Africa are related and, in this study, it is important to try and find out how education and the economy, or the corporate world, fit into each other. Parents and teachers are directly involved in the process; therefore, it seems necessary to determine how they experience the changes in the educational environment from a not-for-profit environment to a profit-driven environment.

2.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The literature indicates that, globally, education has a connection with the economy of a country. If the quality of education is high, the youth of a country will become assets to the labour market, technological development will flourish, and knowledge will be ploughed back into the country. Decentralisation in education is seen as a possible solution to overcome the financial burden of a country to provide quality education. It begs the question whether the Government will continue to monitor the quality of education or withdraw completely from monitoring independent schools.

The attractiveness of a business approach is that it has become so dominant that it is generally accepted and became normal to enterprise, and everybody involved in it. The assumption is that such an approach to school governance may influence the educational thinking and practice and may displace what was regarded as normal before the changeover to a for-profit organisation occurred. For that reason, I explore how such a specific change in governance influences stakeholders' views. Present understanding of the relation between the promised picture painted for stakeholders and the final painting is limited. The effect of profit-driven governance on educational excellence still needs to be explored. The fact that the schools belong to a company which needs to provide positive feedback to the shareholders, may also result in schools that perform at their best because they need results comparable with the top schools in the country to convince shareholders to buy even more shares. Answers to these questions were not found in the literature and therefore I conducted a case study to obtain information on the topic to enable me to suggest some answers to the questions, some changes to the practice of the governance of independent schools and some topics for further research. In the next chapter I discuss the methodology and design of my research.

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Independent schools play an important role to fill the educational gap caused by a shortage of public schools in the country. The major focus of interest in this specific study is not the transition from a public school to an independent school, but rather the transition from a not-for-profit governance approach of an independent school to a profit-driven governance approach in a JSE listed independent school.

Cohen (1987) refers to the change in governance as a tumbling world and explains that we only see parts of the whole change. He also argues that the change towards a more capitalised governance approach is not always different from the state-centred theories which also have a dominant outlook on the capital interest (Cohen, 1987). These strategies, either from a government perspective or a private enterprise perspective, will reflect on the post-Apartheid government and it can be assumed that the profit-driven interest of these independent schools may influence the governance approach they apply. This perspective from Cohen (1987) so many years ago still resonates with the conceptual framework in this study, and it is still applicable in 2021.

In this study I researched the views of the stakeholders concerning the change in governance in independent schools after they were bought by companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE). I wanted to find out if they noted any change and whether change was perceived as improving the quality of education. I also pursued the possibility that the stakeholders viewed the change purely as a business deal to report good profit gains to shareholders.

Imenda (2014:185) explains the need for a conceptual framework as follows:

It is not controversial to state that three people coming from different walks of life, watching the same event, are likely to come up with different interpretations of the event. Each person's viewpoint or point of reference, is his/her conceptual framework.

A conceptual framework enables a researcher to identify different related concepts to construct an empirical finding on the topic (Imenda, 2014). In this research, a conceptual framework was used to obtain sufficient information from different stakeholders on how they viewed these changes in governance. Guba and Lincoln (1994) define a conceptual lens as something which is used to guide the researcher's action and investigation. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:121) define it as: "*a human construction which includes where the research is coming from and influences any beliefs and dictates how the data will be interpreted.*" According to Imenda (2014:190) "*a conceptual framework refers to the epistemological paradigm a researcher adopts in looking at a given research problem*". This conceptual framework is used to provide a lens to simplify the complex reality of governance in independent schools.

Liehr and Smith (1999) explain a conceptual framework as a specific structure to guide research and allow the researcher to explore the experiences and views of participants. In this research, it would be to explore the lived experiences or views of the stakeholders regarding changes. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with relation to the different parts of each category in the conceptual framework. The questions to collect the data were specific to each stakeholder group and their specific role in the school.

In the following paragraphs I refer to the King III Report (Institute of Directors, 2009) as well as the King IV Report (Institute of Directors, 2015) from which I developed the

conceptual framework for this study. Both versions were used to get a complete understanding of the characteristics of corporate governance. I also discuss the meaning and importance of each constituent part of the conceptual framework.

3.2 KING III REPORT

The King III Report (Institute of Directors,2009) presents certain characteristics of good governance:

- Responsibility: to take the correct actions regarding the assets of the school.
- Accountability: to be able to justify decisions.
- Fairness: to consider the legitimate interests and expectations of all stakeholders; and
- Transparency: to disclose information in a manner that enables stakeholders to make an informed analysis of school performance and sustainability.

All these characteristics contribute to the trustworthiness of the governance of a school in the eyes of the stakeholders. This study proposes to use these characteristics of good governance as a conceptual framework to study stakeholders' (management, staff and parents) experiences of changes in governance because of an independent not-for-profit school being bought by a company listed on the stock exchange, where they need to report to the shareholders on the company's performance and profit earnings. This may result in a change of focus; the focus can be to produce a better product to enrol more learners, but it can also be on as little as possible educational input to produce as much as possible profit.

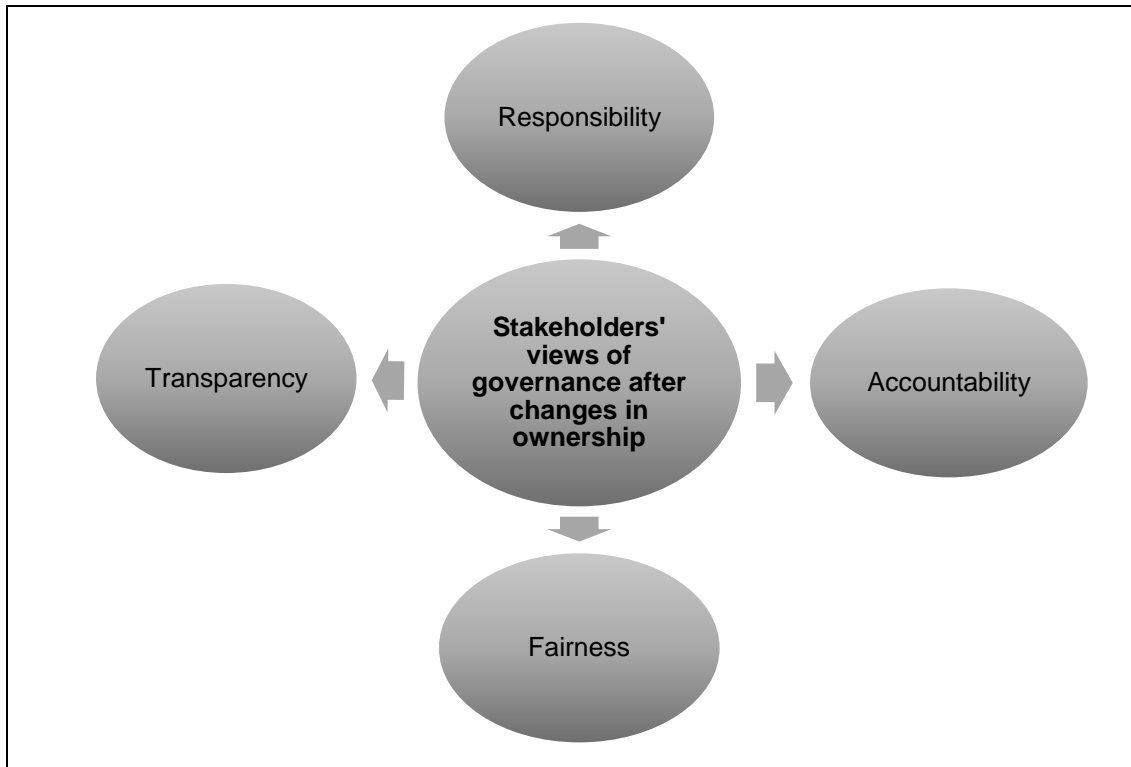


Figure 3.1: The Conceptual Framework of this Thesis

Imenda (2014) explains three dimensions which operate interactively when using a conceptual framework. A framework as illustrated in Figure 3.1 can be used to obtain more information regarding the research problem. The first dimension is the research problem which is where the research begins. The second dimension is the various concepts that are discovered and interplayed with the research problem. The third dimension is when those concepts derived from the conceptual framework are applied to the research problem. This interplay between the components of the conceptual framework of this study and the research problem is illustrated in Figure 3.1 above.

3.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

3.3.1 Transparency

According to the King IV Report (Institute of Directors, 2015:18) transparency is the following: “The unambiguous and truthful exercise of accountability such that decision-making processes and business activities outputs and outcomes (both positive and negative) are easily able to be discerned and compared with ethical standards”. In any governance the governors need to be transparent in their decision making and all the stakeholders need to feel convinced that all decisions are being made while taking the best interest of the stakeholders and in this research the school-based stakeholders in mind.

Parents need to know the reason behind decisions regarding the education of their children. In independent schools this need is even more critical than in public schools among other because of the higher school fees that parents pay. For governance to be transparent parents need to have access to information and be able to make wise decisions if they need to make decisions. The same principle is applicable to all the school-based stakeholders. It is important for the principal, head of departments, teachers and parents to have enough information on, and the context of a decision to be made by the governors (Kosack & Fung, 2014).

To discover if this characteristic of good governance is followed by the governors in these schools the following questions were asked:

Transparency

- What is your view regarding the transparency of the decisions made in the last two years?

- How do you view the disclosure of information after the change in ownership?

3.3.2 Responsibility

Responsibility according to the King IV report is: “Taking ownership of a duty, obligation or liability” (Institute of Directors,2015:16). For the school-based stakeholders the governors need to show that they took ownership the moment when they bought the school to run the school according to the requirements of an educational institution and of a business. The initial owners of the school also had to take ownership and were also obliged to sell the school to a company able to run the school with educational goals in mind. Corporate Social Responsibility can also include the responsibility of governors towards their stakeholders in a company. This includes the economic, social and environmental aspects as well (Isa, 2012). In this research these different aspects included the governors’ responsibility for the educational standards of the school and the school environment including the teaching environment and learner management.

Isa (2012) also emphasises the fact that governors need to work together with stakeholders to provide a consistent balance between business, responsibility expectations, rights and regulations. This emphasises the fact that all stakeholders need to be informed and have access to enough information needed when decisions are made. This also links to the previous point of transparency that needs to be shown by the governors in order to make sure good governance takes place in an organisation.

To discover if this characteristic of good governance is followed by the governors in these schools the following questions were asked:

Responsibility:

- What change have you experienced regarding your responsibility for issues such as curriculum development and implementation and learner management?
- In your opinion, which responsibilities form part of the description of school governance?
- How did you experience the execution of governance responsibilities under the previous ownership of the school?

3.3.3 Fairness

According to the King IV Report (Institute of Directors,2015:12) fairness refers to “the equitable and reasonable treatment of the sources of value creation, including relationship capital as portrayed by the legitimate and reasonable needs, interests and expectations of material stakeholders of the organisation”. In the King IV Report (Institute of Directors,2015) an inclusive approach from the governors’ side towards the stakeholders should take into consideration the interests of the stakeholders in the governors’ direction of the company.

Barucca (2020:765) discusses fairness towards stakeholders and explains the importance to of rethinking “democracy and fairness in policy-making, especially with the aim of global sustainability governance”. This also resonates with the concept of fairness discussed in the King IV Report (Institute of Directors,2015) and the balance between the expectations and the needs in the organisation. The governors and the stakeholders need to be aware of the expectations of one another.

In this research the views of the different stakeholders after the change in governance is explored. Different stakeholders in different “relationships” towards the governors were

asked questions to try to understand if the views of different stakeholders were different and if different “levels” of stakeholders were involved in decision making .

To discover if this characteristic of good governance is followed by the governors in these schools the following questions were asked:

Fairness

- How were you as an SMT member involved in the consideration of legitimate interests of parents and learners?
- What is your view on the way the governors deal with the legitimate interests of the school’s stakeholders?

3.3.4 Accountability

“The obligation to answer for the execution of responsibilities. Accountability cannot be delegated, whereas responsibility can be delegated without abdicating accountability for that delegated responsibility” (Institute of Directors, 2015:9). From the characteristics of good governance discussed earlier in this chapter, it is clear that the governors of the schools bought over by profit-driven companies need to take up their accountability towards the stakeholders make decisions in a fair, responsible and transparent way. As explained in the King IV Report (Institute of Directors,2015) this accountability cannot be delegated but needs to be executed by the governors themselves. This also emphasis the interrelationship of the different characteristics of good governance and that not one of these characteristics can be discussed in isolation but only in relation to one another. Accountability from the governors’ side includes the willingness to answer for the execution of their responsibilities and to explain to the stakeholders why certain decisions were being made.

To discover if this characteristic of good governance is followed by the governors in these schools the following questions were asked:

Accountability:

- In your view, what is the accountability of the governors regarding the academic performance of the school?
- How do you experience your accountability regarding the academic performance of the school?

3.4 CONCLUSION

Corporate governance in the educational environment needs to be monitored carefully to make sure that the governors focus on the educational as well as the corporate side of the organisation. To analyse the views of stakeholders, the research questions as well as the analysis were based on, and evaluated in terms of the characteristics of good governance as explained previously in this chapter.

The characteristics of good governance were the conceptual framework for this study. This conceptual framework was used to simplify the research and was structured to produce results which would contribute to the understanding of the connection between independent school education and business. Understanding corporate governance could contribute to the purpose of education as stated in SASA (RSA 1996b). To do this, this research would have to be a qualitative case study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Section 29 (1) (a) of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) everybody is given the right to a basic education. In terms of Section 9 (3) the state may not discriminate unfairly against anybody when providing access to such a basic education. The government is faced with the legacy that many learners did not have access to the right to a basic education. In financial terms, this makes it very difficult for the government to make everybody's right to a basic education materialise and it implies measures to address and remedy the effects of the past education system on access to the right to education.

Independent schools can help to fill the gap of providing education in South Africa. This independent or private sector is very important for South Africa as it provides educational opportunities to a significant number of learners as discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.2, leaving the government with more money to spend on the promotion of the right to basic education for the learners of South Africa. The people responsible for the governance of these schools are not given much guidance in SASA (RSA, 1996b) or in the Constitution of 1996 (RSA,1996a) and are, therefore, largely reliant on corporate governance conventions, prescriptions, and guidelines such as those provided by The King IV Report (Institute of Directors,2015) to govern their schools.

In Chapter 2, the literature review focused on international independent and private schools to compare South African school governance with international practices. Governance of public schools in South Africa was also covered in in the literature review to compare it with the governance of independent schools in South Africa. There was a dearth of research on the governance of independent schools and how they interact, or share their power as governors, with the government of South Africa. Profit-driven

companies started to buy not-for-profit smaller independent schools. This change from a not-for-profit governance approach to profit-driven governance has started to become a popular trend.

The question is whether stakeholders are even aware of the change in power from previously not-for-profit schools to new governance approaches which has a profit-driven approach. The effect of power over an educational institution with a business approach has not yet been examined in detail. The assumption is that this kind of leadership may negatively influence educational thinking and that common educational practices might disappear. To address the gap in the literature regarding this trend, this research will be in the form of qualitative research to understand how these stakeholders view the change.

In this chapter the focus will fall on the ontological epistemological building blocks of the research. The reason for this specific paradigmatic lens will briefly be discussed in the research approach. The sampling strategy, participants as well as ethical considerations will also be discussed. This chapter will also include the data collection approach, as well as the process of analysing the data. To collect rich data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders who were part of the previous not-for-profit governance approach and then experienced the change to a profit-driven governance approach. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain a deeper understanding of and insights into how the stakeholders view this change in ownership from a not-for-profit school to a profit-driven school. It also explored the participants' views on how the change in ownership may have influenced the core business of the schools and the focus on providing quality education, and how it changed the focus of the school to contributing to the state of the finances of the new owners of the school at the expense of the education offered.

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Education in South Africa is entwined in the history of the country. This fact cannot be ignored. In the literature review, the history of education in South Africa, was briefly discussed with the emphasis on how it affected the involvement of parents. Information was collected with the conceptual framework in mind (as discussed in paragraph 1.7). This conceptual framework is constructed on the characteristics of good governance, as mentioned in the King III Report (Institution of Directors, 2009), namely responsibility, accountability, fairness, and transparency. With these characteristics in mind, appropriate research questions were asked to understand what stakeholders experienced and expected of the governors of their schools. This enabled me to investigate the stakeholders' experience of 'promised change' in relation to the 'actual change'.

Ratan, Anand and Ratan (2019) explain that the research question to any research assignment needs to deliberately include all the areas of concern. In this specific research the interaction between education and the corporate world needs to be scrutinised to determine if governing bodies of these independent schools contribute to the shareholders' financial security while providing quality education. (Ratan, Anand and Ratan (2019:15) explain that “[t]he characteristics of good research questions can be expanded as feasible, interesting, novel, ethical, relevant, manageable, appropriate, potential value, publish ability and systematic”. These research questions are based on the relevance of a growing independent school system in South Africa and the small amount of research done concerning the governance of these schools. To conduct this research, the following research questions and sub-questions were used to obtain information from the participants during semi-structured interviews:

Primary Question

The primary research question guiding this study was:

What are the views of stakeholders in formerly independent not-for-profit schools of governance after a change of ownership to a listed organisation?

Secondary Questions

The secondary research questions in support of the primary question were:

- *How do stakeholders experience the governors' responsibility after the change in ownership?*
- *How do stakeholders experience accountability by the governors after a change in ownership?*
- *How do stakeholders experience the consideration of their legitimate interests in, and expectations of the school as an entity, after a change in ownership?*
- *How do stakeholders experience transparency in decision-making after a change in ownership?*
- *How do stakeholders describe the changes in the ethos and culture of the school after a change of ownership?*

Various stakeholders were invited to participate in this research to build a realistic and appropriate picture of the stakeholders' views on and experiences of the areas and issues addressed in the research questions.

The interview questions were formulated in such a way as to collect data of the stakeholders' experiences before the takeover process, to determine if the takeover processes were discussed with them, and to investigate their experience of the

governance of their schools after the change in governance. The specific aim and objectives of the research is explained in greater detail below.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.3.1 Research Paradigm

Different researchers explain the research paradigm differently. With this research it was important to understand how the different school-based stakeholders view the change in governance. To understand and to interpret their views ontology was used to direct the paradigm namely interpretivism. Guba and Lincoln (1989) explain that ontology, epistemology, and methodology are very important for research. Ontology is the study of being or existing and consists of two elementary positions, namely objectivism (positivism) and constructionism (interpretivism) (Blaikie, 1993). During the research the viewpoints of different school-based stakeholders were scrutinised and their experiences of the change in governance were analysed to find out if the change to for-profit governance affected all the different school-based stakeholders and, if it did, if it affected them differently.

Objectivism (positivism) holds that reality can be measured, quantified and categorised. Constructionism is the opposite of objectivism and emphasises the fact that things do not exist independently and that meaning may be constructed (Charlesworth and Foëx, 2016); therefore, there are multiple realities. This study was conducted from a constructivism paradigm because I believe the reality of any changes in governance after a change of ownership, is constructed by the individual stakeholders experiencing that change. To understand their reality, the research was done by means of a case study where stakeholders experienced these changes individually.

The study of knowledge and the process of knowing the truth is called epistemology - it is a type of methodological literature (Blaikie, 1993). In this regard Kivunja and Kuyini

(2017:27) pose the following question: “*Is knowledge something which can be acquired on the one hand or is it something which has to be personally experienced?*” In this specific study the knowledge collected is the experience of each stakeholder regarding certain aspects as structured in the conceptual framework. Generating knowledge via the analysis of the data is the process of knowing the truth.

Two basic epistemological positions identified are positivism and interpretivism. In the positivistic position, research mirrors other similar research. Interpretivism represents the viewpoint that change is possible, and the researcher accepts constant change (Charlesworth & Foëx, 2016). An interpretivist epistemology (to get to know the truth) will be employed. I believe that the ‘truth’ about the changes, if any, in the governance at previously not-for-profit independent schools after a change of ownership, is created by social interaction with people who are the stakeholders of such independent schools. Their interpretation and views of these changes, if any, constitute their reality and the ‘truth’ as they see it (Maree, *et al.* 2007).

With the application of an interpretivist approach the researcher tend to gain a deeper understanding and the complexity of the unique occurrence (Creswell, 2007). Hammersley (2013) explain the multiple interpretations that may develop amongst humans. For this reason, interpretivist approach was used in this research to gain a deeper understanding of the different ways in which the different school-based stakeholders experienced the change in ownership through different contexts (view’s) and culture (Hammersley, 2013). One of the advantages of this paradigm is the diversifying views of the different school-based stakeholders. The principals and head of departments form part of the management team of the schools whereas the teachers and parents form part of the “rest of the school”. By conducting this research in natural setting, it was possible to understand these participants’ view from their natural environment (Tuli, 2010)

This epistemology came into play once the data for the study had been collected. This valuable data gathering provides the researcher with better understanding of the experiences of the different school-based stakeholders. The data was analysed and

interpreted using the concepts of good governance which constitute the conceptual framework selected for the study, to understand and describe the way the participants (stakeholders) interpreted and viewed the reality of possible changes in governance after a change of ownership (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

4.3.2 Research approach

The conceptual framework was used to structure the study along the four main characteristics of good governance, namely transparency, responsibility, fairness, and accountability. These structures provided a framework to, through a qualitative study, obtain deeper knowledge and understanding of the research problem, namely the experiences of stakeholders in the change to a for-profit- governance approach. According to Creswell (2014:32) *“[q]ualitative research can be interpreted as an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”*. In addition, Hammarberg, Kirkman and de Lacey (2016:498) explain that *“[q]ualitative methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspectives, most often from the standpoint of the participant”*. With this approach, I would be the instrument to collect the data (Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hays, Wadhwa & Varpio. 2015).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) place emphasis on the diversity of qualitative research and explain this research approach as the interpretation of a phenomenon which will bring meaning to people. Qualitative research can be associated with specific kinds of data and normally involves words. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007) this type of research describes a phenomenon within its naturally occurring context. Teherani *et al.* (2015) explains this method of research as a systematic inquiry into a social phenomenon. In this specific study where the views of different stakeholders are explored, this method was useful in the collection of the data where the conceptual framework was used to structure the research.

Qualitative research focuses on the phenomenon and the experiences of the participants in their natural environment. For a researcher to understand these experiences, he/she should understand and contribute to the complex design and method of data analysis. Multiple realities form part of the data collection; each participant experiences the phenomenon differently and the researcher needs to try and obtain rich data from the multiple realities. Examining the views of different stakeholders contributes to a deeper understanding of their experience with regards to the governance of for-profit independent schools and how they perceive the changes, if any. The information gathered from the participants in their natural contexts needs to be analysed. This can be done by uncovering its meaning via descriptive, exploratory, or explanatory procedures (Suter, 2012). This research approach therefore enabled me to use naturally occurring data (the views of stakeholders) to find a specific order in which participants reacted. By studying these patterns, or practices, it was possible to establish how the phenomenon (a change in governance approach) was experienced by the participants (Silverman, 2014). Therefore, a qualitative approach enabled me to develop an understanding of how, through governance, the corporate world meets the world of education.

Although generalisations in this type of study are possible, but very unlikely the focus of this study was the interpretation and experience of people (stakeholders in independent schools) in a specific situation (the change of ownership from a 'not-for-profit' entity to a member of a profit-driven organisation). The qualitative research approach can provide an in-depth description of the views of these stakeholders because nothing is regarded as not being relevant or unimportant and nothing escapes scrutiny. Every detail was used to obtain a complete understanding of the views of these stakeholders of governance after the change of ownership (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014).

In addition, qualitative research contributes to both theory and practice (Silverman, 2014). In this study where the working assumption is that a change of ownership might bring changes in governance in previously not-for-profit independent schools, a qualitative

research approach is appropriate because this approach typically studies people or systems (governors and governance, as well as stakeholders – management, staff, and parents) by interacting with, and observing the participants in their natural environment (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

As discussed previously, change is experienced differently by different people which shows that their world views are different. This is also linked to the conceptual lens used in the research process. The research design will now be discussed in detail and reasons why this specific design would be applicable for this research will be advanced.

4.3.3 Research design

Research designs are the defining part of any kind of research. Qualitative research designs are more diverse and not fixed to a specific kind of design but can differ according to the specific study. These research designs are the so-called ‘blueprint’ of the research and provide a logical structure to the research. In this study I employed a multiple case study design. According to Creswell (2013: 97) a case study

... explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. . . and reports a case description and case themes

Creswell’s definition highlights a number of important characteristics of case studies which were applied in this research namely: it explores a real-life phenomenon (the views of stakeholders of the transition to corporate governance in formerly not-for-profit schools), it investigates a bounded system (attention was solely focused on two schools that had transitioned to corporate governance), it takes place over time (enough time was spent on semi-structured interviews to exhaust the responses to questions and follow-up

questions and also to explore other sources of data) and it involves multiple sources of information (such as semi-structured interviews and documentation analysis). I kept these keys to a successful case study investigation in mind while collecting and processing data. How I integrated them into the research is dealt with in various sub-paragraphs of par 4.4.

A case study design provided a blueprint for the study and allowed me to explore the change from a previous not-for-profit governance approach to a profit-driven governance approach at the participating schools and uncover unforeseen interpretations by the different participants in the study (Freebody, 2003). According to Suter (2012) case studies allow for an extensive variety of data to be used irrespective whether the focus of the study is on a single person, phenomenon, or entity.

A multiple case study design contributed to a better understanding of the specific phenomenon (Gustafsson, 2017). To narrow the study, the participating independent schools which were included in the study were schools which changed from not-for-profit governance to profit-driven governance. The specific focus of the researcher would be on the views and experiences of the stakeholders after the change in ownership. A multiple case study design provided a unique example of actual people in genuine situations, enabling readers and the researcher to understand the experiences of the participants more clearly (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). A further reason for its selection is provided by Ma (2015) who describes a case study as the inquiry into a single instance and for this reason a multiple case study was used. Charlesworth and Foëx (2016) identify a case study as the study of a specific phenomenon, within its own context by using many different data sources.

