

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.5.3. Category 3: Fairness

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

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

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

5.5.3.1 Theme 1: Workload and healthy environment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Similarly, Teacher T-A3 explained:

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

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

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

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

5.5.3.2 Theme 2: Academic standards

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.5.4 Category 4: Trustworthiness

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

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

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

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

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

5.5.4.1 Theme 1: Communication

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

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

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

Principal P-B experienced communication differently:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HD-A3 said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Teacher T-B1 said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pa-A3 said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.6 FINDINGS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.7 CONCLUSION

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

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

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Primary Question

The primary research question guiding this study was:

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

Secondary Questions

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

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

The research questions influenced the formulation of the questions asked during in the semi-structured interviews. This data collection method was flexible and allowed for open-ended and follow-up questions to ensure that rich data could be collected (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Observations also formed part of the data collection. After the data collection, the interviews were transcribed, and meaningful segments were identified. These meaningful segments of the data were coded, and the codes were categorised and organised as categories and themes.

6.2 LIMITATIONS

When I first decided to conduct this research, I did not realise that some stakeholders could decide not to stay at the school after the change in ownership and that limited the study regarding participants. I also think it could be valuable to interview some of the parents and teachers who left the school after the change in ownership. Being able to interview the stakeholders before the change in ownership and after a year under the new governors would have also added value to the data.

By the time I had received my ethical clearance and was ready to conduct the interviews, five years had passed since the change of ownership of the schools occurred. Parents were the most difficult participants to trace. Even though some were very eager to provide all the information, some parents were hesitant to share negative information because they were afraid that they would be victimised, or that their children would be victimised at school. One couple admitted that they were not involved in their children's school at all and did not know if there was a change after the change in ownership. This could contribute to an incorrect view of their experience after the change in ownership because they do not actually know how governance took place before the change of ownership.

Some teacher participants refused to participate in the interviews and said that they did not want to discuss this. After explaining the reason for the research as well as the informed consent, one of the teachers indicated the next day that she would take part in the interview. She was very emotional during the interview, and it was clear that she was very disappointed in the changes that had occurred. Some teachers refused to take part in the interview and for this reason I could only interview three teachers from the one school and four from the other school.

Some of the heads of department from one school believed that the change had been very positive whereas according to the parents and teachers it had not. This is a firm indication of a significant difference in the views of heads of departments on one hand and parents and teachers on the other hand.

There were only two participating principals. One of the principals is still the principal of the school, but the other principal resigned and there is already a third principal. There was no indication from the responses why the other two principals had resigned.

6.3 CONTRIBUTION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Independent schools in South Africa increased over the last few years. The increase of schools also increased the possibility for companies to make a profit from independent schools as mentioned in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.3.3. When education becomes a business, organisations need to be conscious of the fact that, if they buy a school for business purposes, they need to also consult all the school-based stakeholders and make sure that they are transparent in all decisions made. They also need to consult the school-based stakeholders when decisions regarding education are made. From the research, in chapter 5 paragraph 5.5.3.2, and paragraph 5.5.4 it was clear that school-based stakeholders, especially teachers and parents experience the change in governance more traumatic than the principals and heads of departments and for that reason organisations need to be very transparent in their decision-making process.

The experiences of different school-based stakeholders and parents after the change in ownership pointed to the fact that a successful school could also be a successful business. If these organisations could maintain the same educational standards and provide the experiences promised by the not-for-profit governors in a system of profit-driven governance, it could lead to a bright future for education in South Africa. There is

a shortage of schools in South Africa and if organisations can provide high-quality education and still show a profit, more and more shareholders will invest in education even if they do not have children in schools In Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.3 the need for independent schools is discussed in detail. It would appear that the Department of Basic Education could and should become more involve in independent schools especially schools that are governed by corporate governance, to provide support in relation to educational decisions and to ensure that the balance between education and business is maintained.

The relationship between the school-based stakeholders and the governors is very important and need to be a main priority for any organisation who bought a school. In Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.2 the emphasizes the fact that the governing agencies of any school need to foster a relationship of trust between the governors and the school-based stakeholders. Parents need to be part of decision making and need to receive enough information regarding any decision that has been made and as discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.1 Accountability of the governors towards the school-based stakeholders and the accountability of the parents towards the school are important aspects of the success of the school.

6.4 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In the following sub-sections, an overview of the study is provided with a summary of each chapter.

6.4.1 Chapter 1

In Chapter 1 I provided a research map, or chapter planning, to explain what happened in the research. This chapter showed the connections between all the different elements of the research and reference was made to important information explained in the different chapters. The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the thesis to the reader. The extant literature was discussed in Chapter 2.

6.4.2 Chapter 2

The difference between government and governance was discussed. Different kinds of governance were analysed, with the focus being on corporate governance. The differences between public education and independent education internationally and nationally were discussed to develop an understanding of what expectations the government of South Africa has for education. Relevant aspects of the history of education in South Africa and the changes in education after the dawn of democracy were discussed. School governing bodies and how the governance of public schools is structured according to specific policies and regulations were deliberated. Autonomy of independent schools and the influence of profit-driven corporate governance on independent schools were also scrutinised.

6.4.3 Chapter 3

In Chapter 3 the conceptual framework is discussed in detail. The characteristics of good governance were used as the basis for the research questions to be able to answer the main research question. The link between the characteristics of good governance and the view of the school-based stakeholders was used to analyse the view of the school-based stakeholders after the change in governance. As discussed in Chapter 3 these characteristics was used to analyse if the profit-driven corporate governance were viewed by the school-based stakeholders as a successful governance method.

6.4.4 Chapter 4

In Chapter 4, the research methodology, the research design and how the data collection took place were discussed. The main aim of the research was to investigate how stakeholders experienced the change from not-for-profit governance to for-profit governance. The conceptual framework was used to analyse the data to determine how different stakeholders viewed the change in governance (not-for-profit to profit-driven) to answer the research questions. The characteristics of good governance, namely responsibility, accountability, fairness, and trustworthiness as articulated in the King III Report (2009) formed the foundation for the interview questions and data collection strategy. After the data collection, the data was analysed in Chapter 5.

