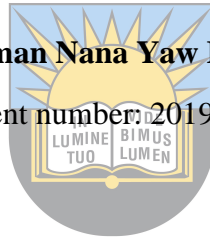




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**The Role of Leadership in Improving Teaching and Learning in
Selected High Schools in Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality**



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A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Education
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Doctor of Philosophy in Education

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Co-supervisor: Dr Nonzukiso Tyilo

Alice, Eastern Cape

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Abstract

The leadership roles in various fields have been a significant concern throughout the past century due to their profound impact on driving social and economic growth across different sectors. In education, effective school leadership role is regarded as indispensable for guiding schools in the right direction and nurturing a supportive teaching and learning environment, ultimately leading to positive outcomes. This study employed a qualitative approach to explore the intricate dynamics of school leadership's role in improving teaching and learning. Utilising an interpretive paradigm, the research delved into the behaviours and perspectives of the participants. Employing a phenomenal case study design was used to focus on school leadership roles in improving teaching and learning in four high schools situated within the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality. The selection of these schools was aligned with the objectives of the study. The study population included all schools, teachers and the teaching staff in schools under the Enoch Mgijima Municipality. The study sample consisted of four principals, four school management teams, four heads of departments, and four educators from the selected schools. The purposive sampling technique was employed, allowing for the inclusion of relevant participants and ensuring a broad perspective. Data collection methods included interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews. Through these approaches, the study uncovered the role of school leaders and a variety of leadership styles used to influence teaching and learning. The study's findings show that effective leadership styles in leadership roles fostered a conducive environment for teaching and learning. The study revealed that among the challenges that affect school leadership roles are the non-attendance of school and class by both teachers and students and an inadequate supply of learning resources for effective teaching and learning. The study also found that using effective school leadership role frameworks and models like transformational, transactional and instructional leadership frameworks can contribute to enhancing school leadership roles in improving teaching and learning in schools. Consequently, the study concluded that understanding the context of the school and adopting a leadership style that is democratic, shared responsibilities, and participatory can get stakeholders of the school to be committed to driving improved teaching and learning. As a result, the study recommends that school leaders adopt transformational, transactional and instructional leadership frameworks used in this study as a guide. Especially as these frameworks contain all the essential ingredients, making the role of school leaders in improving teaching and learning to be more effective.

Keywords: Leadership, role of leadership, , teaching and learning, transactional-instructional leadership, transformational–instructional leadership, and high schools



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Declaration

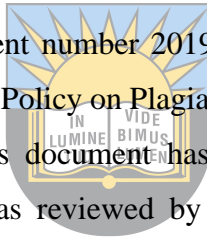
I, Agyeman Nana Yaw Brenya, student number 201923360, declare that this thesis titled “The role of leadership in improving teaching and learning in selected high schools in Enoch Mgiijima Local Municipality”, submitted for the award of a PhD in Education in the Faculty of Education and the School of Further and Continuing Education at the University of Fort Hare, is my own work and has never been submitted for any other degree at this university or any other university.



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Dedication

With deep gratitude, this dissertation is dedicated to God for His grace throughout this journey.

It is also dedicated to my daughter, Bunmi Zoe Agyeman, my wife Vanessa Agyeman, my mom, Rose Agyeman, and my aunt Rosina Frimpong Manso, for their support. I dedicate this to my siblings, Dr Osei Bonsu Agyeman, Dr Boakye Agyeman, Nana Konadu Agyeman, and Efia Nike Agyeman.

Lastly, I dedicate this to my late daughter, Joy-Abena Agyeman, and my late uncle, Mr Kojo Frimpong Manso.



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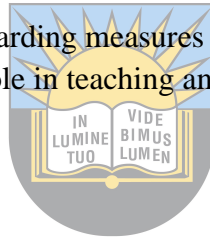
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
DBE	Department of Basic Education
FGDL	Focus group discussion learners
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School governing body



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Chapter 1

Introduction and Background of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Leadership has been a significant concern across various fields of study over the past century, as it plays a critical role in driving social and economic growth in different sectors. According to Chandra and Priyono (2016), the term *leadership* encompasses a wide spectrum, including behavioural approaches, performance issues, job satisfaction, work environments, and employee performance. This study aimed at exploring the role of leadership in improving teaching and learning in selected high schools in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. To explore this phenomenon the study sought to answer the following research questions: To explore this phenomenon the study sought to respond to the following main and sub research questions: 1. What role does leadership play in improving teaching and learning in the selected schools of the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality? hat are the different leadership styles used in schools to improve teaching and learning? 1.2. Why is the role of school leaders important in teaching and learning? . 1.3. What are the challenges that school leaders encounter in influencing teaching and learning in schools? and 1.4. Which leadership framework can be used to improve teaching and learning in schools? Through the exploration of these questions, the study contributes to the an indepth understanding of the complicated relationships between leadership and learning outcomes of students. This will eventually inform the pedagogical strategies that enhance teaching and learning methods in the selected schools and others in the Enoch Mgijima Municipality.

