

## Chapter 5

### 5.0 THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE RESPONDENTS

#### 5.1 Introduction

Four schools which were formally controlled by the now defunct DET in the Odendaalsrus district were purposely selected for qualitative research on the basis of their scholastic achievement, the appearance of the school premises and the deviant behaviour of the educators attached to the four selected schools which had been reported to the District Office. The reason for choosing these four schools was for the researcher to conduct qualitative research effectively (Miles & Huberman 1994:27). Table 4-1 depicts the four schools which are designated in accordance with their worst scholastic achievement as School A, School B, School C and School D.

Throughout the discussion, the four schools are therefore referred to as A, B, C and D. The four principals of the four selected schools were requested in writing to participate in the interviews and discussions, and they voluntarily accepted the request. Similarly, the following teacher organisations' members participated voluntarily in the research project: The South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), The Orange Free State Teachers' Association (OFSATA) and the South African Teachers' Union (SATU) (cf. Annexure D). Lastly, the four School Management Developers (SMDs) concerned were also requested to supply information which contributed to the shaping of this study (cf. Annexure C).

The perceptions of the principals in paragraph 5.5.2, the members of the teacher organisations in paragraph 5.6.2 and the SMDs in paragraph 5.7.2 are not the ideas of the researcher. It must be remembered that in paragraph 1.2 it was stated that the findings will not be generalised or verified. It was furthermore indicated that as far as the qualitative research design is concerned, the findings can be proved wrong. In addition to this, it must be noted that perceptions are not necessarily true or valid. The researcher will make references to illustrate possible links between results and causes. However, the researcher is aware that the relations between causes and results are very complex and some links may be simplistic.

## **5.2 The qualitative research design**

In this research project, the researcher was primarily concerned with the extent to which misconduct was committed, as well as the knowledge of how misconduct should be handled by the principals of the four selected schools and the impact the misconduct has on the management and the leadership of the principals of the four selected schools (Creswell 1994:145). The researcher did attempt to find out the motives surrounding the commitment of misconduct by some of the educators. The question why some educators commit misconduct did shed light on the issues regarding misconduct.

The data was primarily collected by the researcher and then interpreted and analysed by him. No questionnaires were sent to the participants. Instead, structured questions were used in the formal interviews and discussions (cf. Annexures A, B & C). It must also be noted that unstructured questions were also used in informal interviews and discussions. The data was collected by way of involving fieldwork i.e. the researcher went physically to the four selected schools to observe the behaviour of educators in their natural setting and to peruse official documents such as logbooks, instruction books, minutes and the reports of the School Management Teams (SMTs) as well as those of the School Management Developers (SMDs).

The researcher was interested in what the educators did over a period of time, that is in the meaning of what the educators did which is referred to by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:68-70) as the research process. For example, negligence that resulted in the four selected schools' dismal poor performance (cf. Table 4-1) and other factors were studied. The researcher also attached meaning to the graffiti that was on the walls of the four schools. The broken window panes and the vandalised classrooms in some instances were described in order to give meaning to the irreparable damage that the political struggle did and the events that followed. From the data collected, the researcher was able to inductively build concepts and to construct knowledge and new ideas in respect of misconduct (cf. Pictures 2-1 & 4-1).

## **5.3 The qualitative research procedures**

The boundaries for the study were set in that only four schools were chosen. This was done in order to enable the researcher to collect information or data by personally going to the four selected schools to observe what was happening at the schools, to conduct interviews with the

relevant participants and to study official documents as well as the other visual materials and objects such as the surroundings, the buildings and physical assets. A system of recording data and important information was established.

For instance, a meeting with the participants was held after school in a classroom arranged by the principal for this purpose. The researcher explained the terminology used in the structured questions to the participants in order to avoid misconstruction (cf. Annexures A, B & C). The participants were requested to appoint a person who would facilitate the discussion and also one who would record the participants' salient points. This was done in order to ensure freedom of discussion. During the discussion, the researcher was available to answer any questions that the participants asked and to clarify any misunderstanding.

After the participants had discussed the questions among themselves, the facilitator of the group or the scribe was requested to report back in the presence of the group, and the researcher asked questions where there was misunderstanding, while at the same time notes were taken. The notes taken by the researcher and the information written by the participants' scribe helped the researcher in collecting data that was relevant to the study. During the discussion, the researcher was able to make deductions, to interpret and to analyse the information or data supplied by the participants. In the unstructured interviews and discussions the researcher jotted down important points immediately after the discussions, in the absence of the participants, and in this way knowledge with regard to misconduct was constructed.

It is very important at this stage to make mention of the fact that the observational notes were taken by the researcher as a participant and an observer, while conducting an observation at the four selected schools, and this was done over a year. The data or the information was also collected by way of analysing official documents such as reports written by the SMDs and the SMTs, minutes of meetings and newspaper reports. The biographies of the participants were noted, and their anonymity was guaranteed in that their names and schools where they are attached were not mentioned. Lastly, photographs were taken as one of the data recording procedures.

The data recording procedures were considered to be a very important step. It is for this reason that the researcher was careful as to what was to be recorded, and what was not i.e. the chaff was carefully separated from the wheat. This was also done by carefully considering how the data was

to be recorded. It is notable that data analysis procedures in respect of qualitative research differ from the quantitative research in that the data analysis is: "simultaneously [analysed] with data collection, data interpretation and narrative reporting writing" (Caswell 1994:153).

Because the interpretative approach which, according to Schwandt (1994:118), is referred to as the constructivist by some scholars was used in analysing data, the researcher considered the excessive amount of information that was collected through interviews and discussions, observation and official documents, and systematised it by classifying it under certain categories, so that it could be interpreted to construct knowledge.

For instance, question 4, in the Annexure B, namely "Explain in detail why some teachers do not take the classes they have to teach" which was to be responded to by the members of the teacher formations is aimed at finding out whether educators contravene section 17(1)(d) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998) and section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution (No. 108 of 1996).

#### **5.4 The interpretivist and constructivist approaches**

The constructivist and interpretivist approaches in which phenomenological, dialectical and hermeneutical methods are used by the exponents of the qualitative research design are used in this research project. For instance, the dialectic method was used during the data collection phase. During this phase, all the responses of the participants, all the observed phenomena and all the reported incidents of misconduct were recorded in the note book meant for this purpose.

In this chapter, the data collected through the interviews and discussions, the observation and the reading of the official documents will be interpreted to construct authentic and trustworthy knowledge which will of course not be generalised. The interpretation of the data in this chapter is the final stage of the data interpretation which is referred to as the data interpretation phase (Schwandt 1994:129). It is in this phase where the responses of the principals, the members of the teachers' unions and the school management developers will be interpreted (cf. paragraphs 5.5.2, 5.6.2 & 5.7.2).

To support and to authenticate the interviews findings, the hermeneutic method will be used in this chapter (cf. Figure 5-1 & paragraph 5.5.2). The charge sheets of the cases of misconduct at the four project schools as well as the recorded cases of misconduct which were brought before



the disciplinary hearing will be explicated as objectively as possible. The interpretivist approach will be used to interpret the data collected from the contents of the logbooks, minutes books, time books, misconduct charge sheets etc., while the constructivist approach will be used to construct knowledge from the interpreted data.

The phenomena which manifested themselves in the four project schools, and which were observed during the data collection phase will be interpreted during the data interpretation phase. This means that in this chapter, the phenomena will be interpreted to construct knowledge (cf. paragraphs 5.5.2, 5.6.2 & 5.7.2). The method which will help to describe the phenomena during the interpretation phase is phenomenological method (van Rensburg and Landman 1988:442,446).

In the paragraphs that follow, the responses of the principals, the members of the teachers' unions and the school management developers of the four project schools as well as the observed phenomena and the explicated contents of the official documents are discussed using the qualitative research principles and procedures which are mentioned in paragraph 1.6. The constructivist and the interpretivist approaches as well as the hermeneutical and the phenomenological methods will help a great deal in the interpretation and the construction of knowledge in this chapter.

## **5.5 Interpretation and analysis of principals' responses**

### **5.5.1 Brief biographical data of principals**

The principal of School A is well qualified because he holds three university degrees namely Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Education and Master of Arts. He has also a Higher Education Diploma. This man started his professional career as an educator in the Free State Goldfields. In spite of the fact that he pursued theological studies, he was never ordained as a minister of religion, and as such he is not a preacher. He has ten years' experience as a principal. Counting back from the tenth year to the first year in which he first became a principal, it becomes clear that he started principalship at a very difficult time in the history of South African Education (cf. paragraph 1.2).

The principal of School B has only four years' experience as a principal. At the time when he started teaching, he had only a Primary Teachers' Certificate. As time went by he enrolled for the Further Diploma in Education which he passed. This man was not satisfied with his qualifications, so he enrolled at one of the higher institution of learning as a part time student, and he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree. His first appointment was that of a teacher, and later on he was appointed as a principal at school B. At the time of his appointment there were problems at the school.

The principal of School C started his professional career as a teacher, and later on he was appointed as a lecturer at a College of Education. This man has the following qualifications: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education and Higher Education Diploma. Before he was appointed as a principal, he had never occupied a managerial position because he had not been a deputy principal nor a head of department. The man has only four years' experience as a principal. At the time of his appointment as a principal of School C, there were problems ranging from management to political problems. For instance, the white educators were humiliated because of political reasons (cf. paragraph 4.3.1.4).

The principal of School D acted for three years as a principal before he was eventually appointed permanently in 1996. Considering the date from which he acted as a principal and the date on which he was permanently appointed and up to date, it becomes clear that the man has seven years' experience as a principal. It is also notable that he started his management and leadership career at a difficult time. He was, for instance, chased away from the school at one stage for reasons which will be discussed in paragraph 5.2.2.8. The man has the following professional qualifications: Junior Secondary Teachers' Certificate and Primary Teachers' Diploma. He is presently pursuing a Bachelor of Technology degree through correspondence. If one has to compare this principal with the other principals of the four project schools, he has the most problems (cf. paragraph 5.2.2.8).

### **5.5.2 Principals' perceptions of misconduct**

The purpose of the interviews and discussions with the principals was to find out whether educators were contravening the provisions of the Acts, and also to find out whether the four principals of the selected schools know how to manage misconduct. Secondly, the purpose was to find out how and why educators flout the law if ever that was the case. All the questions in

Annexure A which were meant to be responded to by the principals were based on the provisions of sections 17(1)(b)(c)(d)(g)(h)(i)(n) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998); 203(3) of the LRA (No. 66 of 1995); Sch. 7 item 2(a)-(c) of the LRA (No. 66 of 1995) and Sch. 8 items 1(1)-(3), 2(1)-(4); 3(1) of the LRA (No. 66 of 1995). In discussing the principals' responses the relevant sections of the Acts will be referred to.

As has already been mentioned, observation as one of the data recording procedures was used over a year (cf. paragraph 5.3). The researcher was therefore informed by the observational notes taken while conducting the observation at the four selected schools viz. that insubordination was rife, and it was because of this reason that principals were asked Q1, Q2 and Q5\* the purpose of which was to find out whether principals were aware that insubordination as contemplated in section 17(1)(c) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998) was committed by some educators, and also to find out why some educators commit insubordination.

In responding to Q1, the principals agreed that some educators do defy regulations and orders thereby contravening section 17(1)(c) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998). They went further to say that the reason for the educators doing so was because in the old dispensation, schools were ruled by anarchy and lawlessness that led to educators to defy the now defunct DET. Even in the new dispensation, some educators are still trapped in the politics of the past, and this makes them resist and defy everything including the management and the leadership of principals. According to the principals, some educators affiliated with SADTU can't differentiate between unionism and professionalism, hence their defiance of regulations and orders (cf. paragraphs 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.4, & 2.3.5).

The principals' responses to Q4 revealed that some educators contravene section 17(1)(c) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998) by not implementing the decisions that have been taken in staff meetings. The principals indicated that some do this deliberately because they belong to a union that defies the Department of Education. When asked which union was that, the principals identified it as SADTU. They, however, made it abundantly clear that some educators do not implement the decisions because they abuse alcohol and drugs which impact negatively on their energy and their strength, and as such they always feel too tired and are too lazy to do their work.

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\* To avoid writing Question 1, Question 2, Question 3 etc., Q1, Q2, Q3 etc. is written.

The principals hold the perception that some educators who are friends and family members of some of the Directors of Education take advantage of the situation, and they therefore refuse to carry out legitimate and lawful instructions given to them by principals, thereby defying and contravening Chapter 2, regulation C.3.2 of the PSA Regs (No. R. 679 of 1999) which stipulates that each and every employee must execute all reasonable instructions by persons officially assigned to give them, provided these are not contrary to the provisions of the Constitution and/or any other law.

In addition to this, Chapter A, regulation A7.1 of the PSA Regs (No. R. 1091 of 1994) stipulates that subject to the provisions of sub-regulation 2, an officer or employee must obey unconditionally a lawful instruction given to him/her by a person who is competent to do so. Lastly, principals maintain that some educators do not implement decisions because it seems as if they derive pleasure from defying authority as was the case in the past. In other words, some educators are still trapped in the legacy of the past.

In responding to Q8, the principals pointed out that educators coming to school late has become a serious problem at schools. The reasons given by the principals for the educators coming to school late are that the defiance campaign that started in 1950s and reached its climax in 1990 (cf. paragraph 2.5.3) is still alive in schools. Secondly, principals attribute late coming to the fact that some educators know that they will be protected by unions if action against them were to be taken. Lastly, principals felt that some educators come to school late due to the lack of professional commitment, lack of self-discipline and hiding their laziness behind a claimed lack of transport (cf. paragraph 2.2.4).