Mark (1996) argues that such a study may produce theory and new knowledge from the case or cases which may inform policy development. In this type of case study, the focus

is on understanding a specific phenomenon – stakeholders’ views of change in governance at independent schools after changes in ownership to emphasise which phenomenon was under scrutiny in this study (Thomas, 2004).

4.3.4 Sampling and population

To conduct research, everything which is part of the research needs to be related. The research paradigm, the research approach and the research design must be related and contribute to the sampling strategy being used. In addition, DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019:3) explain that “[s]ampling strategies are influenced by the research question and the purpose of the study. Qualitative approaches seek an in-depth and detailed understanding and typically use purposeful sampling”.

In this specific qualitative research, the purpose was to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Vickers, 2002). The phenomenological approach to this study is “*the process whereby the researcher, who may have experience or understanding of the phenomenon under study, suspends their own beliefs or ideas*” (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010:26). It therefore influenced the sampling strategy of the research. Creswell (2013:112) concurs with this view and explains what a phenomenon means as follows:

Phenomenology is a qualitative approach in which researchers aim to develop new understandings of human lived experiences, relying on first person accounts generally obtained through participant interviews.

The research design therefore needs to be taken into consideration when sampling is considered.

Quick and Hall (2015:129) explains that “[p]articipants in qualitative research are selected from the target population of the setting”. Sampling can therefore be described as determining which part of a population will be used in a specific study. If probability sampling is used, there are no measures followed to decide on a specific sample, but everyone has the probability to participate in the research. In the case of non-probability sampling, which was used in this study, subjective criteria determined who will be part of the research (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). In this study I employed a combination of two non-probability sampling strategies, namely convenience sampling and purposive sampling.

Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling and is aimed at allowing the researcher easy access to the participants. Convenience sampling is also affordable, and it is in all ways convenient for the researcher (www.explorables.com). The risk of convenient sampling is that individuals selected for the research turn out to be poor samples and may not provide rich enough information (Oppong, 2013). To minimise this risk, I therefore also needed to do purposive sampling. With this method of sampling, I deliberately chose participants according to specific criteria and according to the type of information needed to compile the specific study (Barnard, 2002). Even though I chose specific participants, this was based not only on their availability and willingness to take part in the study, but also on their potential contribution to the data being collected (Etikan *et al.*, 2016).

Because his study investigated the views and experiences of stakeholders regarding the changes to profit-driven governance approaches, the research sites for this study were independent, previously not-for-profit schools which had gone through a change of ownership in the last five years and are now part of an independent (JSE)- listed education group. In this sense, the sampling strategy was purposive (Silverman, 2000). This is so because this sampling method selects those participants or research sites

which are most likely to provide the information required to answer the research question (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Because this is a multiple case study and only specific schools were selected, schools in my immediate area were more convenient to use than schools which also fulfil the prescribed criteria but are situated further away and in other parts of the country. The participants selected had to be stakeholders who formed part of the previous not-for-profit governance system and who were experienced and had had a chance to experience the new profit-driven governance approach.

4.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

To obtain data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with these stakeholders to develop a better understanding of what they had experienced. Barrett and Twycross (2018: 63) explain the advantages of interviews as a data collection tool as follows:

Collecting data through interviews with participants is a characteristic of many qualitative studies. Interviews give the most direct and straightforward approach to gathering detailed and rich data regarding a phenomenon. The type of interview used to collect data can be tailored to the research question, the characteristics of participants and the preferred approach of the researchers.

To contribute to the trustworthiness of the research, the method of data collecting is important. Brinia, Poullou and Panagiotopoulou (2019) explain that all interviews need to be recorded to ensure the transcription is accurate, as it enables the researcher to listen to the interviews over and over and ensure correct transcribing and interpretation. In addition to semi-structured interviews, additional methods of data collection were used. Extant literature, observations and a conference also contributed to the data that was

analysed in the process of investigating the effect of a change of governance on the stakeholders. The observations were added to the raw data as notes on what I had informally observed.

4.4.1. Semi-structured interviews

Qualitative research depends on rich data and to collect data sources such as semi-structured interviews, observations and documentations were used (Patton, 2002). De Jonckheere and Vaughn (2019) describe semi-structured interviews as a flexible form of interviews aimed at collecting open-ended data supplemented by follow-up questions. As explained by DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019:1), when using semi-structured interviews for data collection, researchers “*should take on a relational focus and consider the skill of interviewing to ensure quality*”. Therefore, data collection in the form of interviews required a special power relationship between me and the participants. My power needed to be controlled to allow each participant to be able to provide the information asked from them without me influencing them (Anyan, 2013). Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach (2009:279) explains this aspect as follows:

One feature about the interview is that both the interviewer and the interviewee may see their respective powers to negotiate the level of information about the study and the interviewee owns the knowledge and experience of the study.

These powers also needed to be controlled and regulated during the data analysis process. Kyala (2006:481) explains as follows:

Despite the power shifts during the data collection stage of the qualitative research interview, researchers may be able to successfully analyse the data collected. The research interview is a tool or an instrument which provides the researcher with descriptions, narratives, and texts of the life

world of the interviewee which the researcher interprets and reports according to his or her research interest.

Semi-structured interviews are primarily based on open ended questions, and this is the main reason for the selection of this method, as it creates the possibility for extra flexibility in the interview and provided the opportunity for me to gain deeper and more complete information (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport.,2014) on participants' views and experiences of the changes in governance at their schools. Furthermore, with semi-structured interviews as part of qualitative research, I was led by the answers of the participants and was not bound to a uniform behaviour or response. This contributed to a two-way interaction during which the participants could also enquire about some of the questions or parts of the questions (Yin, 2016).

These semi-structured interviews were designed to collect data from different categories of stakeholders regarding their experiences of the change. Josselson (2013:80) defines this way of data collection as follows: "*To enter the world of the participants and try to understand how it looks and feels from the participants' point of view*". During this process, each participant was interviewed alone to allow them the opportunity to truthfully explain how they experienced the change. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006:314) explain the purpose of this method of data collection is "*to contribute to a body of knowledge that is conceptual and theoretical and is based on the meanings that life experiences hold for the interviewees*".

The experiences and views of stakeholders regarding their expectations displayed emotions I hoped to capture and observe via the interviews. At present little is known about the changes that are experienced when a school's governance approach changes to a profit-driven governance approach. It appears that little attention has been paid to who in the governance structures are accountable for the educational environment in

such schools. I assumed every stakeholder experienced change differently and for that reason interviews included the management teams (principals and heads of departments), teachers and parents of the participating schools.

The interviews with the principals were aimed to collect data the key decision-making processes at management level. The interviews with heads of departments, as part of the school's management team, focused on management decisions and how they were communicated to the teachers and parents. The teachers and the parents are important stakeholders as they experienced the change and its impact first-hand. The number of years of teaching experience of the participants was not a criterion for this research. However, the position (post level) of the participant during the change in ownership was important.

The selection of these participants was again purposive (Silverman, 2000) because they were the ones most likely to have the information required to answer the research questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The members of the school's management team were selected based on their involvement during the change and not on their seniority. What was important was that they should have experienced the change as a member of the management team of the school.

The parents who participated were selected randomly. I asked for names of parents who were part of the school before and after the change. These parents were contacted and only those who were available to participate in the interview were used. Once again, the only deciding criterion was that they should have experienced the change. Throughout the interview process the purpose of the research was mentioned to the participants and I explained to them that I wanted to understand aspects of profit-driven companies' investments and governance approach in their schools. The change in governance and its contribution towards quality education was one of the points of discussion.

4.4.2 Existing literature and a conference

The value of existing literature can never be taken out of current research. Different articles place emphasis on a variety of information regarding independent schools. For example, one journal article written by Saayman (1991) has the title: “*Who owns the schools will own Africa*”. The detail in the article will not be discussed here but just by looking at the title of the article, it is evident that the article argues that power over schools will indirectly influence the power in a country. Maile (2002) discusses the accountability of school governors and how the restructuring and transformation of school governance were considered problematic aspects of the reforms of the South African education system after 1994. In independent schools, where the input and influence of the government is not as prominent as in public schools, I assume that transformation to profit-driven governance approaches could be problematic when profit-driven companies become more prominent in the South African schooling system

I attended a conference “*Strategic Leadership of Independent Schools*” held by the South Africa Teachers' Union (SAOU) in July 2020 where the focus was on assisting those in school leadership positions, of independent schools, including governors, in their leadership role. Deacon (2019) discussed the legal framework that applies to education and emphasised the fact that independent schools still need to comply with the legal aspects pertaining to education in South Africa. Beckmann (2019) also focused on the importance of the school, including independent schools, as an extension of the community. He referred to school policies with the emphasis on language, religion and admission. It was significant to note the link between SASA (RSA, 1996b) and school policies in all South African schools. However, the question of the influence of profit-driven companies on education was not discussed.

4.4.3 Data collection procedures

The two participating schools were bought by different companies, both who are listed on the JSE. Principals were the first category of stakeholders to be contacted and the research was explained to them. They also provided the names of the senior management team, teachers and parents who had been at the school for longer than five years and experienced the change in ownership. The fact that the schools included both primary and secondary learners, made it possible to interview parents who were part of the school prior to the change in ownership. Some parents become familiar with the not-for-profit governance approach while their children were still in a primary school. At the time of the interviews their children were already in the secondary school.

Interviews were scheduled in 60-minute sessions at a venue or location of the participants' choice. The time at which an interview was held was dictated by the availability of the stakeholders. Interviews were not strictly limited to the 60-minute schedule but could be longer and depended on the individual participants and how much feedback they provided. Each of the interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants.

Analysing and comparing both the original and the newly implemented mission and vision statements of the participating schools provided to determine whether and how they differed from the newly implemented mission and vision statements provided more information concerning the change of focus in the governance approach of a profit-driven school. The marketing brochures of the participating schools (as viewed on the internet) and other advertisements or marketing material also helped the researcher in the understanding of the focus, mission and vision of the school.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

4.5.1 Analysis of interview data

Analysis and interpretation of data is a very important part of any research. Charlesworth and Foëx (2016) remind all researchers that data does not have the ability to speak for itself, and that the researcher is the instrument stimulating actions for the data to have a specific meaning. To make meaning of data is a manual process. Qualitative data analysis is usually based on an interpretative philosophy that is aimed at examining the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2012) explain that the researcher must break the 'whole' down into individual components when he or she analyses data. Inductive processes are used mostly in qualitative studies, where the assumptions of hypothesis come from the data. (Charlesworth & Foëx, 2016). In order to be able to formulate a hypothesis, the research needs to be completed first. Inductive analysis allows research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant categories inherent in raw data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). In this study, inductive analysis was used because the findings emerged from the data analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006) compiled a guide which can be used in the analysis process of qualitative data. This guide is divided into six steps. First the researcher needs to become familiar with the data. When the data has been collected and transcribed, the researcher needs to understand the data. When the researcher is familiar with the data, he or she may start with step two and that is to generate codes. Creswell (2015: 156) describes the process of coding as *"the process of analysing qualitative text data by taking them apart to see what they yield before putting the data back together in a meaningful way"*. Data needs to be coded and marked. After the coding of data, categories will start to appear from the codes, which is step three. Again, the researcher needs to become familiar with the codes and be able to identify them. Step four would be to review these categories and make sure that each category has been correctly identified and defined. The last step will be the write-up of these categories

The data was analysed using thematic analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). This meant that individual aspects of the data were grouped together under categories that emerged as I read and re-read the data after first transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews into texts (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). It also meant I had to analyse the data after the interviews and identify the specific categories emerging from it as they related to the research question and sub-questions which needed to be answered. Thematic analysis after a saturation point had been reached in the data collection process enabled the researcher to ensure that the amount and depth of data analysis reached a saturation point before the interpretation process started (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Meaningful segments of the data were identified; these segments were coded; the codes were then categorised; the categories were then organised as categories and/or themes originating from the data. The questions were asked in such a way as to get enough information to be able to link stakeholders' views to corporate governance.

Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2010) explained that the non-verbal communication also adds deeper meaning for the interviewer and interviewee. Interpretation of this non-verbal communication contributes to the fact that interviews can be time-consuming. LeCompte (2000:147) explains as follows how the different elements of data analysis feed one another:

Thinking of analysis as assembling a jigsaw puzzle is helpful. Jigsaw puzzles cut up a whole picture into fragments. Van Gogh's painting, 'Crows Over a Wheatfield', has a golden wheat field at the bottom, above is sky, ranging from light blue near the wheat field to nearly black at the top. Stylised crows fly through the darkening sky. To assemble a jigsaw puzzle of this painting, people might:

- *Put all the similar pieces (all the edges, or the blue-sky pieces, or those that might be parts of the wheat field in piles, then*
- *Assemble the sky chunks, the wheat field chunks, and the outside borders and finally,*

- *Identify the linking pieces so that the big chunks can be tied together into a coherent facsimile of the painting.*

In a sense the interview questions facilitate the provision of data which can be used to construct categories which can be seen as main points of the researcher's answers to the research questions. The interview questions do not only organise and summarise the data, but they also organise the data in the sense that participants can only provide responses to the questions that are put to them. However, if the questions are housed appropriately, the interview questions will enable the researcher to formulate his or her response to the research question. Interview questions do not determine the categories when data is analysed. The interview questions only organise and summarise the data (Clarke & Braun, 2013). However, the interview questions gave me an opportunity to put questions to which the participants could respond and provide information that helped me to construct answers or conclusions to the research questions.

4.5.2 Analysis of document data

Documents like advertisements and the websites of the schools and the mission and vision statements of the schools were used to gain a deeper understanding of their mission and vision as a not-for-profit school and to determine whether or not they stood for the same values once they become schools with a profit-driven governance approach. To further strengthen this data, extant research papers were used, and conferences were attended to better comprehend the most important aspects of leadership in schools are. An article by Highham (2014) entitled “*Who owns our schools?*”, for example enabled me to link the concerns that participating parents have with the leadership roles of school governors.

LeCompte’s metaphor of the analysing process puts emphasis on the fact that all the processes in the research need to link to each other to ensure that the correct interpretation takes place from the data collected. Qualitative data analysis includes the

human factor, interest, and interpretation. From the process of data collection until interpretation, the researcher needs to be sure of possible sources of bias and ensure that it is prevented from influencing the analysis process (LeCompte, 2000).

4.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

To assure the credibility of qualitative research, the analysis of data is particularly important. With the use of a multiple case study design, I compared the experiences of different participants regarding the change in governance approach at their schools and explored the contrasts in the interpretation of their views and experiences. Different methods of data analysis relating to qualitative studies can be used and there is not a golden rule regarding the way of engagement with the data (Saldana & Omasta, 2018). However, this makes the importance of rigorous or robust quality assurance measures more important. Raskind, Shelton, Comeau *et al* (2019:20) explains as follows:

While the diversity and flexibility of methods for analysis may put the qualitative researcher in a more innovative position than their quantitative counterparts, it also makes rigorous application and transparent reporting even more important

The practical aspects of qualitative analysis need to be applied properly to assure the correct focus point and the prevention of assumptions. Patterns or categories need to be identified within qualitative data. The interview questions gave the researcher the opportunity to formulate further questions to which the participants could respond and provide additional information that could aid in constructing answers to or coming to conclusions regarding research questions. The ideal is that in an interview the researcher should make sure that he or she gets full access to the full depth of knowledge/data that the participants can provide. All the interviews together should provide a saturation point which means that the research reaches a point where additional interviews produce no new information.

Trustworthiness of data is especially important to ensure credibility of the findings. For this reason, the transcriptions of the interviews and the data analysis by coding and thematic analysis were done by me. Some interviews were full of emotion and the ability to capture these emotions was one of the many advantages of the transcribing and analysing the data myself and not relying on technology to differentiate between different codes, but to be able to pay attention to the detail of the different experiences. This was extended to the process of data interpretation, because, as explained by Willig (2017:278)

[t]he purpose of evaluating an interpretation is not to establish its absolute truth. Instead, evaluating an interpretation involves scrutiny of the balance between bottom-up (or participant-led) and top-down (or researcher-led) contributions to the meanings contained in the interpretation. The scrutiny of the balance should be followed by a reflection on the extent to which this balance is congruent with the researcher's declared approach to interpretation

The trustworthiness of qualitative research is important for the overarching reason that research should be trustworthy and credible to be acceptable as valuable work in the research enterprise. Before the interviews, I had to know how to explain and elaborate on questions without influencing the participants. During the interviews, there were a few times that I had to ask the participant to explain what they meant when making a specific statement. At times I was required to repeat some of the statements to get confirmation from the participant that I interpreted some of statements or explanations correctly.

Creswell (2014) explains that in qualitative research, trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility are especially important concepts. Multiple approaches could contribute to the accuracy of findings and may convince readers of the credibility of the research. Credibility needs to be ensured by using different methods throughout the research so that the results or conclusions the research reaches at the end will be trusted information (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Authenticity is very important in increasing the credibility of

the study. The term “*soundness*” is used to describe the authenticity of research by referring to data sources (Eisenhardt, 2006:26). For this reason, fieldwork needs to be described in detail to assure the readers that the fieldwork took place as explained (Eisenhardt, 2006).

Triangulation is also a method/technique used to add to the credibility of any study by getting access to and using different kinds of data collection (Yin, 2016). Creswell (2014) proposes, among other things, the following two strategies to assure the trustworthiness of qualitative research: the comparison of data from different sources (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014) which was accomplished in this research by comparing data from different participants (principals, senior management team members, teachers, and parents and by analysing documents) and member checking.

Methodological triangulation includes the use of different methods of data collection such as semi-structured interviews and by asking the participants if what the researcher understood, is what they meant to convey (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). As mentioned before, the stakeholders each have a different interest in the governance of the school and were sampled for this reason. Obtaining the views of different people at different levels in the school environment contributed to the best possible overall understanding of the phenomenon that was investigated. It was important to ensure that every stakeholder’s view is included in the overall result. The point of departure was to use different datasets that correspond with one another, to achieve the possibility that the data was credible and trustworthy.

Member checking entails the confirmation of the accuracy of the transcriptions and findings by providing each participant with the opportunity to verify his or her own contribution to the data. After the interviews were transcribed, the participants were contacted to confirm the accuracy of the transcriptions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

During interviews, all participants were told that they could view the transcriptions before the data analysis would take place and that they could make additions if they wished to do so.

Some of the questions linked the different interview protocols to one another to assure that the data gained from the interviews was interpreted correctly contributed to the transparency of the data. All the data gathered during the research, as well as recordings of the interviews, will be kept as part of the audit trail of the research. For this research to be regarded as credible study and trustworthy, I needed to show clearly when and how decisions were made. If another researcher can follow it, it can be regarded as auditable (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017).

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before any potential participants were approached, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Pretoria. It was made clear that the main purpose of the research was not to change the circumstances of stakeholders at the schools who took part in the research but to find out how participants experienced the change in governance.

Once the ethical clearance was obtained, permission to conduct the research was sought from the two individual schools that were purposively sampled for the study, as well as from the independent education groups to which they belong. After permission was granted by the schools and the education groups, individual participants were approached and requested to give voluntary informed consent for their participation (Williams, Tutty & Grinnell, 1995).

The letter to each participant detailed the scope and aims of the study, as well as what each participant would be required to do as part of their participation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Participants were informed of their right to withdraw their permission at any stage of the study and that their own and the identity of their school would be kept anonymous at all stages of the study, as well as in reporting the results of the study (Williams *et al.*, 1995). The content of their responses would also be kept confidential, and no respondents would be intentionally harmed by the research. Each participant had to sign a consent form. To protect the identity and privacy of schools and the governors of the schools, the organisation who bought the school was not mentioned.

4.8 CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

In this chapter I explained that this was a qualitative study in which I used a multiple case study design. The research sites and the individual participants were sampled in a convenient and purposive manner. I discussed the data collection strategies and explained how I analysed the data. When conducting a qualitative study, trustworthiness of the data and credibility of the findings are especially important aspects of a study. During the data collection process, I realized how passionate educators are about their profession and the learners in their classes. In Chapter 5, I present the data and discuss my findings.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Mike Schmoker, a former school administrator, English teacher and football coach said the following: *“Things get done only if the data we gather can inform and inspire those in a position to make a difference”* (Schmoker, 1996:01). Stakeholders have a specific expectation when they enrol their children in an independent school. When the governance changes from a not-for-profit governance approach to a profit-driven governance approach the expectations of the stakeholders as well as the governors could change. This investment includes more than only being a profit-driven business. When they invest in an independent educational institution, the stakeholders expect quality education, well-developed facilities, highly qualified teachers, and an education experience better than in public schools.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, a qualitative approach was used to collect data. One of the reasons for this approach was explained in paragraph 4.3.2: *“... qualitative methods are used to answer questions about the experience”* of stakeholders (Teherani, *et al.*, 2015: 669). In the process of trying to understand the views and experiences of stakeholders of these changes, the most effective way to select participants for this research was through employing a purposive or non-probability sampling. One of the criteria for the selection of stakeholder participants was that they had to have been part of the process of changing from a not-for-profit governance approach to a profit-driven governance approach.

The King III Report (Institute of Directors, 2009) presents certain characteristics of good governance that could indicate how well these organisations govern the schools from a corporate governance point of view. These characteristics include responsibility,

accountability, fairness, transparency and trustworthiness and these formed the conceptual framework that was used to link the data collected in the semi-structured interviews. During the semi-structured interviews, questions were asked in a way that could lead to gathering as much information as possible to answer the research questions and to understand the experience of the different stakeholders from their point of view.

In this chapter the data is presented according to the different categories that emerged from the data analysis and in line with the characteristics of good governance as stipulated in the King III report (Institute of Directors, 2009). In Chapter 4 paragraph 4.3.2 the process of data analysis in the form of thematic analysis was explained in detail. Thematic analysis after a saturation point had been reached in the data collection process enabled me to ensure that the amount and depth of data analysis reached a saturation point before the interpretation process started (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014). When the categories were identified, it was clear that there was a definite connection between the data and the characteristics of good governance.

In Figure 5.1, the hierarchical structure within which stakeholders and participants function in their organisations (schools) is depicted. The purpose of the structure is to indicate the communication lines from the governors to all the stakeholders. The focus of this research was specifically on the views and experiences of stakeholders after the change in ownership. To better understand how the participants viewed the change in ownership, different questions were asked to different stakeholders to understand how communication was shared with them and especially how the teachers were involved in the decision-making processes in the school.

The main question posed in this research was: What are the views of stakeholders in formerly independent not-for-profit schools after a change of ownership to a listed company? The following sub-questions were intended to obtain from different angles,

information from the different stakeholders that could enable me to provide answers to the main question:

- How do stakeholders experience the governors' responsibility after the change in ownership?
- How do stakeholders experience accountability by the governors after a change in ownership?
- How do stakeholders experience the consideration of their legitimate interests in, and expectations of the school as an entity, after a change in ownership?
- How do stakeholders experience transparency in decision-making after a change in ownership?
- How do stakeholders describe the changes in the ethos and culture of the school after a change of ownership?

The analysis of the data emerging from these secondary questions led to the identification of the categories that are explained in greater detail in paragraph 5.4. The categories represent a grouping together of the categorised experiences and views of stakeholders. During the analysis, categories were also identified that were used to reflect participants' views better. The views and experiences of the stakeholders were analysed according to their positions in these organisations. The approach that was used to construct the views and experiences of the different stakeholders was a multiple case study that is explained in the next paragraph.

5.2 MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

A multiple case study was used because participants from different schools participated in the research within their own context; hence their experiences of a change of ownership differed. Gustafsson (2017) explains that if your research includes different cases to compare to build a better understanding of the phenomenon, you will need to conduct a multiple case study

Baxter and Jack (2008) argue that a multiple case study could cause difficulties regarding financial implications and could be time-consuming, but that it could also contribute to stronger and more reliable evidence in research. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) argue that a multiple case study could contribute to a more convincing theory. Both these stakeholders from the different schools experienced a change in ownership, but from different owners. The fact could help build a better theory of their experiences. For this reason, the data analysis shows how these multiple case studies were used to analyse the views of stakeholders from their different contexts. Therefore, each participating school, and the profiles of the individual participants are also presented. The constructivist paradigm enabled me to develop a better understanding of how the stakeholders viewed the change in school ownership. In the next paragraph, the data analysis process will be discussed in detail.

5.3 DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

The interviews were recorded, and notes were taken during the interviews to ensure the data was comprehensively captured. After the interview process had been completed and all the information had been collected, all the interviews were transcribed. The participants' involvement with the governors is illustrated in Figure 5.1. The figure shows which stakeholders had direct contact with governors and who not in the different schools. In the data analysis the data was also organised according to the specific stakeholders on the same level of communication. What should be noticed is the line of communication between the governors and the rest of the stakeholders. The broken line illustrates the lack of communication between the profit-driven governors and the parents who, although they are important stakeholders, do not have a direct line of communication with the profit-driven governors even though they are actually the clients. Apart from the principals no other stakeholders have direct communication with the governors. The data was also organised according to the categories of stakeholders and their roles in their respective schools which also included the pathway of communication from the governors to the stakeholders in the profit-driven school.