6.4.5 Chapter 5

During the data analysis, the in-depth experiences of the stakeholders (excluding the governors) regarding the change in governance contained instances where different findings than what was anticipated came to the fore. From the first interview, it was clear that the change in governance involved much more than only signatures on paper and the change of a name. The disappointment of parents and teachers was obvious. Emotions had a major influence on the stakeholders. Commitment, especially by the teachers towards the learners and the parents was particularly noteworthy. Communication and trustworthiness emerged as major issues and the fact that the not-for-profit openers (a church) sold the schools to profit-driven companies without discussing the matter with the stakeholders was also an extremely sensitive point which created misgivings and negatively influenced the levels trust between the stakeholders and the governors. The mind-set of corporate governance also influenced the relationship between the stakeholders and the governors. The lack of structures established by the governors and inadequate communication influenced the view of the stakeholders.

The experiences of the management teams of the schools (principals and heads of departments) regarding the change in governance approach differed from those of the teachers and parents. The experiences of the participating stakeholders at the two participating schools also differed. The Venn Diagram in Chapter 4 Figure 4.3 was used to not only illustrate the interconnectedness, but also the differences between the categories and between experiences of the participating stakeholders. The findings are discussed below.

6.5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

South African education needs independent schools to contribute to the provision of education to learners. Independent schools are designed in a way to be independent from the Department of Basic Education. From the research it was clear that all independent schools cannot be regarded as high-quality schools. The culture and the ethos did change after a change in governance led to some degree of confusion, disappointment and a feeling of doubt about the governors of the school.

6.5.1 Governors' responsibility and accountability

For an organisation to buy a school, the responsibility to make sure that quality education take place is a moral obligation and all the governors are accountable to shareholders and stakeholders alike to make sure quality teaching and learning takes place. It is evident that most participating parents from both School A and School B believed that the profit-driven governors did not take up their responsibility. A shortage of equipment and textbooks, poor infrastructure, and no Wi-Fi (both schools used electronic devices even before the schools changed ownership) contributed to the feeling of disappointment of the stakeholders.

From the data collected during the interviews it appeared that the principals and teachers felt that they were accountable for the academic standards in the schools. For them it was their responsibility as teachers to make sure that a high standard of education was maintained in their classes even if the governors were not aware of what was happening in their classes. Teachers explained that they had to re-assure parents that the standard was still the same after the change in ownership. Parents felt that the teachers who were still teaching and were part of the previous not-for-profit governance were delivering high-quality education, but they did not feel the same regarding the new teachers who were appointed by the new governors. In the eyes of other stakeholders, the governors were only accountable towards the shareholders and focused on the profitability of the school much more than on the quality of education. This vested interest and these accountabilities were not compatible with the best interests of the learners, parents and teachers. This was also applicable to the business orientation of the governors that will be discussed in paragraph 5.3.5.

The frustration of teachers was very clear when they explained that the number of learners in their classes increased, and they did not experience any support from the governors. The high turnover of staff (particularly in School B) and an increase in learner disciplinary problems were also noted. Quality assurance can be exceedingly difficult, and teachers felt that they did not receive any support from the governors. It was clear that all the parents hold the teachers responsible and accountable for the academic standards of the schools. This could be seen as unreasonable if the governors do not provide appropriate support to the teaching staff of a school.

Participating stakeholders (especially the teachers and parents) were generally negative about the profit-driven governance dispensation. They compared it with the previous not-for-profit governance approach where they experienced a softer family-driven approach. During the interviews, some teachers and parents became very emotional and expressed their disappointment. One teacher explained that the previous governors and the

management (principal and heads of departments) displayed compassion under the previous governance dispensation, but that when the schools changed to the profit-driven governors, a much harder and rigid management approach was applied. For example, if teachers had a personal crisis, they are now required to take unpaid leave, whereas previously compassion and empathy were shown.

The participating principals and HODs seemed to be more aware of the governors' involvement in the schools and welcomed the fact that they were allowed the management to manage the school according to what they thought was best. As long as they kept to the budget and had enough learners enrolled in their schools, the governors did not interfere. The management also experience the profit-driven governors as much more skilled and focused on education than the previous not-for profit church governors. However, the participating parents and teachers generally experienced the involvement of the previous not-for-profit governance approach more positively than the profit-driven governance approach. Parents explained that in the previous dispensation there was an emotional and academic partnership with the parents in caring for the children in a holistic way. Participating parents and teachers also regarded the not-for-profit governance support towards the school in general and the academic programme in particular as better than what they are experiencing now. Even though they did not always have sufficient and appropriate equipment, resources and facilities, the not-for-profit governors used the resources in such a way that they were able to fulfil all the expectations of the stakeholders.

The development of teachers under the not-for-profit governance always took place in the form of internal school development initiated by the church. One teacher also explained that the church (not-for-profit governors) invested in them spiritually and emotionally. They invested in the learners as well and contributed to their emotional development. Although the profit-driven governors provided funds for professional development in the budget, the teachers experienced that many of the professional development activities

did not apply to them and did not meet their specific needs. Parents were also not very confident that the profit-driven governors appointed the best available teachers to ensure quality education.

The profit-driven owners (JSE-listed companies) provide a shared service to all their schools where all human resource issues, financial matters and even academic support are controlled by experts. This is very much business orientated and could be one of the reasons that everything is managed more formally and without any compassion. Parent participants complained about the 'shared-service, approach. For example, parent participants expressed their disappointed that although they had been involved at the schools for up to fifteen years, the financial department did not have their contact details. Teachers also mentioned that it was difficult if financial and account matters were not handled on the school premises. If parents questioned their accounts, the teachers are expected to provide answers to the parents and most often they do not have the means and information to help. There is also no compassion toward parents. The governors are only interested in the parents who do not pay their accounts so that they can take steps to collect the outstanding fees.