Coming to school late means that learners are not taught in the first session of mornings, and this is tantamount to negligence or indolence in the carrying out of the duties attached to the posts of educators who engage themselves in this practice (section 17(1)(d) of the EEA, No. 76 of 1998). Alternatively, the educators who come to school late contravene section 17(1)(c) of the EEA in that they display insubordination by ignoring the principals' instructions that they must be on time everyday. Coming to school late also deprives the learners of the right to education as contemplated in section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution (No. 108 of 1996) in that they do not get what is due to them in the first session of the school day. Latecomers also flout Chapter 2, regulation C.2.5 of the PSA Regs (No. R. 679 of 1999) in that they are not committed through timely service to the development and upliftment of learners.



According to the principals, there are educators who intentionally avoid teaching learners. This was evident in their responses to Q3. They dodge teaching periods by spending time in the staff room, or they simply bask in the sun during the cold winter months. Avoiding to teach learners constitutes negligence or indolence in the carrying out of the duties attached to the educators' posts in terms of section 17(1)(d) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998). Educators who do this also deprive learners of the right to education as contemplated in section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution (No. 108 of 1996), while they lack commitment to the development and upliftment of learners (cf. Chapter 2, regulation C.2.5 of the PSA Regs, No. R. 679 of 1999).

The principals believe that after the educators have been used by politicians to topple the former National Party regime, some of them are still trapped in what they were doing in the past, and this renders them not prepared to teach. They, for instance, lack confidence in the subject they teach, and this leads to them displaying immaturity in the workplace. They furthermore indicated that some educators intentionally avoid teaching learners because they do not prepare and plan their lessons for they know that SADTU will bar the School Management Teams (SMTs) from exercising control over their professional work, and others find pleasure when schools are dysfunctional, as this enables them to criticise the management of schools.

The views and the opinions of the principals with regard to some educators' avoidance of the teaching periods are supported by a report dated 24 August 2000, which was forwarded to the SMD in charge of School B. In this document, the Head of Department for Guidance reported among others to the SMD concerned that some of the factors which contribute to the high failure rate of the Grade 12 end of year examination results are that "some educators do not teach, instead they bask in the sun, or they sit in class doing nothing, or they discuss irrelevant topics" [while on the other hand] some educators visit other educators during the teaching periods, and this results in the visited educators' abandoning lessons."\*

In the responses to Q3, the principals expressed the view that some educators do quarrel with them and that sometimes they quarrel with other educators, particularly heads of department,

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\* The document entitled Investigation into the high failure rate at school B prepared and compiled by the Guidance Department, dated 24 August 2000.

thereby behaving in a disgraceful, unbecoming manner and are discourteous to any person in the workplace (section 17(1)(g) of the EEA, No. 76 of 1998). According to the principals, most of the educators who do this are SADTU members who want to be listened to, but fail to listen to other people. They do this because they are not patient or tolerant of other educators' point of view. It has been noted that discourteous educators are among those who come to school under the influence of alcohol or stupefying drugs, or who indulge in drugs on the school premises.

The principals' responses to Q7 clearly confirm that there are some educators who contravene section 17(1)(g) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998) by behaving in a disgraceful, improper, unbecoming manner and by being discourteous in that they use profane language or insulting language when talking to the principal or to learners. The assertion of the principals is supported by the charge of misconduct dated 2 February 1999, which was directed to one of the educators attached to School A, an extract from which reads: "... you used abusive language towards Mr X,\*\* Head of Department for Science, when you said, *o tla nyela, jou vorken bastard of an HOD, vorkof pele o nyela, mosono wa mmao, HOD ya masepa.*" Loosely translated, this means "You will shit on yourself, you fucking bastard of an HOD. Fuck you before you shit on yourself, your mother's pudenda, a shit of an HOD."

The principals furthermore hold the view that some educators do not treat them with respect and courtesy because the authority of principals was eroded in the past when principals were chased away from schools by the unionised educators. This sentiment was expressed in their responses to Q9. It is not sure whether those who disrespect and who are discourteous, know that they are committing misconduct as set out in section 17(1)(g) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998). According to the principals, it is difficult for some of the educators to refrain from displaying this behaviour because this was the norm during the time when the educators were used by the politicians to fight the now dissolved National Party government (cf. paragraph 1.2).

The response to Q10 revealed that educators do not hide important circulars. However, the researcher found that some educators and the entire staff in some instances do disrupt classes in

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\*\* Charge number 4, on the charge sheet dated 3 February 1999, directed to educator X who was charged with misconduct (X stands for an educator whose name is not disclosed for reasons of anonymity).

one way or another. This became evident in the principals' responses. They for example, mentioned that some educators embark on illegal marches. Disrupting classes is a contravention of section 17(1)(b)(c) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998) in that the educators commit an act which is prejudicial to the administration, discipline or efficiency of the school, or alternatively in that they default in teaching learners as they have been instructed to do by principals. The disruption of classes also infringes on the constitutional right of the learners to education (cf. section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution, No. 108 of 1996). According to the principals, disruption of classes at the four selected schools is rife.

The educators do not hesitate to tell the learners, without the knowledge of principals, not to come to school on the day they want to celebrate an occasion they deem important. Occasions such as SADTU meetings and labour actions were mentioned by the principals. They pointed out that educators won't even hesitate to tell learners not to come back to school after break, on the last day of the month to allow educators to do their shopping in town. Principals went further to say that some educators disrupt classes by paying a visit during school hours to a bereaved family member of an educator who has passed away. This is also the case with the so-called memorial services.

In response to **Q13**, principals indicated that some educators do sometimes incite learners against the principals. The incitement constitutes misconduct in terms of section 17(1)(b) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998), in that the act is prejudicial to the administration, discipline and efficiency of the school. The principals of Schools A and B pointed out that educators incited learners to demand a Grade 12 farewell function while they fabricated stories about the principals. On the other hand, the principal of School D indicated that at one stage, educators used learners to demand his resignation and they also lied to the learners in that he had misappropriated the school fund. The incitement forced him to temporarily leave the school.

In response to **Q14**, the principals said that some educators on their staff abuse alcohol. According to them alcohol abuse by some educators is a serious problem because the alcohol abusers do not come to school regularly, while their performance at school leaves much to be desired. The principals went further to say that the health of alcohol abusers has deteriorated to such an extent that it affects their image and personality as educators. The principal of School A maintains that at his school the situation is worse because there are some educators who smoke

dagga, and who promote strange cult activities such as Rastafarianism to justify dagga smoking, even among the learners.

It must be noted that educators who abuse alcohol and drugs are liable to a charge of misconduct in terms of section 17(1)(h) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998), because what they do does not befit the teaching profession, and it also impacts negatively on them as professionals. For instance, the principal of School A said that most of the learners taught by the two educators who smoke dagga at his school are also dagga smokers. According to the principals those who abuse alcohol do not come to school on Mondays and on month ends, and they furthermore said that alcohol leads to educators being irresponsible as they avoid their teaching duties by loafing in the class room.

**Q2, Q6 and Q12** are grouped together because the aim of these questions was to find out whether the code of good practice as contemplated in section 203(3) of the LRA (No. 66 of 1995), Sch. 7, item 2(a)-(c) of the LRA (No. 66 of 1995) and Sch. 8, items 1(1)-(3), 2(1)-(4), 3(1)-(3) & 4(1)-(4) of the LRA (No. 66 of 19965) are observed by the principals and educators. The responses of the principals to **Q2, Q12** and the latter part of **Q6** revealed that the principals of School A, School B and School D did not know how to deal with disciplinary matters or alternatively they did not know what a good code of practice is about.

The responses to **Q6** revealed that some educators contravene section 17(1)(g) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998), in that they sexually harass learners. According to the principals, educators keep sexual relations highly secretive and the complaints are reported to schools when there is a misunderstanding between the educator and the learner whom he or she harasses. The principal of School B indicated that a sexual harassment case was reported to him, and that he charged the alleged educator with misconduct. The principal of School C said that at his school, an educator was even called to a meeting which was attended by the learner who was sexually harassed and her parents, and this is confirmed by the minutes of the school governing body.\* For example, educator X did not submit a question paper on the deadline, namely 22 October 1998, instead he submitted it on 29 October 1998,\* and this negatively affected organising, control and planning.

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\* The minutes of the School Governing Body of School C, of the meeting held on 14 April 2000, which went up to 11h00, and the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2000

\* The report was made in the logbook of School A, and it was dated 29 October 1998. X stands for the educator whose name is not disclosed.



The principal of School A holds the views that the inability or reluctance to implement decisions taken during a staff meeting impedes management in the execution of duty. He supported this by saying that in their objective meetings, the SMT always emphasises the fact that learning and teaching should take place in the classrooms, but this does not occur. The other principals supported him by further stating that there is noise all day in the classrooms throughout the teaching periods because learners are not profitably kept busy, and this negatively affects the ethos, the organisational climate and the organisational culture of schools.

As far as the quarrelling of educators with one another is concerned, all the principals maintained that it occurs among their staff members, and they denounced and detested it more especially if a head of department is involved. The principal of school A experienced a situation whereby a head of department quarrelled with an educator for a reason which did not warrant such behaviour, and this led to the educator not taking instructions from the head of department. The assertion of the principal is supported by logbook entries made on 24 April 1999 and 14 April 2000.\*\*

The principals believe that profane language or insulting language used by some educators when talking to the principal, to other educators or to the learners, is unacceptable and intolerable for the simple reason that it impairs human and labour relations, and this leads to the vision and mission of schools not being realised. The abusive language has a negative impact on the discipline of both learners and educators, and it also creates animosity among the educators. As regards to conflict caused by some educators, principals made it abundantly clear that conflict in schools negatively affects communication, the principals' influence and power, the working as a team and human relations.

Analysing the responses, it became clear that there is a high incidence of educators inciting learners against principals in the four selected schools, and if the learners are used by educators to harass the principal in one way or another, the image of the principal is tarnished, while the discipline of the school, the management and the leadership of the school are impaired, and the principal as a person is seriously traumatised. In the light of the responses to the questions in

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\*\* The reports were made in the logbook of School A on 24 April 1999 and 14 April 2000

Annexure A there was evidence that all the four principals have gone through this terrible experience. For example, the principal of school D was even chased away from school at one stage under the pretext that he was misusing the school funds when in actual fact one of the educators on the staff wanted to become principal.

In light of the principals' perception it becomes clear that educators at the four selected schools are not yet on an appropriate level of readiness (Hersey *et al.* 1996) after the dissolution of the former regime. Laxness and a laissez faire atmosphere which were prevalent during the political struggle still abound. Hence there is a high rate of misconduct at these schools. It also came to the fore that this type of behaviour influences management as well as leadership skills and techniques of the principals of these schools. As a result of the high rate of misconduct in the schools in question, performance of both the learners and educators is not up to standard (cf. Table 4-4 & Figure 5-1).

## **5.6 Interpretation and analysis of teacher organisations' responses**

### **5.6.1 Brief biographical data of teacher organisations' participants**

The ushering in of the new dispensation in South Africa brought about many changes in the education system of our country. One of the changes is that the educators of this country were, for the first time, given freedom of speech and they were also allowed to participate in decision making at all levels of the educational structure including decisions on labour matters. It is for this reason that teachers' unions and organisations such as the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), the Orange Free State Teachers' Association (OFSATA) and the South African Teachers' Union (SATU) are active in mobilising their members.

The above-mentioned teachers' unions and association are recognised in terms of section 4(1)(2)(3) of the LRA (No. 66 of 1995). The reason for this is to allow the unions to participate in all the activities of the particular union or association as contemplated in section 4(2)(a) of the LRA (No. 66 of 1995). The teacher unions and associations have representation at school level. The SADTU representatives form a committee which is known as the site committee. In as far as the other unions and associations are concerned, their members are just referred to as representatives at school level as they do not have site committees. The SADTU site committee

members and the representatives of other teachers' unions and associations are leaders in their own right because they lead their members at school level.

It is because of the above reason that interviews and discussions were held with them. To be specific, the following site committees and representatives of teacher organisations of the selected schools were participants: SADTU, OFSATA and SATU. It must be mentioned from the outset that the site committee of School D refused to be interviewed and to take part in the discussions. This did not come as a surprise to the researcher because at this school there are two educators who have a negative attitude towards officials, and unfortunately both of them are members of the school management team. For instance, on 5 May 2000 and 23 August 2000\* the SMDs were refused access to the professional work of the educators and their classes during visit which was pre-planned and made known to all concerned.

Mention must be made that SADTU site committee members are found in almost every school in South Africa because SADTU is a big organisation, hence the existence of the SADTU site committees at the four selected schools. With regard to the OFSATA representatives, it was found that they do not exist in other schools. It is for this reason that they were only found at School A, while the SATU representatives were only found at School C. This can be attributed to the fact that SATU is a union which has been established by white educators, and to which mainly white educators belong. Though School C is situated in an area which was formally known as a black area, it has both white and black educators. Interviews and discussions were held with the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) site committee members of schools A, B and C.

The participants are relatively young and only have a few years' teaching experience e.g. the youngest educator has one year's teaching experience and the oldest has seven years' experience. The Orange Free State Teachers' Association (OFSATA) and the South African Teachers' Union (SATU) representatives have relatively more teaching experience, the minimum of which is four years and the maximum fourteen years.

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\* On 5 May 2000 and 23 August 2000, entries were made in the logbook of School D to the effect that SADTU members refused the SMDs access to the educators' professional work and to visit educators in their classes.

All the participants who were interviewed, are qualified as educators in terms of professional qualifications, except one educator who holds only a B. Com. degree without an Education Diploma. Among the participants, however, there seem to be three who were misplaced in terms of their qualifications which were for primary schools. The experience, the professional and the academic qualifications of the participants were viewed in a serious light because it is believed that the more one is experienced and qualified, the more one is knowledgeable about matters pertaining to education in general and in labour matters in particular (Wehrich & Koontz 1993:204).