This study will provide an indebth understanding understanding and context that have been already explained. These key areas of the study include the role of school leadership, the leadership style used in used to improve instructional activities, the challenges that confront school leaders as well as the leadership frameworks that are used to improve teaching and learning in schools. An examination of these areas of focus contributes to a comprehensive knowledge of the impact of school leadership. In the context of education and the schooling system, effective leadership is perceived as a comprehensive and collaborative process involving all school personnel, including school principals, members of school governing bodies (SGBs), teachers, learners, and other stakeholders (Ahmad & Ghavifekr, 2015). The

primary objective of school leaders, as stated by Ahmad and Ghavifekr (2015), is to enhance school leadership, teaching and learning practices, educational outcomes, the overall school environment, and to foster continuous improvement and growth.

Various scholars and educational practitioners have attempted to define the concept of school leadership, recognising it as one of the crucial factors influencing teaching, learning, and learners' performance. Different scholars have attempted to define school leadership. According to Xhomara (2018), school leadership involves fostering equity, inclusion, diversity, and stimulating changes in the school environment for positive outcomes. This pertains to the influence that principals and other school leaders have on individuals and groups in the school setting. School leadership enhances the quality of teaching and learning, as well as learners' performance. Hariri et al. (2016) asserted that improved education occurs when leaders influence teachers and learners, motivate individuals, build capacity, and create a school climate and environment that support quality education. This highlights that effective school leadership is a crucial area that needs to be prioritised in school leadership.

Influential school leaders are considered essential for steering the school in the right direction and fostering a supportive teaching and learning environment to achieve positive outcomes. According to Terziu et al. (2016), influential leaders possess qualities such as vision, courage, passion, emotional intelligence, decision-making skills, and other essential characteristics that enable them to excel in their roles as school leaders. These leaders can motivate their staff, provide learners with the resources they need to succeed and make decisions that benefit the entire school (Anderson, 2017). Anderson also emphasised that influential school leaders create an environment where teachers are committed to their work and motivate learners to succeed, while providing a compassionate, supportive, and encouraging atmosphere. In light of this, schools create robust learning environments that ensure learners' success by appointing qualified and effective leaders with good track records and experience in school leadership.

To address the challenges that hinder quality education in schools, school leaders employ various leadership styles tailored to different situations. These leadership styles play a crucial role in influencing performance, job satisfaction, and the overall improvement of the school environment (Chandra & Priyono, 2016). Notably, Chandra and Priyono highlighted that the principals' strong leadership significantly influences learners' and teachers' performance. Kythreotis et al. (2017) asserted that the concept of school leadership has evolved beyond mere management and administration to encompass instructional and transformational leadership.

This study emphasises the importance of transformational and instructional leadership styles in school development. In Vietnamese schools, Truong and Hallinger (2015) noted that autocratic and directive leadership styles are prevalent among school principals. These leadership styles are employed as strategies to enforce rules, establish clear performance standards, utilise rewards, and apply punitive measures for disobedience. However, it remains unclear which specific leadership styles the selected schools are using to maintain rules and set standards.

School leaders face a multitude of challenges that can have a significant effect on both teaching and learning outcomes, as well as the overall school environment. Truong and Hallinger (2015) identified various challenges in their study, one of which is the challenge of the process. They argued that there is a lack of opportunities to seek innovative ways to effect change, foster growth, and enhance the quality of educational outcomes. School leaders must address a wide range of challenges, including the need to improve learning outcomes, create safe and inclusive learning environments, address gender disparities, ensure equal access to education for vulnerable populations, and effectively manage day-to-day operations, while providing guidance and oversight to teachers and learners (Taufik & Istiarsono, 2020).

The pressure of being self-sufficient and accountable, to manage multiple school demands, and to deal with mounting expectations from parents and the community at large, are additional challenges faced by school leadership (Zainal et al., 2020). Addressing these challenges, require school leaders a set of critical leadership skills, including the ability to manage the school, prioritise transparent communication, address disciplinary issues to ensure quality education, and collaborate to support the well-being of the school and the community, especially in difficult circumstances such as the Covid-19 pandemic, which was experienced not quite long ago.

An assessment of the literature on school leadership underlines the critical role of school leaders in improving teaching and learning outcomes and learner achievement. However, there is a limited number of research that specifically focuses on understanding the unique roles, skills, leadership styles, and characteristics that school leadership should possess to exert a significant influence in the context of the selected schools in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality. While education leadership has been broadly studied, there is a need for more research to be conducted on the role of leadership and how it contributes to improving teaching and learning. Furthermore, a study that delves into the specific challenges and opportunities

faced by schools in this municipality is essential. Thus, this study aims was to explore the role of school leadership and how it contributes to the quality of education in schools, ultimately leading to increased learner achievement. This introductory chapter provides a general overview of the the study which included the background, the research problem, the research questionas and objectives. In addition, the the chapter also outlines the significance, the scope, limitations, keyterms and provide the chapters summary.

1.2 Background of the study

The role of leadership

Leadership is considered one of the most crucial yet enigmatic phenomena in the world, often visible but not fully understood (Platt, 2015). As such, leadership role can be analysed through various theoretical lenses, including trait, behavioural, contingency and transactional leadership theories. It can also be examined from the perspective of different leadership styles, such as democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Given the global emphasis on quality education, there is a growing worldwide interest in education, particularly in the search for the effective role school leadership in enhancing enhance teaching and learning (Northhouse, 2015).