In the process of analysing the data, it became clear that the profit-driven governors did not always have direct contact with the principals, but that there was a manager overseeing all the schools and communicating mainly with the principals. It appeared that lines of communication were one of the first things that changed after the change in ownership. The not-for-profit governors maintained direct contact with the parents and teachers during the previous governance dispensation

The governors' accountability regarding the emotional wellbeing of teachers was perceived negatively due to the number of teachers who resigned since the change in ownership, particularly in School B. Some of the participating parents also mentioned that

they thought the teachers were overburdened and that the governors do not look after the teachers. Most teachers experienced their interaction with the not-for-profit governors as happy and family-like. With profit-driven governors, they experienced a stricter business-orientated approach.

The conclusion from this could be that the governors do not provide the support the stakeholders need. The principals are still in charge of the professional management of the school, but the governors also need to be accountable to the stakeholders and their needs and not only focus on the shareholders.

6.5.2 Change in ethos and culture of the school

The ethos and culture of a school determines the atmosphere or climate of the school. The literature review indicated that parents enrol their children in an independent school for a specific reason. The reason is not always quality education, but the data suggests that parents wanted individual attention and small classes for their children. During open days, schools show the best possible image of the school to be able to attract as many enrolments as possible. When parents enrol their children in a specific school, they expect a kind of culture and ethos. If the owner of a school changes, the assumption will be that there will be a change in culture and ethos. However, with the change in ownership at the participating schools, the expectation from the stakeholders was that the culture and ethos would stay the same.

However, from the participating teachers and parents' perspective, the culture did change. Classes were larger and they experienced the school as more business orientated and as having lost the family feeling. Despite the principal and HODs from School A indicating that there was not a change in culture at the school and that the governors allowed them to keep their DNA, parent participants perceived a change in the

school ethos and culture; about which some of them were very emotional. Some parents also felt disappointed in the fact that they really have to work hard to being able to pay school fees for their children at an independent school but now they realised that the school did not provide anything more than a public school where they could save more money on school fees. They felt that their children are not receiving the quality education and quality teachers that they are paying for.

6.5.3 Neglect of democratic principles

The experience of democratic principles differed among the stakeholders. Regarding decision-making, the principal of School A said that all decisions were made by him; the governors are only interested in the bottom line, namely the profit that the school was making. The principal of School B said all the decisions are made by the governors without her input. The HODs of School A felt confident that the decisions of the principal and governors are very transparent. However, the rest of the stakeholders from School A had the opposite experience and said that they did not see any transparency in decision-making.

Teachers at both schools felt that decisions made by the governors are not transparent and are never discussed with them and that they are never involved in decision-making processes, not even in the budget. A teacher from School A explained that although the school proclaims to have an open-door policy, she never experienced the principal as open when she needs to discuss serious issues. Some of the participants from School A experience transparency and the principal and management also said that they had an open-door policy, but the rest of the stakeholders do not experience it. Teachers also felt that some decisions were made that do not apply to their subjects and that the governors or managers make some training sessions compulsory in order to show that they had conducted some training with the staff, even though it was not necessarily relevant to the teachers. It was clear that no parent, teacher or HOD are included in governance decision-

making processes. No decisions made on behalf of the school are discussed with the stakeholders.

Modisaotsile (2012) expounded the importance of parents' involvement in the education of their children. As explained in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.3, there has been an important change in South Africa to apply democratic principles to enable local school communities, particularly parents, to participate in decisions regarding their children's education. However, it seemed as if parents are not involved in any decision-making processes in these participating schools, neither during the not-for-profit governance dispensation nor with the new profit-driven governance approach. It was surprising that parents did not expect to be part of the decision-making process in independent schools. What is particularly important to them is to be informed of what was happening in their child's school and with the money that they paid each month.

Parent participants explained that they had trusted the previous governors much more than they trust the present governors, even though they are not involved in any decision-making. They had a relationship with the previous governors and knew them personally. One parent explained that under the previous not-for profit ownership, they knew what was going on in the school and could also provide support to other parents in the school, even if it was only as a class representative.

The compassion and care they experienced during the not-for-profit dispensation gave them some feeling of security, and they knew their children were in good hands. However, with the profit-driven governors, they cannot even put a face to a name. There is no form of contact or discussions between the parents and the governors. The parent participants explained very emotionally that they do not trust the profit-driven governors. Parents of School B explained that the governors scheduled meetings with the parents and did not show up. This happened a few times without any explanation or excuse, and it made

parents feel that their dignity was violated and that they are not valued members of the school community. Parents do not trust governors and do not feel the school is in safe hands. Transparency and other democratic principles at the profit-driven schools will be enhanced if governance structures include parental participation and decision-making processes are more inclusive of all the stakeholders. This should also allow for healthy trust relationships to develop between governors and their stakeholders.

6.5.4 Dedication of teachers in independent schools

In Chapter 2 reference was made to the commitment of teachers (paragraph 2.2). Sailors, Hoffman and Matthee (2007) debated the idea that good governance could influence teachers' commitment. The assumption could be made that teachers who teach at an independent school would receive more support and a well-developed working environment and therefore would be more committed and dedicated to their learners than teachers in public schools. The dedication, commitment, and passion of the participating teachers was evident. The emotional connection to their profession by some of the teacher participants was extraordinarily strong.

Teacher participants are disappointed in the level of support they receive from the profit-driven governors and in their working environment after the transition to a profit-driven school. One teacher was so sad and did not want to grant an interview because of her disappointment in profit-driven governance but later she changed her view and participated in the study. Some of the participating teachers were furious and said the governors did not care about them. Personalities differ and each person has his/her way of dealing with different circumstances. If the emotions are not considered, the message was still the same. These teachers demonstrated passion for their profession and their love and dedication towards the learners and the parents of the school without any support from the governors.

The teacher participants of both schools still try their utmost to ensure quality teaching and learning, despite their perception that they are being treated unfairly and that they are overstretched due to a significant increase in their workload. These participants explained that they were under great pressure from the governors to increase the number of learners in the school. The larger numbers of learners in each class also contributed to the learner disciplinary problems in the schools and complicated the work of the teachers.

The data suggests that the governors did not know what was happening in the classes. Parent participants explained that the teachers that were appointed during the not-for-profit governance dispensation were the teachers who kept everything together at the schools. Dedication seemed to go deeper than the circumstances and it seems that the governors do not realise how important these teachers are to the success of the school.