As leaders of the educators they represent at school level, it was expected that the members of the SADTU site committees and the OFSATA as well as the SATU representatives to have conducted workshops with their members, or to have at least delivered papers at conferences, seminars or even at meetings. From the information the researcher gathered, it became clear that meetings with the educators at the school level are not held to help schools to realise their vision. Instead, meetings are held whenever there is a crisis at the schools or whenever they plan to oppose management.\*

### **5.6.2 The members of teacher organisations' perception of misconduct**

The open-ended questions which were to be responded to in the interviews held with the teacher organisations' participants are in Annexure B. The aim of Q1 was to find out whether the participants knew the contents of section 17(1)(a)-(n) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998), the contents of the South African Council for Educators (SACE) Code of Conduct as contemplated in section 5(c)(i) of the South African Council for Educators Act (SACEA) (No. 31 of 2000) and the provisions of other legislation such as the Constitution and Regulations. Furthermore, questions were aimed at finding out whether they as leaders in their own right have knowledge of legislation or whether they are able to perceive misconduct as identified or depicted by Common Law.

The responses revealed that the participants have an idea but no clear knowledge of what misconduct is all about, or what constitutes misconduct. They, for instance, mentioned that the

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\* In the informal interviews and discussions, the principals of the four selected schools informed the researcher that the site committee of SADTU in particular will hold meetings when they plan to oppose management.



contravention of laws that govern education constitutes misconduct, and they went further to say that actions that defy the "educators' code of conduct" without actually making reference to the SACE Code of Conduct. They also mentioned many things that were irrelevant, and that need not be written here. However, their responses indicated that they know about the EEA, the LRA, the Equity Act and the BCEA, but they quoted these Acts out of context.

The display of this lack of legal knowledge is a worrying factor, more especially if one has to consider the fact that one of the functions of the SADTU site committee is "to receive and attend to complaints of members concerning their employment..."\* The OFSATA representatives are expected "to provide legal assistance to members in matters pertaining to the Labour Relations Act and other deserving matters."\*\* One wonders as to how the members of SADTU site committees and the representatives of OFSATA deal with legal matters when they seem to be lacking the legal knowledge.

The participants' responses to Q2 revealed mixed feelings in that some maintain that some educators defy regulations and orders, because of psychological reasons such as in-born rebelliousness which prompts them not to submit to authority, and as such they defy rules and regulations. On the other hand, some participants feel the frustration which came about as a result of inept management of principals and stress caused by redeployment, which forces educators to defy regulations and orders. They furthermore maintain that the reason why some educators defy regulations and orders, is because the SMTs of the schools discriminate against some educators, and as a result, those who are not favoured by the management of the school defy regulations and orders (cf. paragraphs 2.4.1, 2.4.2 & 2.4.6).

From the responses, it came to the fore that the members of the SMT do not lead by example i.e. they do not do as they say. The participants cited examples where members of the SMT themselves defy regulations and rules e.g. coming to school late. It also became clear from the responses that the members of the SMT do not sign the time book. According to the participants, all these contribute to the defiance of regulations and orders by some educators. The participants

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\* The SADTU Site Committee Functions on page 11 of the constitution of SADTU, amended July 1995.

\*\* The constitution of OFSATA as set out in the 2000 calendar of the Free State Teachers' Association.

also hold the view that the unclear instructions and inadequate information from the members of the SMT are factors that contribute to the defiance of regulations and orders.

The participants are of the opinion that at times some educators ignore regulations and orders when mass action is to be embarked upon country wide in retaliation against appalling conditions of service, or when the members of the SMT lack firmness and responsible decision making. It must be noted that defiance which has been highlighted by the participants in the foregoing paragraphs is a contravention of section 17(1)(c) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998), because more often than not the defier defaults in carrying out lawful orders given to him/her by a principal who has the authority to give it. Instead, they display insubordination by word or conduct.

The responses to Q4 confirm that some educators do neglect the teaching periods for a number of reasons, such as the educators not having enough knowledge of the subjects they teach. This is perhaps true if one has to consider the boycotting of classes and the unrest situation that were prevalent, more especially from 1984 up to 1994. During that time, most of the participants were at high schools and colleges of education where they were not properly taught because of the strikes, boycott of classes, marches, picketing and sit-ins that were organised by political activists (cf. paragraphs 2.3.1, 2.3.4 & 2.3.6). In addition to this, participants believe that some educators neglect classes because the SMTs allocate subjects to them in which they have not specialised. It is for this reason that the participants recommend that the SMTs must consult educators before the subject allocation is done.

The participants maintain that when subjects allocations are done, the workload of educators is not taken into account, and as a result some educators are overloaded with subjects, and this leads to them avoiding their teaching periods. According to the respondents, another factor which contributes to the educators avoiding classes is personal problems such as drug and alcohol abuse. It is for this reason that they hold the view that alcohol and drug abusers are always suffering from physical, psychological and mental illness to such an extent that they do not feel like working, and sometimes they feel rejected by the school community. Lastly, the respondents concede that some educators do not prepare and plan their lessons, and as a result they avoid teaching periods.

The avoidance of teaching periods is not in line with the provisions of section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution (No. 108 of 1996), which stipulates that everyone has the right to a basic education,

including adult basic education. Those who do not take the classes they have to teach, deny the learners the right to education, and they are also negligent or indolent in the carrying out of the duties attached to their posts in terms of section 17(1)(d) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998). By avoiding the teaching periods, they do not enable learners, through formal education, to develop a set of values consistent with those upheld in the Bill of Rights as contained in the Constitution of South Africa (cf. paragraph 3.3 of the SACE Code of Conduct, Boshoff & Morkel 1999:4-10 ).

In light of the responses to Q6, it became clear that some educators do sometimes quarrel with principals. The quarrelling with the principals constitutes misconduct in terms of section 17(1)(g) of the EEA if such educators behave in a disgraceful, improper or unbecoming manner, or, while on duty, are discourteous to principals in that they quarrel with them. Secondly, in terms of paragraph 6.1 of the SACE Code of Conduct, educators who quarrel with principals undermine the principals' status and authority. Lastly, quarrelling with principals is unprofessional in terms of Chapter 2, regulation C.3.6 of the PSA Regs (No. R. 679 of 1999).

Furthermore, the respondents hold the views that some educators quarrel with the principals because of poor communication, and the principals' approaches. Those attached to School A went further to say that their principal hasn't got the decency of calling an educator to his office if he feels that the educator does not adhere to the stipulations. Instead, the principal will choose to shout and yell at the educator who in turn retaliates by engaging in an exchange of unpleasant words, sometimes in the presence of learners or other colleagues. According to the participants, personal differences also play a role in this regard. For instance, if an educator does not see eye to eye with the principal quarrelling is likely to occur. Quarrelling with principals impairs the dignity which is inherent in them and which must be respected and protected as is contemplated in section 10 of the Constitution (No. 108 of 1996).

In response to Q7, the respondents feel that the use of profane language to the learners should be condemned in the strongest possible terms, for there are some educators who use abusive language to learners. The respondents think that educators who use insulting words when talking to learners produce learners who will in future use abusive language even to elderly people. The profane language hurts the feelings of learners, and as such affects them psychologically in that anger is gradually instilled in them. By insulting learners, educators who do this are emotionally harassing them, and it is also unprofessional for the educators to insult the learners as they lose

credibility and respect (cf. paragraph 3.5 of the SACE Code of Conduct, Boshoff & Morkel 1999:4-10).

It is notable that using profane language to the learners is a contravention of section 28(1)(d) of the Constitution (No. 108 of 1996), which stipulates that every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation. Secondly, it must be noted that in terms of section 17(1)(g) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998), an educator who uses profane language to learners is guilty of misconduct in that he or she behaves in a disgraceful, improper or unbecoming manner, or, while on duty, is discourteous to learners or commits abuse or degradation. Thirdly, such educators do not observe the SACE Code of Conduct, in particular paragraph 3.1 which stipulates that educators must use appropriate language and behaviour in their interaction with learners, and act in such a way as to elicit respect from the learners (Boshoff & Morkel 1999: 4-9).

In response to Q8, the participants concede that absenteeism is increasing alarmingly at their schools, and in respect of the law, an educator who is continuously and unlawfully absent from school is guilty of misconduct in terms of section 17(1)(d) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998), in that he or she is negligent or indolent in the carrying out of the duties attached to the educator's post. It must also be noted that such educators transgress Chapter 2, regulation C.2.5 of the PSA Regs (No R. 679 of 1999), in that they are not committed through timely service to the development and upliftment of learners by absenting themselves from work, and they also infringe the constitutional rights of learners as articulated in section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution (No. 108 of 1996) by denying them the right to basic education

The participants are of the opinion that some educators are continuously and unlawfully absent from school because of personal problems such as domestic problems, financial problems (unable to pay transport), alcohol and drug abuse which lead to depression, stress and tension. They furthermore maintain that some educators do not come to school regularly because of poor working conditions and poor working relations at schools. In support of what they say, they cited the situation where principals discriminate against some educators on account of favouritism as an example. They also feel that some educators continuously absent themselves from schools because they do not plan and prepare their lessons, and as such they suffer from an inferiority complex.



The responses to Q11 revealed that some educators do not treat principals with respect and courtesy. The reasons given by the participants are that the principals' approaches or leadership styles prompts the educators not to show them respect. For example, they claim that principals are not knowledgeable in matters pertaining to administration, leadership and management, and as a result, they do not command respect. The participants also indicated that the principals are not firm when dealing with educators, while on the other hand they lack empathy as they always ignore the family background of the educators. The participants, however, agreed that some educators undermine principals for the reason of their own, as well as the lack of professionalism on their part.

In terms of section 10 of the Constitution, principals have inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected, it is because of this reason that an educator who does not show respect to the principal, infringes on the dignity of such a principal, and he or she is also liable to a charge of misconduct in that they perform or cause, or permit to be performed, or connive at any act which is prejudicial to the administration, discipline or efficiency of schools (section 17(1)(b) of the EEA, No. 76 of 1998). Alternatively they are guilty of misconduct in terms of section 17(1)(g) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998), in that they behave in a disgraceful, improper, or unbecoming manner, or, while on duty, are discourteous to principals.

In response to Q12, respondents concede that some educators abuse alcohol to such an extent that they become a liability to the school. The alcohol abusers are, for instance, unable to read the subject matter at home, to prepare and plan their lessons, to honour their teaching periods and they continuously and unlawfully absent themselves from school. Because of these reasons, their performance negatively affects the entire discipline and productivity of schools. Alcohol abusers are not respected by the learners and the community at large, apart from this, alcohol tarnishes their image and as such impacts negatively on their profession and their authority.

In terms of section 17(1)(h) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998), educators who abuse alcohol are guilty of misconduct in that they are under the influence of intoxicating liquor while on duty or acting in an official capacity. Or alternatively, they contravene section 17(1)(d) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998), in that they are negligent or indolent in the carrying out of the duties attached to their posts. Secondly, the educators who abuse liquor do not adhere to Chapter 2, regulations C. 4.4 and C.5.2 of the PSA Regs (No. R. 679 of 1999) which stipulate respectively that employees must execute their duties in a professional and competent manner and that they must act

responsibly as far as the use of alcoholic beverages or any other substance with an intoxicating effect is concerned.

It is also evident from the participants' responses to **Q13** that the four project schools did not have a policy on dress code. This means that there is no accepted dress code at the four selected schools. As a result of this, the participants' responses were irrelevant. For example, statements like the following are cited as examples: people want comfort and freedom, that is why they prefer to wear whatever they like. To agree on a dress code is oppressive because it prevents a person from wearing whatever he or she wants to wear. Educators are not paid well, and as a result, they cannot afford to buy a formal shirt.

What the participants said above is open to criticism and correction. It is not true that educators cannot afford to buy a formal shirt if one has to consider expensive shoes, skippers, T shirts and the like that educators buy at the expensive shops in town. It is ironical for a person who is supposed to be a role model for the learners and who plays a leadership role in his or her class to claim that an accepted dress code (school code of conduct) is oppressive. A school is an institution of learning, and it is where a learner has the opportunity to learn how to groom himself or herself, as well as how to be presentable and what to wear at school situation which is of course formal. It is still believed that there should be a difference between how a thug and an educator dress, because an educator must always elicit respect from the learners who imitate him/her (cf. paragraph 3.7 of the SACE Code of Conduct, Boshoff & Morkel 1999:4-10).

It is because of the above-mentioned reasons that educators must dress formally so that learners can imitate and emulate them. Sometimes they can be mistaken for ordinary labourers who have nothing to do with education. Some educators go to school dressed in T shirts with *Castle Lager* printed at the back or front. What impression does this have on learners? Those who dress shabbily are not even aware that they may be contravening Chapter 2, regulation C.5.1 of the PSA Regs (No. R. 679 of 1999), which stipulates that an employee must, dress and behave in a manner that enhances the reputation of the public service during official hours.

In response to **Q14**, the respondents made it abundantly clear that some educators are still administering corporal punishment in spite of the fact that it has been legally abolished, and are thus contravening section 10(1) of the SASA (No. 84 of 1996), which stipulates that no person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner. Corporal punishment infringes the

constitutional right of learners. For instance, an educator who administers corporal punishment flouts section 12(1)(d)(e) of the Constitution (No. 108 of 1996), which stipulates that everyone has the right not to be tortured in any way; and not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhumane or degrading way.

Educators who mete out corporal punishment to learners also contravene section 28(1)(d) of the Constitution (No. 108 of 1996) which spells out the fact that every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation. More importantly, educators who administer corporal punish to learners do not observe paragraph 3.5 of the SACE Code of Conduct, which demands of an educator to avoid any form of humiliation, and refrain from any form of child abuse, physical or psychological, and also paragraph 3.8 of the SACE Code of Conduct, which demands of an educator to take reasonable steps in order to ensure the safety of the learners (Boshoff & Morkel 1999:4-10).