Numerous scholars have provided diverse interpretations of leadership (Gakenia et al., 2017; Mwangi, 2016; Ndaipa, 2016). Ndaipa defined leadership as the process of communication between leaders and followers that influences followers to work together towards a common goal. This fundamental definition shows the essential role leaders play in guiding followers towards shared objectives. On the other hand, Gakenia et al. (2017) approached leadership slightly differently by focusing on the impact it has on followers. They defined leadership as the process through which a leader significantly influences a group of people or individuals to attain a collective goal. These definitions and conceptualisation emphasise the importance and highlight the influence that leaders exert on their followers. Mwangi (2016) defined leadership by accentuating the importance of the interactions between leaders and followers within the context in which these interactions occur. Despite the variations in these definitions, a common thread in all of them is the concept of leadership as a force driving individuals towards shared objectives, development, and success within a specific context.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the concept of the role of leadership in improving teaching and learning, extensive studies have been conducted by various scholars in different

contexts. For this study, these contexts have been categorised into a global context, an African context, and South African context.

1.2.1 Global context

The inability of school leaders to fulfil their responsibilities in improving teaching and learning is a global issue, not confined to developing nations. Given the leadership crisis and the poor quality of education provided in schools, educational leadership has garnered unprecedented attention (Muasy et al., 2017). Numerous studies have been conducted worldwide to discern the leadership roles that support quality teaching and learning in schools. Rautiola (2009), in a study conducted in the United States, argued that no single leadership style is universally suitable for all contexts. Instead, Rautiola's study suggested that schools should determine and establish a leadership model that aligns with their unique context and culture. A similar study by Hussain (2014) in Israel concluded that transformational leadership significantly have an impact on school development and effective operation. While the findings of these studies vary, they all clearly show the extent of influence that school leaders have in any given context.

Studies conducted in different settings have shown that institutions and organisations benefit immensely from school leadership. Singh (2017) found that schools in Nepal benefit from strong leadership, which includes a clear vision and effective goal setting, fostering an environment of trust and empowerment for both teachers and learners. In contrast, a study conducted in Indonesia by Firmaningsih-Kolu (2016) highlighted the crucial role of instructional leadership in teaching and learning. In a school context, instructional leadership is seen as fostering a positive relationship between leaders and followers. Agasisti et al. (2018) discovered that transactional leaders in Italy were more effective when leaders intended to reward performance. However, these transactional leaders were found to have lower educational outcomes compared to schools with leaders who operated within a comprehensive school leadership policy. These findings regarding leadership suggest that transactional leaders prioritise the use of reward systems to influence performance. However, within an educational context, the outcomes associated with transactional leaders were considerably lower. This could potentially be attributed to the specific school context and the leadership policies implemented therein.

School leaders prefer to use a transformational leadership approach to improve the school environment and the commitment of teachers and learners. In Canada, Ross and Gray (2016)

observed that leaders who adapted transformational approaches increased teacher commitment and learner achievement. However, the authors opined that effective leadership depends on considering the context and specific needs of a school, which may necessitate adjustments to strategic choices based on these factors. Cruickshank (2017) argued that instead of a school relying only on a transformational leadership style, it is critical that school leaders rather adopt an integrated leadership style to contribute to improved learner achievement in Australia. This approach prioritises engaging with teachers and learners, setting goals, and outlining vision and mission statements that address external factors affecting school effectiveness. Similarly, findings in De Oliveira and De Carvalho's (2018) study in Brazil noted positive connections between principal leadership and learners' school performance. These studies showed the contrasting effects of the critical roles of school leadership in shaping teaching and learning in schools.

1.2.2 African context

In Africa, the quest for an ideal school leadership style has brought about a significant stride in the quality of education that is offered in schools. A considerable number of studies in Africa have aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of school leaders in managing educational institutions. One such study, conducted by Muasya et al. (2017) established a direct correlation between school leadership style and performance in Kenya. Conversely, the study found that schools with effective instructional leadership outperformed those lacking it in terms of overall performance. However, this contrasts with a related study in Kenya, which highlighted the effectiveness of strategic leaders in developing successful intervention plans for schools (Gakenia et al., 2017). This was achieved through improved communication channels and by enhancing the schools' organisational and individual capabilities. These studies demonstrated in different ways how different leadership styles in schools have a significant influence on the quality of education in Africa.

Scholarly work has found that democratic leadership is the most prevalent leadership style used in African schools to enhance the learning environment (Amedome, 2018). According to Amedome, a democratic leadership style was used to bring all stakeholders on board with regard to decisions that affect teaching and learning in Ghana. This leadership style was found to have a positive impact on the school climate and culture. Moreover, it is assumed that numerous schools in Africa adopted this leadership style and demonstrated commendable performance when effectively implemented. Leaders promote organisational cohesion by

encouraging employe to embrace democratic and participative management styles (Igbaekemen & Odivwri, 2015). These studies seem to demonstrate how the effectiveness of a school leader's role could be enhanced by adopting a leadership style that improves teaching and learning outcomes.