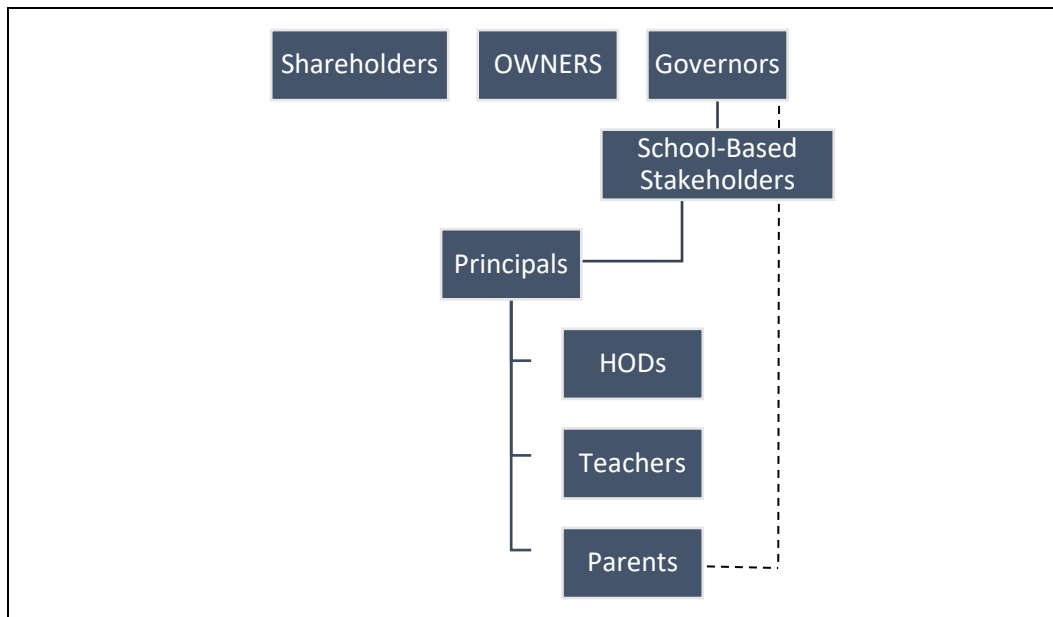


Figure 5.1: Structure in which stakeholders function in participating schools

First, the Principal of School A (P-A) was interviewed and then the Principal of School B (P-B) followed by the Head of Department (HD-1A) from School A and the Head of Department of School B (HD-1B). This method of numbering and coding was used throughout the data collection and data analysis process. The data was organized according to the participating schools and the role of each participant in the specific schools. Only the stakeholders from within the school context were interviewed to understand their view of the change in ownership in the school itself. The shareholders, governors and owners were not involved in this research because they are not directly involved in the educational processes and experiences of the school,

Both schools are situated in the Gauteng Province. Both these participating schools catered for learners from Grade 1 through to Grade 12. School B is smaller than School A and for that reason participants from the primary school as well as the high school were selected. The size of School A contributed to the fact that only participants from the high school were selected for interviews. The reason was to specifically determine if a corporate governance structure would govern a school in the same way or a better way

than a not-for-profit governance approach. Both the participating school's new owners (JSE-listed companies) bought other schools as well, but for this study, these two schools were sampled. To protect the identity of the schools and the stakeholder participants from the participating schools, no names were disclosed, and participants were assigned codes as indicated in Table 5.1. Two principals were interviewed, one from each school. A total of five heads of department were interviewed. From School A three heads of department participated and two participated from School B. Four teachers were interviewed at both schools and four parents from School A and three from School B. Therefore, there were a total of twenty-two participants, twelve from School A and ten from School B.

Table 5.1 Allocation of codes to participants

	School A	School B
Principals	Principal P-A	Principal P-B
Heads of Department	HD-1A HD-2A HD-3A	HD-1B HD-2B
Teachers	T-1A T-2A T-3A T-4A	T-1B T-2B T-3B T-4B
Parents	Pa -1A Pa-2A Pa-3A Pa-4A	Pa-1B Pa-2B Pa-3B

Figure 5.2 below shows the profiles of the participants.

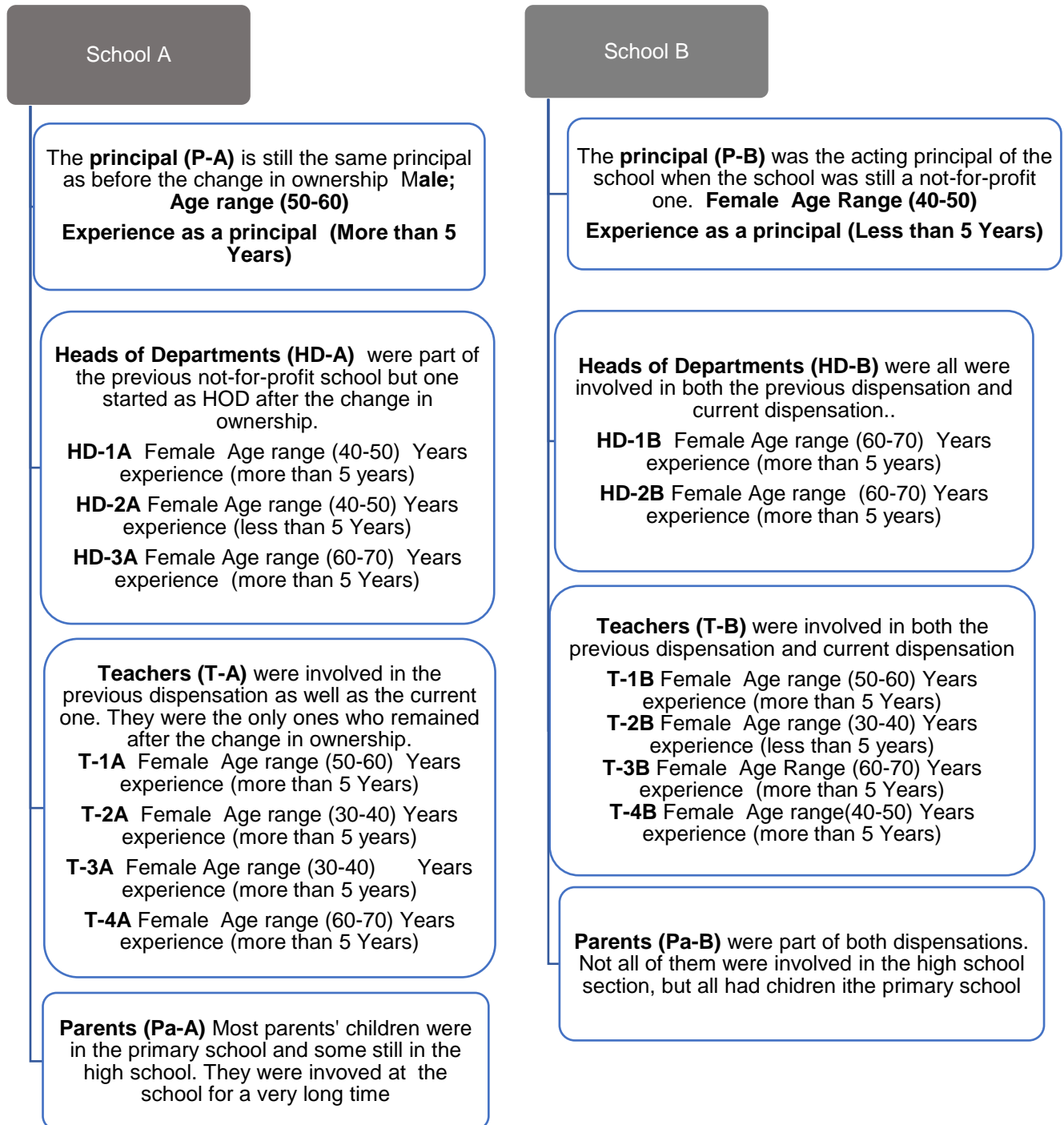


Figure 5.2: Profiles of the Participants

There are different methods used for transcription, but I transcribed the interviews myself to immediately immerse myself in the data. First, the interviews of the principals were transcribed, followed by those of the heads of departments, the teachers, and the parents. The researcher also analysed the data in this order to first develop insight into the experiences of the highest level of the organisational hierarchy in the two participating schools. This does not mean that the parents are the lowest level of stakeholders, because they and their children are the clients and customers and therefore should be regarded as valued stakeholders, particularly at profit-driven schools.

The rationale of this data analysis strategy was to scaffold the experiences of the participants according to their contextual experiences with the governors of their respective schools. It was clear from the outset that the viewpoints of the different categories of stakeholders varied from one another. Variations also occurred between the participating schools.

5.4. GENERATING CATEGORIES

The transcripts were coded by using different colours. After the coding, these codes were categorised and then from those themes were identified. Categories linked to the conceptual framework were as follows:

- Category 1: Responsibilities of governors
- Category 2: Accountability
- Category 3: Fairness
- Category 4: Trustworthiness of governors

During the data analysis process categories were identified. These categories were not anticipated before the data analysis process started but were linked to the conceptual framework to be able to evaluate the used of corporate governance in independent schools. To better understand how these categories fit under the themes, each category and theme were explained. Because of the research focused on the views of stakeholders, it is important to explain that these categories cannot stand in isolation from one another. In each of these categories there are overlaps. In the Venn Diagram (Figure 5.3 below), the relationship between the different categories and themes, the overlapping of these categories and themes are illustrated, followed by an explanation and a diagram of the categories and themes in Figure 5.4.

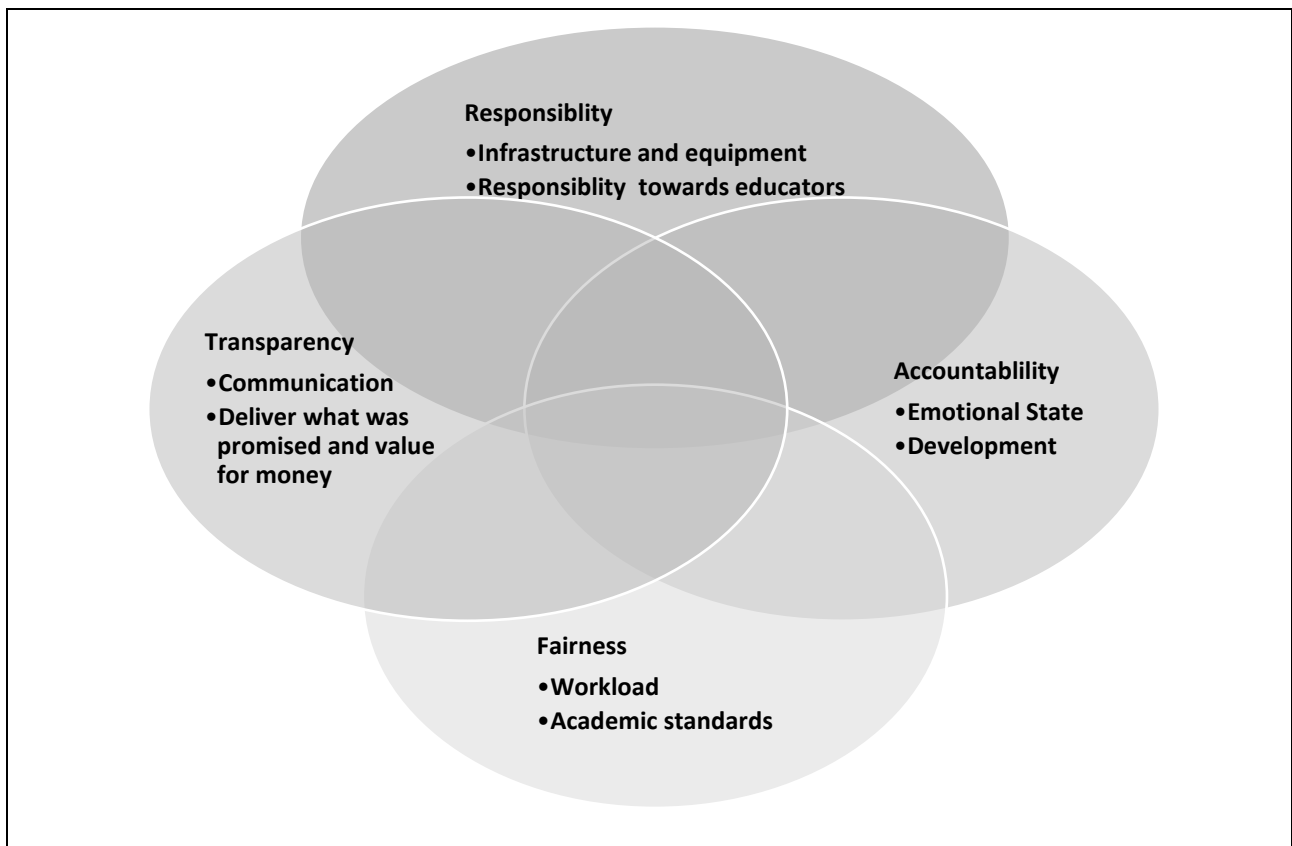


Figure 5.3: Venn Diagram of the Interconnectedness of the Different Categories and Themes

Paragraphs 5.4.1 to 5.4.4 below present an interpretation of the information provided in chapter 3 (where references are acknowledged). The paragraphs also link the information to the themes identified from the literature.

5.4.1 Responsibility of governors.

Governors need to take up their responsibility to provide whatever is needed for the school to be able to function as an independent school (the reason for starting an independent school in the first place). One of the categories was the responsibility to provide buildings and equipment to allow the teachers and learners to receive high quality education. Theme 2 included the responsibility towards the other stakeholders including the managers of the school, the teachers and parents. This responsibility towards the other stakeholders included the responsibility of the governors to include the parents in decision making as stipulated for public schools in Section 16(1) of SASA (RSA, 1996b). These governing bodies need to carry out the provisions of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a), which is the supreme law of the country. A public school has the legal status as a juristic person as stipulated in section 15 of SASA (RSA, 1996b).

5.4.2 Accountability.

One can argue that if the governors take up their responsibility to provide buildings and equipment for the school and accept their responsibility towards their school's stakeholders, they will include them in the decision-making of the school. The governors can also be held accountable in terms of the emotional state of their school's stakeholders and develop them. The Institute for Government in the United Kingdom explains why accountability is so important for good governance (www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk):

Strong accountability matters. When it works, it benefits everyone. Accountability is a part of good governance and can increase the trustworthiness and legitimacy of the state [in the context of this study, profit-driven corporate companies] in the eyes of the stakeholders.

If the governors are committing to their responsibilities to provide what is needed to all stakeholders involved, they need to be accountable for those responsibilities. This means they give an account of how they fulfilled or executed the responsibility which they accepted when they bought the school. It is trite knowledge that, if you accept responsibility, you are accountable for how these responsibilities are met. When the organisation bought the school, they took up the responsibility to maintain and develop the schools' facilities, to provide quality education, to employ qualified teachers, to reduce class sizes to assure individual attention to learners and to provide the necessary resources needed. The governors should therefore be held accountable for all these responsibilities.

5.4.3 Fairness

Fairness could be linked to the biblical reference to do to others what you would like them to do to you. Questions then arise as to whether the governors of any independent school would enrol their own children in their schools and how they would treat the staff members of their schools with fairness. Fairness toward the stakeholders can also overlap with their emotional state. For example, if the workload of especially the teachers is too heavy, it could lead to them struggling emotionally because they cannot cope with the workload, leading to burnout. Fairness in terms of the academic standards can also overlap with the emotional wellbeing of the educators and learners if the governors allow too many learners to enrol in the school. This will result in a drop in academic standards as well as a bigger workload for teachers and will cause an emotional struggle. If parents change their households in such a way to be able to afford to enrol their children in expensive

independent schools, it will just be fair towards both the parents and learners that these schools provide the best possible education. In the end, learners will be disadvantaged if the school does not provide the quality of education that is expected.

5.4.4. Trustworthiness of governors

Trustworthiness of governors overlaps with all the above as portrayed in the Venn Diagram in Figure 5.3. These stakeholders, especially the parents, sacrifice other luxuries or necessities to be able to enrol their children in an independent school. The assumption would be that they trust the school and teachers to provide the best possible education to their children. If the governors show transparency in the way they govern their school, it is more likely that stakeholders will trust them and support whatever they do.

Figure 5.4 provides a structured outline of the categories and themes. As discussed earlier, some of these themes overlap with one another, but for the structure of the analysis and to be able to develop an informed understanding of the data, the discussion was structured as outlined below.

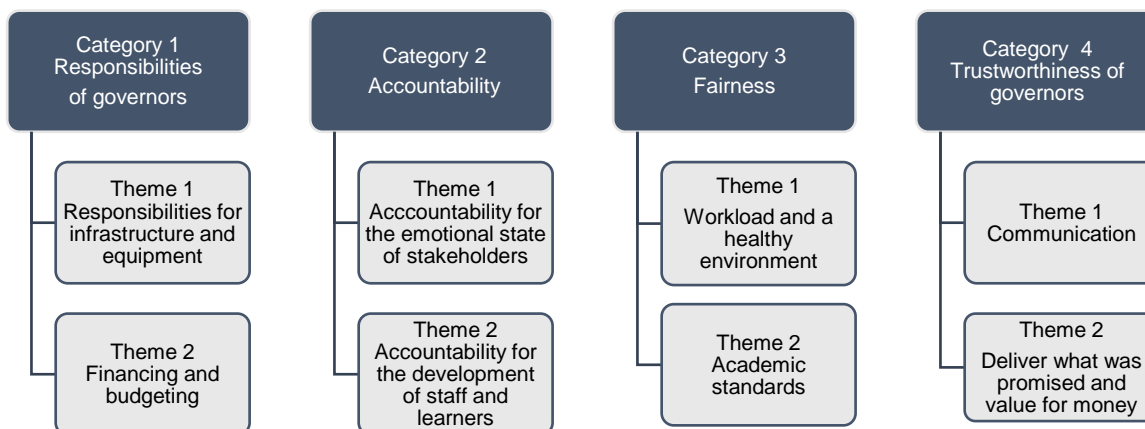


Figure 5.4: Categories and Themes

5.5 CATEGORIES

5.5.1 Category 1: Responsibilities of governors

As mentioned in the literature review in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.1 the education system in South Africa changed after 1994 to become more inclusive. The Department of Education articulated their vision in 1996 as follows:

Our vision is for a South Africa in which all people have equal access to lifelong education and training opportunities which will contribute towards improving the quality of life and build a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society. (RSA, 2001).

With this in mind, the expectation would be that the governors of independent schools as part of South Africa and subject to the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) and Sections 45 – 50 (Chapter 5) of SASA (RSA, 1996b) would govern those schools with the same vision. McCormick, Barnett and Alavi (2006) explain that the responsibilities of the school governors which include their legal and moral obligations towards their schools' stakeholders. Moral obligations would include maintaining high quality education as one of the main goals of independent education. McCrone, Southcott and George (2011) also mention that the governors' relationship with the teachers and principals needs to be one. There must be a sound understanding of and knowledge about the roles of governors and school management structures in serving the needs of the different stakeholders of the school. Only if a sound trust relationship is formed, will the school and/or the company succeed in establishing a good working relationship between the different stakeholders. This working relationship will include the support of parents to the management of the school, because they decided to enrol their children in an independent school and have specific expectations.

During the interviews on the expectations of the stakeholders and the role of the governors in the not-for-profit schools, stakeholders indicated that the governors focused only on the academic standards, whereas for the participants it was particularly important to build positive relationships with the parents. Principal P-B said the following:

The previous governors had a history that they focused on the academic aspects of schools and built a relationship with the parents.

Parents experienced that the not-for-profit governors (previous owners – a church) accepted responsibility for more than just the academic wellbeing of the school and were concerned about the needs of the whole family, were involved in each family and provided support to the family. Parent Pa-B1 said the following:

They looked after the whole family. Each class had a parent representative, and together with the teacher, we supported the family. The governors knew the family and supported when things were tough. Now no one cares.

Parents pay a high premium for individual attention from the educators to their children. If they feel that the governors do not care about them and their children, it could lead to a lack of trust. However, a contrasting view was expressed by one of the HODs from School A (HD-A1) who complained about the involvement of the previous governance functionaries in the academics of the school and said that they controlled the academic programme of the school from the church's side, without having an educational background.

I am glad we changed; you can't have the people of the church tell me how to run my class. The church had a dream and whatever we do, it had to be in line with the churches.

This HOD experienced the previous governance as being more prescriptive with too much church and parent involvement. This could indicate that the church (previous owner) had a significant influence on the academic programme of the school and impacted the teachers more than on the parents and learners. None of the participants mentioned that they expected the governors to regulate the quality of education. However, parent participants felt that the governors had to involve them more in the decision-making processes. All the participants expected the governors to take up their responsibility to govern and communicate. This also included looking after the teachers and supporting them to teach the learners.

The expectations of parents were not only related to quality teaching and learning, but also related to the relationships between them as parents, their children and the educators and managers of the school. The first two themes discussed below addresses the participants' views pertaining to the governors' responsibility for development and maintenance of the infrastructure of the schools and the responsibility of the governors towards the educators, learners and parents.

5.5.1.1 Theme 1: Responsibility for infrastructure and equipment

One of the advantages of independent schools that emerged in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.3.2, is that they alleviate the shortage of infrastructure and the high teacher-to-learner ratio in public schools (Jordaan, 2019). If the teacher-to-learner ratios were lowered, this could help governors execute their responsibility to provide good infrastructure and support to teachers and learners. During the interviews one of the HODs (HD-B1) mentioned that she perceived the responsibility of HODs as follows:

We are responsible for the day to day running of the school like the academics and the sports, but I feel they [the governors – own insertion] have a responsibility towards us to support us financially, which at the current moment is not really happening.

HD-B3 said:

I think that they are supposed to see that schooling takes place, that teaching takes place in classes and that the environment is a safe environment and an environment to be proud of.

The governors of the for-profit schools do not seem to have taken up their responsibility. If the governors run the school as a business, the expectation would be that they provide financial support to the managers. The participants expressed general disappointment in the amount of money the governors of the profit-driven company invested in the buildings and other infrastructure of the school. The not-for-profit governors invested more and looked after the terrain and infrastructure better to project the image of an independent school.

At this stage, when we were part of the not-for-profit company, it was really the case that they looked after the buildings and after the terrain and everything. But at this stage, nothing happens. It really looks like a school in an extremely poor community and not like an independent school (HD-B3).

To some participants, even poor government schools look better than this profit-driven independent school. It seems as if there was a general expectation among the participants that, after the change in ownership, facilities would be improved, and better equipment would be provided. One could argue that from a business perspective, the new governors would accept the responsibility to improve the facilities and provide equipment to allow the business to function successfully. This confirms Mupunga's (2019:01) argument (Chapter 2, paragraph 2.5.3.) that “[o]nce a school is built in a good location and the cost structure is right, it becomes a case of bums on seats”.

However, the question can be asked whether bums on seats the most important indication of the success of the business (school) after the building is has been built. When parents know they pay a premium for education, the assumption can be made that they will also expect that the aesthetic look of the school, the quality of equipment, as well as educational standards would be in line with the cost. The parent participants do not perceive that their expectations in this regard are met and that they are nor receiving what they are paying.

Larger class size

A teacher from School A (T-A1) mentioned that the new profit-driven governors expected them to increase their teacher-to-learner ratio.

I think they know the numbers in our classes because now I am teaching a lot more and I feel personally, in the position that I am now, they misuse me because I don't have a lot of off periods. I will have two off per week, which is not enough. I think I am overloaded a bit now, in comparison with the previous set-up where I had enough time during the day to go and have some tea and have a break.

This teacher believed quite correctly that if the teacher-to-learner ratios were lowered, this could help governors execute their responsibility to provide good infrastructure and support to teachers and learners.

Another teacher from School A (T-A2) said:

Meaning, it wasn't bums-on-seats kind of driven. If you had a smaller group, it was fine, now it is you must have a bigger class. If we lose learners, they need to be replaced immediately.

The governors of the profit-driven school expect the teachers to provide the same kind of experience and quality education with fewer staff members and more learners in each class. One teacher from School B (T-A3) expressed a similar view.

I would like to say even if I teach one and I make a difference in that one's life, that could be cool, but with the profit-driven school it comes down to man hours. It could be used differently, so I suppose from an economic point of view it does not affect the bottom line

Quality education

Now money seems to be the only thing that matters, and the teachers and parents question the quality of education being provided under the profit-driven governance approach. If teachers are continuously reminded that the number of learners enrolled in the school is particularly important (more information will be provided in paragraph 5.5.1.2), one would think that teachers would recommend their school as part of a 'word-of-mouth' marketing strategy. However, Teacher T-A3 said that these teachers do not experience quality education that they would feel proud to market. This was supported by Teacher T-B1 who stated:

I didn't realise, because I am not involved in high school, but it is just to get numbers and not about the quality of education. So that is why I would never recommend this school to anyone.

This is a very strong statement from someone who is a stakeholder at the school. This teacher was very emotional while she explained this statement. Her son was also enrolled in this School B and there was a time where he had to teach and help the other learners in his class because the teacher was not capable of teaching. After a year of struggling, she had to enrol her son in another province for him to complete his Grade 12 year.

The rhetorical question could be asked whether the governors know what is happening in the classrooms. It seems that the teacher-learner ratio increased after the change in ownership. This change contributed to more stress on the teachers and undermined the reasons why parents initially enrolled their children in the school. Teacher T-B1 mentioned that the quality of education was not important anymore, but numbers were more important and that she would not recommend the school to anyone. This could be very problematic if the Department of Basic Education is not involved in or concerned about the governance of independent schools. Numbers should not become more important than quality education. As discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.2.3, in terms of Section 29 (3) of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a), governors of independent schools need to take up their responsibility to “*maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public education institutions*”.

Parent Pa-A1 was also concerned about the increase in class sizes.

It was more on a personal level [under the previous dispensation – own insertion] I think the school having to accommodate more children, with discipline is a big, big problem. Teachers would walk out of the class because the class was disruptive, and nobody could do any work, so the teacher would go outside. I feel for the money that we pay; it was better when it was smaller

This parent tried to be positive, she admitted that her child does not receive the standard of teaching one would expect for the money she pays because there is no discipline in the classrooms. Parent Pa-A1 explained that, after the change in ownership, she did not feel that they received value for their money with the classes that became bigger and the problem of poor discipline. She did, however, mention that she believed that the education provided at the profit-driven school was still of a high quality like it was before the change in ownership. This is a contradiction: education could be of a high quality, but if the discipline in classes is poor, the assumption could be made that teaching and learning is

affected negatively. For a teacher to feel helpless enough to walk out of the class rather than facing a disciplinary problem could indicate that teachers do not receive the necessary support from the governors. This could be indicative that the governors do not know what is going on in the classes, which could contribute to the schools not providing what they promised parents in their advertisements and during open days. If the governors are mainly interested in the number of learners in the class, the profit-driven approach could be questioned.