The data analysis showed ongoing commitment, especially from the teachers' side, towards the learners that they teach as well as to the parents. An assumption can be made that the working relationship and success of the school could be improved if the stakeholders and the governors who formed part of the changed governance approach had a better understanding of the expectations of the different stakeholders and governors. Organisations need to keep the trust and commitment of their stakeholders.

6.5.5 Business orientation of governors (board of directors)

The governors or boards of directors did not participate in this research. The specific style that they used to govern the participating schools was also not researched. However, according to the participating stakeholders, the new owners (profit-driven governors) govern the participating schools as if they were a business.

The participating principals and the HODs explained that the principals of the participating schools are responsible for most of the school-based decisions but needed to stay within the budget that is drafted by the governors. Even though the boards of directors are business-orientated, it seemed as if they expect the principal and his/her management team to ensure that quality education takes place within the budget provided to them. However, it seems as if the profit-driven governors allow limited opportunities for stakeholder participation in the budgeting process. Therefore, one may argue that although principals and their management teams are granted autonomy to manage their schools, this autonomy is restricted because they cannot contribute to determine the priority needs of the school. It seems as if the governor's priority is to satisfy the shareholders of their company, rather than to satisfy the needs of the school. The relative autonomy given to the principals by the profit-driven governors to manage their schools also implies that the principals of these schools need to be competent financial managers as well.

6.5.6 Higher fees vis-à-vis quality of education

Independent schools are generally more expensive than public schools and when parents enrol their children in independent schools, they expect value for their money. In these participating schools, parent participants indicated that they enrolled their children for education based on Christian principles, small classes, and that the learners would come from families who share similar values and beliefs'. Parents expected the best of the best because they paid high school fees and they wanted a personal touch and a sound relationship between the teachers, their child and the family. Some participants said they wanted a family-like partnership with the school This was kind of relationship for which they believed they paid for. However, parent participants were disillusioned because they experienced the opposite. The classes became larger, the school enrolled more learners from diverse backgrounds, the Christian values became less prominent, and they experienced less connection to the school.

Parents hold the teachers accountable for the academic standards and believed that the IEB determined the validity and quality of the academic standards. The governors of one of the schools changed from the IEB to the NSC without any transparency in their decision making and consulting with the parents and teachers. A change like this contributed to the fact that the responsibility and accountability of the governors was more focused on the shareholders than the needs and expectations of the stakeholders. The assurance of quality education was not provided to stakeholders after the change in ownership.

School A's parent participants indicated that, although the school infrastructure was good, the school did not have enough equipment, especially in practical subjects. Parents and teachers from School B expressed their disappointment with the infrastructure and facilities of the school. They believe that this independent school is now worse than even the poorest public schools. They complained about the gardens and the image of the school which did not resonate with the image of an independent school. Both parent and teacher participants expressed their lack of trust in the profit-driven governance and referred to the fact that they would like to see the budget of the school to see what they were paying for. This included the fact that some parents also questioned the qualifications of the newly appointed teachers under profit-driven governance. These stakeholders believed they did not receive value for their money.

6.5.7 The appropriateness of corporate governance in the world of education

The transition process from not-for-profit to profit-driven ownership was a very emotional process in both schools. One of the reasons could be the fact that parents and teachers experienced the previous governance as more family orientated and suddenly found that the governors were unknown to them. However, it seems that parents who enrol their children in the schools after the transition profit-driven governance, do not have the same high expectations.

The principal of School A said a few times that he had the freedom to manage the school and the governors were not prescriptive. However, each time he said the governors were only interested in the bottom line (profit). This was a clear indication that the vested interests of the governors and the stakeholders were of primary importance. To only allow the principal to decide what happens with the allocation of the budget, without a say and influence in the budget amount, shows that profit is more important than the needs of the stakeholders. This would influence the principal's management style as well as the execution of the budget. From the data it was clear that the management style during the not-for-profit governors' reign was a more "*caring*" and "*softer*" management style and compassion, and consideration was shown to the stakeholders. The management style under the profit-driven governors, from the same management team, was purely business orientated with a "harder" and more strict and inflexible approach, especially towards the teachers. This resonates with the business-orientated approach mentioned in paragraph 5.3.5.

The responsibility of an independent school towards a community includes much more than making a profit. Corporate governance needs to provide what is required to meet the educational needs of the school communities. If profit-driven companies show profits and expect stakeholders to pay a high premium for education, they need to ensure that their stakeholders receive more than simply basic education. The learners in these schools have the right to quality education, highly qualified teachers, good facilities, and enough equipment in all their classrooms because their parents pay for it. If the governors are interested in the number of learners, they also need to make sure that there are enough teachers and that the teachers receive appropriate support from the governors. However, the opinion of the participants in this study is that the governors of these participating schools did not apply the principles of good governance as stipulated in the King III Report (Institute of Directors, 2009).

Whether a profit-driven or not-for-profit driven approach is applied should not determine the quality of education provided by a school. Good governance should determine the quality education provided by a school and the focus should be on the best interests of the learners. To make a profit out of quality education is not against the law, but to charge parents a premium fee to enrol their children in a school which provides lesser quality than a public school is not only a disadvantage to the educational system of South Africa but is also detrimental to each learner enrolled in such a school and the family supporting them. It is also a violation of a child's right to quality education. This is something that the education system of South Africa cannot afford.

6.6 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Research regarding school governing bodies indicates the positive and the negative influence of parents who form part of the decision-making system of a school. The literature emphasises that the main aim is to include parents in their child's education. If parents are part of their child's education, whole communities could develop for the better. From the literature review in Chapter 2, it was clear that the field of independent schools in South Africa is still relatively under researched. Since the change of government in South Africa in 1994 and the introduction of a partnership model in public school governance, there has been a great deal of research regarding the role of school governing bodies and the policies regarding the involvement of parents in the decision-making process in public schools. Although some research regarding the importance of independent schools have been done, hardly any could be found regarding the governance of independent schools, particularly with a focus on corporate governance.