The participants maintain that some educators do administer corporal punishment to learners because they are still trapped in the past, and as a result, they labour under the impression that corporal punishment helps maintain discipline effectively. The participants went further by saying that some educators are still ignorant of the abolition, while some claim that they use it because there is no other alternative method one can use to maintain discipline. Be that as it may, the crux of the matter is that corporal punishment is not the only method that one can use in maintaining discipline at schools.

The respondents also feel that some educators use corporal punishment as a form of revenge because when they themselves were school-going children, they used to be hated and lashed by their teachers - now they feel that they must do it to the learners they teach. Because of the type of learners they teach i.e. the learners who have been negatively influenced by the violence situation, riots and the political unrest in the past in this country, they use sticks and canes to force the learners to observe their authority which has been eroded because of the reasons already mentioned (Mokone 1996:17). While on the other hand those who do not prepare their lessons hide behind the lashing of learners, in the hope that they will rid themselves of their frustration.

In the light of the participants' responses to Q15, it becomes clear that drug abuse, more especially dagga smoking, is fast becoming rife among the educators attached to the project schools, and it must be noted that those who abuse drugs contravene section 17(1)(h) of the EEA

(No. 76 of 1998), which stipulates that an educator is guilty of misconduct if he or she is under the influence of intoxicating liquor or stupefying drugs, while on duty or acting in an official capacity. The participants hold the view that drugs have a negative impact on the health and teaching practice of the drug abusers. According to the respondents, drug abusers become very moody, aggressive, arrogant and learners and parents do not respect and trust them.

The respondents went further to say that the drug abusers neglect their teaching tasks, and they are unable to impart knowledge to the learners even if they wish to do so because they are no longer energetic and enthusiastic. If given work to do, they abdicate their responsibility and authority. They also lack commitment e.g. they are unable to train learners in extra mural activities, they fail to convince learners that it is not permissible for them to come to school late because they themselves are latecomers. They continuously and unlawfully absent themselves from schools, and at times they just play truant by disappearing during school hours. Lastly, they refuse to prepare and plan their lessons, and this results in a loss of respect, while their dignity and image are tarnished.

It must be mentioned that the respondents did not know the difference between management and leadership. Their responses to Q15 bear testimony to this. The unstructured questions that were asked while interacting with them outside the meetings did not help in eliciting relevant responses either. The responses to Q15 have therefore not served the purpose that was intended. However, the respondents did vaguely allude to the management aspects in their responses such as misconduct impacting negatively on the morals and discipline of schools, without mentioning the components of management such as organising, control, planning, supervision etc.

It is notable that educators who commit misconduct contribute to schools not achieving their goals and objectives. The perpetual low pass rate in Grade 12 at the four selected schools (cf. Figure 5-1) is an example. The educators who are guilty of misconduct also influence the management and the leadership of principals negatively, and as a result, a laissez-faire type of situation which is susceptible to mischievous behaviour prevails. In such situations, principals are unable to exercise control over the learners and the educators, and tardiness becomes a chain reaction in that the late comers also influence other educators to come to school late.

Q3, Q5, Q9 and Q10 are grouped together because they were intended to test the knowledge of the teacher unions on the steps to be taken when disciplining an educator, for the simple reason



that unions play a leadership role at school level, and as such, they must be knowledgeable about matters pertaining to discipline. In outlining the steps that are taken when an educator defies regulations and orders, avoids teaching periods, abuses learners sexually and issues learners with false reports, the respondents maintain that an educator must be verbally warned, the matter must be referred to the steward, the matter must be referred to the site committee, the matter must be referred to the school governing body and the last step should be the counselling of the educator. Taking note of the participants' responses, it can be said that they are not far from the truth. It is however expected of them to know exactly the steps to be taken when disciplining an educator, so that they are able to challenge the principals' deviations.

With regard to sexual harassment in Q9, the participants anonymously agree that educators who have relations with school girls or boys commit a serious offence that warrants dismissal. The concern of the respondents is valid because in terms of section 17(1)(g) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998), such educators are guilty of misconduct, in that they behave in a disgraceful, improper or unbecoming manner, or, while on duty, are discourteous to any person, or commit sexual or any other form of harassment.

However, the participants feel that before educators who have sexually harassed learners are dismissed, they must be suspended while an investigation is being conducted, but they do not indicate that common law principles such as natural justice must be applied before an educator can be suspended. They furthermore maintain that if an educator is found guilty on the basis of concrete evidence, the culprits must be dismissed and the learner's parents whose child was sexually harassed by an educator must be encouraged to report the case to the police. The views of the respondents are in line with Sch. 8, item 3(4) of the LRA (No. 66 of 1995), which stipulates that it is generally not appropriate to dismiss an employee for a first offence, except if the misconduct is serious and of such gravity that it makes a continued employment relationship impossible.

The sexual harassment mentioned in Q9 is a serious offence, if one has to compare it with the misconduct in Q3, Q5 and Q10. The responses of the participants to Q10 indicate that there are some educators who issue learners with false reports. The educators who do this are guilty of misconduct in terms of section 17(1)(b) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998), in that they perform or cause, or permit to be performed, or connive at any act which is prejudicial to the administration, discipline or efficiency of schools. The issuing of learners with false reports is also a violation of

Chapter 2, rule C.4.5 of the PSA Regs (No. R. 679 of 1999), which stipulates that an employee must not engage in any transaction or action that is in conflict with or infringes on the execution of her or his official duties.

In the light of the responses to Q17 it appears that principals invoke procedures every time educators break a rule or a standard, and this is in conflict with Sch. 8, item 3(3) of the LRA (No. 66 of 1995), which stipulates that informal advice and correction is the best and most effective way for [a principal] to deal with minor violations of work discipline. Repeated misconduct will warrant warnings, which themselves may be graded according to degrees of severity. More serious infringements or repeated misconduct may call for a final warning or other action short of dismissal. Dismissal should be reserved for cases of serious misconduct or repeated offences.

The SADTU site committees feel that principals do not want to develop educators when dealing with misconduct cases. Instead they destroy them, more especially those who are affiliated with SADTU, because they always talk ill about some educators who are not in their good books. When dealing with the cases of misconduct which have been committed by the SADTU affiliates, principals exercise prejudice and subjectivity. The participants maintain that it is wrong for the principals not to involve the unions when dealing with the cases of misconduct as is contemplated in section 86(1)(a) of the LRA (No. 66 of 1995), which stipulates that unless the matters for joint decision-making are regulated by a collective agreement with the representative trade union [a principal] must consult and reach consensus with a workplace forum before implementing any proposal concerning disciplinary codes and procedures.

As may be seen from the participants' responses to Q1 up to Q17 misconduct appears to be prevalent at the project schools. It is this misconduct that has a negative impact on quality and productivity of the schools, hence the abysmal Grade 12 examination results from 1996 - 2000 (cf. Figure 5-1). It also becomes clear that there are serious management and leadership problems which need immediate attention at the aforementioned schools. From the responses of both the principals and the unions, it appears as if principals and unions work as isolated entities, hence the principals' unilateral stances on misconduct. It is for this reason that principals must take cognisance of unions because they have been legally constituted in terms of section 4(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)-(c) of the LRA (No. 66 of 1995).

## 5.7 Interpretation and analysis of School Management Developers' responses

### 5.7.1 Brief biographical data of School Management Developers (SMDs)

The School Management Developers are the backbone of the Provincial Department of Education in general, and of the District of Education in particular. Without the SMDs, the management, the leadership and the administration of schools can suffer. In other provinces, the SMDs are referred to as the Circuit Managers, while others prefer to call them Education Development Officers. Be that as it may, they all do the same in terms of their job description.

In the Odendaalsrus district, there are eight SMDs who are in charge of eight sub-districts. For the purpose of this study, only four SMDs who are in charge of the four project schools have been requested to participate. The SMD in charge of School A has a Diploma in Education, and he holds a B.A (Hons) degree and is currently pursuing an MBA degree. This gentleman is in charge of the Odendaalsrus 1 sub-district with thirteen schools. Lastly and more importantly, it must be mentioned that the man has eight years' experience as a manager of schools. Before he was appointed as a principal and an SMD he was a high school teacher and a university lecturer.

The SMD for School B is in charge of the Bultfontein sub-district which has forty-five schools, of which some are farm schools. It must be noted that the number of schools does not matter, but what matters is the number of learners and educators in the schools concerned. For example, the SMD for Odendaalsrus 1 is in charge of thirteen schools which are in a metropolitan area, and which have more educators and learners if one has to compare it with Bultfontein sub-district. The SMD for School B has two education diplomas namely a Diploma in Secondary Education (DSE) and a Further Diploma in Education (FDE). He holds a B.A (Hons) degree in Human Resources, and he is presently studying towards an MBA degree. This gentleman has twelve years' experience as a manager, and he started his teaching career as a high school teacher.

On the other hand we find that the SMD for School C has eight years' experience as an education manager. This man is a qualified teacher who taught at high school and college of education level. He holds B.A and B.Ed degrees. As of now, he is a registered student at a higher institution of learning where he is pursuing an MPA degree. Mention must be made that he once went to Canada where he attended a workshop on school management development. This man is in charge of the thirty one Winburg sub-district schools which comprise mainly the farm schools.

Lastly, the SMD for School D has a Higher Education Diploma and holds B.A and B.Ed degrees. He is presently studying towards the M.Ed degree at an institution of higher learning. This gentleman has twenty two years' experience as an education manager. He was a high school teacher who taught History. At the time when he was a principal, he used to produce 100% pass rates in matric. This man is in charge of the Wesselsbron sub-district which has forty-two schools, most of which are farm schools.

The SMDs are public figures who interact with parents, learners, educators and mainly with the principals, deputy principals and heads of department. The SMDs deliver speeches to statutory meetings of parents. They also meet from time to time with the Grade 12 learners and the educators to deliver motivational speeches. As part of their job description, they hold management meetings with principals or the entire SMTs. They also organise workshops on education management where they present the different aspects of leadership, management and administration to the principals in particular and to the entire SMTs in general.

The SMDs conduct training for the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and the SMTs. With regard to the misconduct cases, they act as investigating officers (cf. section 18(1)(2) of EEA, No. 76 of 1998). Secondly, it is expected of the SMDs in some other instances to preside as chairpersons or prosecutors of the Disciplinary Tribunal (cf. section 22(1)(a)-(c) of the EEA, No. 76 of 1998). It is also notable that the SMD in charge of School B is the chairperson of the Institute of Public Servants (IPS) now the South African State and Allied Workers Union (SASAWU) for the Goldfields region, and he is currently serving on the executive committee of the SASAWU at national level. He has delivered papers at conferences, both in South Africa and abroad.

### **5.7.2 SMDs' perception of the management and leadership of principals**

As has already been mentioned in paragraph 5.6.1, the SMDs manage and lead schools that are within their jurisdiction, and as a result, they know almost everything that happens at the schools they control. For instance, the SMDs handle appointment forms of educators, leave forms of educators, termination of duty forms of educators, cases of misconduct of educators, examination records of schools, educators' grievances and other labour issues, documents containing financial matters of schools, matters related to the SGBs and many more. It is because of the foregoing



reasons that it was believed that they would be furnishing the researcher with relevant information regarding principals' management and leadership when responding to questions which are in Annexure C.

### **5.7.2.1 Management as a practical activity of principals**

#### **5.7.2.1.1 Administration**

The principals of the four project schools are not free to execute their duties because of a plethora of factors or variables that have already been mentioned in Chapter 2. The political struggle that has contributed to laxness and a laissez-faire attitude in schools is cited as an example. As a result of this type of situation principals are scared and traumatised by the events that took place in schools. In spite of the fact that some were not principals at the time when schools were gripped by the political upheaval and terror that prevailed at that time, they witnessed the harassment, mental torture, unfair labour practices and oppressive situation principals were subjected to. As a result of the aforementioned reasons it is believed that principals are psychologically affected (cf. paragraphs 2.2.6, 2.3.3, 2.3.4 & 2.4.6).

It is in the light of the above, that principals are not self-confident and self-reliant; hence the administrative work that seems obvious and simple is haphazardly done. The SMDs think that the laxness and laissez-faire type of attitude is conducive to misconduct and leads to the administrative work of the principals being neglected. The SMDs supported this view by pointing to the fact that the filing system of the four selected schools is in a chaotic state. For instance, circulars from the Head/District office are stored in one big file and the result is that retrieval is not easy. Because principals find themselves in a laissez-faire situation, their administrative work is done in a laissez-faire manner, and that is why the official documents from their schools are always full of mistakes.

In support of the sentiment expressed above, the SMD in charge of School A indicated that it was expected of the principal to order text books for his school in May 2000, and the instructions were clearly given for the completion of the requisition form. When the form was returned, it was incorrect. The same is the case with the end of year mark schedules. The principal certified the mark sheets and schedules to be correct, and when controlled by the SMD, they were found to be incorrect, for example, incorrect entries and incorrect additions. The principal who is said to be



doing this holds a master's degree, and it cannot be claimed that he did not understand the instructions on the requisition form (cf. paragraph 5.4.1).

The SMDs hold the views that the principals do not have duty sheets according to which the SMTs are expected to execute their administrative duties. They went further on to say that duties are done on an *ad hoc* basis. In addition to this they said that the schools do not have a functional plan with which to ensure smooth administration. It is because of this reason that the due dates are not met, and as such, the schools are continuously reminded to submit information that has been requested from the schools. Lastly, the SMDs maintain that the principals are the cause of a lot of noise made by the public when schools are not supplied with stationery or textbooks because of laxness and a laissez-faire type of attitude prevalent at the four selected schools.