Equipment

The provision of quality infrastructure and appropriate equipment and resources were mentioned. Initially, teacher T-B3 did not want to take part in the interviews. She explained that these past few years were exceedingly difficult for her, and her disappointment and emotions were too high. After I had explained the ethical considerations and the purpose of the research, she did take part in the interview, but she was very emotional, and it was revealing to see that this passionate teacher had to deal with a shortage in textbooks and other disappointments regarding the school terrain. For example, the governors did not want to provide a sandpit for the pre-primary learners. Teacher T-B3 said:

If I think about the resources of the school. They are not putting anything into the school. There is no support from their side. We are even struggling to get textbooks from them.

This is a critical accusation against this governance. A struggle to get textbooks does not need to happen in any school and especially not in an independent school. When the profit-driven company bought the school, they also took up the responsibility to provide for the needs of the learners. This is a basic parental expectation and an especially important responsibility that the governors need to assume. Parent Pa-A2 why they, as parents, are expected to send extra equipment to the school:

Are there enough beakers in the lab for your child to be able to do the experiments? Are there enough cricket bats to play cricket, rugby balls to play rugby?

This parent experienced a shortage of equipment that was not expected at an independent school. This is a huge disappointment experienced by the parents after the change in ownership. Parents could ask with some justification why the equipment available at a school charging an independent-school-fee-premium needed to be part of their concerns. Parent Pa-A2 also referred to the fact that some public schools (with lower school fees) are run as if they are independent schools. In other words, some of the public schools provide enough of the required equipment and resources. This is more than can be said of what they experienced at the current profit-driven independent school.

I know of public schools which run like independent schools. It sounds terrible to say but we are paying a premium; so, we need a privilege of sorts, and we find it difficult when we get asked to bring an extra of this or that. So, it hits our pockets, and a lot of people can afford to send their children to a private school, without even blinking. We really must work hard to keep our kids in this school.

Parents need to go out of their way to be able to enrol their children in an independent school and having to pay an independent school's fees can affect an entire family. It seems that some parents have to work very hard and have less time to spend with their children to be able to afford the education offered by an independent school. According to Parent Pa-A2, they did not receive the quality for which they paid, despite having to sacrifice much of their happiness as a family. Parent Pa-A2 revealed how hard they (her husband and herself) needed to work to be able to send their children to an independent school and expressed their disappointment when the school could not provide all the equipment that their child needed in the class.

The above remarks by this parent could lead to questions regarding the planning and distribution of money in the budget. If the principal has the sole power to decide how the money in the budget needs to be distributed, the question arises whether he/she involve the management and teachers in the budgeting process. Parents of the participating schools do not have a say in the distribution of money, as is the case of public schools. This indicates that the governors and managers use an autocratic leadership style, also discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.2.2. It could therefore be argued that the profit-drive governors are not adhering to the constitutional values of openness and transparency.

The advantage for parents to enrol their children in an independent school could also be questioned. Parents, as stakeholders, expect transparent governance and to be informed about how their money is used to the benefit of their children. In Chapter 2 paragraph 2.2.4, I refer to Winkler and Yeo (2007) who argue that one of the important benefits of involving parents as governors is to provide them with opportunities to participate in the entire budgeting process so that they understand what they are paying for. Parents would like to know what is happening. They want to be involved in decisions regarding spending, the school fees, and the allocation of money in the budget. According to the data provided by the parents who participated in the study, they do not know what they are paying for and do not receive what they believe they are supposed to receive.

Participating teachers and parents from both School A and School B experienced a shortage of equipment in subjects where learners needed to do practical classes, despite the school fees having increased. Their perception was that the value for money decreased. Some teachers said that they thought the money went into the shareholders' accounts and that they did not reinvest in the school. This accentuates the fact that the participants suspected a misappropriation of money as well as ineffective management of the budget. Teacher T-B3 articulated this concern as follows:

They are in the stock market. They are using the extra money that they are receiving from the school to use on the stock market, and they need a certain

amount of money to stay there; so now they do not invest anything in the school. When the money is paid into the owners' accounts, we cannot get them to pay the camp venues. So, for them it is not about the school; it is about the money.

A lack of transparency is therefore leading to distrust in the governors. Parents would like to know that the governors will provide all the equipment and infrastructure because they are paying a fee for quality education. If the parents do not trust the governors with their money and their children, these independent schools will not function according to the expectations of good governance. Good governance creates trustworthiness. However, the data suggests that the participating stakeholders do not trust the governance functionaries and they do not feel that teaching and learning is the focus of this profit-driven governance dispensation. It seems as if the profit-driven governance is perceived as not accepting their responsibility of providing the appropriate infrastructure and equipment which is expected from an independent school.

5.5.1.2 Theme 2: Financing and budgeting

The expectations of the participating stakeholders regarding the governors' responsibility towards the educators, learners, and parents include the involvement of parents in the decision-making processes in the school. Parents need to be involved in the education of their children and in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.2 the involvement of parents in the governance of schools was discussed in detail. A change in South African education occurred when the main decisions in public schools, previously made by principals and inspectors, were devolved to the school governing bodies of which parents are the majority (Modisaotsile, 2012). This principle, it seems, is not applied in the participating profit-driven schools.

If parents participate in the governance of a school, transparency of decision-making is promoted. When a school changes from not-for-profit governance to profit-driven or corporate governance, the expectation is that the governors will show suitable respect to all the stakeholders (Gayathri, 2015). During the interviews, Parent Pa-A4 said that they had been involved at School A for fourteen years and, after experiencing the new governance dispensation for five years, the school still did not have their contact details right. After not receiving any communication from the school they had to send their details to the school several times. This specific participant experienced a lack of professionalism from the new governance dispensation and felt that it did not respect them as stakeholders. A situation like the one mentioned by parent Pa-A4 puts the communication and partnership between the stakeholders and the new governance model in a negative light it is evident that the profit-driven governors only showed interest in the stakeholders who did not pay their school fees. This attitude towards stakeholders demonstrates that the new profit-driven governors are only interested in the money.

Principal P-A said that he was responsible for everything from the finances to the emotional wellbeing of the staff and learners. As far as he was concerned, the governance structures trusted him to run the school. This suggests that the governors of the profit-driven school trust the principal to use the money that is allocated to the school in such a way that quality education can take place, while still making a profit. However, the ability of the principal to manage a budget could be questioned after teacher and parent participants experienced no investment from the governors' side in the infrastructure at the school and a shortage of equipment for quality teaching and learning, as discussed in theme 1 (paragraph 5.4.1.1). This is unfair pressure that the governors have put on the principal. Yet, nothing stops the principal from sharing the budget with the stakeholders and explaining why they cannot spend money on equipment or specific needs identified by the teachers. This pressure on the principal to show a profit could influence his decisions about how much money he allocates for teaching aids and how much for other needs. Principal P-A said:

They are only interested in the bottom line, and what the investors get out of it, so it has got to be a profit line. I must make sure that I don't exceed anything budget-wise. And if we do any fundraising and make any profit, it needs to go into the budget and into the profit line. Previously you could take that money and invest it in the school to develop it. Now it must go into the company.

One could ask why the schools need to take time fundraising and why they need to give the money to the governors. One could expect governors to take up their responsibility and provide the money needed for teaching and learning. Principal P-A experienced collaboration with principals from other schools in their company, but he never mentioned that the governors provided guidance and support regarding the budget. One must question the effectiveness of the budgeting process if principals have to rely on each other's support to plan their budgets without consulting the teachers who know what is needed in the classrooms. It would be more transparent and create more confidence in the system if teachers could be involved in the budgeting process to explain their needs in the classroom. Principal P-A explained: *"We have an excellent principal network. When we struggle with something, then we help one another."*

Budgeting flexibility

The principal of School B is not involved in the budgeting process: the governors controlled the budget and the money of the school. Principal P-B expressed his opinion that the budget was not open, and they are only informed about whether money is available or not:

I never saw the budget. There was never communication whatsoever about finances, except that the learners who are not paying, are not allowed to receive their reports, that kind of thing. So financial management changed

completely. Of course, the new company had a plan, but it was not an open plan as I was used to with the previous governors.

The expectation of the governors for the principal to manage a school without any input or knowledge of the budget seems to be unreasonable. The transparency and trustworthiness of the profit-driven governors at School B does not appear to be in accordance with the requirements of good corporate governance.

The principal from School A was clear that despite him being allowed draft his own budget, the governors were only interested in the bottom line. A contract between parents and the school (an example of which was not made available to me as the researcher) could include the prompt payment of school fee accounts. The school community is also supposed to show empathy and compassion and support parents during difficult times. In an independent school, the relationship between the governors and parents should be such that parents would be able to inform the school if they are struggling to pay the full school fees before it reaches the point of holding back report cards. This stringent policy regarding the payment of school fees is not conducive to the creation of harmony in the school community environment. Principal P-A explained as follows:

They are always just interested in the bottom line. If we move money around, it is up to us, up to a certain extent. We must make sure there is enough money for security, cleaners. So, I've got much more responsibility and freedom as well.

The principal of School A explained that he can move money around in the budget as long as if he shows a profit. From his explanation it seems as if he can allocate money to buy new equipment to make it easier for the teachers in the class. This, he said, he can only do “*up to a certain extent*” because he must still operate within the budget and the framework dictated by the governors.

A Head of Department (HD-A1) from School A felt that their responsibility as middle managers had increased with the new governance model because there is now less interference in the teaching and learning activities of the school:

I think the company gave us more responsibility to run the school the way we want to if I can say so. When we were part of the not-for-profit school, it was like we had regular meetings about stuff, but it was like the new governance had expertise in the different fields compared to the previous church school. You can't have people in the church telling you how to run your class. I feel the new company is not as prescriptive.

Although the majority of the participating HODs were generally negative towards the profit-driven dispensation, HOD HD-A1 was positive and relieved that they did not need to answer to the “church people” anymore who HD-A1 perceived as placing too much emphasis on religion instead of the curriculum. HD-A1 experienced the previous owners as too prescriptive in what they had to teach in class, how they had to approach their classes and those meetings were not focused on the educational aspects in the school. HD-A1 also mentioned that the church told you how to manage their classes. This could cause problems if people who were not educators were too prescriptive and too involved in classroom matters.

HD-A2 felt that everyone in the school experienced a shift in responsibility after the change to profit-driven ownership. She explained that the profit-driven company had specialists in different fields like human resources and finances. However, there was now less support for the wellbeing of learners.

You now have the professional specialist in the field to be able to assist you. Whereas with the previous governors, we had more help with counselling and the wellbeing of the students and parents. Now we don't have that much support when it comes to the emotional part.

HD-A2 thought that the previous governance system's support was mainly at an emotional and more spiritual level, but the profit-driven governance provides specialist teaching assistance.

HD-A3 was positive about the support that they received to continue their responsibility regarding academic matters. It seems as if development as a management team also happened during the process:

We started to work closely with head office's academic department, with the principal and other senior managers and sessions that we had with them and that they sort of prescribed. It was carried out so that every member of the staff needed to buy in and acquired a better understanding of what was expected of them.

Teacher professional development

The investment in the leadership and management competencies of the managers of the school could contribute to the upliftment and development of everyone in the school. However, the data suggests that those in management positions experienced the transition to profit-driven governance differently than the teachers which raises questions about the communication and involvement of the governors and the managers with the teachers. According to HD-A1, interaction with the profit-driven governors was missing. Because they as managers and teachers knew what to do and took their responsibility as teachers very seriously, it did not seem to be problematic that the governors were not involved. HD-B1 remarked:

No, I don't think my responsibilities changed. I think because we are responsible, and we are passionate we try everything in our ability to do what we are supposed to do and for teaching to take place and the kids to get the education that they deserve. They do not even know what we are doing. So, because we know what we are supposed to do, we continue with

that. With the previous owners, there was more interaction with the governors. Now it is just a money-making business.

The data therefore points to the participants experiencing less involvement from the profit-driven governors in the day-to-day activities of the teachers and management of the school. The governors are only interested in the numbers of learners and the profits and not in the management and running of classes. One would think that the governors, who make the most important decisions pertaining to the school, need to be updated regarding what is happening in the classrooms. How can they promote a business if they are only interested in the profit line and show no interest in the individuals who are responsible for making that profit? This shows that the profit-driven governors are inclined to focus on growing their businesses and are not so much interested in the people who need to make sure that teaching and learning takes place as it is supposed to

The teacher participants also experienced a change in responsibilities. Some of the teacher participants felt that they needed to take up the added responsibility to market the school, that there were too many things for which they were held responsible and that the focus was not on academic activities anymore. Teacher participant T-A1 explained as follows:

Responsibilities on other levels than teaching in the class grew a lot. I think we are now also responsible for promotion, trying to advertise the school according to what we need financially. We need to try to save more on various aspects, save money here, even to limit the coffee and tea. Therefore, being more responsible for budget. We are limited in the sense that we are not allowed to spend money that is not regulated. We must focus foremost on two things that we need to do: that is teaching and educating and being a mother to a child at school.

Expecting teachers to market the school is questionable, particularly in schools that are owned by large JSE-listed companies. Marketing is different from teaching. These profit driven companies need to have a marketing division with specialist marketers. Teachers should only be involved in word-of-mouth marketing. It further seems as if the teachers' teaching responsibilities have become intertwined with the focus being placed on profit-making as the teachers are expected save money on essential needs that contribute to quality teaching and learning. It seems as if the profit margin determines what is needed in the classrooms and not the teachers' and learners' needs.

There is, however, some evidence that in-service teacher training is taking place. For example, HD-A3 indicated that teacher training took place throughout the year to make sure that all the teachers were teaching critical thinking skills in as prescribed by the governors. This indicates a certain expectation the new profit-drive governors have of the teachers and their method of teaching, even though they show little inclination to be involved involvement and to communicate with the teachers. To have expectations of teachers without knowing what is going on in their classes could lead to money being spent on the wrong things not needed to provide quality education. This aspect overlaps with theme 2.2 on the development of educators.

The profit-driven governors seem to expect their principals to include teacher development in the budget. As mentioned earlier by Pa-A1, teachers need support regarding discipline in the class. Therefore, in-service professional development activities should be prioritised to meet the developmental needs of the teachers and principals and their management teams should play a significant role in this regard. However, it seems as if the teachers are forced to attend certain compulsory training sessions, but they do not experience these sessions as relevant to them in the class situation This underscores that the principal's responsibility extends to the professional developments need of his or her staff as one cannot realistically expect governors to be hands-on with what happens

in classrooms on a daily basis. T-A2 regarded these seemingly irrelevant training sessions as an added responsibility that did not contribute to her teaching in her class.

Yes, the load is much more, it's just the fact that I have signed in and they know that I have been there. It is not something that I can go and apply because it is general or generic. It is for the general population and not specifically for what we do in high school or even in my subject.

Governors are perceived by some participants as spending money on things that are not a priority, for example, training which teachers do not experience as valuable while they need more equipment. In addition, appointing more teachers could contribute to a smaller teacher-learner ratio to improve discipline and the quality of teaching. This resonates with Category 3 regarding fairness towards educators because the governors expect the school to increase the number of learners in the class but do not think of the extra load being placed on the teachers. This is also relevant to Category 4 that includes transparency. The governors are not transparent regarding the spending of money on the teachers. They seem to be ignorant of teachers' needs. and that they only include professional development of teachers in the as a window-dressing exercise rather than addressing the development needs of teachers. Therefore, the responsibility of principals to ensure that the developmental needs of teachers are met is even greater.

In addition to the above, T-A4 indicated that there is more pressure being placed on teachers to recruit more learners.

I do think that there is pressure on teachers. They must feel it is up to them if there are enough students here or not. It is often said that if you don't get these students then you cannot have a raise.

The lack of parental involvement was also highlighted by T-B1:

There were always parents involved with the previous governance. The parents had representatives, like the middle person between the rest of the parents and the teachers.

Parent involvement

Therefore, it seems that the previous not-for-profit owners did try to include parents in decision-making processes. They involved parents and made them feel as if they were valued by the governance structures. The governance systems of the profit-driven company operate in contrasting ways and do not even communicate with the parents. If parents were accustomed to good communication from the previous governance approach, this could lead to mistrust and a feeling that parents are not important and valued as stakeholders because they are excluded from any form of decision-making. For example, one of the parent participants (Pa-A4) explained that she felt more excluded from the school:

You feel more excluded. You can still go and discuss, but you feel a little bit more excluded. With the previous governance, it was more of a team effort of the parents and the teachers, but with the new governors, it feels like everything is taken away from us and I can even sense that the teachers feel the same. I don't know if they even care about the parents.

As mentioned earlier in paragraph 5.5.1, parents do not feel part of the governance partnership as was the case with the not-for profit school. Their responsibility as stakeholders is therefore being diluted. Parents need to feel that they are involved in and are part of the decision- making of the school because they are legitimate partners in the education of their children. Even if schools want to operate independently from government, they still need to provide the same quality service as a comparable public school.

Parent participants from School B have similar experiences. For example, Pa-B1 experienced much more involvement during the time of the not-for-profit dispensation at School B:

When it was still the not-for-profit school the parents were involved quite a lot. Whether it was because we were still small, our classes were still small, it was quite nice when we were sort of involved in the education. With the new governors, it is a big change. We lost our voice; you don't know whether you are coming or going. Luckily, the teachers are still the same and try to reassure us about things, but then you see certain things and you know it is not the same.

Similarly, Pa-B2 explained parental involvement under the previous governors as follows:

I don't think there was a proper structure like a PAF, but I think the parents were involved. A lot of the parents were involved in the finances of the school, and I think there were a lot of people who had a say about stuff. After the change, there were talks about a PAF [Parents Association Forum. There was talk about getting a group together, but it was as if the parents were against the school, but it was a head office issue. They wanted to find out what qualification the teachers had.

Parents therefore experienced little to no involvement in the schools after the change in ownership and felt excluded in the new profit-driven governance approach. There was also a change in relationships between parents and teachers after the transition to the profit-driven governance systems because teachers are now playing a more prominent role in involving the parents. The reason for the change could be linked to the not-for-profit governance approach being more focussed on relationships with the whole family, whereas it seems that in the new profit-driven governance system there are no relationships being formed between the governors and the parents. Teacher participants

also indicated said that they did not know the governors and the governors did not know what was happening in their classes. There is also no meaningful relationship between the teachers and the governors of the profit-driven company.

Pa-B3 also commented on the qualifications of the teachers:

They do employ some teachers who are not qualified, or they are not registered at SACE and then the facilities in general in the school are not as they should be.

Quality teachers

Appointing teachers who not registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE), if it can be proved, would be an illegal action; no public or independent schools may appoint any teacher who is not registered with SACE. Section 21 of the South African Council for Educators Act 31 of 2000(RSA, 2000) stipulate the following:

- 1. Every educator contemplated by the Act must register with the Council before appointment to a teaching post, and*
- 2. No person may be employed as an educator by an employer unless that person is registered with the Council (www.sace.org.za)*

This is a serious allegation against the governors of the school. One of the responsibilities of independent schools is to provide highly qualified teachers. For parents to contemplate creating a group (PAF) to act in response to the school, creates an impression that the communication and trustworthiness on the side of the governors are not particularly good. One of the most important aspects of corporate governance is transparency and trustworthiness and it seems as if this is not happening in this school (School B) after the change in governance.

The participating stakeholders only expected a change in name and principal and some of the HODs indicated that they still had their own identity and could run the school as they did previously. However, the teachers and parents experienced the opposite, and they did not trust the governors, nor did they feel that decisions were made in the best interests of the learners.

Concluding this category, there seems to be an overlap of responsibility with what emerged under the categories 'accountability' and 'fairness'. The especially important element is that there seem to be inadequate communication with stakeholders by the profit-driven governors who led to an absence of trust and transparency by especially the teacher and the parent participants. Being responsible in their decision-making and the provision of different needs could make governors accountable to their stakeholders.

5.5.2 Category 2: Accountability

Accountability can be described as "*the state of being accountable, meaning responsible for something or obligated to answer to someone, such as a person with more authority, like a boss*" (www.dictionary.com). Accountability of the governors towards the stakeholders also includes how they treat their employees and how the teachers experience the governors' attitude towards them and towards their workload. To be responsible to the stakeholders and how the governors contribute to the development of the stakeholders emerged as another Theme. With corporate governance being an integral element of the governance of profit-driven independent schools, stakeholders could with some justification expect to receive value for the money that they pay, and, for that reason, this has also emerged as a theme of accountability towards the stakeholders.

5.5.2.1 Theme 1: Accountability for the emotional state of stakeholders

Stakeholders' emotional experiences were not addressed directly in the research questions. Emotions cannot be measured, and different people experience and express emotions in different ways and it was not expected that the emotional impact of the change in ownership would surface so prominently. For this reason, it was necessary to create a theme for it. During the interviews and data analysis it became clear that, for some stakeholders, the change was not only something that they were aware of or viewed from a distance, but something that affected them personally. Some of the participants, especially the teachers and parents, became very emotional during the interviews. For the parents, their children were involved, and the teachers demonstrated a passion for teaching and did not only see it as a job and an income, but as an opportunity to change the lives of children.

P-A mentioned that he was previously responsible for the emotional wellbeing of the learners. For him, the change in governance did not increase any responsibility regarding the emotional wellbeing of others. He also mentioned in theme 5.5.1.2 that he was now responsible for everything. However, he seemed to be hesitant to provide any negative comments about the new governance dispensation.

A head of department (HD-A2) indicated that they do not receive support from the new governors regarding learners' counselling. The HOD explained the previous governance dispensation support and provide in terms of the well-being of staff and learners which was not received any more. Principal P-A explained as follows: "*The children are their emotional investment. It is not only an academic institution but also aims to make them grow as emotionally well-groomed people.*" Principal B said the governors placed the complete responsibility for academic standards in the hands of the teachers: "*It was an extremely emotional time for them and there was a huge staff turnover as well.*" Teachers

did not receive any support but knew that they were responsible for the academic programmes (teaching and learning) of the schools.

It was evident that for some of the participants, the change in governance approach was an emotional experience. This is probably a reason for the high staff turnover mentioned by Principal P-B. The assumption can be made that the change in ownership contributed to a feeling of uncertainty or a lack of trust in the new governors.

According to HD-A2 the support provided by the new governors was in different areas to what was expected on the emotional side. The not-for-profit governors provided emotional support and counselling to both teachers and learners. HD-A2 referred to the wellbeing of the learners and explained that the learners' wellbeing was the priority of the school. When answering the question whether they received support from the new governors to promote the learners' wellbeing, HD-A2 replied:

With the previous governors we had more help with counselling and the wellbeing of the students and parents. Now we don't have that much support when it comes to the emotional part. I feel at this stage the company is not interfering in what I am doing in the class, which I enjoy. I want to have the freedom of setting up my own assignments but, no, I don't receive any support from the governors.

Therefore, although this HOD does not receive support, he welcomes the fact that the governors allow them the freedom to do what they think is important. HD-B1 from School B experiences the new governance approach as purely business driven and that the profit-driven governors show little interest in the wellbeing of staff and learners:

They run the school as a business, which is fair, but we aren't a business: we are a school. They don't care what is happening here. It is interesting

that, if you ask them if their children are in one of our schools, they will answer no.

From the same school, HD-B2 expressed a similar sentiment:

No, they don't even know what we are doing. So, because we know what we are supposed to do, we continue with that. With the previous owners, there was more interaction with the governors, but nowadays there is no interaction with the governors at all. Just a money-making business.

It appears as if these two Heads of Department missed the interaction with the governance structures. One can therefore assume that these participants experienced the previous not-for-profit governors as people who were involved the school and who based their decisions on accurate information regarding the school and the needs of the staff and learners at a particular time. In contrast, it seems that the new profit-driven governors are not involved in the schools and that little interest is shown in the stakeholders (teachers, parents and learners). There seems to be a general perception that the profit-driven governors do not care about them and do not view them as important.

Generally, the participants experienced the previous not-for-profit dispensation as being more relaxed, with some participants indicating that they were happy. For example, T-A1 said: *"I think they were more, I perceived them that time as happier than now."* Similarly, T-A2 became very emotional when she said the following:

Well, it was more relaxed, it was a smaller team, it was more personal, and it was not money-driven. For me, it was much better than now.

Another teacher, T-B2 at School B said: *"We had a wonderful school"*. Teacher T-B1 indicated that the new governors disappointed her a great deal:

I am still happy, and I am a teacher by heart. But the governors and the school are not the same. I have a second work because I need to support my son in another province.

The disappointment of this teacher was evident. She loves to teach but the circumstances under the new governance dispensation disappoint her. Another teacher from School B (T-B4) explained that the new profit-driven governors did not care about them and expected the teachers to be self-sufficient:

But to me, it does not seem like they are involved. From a teacher's side, that is my impression. I don't feel that they are involved or that they are giving any input or have uplifting things to say to the staff. It as if we are self-sufficient but are not. You must run on your own, but you cannot do that.

One gets the impression that parents feel that the new governors do not care about the school or the stakeholders. One of the schools went through a change in ownership for a second time and the parents were not involved in the discussions. For this reason, a specific parent from School A (Pa-A4) felt that there was no partnership between the parents and the new governors:

The not-for-profit school was taken over by a private company and that was discussed with us before we had a meeting with the new governors of the private company. We had an input there and then a public company bought us over during December. Whoops, we are now part of the public company. There was no discussion: there was one meeting, but it was after everything was done. So, no, we immediately felt excluded, and we immediately felt we were pushing here for something that was not Christ-centred. They sold their souls.

The next comment overlaps with Category 4 regarding communication and trustworthiness and it also resonates with this specific theme where accountability toward the stakeholders is discussed. The lack of involvement of the parents in the governance of the school and comments of the parent participants such as “*they sold their souls*”, “*you feel excluded*” and “*I don’t know if they care about the parents*” are also indicative of the transition to a profit-driven approach being an emotional experience for the schools’ stakeholders. To feel you are not valued and not regarded as an important stakeholder could lead to a lack of trust.