Research regarding the effect on a community when corporate companies listed on the JSE buy small not-for-profit schools and change them into large independent schools listed on the JSE has not been done yet. In this research, the focus was particularly on the views of some of the stakeholder groups regarding a change to profit-driven

ownership. It seems that the participants regarded and experienced these changes as much more than only signatures on paper. Quality assurance regarding education includes much more than profit. Corporate companies need to know the needs of all stakeholders if they invest in an educational institution.

6.7 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THIS RESEARCH

With the main and secondary research questions in mind, the following conclusions were made:

- The primary research question was: *What are the views of stakeholders in formerly independent not-for-profit schools of governance after a change of ownership to a listed company?* Some changes were expected in the governance of the schools but that the quality of education would not be jeopardised, that the positive aspects of the not-for-profit governance style would be retained and that there would be good communication and support from the governors.

The data suggests that stakeholders experienced a definite change after the transition to profit-driven ownership. For some of the participants the change was drastic and emotional. For others it was gradual and evolutionary. Some of the participants in management positions experienced the change as positive and that that it brought improvement. However, parent and teacher participants in both schools perceived the change negatively and experienced inadequate communication, transparency and openness from the profit-driven governance structures.

- The first secondary research question was: *How do stakeholders experience the governors' responsibility after the change in ownership?* Generally, the participants experienced the governors as uninvolved, not taking up their responsibilities. The

principals and his/her management teams are solely responsible for the professional management of the schools. Parent participants indicated that the new profit-driven governors did not care about them as stakeholders. For them it seems as if everything was just about money and that the new profit-driven governors do not provide what was promised the take-over of the not-for-profit schools.

- The second sub-question was: *How do stakeholders experience accountability by the governors after a change in ownership?* The governors who mostly came from the world of business were expected to be familiar with the King Reports (2009, 2015) and would perhaps demonstrate more accountability towards the stakeholders than the previous not-for-profit governors. The stakeholders experienced the governors as only accountable to the shareholders for the profit shown at the end of the financial year. Stakeholders did not experience the governors as supportive, and teachers experienced more pressure from the governors without any support.
- The third sub-question was: *How do stakeholders experience the consideration of their legitimate interests in, and expectations of the school as an entity, after a change in ownership?* The stakeholders of one of the schools experienced the profit-driven governors as uninvolved and as not respecting their legitimate interests. Some parents questioned the qualifications of the newly appointed teachers. There was disillusionment with what seemed to be perceived unlawful actions like holding back learners' report cards if school fees had not been paid. One of the stakeholders even believed that the governors used the fees on the stock exchange and not in the interests of the school. Stakeholders did not experience representation on the board of directors and were not involved in any discussions or asked for any input regarding the budget or the future in the school. This led to an overall feeling of exclusion.

- The fourth sub-question was: *How do stakeholders experience transparency in decision-making after a change in ownership?* As transparency had been identified as one of the main characteristics of good governance in the King Reports (2009, 2015), it was reasonable for parents to expect transparency of decision-making and actions by the governors.

However, most of the participating stakeholders generally experienced a lack of transparency. They did not know the governors. They did not trust the governors and did not feel that governors' decision-making processes were transparent. Parents as stakeholders do not have the opportunity to take part in budget discussions, which contributes to the lack in trust. A sense of apprehension and suspicion regarding the trustworthiness of governors permeated many responses. No parent is involved in, or part of the board of directors and this contributes to the suspicion and lack of trust regarding the governors.

- The fifth sub-question was: *How do stakeholders describe the changes in the ethos and culture of the school after a change of ownership?* The stakeholders of the not-for-profit schools expected that the ethos and the culture of the schools would remain unaffected as promised during the negotiations before the take-over, or else they would probably not have agreed to a change of ownership.

Stakeholders from both schools experienced a significant change in the ethos and culture of the schools. As the previous owners of the participating were a church, the participating schools had a deliberate focus on an ethos based on Christian values. They were also accustomed to governors supporting the teachers, learners and parents and their families. The increase of learner numbers in the schools after the transition to profit-driven ownership brought a change in the culture and ethos of both schools. The caring aspect of the governors' involvement seemed to

disappear, and the teachers had difficulty in understanding how the same managers could suddenly have different rules. The management style applied at both schools changed from a softer people centered approach to a harder managerialist and less flexible approach.

Corporate governance and educational institutions could be a highly effective and successful combination. The change from not-for-profit governance to profit-driven governance could also contribute to an improvement of the quality of education being provided by the South African education system. However, the way a transition from a not-for-profit to a profit-driven governance approach takes place need to be considered very carefully. Stakeholders, especially the partners who are directly affected by such a transition, need to be informed about the change process and its consequences in advance.

Parents who are stakeholders in an independent school form an especially important part of the organization. Even if the decision-making power is with the governors and not with the parents, as is the case in public schools, parents need to be involved in decision-making processes. In addition, effective communication with all the stakeholders to promote transparency is very important.

6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.8.1 Improvement of practice

6.8.1.1 Involvement of parents in for-profit schools

A direct result of this study concerns the long-term goals of organisations that invest in schools. The involvement of parents in the governance of independent schools could contribute to an improved quality education in the South African independent school

sector in particular, and the whole education system in general as discussed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.2.4. If corporate profit-driven organisations invest in education, the governors need to include educators and parents in the governance structures who know the needs of teachers and learners in the classroom as discussed in Chapter 5 paragraph 5.5.1 and 5.5.1.2 . Such inclusion does can even be in an advisory capacity. This will not only allow for greater participation of local school communities, but also increase accountability and transparency in the way these schools are governed.

6.8.1.2 Focus to be broader than financial profit

Profit cannot be the only focus of an educational institution. In chapter 5 paragraph 5.5.4.2 parent Pa-B2 explain the disappointment with the profit-driven governors who do not care about the children but only about the profit. However, profit could contribute to better facilities. One of the participants (Pa-A2) mentioned with some justification that independent schools could adopt and support under-resourced public schools. In that way, independent schools could contribute to the broader educational needs of our country.