#### 5.7.2.1.2 Control

In terms of Chapter A, paragraph 4.4 (e) (ii) of the EEA Regs (No. 222 of 1999) the heads of department must exercise control over the work of educators and learners in their departments and this is also the case with the SMDs and the Learning Facilitators (LFs), so that they are able to identify the training needs and the problems which will make it possible for the SMTs, LFs and SMDs to assist in empowering and developing educators. It is however not possible for the management of the schools and the district support teams to execute control as a management task because unionised educators bar them from doing so.

What is said above, is supported by the fact that at School D, the SADTU site committee refused the SMDs access to the professional work of the educators and their classes on 5 May 2000 and 23 August 2000 (cf. paragraph 5.5.1). It is this resistance that contributes to educators committing misconduct as set out in section 17(1)(b)(c) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998). Furthermore the SMDs feel that because of this resistance principals are scared away and, as a result, they do not have a programme according to which they conduct class visits, and the control of the educators' professional work. This leads to lessons preparations structures reflecting individual educator efforts and no uniformity. As a result, troublesome educators are not closely monitored, and dodging and absenteeism become rife due to alcohol abuse which has become a serious problem at the project schools.

The SMDs are of the opinion that principals are not assertive because they are dictated to by SADTU members, and this leads to their not being able to debate issues in order to influence educators positively. For instance, it is the norm for educators and learners to come to school late because control is regarded as taboo, and this has resulted in disorderly and chaotic situation at schools. Learners move in and out of the school premises all day long. According to the SMDs, continuous evaluation is not controlled, and as such, arbitrary allocation of marks cannot be monitored.

What aggravates the resistance to submit to control is the fact that some of the members of the SMTs are SADTU affiliates who are very non-supportive of control. They fully align themselves with the SADTU Provincial Committee's stance that educators belonging to SADTU must not allow members of the SMT access to their classes. As a result, schools do not have their own policy on class visitation and they have not even discussed the importance or non-importance of class visits. The SMDs further pointed out that when principals try to exercise control at their schools, they are rendered ineffective by some of the members of the SMT who belong to SADTU.

#### **5.7.2.1.3 System and structure**

The SMDs maintain that one of the systems and structures that is very important in a school setting is the system of school management teams. According to the SMDs, these are more symbolic than functional though they are employed. The members of the SMTs are not operating as a team, but are individual entities who are not accountable to the principals. Sometimes matters are brought to the attention of principals out of convenience only i.e. when an SMT member passes the buck. Meetings are not held to address pertinent issues impacting on learners' education in the classroom situation.

In addition to the above, the SMDs believe that the SMTs do not have their focus on the actual business of the school as an organisation, namely meaningful learning and educative teaching. The members of the SMT would rather club together or agree with educators (their subordinates) not to carry out their daily tasks. There is, therefore, no structure agreed upon according to which work within the school as an organisation should flow. As has already been mentioned, the SMTs do not have direct control over the work of educators within the classrooms (the factory floor). As a result, there is no control to determine the quality of both teaching and learning.

The SMDs furthermore express the fact that there is little proof that a systematic operation exists in the project schools. According to them, various academic departments do not seem to work according to well-planned system and structures. For example, there is no procedure for communicating information contained in circulars, Employment of Educators Act (EEA) (no. 76 of 1998), Labour Relations Act (LRA) (No. 66 1995), South African Schools Act (SASA) (No. 84 of 1996) and other important official documents. This results in school finances not being administered according to any set of rules. For example, financial expenditure is not supported by documents such as receipts and invoices.

#### **5.7.2.1.4 Improving educators' skills**

The SMDs believe that the situation at four project schools is not yet ripe for the four principals to improve their educators' skills. At these schools SADTU confuses the management and leadership role of principals with unionism or the role the unions play. Some educators belonging to SADTU fail to distinguish between labour matters or union matters and the management tasks of principals. Whenever principals want to perform their functions, the members of SADTU want to be involved or alternatively they want the principals to ask permission from them as to whether they can continue with the function.

Because of the above, principals are rendered ineffective in empowering the educators with skills, and this results in their being unresourceful and members of the staff being divided into camps. For example, there are those who support the SADTU strategies and to a lesser extent there are those who support principals. As a result the management of staff development programmes are not actualised at the four project schools. The SMDs cited the following as an example: there are no internal workshops to improve educators' skills. More often educators call for SMDs support services, which is a clear indication of lack of school-based initiatives.

Internal staff encounters occur in the form of meetings, and the latter do not improve skills, attitudes and knowledge of educators. When invited to attend refresher courses and workshops at the district office, SADTU influences their members not to attend because of a number of reasons, money for transport being one of them. The information of the workshops held by the SMDs to develop the SMTs skills is not carried down by principals to the educators, and this is confirmed by the fact that no reports have been given to the SMDs about the progress made.

#### **5.7.2.1.5 The setting of standards**

The SMDs feel that the setting of standards where principals are gripped with fear, and where members of SADTU want to play a management and leadership role at schools and where members of SADTU do not want to submit to authority and control is impossible. For example, schools have no instruments such as class visit forms, developmental forms etc. to measure standards. One is also informed about the situation where learners and educators display a carefree attitude by spending time outside the classrooms suggesting that there are no standards set at the four project schools.

According to the SMDs, at the four selected schools, the conduct of learners leaves much to be desired. The educators' conduct and dress code are not in line with the SACE Code of Conduct. So is the case with educators' standards and professional values. The SMDs cited an educator who comes to school attired in Rastafarian garb, and those who come to school wearing a T shirt on which *Castle Lager* is printed as examples. The SMDs continued to say that there are no standards set at schools, and that is why some educators smoke in full view of the learners, and as a result they are imitated by the learners. In addition to this the SMDs said that there was a moral decline among the educators at the four project schools, hence the dismissal of three educators within a year at school A.

#### **5.7.2.2 Leadership as a practical activity of principals**

##### **5.7.2.2.1 Innovation**

The SMDs believe that the principals of the four selected schools lean too much on SADTU decisions as if they have been employed by this particular union. In many instances, principals want SADTU to take the initiative and to think on their behalf. For instance, the SADTU members interpret Chapter A, paragraph 4.4 (e) (ii) of the EEA Regs (No. 222 of 1999) incorrectly to their advantage, and the principals do not challenge their perception and their interpretation. Their role is seemingly to say yes to everything that SADTU dictates to them.

The SMDs argue that principals seem to be turning a blind eye to the fact that most of the communities are poor because of the unemployment which is so rife in our country. Instead of

principals being creative or innovative, they still rely on school fees. No innovative ideas are developed to augment the seemingly insufficient funds, and the dependency syndrome of the SMTs dampen any hopes of collaborative processes to actualise innovations. The SADTU mentality is a mind set that must be transformed by principals as leaders, but, it seems as if they have no ability and capability to do so.

The SMDs feel that the principals do not strive towards turning the situation at their schools around. They for instance, do not act on their own initiative. The induction programmes for newly-appointed educators are not in place, and they do not even initiate the training programmes for their SMTs. The attitude and moral problems of the educators are also not changed or given attention by principals. It has been proved beyond doubt that principals fail dismally when it comes to improving the poor matric results (cf. Figure 5-1).

#### **5.7.2.2.2 Originality**

The SMDs believe that the principals of the four selected schools operate like wheelbarrows which need to be always pushed whenever they have to do the work. For the principals to be doing something, the SMDs have to initiate ideas before the schools can move in one direction or another. On three occasions the SMDs visited the schools to render assistance, but, on the latter two occasions the entire staff of the school D and the vast majority of the SMT of the school were negative and unresponsive. Surprisingly, the principal of the school did nothing about the situation, except to half-heartedly act on the instructions of the SMD in charge of the school.

The SMDs think that the principals of the four schools are not visionary leaders, and as a result they do not have vision about where they want to take the schools. Their management, administration and leadership styles have remained the same for years. It is notable that they do not initiate plans even if they fail in an aspect of management, administration or leadership. If one has to observe their daily routine, their offices and their operations, one will realise that they remain where they were five years ago. The principals still have problems such as tardiness, defiance on the part of educators etc., and it has been discovered that they are unable to design a plan which will turn things around at their schools.

The reactionary approach by the principals suggests that they are not original in managing and leading their schools. Criticism of ideas and originality, especially by the SMDs, is a principals'



trademark. They do not take cognisance of the fact that managers always get negative and positive feedback from their supervisors. The unfortunate part of it is that the four principals at the four selected schools only criticise and they never provide alternative suggestions.

### **5.7.2.2.3 Motivation**

The SMDs concede that motivation at the four project schools is not in place on a daily basis because the principals are still not sure whether they are in control of the schools or whether SADTU is in control. The SMDs went further to say that the learners are no longer motivated by principals at the morning assembly and devotions because the morning assemblies these days are only used for directives and announcements. According to the SMDs, the educators' morale is at its lowest ebb, and as a result they are demotivated, dispirited and uninspired.

The assertion of the principals is supported by Matseke (1997:12) who feels "that the situation [at the traditional black schools] is so bad that some good teachers have decided to take packages to run away from the shameful scene." The opting for severance packages is indicative of demotivated educators. On the other hand, some educators at the four selected schools do not display signs of being motivated by the schools' leadership. Some are, for instance, not attending to their teaching periods, while others are regularly coming to school late, and some do not even bother to prepare and plan their lessons. Because they are also demotivated, principals neglect to motivate educators who display the above-mentioned unprofessional behaviour.

Furthermore, the SMDs feel that principals are unable to confront educators because the unionised educators encroach on the leadership of principals, and this type of behaviour demotivates the principals and renders them useless with regard to motivating educators. The head office, at the provincial level also contributes to the demotivation of principals because of misconduct cases which are submitted to the labour relations sub-directorate at provincial level and which drag on for months before they are given attention.

Because of the lack of motivation on the part of educators and principals, parents are left out of the process of the education of their children. Instead of instilling a work ethic in the learners, demotivated principals and educators allege that learners do not want to do their work and are failures. The SMDs refuted the belief that all the Grade 12 learners do not want to do their work.

They went further by wanting to know why the educators do not make learners feel like learning, if it is true that they do not want to learn, by motivating them.

#### **5.7.2.2.4 Inspiring trust**

The perception of the SMDs of the inspiring of trust among the educators by principals is that open communication and joint decision making is lacking at the four selected schools. Principals do not consider the democratic values and principles which are enshrined in our country's Constitution. That is why they make unilateral decisions and as such fail to command the support and trust of their staff. In most cases matters are left until the last moment and the staff is then expected to hurriedly carry out the principals' decisions. This approach breeds mistrust and uncertainty, and it furthermore encourages dissatisfaction and resistance among the educators.

The principals cause fear and animosity among the staff in that they discriminate against their educators by giving their friends preferential treatment thereby contravening section 9(1)-(5) of the Constitution (No. 108 of 1996). Those who are close friends of principals get information before the entire staff. If a friend of a principal commits the same misconduct committed by a non-friend, he/she is not charged. The principal of School A for instance is surrounded by his friends in the school management team, because he recommended his friends to be elevated to the position of heads of department thereby contravening Chapter 2, regulation C.3.3 of PSA Regs (No. R. 679 of 1999) which stipulates that an employee must refrain from favouring relatives and friends in work-related activities and never abuse her or his authority or influence another employee, nor be influenced to abuse her or his authority.

The SMDs believe that the principals of the project schools seem completely lost, especially with regard to support and encouragement of educators. When asked why the principals do not support and encourage the educators, the SMDs indicated that it is because of the fact that the principals started their teaching career in the turbulent period in the history of education in this country and as such they are affected psychologically to a certain extent, hence they neglect important issues such as the ones mentioned above.

Support and encouragement are the cornerstones for inspiring trust among the educators. The SMDs reported that principals do not visit educators who are on sick leave to boost their spirits. Such a cold attitude is not inspiring. A consequence of this is that there is no mutual trust among

the educators. Because SADTU does not allow principals to pay class visits, it is difficult for principals to encourage and to support educators. The SMDs added that at the four selected schools the customer service is poor, and as a result, educators and the parents express dissatisfaction about them, more especially the principal of School B.\*

#### **5.7.2.2.5 Long term perspective**

In the developmental visits to the four schools, the SMDs stressed the importance of a school vision and mission. The principals were also helped or shown how to formulate the same. But, up to now, principals find it difficult to share their vision with the unionised educators who have formed a front that opposes them. The vision and mission of schools are just written to impress those officials who may want to see them, but in essence the vision is not realised or attained by schools. Principals never give themselves benchmarks, hence the deterioration of Grade 12 results and the standards in general at the four selected schools (cf. Table 4-1 & Figure 5-1).

The SMDs concede that there is a weakness in the leadership at the four selected schools and that they lack a long term perspective. According to them, what happens at the four schools suggests that principals do not know how to make learners work hard in order to succeed at the end of the year. They do not know how to make educators work towards a dream and it appears as if they are unable to solve the attitude problems of the educators and to change their mind set so that schools can become proper institutions of learning. Lastly, the way principals handle management and leadership issues, suggests that there is something which prevents them from wanting to visualise performing schools.

The SMDs furthermore postulate that serious-minded and authentic educators are not proud to be the followers of the principals of the four schools. This is because it appears as if these principals do not possess the innate talent to lead, and they also appear not to have the ability to inspire long term perspective among the educators (cf. paragraphs 2.2.3 & 2.3.4). In fact, the leadership of the principals of the four selected schools seems to be causing chaotic situations and destruction at schools (cf. Table 4-1 & Figure 5-1). The postulation of the SMDs is supported by Mulholland

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\* The correspondence dated 15 and 19 May 2000 from School B addressed to the SMD in charge of the school outlines the dissatisfaction of the school community.

(2000:1) who writes "leadership is an intangible quality. It is difficult to define and can lead as easily to destruction as to salvation." Mulholland was referring to political leadership which may be not different from educational leadership.