In Mozambique, Ndaipa (2016) identified several key factors influencing school leaders' performance and their inability to achieve success. These factors included the absence of leadership training, low learner engagement, inadequate salaries, and teachers' limited involvement in decision-making processes. The study argued that leadership training plays a critical role in enhancing school achievement and teacher performance. This finding aligns with a similar study conducted by Amanchukwu et al. (2015) in Nigeria. The study discovered that effective school leadership requires the ability to anticipate the future by inspiring and influencing attitudes and behaviours geared towards achieving organisational goals. Additionally, it was found that school leaders face a variety of challenges, and how they manage these challenges, regardless of their effectiveness, significantly affects both school and learner achievement. Therefore, for a school to function effectively, the leader must possess a comprehensive understanding of the challenges associated with leadership responsibilities.

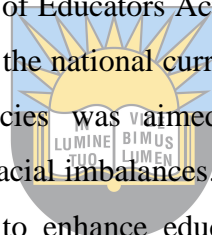
1.2.3 South African context

From the apartheid era to the current democratic government, South Africa's education system has undergone significant transformations. The apartheid government utilised education as a means to divide the nation based on racial identity among learners and teachers, resulting in inequalities and hindrances to teaching and learning (Msila, 2007). Thus, the curriculum was deemed ineffective due to its failure to create an environment conducive to effective education. Additionally, many school leaders lacked the ability to manage the rapidly changing school context due to neglect and discrimination in schools (Bhengu & Myende, 2016). Consequently, managing continuous education policy reforms presented significant challenges for principals in racially discriminatory schools. Therefore, different studies recommended a strong leadership that can adapt to ongoing changes in the educational sector, which are seen as essential (Bhengu & Myende, 2016; Msila, 2007).

In addressing these imbalances, the South African government initiated reforms and passed various educational acts and policies to promote school reform (Bush & Glover, 2016). These reforms aimed at correcting the injustices and prejudices of the apartheid government through

curriculum changes and school leadership development. This led to the belief that a vibrant education system supporting the new South African economy required considerations of changing demographics among learners and teachers, the policy context, and their implications (Bush & Glover, 2016). To this extent, the South African government needed to recruit qualified principals to implement continuous development programmes to prepare leaders, teachers and other stakeholders for effective teaching and learning. Thus, a qualified leader works within a strategic vision and possesses good communication skills and an in-depth knowledge of the needs and aspirations of the team.

It is generally assumed that for a leader to be able to transform the school, their understanding of school and educational policies is vital. The leader's ability to adapt to a changing school environment through effective implementation of policies can significantly contribute to the potential of the school to enhance instructional activities. Among these policies that can be used are the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (hereafter SASA), the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, and the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998. SASA emphasises school leadership and governance to support the national curriculum (Msila, 2007). It seems that the strategy for introducing these policies was aimed at changing and rectifying unfair discrimination to address ethnic and racial imbalances. These were some of the measures that education authorities sought to use to enhance education through effective teaching and learning.



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SASA especially played a crucial role in establishing a unified quality education system in South Africa. The policy seems to recognise the importance of school leadership and governance, providing direction for school leadership, governance, funding, and overall education quality (Bush & Glover, 2016). More importantly, this policy transformed the South African education system, which allowed learners to freely express themselves and shape their learning experiences in a democratic environment (Msila, 2007). Thus, teachers and learners gained the opportunity to have a voice in curriculum development decisions which was a significant departure from the apartheid era.

Given this historical background on the role of school principals in influencing teaching and learning in schools, it becomes evident that school leadership in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality is a critical factor in achieving quality education, especially as they are expected to understand the context to be able to steer the educational excellence within the local municipality. This, to a greater extent, shows how indispensable effective leadership is in

fostering quality education. The current study aimed at exploring the role that different leadership styles play in improving education quality, teaching, and learning, ultimately impacting school and learner achievement.

1.3 Statement of the research problem

As clearly illustrated in the background of this study in the previous section, it is evident that many South African schools face significant leadership challenges that have a detrimental impact on teaching and learning. These challenges are further compounded by the poor quality of education and instructional activities, which negatively affect learners' performance. What exacerbates these issues is the fact that many of these schools are in disadvantaged communities in South Africa, such as within the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality. These communities consist of impoverished rural areas and townships that are severely affected by a lack of effective leadership. Addressing these challenges, it is crucial that the study investigate the role of school leadership in enhancing teaching and learning. By examining the different leadership styles employed in schools, to analyse the importance of leadership in the teaching and learning in schools, to examine the challenges that are faced by school leaders and lastly to explore the different leadership frameworks used to improve teaching and learning outcomes in schools.

Ngcobo (2012) attributed the poor performance of schools in South Africa to a lack of leadership and an inability to efficiently organise the available resources to enhance education. Furthermore, the findings of Naidoo (2019) indicated that underperforming schools often struggle due to school leaders' inability to comprehend and effectively implement school policies for curriculum reforms and the improvement of teaching and learning. Regarding poor performance in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality, similar situations in other impoverished areas of South Africa have significant implications for the schools. These consequences affect not only the schools, but also the learners, parents, and other stakeholders. However, a review of the literature reveals that some disadvantaged townships and rural schools, when led by strong leadership, manage to achieve high pass rates in the national senior certificate (Bhengu & Myende, 2016; Bush & Glover, 2016; Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2008; Solomon & Steyn, 2017).