6.8.1.3 Community involvement

Governors need to know and acknowledge that a school consists of a community. Compassion and empathy need to be shown to all stakeholders of the school. Parents need support and guidance of the school in raising their children. In chapter 5 paragraph 5.5.4.2 Teacher T-A3 mention the fact that the pervious not-for-profit governors was more family driven and made a difference in the children's lives. Parent Pa -A4 also mention that their experience a team effort between the governors and the school-based stakeholders during the not-for-profit governance, but after the change in ownership they felt that the governors do not even care about them. When a company buys a school, the

process before the transaction and the process after the transaction need to be planned and implemented very carefully.

6.8.1.4 Communication

Attention needs to be given to communication with stakeholders, especially the teachers and parents. In chapter 5 paragraph 5.5.1.2 parent Pa-B1 said it felt as if they lost their voice, and they feel totally lost under the profit-driven governors. Teacher T-B3 mention in chapter 5 paragraph 5.5.4.1 the fact there they never receive any feedback from the governor's side, and they never see the governors. The new governors of the school need to be more visible and need to be active in the school's activities. Relationships of trust take time to develop and need to be established between stakeholders. A representative from the new owners (JSE-listed company) need to be available to address parents at least once a term. The psychological and emotional effect of a transaction like this on the stakeholders needs to be addressed. The emotional effect on the parents and teachers was much greater than what had been anticipated. These emotions also influence the children and the whole family structure.

6.8.2 Issues to be covered in future research

6.8.2.1 Effectiveness of governance structures in independent schools

More research therefore needs to be done regarding the most effective school governance structures for independent schools, both not-for-profit and profit driven. There is a variety of independent schools in South Africa, each with their own governing structure. More research could be conducted to compare the effectiveness of the various governing structures: some independent schools owned by an individual private person, some schools form part of a trust, some schools are based on a specific religion, some are international schools and there are schools owned by profit-driven companies, listed on the JSE.

6.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This change from a not-for-profit governance to a profit-driven governance has not been researched before, and this study produced knowledge (views and experiences) about the change in governance in independent schools from the view of stakeholders. The study revealed stakeholders' views that governors' accountability towards shareholders is not in line with the expectations of the stakeholders and good governance. A business-orientated approach contributes to a profitable education institution and a valuable investment for shareholders. However, this approach needs to be carefully managed to accommodate the needs and expectations of stakeholders and education as a unit. Schools consist not only of the buildings and learners but are also part of a community. Parents need to be part of the educational process and all decisions need to be transparent and in the best interests of quality education.

From this research it was clear that there is a significant gap between the expectations of stakeholders regarding the commitment of the governors towards them and the way these expectations panned out in practice. After the change in governance, stakeholders experienced the governors as a board of directors with a fixed focus on the "bottom-line" or profit. This contributed to a conflict of interest between the stakeholders and the governors. For the stakeholders the change from not-for-profit to profit-driven governance was a very emotional process exacerbated by a lack in communication between the stakeholders and the governors and a decrease in trust and transparency.

Passion and commitment from teachers showed the value and importance of education. Education is much more than the transference of knowledge; it includes the pedagogical value to lead children to become well-developed adults. It is concerning that stakeholders at the newly-formed independent schools believed that the schools did not look after their teachers with the same passion and commitment shown by their teachers.

The fact that some parents felt the need to question the qualifications of teachers at an independent school where the school fees were much higher than a public school seems to resonate with the question of the effectiveness of independent schools. Parents enrol their children in independent schools and trust the teachers and the management of the school to provide the best possible education to them. When an organisation invests in a school, they cannot only invest in the buildings and the possible income from the school fees. When they invest in an educational institution, the organisation should take up the responsibility to provide whatever is needed for quality education to take place.

The trust of the parents regarding the teachers in the school was remarkable. It seems as if the parents relied almost exclusively on the teachers for quality education and not the governors. They believed that the success of the school was largely determined by the teachers and not the managers or the governors. A close community like this could also lead to the exclusion of learners, contrary to the vision for South African education. Education is about children and pedagogy, and quality teaching and education. Community is about family, support, and a hand in need.

Profit-driven schools could be very effective if the communication between both parties (organisation and school) is open and trustworthy. Principals need to look after their staff and make sure they provide what is necessary to teach in the class. The governors need to support the principals. A school is not only a business, but also a community. Education and business can be an exceptionally good combination if communication between all the stakeholders is functional. Expectations from all stakeholders need to be discussed and each stakeholder needs to know what their role in the school is. Marketing of the school is not the responsibility of the teachers, but if the governors look after the teachers, marketing will take place by word of mouth. A profit-driven organisation also needs to be mindful of the real relationship between learner numbers and school success. Quality education, quality equipment and highly qualified and committed teachers will contribute to the success of the school.

In terms of theory about independent schools, this study suggests that the theory needs to be expanded to cover transitions from not-for-profit independent faith-based schools to profit-driven schools owned by companies listed on stock exchanges. The theory also needs to deal with the shareholder-stakeholder-school community relations at such profit-driven schools. Parents' views of the quality of education provided by independent schools and their expectations of governors' behaviour towards them also need to be included in the theory's purview and used to modify the general notion that independent schools offer better quality than other schools.

6.10 FINAL REMARKS

Education is very important to any country. Nelson Mandela, former South African president said: "*Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world*". Independent schools can increase help provide quality education to learners of different socio-economic backgrounds if they focus on quality education by ensuring that quality teachers teach in an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Section 29 of the Constitution of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) not only stipulates that everybody has the right to a basic education, but also that any person may establish an independent school in accordance with certain conditions. Independent schools can contribute to ensuring the fulfilment of education rights by providing quality education in areas where there are no adequate facilities and opportunities.

Importantly, governors of independent schools need to be mindful of their stakeholders' needs and expectations. As indicated in the King III Report (Institution of Directors, 2005), good governance includes responsibility, accountability, fairness, and trustworthiness. These values need to be projected by governors. For example, as school-based

stakeholders, teachers and parents need to be consulted in the budgeting process. Opportunities must be created for them to voice their needs and they need to feel that the management and the governors of their school care about them as people. Stakeholders need to trust the governors of the school and need to feel that they receive value (quality education) for their money.

Respect and dignity are one of the most important values in education. They include respecting the children who have the right to education, and parents who pay a great deal of money to enrol their children in independent schools. Respect should also be shown to the principals, their management teams and their teachers in order for them to manage their institutions in such a way that quality education can take place. Therefore, all educational institutions, including independent schools, should aim to improve education in South Africa and give every child in our country the opportunity to become who he or she is supposed to be.