Another parent participant expressed his disappointment in the new governors and said that after the takeover there was no open communication. One of the reasons why parents trusted the previous governors was the school’s history of good education and good relationships with parents. This Parent (Pa-B3), who was previously involved in initiatives of the Department of Basic Education, experienced the previous dispensation at School B as good. Now, he did not feel that this school was in good hands. Parent Pa-B3 explained as follows:

At that time when it was the previous governance, I kind of knew what was going on here. If you were not happy after the takeover, it was clear that somebody else was running the show. You could complain. After the change in ownership, there was an issue about the introduction of an African language and a lack of resources for teaching and learning. There was an issue regarding the boarding school and possible camps. There was another issue concerning certain teachers who were not doing their work in the class, and parents complained. You could feel that there was hostility towards the parents and their voice in the school. You could tell that from the tone of the emails – it was not open or calming; it was very defensive.

Parents are particularly important stakeholders in a profit-driven school, even for the benefit of the shareholders. If parents feel that they have no say in the school and they

feel that the school is being controlled by someone whom they do not trust, this could lead to a dysfunctional relationship between parents and the school. This could undermine the partnership principle as envisaged in the Preamble of SASA and the National Education Policy Act.

5.5.2.2 Theme 2: Accountability for the development of staff and learners

Ball (2007) remarked that performance management could contribute to changing teachers' focus on their work and to continuously improve themselves. One of the reasons (different reasons were discussed in Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.1) for parents enrolling their children in independent schools is to ensure personal attention and quality education for their children. Parents want individual attention for their children, dedicated teachers, and small classes. This overlaps with Category 3 where the workload of the teachers is discussed. The inference can be made that the governors do not care about the impact the number of learners in the class has on the quality of teaching and learning. Concern for the wellbeing of teachers and quality teaching and learning would imply that governors would also take the number of learners in a class into account and not allow classes to become overcrowded and difficult to manage.

Governors are also accountable for the provision of adequate and appropriate facilities and teachers to ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place. In this regard Larsen (2005) emphasise that performance-based evaluations could contribute to better performing teachers. Development of the staff members could indicate that the governors invest in their stakeholders (principal, HODs and teachers, and indirectly also in the learners).

Principal P-A indicated that he had experienced development and growth since being part of the new governance structure. He experienced professional support as well as

leadership development from the new governance system and is now expected to play a more prominent leadership role than in the past. He explained as follows:

More leadership development, much more as a principal. Previously I had people thinking for me. You were more a manager than a leader. I was only a manager. The church was the leader and there you just had to manage their decisions. Now you are the leader. Again, it comes down to the bottom line (the profit).

This principal really experienced an opportunity provided by the new governors to develop continuously. According to him, his managing style changed to adapt to the new governance approach. However, this development sounded as if it was something that the governors needed to do as part of their goals for the year. This development was also mentioned in Theme 1 when governors' responsibility towards the stakeholders was discussed. The principal of School A also mentioned that the governors were only interested in profit (bottom line) – what happened before was not important. It therefore can be assumed that his leadership and management development was focused at making the school more profitable rather than being focused on the improvement of teaching and learning. The principal of School B did not mention anything regarding development and investment in the development of the school management or staff. As mentioned previously in paragraph 5.5.1.2, this principal was not even involved in the planning of the budget. However, HD-A2 mentioned the following:

In the budget, there is money to train staff. I think that with the previous ones, because the profit went to the church institution, we did not have any money for that training.

The question arises as to what kind of staff development is required. If, as indicated by Principal P-A, the profit-driven governors were only interested in the bottom line and teachers (as mentioned earlier in paragraph 5.5.1.2) are struggling to manage discipline

the large classes, training and development of teachers and staff members do not seem to take place according to the needs of the teachers in the school. Not one teacher indicated that the school provided training in new techniques or skills that were needed to teach larger classes. However, HD-A3 explained that teachers needed to focus on the development of the learners:

The challenge that I have is to get the teachers just to stand back a little and allow the students to discover the content of what they are doing and come up with opinions and ideas. We must focus on developing their communication skills and research skills. Make them aware of social awareness and self-management.

The participants who are part of the management of School A mentioned the importance of teacher development to teach the application of critical thinking. In paragraph 5.5.2.1 HD-A3 said: “*We need to focus on the learners’ communication skills*”. Also, as mentioned previously in paragraph 5.4.2.1 by Teacher T-A2, the training teachers to receive are not relevant to their needs (“*It is not something I can apply in my subject*”). Because the governors are generally absent in their involvement in the school, principals and their management teams are required to play a more prominent role in the development of teachers. However, this is being restrained by the limited funds allocated for professional development in the budget and the principal’s having limited opportunities to make meaningful inputs during the budgeting process. For example, HD-B1 said:

They don’t worry about us, no, no, no! If we tell them we are going to lose teachers, it is not a problem. They will be able to fill a post. So, what do we get at the end?

Teacher participants felt that they are being forced on informal training courses that are not applicable to the subjects they teach and which they regard a waste of time. This is also an indication of a lack of communication and opportunities for teachers to make

inputs regarding their needs. It therefore seems that in the profit-driven governance approach applied at the participating schools, the school management and governors are ignorant to what teachers need. T-A2 commented as follows:

We as teachers must go on courses that are core skills driven and twenty-first century development and such skills are discussed. We must go to a lot of workshops, where, for me I don't feel like it is related to our structure, to high school specifically. In terms of academic matters and development, we must go on these courses, and then it is driven into us what twenty-first century skills are and that weren't there before. I come away from those sessions, not having learned more. It is not something that I then go and can apply in my subject.

Teachers regarded this as a tick-the-box (compliance) managerial style (not the development or training that they needed in their current large classes) and said that the governors did not know if they applied it in their classes or not because of the governors being distanced from school matters. This resonates with the comment of Principal A that the governors are only interested in the “*bottom line*” (profit).

Teacher T-A3 felt that professional development activities were often ineffective because of a lack of communication. If the governors and the management are not open to ideas, suggestions and inputs from the teachers, they are not able to communicate their needs and explain what kind of training they need to succeed in their classroom:

It always is open regardless of whether it was not-for-profit or profit-driven to say I need the training to be able to go for that training. It is that communication thing that relates to a failure to be able to identify that you need training in a certain thing and maybe that is why you do not achieve per se.

As mentioned earlier, Parent Pa-A1 complained about the lack of discipline in the class. Likewise, Teacher T-A2 griped about the fact that the governors forced them to go on training that cannot be used in the classroom. Teacher T-A3 explained the fact that teachers needed support in their classrooms, but that management provided inappropriate training due to ineffective communication between the governors and management. The levels of trust, communication and teamwork between the governors and management and the teachers and parents seemed to be inadequate and it seems as if stakeholders (especially the parents and teachers) were fighting their own battle and that there is no co-operation and interest shown in the needs of different stakeholders.

The parent participants also do not seem to have experienced that the profit-driven governors are investing in teachers to provide the best possible teachers to teach their children. Having difficulty in disciplining the children in the class could also influence the trust that parents have in the teaching being provided to their children and capability of the teachers. Parent Pa-A1 said that, with the large classes, it seemed to be difficult for the teachers to focus on the quality of the academic work:

I think teachers try their best, to enforce high standards of academics, but it gets exceedingly difficult to keep on doing that, not to be discouraged, because some of the children, according to my children, don't care.

Parent Pa-B3 referred to a time when the parents wanted to know what the qualifications of the teachers were because they sensed, from the feedback from their children, that some teachers were not qualified to teach their subjects. One can assume that this was a sign that parents did not trust the decisions and appointments made by the governors: “*They do employ some teachers that are not qualified. They are not registered at SACE (South African Council for Educators)*” (Pa-B3). This comment was repeated almost *verbatim* by one of the teachers at School B (T-B1):

When they appoint teachers, they do not care what they are capable of and don't care about the quality of education. That specific teacher told the learners that cotton is growing on sheep [sic].

The above raises the question of how governors could allow stakeholders to pay a premium fee to enrol their children in an independent school when the teachers, hired by the governors and management, are not qualified to teach. According to Chapter 4 of the South African Council for Educators (SACE) Act 31 of 2000 “[n]o person may be employed as an educator by any employer unless the person is registered with the council”. This includes public and independent schools. If a company allows this to happen in a profit-driven school, the school could lose its accreditation from Umalusi (www.umalusi.org.za), which is the quality assurance body in the South African Schooling system. If this is what happens in these schools, they are contravening the law and do not realise the importance and the role of SACE in a school.

Comments like “*they don't worry about us*” (HD-B1) and “*they are only interested in the bottom line*” (P-A), is indicative that the participants perceive their governors as not being accountable for the empowerment and development of the staff – they just want them to make sure the school makes a profit. It also seems as if the teachers do not feel appreciated by the profit-driven governors. It further seems that the governors do not understand the classroom situation in the schools and needs of the teachers to ensure quality education.

5.5.2.3 Theme 3: Accountability for the academic programme of the school

It is a positive sign that an effort is being made to ensure that the academic performance of schools is on standard and that questions are asked if learners do not perform well. HD-A3 said:

The governors will keep us accountable for the academic standard. We need to make sure that all subjects across the school are improving as far as testing is concerned. A change in format and visiting classes on a regular basis is required.

HD-B1 said that she personally felt responsible for the academic standard because she felt the governors did not care.

I am not sure if they are even interested in the academic standard of the school. They just want the numbers to get better, but they are not there to make sure that . . . It feels as if people look up to me and say but “why?” Why aren’t the children performing as they are supposed to?

The fact that this HOD felt that she needed to provide the stakeholders (parents) with answers regarding their children’s academic performance suggests that some governors do not provide support to the management of the school but expect them to perform according to expectations. An HOD of School A (HD-A3) mentioned that the governors kept them accountable for the academic standards of the school and that they needed to report to them.

One teacher (T-A3). felt that the profit-driven governors were now more interested in the results, and you needed to explain why a student was underperforming and how you would support the student.

Yes, previously I was also accountable but not as intensely as now. So, there it was just, you did your thing and got the results, but now there are questions, why didn’t that happen, why did this one get those results and why did this one does not get an A?

This again emphasises that the stakeholders (especially parents) expect the managers and not the governors to make sure that the academic performance of the school meets acceptable standards. This also accentuates the fact that the communication between the management and teachers needs to be open and that they all need to work together to provide quality education in line with the expectations of the parents. *“I think in both instances the school and the headmaster mainly and the subject head. We hold them responsible for the standard of education” (Pa-A3).*

Participants HD-A3 and HD-B1 had different opinions about whether or not governors cared about academic standards. The dominant opinion seems to be that that they do care about academic standards.

5.5.3. Category 3: Fairness

Fairness can be linked to the biblical principle of doing to others what you would want them to do to you. The data enabled me to relate the experience of the stakeholders of how the governors treated the stakeholders after the change of ownership to the concept of fairness. As mentioned in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.6, one of the key elements of corporate governance is fairness towards everyone involved. This includes the shareholders and the stakeholders. As stated in the King III Report (2009), responsibility, accountability, fairness, and transparency are part of good governance. The data revealed that the governors either did not know about the King III report (2009) or they did not apply these principles in governing these independent schools.

Aspects that emerged from the data that could affect the principle of fairness is the increased stress and tension experienced by participants in the workplace, the lack of involvement of parents and teachers in the decision-making processes (also discussed under Category 2: Accountability) and stakeholders' expectations of academic standards,

small classes and individual attention to learners not being met will be discussed as a sub-theme. This principle of fairness implies that governors must keep the rights and privileges of the stakeholders in mind when they make decisions. Co-operation between the principal and teachers will include discussion of the work distribution with teachers, including the allocating extra-curricular responsibilities, to ensure they feel that the workload is distributed in an equitable and manageable way. The conditions of employment of teachers also need to be in line with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 (RSA,1997a). It also needs to be in line with Section 33(1) of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) which provides that “[e]veryone has the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair”. The data indicated that participants did experience problems with their workload and their need for someone to listen to their frustrations manifested in some of the answers to the interview questions.

5.5.3.1 Theme 1: Workload and healthy environment

No direct questions regarding their workload and the health of the participants’ environment were asked. However, from the start, when questions such as participants’ experiences of a change in responsibilities after a change in ownership were asked, answers were provided that were not anticipated. The principals explained that the new profit-driven governance approach brought more tension and stress. For example, Principal P-A said the following:

I think the stress level is much higher because of the demands from the governors. At principals’ conferences, you can hear the stress. Many principals say they can’t do this for longer than five years. The stress is too much. Previously it was not so much pressure or stress; you just had to do whatever, so everyone is happy, but now it is much more stress.

Initially this principal (P-A) was very positive towards the new governance approach in responding to questions. It was, however, noticeable that he was now negative and

explained that the workload was too much. He even said that principals could not be in this position for more than five years. It seemed as if the workload was not reasonable. The principal of School B described a similar experience:

I think I hoped for a signature on paper and change for the good, but I think what I experience is like that goo that the children play with. For me personally it was to juggle it from one hand to another and the goo going through your fingers and trying not to let it fall, because if it fell it would be damaged. The standard of academics fully laid on the teaching staff was difficult. It was an extremely emotional time for them, and it was complicated by a huge staff turnover (P-B).

The participating principals acknowledged that the stress was too much after the change in ownership, and that they would not be able to continue in this position for longer than five years. This does not reflect particularly well on the profit-driven governors and their fairness towards the stakeholders. One can surmise that the principals only accepted the position during the previous not-for-profit school and did not anticipate how their level of stress would change under the new governance model. For example, Principal P-B said, *“I think I hoped for a signature on paper and change for good”* which expressed the idea that even the management thought that the change to a profit-driven governance approach would be a change for the better, which did not seem to be the case.

Some heads of department experienced the increase in levels of stress as positive. However, they were in the minority. For others to experience the stress to be so much higher and the workload so much more could indicate that some stakeholders experienced treatment different from what they were used to. The HODs did not mention much regarding the workload or stress they experienced after the change in ownership. HD-A3 actually said that, even if the stress was more, it added more value to the school:

I think the academic responsibility under the previous governance was definitely less intense. But I see how we operate now; I see the value in how we do what we do.

HD-A1 explained that the previous not-for-profit governors from the church were too prescriptive, and too involved in day-to-day activities at the school. However, HD-A2 explained that they received ample support from the previous governors but not from the current profit-driven governors and that they now had more responsibility. Some of the participating HODs even experienced less stress from in the new profit-driven governance approach and HD-A1 said that it was a relief not to be part of the church anymore.

For me, it was a relief that the school is now run by people that know what is going on in education. It helps to know that the company has people in education that know what is going on in education.

HD-A2 said that change was evident but sensed more professionalism with the profit-driven company – specialist support that was not provided by the not-for-profit governors was now available.

I think for everyone there was a change; the teachers felt it, the parents felt it and management felt it. If we say change, it is also a matter of a good change or a bad change. Being under the new governors, they are a lot more profit driven. For the managers there is more support – if you need support, you have the professional specialist in the field to be able to assist you.

From the data it was clear that the HODs felt responsible towards the parents (stakeholders) to still provide quality education to the learners. The interviews gave no indication whether the governors felt any responsibly from their side towards the parents

regarding quality education. One participating HOD welcomed the fact that the church (the previous not-for-profit owner) did not regulate what happened in the classrooms anymore but did not mention any form of involvement from the ne profit-driven governors. Profit seems to be the most important measuring tool of the school's success and not the satisfaction and trust of the stakeholders. During the interviews, parent participants mentioned the trusting relationship they experienced with the previous not-for-profit governors and that relationships were particularly important then.

The HODs seem to be more inclined to maintain the kind of relationships that were previously provided by the not-for-profit governors. HD-B1 explained as follows:

There is more pressure on us to keep all the balls in the air. Especially pressure with the parents and they are asking a lot of questions. I just feel or I know something is wrong. Because of my position I have a greater responsibility to make sure that the things stay the same as they used to be.

The comment by this HOD that they tried to make sure things stayed the same as they used to be could imply that the change in ownership contributed to a change at all levels in the school and that those in management positions tried to keep things much as they were previously. On the one hand could show character and care on the part of the HODs, while on the other hand it could indicate reluctance to transform the school to the new profit-driven governance approach.

Teacher participants explained that they did not experience stress under the previous governors. They perceived the previous governors as more relaxed. The new profit-driven governance approach, however, brought additional pressure in areas in which they previously did not experience any. This is illustrated by the following responses from teacher participants of School A in particular:

I would say that previously the governors were a bit more relaxed in a sense. The stress levels were a bit lower. The stress is perceived from outside, and we perceive that they are more stressed now because of all the different things that need to be in place according to the new governance system (T-A1).

Well, it was more relaxed, it was a smaller team, it was more personal, and it was not money driven. For me, it was much better than now (T-A2).

I have more learners from grade eight to grade twelve versus someone who has also got grade eight to twelves with only seven students in a class where I have twenty-four students in a class. Now they regard it as the same workload (T-A2).

I do think that there is pressure on teachers that they feel it is up to them to get more students (T-A4).

Teacher T-A3 argued that the ne profit-driven governors expected too much of them as teachers. She explained that changes were not communicated to her and that many of the changes were not related to teaching, which added much pressure on her:

But now with this changeover, certain things became more comprehensive. Now I must do everything, from getting the quotes through to getting the printing done and selling those books, which duty was not communicated to me from the start; I feel I need to do the work of an outside marketer.

Again, the lack of communication between the governors and the rest of the stakeholders was mentioned. Some Teacher participants indicated that they are now expected to do marketing and participate in other projects that were not related to teaching, while other teacher participants felt that they were being controlled by extremely strict human resources regulations. For example, these participants could not understand how the same managers of the school now applied strict rules regarding leave that were not applied previously. Teacher T-A2 explained as follows:

It is the same management but suddenly we need to take unpaid leave if we need to do something. Previously we could take what we needed.

Similarly, Teacher T-A3 explained:

With leave, for example, I never actually know how many leave days I have, ever, so it is new stuff for me that I never experienced before. The other day they told me that I don't have any sick leave left.

No compassion is shown by the same managers who showed compassion under the previous governance. It appears that the previous not-for-profit governors regarded compassion as one of the values according to which they governed the school and therefore had a softer approach towards stakeholders. Now, under the new profit-driven governance approach, a less compassionate, rigid and hard-line approach to management is being applied. Such an approach from the management could lead to negativity and disillusionment of stakeholders, especially the teachers. From the interviews it appeared that teachers felt that the pressure on them was much higher under the new governance approach. They described a tense atmosphere and the additional financial burden being placed on them to ensure that there were enough learners in the school to be able to meet the required profit targets.

Most teacher participants voiced their disappointment with the change. They expected the new profit-driven owners to invest more money in them as educators and in the school

in general. They expressed their concern that they were not being treated fairly or being paid a fair salary. Good and open communication is fair for all stakeholders who are part of the organisation. In any transition communication is particularly important, but it appears that the implications of the change in ownership were not communicated clearly to all the stakeholders. Although the participants' expectation could have been unrealistic or unreasonable, effective communication regarding the implications of the change in ownership could have prevented disappointed and disillusionment with the new profit-driven governance approach. Lack of communication can also cause teachers to perceive the added responsibilities placed on them by the governors as being unfair towards them as teachers.

5.5.3.2 Theme 2: Academic standards

In independent schools, parents generally pay more money for a higher quality of education, and they assume it will include better facilities and higher academic standards than offered in public schools. Van Rooyen (2012) argues that *"[t]he assumption that more funding should lead to better quality education has not been proven"*. However, governors should strive to make this assumption true if they wish to retain or increase the numbers of learners enrolled at the schools and help improve the quality of school education available to South African learners. During the interviews, it quickly became noticeable that the overall feeling of the participants regarding the profit-driven governors was that they did not intend to take up the responsibility for the academic standards of the school but expected the teachers and principal to make sure the academic standards were high.

It seems as if all the participants expected the governors to take up the responsibility to provide what was needed for the teachers and principals to make sure that quality education would be offered. To buy a school is the responsibility of the governors and

they can be held accountable for it. Similarly, the governors must hold the principal and his or her staff accountable for the standard of teaching and learning.

The principal of School A P-A experienced an improvement in academic standards and explained that there was considerable pressure on him from the governors to make sure that the academic standards were in line with the other schools. He could not prove this but explained that the pressure on them as principals to show quality education in relation to the other schools which form part of the organisation had increased. So, parents expected teachers to make sure that the academic standards were acceptable, and the governors expected the principals to ensure high academic standards. However, it seems as if the governors regarded high academic standards as a marketing tool rather than a moral obligation. Principal P-A said the following:

Then it is also more challenging with your standards that you are having; the standards of your school will draw more students and more students will bring in more money.

Principal P-A explained that the governors allowed the principal to run the school according to the specific schools' needs.

Everything, everything stops here. First, the academics, to make sure that the school is on a standard that we want. The finances, I am the manager of the whole budget. Then the facilities, I am managing the facilities. Also, the whole HR section, managing all the staff and then also the health and safety are also a big part of my responsibilities and then to make sure the whole program flows: sport, culture activities, and academic activities.

As mentioned previously in paragraph 5.5.1.2, principals are not always trained to run a business and it could be a stressful situation to run a school as a business if you are not

specifically trained for it. During the interviews, principal P-A mentioned several times that the new governors were only interested in the bottom line: the profit. This leads to the question as to how to balance the academic expectations of the stakeholders with the profit motives of the governors.

Where Principal P-A experienced more freedom and autonomy to manage his school, Principal P-B experienced the opposite:

I had to submit everything, I did everything and then I needed to submit it for approval. I never saw the budget. There was never any communication whatsoever about the finances, except about the learners that we needed to follow up on, who did not pay school fees.

The governors of School B applied a much more centralised approach and even the budget was solely determined by the governors. Since not one of the stakeholders mentioned any contribution from the governors to support them and take responsibility for the academic performance of the school, it could be assumed that although they controlled the budget, they did not know what the needs in the classrooms were. If teachers needed more textbooks and teaching aids and the governors did not know that what the need was, one may ask how they could provide what the teachers needed to ensure quality education.

Most of the participating HODs regarded themselves as being responsible for the academic standards in the school. They explained that a high academic standard was one of the most important marketing tools and because the number of learners was so important, they needed to make sure that the academic standards resulted in more learners coming to the school. Some felt that it could be regarded as positive pressure and a positive influence on their academic standards. HD-A1 said:

I feel I am accountable for the academic standard of the school as I am the HOD, and I am teaching the subject. I don't have someone else that knows my subject and is accountable, so being a senior teacher makes it sometimes hard for me. I have got no one to compare the stuff with unless I ask people in other schools.

This is a predicament at many small schools. Teachers sometimes are the only ones teaching a subject and there is no one to mentor them and help standardise their work. Teacher-A1 explained that: “[t]here is no other person here to actually help me to determine the standard.” Sometimes not even the HODs know the subjects that they moderate. The assumption can be made that the HODs complete moderation as a tick-the-box exercise but cannot substantively assess whether the standard is adequate and measure up to what is expected. Some teacher participants also felt that they received support from their subject cluster groups and the Independent Examination Board (IEB) but not from their head of department

Teacher participants said that the previous not-for profit governors expected all new learners to write an entrance exam to try to ensure that they only enrolled learners with a good academic record. The new profit driven governors allow any learner as long as their parents can pay the school fees. HD-B2 reflected a strong viewpoint regarding their calling and responsibility as teachers:

My responsibility is to see that teaching takes place, that we give education of a high standard, and I can honestly say that I am proud of what we are doing in the classroom in the Foundation Phase.

The problem, however, is that the governors do not seem to know what is going on in the classrooms and what kind of support teachers need. Interview responses suggested that they are only interested in the bottom line (profit) and that the teachers need to produce

high quality education without the necessary resources. A teacher from School B (T-B1) felt that the governors expected them to perform without providing the resources:

The new governors knew we work on iPads when they bought over the school, but now they don't provide Wi-Fi. The principal has difficulties to get money from the governors to give to us. We have a responsibility towards the children as educators.

It seems that, even though the governors expect the teachers to make sure the best possible results are achieved, they do not provide the resources, which is perceived by the teacher participants as being unfair. There are different opinions regarding the use of technology in the classroom and the governors could feel that they do not like the students to use Wi-Fi in the classroom. However, such reasons then need to be shared with the teachers and, especially, with the parents. This also resonates with Category 4 where communication and trustworthiness are discussed. If the profit-driven company wants to change the format of teaching after the change in ownership, surely the teachers and parents need to be given reasons for that decision. As explained by a teacher from School A (T-A3) the only reason for the governors to be interested in the academic standard is for marketing purposes:

For them, it is more about numbers, and they don't care about the academics. It is more about how many children can we allow into the school so that they can probably make a profit. It is not about the academic standard of the school and what the children can do.

Teacher T-B4 from School B also felt that they were required to produce high quality education without support from the governors:

I don't feel that they are involved or that they are interested or that they are giving any inputs or making things easier for the staff to say that they listen. They say you need to do that or that. It is almost as if we are self-sufficient,

but we are not. You must run on your own, but you can't do that, so it is a bit difficult.

Despite the teachers experiencing little or no support from the governors, the governors expect them to be self-sufficient. In subjects where there are still teachers from the previous governance system left, parents felt confident that the standard would be the same as before. Parent Pa-A3 said: *"I didn't realise anything changed, because the teachers stayed more or less the same."* This was echoed by Parent Pa-B1: *"Luckily, with the education you actually know because the teachers were still the same and they reassure us about things."* Parent Pa-B2 said:

I can't really say that there was any change from my point of view and the opinion of my child. There would be a change if there were a change in teachers. There comes a change in standard with a change in teachers.

It seems as if the participants have a perception that the governors do not value the important role teachers play in the school. According to parents, the standard is only staying the same because the teachers from the previous dispensation are still in the class. Parents feel they pay a premium fee and expect quality education and that their children therefore deserve the best possible teachers in the class. One parent (Pa-A2) felt that it was especially important that standards remained high because that is what they paid for:

Education is so much more than the reputation of knowledge and the standard of education. We must have the best because we pay a premium. And it is fine to make a profit, but it must never be at the expense of the child's education.