Mulholland goes on to say that James David Barber has identified four categories under which leaders can be classified namely *passive positive*, *active positive*, *passive negative* and *active negative*. According to the SMDs, the principals of the four schools are not active positive because they do not enjoy their work as a result of unionised educators who more often than not dictate terms to them (cf. paragraph 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 2.3.6), nor do they deal with their awesome responsibilities because they are intimidated by the unionised educators and as such they do not relish the challenges. The SMDs went further to say that the principals do not delegate their power to able educators so as to entrust them with the responsibility of running the affairs of the schools. Instead the principals are active negative i.e. they are, in most cases, doing nothing because they are frustrated by the destruction and chaotic situation caused by the unionised educators at their schools (cf. Matseke 1998:11).

Considering the leadership of principals of the four selected schools as portrayed by the SMDs, one can say that they are negative passive leaders, i.e. they are leaders who do very little for their schools. The laissez-faire situation prevalent at their schools supports this view. However, mention must be made that unionised educators contribute to the principals being negative passive leaders. Instead of assisting principals by working hard towards the attainment of vision, they oppose the leadership of principals. As a result, the principals do not strive for the attainment of the school vision. The end examination results and productivity at the four schools evidently suggest that principals do not give themselves the time and opportunity to ponder about where they want to take their schools (cf. Figure 5-1).

#### **5.7.2.2.6 The influence of leader**

The SMDs maintain that principals occupy a leadership role, and that influencing educators towards the achievement of goals is one of their tasks as leaders of the schools to which they are attached. According to the SMDs, the principals of the four selected schools minimally influence educators towards the setting of goals. This means that principals have abdicated their responsibility in respect of goal setting, which needs to be a system that is followed throughout the existence of their schools as organisations. However, the SMDs concede that it is difficult for

the four principals of the four selected schools to influence the unionised educators who have a hidden agenda, and who resolve their grievances at the expense of the learners. The belief of the SMDs is supported by Makgalemele (2000:3) who points out that the government will deal accordingly with educators who toyi-toyi, down chalk and go slow at the expense of the learners in future.

It must be noted that the principals are vested with the power to influence the educators towards the attainment of goals. One of the most important powers vested in principals is legitimate power which none can dispute and which comes about as a result of the formal, legal and official appointment of principals (cf. paragraph 4.3.1.7). But, according to the SMDs, principals do not use their legitimate power to influence learners and educators towards the realisation of the set standards. For example, the learners come to schools shabbily dressed, they are continuously noisy in the classrooms during school hours, and they leave the school premises at any time.

It has also been noted that the educators at the four selected schools also come to school late, and they dress contrary to the provisions of Chapter 2, regulation C.5.1 of the PSA Regs (No. R. 679 of 1999). The matric results of the four schools for the past five years are a proof of a minimal influence on discipline which is supposed to sustain the culture of meaningful learning and educative teaching (cf. Figure 5-1). The SMDs believe that the principals are unable to influence deputy principals and heads of department, and as a result they under-perform, and they are also unable to conduct themselves as leaders who are expected to set standards for their subordinates. As is the case with the principals, the deputy principals and the heads of department do not use legitimate power in influencing their subordinates.

The SMDs maintain that the principals do not have an expressive plan of action to actualise a future perspective with regard to principals' guidance, monitoring, leadership and coaching of educators. According to the SMDs, all the foregoing are essential aspects of influence that need to be given serious attention by principals. Another problem that makes it difficult for the principals to have an influence on the staff after formal working hours is the migrant labour pattern of the staff. Most of the educators do not reside in the townships where the four schools are situated.

The SMDs pointed out that in spite of the fact that the prioritised goals at the four schools are to achieve a pass rate above 50% by the Grade 12 learners, there is no evidence that the schools will



succeed in doing this, because there is no physical programme of action that the principals are able to produce on demand. The SMDs feel that the lack of a synchronised strategy to influence achievement of goals at the four schools, surely, undermines long term perspectives as discussed in paragraph 5.6.2.2.5. In the light of what the SMDs aver, it becomes clear that principals do not use their legitimate, coercive, expert, reward and referent powers to influence their educators towards the achievement of goals and the set standards (cf. paragraph 4.3.1.7).

#### **5.7.2.2.7 Risk taking**

The SMDs describe the principals of the four schools as having an aversion to risk taking. They subscribe this aversion attitude to unionised educators who always oppose every move that the principals make. The classrooms are dirty, while the toilets of the four schools resemble pigsties (cf. Picture 4-1). The principals do not take care of the school buildings. In some instances, the windows are broken and doors have been removed from the classrooms. Among others, principals inform the SMDs that the unionised educators tell the learners not to clean the surroundings of schools because they are not slaves. This makes principals averse to telling learners to clean their mess in the toilets and the classrooms.

The SMDs believe that the principals of the four schools want to operate from a comfort zone. The reason why they say this, is because they believe that the principals want to be seen as good boys in the eyes of SADTU, but complain to the SMDs in the absence of SADTU. This serves as an indication that they are scared of making a decision dealing with SADTU. In spite of the fact that the principals have coercive and legitimate power to take risks, they are seen to be risk averse (cf. paragraph 4.3.1.7). According to the SMDs, principals are hesitant to take charge of their schools, hence laxness and laissez-faire attitudes prevail at these schools.

The SMDs concede that the principals of the four schools would rather refer the matter to the SMDs instead of taking a decision, so that they can pass the buck and say to their staff "the SMDs say . . ." instead of "I say . . ." More often than not, the staff of the four schools will insist, that they want to see the SMDs because it is they who say . . . not the principals. This indicates, that the principals are not firm, and rarely, if ever, take a stance on issues of importance. For example, the principals understand the importance of lesson preparation and class visits, and allege that they want to see that it is implemented in their schools, but this is not done because

they cannot firmly propagate its implementation. What makes matters worse is the fact that principals are not supported by their deputy principals and heads of department.

#### 5.7.2.2.8 Leadership and followership

The principals of the four selected schools seem not to be accepted as leaders at the schools to which they are attached, or alternatively, they seem to be despised by their educators, as followers. The SMD for School D holds the view that the staff of this school do not take the principal seriously because they think that the principal is disposable and can be substituted in the wink of an eye. The learners are easily influenced by the educators to go against him because he does not command their respect. This is due to how he portrays himself in front of them, how he communicates with them and also how the staff negatively portrays him in front of the learners.

For example, in 1997 the educators incited the learners to chase him away because of the following reasons: that he did not discipline male educators who sexually exploited school girls; that he failed to take action against educators who went on a trip with athletes to an athletic meeting and instead of feeding the athletes properly, used some of the money for liquor; that the disciplinary code of the school is generally poor because educators use abusive language when speaking to learners and also fail to honour their teaching periods without any action being taken against them; that some educators come to school drunk and or leave school premises without permission and no action is taken against them; that the representative council of learners was incorrectly used by the principal; that school funds were embezzled by the principal and that most educators employed at the school were not *bona fide* residents of the township where the school is situated.

There is nothing wrong with the above-mentioned reasons which were given by the learners. The only reason which seems to be wrong is the last one because it sounds as if influx control which has been scrapped subsequent to the ushering in of the new dispensation on 27 April 1994 must be maintained. It must also be noted that the educators who wanted the principal to be demoted actually instigated the learners to come up with these reasons which were of course genuine.

The non-support of the principal by the educators during this ordeal is an indication of the fact that some influential individuals among the staff influenced learners negatively. Later on, during this impasse, the educators refused to attend classes, and the reason they gave was that the

learners were misbehaving and threatening their lives. Had it not been because of the latter, it could easily have been business as usual. Some of the implicated educators did not even choose the side of the principal even though they were guilty of the accusations levelled at the principal.

During the negotiation process to have the situation normalised, some parents and learners pointed out that some educators were behind the impasse and were using the learners (a few influential learners) to achieve their misguided goals. When the South African Police Service (SAPS) were requested to investigate the matter because people with important information were not prepared to come forward and declare it, the perpetrators capitulated, apologised to the principal and the impasse died a natural death. Since this ordeal the principal has lost self-reliance and self-confidence.

The SMD for School A maintains that the principal of this school is not accepted as a leader because most of his followers don't look upon him as a good leader or a competent one. According to the SMD the principal has himself to blame because he allowed lawlessness at his school when the new government was voted in. He never showed any resistance to those who were destabilising schools because principals were victimised and oppressed psychologically by SADTU members. Unfortunately, subsequent to the political storm, the principal still has the group of educators who were his right-hand men and he continues to favour them over the others.

This favouritism caused a rift between the principal and the other staff members and as such jeopardised his leadership. The principal continued to worsen the situation by mismanaging the funds and making loans to his friends. The worst part of it was the appointment of his friends in management posts, and this angered most of his educators. Because of this corruption and nepotism, he is not considered a leader and the school is out of control. As a result of this, many accusations are hurled at him. For example, educators complain about favouritism, mismanagement of funds and incompetence. Because of this complaint, three educators were dismissed from the school for acting timidly in order to restore order, but still most of the educators do not regard him as their leader.

The SMD for School C feels that it is difficult to say whether the principal of this school is perceived as a leader by his followers because the principal has only been at the school which looked or appeared directionless since the predecessor departed four years ago. The SMD went further to say that the school community has been leaderless for a period exceeding a year, a

period when no appointment of the principal had been effected. With the passage of time, the school community seems to be appreciating the leadership. Lack of conflict, except during times close to the farewell function of Grade 12 learners at the end of 2000, is proof enough that the principal is viewed as a leader by his followers.

The SMD's assertion is dubious. How can a man who has not given attention to vandalised school buildings for four years be perceived as a leader? How can a man whose school has produced dismal Grade 12 results be regarded as a leader (cf. Figure 5-1)? How can a man whose school's learners come to school late and leave the school for home at any time be regarded as a leader? How can a man who is afraid to confront one of the educators who is an office bearer of SADTU, and who is absent from school now and then, and who has affairs with a learner be perceived as a leader by his followers?\*

The SMD for School B pointed out that the principal of this school is definitely not accepted by his followers. The reasons given by the SMD to support his argument are as follows: In one of the meetings which was held by the SMDs with the entire staff during their developmental visit, the staff accused the principal of not following procedures when dealing with cases of misconduct. They, for instance, made it abundantly clear that the principal does not warn an educator who is alleged to have committed misconduct, nor does he discuss the alleged case of misconduct with said educator, and the staff continued to say that he was biased in dealing with the cases of misconduct. For example, his friends are not charged with misconduct.

The SMD also indicated that an accusation by the entire school community was levelled against the principal because he uses the school funds to subsidise his petrol costs. Another issue is that of a lawn mower and a video machine which disappeared under very strange circumstances. According to the SMD, the said equipment is stored in the strong room by the principal who is the only person who has access to the strong room and who keeps the keys for the strong room. The arrangement at this school is that the principal is the only person who may take teaching aids out of the strong room to hand them over to the educator, or the educator may take them out of

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\* The minutes of the School Governing Body dated 14 April 2000 and 17 April 2000 bear testimony to these allegations.

the strong room in the presence of the principal, and the same procedure is followed when the equipment is brought back. But the principal could not account for the missing items mentioned above.

Lastly, the principal does not command respect, more especially among his staff members. The SMD in charge of the school informed the researcher that in one of the staff meetings he created a nasty situation which resulted in an exchange of unpleasant words. Apparently, in that meeting the principal said to one of the educators: You cannot speak to me like that because you are not my wife. In response to this unprofessional remark, the lady said: Yes, indeed, I am not your wife. My husband is not a fool like you are. As if it was not enough, the principal provocatively said to the lady: Look here, my wife is more beautiful than you are. This type of unprofessional behaviour made the entire staff unceremoniously leave the meeting on that day.

### **5.7.2.3 Leadership traits and skills of principals**

#### **5.7.2.3.1 Independence**

The principals of the four selected schools are not independent in the carrying out of their duty because SADTU acts as a watchdog and affects their independence. This interference has resulted in a deplorable situation in the four schools. The SMDs feel that this type of situation forces the principals of the four schools to avoid accountability as they bank heavily on the members of the SMTs, and in some other instances they want the SMDs to lead their schools on their behalf. For instance, the principals know that the unions' office bearers not the entire staff are entitled to time off, but they won't reason independently if the staff want time off for memorial services and sporting activities during school hours. Instead they will want the SMDs to make these decisions on their behalf.

According to the SMDs principals of the four schools are not confident and assertive when addressing educators and learners, and they are not firm when reprimanding the learners, hence the deviant behaviour that manifests itself among the learners at the four schools. The principals are definitely not acting independently when dealing with SADTU members. The reason why they behave like this could be the seemingly superior understanding of policy issues and legal provisions by some SADTU members. Every time the principals want the SMDs to confront labour issues, rather than dealing with these issues themselves.



The principals seem to be scared of leading schools. As a result of this the management and leadership of principals are fraught with mistakes, and they have to be advised by the SMDs time and again. The lack of independence weakens the leadership and management of principals, and results in their losing confidence in themselves. They are, therefore, unable to initiate programmes independently. They rely mostly on the directions from the District Office. When their staff do not align themselves with directions or innovations from the District Office, the principals cannot have them implemented in their schools.

#### **5.7.2.3.2 Organising**

The SMDs believe that organising as a task of a leader at the four schools is very poorly attended to. The SMD in charge of School D pointed out that during the year 2000 the Development Team from the District Office visited the school thrice. On the first two visits the principal had not met with his SMT to prepare for the visit. This evidently indicates that if the principal fails to hold organisational meetings with the SMT for almost five months, then there is poor organisation at the school. However, this can also be attributed to the fact that the principal is scared to meet with his SMT some of whose members occasionally oppose him (cf. paragraph 5.2.2.8).