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

Christene Gregoire

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APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER: OPERATIONAL HEAD/PRINCIPAL OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

June 2019

Dear Principal /Operational Head

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am a teacher and have enrolled for a PhD Degree at the University of Pretoria at the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies under the supervision of Prof. J.L. Beckmann.

A requirement for completing my PhD degree is to conduct a research study and compile a report of my findings. I hereby request your permission to conduct a part of my research at your school.

The title for my research is: **Stakeholder views of educational governance after a change in ownership of independent schools.** The aim of the study is to investigate stakeholders' views of change, if any, in the governance after a change in ownership. Due to an increase in the number of independent Schools in South Africa, as well as a large number of not-for-profit schools that changed to profit-driven schools, I will focus on the change in governance.

A case study will be done at two schools who changed from not-for-profit governance schools to schools governed by a public listed company during the past five years.

Participants will be requested to participate in a semi-structured interview led by myself and this should take approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete. During the interview questions relating to their view and opinion of the impact of the change in governance will be asked, as well as further probing questions based on the responses given. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed.

In this study all information will be treated as sensitive and confidential and the identity of participants will not be revealed at any time. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the information given by the participants. All activities will take place after school hours to ensure minimum disruption to the activities of the school and the educators' programmes. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and anonymous and participants may withdraw from the study at any point during the study, with no consequences.

If you agree that this research can be conducted, I would appreciate if you could complete the attached consent form. Feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any queries regarding my research.

Yours faithfully



Ms Ilze Breedt (Student)

ilzebreedt@gmail.com



Prof. J.L. Beckmann (Supervisor)

johan.beckmann21@gmail.com

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER TO SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBER

Gauteng

June 2019

Dear Senior Management Team Member

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a teacher and I have enrolled for my PhD Degree at the University of Pretoria at the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies under the supervision of Prof. J.L. Beckmann.

A requirement for completing my PhD degree is to conduct a research study and compile a report of my findings. I hereby request you to participate in my research study.

The title of my research is: **Stakeholder views of educational governance after a change in ownership of independent schools**. The aim of the study is to investigate stakeholders' views of change, if any, in the governance after a change in ownership. Due to an increase in the number of independent schools in South Africa, as well as a large number of not-for-profit schools which changed to profit-driven schools, I will focus on the change in governance.

A case study will be done at two schools which changed from not-for-profit independent schools to schools governed by public listed companies during the past five years.

You will be requested to participate in a semi-structured interview, and this should take approximately 30 to 40 minutes. During the interview, questions relating to your view and opinion of the impact of change in governance will be asked, as well as further probing questions based on the responses given. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed.

In this study, all information will be treated as sensitive and confidential, and the identity of participants will not be revealed at any time. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the information given by the participants. All activities will take place after school hours to ensure minimum disruption to the activities of the school and the educators'

programmes. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and anonymous and participants may withdraw from the study at any point during the study, with no consequences.

If you agree to this research, I would appreciate it if you could complete the attached consent form. Feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any queries regarding my research.

Yours faithfully



Me Ilze Breedt (Student)

ilzebreedt@gmail.com



Prof. J.L Beckmann

johan.beckmann21@gmail.com

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER TO SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBER

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM AND SEND IT TO:

Email: ilzebreedt@gmail.com

I _____ (Full names and Surname)

Contact details:

Email address: _____

Phone numbers: _____

Other contact details: _____

hereby give my consent to participate in the research.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER TO TEACHER

June 2019

Dear Teacher

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a teacher and I have enrolled for a PhD Degree at the University of Pretoria at the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies under the supervision of Prof. J.L. Beckmann.

A requirement for completing my PhD degree is to conduct a research study and compile a report of my findings. I hereby request you to participate in my research study.

The title of my research is: **Stakeholder views of educational governance after a change in ownership of independent schools**. The aim of the study is to investigate stakeholders' views of change, if any, in the governance after a change in ownership. Due to an increase in the number of independent schools in South Africa, as well as a large number of not-for-profit schools which changed to profit-driven schools, I will focus on the change in governance.

A case study will be done at two schools which changed from not-for-profit independent schools to schools governed by public listed companies during the past five years.

You will be requested to participate in a semi-structured interview, and this should take approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete. During the interview questions relating to your view and opinion of the impact of change in governance will be asked, as well as further probing questions based on the responses given. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed.

In this study all information will be treated as sensitive and confidential and the identity of participants will not be revealed at any time. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the information given by the participants. All activities will take place after school hours to

ensure minimum disruption to the activities of the school and the educators' programmes. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and anonymous and participants may withdraw from the study at any point during the study, with no consequences.

If you agree to this request, I would appreciate it if you could complete the attached consent form. Feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any queries regarding my research.

Yours faithfully



Me Ilze Breedt (Student)

ilzebreedt@gmail.com



Prof. J.L Beckmann

johan.beckmann21@gmail.com

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER TO TEACHER

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM AND SEND IT TO:

Email: ilzebreedt@gmail.com

I _____ (Full names and Surname)

Contact details:

Email address: _____

Phone numbers: _____

Other contact details: _____

hereby give my consent to participate in the research.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION LETTER TO PARENT

Dear Parent

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a teacher and I have enrolled for a PhD Degree at the University of Pretoria at the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies under the supervision of Prof. J.L. Beckmann.

A requirement for completing my PhD degree is to conduct a research study and compile a report of my findings. I hereby request you to participate in my research study.

The title of my research is: **Stakeholder views of educational governance after a change in ownership of independent schools**. The aim of the study is to investigate stakeholders' views of change, if any, in the governance of a school after a change in ownership. Due to an increase in the number of independent Schools in South Africa, as well as a large number of not-for-profit schools which changed to profit-driven schools, I will focus on the change in governance.

A case study will be done at two schools which changed from not-for-profit governance schools to schools governed by public listed companies during the past five years.