Parent Pa-B1 mentioned that the previous governors provided support not only for academic purposes, but also to the learners as individuals. She explained that teachers would try to find out what the reason was if a learner did not achieve good marks and, if the learner needed to go to an occupational therapist, the teacher would arrange it and would also support the process. As discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.2, Dunlop (2012) mentions that one of the reasons parents choose an independent school is for individual attention. This parent (Pa-B1) experienced this kind of individual attention in the not-for-profit school and is of the opinion that the profit-driven governors do not provide this service anymore. Parent Pa-A2 describes this loss in individual attention as follows: *“Now it feels like a sausage machine; they are just interested in the pass rate.”*

In the previous not-for-profit governance dispensation, the senior management of the schools participated in the development of policies of the school. In both cases, the schools offered the curriculum of the Independent Examination Board (IEB) and the overall feeling between parent and teacher participants were that the IEB and not the governors assured the school’s academic standards. Teacher T-B4 was disappointed about how the new governors changed their curriculum to the National Senior Certificate (NSC) which is the curriculum prescribed to public schools by the Department of Basic Education. The teacher was concerned that their standards would drop. According to Parent Pa-A3 the school’s connection with the IEB contributed to a feeling of satisfaction and trust regarding the academic standards. One could infer that the stakeholders believed that the IEB is the leader in academic standards and not the Department of Basic Education. It seems as if the trust of the stakeholders is being eroded by this change in curriculum.

It seems fair that parents could expect high academic standards at a school because they pay higher school fees. One teacher (TB-4) was afraid that the standards would drop if the governors decided to move from the IEB curriculum to the NSC curriculum. This change and decision seemed to be unfair toward the parents and the teachers. Fairness

towards the parents and teachers also includes the support from the governors' side by providing the necessary equipment funds and support to the teachers to be able to deliver high quality teaching and learning. Governors cannot expect quality education from the teachers if they do not support and provide for the needs of the teachers.

5.5.4 Category 4: Trustworthiness

Some participants experienced a trust issue with the new profit-driven governors and some also felt betrayed by the previous governors for selling the school. One of the primary roles of governing bodies in public schools is to make the governance more transparent and open for wider public involvement and enhancing their trustworthiness (James *et al.*, 2011). In independent schools the assumption could be made that all the stakeholders would expect transparency in decisions made by the governors and that they could even take part in the decision-making process as valued stakeholders.

The data indicated that there was apprehension among all the different participants about the communication by the new profit-driven governors. Parent Pa-A4 was very passionate and accused the previous governors of selling their souls when they sold the school to the profit-driven company. Her direct words were: "*Definitely, they sold their souls*". The data pertaining to Category 4 seems to support the data related to the other themes.

There were contrasting views expressed by the two participating principals though. In contrast with Principal P-B, the principal of School A Principal P-A explained that he felt decisions made by the previous governors were not always discussed with him, whereas Principal P-B's experience was that the information from the previous governors was shared and explained, which is not the case in the new profit-driven dispensation. The difference in how the participating principals experience communication with the new governors could be ascribed to their schools being owned by different companies. It could

also be that the participants were hesitant to provide any negative comments regarding the new governors for fear of retribution.

Trust between stakeholders is particularly important. According to the King III Report (2009) on the importance of good corporate governance, mutual trust creates a credible and professional business system. Cadbury (1992) also refers to the fact that corporate governance includes a balance between economic and social goals. If the organisation is only interested in the bottom line as explained several times by Principal P-A, the assumption can be made that the organisations may only be interested in the profit and not in the quality of education. To build trust, there needs to be good communication between stakeholders. This leads to the discussion of the next theme, namely communication.

5.5.4.1 Theme 1: Communication

According to McCormick *et al.* (2007), communication and trust as well as collaboration between the principal and the rest of the governors are especially important. Building trust between governors and stakeholders is one of the key aspects of success of a school. Communication without trust could impact negatively on the success of a school, especially if the governors communicate with only a select group of stakeholders.

Principal P-A said that he was the intermediary between the governors and the other stakeholders. He explained that the governors appointed a general manager over schools and that it was his main contact person with the governors and that communication was good:

Sometimes the governors make decisions that you do not understand where this comes from. We have the open door to ask. That is also why our head office changed their name to support office – they are there for support.

Principal P-B experienced communication differently:

I was informed about the things that were appropriate for me. There was an openness that I could ask any time previously, which I did not experience with the new governance, but it could also be due to a relationship thing. I did not have the openness to ask – it was never there.

These two principals therefore had contradictory experiences regarding communication with their governors. Principal P-B mentioned that the lack of communication could be blamed on hesitant and apprehensive relationships. An HOD from School A (HD-A1) also described the principal as the mediator between the governors and the other stakeholders: *“The principal is very transparent to us as management. I think he wants to be transparent to the teachers as well.”* HD-A3’s experience was that challenges regarding the governors could be discussed:

Initially there were some challenges, I think because the academic team at head office had not really been in teaching for many years. I think sometimes the expectations are too high and not really in line with what is happening at grassroots level. But they are quite open to listening.

According to HD-A1, the principal of School A would like to be transparent and open with the teachers and they also regard themselves as transparent managers. However, the data indicate that the teachers at School A do not experience the same transparency. School B had three different principals in three years. For the HODs this was very problematic and HD-B1 felt that there was not enough openness and candidness. The lack of transparency could be one of the reasons why the turnover of principals was so high at School B. The governors made decisions without consulting or including the principals in the decision-making processes. HD-B1 explained that they did not have any clarity regarding decisions:

We don't know. Nothing is given to us, nothing is said to us, there is nothing. If we ask, they say: "But your school is not growing, parents are not paying. So how can we give you an increase?" They don't worry about us.

HD-A1 explained they did not have any face-to-face communication with the governors, but that they worked through the principal.

I have the names of the governors, knowing them on a one-on-one basis is not always possible because there is a distance between the school and the company. But then again, we need to follow the line managers to be able to communicate to the right people.

HD-A3 said:

I have no communication with them. The principal has communication with them. I don't experience the governors as obscure, although I do not always agree with what they prescribe.

Communication seems to be an immense problem for the participants under the leadership of the corporate governance structures. It could be that the organisation has too many schools to communicate effectively. However, there needs to be more open communication with the stakeholders from the governors' side to improve the transparency. Teacher participants were clear that they did not know the governors and had no contact with them at all. Teacher T-A1 clearly stated that they are only involved in decisions of minor importance:

Certain decisions about minor issues are very transparent and we are even asked our opinion about certain decisions. At a certain level there is no transparency. There are certain decisions that the governors make and discuss among themselves and that we don't know about and then they just

make the decision, and we don't have a say. I think what is transparent is things that are ... smaller things like coffee and tea. The final look at the budget is not transparent. I haven't had an increase equal to inflation ever since I started working here; there is no person to go and talk to about your increase, except the principal and he doesn't want to talk about it. Or he just says there is no money available.

Teacher T-A1 felt that there was enough transparency from the principal's side but not from the governors. This participant explained that although the principal listened to them, he only really paid attention to certain queries and said that he would communicate with the governors, but he does not give any feedback. Transparency is required to increase the trustworthiness of governance structures. Communication regarding the need or equipment and other needs of the teachers does not reach the governors, or if it does reach the governors, they do not care. it.

Teacher T-A2 mentioned a lack in transparency from the management's side. She expressed that as a teacher, she was not responsible for the marketing of the school:

No, there is no transparency. I think because this year transparency has been mentioned, the managers are trying to be more transparent. I got to a point where I needed to know what was happening, from the teachers' side. I wanted to hear, as a teacher, from the management what they expected. I don't feel it is my responsibility to market my school. For me, education is a service we are providing, and it is not a business.

It was clear from Teacher T-A2's explanation that she is not interested to know if they did not remain within the budget. She did not have any say in the budget, and, for that reason, she felt her salary was not supposed to be linked to the budget. She was being paid to deliver education and did not need to worry about school finances. If the communication

and information were clear to the teachers, it could lead to a better understanding of why they needed to market the school and why the numbers were so important. A lack of communication could lead to a lack of trust.

If the different stakeholders do not trust one another, the organisation (profit-driven company) could experience a division between the parents and the teachers on the one hand and the management and the governors on the other hand. Such a situation could have a negative effect on education in the school. Teacher T-A3 said:

I don't think there is always great transparency in decisions that are made and maybe it is because we are from the not-for-profit school where everything was discussed, and everything was a family thing. Now it is more a top-down approach, and we are not used to it. I don't always think management feels that there should be transparency and I think that causes secrecy or obscurity as well.

Teacher T-A3 felt that the management and governors hid certain things from them on purpose and this was much worse than only a lack of transparency. If they, did it purposefully, it could be sly or clandestine work or else they plotted against the teachers. Teacher T-A4 mentioned her disappointment with the level of transparency from the management side:

On some things, we might be told things are going to happen. But I do not get feedback on a lot of things. I do feel that sometimes when something is said, maybe we don't know what is going on, we don't have a clue why or what is going on, so I would not say that we get all info.

Teacher T-B1 said:

No, not transparent at all. No, they never talk to us, and they never inform us about any decisions. Nothing is transparent. And they don't care about us at all.

Teacher T-B3 complained about feedback when they asked some questions:

There is no feedback from them about what we discuss in our meetings. I was just told they made the decisions. But then they say they have an open-door policy or there are things said like you are very welcome to come and talk to me, but I will convince you that you are wrong.

This is totally in conflict with the founding principles in Section 1(d) of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) which provides that the values of accountability, responsiveness, and openness must be promoted. If people do not give feedback or are not open, they may undermine the values of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a). From the above comments, there seems to be an enormous problem regarding transparency from the governors' side which leads to inadequate trust. One of the reasons why SASA (RSA, 1996b) made provision for the involvement of parents and teachers as part of the school governing body may well have been to promote openness and a feeling of trust between the management and governors, and the rest of the school seeing that no such relationships existed in the majority of South African schools before 1994.

Parent participants also do not experience any form of partnership between them and the governors. Parent Pa-B1 explained that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Board scheduled appointments to come and speak to the parents. These meetings were often cancelled without any explanation or excuse minutes before they were scheduled to begin. This constitutes a disregard of the rights of stakeholders and impairs their dignity. This could lead to parents feeling that the governors did not care about the school or that they do not respect them as stakeholders of the school. This could also convey the

message that the governors had something to hide, and which could negatively influence the stakeholders' trust in and communication with the governors. Parent Pa-A1 felt that the teachers were the first and most reliable source of information:

Teachers normally give thorough information. We don't get information from the governors' side on a regular basis. We do get some, but not on a regular basis. For about six or seven months we did not receive any statements. When we received the statements, they were incorrect.

Parent Pa-A4 complained about the same lack of communication.

I even realised it a month ago, since the beginning of the year the school we never did receive accounts and then we realised that they did not have our email address. We gave it to them again and my children have been in this school since 2005.

The governors need to be accountable to communicate enough and correct information to the stakeholders. If parents have been stakeholders of the schools for so many years and the new profit-driven owners organisation still do not have their information, it demonstrates disrespect and that they do not regard them as valuable stakeholders. When the new profit-driven owners took over the school, they could have been more sensitive regarding the privacy of the information of the stakeholders. For stakeholders to feel safe in the leadership of the new profit-driven dispensation, communication and the control of information need to demonstrate that the governors could keep a balance between profit-driven business principles and educational principles.

Parent Pa-A3 said: "*Sometimes I feel it is a bit overwhelming and it is overdone*". Parent Pa-A2 said that although they received some information, it seemed as if the information communicated to them was often useless or inadequate. Parent PA-A2 explained as follows:

We do receive information, but the question is, how much of it is being shared. But there is an element that you wonder, and which is there for mistrust. So, you don't always trust their motives doing things.

Parent Pa-B2 described communication as a two-way process:

There is a lot of information. For instance, they bought the school, and it looks as if they haven't even paid the owners. Now as parents, you can't be part of a group that does not seem to know what they want. Maybe they are playing games. It must be clear what it is that they want to do with the school.

These two statements indicate that parents did not trust the governors and they even said they felt that they were not trustworthy and did not even buy the school honestly; they felt that it was not an honest transaction. This links to previous comments where stakeholders explained that they did not receive correct or complete statements or communication. Stakeholders need to feel that they are informed and know what they are paying for. Good communication contributes to a higher level of trust and will increase the level of transparency.

After the change in ownership, the new profit-driven governors needed to focus on communication, especially with the teachers and parents to build a partnership and gain their trust. Only when teachers and parents experience transparency and gain trust in the new governors can the governors shift their communication channels to the principals only. Stakeholders, in this case the parents, need to know that they will receive what they pay for, and the teachers need to experience security under the new governors and understand that they and the governors are moving towards the same goal. theme 2 develops the idea of parents knowing what they can expect.

5.5.4.2 Theme 2: Deliver what was promised and value for money

Independent schools were formed and introduced for several reasons mentioned in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.4.4. One of the overarching questions regarding the change in ownership is how the stakeholders perceive the school under the new profit-driven governance approach. Do they think the culture and ethos changed when the governance approach changed? Do the new owners still provide the same value for the money to the parents as promised before the change in ownership?

Principal P-A explained that the culture and ethos were still the same, and the reason for that was the fact that the company wanted the school as it was, so they did not want to change the culture and ethos of the school.

No, there is no change in our school. They [the governors] encourage us, that is the character of the DNA of our school, and this is what makes our school a success. They [the governors] encourage us to keep our Christian ethos. They support us and it does not matter what the other schools believe, that is the need that we fulfil.

Contrary to Principal P-A, Principal P-B said they experienced a definite change regarding their culture and ethos. This principal (P-B) explained that with the appointment of new teachers, a new culture emerges. Christ-centeredness is not something that you can learn but it becomes part of you. Principal P-B explained that the change was very emotional, especially for those parents who helped build the school from the start:

I just try to lead the emotions of everyone through the change. We had parents to manage, who had their own expectations and did not get what they expected with the increase of the school fees. Those were expectations that I had to explain. Because of the change in culture, we lost a lot of kids, and they were the children of the parents who helped build the school. I

experienced two years of exceedingly difficult times and I did not experience the governors' support.

The different experiences of the different levels of stakeholders regarding the change in ethos and culture also led to the discussion of the number of learners. During the interviews, teachers and parents of School A mentioned that the class sizes became larger and Parent Pa-A2 even referred to the school as becoming like a “*sausage machine*” as the school just enrolled more and more children. However, Principal P-B said that many learners, who were part of the not-for-profit school, left the school after the change in ownership. Teacher T-B3 mentioned that Afrikaans as the language of instruction was terminated after the change in ownership. Therefore, the change in ownership at School B did not only result in a culture and ethos change, but also in a change in the language of teaching and learning.

The HODs of the different schools experienced something different as well. HD-A2 explained that the new governors allowed them to retain their culture and ethos. It seems as if it came at a “*price*”; they could stay the same, but the numbers needed to increase. For some HODs this was a reasonable agreement and HD-A1 mentioned that it was better to be managed by people who knew education than the church people.

When we changed from the previous governors to the new ones, they promised us we could keep our ethos. Our brand would stay the same, our name would stay the same and our school clothes stayed the same (HD-A2).

They are, you know, putting pressure on us in terms of numbers. But now, it is better to be run by people that know what is going on in education and not the church people (HD-A1).

The HOD from School B (HD-B2) did not experience a change: *“Even if the governors change, we did not change.”* It is interesting how the management experienced the change in relation to the rest of the stakeholders. One of the HODs experienced the change more on the academic side.

There was change that resulted in a problem regarding learner discipline. The main reason was the increase in learner numbers. The first reaction from management was that there was no change but, when they elaborated further, it transpired that change was evident, but they did not realise the change, because they were not in the classrooms the whole time. HD-A3 said:

A definite change regarding academics. They prescribe what needs to happen and what I need to share with the staff, but our day-to-day work did not change. We battle with students coming from outside to get them to a place where they have a better understanding of how we do things. So, the challenge is bigger as far as that is concerned.

One of the other HODs (HD-B1) had the same experience regarding the change in culture. From the comments from this HOD, the previous not-for-profit school was very exclusive, and the assumption could be made that the specific environment was the reason why parents were willing to pay a premium for their children to be in a specific school with a specific environment and specific culture:

It happened, not only because of the ethos, but also the children coming to the school. The parents of the children who are accepted are not there. They were informed that this is a Christian school, and we do Christ-centred education, but they are not there for that. Some are here for that reason, but others are only here because it is a private school.

Teacher participants experienced a definite change in focus to being a more profit-driven institution but with no increase in salaries. One teacher, T-B1, explained that for the first time in her career as a teacher she needed to buy her own stationery. This was previously provided by the governors. Their experience was that governors only cared about money and not about teachers. Teacher T-A3 explained that they were told two to three times in a week about the finances, and it seemed to be a problem if one of the learners left the school because it was money that was lost. They felt pressured to get enough enrolments. They felt that the governors were only interested in the academics when they used it as a marketing tool. Classes became larger and learner discipline more difficult to manage. Situations like this could diminish teachers' motivation.

Teacher T-A1 was very emotional in her explanation that the school differed from the one to which she was used. She said this is not what she signed up for. Teacher T-A1 added the following:

I think they did lose something of the culture, ja. For me, the culture became more stressed in a certain sense that they [the management] are more stressed. There was definitely a change in culture in governance from what happened before the change of ownership and that what is happening now.

Another teacher (T-A2) mentioned the more relaxed atmosphere at the school under the previous governors. One could argue that, if the management and school were still the same, the culture needed to stay the same. The governors were the only ones who changed. From the interviews it was clear that the governors favoured a more focused-on-profit approach and for that reason the teachers experienced an atmosphere that was more stressed. In addition, because of a lack of communication, the teachers experienced the governors as a group of people who did not care about their well-being and did not have any compassion for them as teachers. Teacher T-A3 explained that she needed to take unpaid leave if she had a crisis at home. Previously she could resolve the crisis

without taking leave. Teachers experienced a loss of empathy and kind-heartedness after the change in ownership. T-A2 explained as follows:

It was more relaxed and personal. I liked the way that it was and with which I fell in love when I got here. I think for a lot of people who had to make the transition it's quite difficult because you are dealing with the same people in management, but they have more expectations, and they don't have that kindness. I don't know if I can say that, but there is no grace.

The fact that the previous governors were more relaxed and created a family atmosphere was mentioned by other teacher participants as well. Teacher T-A3 said the following:

Back there it was family driven, making a difference in children's lives. Yes, academics were important, but it was very student-centred Now there are a lot more structures which cause this mistrust of teachers at ground level. Managers' decisions are being made differently. Previously I never actually know how many days leave I got, but now each day counts. So, it is new stuff for me that I never experienced before.

The change in atmosphere from a “family” approach to a business approach could inadvertently influence the teachers’ behaviour towards the learners. The importance of the numbers in the school also contributes to an increase of pressure on the teachers to make sure the numbers in the school increase:

What I could see from the students, was quite different from what it is now. There was another culture, they were more structured. There is pressure on teachers if there are not enough students. It can't be up to us to get students. I do feel we've got a lot of pressure in that regard.

Teacher T-B1 explained that the previous not-for-profit governors looked after the stakeholders, not only as staff members, but also as their family:

The spiritual input. We had to attend seminars and the teachers were being served with spiritual food and knowledge. More knowledge that we had to gain. They really looked at us as a whole person. Nothing like this is happening now.

The priorities of the governors how they react towards the stakeholders, as perceived by the stakeholders, were also discussed. According to T-B4:

I think they are business driven. It seems to me they are more worried about the numbers and who they can get in and not really worried about the essence of what is happening at the school. I think previously, they did, there was a lot more I don't know. I would not say the management is involved in the school. It never seems as if anything is uplifted. We just do what we must, and we need to pump up the marketing.

Parents and teachers experienced the change differently from the management (principals and HODs). Parent participants indicated that they do not get value for the school fees they paid. The parent participants felt their children do not receive the quality education and individual attention that they received under the previous not-for-profit governance owners, primarily due to the increase of learners in a class and learner disciplinary problems. Pa-A1 recalled that a teacher walked out of class a few times because of the learners who misbehaved and during those periods her child did not receive any teaching. One parent from School A (Pa-A2) said that they paid school fees for their children to be in an independent school but that there was not enough science equipment. Similarly, Pa-B3 explained: *"It is more about cutting corners, cutting costs at the expense of quality of education in the school"*.

Most of the participating parents experienced a change on a spiritual level. The expected spiritual experience was one of the most important reasons parents had for enrolling their children in these previously church-owned schools. Pa-A1 said the following:

There is just a different feel. I can't put my finger on it. The school grew in numbers. With the old system, it was smaller. We experienced a closeness, more involvement. It felt like a small cell group. It was sad when we grew this big. It became a business. It was not the Christian school that we enrolled in the first place, to have a haven for our children. ...financially it just feels more like a business and not like the school at which we signed up in the first place

Pa-A3 said:

The spiritual level that we experienced in the previous governance system was a little bit higher. Because they are more business-driven, this caused them to allow almost anybody to come to the school and the culture changed

Parent Pa-A2 explained that the change was gradual, and it took a while for them to realise that change had taken place. According to this parent the new profit-driven governors do not appreciate them as stakeholders and the fees that they needed to pay do not reflect the quality and kind of education that their child received.

The change was gradual. It is kind of slippery through your fingers like holding oil your hand. I think the ethos of the school at ground level hasn't changed. It is a little disheartening when you are the one paying, and you want to give the best for your child. If they value the child for the school, they could appreciate the stakeholders from whom they make a profit. I do not mind if someone makes money, and my child gets a good education. For us it is not the greatest thing that it is for profit (Pa-A2).

The fact that parents felt excluded from the change process was also mentioned and in the discussion with Parent Pa-A4 the disappointment in the parent's voice was evident. The fact that they were informed about the change only after the profit-driven company had bought the school contributed to the lack of trust. This parent also emphasised the fact that the teachers who remained at the school were those who kept the school as it was:

What upset us the most with the company taking us over, was the specific meetings that they had after the deal was done. They bought brands and we kept telling them we were not a brand, but a Christ-centred school. They said the fees would not increase, but they did increase drastically. Luckily, the teachers stayed the same. Our worry is what will happen when the teachers go. The teachers know what the school was like, and we can see the pressure on the teachers. They need to put certain things in place because otherwise they will lose their jobs. This is the feeling that we get (Pa-A4).

Parent Pa-A4 mentioned the change in discipline as well. She was visibly upset and explained that the discipline in the school was not Christ-centred as it had been before. She also said that this was not why they had enrolled their child in the school. The parent felt that the school management would not react to bad behaviour because the managers as well as the governors were afraid to lose learners:

This is not what we signed up for. The discipline is not there as a Christ-centred outlook. It is not there at all. The kids can do just what they want and there is still grace, but the grace is mixed with fear of discipline, because they are afraid to lose children (Pa-A4).

This re-emphasises the fact that parents who participated in the study felt discouraged about the fact that they paid higher school fees under the new profit-driven governance approach while they perceived deterioration in the quality education. One of the parents from School B (Pa-B1) also said that this was not the same school but, because there was not a better school close by, they would not be able to move their children:

If I had another option, I would take them out of this school. I would have that one, the not-for-profit school. I will have that any day rather than this, because then it was good. They used all the resources that they had. If there was a problem, they did try to do something about it. Now, you as a parent you see there is a problem, and you sort of sometimes think that it is pointless to talk to the teacher because what is the teacher going to do. The teacher is not able to do anything. Not the same school. We lost our voice. Previously we could discuss things, now nothing.

Some parents did not experience the new profit-driven governors as caring for the school. Previously they had had a relationship with the governors but, according to Pa-B2:

Culture did change, we are not involved. Caring is not coming from above. I think it was more caring holistically for the child. They made sure that the child was spiritually okay.

Parent Pa-B3 was very emotional and said that the governors did not respect them as stakeholders:

I don't think they see parents as stakeholders here. They see parents as, I don't know, consumers of their nonsense. No, they don't see us as stakeholders. There has never been an engagement.

It therefore seems as if the parents experienced a definite change after the change to profit-driven ownership. They also mentioned that the teachers who were part of the previous governance dispensation, were the only group in the school who cared about quality education.

5.6 FINDINGS

I expected to be able to observe how the mission statement changed after the transition from not-for-profit governance ownership to profit-driven ownership. Not one of the stakeholders provided me with any documentation and it seems as if the mission statement on paper is still the same and the expectation from the stakeholders is that the schools would still function in the same way as before the change in ownership. There were problems with documents analysis as has been pointed out in various place in the thesis. I did manage to utilise some documents. The deficient analysis of documents was certainly one of the limitations of the study. Access to documentation showing the product that the profit-driven governors' sell, to the stakeholders could also shed more light on the expectations that the stakeholders have of the governors. This was not provided and for that reason the observations during the interviews form part of the data collection. I could access some website information about the new schools but not about the schools under the previous governance structures.

From the literature review and this research (interviews), the most important change expected from the school-based stakeholders would be an improvement in facilities and academic standards. The expectation came from the stakeholders without it been communicated by the new owners. It was clear during the interviews the difference in the views of the participating principals and HODs, as opposed to the views of the participating parents and teachers. It was noticeable that the management was much more informed and understood the reasons for some of the changes, especially the

management of School A. The information conveyed to all stakeholders (management included) by the governors of School B was noticeably limited.

The participants' disappointment after the change in ownership was evident. A different management style was experienced by some the participating stakeholders, particularly the lack of compassion by the same managers were perceived negatively. It was especially teachers and parents who felt that this was not the same school where they had started to teach at or where they had enrolled their children. The participating teachers from School A experienced an extra workload and the constant pressure that they needed to make sure the learner numbers in the school increased to protect their own jobs. This kind of stress and concern was not experienced during the not-for-profit governance dispensation. The participating teachers at School B had a similar experience and are required to keep parents happy and by providing answers to the concerns about the governors who did not even communicate with the management of the school. Parents from both the participating schools felt that governors did not care about them as stakeholders. They even said that they felt the governors did not respect them to the same extent as the previous not-for-profit governors which was the same governance system for both School A and School B. The previous governors really tried to connect with the parents and took the well-being of the whole family into consideration. The participating teachers from both schools also experienced the previous governors as caring, loving, and approachable people. Some of the teachers mentioned the family atmosphere that they experienced under the not-for-profit governors.