According to the SMDs, further visible proof that the principals are poor organisers are their offices and their schools which lack proper organisation. For example, learners come to schools and leave for home as they please. The learning facilitators who visited the schools to moderate the Grade 12 marks at the end of 2000 were shocked on their arrival to find that some of the educators were not present though they knew that the learning facilitators would be coming to their schools on that specific day. In some instances the learning facilitators were shocked when they found that some educators' work was incomplete. The SMD for School A went further to say that the principal of this school does not feel ashamed to submit end of year mark schedules which contain errors and are untidy.

The SMDs maintain that the principals lack the organisational skills to allocate responsibilities. However, the principals are to a certain extent able to organise resources to meet institutional goals. However, the same cannot be said when it comes to delegation. For example, delegated duties allocated to the members of the SMT are not well organised. This is as a result of their reluctance to support the principals. The SMDs feel that intervention and reorganising by

principals, where necessary, is imperative. In addition to this, they hold the view that principals are not organising educators properly in accordance with ability and capability. For example, poorly performing educators, never elicit the principals' intervention and reorganising of subject allocation.

The principals of the four schools seem unable to organise the staff and the members of the SMT towards the attainment of goals. During their developmental visit, the SMDs always give feedback on the findings as well as hints to the principals. The principals in turn are expected to pass the information on to the members of the staff and the SMT members, but most unfortunately the principals will sit on the information. The developmental tools (forms) used when assessing the work of educators, clerks, and members of the SMT are not even discussed by principals with the persons concerned.

#### **5.7.2.3.3 Self-confidence**

Self-confidence is probably the most important leadership trait that is mostly needed for the leader to be able to lead effectively. The information supplied by the SMDs indicates that self-confidence among the principals is lacking. The SMDs think that this has come about as a result of working in the situation where the members of SADTU want to dominate decision making and discussions as well as the destructive criticism hurled at principals by SADTU members. As a result of the lack of self-confidence, principals of the four schools invariably refer labour issues such as discipline to the SMDs.

The principals of the four schools have been rendered ineffective by the members of SADTU who interfere with the smooth running of the schools. According to the SMDs, these principals seem to have run out of ideas on how to make things happen at their schools. They are not confident enough to come up with a quality plan that can turn the schools around. Table 4-4 and Figure 5-1 bear testimony to this. Instead the principals always say their teachers are difficult to handle. They do not confidently handle issues such as reprimanding, monitoring, inspiring, motivating and influencing learners and educators towards the achievement of goals.

The SMD in charge of School D made it abundantly clear that the principal of this school was psychologically affected at the time when some educators instructed learners to chase him away from school. As a result of this, his self-confidence was eroded and it is difficult to be regained.

What made it worse is the fact that during the ordeal, educators and parents generally did not support him. The fact that he shies away from holding management meetings, definitely indicates his lack of confidence.

#### **5.7.2.3.4 Courageous**

The SMDs believe that a good leader is one who continues to try against all odds. If such a leader feels that he or she is left in the lurch, he or she does not hesitate to go it alone or with a few who are prepared to follow him or her. Such a leader does not easily despair and shy away from any situation, and he or she is not a critic who will always fold her or his arms and rest on his or her laurels while criticising a move initiated by others or while waiting for the others to come and do things for him or her. The SMD for School B maintains that the principal of this school is not courageous in setting records straight. For example, he knows that preparation of lessons is a must, if things have to be done in accordance with educational principles, but he lacks the courage to convince or reprimand those who do not want to prepare and plan their lessons.

The SMD for School C also feels that the principal of this school is not courageous. According to the SMD, when this man is confronted with difficult situations such as confronting a prominent SADTU member who is always absent from school and who has sexual relations with a school girl, the principal, either consciously or unconsciously, revealed that he was willing and ready to take up a business career. This principal is not courageous in confronting problems such as vandalism, late coming, poor matric results and low standards which need to be confronted.

Contrary to the above, the SMD for School A thinks that the principal of this school has grown to show courage, though at times he is reluctant to confront a problematic situation. The skill is developing after being assured that the SMD is prepared to be supportive of him if he does things according to rules and regulations. This made him confront those educators who flouted the regulations by coming to school reeking of liquor and violated other regulations laid down in section 17(1)(a)-(n) of the EEA (No. 76 of 1998). So far, twenty-four educators have been charged with misconduct because of undermining his authority and failing to carry out legitimate and lawful instructions given to them by the principal.

On the other hand, the SMD for School D perceives the principal as someone who does not have enough courage to implement policies and strategies that are in the best interest of his school. At

this school, it is difficult to say whether SADTU is leading the school or whether he as a principal is doing it. For instance, some members of SADTU refuse to take legitimate and lawful instructions from him using correspondence from their provincial committee as an excuse. The principal lacks the courage to use official documents at his disposal, to fight for the plight of learners in ensuring that there is educative teaching and meaningful learning taking place at the school he is leading.

#### **5.7.2.3.5 Knowledgeable**

Considering the years of experience of the principals, it becomes clear that all the principals of the four project schools were appointed as principals during the darkest period in the history of South African education. It is also notable that all of them have not pursued studies in education management and leadership. This prompted the SMDs to say that, by elevating the principals to the position of leaders, it was tantamount to throwing them into the lions' den or in at the deep end because they lack leadership skills, and this is compounded by the fact that there are no assessment centres in South Africa where leadership skills of principals are honed. The assessment centre at the Free State University is used to identify management and leadership potentials that may be there in an individual, but it does not provide training *per se*.

The SMD went further to say that in spite of the SADTU opposition an endeavour was made to develop schools during the year 2000 and that a programme which is aimed at developing leadership skills of principals in the year 2001 has been drawn up. Perhaps this will come to the rescue of principals who lack leadership knowledge. The SMD in charge of School B describes the principal as someone who lacks knowledge in dealing with labour issues. For example, minor cases of misconduct are reported to the District Office, meaning that he does not know the contents of Sch. 8. item 3(3)(4) of the LRA (No. 66 of 1995). He does not know how to manage staff, learners and buildings. This is supported by the fact that he has done nothing to the school building which has been vandalised for six years.

The SMD for School A believes that the principal of this school is not knowledgeable regarding administration, management and leadership. He lacks knowledge of filing documents, guidance of administrative staff, distribution of duty among the heads of department and the deputy principal. He lacks knowledge of monitoring the work of educators and that of the learners, hence the poor matric results. The principal lost direction in so many areas, that he finds himself having no idea

of a number of issues that are to be put into practice by him. This man lacks knowledge of governance and financial management.

The SMD in charge of School D perceives the principal of this school as someone who lacks leadership and managerial skills. According to him this man is totally lost and frustrated by the SADTU members who oppose everything he does. In spite of the fact that the man has seven years' experience as a principal, he has not acquired managerial and leadership skills because of the variables mentioned earlier on (cf. paragraph 2.4.8.5). Mention must be made that principals are in possession of documents on legal, management, administration and leadership aspects, and now of late they are exposed to the developmental visits, but, they still do not perform because of the unionised educators who encroach on their management and leadership (cf. paragraphs 2.3.1 & 2.3.4).

### **5.8 Leadership styles of principals**

The SMD for School D pointed out that there are many things that happen within and outside the school which have a direct impact on the school and which are not attended to at all by the principal. For example, he ignored the action of the SADTU members who refused the SMDs access to the educators' professional work and their classrooms in order to develop the school, and since he fails to organise his SMT and staff, this suggests that they do what they think is correct or they do not do anything at all.

In the light of the above, the conclusion is drawn that the principal's leadership style is *laissez-faire*. This is also supported by the fact that he fails dismally to push programmes or to initiate something. In addition to this, it has been noted that his instructions or programmes, if any, are not carried out. The principal of School D does not know the progress that the learners are making or not making, and this suggests that his leadership style is *laissez-faire* because he fails to manage the core business of the school, namely learning and teaching.

Learners' absenteeism at School D is very high and there is no procedure to check them. In addition to this, there is no support programme for learners to ensure that they spend their time profitably, wisely, effectively and in learning and educative activities, and to crown it all, there is no functional extra-mural programme for learners. The staff of the school operate more reactively than according to an available programme. The buildings and physical assets at the school are not



managed, and every afternoon chairs are scattered all over the school premises and doors are left open. The classrooms are filthy and litter is always scattered about.

The SMD for School A maintains that the principal has chosen a democratic style which he cannot properly put into practice. According to the SMD, this principal takes every single thing to the staff because he claims to be transparent and he will leave everything to the educators. This sounds like abdication of responsibility and it also constitutes a laissez-faire management style. The perception of the SMD is not accepted. This notion is supported by the fact that the researcher observed that learners and educators of this school come to school late, and some learners leave the school at any time during school hours.

The SMD believes that a consultative approach disempowers the principal because he ends up not making decisions without consulting with the educators, and as such instructions are not coming from the principal's office but from anybody and everybody. The consultative approach is carried out to the detriment of the leadership and the management of the school. In fact, the consultative approach in South Africa has done serious harm to the education of this country because SADTU which has many members, is dominating decision making and as such they always choose that which is favourable and advantageous to them. At school level one will find that decisions which deprive learners of the right to learn, like memorial services during school hours, are made.

The SMD for School C feels that the most dominant style of leadership which characterises the principal of this school is that of authoritative tendencies. According to the SMD, the principal usually prefers being listened to and obeyed. The principal still feels aggrieved by the abolition of corporal punishment in schools (cf. section 10(1)(2) of the SASA, No. 84 of 1996). The authoritative tendency was when he expelled a pregnant girl despite the policy position of the Department of Education regarding expulsion of learners from school.

The frequent reference to the "I" concept is sufficient evidence of unilateral tendencies. The principal strongly believes in practices that erode democratic values and principles as well as the democratic rights of role-players. Any mention that he should have consulted, interacted with other stakeholders as prescribed by policy, is met with reasons for non-participation. The assertion of the SMD holds water, but if one analyses the situation at this school, one is forced to believe that the principal opts for the authoritative style because unionised educators oppose everything that he does. In opting for this style, he therefore hopes to force them to toe the line.

The SMD in charge of School C went on to say that the authoritarian style for which the principal is opting seems to be unconsciously sidelined when those preferred by him are interacted with. This is evident when the principal talks to educators, learners and parents closer to him. The opposite is true for those not necessarily close to the principal. These are educators with dissenting views and particularly belonging to SADTU. The dissenting group is usually spoken to in an undemocratic and arrogant manner. What the SMD says here supports indirectly the view that the principal is fed up with the unionised educators always being prescriptive when handling educational issues.

The SMD in charge of School B thinks that the principal of this school opts for a laissez-faire leadership style. The reason why he says this is that the principal abdicates his responsibilities. For example, educators who do not teach classes when they know very well that they are supposed to be teaching are reported to the SMD by the heads of department instead of by him because he is accountable to the SMD, not the heads of department. According to the SMD, some learners at this school are seen basking in the sun during the winter months, while in summer they mill around on the school premises.

The school is characterised by a laissez-faire type of attitude in that educators and learners come to school late while learners leave at any time during school hours. Another common problem is that educators at this school hold so-called memorial services during school hours when an educator has passed away. At this school, there is noise or buzz in the classrooms all day long, which suggests that there is no effective teaching and learning taking place. Lastly, the toilets are so filthy that the stench coming from them is unbearable. They are health hazards in that they are susceptible to germs.

## **5.9 The matching of practice with theory and model**

### **5.9.1 Introduction**

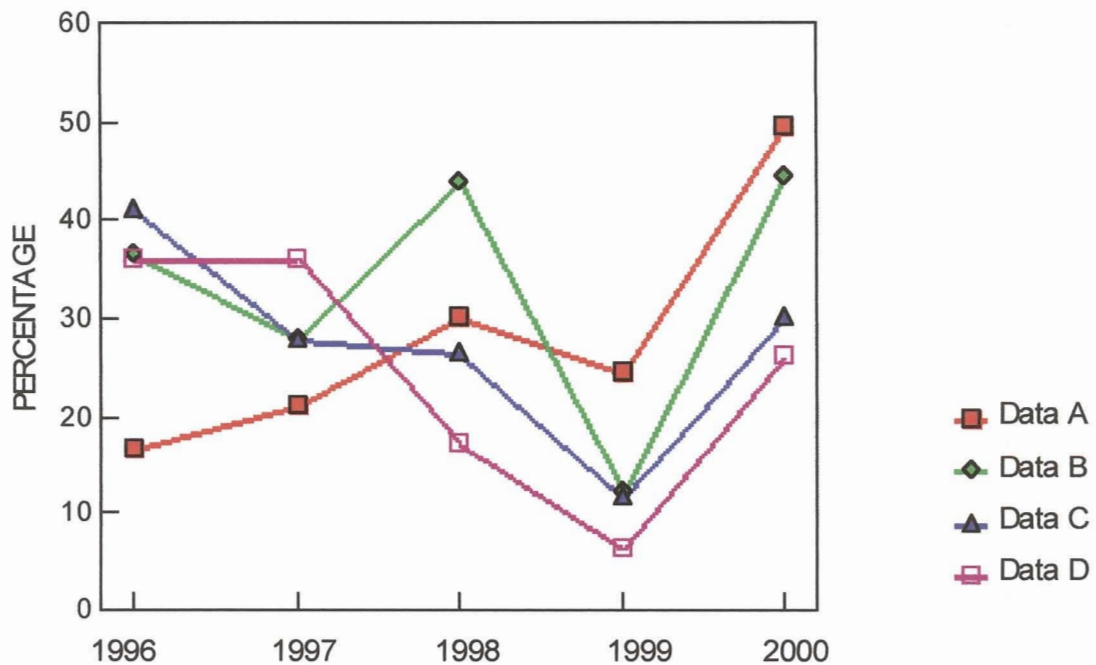
The four project schools have been producing dismal Grade 12 results for years. This is indicative of the fact that there is plethora of factors that contribute to the poor matric results. Management and leadership of schools is one of them. It is for this reason that the management style of the leadership of the four project schools must change i.e. theory must be changed into practice.