You will be requested to participate in a semi-structured interview, and this should take approximately 30 to 40 minutes. During the interview, questions relating to your view and opinion of the impact of change in governance will be asked, as well as further probing questions based on the responses given. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed.

In this study, all information will be treated as sensitive and confidential, and the identity of participants will not be revealed at any time. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the information given by the participants. All activities will take place after school hours to ensure minimum disruption to the activities of the school and the educators' programmes. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and anonymous and

participants may withdraw from the study at any point during the study, with no consequences.

If you agree to this request, I would appreciate it if you could complete the attached consent form. Feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any queries regarding my research.

Yours faithfully



Me Ilze Breedt (Student)

ilzebreedt@gmail.com



Prof. J.L Beckmann

johan.beckmann21@gmail.com

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION LETTER TO PARENT

PLEASE FILL IN THE FORM AND SEND IT TO:

Email: ilzebreedt@gmail.com

I _____ (Full names and Surname)

Contact details:

Email address: _____

Phone numbers: _____

Other contact details: _____

hereby give my consent to participate in the research.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX E INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OPERATIONAL HEADS AND PRINCIPALS

The title of my study is:

Shareholder views on the change in governance after a change in ownership

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. Be informed that this interview is recorded for analysing purposes. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from participating at any point in time, should you feel like doing so, without any consequences. It is of utmost importance that you respond to all questions as honestly as possible, as all responses provided by you will be treated confidentially. I want to repeat that you are the only sources who can assist me with information to answer my research question and be in a position to understand the change of governance as viewed by shareholders after a not-for-profit school became part of a public company.

Interview questions

Responsibilities

1. What are your responsibilities at the school?
2. After the change in school ownership, did your view with regard to your responsibility to key questions change
3. Which responsibilities are transferred to the governors after the change in ownership?

Accountability

4. Were you involved in managing the not-for-profit school's finances?
5. Could you influence the distribution of money in compiling the school's annual budget?
6. Did you see a change in governance regarding the accountability for the allocation of funds in the school?
7. Do you work with the governors to determine if improvements need to be made in academic standards or structures?

Transparency

8. How did you experience and view the transparency of information when it was still a non-profit- driven school?
9. Did you experience a change regarding the ethos and culture of the governors regarding staff matters?
10. What you think of the transparency of decisions made by the governors?

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

The title for my study is:

Shareholder views on the change in governance after a change in ownership

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. Be informed that this interview is recorded for analysing purposes. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from participating at any point in time, should you feel like doing so, without any consequences. It is of utmost importance that you respond to all questions as honestly as possible, as all responses provided by you will be treated confidentially. I want to repeat that you are the only sources who can assist me with information to answer my research question and be in a position to make recommendations which can improve the induction of novice teachers into the practice of the profession.

Interview questions

Responsibilities

1. Do you know the governing body of the school?
2. In your opinion, what responsibilities to governors of the school have
3. Did you experience a change in your responsibilities, as part of the SMT of the school, after the change in ownership?

Accountability

4. In your view, what is the accountability of the governance structures with regards to the academic standards of the school?
5. How do you view your accountability for the academic standard of the school?
6. Can you influence the academic standard or academic level of the school?

Fairness

7. Were you previously involved in the consideration of the legitimate interests of SMT members?
8. Did you experience a change in expectations from governors after the change of ownership?

Transparency

9. How would you describe the culture and the ethos of the non-profit-focused school?
10. Did you experience a change in the culture and ethos after the change in ownership?
11. What do you think of the transparency of decisions and their influence on the academic development of learners?

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

The title for my study is:

Shareholder views on the change in governance after a change in ownership

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. The aim of this interview is to obtain your views with regards to induction for teachers starting their career. Be informed that this interview is recorded for analysing purposes. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from participating at any point in time, should you feel like doing so, without any consequences. It is of utmost importance that you respond to all questions as honestly as possible, as all responses provided by you will be treated confidentially. I want to repeat that you are the only sources who can assist me with information to answer my research question and be in a position to understand the change of governance viewed by shareholders after a not-for-profit school became part of a public company.

Interview questions

Responsibilities

1. How did you experience management and execution of responsibilities during the previous governance of the school?
2. Did you experience a change in responsibilities, related to academic matters and development, of the school after the change in ownership?

Accountability

3. Were you accountable for the academic standard in your classroom?
4. Who ensured that your specific subject/s are on standard?
5. How do you view the governors' accountability regarding the academic standard in your school?
6. Are the governors aware of what you do in your classroom?

7. As part of the previous not-for-profit school, were the governors aware of what, and how many students you are teaching?

Fairness

8. After the change in ownership, how did you experience expectations from you as a teacher from the governors?
9. Do you know what is the ratio of learner: teacher after the change in ownership? Is it different from the past?

Transparency

10. How would you describe the culture and the ethos of the non-profit-driven school?
11. Did you experience a change after the change in ownership?
12. What is your experience regarding the transparency of decisions made during the last two years?

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

The title for my study is:

Shareholder views on the change in governance after a change in ownership

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. Be informed that this interview is recorded for analysing purposes. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from participating at any point in time, should you feel like doing so, without any consequences. It is of utmost importance that you respond to all questions as honestly as possible, as all responses provided by you will be treated confidentially. I want to repeat that you are the only sources who can assist me with information to answer my research question and be in a position to understand the change of governance viewed by shareholders after a not-for-profit school became part of a public company.

Interview questions

Responsibilities

1. Did parents share responsibilities with regard to the academic management of the school while it was still a not-for-profit school?
2. How did the parents' governance responsibility change after the change in ownership?

Accountability

3. In the not-for-profit school, who did you hold accountable for the school's academic standard and your child's academic performance? Did it change when the ownership changed?
4. In what format and to what extent did the school communicate the academic approach and standard they would follow, if they did communicate it at all?

Fairness

5. What is your opinion and experience of the legitimate interests of the governors in the academic performance levels of the school?
6. Did you view a change after the change in ownership?

Transparency

7. How would you describe the culture and the ethos of the non-profit-focused school?
8. Did you experience a change after the change in ownership?
9. How do you experience the disclosure of information after the change in ownership?
10. What is your experience with regard to the academic standard learners achieve after the change in ownership?