According to Principal P-A, HD-A1, HD-A2 and HD-A3, the new governors were professionally better equipped and more knowledgeable regarding school affairs to govern a school than the previous church governance structures. The principal and HODs of School B experienced the change more emotionally and were not as satisfied with the change. The participating teachers and parents of both schools shared similar emotions. All of them experienced similar problems and stress and did not experience the governors

as fair, trustworthy or transparent in their decision-making. In fact, they were apprehensive and perceived the governors as sly and devious in their decision-making and that that was the reason for the lack of communication.

One of the aspects that was especially important for the parents of both schools was to be informed and involved in the school. They would like more transparency. The reason why they enrolled their children in these schools came out clearly during the interviews. They wanted a Christ-centred education, small classes and a smaller school. They wanted caring teachers, and they wanted to feel that the school cared about their children and their families. They wanted to have a relationship with the governors, and the knowledge that the governors cared about them as shareholders. They wanted to be able to put faces to names and titles and be able to trust the governors' decision-making processes.

It seems as if parents did not complain about lack of equipment or facilities during the previous governance dispensation and that they as parents supported the school even if they had to pay higher school fees than at a public school. But now, the profit-driven school and higher school fees brought an expectation for an improvement of facilities, equipment, and better-qualified teachers. If they had to pay more, they wanted to see improvement.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Change in governance is not only something that happens on paper. It is something emotional. When you work with children, you also need to remember that you work with the whole family. The dream for South African education is to enable all children to receive the best possible education. For the participating parents it is more about just paying the school fees. They would like to see how the money is being allocated in the budget. In

Chapter 5, the participating stakeholders' views regarding the research questions will be discussed further. Issues that came to the surface during the literature review will be revisited.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Since 2012 several independent education companies have started buying individual independent schools to include them in larger master or brand groups. In some cases, these independent not-for-profit schools changed their names to that of the master group or brand, which could imply a change in ethos at that school to better fit the master group or brand.

Present understanding regarding the regulation of power over independent schools by the government to assure quality education is still extremely limited. The involvement of the government in independent education in South Africa as well as the combination of business and education as discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.3.3 were examined in this research.

To determine the pivotal role of the location of power in educational governance, the history of South Africa's public and independent schools was researched. International trends in independent education were also discussed to better understand how independent schools are governed internationally. In 1996, the Department of Education announced its vision for education in South Africa. This vision included lifelong education and training opportunities and a democratic society (DOE, 2001). To create this democratic society, power had to be distributed to the community as well.

An issue relevant to this study is whether the independent schools that went through a change of ownership would lose their unique identity, ethos and in many cases the

specific and unique reason for their original establishment. The questions that arose included how the stakeholders (principal, heads of department, teachers, and parents), viewed this change in governance from not-for-profit governance to profit-driven governance, how the schools were governed now in relation to the previous governance dispensation and how the stakeholders assessed the impact of these changes. I wanted to determine whether a profit-driven corporate governance approach could be compatible with the greater educational environment.

Qualitative research contributes to both theory and practice (Silverman, 2014). In this study the change in governance could significantly shape the views of stakeholders in previously not-for-profit independent schools on the new form of governance. A qualitative research approach was appropriate because this approach typically studies people or systems (governors and governance, as well as stakeholders – management, staff, and parents) by interacting with, and observing the participants in their natural environments (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

A multiple case study was conducted in two specific schools in which this change occurred. The reason for a multiple case study is because the participating schools were part of the same not-for-profit organization (a church) but were bought over by two different profit-driven JSE-listed companies and therefore could contribute to a more convincing theory (Eishardt & Graebner, 2007). The purposive sample method was used because the participants had to be part of an independent school that changed from not-for-profit governance to profit-driven governance and were deliberately selected according to specific criteria (Barnard, 2002). The following research questions were used to guide this study:

Primary Question

The primary research question guiding this study was:

What are the views of stakeholders in formerly independent not-for-profit schools of governance after a change of ownership to a listed company?

Secondary Questions

The secondary research questions in support of the primary question were:

- *How do stakeholders experience the governors' responsibility after the change in ownership?*
- *How do stakeholders experience accountability by the governors after a change in ownership?*
- *How do stakeholders experience the consideration of their legitimate interests in, and expectations of the school as an entity, after a change in ownership?*
- *How do stakeholders experience transparency in decision-making after a change in ownership?*
- *How do stakeholders describe the changes in the ethos and culture of the school after a change of ownership?*

The research questions influenced the formulation of the questions asked during in the semi-structured interviews. This data collection method was flexible and allowed for open-ended and follow-up questions to ensure that rich data could be collected (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Observations also formed part of the data collection. After the data collection, the interviews were transcribed, and meaningful segments were identified. These meaningful segments of the data were coded, and the codes were categorised and organised as categories and themes.

6.2 LIMITATIONS

When I first decided to conduct this research, I did not realise that some stakeholders could decide not to stay at the school after the change in ownership and that limited the study regarding participants. I also think it could be valuable to interview some of the parents and teachers who left the school after the change in ownership. Being able to interview the stakeholders before the change in ownership and after a year under the new governors would have also added value to the data.

By the time I had received my ethical clearance and was ready to conduct the interviews, five years had passed since the change of ownership of the schools occurred. Parents were the most difficult participants to trace. Even though some were very eager to provide all the information, some parents were hesitant to share negative information because they were afraid that they would be victimised, or that their children would be victimised at school. One couple admitted that they were not involved in their children's school at all and did not know if there was a change after the change in ownership. This could contribute to an incorrect view of their experience after the change in ownership because they do not actually know how governance took place before the change of ownership.

Some teacher participants refused to participate in the interviews and said that they did not want to discuss this. After explaining the reason for the research as well as the informed consent, one of the teachers indicated the next day that she would take part in the interview. She was very emotional during the interview, and it was clear that she was very disappointed in the changes that had occurred. Some teachers refused to take part in the interview and for this reason I could only interview three teachers from the one school and four from the other school.

Some of the heads of department from one school believed that the change had been very positive whereas according to the parents and teachers it had not. This is a firm indication of a significant difference in the views of heads of departments on one hand and parents and teachers on the other hand.

There were only two participating principals. One of the principals is still the principal of the school, but the other principal resigned and there is already a third principal. There was no indication from the responses why the other two principals had resigned.

6.3 CONTRIBUTION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Independent schools in South Africa increased over the last few years. The increase of schools also increased the possibility for companies to make a profit from independent schools as mentioned in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.3.3. When education becomes a business, organisations need to be conscious of the fact that, if they buy a school for business purposes, they need to also consult all the school-based stakeholders and make sure that they are transparent in all decisions made. They also need to consult the school-based stakeholders when decisions regarding education are made. From the research, in chapter 5 paragraph 5.5.3.2, and paragraph 5.5.4 it was clear that school-based stakeholders, especially teachers and parents experience the change in governance more traumatic than the principals and heads of departments and for that reason organisations need to be very transparent in their decision-making process.

The experiences of different school-based stakeholders and parents after the change in ownership pointed to the fact that a successful school could also be a successful business. If these organisations could maintain the same educational standards and provide the experiences promised by the not-for-profit governors in a system of profit-driven governance, it could lead to a bright future for education in South Africa. There is

a shortage of schools in South Africa and if organisations can provide high-quality education and still show a profit, more and more shareholders will invest in education even if they do not have children in schools In Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.3 the need for independent schools is discussed in detail. It would appear that the Department of Basic Education could and should become more involve in independent schools especially schools that are governed by corporate governance, to provide support in relation to educational decisions and to ensure that the balance between education and business is maintained.

The relationship between the school-based stakeholders and the governors is very important and need to be a main priority for any organisation who bought a school. In Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.2 the emphasizes the fact that the governing agencies of any school need to foster a relationship of trust between the governors and the school-based stakeholders. Parents need to be part of decision making and need to receive enough information regarding any decision that has been made and as discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.1 Accountability of the governors towards the school-based stakeholders and the accountability of the parents towards the school are important aspects of the success of the school.

6.4 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In the following sub-sections, an overview of the study is provided with a summary of each chapter.

6.4.1 Chapter 1

In Chapter 1 I provided a research map, or chapter planning, to explain what happened in the research. This chapter showed the connections between all the different elements of the research and reference was made to important information explained in the different chapters. The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the thesis to the reader. The extant literature was discussed in Chapter 2.

6.4.2 Chapter 2

The difference between government and governance was discussed. Different kinds of governance were analysed, with the focus being on corporate governance. The differences between public education and independent education internationally and nationally were discussed to develop an understanding of what expectations the government of South Africa has for education. Relevant aspects of the history of education in South Africa and the changes in education after the dawn of democracy were discussed. School governing bodies and how the governance of public schools is structured according to specific policies and regulations were deliberated. Autonomy of independent schools and the influence of profit-driven corporate governance on independent schools were also scrutinised.

6.4.3 Chapter 3

In Chapter 3 the conceptual framework is discussed in detail. The characteristics of good governance were used as the basis for the research questions to be able to answer the main research question. The link between the characteristics of good governance and the view of the school-based stakeholders was used to analyse the view of the school-based stakeholders after the change in governance. As discussed in Chapter 3 these characteristics was used to analyse if the profit-driven corporate governance were viewed by the school-based stakeholders as a successful governance method.

6.4.4 Chapter 4

In Chapter 4, the research methodology, the research design and how the data collection took place were discussed. The main aim of the research was to investigate how stakeholders experienced the change from not-for-profit governance to for-profit governance. The conceptual framework was used to analyse the data to determine how different stakeholders viewed the change in governance (not-for-profit to profit-driven) to answer the research questions. The characteristics of good governance, namely responsibility, accountability, fairness, and trustworthiness as articulated in the King III Report (2009) formed the foundation for the interview questions and data collection strategy. After the data collection, the data was analysed in Chapter 5.

6.4.5 Chapter 5

During the data analysis, the in-depth experiences of the stakeholders (excluding the governors) regarding the change in governance contained instances where different findings than what was anticipated came to the fore. From the first interview, it was clear that the change in governance involved much more than only signatures on paper and the change of a name. The disappointment of parents and teachers was obvious. Emotions had a major influence on the stakeholders. Commitment, especially by the teachers towards the learners and the parents was particularly noteworthy. Communication and trustworthiness emerged as major issues and the fact that the not-for-profit openers (a church) sold the schools to profit-driven companies without discussing the matter with the stakeholders was also an extremely sensitive point which created misgivings and negatively influenced the levels trust between the stakeholders and the governors. The mind-set of corporate governance also influenced the relationship between the stakeholders and the governors. The lack of structures established by the governors and inadequate communication influenced the view of the stakeholders.

The experiences of the management teams of the schools (principals and heads of departments) regarding the change in governance approach differed from those of the teachers and parents. The experiences of the participating stakeholders at the two participating schools also differed. The Venn Diagram in Chapter 4 Figure 4.3 was used to not only illustrate the interconnectedness, but also the differences between the categories and between experiences of the participating stakeholders. The findings are discussed below.

6.5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

South African education needs independent schools to contribute to the provision of education to learners. Independent schools are designed in a way to be independent from the Department of Basic Education. From the research it was clear that all independent schools cannot be regarded as high-quality schools. The culture and the ethos did change after a change in governance led to some degree of confusion, disappointment and a feeling of doubt about the governors of the school.

6.5.1 Governors' responsibility and accountability

For an organisation to buy a school, the responsibility to make sure that quality education take place is a moral obligation and all the governors are accountable to shareholders and stakeholders alike to make sure quality teaching and learning takes place. It is evident that most participating parents from both School A and School B believed that the profit-driven governors did not take up their responsibility. A shortage of equipment and textbooks, poor infrastructure, and no Wi-Fi (both schools used electronic devices even before the schools changed ownership) contributed to the feeling of disappointment of the stakeholders.

From the data collected during the interviews it appeared that the principals and teachers felt that they were accountable for the academic standards in the schools. For them it was their responsibility as teachers to make sure that a high standard of education was maintained in their classes even if the governors were not aware of what was happening in their classes. Teachers explained that they had to re-assure parents that the standard was still the same after the change in ownership. Parents felt that the teachers who were still teaching and were part of the previous not-for-profit governance were delivering high-quality education, but they did not feel the same regarding the new teachers who were appointed by the new governors. In the eyes of other stakeholders, the governors were only accountable towards the shareholders and focused on the profitability of the school much more than on the quality of education. This vested interest and these accountabilities were not compatible with the best interests of the learners, parents and teachers. This was also applicable to the business orientation of the governors that will be discussed in paragraph 5.3.5.

The frustration of teachers was very clear when they explained that the number of learners in their classes increased, and they did not experience any support from the governors. The high turnover of staff (particularly in School B) and an increase in learner disciplinary problems were also noted. Quality assurance can be exceedingly difficult, and teachers felt that they did not receive any support from the governors. It was clear that all the parents hold the teachers responsible and accountable for the academic standards of the schools. This could be seen as unreasonable if the governors do not provide appropriate support to the teaching staff of a school.

Participating stakeholders (especially the teachers and parents) were generally negative about the profit-driven governance dispensation. They compared it with the previous not-for-profit governance approach where they experienced a softer family-driven approach. During the interviews, some teachers and parents became very emotional and expressed their disappointment. One teacher explained that the previous governors and the

management (principal and heads of departments) displayed compassion under the previous governance dispensation, but that when the schools changed to the profit-driven governors, a much harder and rigid management approach was applied. For example, if teachers had a personal crisis, they are now required to take unpaid leave, whereas previously compassion and empathy were shown.

The participating principals and HODs seemed to be more aware of the governors' involvement in the schools and welcomed the fact that they were allowed the management to manage the school according to what they thought was best. As long as they kept to the budget and had enough learners enrolled in their schools, the governors did not interfere. The management also experience the profit-driven governors as much more skilled and focused on education than the previous not-for profit church governors. However, the participating parents and teachers generally experienced the involvement of the previous not-for-profit governance approach more positively than the profit-driven governance approach. Parents explained that in the previous dispensation there was an emotional and academic partnership with the parents in caring for the children in a holistic way. Participating parents and teachers also regarded the not-for-profit governance support towards the school in general and the academic programme in particular as better than what they are experiencing now. Even though they did not always have sufficient and appropriate equipment, resources and facilities, the not-for-profit governors used the resources in such a way that they were able to fulfil all the expectations of the stakeholders.

The development of teachers under the not-for-profit governance always took place in the form of internal school development initiated by the church. One teacher also explained that the church (not-for-profit governors) invested in them spiritually and emotionally. They invested in the learners as well and contributed to their emotional development. Although the profit-driven governors provided funds for professional development in the budget, the teachers experienced that many of the professional development activities

did not apply to them and did not meet their specific needs. Parents were also not very confident that the profit-driven governors appointed the best available teachers to ensure quality education.

The profit-driven owners (JSE-listed companies) provide a shared service to all their schools where all human resource issues, financial matters and even academic support are controlled by experts. This is very much business orientated and could be one of the reasons that everything is managed more formally and without any compassion. Parent participants complained about the 'shared-service, approach. For example, parent participants expressed their disappointed that although they had been involved at the schools for up to fifteen years, the financial department did not have their contact details. Teachers also mentioned that it was difficult if financial and account matters were not handled on the school premises. If parents questioned their accounts, the teachers are expected to provide answers to the parents and most often they do not have the means and information to help. There is also no compassion toward parents. The governors are only interested in the parents who do not pay their accounts so that they can take steps to collect the outstanding fees.

In the process of analysing the data, it became clear that the profit-driven governors did not always have direct contact with the principals, but that there was a manager overseeing all the schools and communicating mainly with the principals. It appeared that lines of communication were one of the first things that changed after the change in ownership. The not-for-profit governors maintained direct contact with the parents and teachers during the previous governance dispensation

The governors' accountability regarding the emotional wellbeing of teachers was perceived negatively due to the number of teachers who resigned since the change in ownership, particularly in School B. Some of the participating parents also mentioned that

they thought the teachers were overburdened and that the governors do not look after the teachers. Most teachers experienced their interaction with the not-for-profit governors as happy and family-like. With profit-driven governors, they experienced a stricter business-orientated approach.

The conclusion from this could be that the governors do not provide the support the stakeholders need. The principals are still in charge of the professional management of the school, but the governors also need to be accountable to the stakeholders and their needs and not only focus on the shareholders.

6.5.2 Change in ethos and culture of the school

The ethos and culture of a school determines the atmosphere or climate of the school. The literature review indicated that parents enrol their children in an independent school for a specific reason. The reason is not always quality education, but the data suggests that parents wanted individual attention and small classes for their children. During open days, schools show the best possible image of the school to be able to attract as many enrolments as possible. When parents enrol their children in a specific school, they expect a kind of culture and ethos. If the owner of a school changes, the assumption will be that there will be a change in culture and ethos. However, with the change in ownership at the participating schools, the expectation from the stakeholders was that the culture and ethos would stay the same.

However, from the participating teachers and parents' perspective, the culture did change. Classes were larger and they experienced the school as more business orientated and as having lost the family feeling. Despite the principal and HODs from School A indicating that there was not a change in culture at the school and that the governors allowed them to keep their DNA, parent participants perceived a change in the

school ethos and culture; about which some of them were very emotional. Some parents also felt disappointed in the fact that they really have to work hard to being able to pay school fees for their children at an independent school but now they realised that the school did not provide anything more than a public school where they could save more money on school fees. They felt that their children are not receiving the quality education and quality teachers that they are paying for.

6.5.3 Neglect of democratic principles

The experience of democratic principles differed among the stakeholders. Regarding decision-making, the principal of School A said that all decisions were made by him; the governors are only interested in the bottom line, namely the profit that the school was making. The principal of School B said all the decisions are made by the governors without her input. The HODs of School A felt confident that the decisions of the principal and governors are very transparent. However, the rest of the stakeholders from School A had the opposite experience and said that they did not see any transparency in decision-making.

Teachers at both schools felt that decisions made by the governors are not transparent and are never discussed with them and that they are never involved in decision-making processes, not even in the budget. A teacher from School A explained that although the school proclaims to have an open-door policy, she never experienced the principal as open when she needs to discuss serious issues. Some of the participants from School A experience transparency and the principal and management also said that they had an open-door policy, but the rest of the stakeholders do not experience it. Teachers also felt that some decisions were made that do not apply to their subjects and that the governors or managers make some training sessions compulsory in order to show that they had conducted some training with the staff, even though it was not necessarily relevant to the teachers. It was clear that no parent, teacher or HOD are included in governance decision-

making processes. No decisions made on behalf of the school are discussed with the stakeholders.

Modisaotsile (2012) expounded the importance of parents' involvement in the education of their children. As explained in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.3, there has been an important change in South Africa to apply democratic principles to enable local school communities, particularly parents, to participate in decisions regarding their children's education. However, it seemed as if parents are not involved in any decision-making processes in these participating schools, neither during the not-for-profit governance dispensation nor with the new profit-driven governance approach. It was surprising that parents did not expect to be part of the decision-making process in independent schools. What is particularly important to them is to be informed of what was happening in their child's school and with the money that they paid each month.

Parent participants explained that they had trusted the previous governors much more than they trust the present governors, even though they are not involved in any decision-making. They had a relationship with the previous governors and knew them personally. One parent explained that under the previous not-for profit ownership, they knew what was going on in the school and could also provide support to other parents in the school, even if it was only as a class representative.

The compassion and care they experienced during the not-for-profit dispensation gave them some feeling of security, and they knew their children were in good hands. However, with the profit-driven governors, they cannot even put a face to a name. There is no form of contact or discussions between the parents and the governors. The parent participants explained very emotionally that they do not trust the profit-driven governors. Parents of School B explained that the governors scheduled meetings with the parents and did not show up. This happened a few times without any explanation or excuse, and it made

parents feel that their dignity was violated and that they are not valued members of the school community. Parents do not trust governors and do not feel the school is in safe hands. Transparency and other democratic principles at the profit-driven schools will be enhanced if governance structures include parental participation and decision-making processes are more inclusive of all the stakeholders. This should also allow for healthy trust relationships to develop between governors and their stakeholders.

6.5.4 Dedication of teachers in independent schools

In Chapter 2 reference was made to the commitment of teachers (paragraph 2.2). Sailors, Hoffman and Matthee (2007) debated the idea that good governance could influence teachers' commitment. The assumption could be made that teachers who teach at an independent school would receive more support and a well-developed working environment and therefore would be more committed and dedicated to their learners than teachers in public schools. The dedication, commitment, and passion of the participating teachers was evident. The emotional connection to their profession by some of the teacher participants was extraordinarily strong.

Teacher participants are disappointed in the level of support they receive from the profit-driven governors and in their working environment after the transition to a profit-driven school. One teacher was so sad and did not want to grant an interview because of her disappointment in profit-driven governance but later she changed her view and participated in the study. Some of the participating teachers were furious and said the governors did not care about them. Personalities differ and each person has his/her way of dealing with different circumstances. If the emotions are not considered, the message was still the same. These teachers demonstrated passion for their profession and their love and dedication towards the learners and the parents of the school without any support from the governors.

The teacher participants of both schools still try their utmost to ensure quality teaching and learning, despite their perception that they are being treated unfairly and that they are overstretched due to a significant increase in their workload. These participants explained that they were under great pressure from the governors to increase the number of learners in the school. The larger numbers of learners in each class also contributed to the learner disciplinary problems in the schools and complicated the work of the teachers.

The data suggests that the governors did not know what was happening in the classes. Parent participants explained that the teachers that were appointed during the not-for-profit governance dispensation were the teachers who kept everything together at the schools. Dedication seemed to go deeper than the circumstances and it seems that the governors do not realise how important these teachers are to the success of the school.

The data analysis showed ongoing commitment, especially from the teachers' side, towards the learners that they teach as well as to the parents. An assumption can be made that the working relationship and success of the school could be improved if the stakeholders and the governors who formed part of the changed governance approach had a better understanding of the expectations of the different stakeholders and governors. Organisations need to keep the trust and commitment of their stakeholders.

6.5.5 Business orientation of governors (board of directors)

The governors or boards of directors did not participate in this research. The specific style that they used to govern the participating schools was also not researched. However, according to the participating stakeholders, the new owners (profit-driven governors) govern the participating schools as if they were a business.

The participating principals and the HODs explained that the principals of the participating schools are responsible for most of the school-based decisions but needed to stay within the budget that is drafted by the governors. Even though the boards of directors are business-orientated, it seemed as if they expect the principal and his/her management team to ensure that quality education takes place within the budget provided to them. However, it seems as if the profit-driven governors allow limited opportunities for stakeholder participation in the budgeting process. Therefore, one may argue that although principals and their management teams are granted autonomy to manage their schools, this autonomy is restricted because they cannot contribute to determine the priority needs of the school. It seems as if the governor's priority is to satisfy the shareholders of their company, rather than to satisfy the needs of the school. The relative autonomy given to the principals by the profit-driven governors to manage their schools also implies that the principals of these schools need to be competent financial managers as well.

6.5.6 Higher fees vis-à-vis quality of education

Independent schools are generally more expensive than public schools and when parents enrol their children in independent schools, they expect value for their money. In these participating schools, parent participants indicated that they enrolled their children for education based on Christian principles, small classes, and that the learners would come from families who share similar values and beliefs'. Parents expected the best of the best because they paid high school fees and they wanted a personal touch and a sound relationship between the teachers, their child and the family. Some participants said they wanted a family-like partnership with the school This was kind of relationship for which they believed they paid for. However, parent participants were disillusioned because they experienced the opposite. The classes became larger, the school enrolled more learners from diverse backgrounds, the Christian values became less prominent, and they experienced less connection to the school.

Parents hold the teachers accountable for the academic standards and believed that the IEB determined the validity and quality of the academic standards. The governors of one of the schools changed from the IEB to the NSC without any transparency in their decision making and consulting with the parents and teachers. A change like this contributed to the fact that the responsibility and accountability of the governors was more focused on the shareholders than the needs and expectations of the stakeholders. The assurance of quality education was not provided to stakeholders after the change in ownership.

School A's parent participants indicated that, although the school infrastructure was good, the school did not have enough equipment, especially in practical subjects. Parents and teachers from School B expressed their disappointment with the infrastructure and facilities of the school. They believe that this independent school is now worse than even the poorest public schools. They complained about the gardens and the image of the school which did not resonate with the image of an independent school. Both parent and teacher participants expressed their lack of trust in the profit-driven governance and referred to the fact that they would like to see the budget of the school to see what they were paying for. This included the fact that some parents also questioned the qualifications of the newly appointed teachers under profit-driven governance. These stakeholders believed they did not receive value for their money.

6.5.7 The appropriateness of corporate governance in the world of education

The transition process from not-for-profit to profit-driven ownership was a very emotional process in both schools. One of the reasons could be the fact that parents and teachers experienced the previous governance as more family orientated and suddenly found that the governors were unknown to them. However, it seems that parents who enrol their children in the schools after the transition profit-driven governance, do not have the same high expectations.

The principal of School A said a few times that he had the freedom to manage the school and the governors were not prescriptive. However, each time he said the governors were only interested in the bottom line (profit). This was a clear indication that the vested interests of the governors and the stakeholders were of primary importance. To only allow the principal to decide what happens with the allocation of the budget, without a say and influence in the budget amount, shows that profit is more important than the needs of the stakeholders. This would influence the principal's management style as well as the execution of the budget. From the data it was clear that the management style during the not-for-profit governors' reign was a more "*caring*" and "*softer*" management style and compassion, and consideration was shown to the stakeholders. The management style under the profit-driven governors, from the same management team, was purely business orientated with a "harder" and more strict and inflexible approach, especially towards the teachers. This resonates with the business-orientated approach mentioned in paragraph 5.3.5.