As clearly shown above, schools in this municipality struggle to establish a conducive environment that supports effective teaching and learning. Therefore, this study aimed at

investigating the leadership's role in schools and how it contributes to enhanced teaching, learning, performance, and overall learner achievement. To change the current narrative that contributes to underperformance, it is imperative to examine the leadership role in improving educational outcomes. While effective school leadership is widely acknowledged for its critical role in enhancing teaching and learning outcomes, there is a notable lack of extensive research regarding the specific functions, skills, behaviours, and characteristics of school leadership that have a significant influence on schools within the context of the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality. Additionally, there seems to exist limited knowledge about the specific challenges and opportunities confronted by schools in this region.

Based on the gap identified, conducting a focused research study that seeks to explore and comprehend how school leaders contribute to the quality of education could provide valuable insights into addressing the challenges faced by these schools. The current research gap hinders the achievement of effective quality education, improved teaching and learning, and learner progress. To rectify this gap in school leadership research, facilitate informed decision-making, and support enhancement initiatives within these schools, a comprehensive investigation into the role of school leadership in improving teaching, learning, and educational quality was warranted. As a result, to improve these challenges that affect teaching and learning in schools, the aim of this study will be to investigate the role of school leadership in improving teaching and learning in schools under the Enoch Mgijima Municipality.

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1.4 MAIN AND SUB-RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1. Main Research Question

To explore the role of school leaders on teaching, learning, and learner performance in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, the researcher sought to address the following research questions, which provided the framework for the study.

What is the role that leadership play in improving teaching and learning in the selected schools of Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality?

1.4.2. Sub-Research Questions

The following the research questions were formulated:

1. What are the different leadership styles used to improve teaching and learning in schools?

2. Why is the role of school leaders important in teaching and learning in schools?
3. What are the challenges that school leaders encounter in influencing teaching and learning in their schools?
4. Which leadership framework can be used to improve teaching and learning in schools?

1.5 Aim and objectives of the study

1.5.1 Main aim

To understand the role that leadership play in improving teaching and learning in the selected schools of Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality.

1.5.2 Objectives

1. To investigate the different leadership styles used to improve teaching and learning in schools.
2. To analyse the importance school leader's role in teaching and learning in schools.
3. To examine the challenges encountered by school leaders in influencing teaching and learning in schools.
4. To examine the leadership framework used to improve teaching and learning in schools



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1.6 Significance of the study

The study aimed to investigate the role of leadership in South African schools and its influence on teaching and learning in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. The findings of this study may contribute to identifying reasons for the consistent underperformance of many schools in this municipality, which has persisted since the introduction of outcomes-based education and the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 1996, as well as the Consolidated Assessment and Policy Statements (CAPS) in 2008. Additionally, it may help pinpoint schools struggling to meet the national benchmarks set for the annual national senior certificate examinations. This research sought to understand the role of leadership in improving teaching and learning in selected high schools.

Furthermore, the results of this study may augment the existing body of knowledge concerning the roles of school leadership and leadership in general, with a particular focus on the Enoch

Mgijima Municipality, Eastern Cape province, and the South African education system. While examining the roles of school principals as leaders, the study will emphasise the effectiveness of school leaders, appropriate leadership behaviours, and how leaders can efficiently fulfil their general administrative and management duties and instructional responsibilities in schools. All stakeholders in the education sector, including government, education authorities, school management teams, school governing bodies (SGBs), teachers, non-governmental organisations, learners, and parents, may benefit from the recommendations and suggestions stemming from this study, which can pave the way for the desired reforms in schools. Teacher will obtain an insight into the efficacy of leadership practice supporting their teaching in the classroom, non governmental organisations can understand how to complement the effort of school leaders in enhancing instructional activities. Importantly, this study contributes to improved knowledge of how school leaders can promote transformation and improved environment, it will encourage parental involvement in schools and provide teaching and learning opportunities for learners to excel.

Furthermore, this study may provide valuable insights to inform decision-making processes for school leadership and policymakers, especially regarding the successful implementation of school leadership policies. The results of this study have the potential to significantly influence policy direction. This may ultimately foster a positive climate that supports teaching and learning in schools. In this regard, local, national, and global bodies involved in the development and implementation of educational leadership, as well as leadership in a broader organisational context, may find the study beneficial. The identified gaps in this study may also open doors for further research into school and educational leadership policy formulation and implementation.

1.7 Delimitations

The study was conducted in four high schools within the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality, situated in the Eastern Cape province, which encompasses six major towns: Komani, Tarkastad, Hofmeyer, Whittlesea, Sterkstroom, and Molteno. Because of the extensive coverage area, the research was limited to high schools located in Komani and Whittlesea. The primary focus of this study was to investigate the role of school principals in influencing teaching and learning within these schools, and to explore their impact on both school and learner achievements.

The participants of the study were primarily drawn from the pool of principals, school management teams, heads of departments, teachers, and learners. It is worth noting that the selection of participants could potentially have been broadened to encompass other stakeholders such as non-government organisations and parents. Additionally, it is essential to acknowledge that the study was conducted over a relatively short period, spanning from 2019 to 2022, which may be perceived as limited for the scope of such research.

1.8 Definition of keywords

The following keywords have been defined within the specific context of their usage in this study, both in terms of practical application and operational definitions. To avoid unnecessary complexity, the researcher focused on essential key terms that hold significance in the context of this thesis. These key terms are highlighted and elaborated upon below.