After matching practice with theory Hersey *et al.* (1996:113) and Greenberg & Baron (1997:150-153) found that managers are able to change their management style, their training methods and their training programmes. These changes were also found to have positively affected productivity.

The matching of practice with theory by changing the management system to suite the activities of the organisation helps the management to arrest the situation and to turn things around. For example, productivity could increase after the initiation of change in a management system. In addition to this, the following are likely to improve considerably: the morale of employees, the organisational image and human as well as labour relations. Change as suggested below will also bring about freedom of interaction of the supervisor with the subordinates within the organisation and the friendly spirit which will make it possible for the supervisor to know the problems of the workers will prevail. More importantly, the organisation will begin to show a clear healthy productivity after struggling for a long time (Hersey *et al.* 1996:113, Dessler 1997:292, Sherman & Bohlander 1992:56-58).

It is believed that the situation at the four project schools can be arrested and be turned around if Fiedler's Contingency model and House's path-goal theory can be put into practice i.e. if change can be brought about. Fiedler's Contingency model and House's path-goal theory, which are used as a framework for the researcher in this research project to understand the situation and the leadership effectiveness of principals at the four project schools, will be examined.

Figure 5-1 below indicates that the four selected schools performed inconsistently in the Grade 12 examinations for five consecutive years as follows: In 1996 School A's pass rate was 16,88%; School B's pass rate was 36,69%; School C's pass rate was 41,15% and School D's pass rate was 36,11%. In 1997 School A's pass rate was 21,26%; School B's pass rate was 28,14%; School C's pass rate was 28,09% and School D's pass rate was 36,13%. In 1998 School A's pass rate was 30,34%; School B's pass rate was 43,98%; School C's pass rate was 26,67% and School D's pass rate was 17,33%. In 1999 School A's pass rate was 24,79%; School B's pass rate was 12,36%; School C's pass rate was 11,68% and School D's pass rate was 6,33%. In 2000 School A's pass rate was 49,52%; School B's pass rate was 44,57%; School C's pass rate was 30,14% and School D's pass rate was 26,29%.

**Figure 5-1: The 1996-2000 Grade 12 Pass Rates of the the Project Schools**

If one has to consider the above graph, one realises that the Grade 12 examination results in some instances fluctuate. School A's pass rate slightly improved from 1996, and in 1999 it declined, whereas it went up in 2000. The school B's Grade 12 examination results declined in 1997 and went up in 1998. But, in 1999 there was a sharp decline, whereas in 2000 the results went up. From 1996, the Grade 12 examination results of school C have been declining, and in 2000 there was a slight improvement. The last school's Grade 12 examination results namely school D were constant from 1996 up to 1997, and they started showing a decline. In 2000 they showed a slight improvement.

It must also be noted that all the four schools' Grade 12 examination results improved in 2000. It can be said that this was possible because of the standard of the question papers in that year because the situation at the four project schools in terms of management and leadership has been the same since 1996. Also, the matric results of the entire country improved drastically in 2000. Another point to be taken note of is that the Grade 12 examination results of schools C and D have been on the decline because of the impact of unionised educators who do not want to submit to authority and control at these schools (cf. paragraph 5.2.2.8).

### 5.9.2 Fiedler's contingency model

As has already been mentioned in paragraph 5.9.1, theory which is put into practice can help schools as organisations to improve productivity. In the light of the matric results of the four project schools for the five consecutive years as depicted in Figure 5-1, it becomes clear that theory at the four schools was not considered or alternatively the matching of practice with theory and model was never given attention by the leadership of the four project schools. In the subsequent discussion, an attempt will be made to investigate whether Fiedler's Contingency model could be used by the principals at the four project schools.

Before further discussion could be embarked upon, it is necessary to make mention of the fact that a model and a theory have been purposely chosen because they are not the same. Hersey *et al.* (1996:190) distinguish the two concepts as follows: "A theory attempts to explain why things happen as they do. As such, it is not designed to recreate events. A model, on the other hand, is a pattern of already existing events that can be learned and therefore repeated." For example, if one wants to determine whether the process is a model, one has to record procedures and sequences (Hersey *et al.* 1996:190).

According to Sergiovanni and Starratt ((1983:90), Fred Fiedler developed the Contingency model to determine whether the situation in which a leader finds himself or herself affects his or her leadership effectiveness, and he discovered that the following procedures or sequences which he refers to as situational variables affect the leadership effectiveness in a given situation: *task structure*, *leader followers relations* and *position power*. In other words, Fiedler's Contingency model consists of the three already mentioned variables (Hersey *et al.* 1996:124).

The task structure refers to clear standards, objectives, vision, decision making, problem solving etc. On the other hand the position power refers to the power and authority the principal has as a leader in order to help him or her to influence the educators towards the attainment of objectives or goals. Lastly, the leader-followers relations refers to the extent to which a leader relates to his or her followers. For example, in a school setting, educators may like or dislike the principal for reasons of their own (Hersey *et al.* 1996:124-125, Mondy & Premeaux 1995:357, Hoy & Miskel 1987:287).



Mondy and Premeaux (1995:356) express the sentiment that in the situation where a leader finds himself or herself there may be a friendly or unfriendly, a relevant or tense, and threatening or supportive atmosphere which impacts on the effectiveness of a leader. The assertion of Mondy and Premeaux (1995) is valid if one has to consider the discussion in Chapter 5 of the research project. The leadership technique that the principals of the four project schools could apply at their schools is mostly interfered with by the unionised educators, who more often than not oppose the move that the principals may want to take, thereby creating a tense and unfriendly atmosphere (cf. paragraphs 5.6.2; 5.6.2.2 & 5.6.2.3).

There is evidence that in some instances some educators at the four project schools do not like their principals and that this leads to their being hostile and as such they cause a threatening situation for the principals. An example of such situation is the events that took place at School D. It is recalled that at this school the learners were incited against the principal by the educators, and that this resulted in the principal being chased away from school. In School A, the situation forced the principal to favour some of the educators and this created a hostile situation at the school. On the other hand the principal of School C was forced by the circumstances prevalent at his school to opt for the authoritarian leadership style and to be harsh with the SADTU members (cf. paragraph 5.2.2.8).

As has already been mentioned, the four principals of the four project schools are barred by the members of the above mentioned teacher union from exercising control over their professional work. This suggests that the situation at the four schools renders the principals ineffective and this is confirmed by the chaotic situation prevalent at the four project schools e.g. late coming, noise in the classrooms and avoidance of the teaching periods (cf. paragraph 5.4 & 5.5). Some members of SADTU do not want to submit to authority, and this results in the principals not being able to influence them towards the achievement of goals. In other words the educators belonging to the above-mentioned union render the principals powerless as they cannot use their power effectively to influence them (cf. paragraph 5.6.2.2.6).

The task structure events at the four project schools occur minimally, if they ever occur. According to the SMDs in charge of the four schools there are no visible standards set by the principals and graffiti and abusive language in the toilets and other mischievous things happen in these schools. It is also not clear whether objectives are set at the four project schools. The Grade 12 pass rate depicted in Figure 5-1 bears testimony to this. The long term perspective

among the principals is missing and as a result, the four principals are not visionary leaders, hence problems remain unsolved for years e.g. unprofessional behaviour among some educators (cf. paragraph 5.6.2.1.6).

In the light of the foregoing discussion, it becomes clear that the task-oriented style and the relationships-oriented style which are propagated by Fiedler are not opted for by the principals of the four selected schools, or alternatively, it is difficult for them to opt for these styles. Should they have forged ahead opting for the task-oriented style it could have been easy for them to achieve their goals (Sergiovanni & Starratt 1983:91). This is endorsed by Fiedler who argues that leaders who opt for the task-oriented style perform better even if the situation is unfavourable or very favourable (Hersey *et al.* 1996:124-125 & Hoy and Miskel 1987:290). Fiedler goes on to say that a relationship-oriented style can only help the principals if the situation is favourable. Following the postulation of Fiedler, it is believed that the relationship-oriented style is unlikely to work at the four project schools should the principals opt for it.

### 5.9.3 House's path-goal theory

Hersey *et al.* (1996:190) believe that if a person tries to imagine why a person is motivated to achieve something, and tries to answer the question why things happen the way they do, that person will come up with a theory. The main concern will then be to look into why the leader does what he or she does in the situation in which he or she finds him/herself. For instance, the question why a leader defines what followers must do to attain a work outcome will be the main concern. But before that could be done, it is necessary to mention that House's path-goal theory that the researcher has opted to match with practice "[is] the proposition that managers can facilitate job performance by showing employees how their performance directly affects their receiving desired rewards" (Mondy & Premeaux 1995:687).

Similarly, Hoy and Miskel (1987:292) maintain that "the theory is called path-goal because it explains how leaders influence their subordinates' perceptions of work goals, personal goals, and paths to goal attainment." If the foregoing is to be analysed, it becomes clear that there are four elements of House's path-goal theory namely *leaders' influence*, *subordinates' perceptions*, *organisational goals* and *paths to goal achievement*. Mondy and Premeaux (1995:292) and Hersey *et al.* (1996:126) add *reward* as another dimension to House's path-goal theory. Lastly and more importantly, this theory looks into how leaders and followers succeed in attaining goals,

or how they follow the path that leads to the attainment of goals (Sherman & Bohlander 1992:482).

According to Hoy and Miskel (1987:292) there are four basic leader behaviours which help a leader and followers to move in the path that leads towards the attainment of goals such as *directive behaviour*, *achievement-oriented behaviour*, *supportive behaviour* and *participative behaviour*. In so far as the directive behaviour of a leader is concerned, expectations are clarified while a leader gives direction to the followers who are asked to follow rules and procedures. As regards the situation at the four project schools, the deduction which is made on the basis of the information supplied by the principals, the teacher unions and the SMDs is that the principals are not in a position to give direction because of their ignorance of statutes, rules and regulations as well as the unwillingness of the unionised educators to perform to standard (cf. paragraphs 5.4; 5.5 & 5.6).

Earlier on, it was also indicated by the SMDs in charge of the four project schools that meetings at these schools are seldom held and that the manner in which they are held suggests that they are not developmental, informative and directive. The workshops where specific direction is given to the educators are not given attention by the principals. As has already been mentioned, leader behaviour can also be goal-oriented. This behaviour sets challenges such as *goal achievements*, *performance improvements*, *striving to attain higher standards* and *the emphasis of excellence* among the followers (Hoy & Miskel 1987:293, Hersey *et al.* 1996:128, Swanepoel *et al.* 2000:384).

In so far as the principals of the four project schools are concerned, there is no evidence that their behaviour is goal-oriented. In spite of the improvement shown in 2000, the Grade 12 pass rate of the four schools suggests that there is something that prevents them from following a path that leads to the attainment of goals. In terms of the information given by the SMDs, one is inclined to say that the principals of the four schools do not have a clear vision and as a result they do not set goals and standards nor do their educators continue to seek for improvement in their performance (cf. paragraphs 5.6.2.1.4; 5.6.2.1.5 & 5.6.2.2.5). From the information supplied by the SMDs, it emerged that participative behaviour is missing at the four project schools. Those principals who may try to make a move towards allowing their educators to partake in the decision making and the activities of their schools are embarrassed by some unionised educators (cf. paragraph 5.6.2).

Lastly, supportive behaviour among the educators of the four project schools is not evident. According to the SMDs and the teacher unions, one of the reasons why they do not support the principals is because some principals do not treat the educators the same way. This discrimination has also resulted in some educators forming camps and cliques. From the SMDs discussions it emerged that emotional behaviour causes animosity among the educators. There is also evidence that the principals do not morally support the educators who are alcoholics as well as those who are ill, in bed. More importantly, they do not develop pleasant interpersonal relationships among educators (cf. paragraphs 5.6.2.2 & 5.6.2.3).

Hoy and Miskel (1987:293) stress the fact that apart from the leader behaviour there are situational factors that may prevent leader behaviour and followers from strictly following a path that leads to the attainment of goals. According to them, such situational factors are *personal characteristics of followers* and *environmental pressures and demands*. At the four project schools, some educators are characterised by the following: late coming, avoiding teaching periods, intimidating principals and defiance of regulations and orders. The pressure exerted on the principals by some members of SADTU and political transformation are the order of the day at the four project schools (cf. paragraphs 5.4.2; 5.6.2.1 & 5.6.2.2). However, it must be noted that the four leadership behaviours discussed above can be displayed at different times and in different situations. In other words, a different situation calls for a different behaviour (Swanepoel *et al.* 2000:384)

Lastly, Hoy and Miskel (1987:294) point out that leader effectiveness helps a leader and followers to follow a path that leads to the attainment of goals. According to them leader effectiveness is not defined in terms of task accomplishment but in terms of the psychological states of followers. In the school setting, a principal's behaviour is effective if it influences the educators to improve job satisfaction, the acceptance of principals more especially at the four project schools and if it promotes educators' motivation (Hoy & Miskel 1987:294, Hersey *et al.* 1996:126). The leader behaviour which makes the path to the attainment of goals clear and easy to travel is not displayed by the principals at the four project schools, hence most educators are reluctant to teach and to attain high standards (cf. paragraphs 5.6.2.1; 5.6.2.2; 5.6.2.3 & 5.6.2.4).

## 5.10 Conclusion

The qualitative research design and procedures helped the researcher to conduct research at the four selected schools. Mention must be made that it was not difficult to collect data needed for the research from the four schools seeing that they were accessible to the researcher. The participants co-operated except the SADTU site committee at School D. From the responses of the four principals of the four project schools, it came to the fore that some educators are guilty of misconduct, and that the principals do not have a sound knowledge of how to manage misconduct. The teacher organisations also indicated in their responses that they were uncertain as to what constitutes misconduct. The SMDs responses are vital because the training needs of the principals and other members of the school management teams in leadership and management were highlighted from their responses.