The responsibility of an independent school towards a community includes much more than making a profit. Corporate governance needs to provide what is required to meet the educational needs of the school communities. If profit-driven companies show profits and expect stakeholders to pay a high premium for education, they need to ensure that their stakeholders receive more than simply basic education. The learners in these schools have the right to quality education, highly qualified teachers, good facilities, and enough equipment in all their classrooms because their parents pay for it. If the governors are interested in the number of learners, they also need to make sure that there are enough teachers and that the teachers receive appropriate support from the governors. However, the opinion of the participants in this study is that the governors of these participating schools did not apply the principles of good governance as stipulated in the King III Report (Institute of Directors, 2009).

Whether a profit-driven or not-for-profit driven approach is applied should not determine the quality of education provided by a school. Good governance should determine the quality education provided by a school and the focus should be on the best interests of the learners. To make a profit out of quality education is not against the law, but to charge parents a premium fee to enrol their children in a school which provides lesser quality than a public school is not only a disadvantage to the educational system of South Africa but is also detrimental to each learner enrolled in such a school and the family supporting them. It is also a violation of a child's right to quality education. This is something that the education system of South Africa cannot afford.

6.6 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Research regarding school governing bodies indicates the positive and the negative influence of parents who form part of the decision-making system of a school. The literature emphasises that the main aim is to include parents in their child's education. If parents are part of their child's education, whole communities could develop for the better. From the literature review in Chapter 2, it was clear that the field of independent schools in South Africa is still relatively under researched. Since the change of government in South Africa in 1994 and the introduction of a partnership model in public school governance, there has been a great deal of research regarding the role of school governing bodies and the policies regarding the involvement of parents in the decision-making process in public schools. Although some research regarding the importance of independent schools have been done, hardly any could be found regarding the governance of independent schools, particularly with a focus on corporate governance.

Research regarding the effect on a community when corporate companies listed on the JSE buy small not-for-profit schools and change them into large independent schools listed on the JSE has not been done yet. In this research, the focus was particularly on the views of some of the stakeholder groups regarding a change to profit-driven

ownership. It seems that the participants regarded and experienced these changes as much more than only signatures on paper. Quality assurance regarding education includes much more than profit. Corporate companies need to know the needs of all stakeholders if they invest in an educational institution.

6.7 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THIS RESEARCH

With the main and secondary research questions in mind, the following conclusions were made:

- The primary research question was: *What are the views of stakeholders in formerly independent not-for-profit schools of governance after a change of ownership to a listed company?* Some changes were expected in the governance of the schools but that the quality of education would not be jeopardised, that the positive aspects of the not-for-profit governance style would be retained and that there would be good communication and support from the governors.

The data suggests that stakeholders experienced a definite change after the transition to profit-driven ownership. For some of the participants the change was drastic and emotional. For others it was gradual and evolutionary. Some of the participants in management positions experienced the change as positive and that that it brought improvement. However, parent and teacher participants in both schools perceived the change negatively and experienced inadequate communication, transparency and openness from the profit-driven governance structures.

- The first secondary research question was: *How do stakeholders experience the governors' responsibility after the change in ownership?* Generally, the participants experienced the governors as uninvolved, not taking up their responsibilities. The

principals and his/her management teams are solely responsible for the professional management of the schools. Parent participants indicated that the new profit-driven governors did not care about them as stakeholders. For them it seems as if everything was just about money and that the new profit-driven governors do not provide what was promised the take-over of the not-for-profit schools.

- The second sub-question was: *How do stakeholders experience accountability by the governors after a change in ownership?* The governors who mostly came from the world of business were expected to be familiar with the King Reports (2009, 2015) and would perhaps demonstrate more accountability towards the stakeholders than the previous not-for-profit governors. The stakeholders experienced the governors as only accountable to the shareholders for the profit shown at the end of the financial year. Stakeholders did not experience the governors as supportive, and teachers experienced more pressure from the governors without any support.
- The third sub-question was: *How do stakeholders experience the consideration of their legitimate interests in, and expectations of the school as an entity, after a change in ownership?* The stakeholders of one of the schools experienced the profit-driven governors as uninvolved and as not respecting their legitimate interests. Some parents questioned the qualifications of the newly appointed teachers. There was disillusionment with what seemed to be perceived unlawful actions like holding back learners' report cards if school fees had not been paid. One of the stakeholders even believed that the governors used the fees on the stock exchange and not in the interests of the school. Stakeholders did not experience representation on the board of directors and were not involved in any discussions or asked for any input regarding the budget or the future in the school. This led to an overall feeling of exclusion.

- The fourth sub-question was: *How do stakeholders experience transparency in decision-making after a change in ownership?* As transparency had been identified as one of the main characteristics of good governance in the King Reports (2009, 2015), it was reasonable for parents to expect transparency of decision-making and actions by the governors.

However, most of the participating stakeholders generally experienced a lack of transparency. They did not know the governors. They did not trust the governors and did not feel that governors' decision-making processes were transparent. Parents as stakeholders do not have the opportunity to take part in budget discussions, which contributes to the lack in trust. A sense of apprehension and suspicion regarding the trustworthiness of governors permeated many responses. No parent is involved in, or part of the board of directors and this contributes to the suspicion and lack of trust regarding the governors.

- The fifth sub-question was: *How do stakeholders describe the changes in the ethos and culture of the school after a change of ownership?* The stakeholders of the not-for-profit schools expected that the ethos and the culture of the schools would remain unaffected as promised during the negotiations before the take-over, or else they would probably not have agreed to a change of ownership.

Stakeholders from both schools experienced a significant change in the ethos and culture of the schools. As the previous owners of the participating were a church, the participating schools had a deliberate focus on an ethos based on Christian values. They were also accustomed to governors supporting the teachers, learners and parents and their families. The increase of learner numbers in the schools after the transition to profit-driven ownership brought a change in the culture and ethos of both schools. The caring aspect of the governors' involvement seemed to

disappear, and the teachers had difficulty in understanding how the same managers could suddenly have different rules. The management style applied at both schools changed from a softer people centered approach to a harder managerialist and less flexible approach.

Corporate governance and educational institutions could be a highly effective and successful combination. The change from not-for-profit governance to profit-driven governance could also contribute to an improvement of the quality of education being provided by the South African education system. However, the way a transition from a not-for-profit to a profit-driven governance approach takes place need to be considered very carefully. Stakeholders, especially the partners who are directly affected by such a transition, need to be informed about the change process and its consequences in advance.

Parents who are stakeholders in an independent school form an especially important part of the organization. Even if the decision-making power is with the governors and not with the parents, as is the case in public schools, parents need to be involved in decision-making processes. In addition, effective communication with all the stakeholders to promote transparency is very important.

6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.8.1 Improvement of practice

6.8.1.1 Involvement of parents in for-profit schools

A direct result of this study concerns the long-term goals of organisations that invest in schools. The involvement of parents in the governance of independent schools could contribute to an improved quality education in the South African independent school

sector in particular, and the whole education system in general as discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.2.4. If corporate profit-driven organisations invest in education, the governors need to include educators and parents in the governance structures who know the needs of teachers and learners in the classroom as discussed in Chapter 5 paragraph 5.5.1 and 5.5.1.2 . Such inclusion does can even be in an advisory capacity. This will not only allow for greater participation of local school communities, but also increase accountability and transparency in the way these schools are governed.

6.8.1.2 Focus to be broader than financial profit

Profit cannot be the only focus of an educational institution. In chapter 5 paragraph 5.5.4.2 parent Pa-B2 explain the disappointment with the profit-driven governors who do not care about the children but only about the profit. However, profit could contribute to better facilities. One of the participants (Pa-A2) mentioned with some justification that independent schools could adopt and support under-resourced public schools. In that way, independent schools could contribute to the broader educational needs of our country.

6.8.1.3 Community involvement

Governors need to know and acknowledge that a school consists of a community. Compassion and empathy need to be shown to all stakeholders of the school. Parents need support and guidance of the school in raising their children. In chapter 5 paragraph 5.5.4.2 Teacher T-A3 mention the fact that the pervious not-for-profit governors was more family driven and made a difference in the children's lives. Parent Pa -A4 also mention that their experience a team effort between the governors and the school-based stakeholders during the not-for-profit governance, but after the change in ownership they felt that the governors do not even care about them. When a company buys a school, the

process before the transaction and the process after the transaction need to be planned and implemented very carefully.

6.8.1.4 Communication

Attention needs to be given to communication with stakeholders, especially the teachers and parents. In chapter 5 paragraph 5.5.1.2 parent Pa-B1 said it felt as if they lost their voice, and they feel totally lost under the profit-driven governors. Teacher T-B3 mention in chapter 5 paragraph 5.5.4.1 the fact there they never receive any feedback from the governor's side, and they never see the governors. The new governors of the school need to be more visible and need to be active in the school's activities. Relationships of trust take time to develop and need to be established between stakeholders. A representative from the new owners (JSE-listed company) need to be available to address parents at least once a term. The psychological and emotional effect of a transaction like this on the stakeholders needs to be addressed. The emotional effect on the parents and teachers was much greater than what had been anticipated. These emotions also influence the children and the whole family structure.

6.8.2 Issues to be covered in future research

6.8.2.1 Effectiveness of governance structures in independent schools

More research therefore needs to be done regarding the most effective school governance structures for independent schools, both not-for-profit and profit driven. There is a variety of independent schools in South Africa, each with their own governing structure. More research could be conducted to compare the effectiveness of the various governing structures: some independent schools owned by an individual private person, some schools form part of a trust, some schools are based on a specific religion, some are international schools and there are schools owned by profit-driven companies, listed on the JSE.

6.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This change from a not-for-profit governance to a profit-driven governance has not been researched before, and this study produced knowledge (views and experiences) about the change in governance in independent schools from the view of stakeholders. The study revealed stakeholders' views that governors' accountability towards shareholders is not in line with the expectations of the stakeholders and good governance. A business-orientated approach contributes to a profitable education institution and a valuable investment for shareholders. However, this approach needs to be carefully managed to accommodate the needs and expectations of stakeholders and education as a unit. Schools consist not only of the buildings and learners but are also part of a community. Parents need to be part of the educational process and all decisions need to be transparent and in the best interests of quality education.

From this research it was clear that there is a significant gap between the expectations of stakeholders regarding the commitment of the governors towards them and the way these expectations panned out in practice. After the change in governance, stakeholders experienced the governors as a board of directors with a fixed focus on the "bottom-line" or profit. This contributed to a conflict of interest between the stakeholders and the governors. For the stakeholders the change from not-for-profit to profit-driven governance was a very emotional process exacerbated by a lack in communication between the stakeholders and the governors and a decrease in trust and transparency.

Passion and commitment from teachers showed the value and importance of education. Education is much more than the transference of knowledge; it includes the pedagogical value to lead children to become well-developed adults. It is concerning that stakeholders at the newly-formed independent schools believed that the schools did not look after their teachers with the same passion and commitment shown by their teachers.

The fact that some parents felt the need to question the qualifications of teachers at an independent school where the school fees were much higher than a public school seems to resonate with the question of the effectiveness of independent schools. Parents enrol their children in independent schools and trust the teachers and the management of the school to provide the best possible education to them. When an organisation invests in a school, they cannot only invest in the buildings and the possible income from the school fees. When they invest in an educational institution, the organisation should take up the responsibility to provide whatever is needed for quality education to take place.

The trust of the parents regarding the teachers in the school was remarkable. It seems as if the parents relied almost exclusively on the teachers for quality education and not the governors. They believed that the success of the school was largely determined by the teachers and not the managers or the governors. A close community like this could also lead to the exclusion of learners, contrary to the vision for South African education. Education is about children and pedagogy, and quality teaching and education. Community is about family, support, and a hand in need.

Profit-driven schools could be very effective if the communication between both parties (organisation and school) is open and trustworthy. Principals need to look after their staff and make sure they provide what is necessary to teach in the class. The governors need to support the principals. A school is not only a business, but also a community. Education and business can be an exceptionally good combination if communication between all the stakeholders is functional. Expectations from all stakeholders need to be discussed and each stakeholder needs to know what their role in the school is. Marketing of the school is not the responsibility of the teachers, but if the governors look after the teachers, marketing will take place by word of mouth. A profit-driven organisation also needs to be mindful of the real relationship between learner numbers and school success. Quality education, quality equipment and highly qualified and committed teachers will contribute to the success of the school.

In terms of theory about independent schools, this study suggests that the theory needs to be expanded to cover transitions from not-for-profit independent faith-based schools to profit-driven schools owned by companies listed on stock exchanges. The theory also needs to deal with the shareholder-stakeholder-school community relations at such profit-driven schools. Parents' views of the quality of education provided by independent schools and their expectations of governors' behaviour towards them also need to be included in the theory's purview and used to modify the general notion that independent schools offer better quality than other schools.

6.10 FINAL REMARKS

Education is very important to any country. Nelson Mandela, former South African president said: "*Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world*". Independent schools can increase help provide quality education to learners of different socio-economic backgrounds if they focus on quality education by ensuring that quality teachers teach in an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Section 29 of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) not only stipulates that everybody has the right to a basic education, but also that any person may establish an independent school in accordance with certain conditions. Independent schools can contribute to ensuring the fulfilment of education rights by providing quality education in areas where there are no adequate facilities and opportunities.

Importantly, governors of independent schools need to be mindful of their stakeholders' needs and expectations. As indicated in the King III Report (Institution of Directors, 2005), good governance includes responsibility, accountability, fairness, and trustworthiness. These values need to be projected by governors. For example, as school-based

stakeholders, teachers and parents need to be consulted in the budgeting process. Opportunities must be created for them to voice their needs and they need to feel that the management and the governors of their school care about them as people. Stakeholders need to trust the governors of the school and need to feel that they receive value (quality education) for their money.

Respect and dignity are one of the most important values in education. They include respecting the children who have the right to education, and parents who pay a great deal of money to enrol their children in independent schools. Respect should also be shown to the principals, their management teams and their teachers in order for them to manage their institutions in such a way that quality education can take place. Therefore, all educational institutions, including independent schools, should aim to improve education in South Africa and give every child in our country the opportunity to become who he or she is supposed to be.

“One of the most powerful tools for empowering individuals and communities is making certain that any individual who wants to receive a quality education can do so.”

Christene Gregoire

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APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER: OPERATIONAL HEAD/PRINCIPAL OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

June 2019

Dear Principal /Operational Head

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am a teacher and have enrolled for a PhD Degree at the University of Pretoria at the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies under the supervision of Prof. J.L. Beckmann.

A requirement for completing my PhD degree is to conduct a research study and compile a report of my findings. I hereby request your permission to conduct a part of my research at your school.

The title for my research is: **Stakeholder views of educational governance after a change in ownership of independent schools.** The aim of the study is to investigate stakeholders' views of change, if any, in the governance after a change in ownership. Due to an increase in the number of independent Schools in South Africa, as well as a large number of not-for-profit schools that changed to profit-driven schools, I will focus on the change in governance.

A case study will be done at two schools who changed from not-for-profit governance schools to schools governed by a public listed company during the past five years.

Participants will be requested to participate in a semi-structured interview led by myself and this should take approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete. During the interview questions relating to their view and opinion of the impact of the change in governance will be asked, as well as further probing questions based on the responses given. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed.

In this study all information will be treated as sensitive and confidential and the identity of participants will not be revealed at any time. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the information given by the participants. All activities will take place after school hours to ensure minimum disruption to the activities of the school and the educators' programmes. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and anonymous and participants may withdraw from the study at any point during the study, with no consequences.

If you agree that this research can be conducted, I would appreciate if you could complete the attached consent form. Feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any queries regarding my research.

Yours faithfully



Ms Ilze Breedt (Student)

ilzebreedt@gmail.com



Prof. J.L. Beckmann (Supervisor)

johan.beckmann21@gmail.com

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER TO SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBER

Gauteng

June 2019

Dear Senior Management Team Member

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a teacher and I have enrolled for my PhD Degree at the University of Pretoria at the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies under the supervision of Prof. J.L. Beckmann.

A requirement for completing my PhD degree is to conduct a research study and compile a report of my findings. I hereby request you to participate in my research study.

The title of my research is: **Stakeholder views of educational governance after a change in ownership of independent schools**. The aim of the study is to investigate stakeholders' views of change, if any, in the governance after a change in ownership. Due to an increase in the number of independent schools in South Africa, as well as a large number of not-for-profit schools which changed to profit-driven schools, I will focus on the change in governance.

A case study will be done at two schools which changed from not-for-profit independent schools to schools governed by public listed companies during the past five years.

You will be requested to participate in a semi-structured interview, and this should take approximately 30 to 40 minutes. During the interview, questions relating to your view and opinion of the impact of change in governance will be asked, as well as further probing questions based on the responses given. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed.

In this study, all information will be treated as sensitive and confidential, and the identity of participants will not be revealed at any time. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the information given by the participants. All activities will take place after school hours to ensure minimum disruption to the activities of the school and the educators'

programmes. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and anonymous and participants may withdraw from the study at any point during the study, with no consequences.

If you agree to this research, I would appreciate it if you could complete the attached consent form. Feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any queries regarding my research.

Yours faithfully



Me Ilze Breedt (Student)

ilzebreedt@gmail.com



Prof. J.L Beckmann

johan.beckmann21@gmail.com

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER TO SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBER

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM AND SEND IT TO:

Email: ilzebreedt@gmail.com

I _____ (Full names and Surname)

Contact details:

Email address: _____

Phone numbers: _____

Other contact details: _____

hereby give my consent to participate in the research.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER TO TEACHER

June 2019

Dear Teacher

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a teacher and I have enrolled for a PhD Degree at the University of Pretoria at the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies under the supervision of Prof. J.L. Beckmann.

A requirement for completing my PhD degree is to conduct a research study and compile a report of my findings. I hereby request you to participate in my research study.

The title of my research is: **Stakeholder views of educational governance after a change in ownership of independent schools**. The aim of the study is to investigate stakeholders' views of change, if any, in the governance after a change in ownership. Due to an increase in the number of independent schools in South Africa, as well as a large number of not-for-profit schools which changed to profit-driven schools, I will focus on the change in governance.

A case study will be done at two schools which changed from not-for-profit independent schools to schools governed by public listed companies during the past five years.

You will be requested to participate in a semi-structured interview, and this should take approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete. During the interview questions relating to your view and opinion of the impact of change in governance will be asked, as well as further probing questions based on the responses given. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed.

In this study all information will be treated as sensitive and confidential and the identity of participants will not be revealed at any time. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the information given by the participants. All activities will take place after school hours to

ensure minimum disruption to the activities of the school and the educators' programmes. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and anonymous and participants may withdraw from the study at any point during the study, with no consequences.

If you agree to this request, I would appreciate it if you could complete the attached consent form. Feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any queries regarding my research.

Yours faithfully



Me Ilze Breedt (Student)

ilzebreedt@gmail.com



Prof. J.L Beckmann

johan.beckmann21@gmail.com

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER TO TEACHER

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM AND SEND IT TO:

Email: ilzebreedt@gmail.com

I _____ (Full names and Surname)

Contact details:

Email address: _____

Phone numbers: _____

Other contact details: _____

hereby give my consent to participate in the research.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION LETTER TO PARENT

Dear Parent

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a teacher and I have enrolled for a PhD Degree at the University of Pretoria at the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies under the supervision of Prof. J.L. Beckmann.

A requirement for completing my PhD degree is to conduct a research study and compile a report of my findings. I hereby request you to participate in my research study.

The title of my research is: **Stakeholder views of educational governance after a change in ownership of independent schools**. The aim of the study is to investigate stakeholders' views of change, if any, in the governance of a school after a change in ownership. Due to an increase in the number of independent Schools in South Africa, as well as a large number of not-for-profit schools which changed to profit-driven schools, I will focus on the change in governance.

A case study will be done at two schools which changed from not-for-profit governance schools to schools governed by public listed companies during the past five years.

You will be requested to participate in a semi-structured interview, and this should take approximately 30 to 40 minutes. During the interview, questions relating to your view and opinion of the impact of change in governance will be asked, as well as further probing questions based on the responses given. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed.

In this study, all information will be treated as sensitive and confidential, and the identity of participants will not be revealed at any time. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the information given by the participants. All activities will take place after school hours to ensure minimum disruption to the activities of the school and the educators' programmes. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and anonymous and

participants may withdraw from the study at any point during the study, with no consequences.

If you agree to this request, I would appreciate it if you could complete the attached consent form. Feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any queries regarding my research.

Yours faithfully



Me Ilze Breedt (Student)

ilzebreedt@gmail.com



Prof. J.L Beckmann

johan.beckmann21@gmail.com

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION LETTER TO PARENT

PLEASE FILL IN THE FORM AND SEND IT TO:

Email: ilzebreedt@gmail.com

I _____ (Full names and Surname)

Contact details:

Email address: _____

Phone numbers: _____

Other contact details: _____

hereby give my consent to participate in the research.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX E INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OPERATIONAL HEADS AND PRINCIPALS

The title of my study is:

Shareholder views on the change in governance after a change in ownership

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. Be informed that this interview is recorded for analysing purposes. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from participating at any point in time, should you feel like doing so, without any consequences. It is of utmost importance that you respond to all questions as honestly as possible, as all responses provided by you will be treated confidentially. I want to repeat that you are the only sources who can assist me with information to answer my research question and be in a position to understand the change of governance as viewed by shareholders after a not-for-profit school became part of a public company.

Interview questions

Responsibilities

1. What are your responsibilities at the school?
2. After the change in school ownership, did your view with regard to your responsibility to key questions change
3. Which responsibilities are transferred to the governors after the change in ownership?

Accountability

4. Were you involved in managing the not-for-profit school's finances?
5. Could you influence the distribution of money in compiling the school's annual budget?
6. Did you see a change in governance regarding the accountability for the allocation of funds in the school?
7. Do you work with the governors to determine if improvements need to be made in academic standards or structures?

Transparency

8. How did you experience and view the transparency of information when it was still a non-profit- driven school?
9. Did you experience a change regarding the ethos and culture of the governors regarding staff matters?
10. What you think of the transparency of decisions made by the governors?

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

The title for my study is:

Shareholder views on the change in governance after a change in ownership

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. Be informed that this interview is recorded for analysing purposes. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from participating at any point in time, should you feel like doing so, without any consequences. It is of utmost importance that you respond to all questions as honestly as possible, as all responses provided by you will be treated confidentially. I want to repeat that you are the only sources who can assist me with information to answer my research question and be in a position to make recommendations which can improve the induction of novice teachers into the practice of the profession.

Interview questions

Responsibilities

1. Do you know the governing body of the school?
2. In your opinion, what responsibilities to governors of the school have
3. Did you experience a change in your responsibilities, as part of the SMT of the school, after the change in ownership?

Accountability

4. In your view, what is the accountability of the governance structures with regards to the academic standards of the school?
5. How do you view your accountability for the academic standard of the school?
6. Can you influence the academic standard or academic level of the school?

Fairness

7. Were you previously involved in the consideration of the legitimate interests of SMT members?
8. Did you experience a change in expectations from governors after the change of ownership?

Transparency

9. How would you describe the culture and the ethos of the non-profit-focused school?
10. Did you experience a change in the culture and ethos after the change in ownership?
11. What do you think of the transparency of decisions and their influence on the academic development of learners?

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

The title for my study is:

Shareholder views on the change in governance after a change in ownership

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. The aim of this interview is to obtain your views with regards to induction for teachers starting their career. Be informed that this interview is recorded for analysing purposes. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from participating at any point in time, should you feel like doing so, without any consequences. It is of utmost importance that you respond to all questions as honestly as possible, as all responses provided by you will be treated confidentially. I want to repeat that you are the only sources who can assist me with information to answer my research question and be in a position to understand the change of governance viewed by shareholders after a not-for-profit school became part of a public company.

Interview questions

Responsibilities

1. How did you experience management and execution of responsibilities during the previous governance of the school?
2. Did you experience a change in responsibilities, related to academic matters and development, of the school after the change in ownership?

Accountability

3. Were you accountable for the academic standard in your classroom?
4. Who ensured that your specific subject/s are on standard?
5. How do you view the governors' accountability regarding the academic standard in your school?
6. Are the governors aware of what you do in your classroom?

7. As part of the previous not-for-profit school, were the governors aware of what, and how many students you are teaching?

Fairness

8. After the change in ownership, how did you experience expectations from you as a teacher from the governors?
9. Do you know what is the ratio of learner: teacher after the change in ownership? Is it different from the past?

Transparency

10. How would you describe the culture and the ethos of the non-profit-driven school?
11. Did you experience a change after the change in ownership?
12. What is your experience regarding the transparency of decisions made during the last two years?

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

The title for my study is:

Shareholder views on the change in governance after a change in ownership

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. Be informed that this interview is recorded for analysing purposes. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from participating at any point in time, should you feel like doing so, without any consequences. It is of utmost importance that you respond to all questions as honestly as possible, as all responses provided by you will be treated confidentially. I want to repeat that you are the only sources who can assist me with information to answer my research question and be in a position to understand the change of governance viewed by shareholders after a not-for-profit school became part of a public company.

Interview questions

Responsibilities

1. Did parents share responsibilities with regard to the academic management of the school while it was still a not-for-profit school?
2. How did the parents' governance responsibility change after the change in ownership?

Accountability

3. In the not-for-profit school, who did you hold accountable for the school's academic standard and your child's academic performance? Did it change when the ownership changed?
4. In what format and to what extent did the school communicate the academic approach and standard they would follow, if they did communicate it at all?

Fairness

5. What is your opinion and experience of the legitimate interests of the governors in the academic performance levels of the school?
6. Did you view a change after the change in ownership?

Transparency

7. How would you describe the culture and the ethos of the non-profit-focused school?
8. Did you experience a change after the change in ownership?
9. How do you experience the disclosure of information after the change in ownership?
10. What is your experience with regard to the academic standard learners achieve after the change in ownership?