1.8.1 Leadership

Leadership is widely recognised for its significant role in improving the education process, potentially enhancing school academic performance and learner achievement (Choi & Gil, 2017). However, this broad assertion about leadership lacks a comprehensive explanation, given the various definitions, models, and diverse leadership behaviours and characteristics. Naidu (2010) defined leadership as the influence on people to guide them towards the right course of action. According to Singh (2017), leadership involves the process of influencing people to undertake the necessary tasks, guiding them on how to accomplish these tasks, and enabling both individual and collective efforts to achieve common goals. Leadership, in the context of this study, pertains to the extent of influence that school leaders possess and how this influence translates into measurable performance (Felt, 2017).

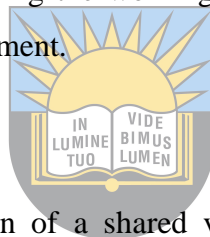
1.8.2 School leadership

School leaders, in the form of individual principals, play a significant role in establishing and nurturing a vibrant, engaging, and productive learning environment for learners. This achievement is based on the collaborative efforts of all school stakeholders and interested parties. Through this process, school leaders can facilitate high-quality academic performance and positive learner outcomes (Feng-I, 2016). School leadership is best described as a relational influence within the school organisation, helping the institution work towards its objectives (Cruickshank, 2017). As per Cruickshank (2017), school leadership encompasses shaping the

vision and mission of the school and planning strategically on how to accomplish them. In this study, the term *school leadership* refers collectively to principals and the roles of other school leaders and how they contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning.

1.8.3 Leadership styles

Leadership styles reflect the motivational systems employed by leaders (Dixon, 2014). The approach to leadership styles emphasises the behaviours that effective leaders can exhibit (Naidu, 2010) and what they inherently are. As Green (2016) noted, leadership styles encompass significant variations within any organisation and how these differences affect the teaching and learning environment. At its core, leadership styles revolve around the assertion that leaders serve as guiding forces in schools, influencing the success of both learners and the institution. According to Cruickshank (2017), the leadership style of the principal can have a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning within schools. This, in turn, can affect learner achievement by enhancing the working conditions of teachers and creating a conducive school climate and environment.



1.8.4 Leadership roles

Leadership roles involve the creation of a shared vision and mission, the promotion of organisational goals, the cultivation of performance expectations, and the guidance of the direction of the school (Terhoven & Fataar, 2018). Within a school context, the leadership roles of principals are defined by how they leverage their expertise to drive teaching and learning processes and design action plans aimed at enhancing the quality of education and instructional delivery (Firmaningsih-Kolu, 2016). According to Terhoven and Fataar (2018), the leadership roles include the establishment of a curriculum framework and platform to support the high-quality delivery of teaching and learning within their schools. School leaders provide the necessary structures and support systems, foster teacher development and motivation, and facilitate the implementation of policies and curricula to ensure effective teaching and learning in their institutions.

1.8.5 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership refers to the process of influencing significant changes in the attitudes and thinking of employees within an organisation (Naidu, 2010). Leaders are considered transformational when they inspire and motivate others to achieve exceptional

outcomes (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Marks and Printy (2017) argued that transformational leadership centres on the primary role of school leaders in fostering reform, particularly in terms of introducing innovation, motivating, and reshaping the broader school culture. The focus of transformational leaders is on revitalising the school as an organisation and its staff. However, it is worth noting that transformational leaders often lack a sufficient focus on curriculum and instruction (Marks & Printy, 2017). In spite of the shortcomings of transformational leadership, its conceptualisation gives meaning to how teaching and learning can be improved by school leaders.

1.8.6 Learners

Learners are indeed the central focus of the South African education system (Bhengu & Myende, 2016). Du Preez et al. (2018) have noted that the life orientation CAPS in South Africa are geared towards facilitating the holistic development of learners. According to Du Preez et al. (2018), the objective of life orientation teachers is to provide guidance to learners regarding their personal, social, and physical development in South African schools. Learners play a significant role in sharing the responsibility of creating a transformational teaching and learning environment (Okinyi et al., 2015). For this study, *learners* is used interchangeably with *students*, and they have the same meaning. In this study, learners are the focal point of the South African educational system; hence the need to emphasise their development and active involvement in teaching and learning.

1.8.7 Teachers

Arreman and Erixon (2017) have pointed out that teachers bring with them a vast array of skills, experiences, and knowledge that help guide learners to academic success. Teachers can create a platform that fosters engagement between them and learners in vocational education, including a specific way of reasoning and behaving that learners adopt in schools (Arreman & Erixon, 2017). Kobiah et al. (2015) pointed out that to build an effective curriculum, teachers must play an integral role in every stage of school curriculum development for effective teaching and learning to take place. Given the crucial role that teachers play in teaching and learning in schools, Le Roux (2016) believed that teachers need support to recognise and understand their roles before they can help learners play their roles in a diverse teaching and learning environment. In the context of this study, teachers are important figures who by their

competencies and experiences, contribute to the success of the learners by creating a conducive climate for effective teaching and learning.

1.9 Summary

School leadership has been identified to play a crucial role in teaching and learning in schools, as well as the success of the learners. There is a national concern for the performance of most South African schools and learners, which focuses attention on the role of school leadership. This study aimed to explore the leadership role in improving teaching and learning in a selected school within the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality. Its purpose was to investigate how the roles of school leaders contribute to teaching and learning, ultimately impacting school and learner achievement. The study was prompted by the underperformance of many schools in the Enoch Mgijima Municipality, seeking to understand the influence of leadership roles on enhanced educational outcomes. Thus, the aim of the study was to examine leadership roles in the selected schools and their effect on teaching and learning, with the aim of proposing a school leadership framework that positively influences the quality of education delivery. The subsequent chapter critically focuses on a wider review of relevant and related literature on the role of school leadership in order to gain an insight into the role of school leaders, the challenges that confront them and strategies that can be relied upon to improve teaching and learning.



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1.10 Chapter outline

The study is organised into six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 presented the background of the study, the problem of the study, rationale, the main research question, the sub-research questions which were aligned to the aim and objectives of the study, and lastly, the background of the study, which provided the research gap and justification for the study.

Chapter 2 of the study provides a critical review of the theoretical and legislative frameworks of the study that gives a lens for this study to be conducted. The chapter also assesses the importance of theoretical frameworks underpinning the current study, which aimed at establishing the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the study from another related research.

Chapter 3 comprises a comprehensive scholarly review of relevant literature on school leadership. The literature review is guided by the research questions and seeks to explore

various theoretical frameworks of leadership. This exploration guides the current study in the development and design of a preferred leadership framework intended to enhance teaching and learning in schools.

Chapter 4 details the research methods employed in this study, offering an overview of the research methodology, a review of the research design, and an examination of the population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the presentation of data, data analysis, and the interpretation of emergent themes within the study. These themes are derived from the interview questions, and the interpretation is conducted in alignment with the research questions.

Chapter 6 serves as the culmination of the entire study, focusing on the discussion of findings, offering recommendations for action, exploring the implications for social change, providing a conclusion for the study, and suggesting directions for further research. This chapter effectively addresses the four research questions, ultimately concluding the study.



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Chapter 2

Theoretical and Legislative Frameworks

2.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework of the study revolved around the transformational-instructional leadership model and the transactional-instructional leadership model. The transformational leadership model aims to enhance the teaching and learning environment by inspiring teachers and students to work towards the school's vision with dedication. On the other hand, the transactional leadership model uses rewards and penalties to drive commitment. Instructional leadership is focused on improving teaching and learning practices within the school. Combining these leadership models is essential as it helps school leaders create a supportive and conducive environment that encourages shared commitment and improved school teaching and learning (Hallinger et al., 2017). Similarly, the legislative framework included policies on South African education and how they influence leadership. Some key legislative frameworks that guide this study in the South African school context include vital policies such as the National Curriculum Statement, the National Education Policy, the Policy for South African Schools Principals (SASA), and the Norms and Standards for Educators. These legislative frameworks provide an overarching guide and regulations for school leadership in improving teaching and learning (DBE, 2016).

This chapter reviews the theoretical and legislative frameworks and essential school policies regarding the role of school leaders and how they influence teaching and learning in schools. The chapter is divided into two sections, with the first section focusing on the theoretical framework that underpins the study and the second part focusing on the review of legislative frameworks and policies that affect the role of school leaders.

2.2 Theoretical frameworks

Theoretical frameworks are constructed based on theories within a relevant discipline that address the current research challenge (Adom et al., 2018). Adom et al. emphasised that a theoretical framework serves as the foundation and guide for research. As noted by Nkala (2014), a theoretical framework aids researchers in understanding the nature, scope, research questions, objectives, and purpose of the study. This research investigated the different

leadership styles used to improve teaching and learning in schools, analysed the importance of school leaders' role in teaching and learning in schools, examined the challenges encountered by school leaders in influencing teaching and learning in schools and examined leadership framework used to improve teaching and learning in schools. To explore the role of leaders and their influence on teaching and learning in schools, the study first utilised instructional leadership and, second, transformational leadership and transactional leadership theories for promoting change in the school environment. These two theories complement each other, addressing potential limitations in isolation.

2.2.1 Instructional Leadership Framework

Instructional leadership theory has become a focal point of interest for school managers and administrators, leading to extensive research in the field. This framework of instructional leadership has been advocated by various scholars for over half a century; however, it was the work of Philip Hallinger on instructional leadership that is considered particularly prominent and relevant to this study (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger et al., 2017). A review of the instructional leadership literature delves into the instructional responsibilities of school principals and their contributions to teaching and learning. The instructional leadership theory illustrates how the role of the school leader in instruction ensures the achievement of educational outcomes (Hallinger, 2010a).

Researchers investigating the effectiveness of teaching and learning in schools have found that, for schools to improve their educational outcomes, principals must not only be qualified but also proficient in their instructional responsibilities (Shatzer, 2009). Despite variations in the conceptualisation of instructional leadership, there is a reasonable connection between the diverse scholarly works conducted. As a result, a review of these scholarly works on instructional leadership is presented below.

2.2.1.1 Conceptualisation of instructional leadership

The pursuit of a leadership theory that optimally fosters a positive environment for teaching, learning, and learner success has spurred extensive scholarly work on instructional leadership. While numerous studies on instructional leadership have been conducted since the 1970s, the work of Philip Hallinger and his colleagues in the 1980s stands out as particularly influential for this study, warranting special recognition. This section aims at providing a comprehensive understanding of the role and impact of instructional leadership on teaching and learning by

reviewing various instructional models, studies, and the work of Hallinger. This review establishes a strong theoretical foundation for the current study.

Numerous scholars have offered various definitions of instructional leadership. One notably significant definition emphasises the principal's responsibilities in teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2010b). Within this context, instructional leadership involves recognising school principals as teachers and educational experts (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018). This definition is crucial as it outlines the principal's key responsibilities and the essential skills required to be an effective instructional leader. Furthermore, Shatzer (2009) defined instructional leadership as leadership roles associated with teachers instructing and learners learning. That is, it becomes evident when the behaviour of an individual is officially recognised as the school leader influences other teachers in a way that contributes to enhanced learning and educational outcomes (Maponya, 2015).

Hallinger et al. (2017) elaborated that instructional principals are individuals who foster a cultural system with high expectations for both staff and learners within the school. They are perceived as goal-orientated leaders who establish a clear direction for the school, motivate individuals in the organisation to strive for success, and align the vision and mission with strategic planning and decision-making (Hallinger, 2011). As a result, instructional leaders not only provide leadership but also oversee the day-to-day administration of the school (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). This approach is essential to ensure the effective functioning of the school, both in administration and, more critically, in promoting effective teaching and learning. The day-to-day administration, as explained by Hallinger (2010b), encompasses roles such as coordination, control, supervision, curriculum development, and instruction. This stresses how instructional leaders are directly involved in managing the school, particularly in the core business of teaching and learning. Therefore, this theoretical framework underpins the study, with the findings aligning with and corroborating this theory to provide a potential best-practice framework.

2.2.1.2 Hallinger's conceptualisation of instructional leadership

Before 1980, there were only limited coherent theories and comprehensive models available for understanding instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2011). However, after the 1980s, this situation began to change as many scholars began to theorise the concept of instructional leadership. Prominently among these scholars are Hallinger and colleagues, who are credited with extensive work in constructing the theory of instructional leadership (Hallinger & Heck,

1998). To broadly consider the extensive scholarly work on instructional leadership theory, this study briefly outlines the distinctions between some of the significant studies conducted by different scholars. An assessment of this scholarly work reveals the following clarifications:

- Instructional leadership of the school principal affects the quality of educational delivery and the achievement of school outcomes when it is aligned with the organisational structures, missions, and visions of the school (Hallinger, 2003).
- Instructional leadership primarily emphasises the school principal's role in coordinating, controlling, supervising, and promoting the curriculum and instruction in the school (Angell, 2017).
- The instructional leadership of the principal was first identified in pre-primary and primary schools. Formerly, it was considered as the primary role of the school principal (Bass, 1985).
- Research on effective schools often focused on rural and underserved schools in need of reform. Therefore, instructional school principals were mainly seen as effective and strong leaders (Blase & Blase, 2000).
- Instructional leadership is seen to lead with a combination of charisma and skills. Instructional principals are deeply involved in the implementation of the curriculum and instruction and collaborating with teachers to improve teaching and learning (Bellibas et al., 2016).
- Instructional principals are considered to be goal-orientated and focusing on improving learner achievement in consideration of the context of their schools. These instructional leaders pay attention to the mission and vision of the school, more than other principals (Hallinger & Heck, 1998).
- Principals who are instructional leaders are seen as culture builders. They seek to foster a positive climate that enhances teaching and learning and promotes high expectations for both teachers and learners (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

Hallinger's (2003) conceptualisation of instructional leadership is fundamental to our understanding of the school principal's role as a leader. The model proposes three dimensions for understanding instructional leadership: defining the mission of the school, managing the instructional programme, and promoting a positive school climate for teaching and learning.

Furthermore, Hallinger (2003) categorised these dimensions into ten instructional leadership functions primarily aimed at improving teaching and learning in the school.

Table 2.1 Principal instructional leadership practices model

Defining the mission	Manages instructional Nkosikhona	Promotes school climate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framing school leadership • Communicating school goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervising and evaluating instructions • Coordinating curriculum • Monitoring learners' progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting instructional time • Promoting professional development • Maintaining high visibility • Providing incentives for teachers • Enforcing academic standards • Providing incentives for learners

Source: Hallinger (2003)

Hallinger's leadership model, as illustrated in Table 2.1, comprises three dimensions of the instructional leadership role of the principal: defining the mission of the school, managing the instructional programme, and promoting a positive school learning climate. These dimensions are further categorised into ten functions of the principal. These dimensions and functions are instrumental because they help principals build an effective school climate that supports effective teaching and learning. Besides Hallinger's instructional model, other scholars have further conceptualised the role of instructional principals in teaching and learning.

In conceptualising the instructional leadership of the principal, Ovando and Cavazos (2005) categorised the definition of instructional leadership into narrow and broader definitions. The narrow definition emphasises instructional leadership as a distinct entity from management, focusing on actions directly connected to teaching and learning, while the broader definition focuses on developing and implementing the objectives, culture, and instructional administration of the school, directed towards improving teaching and learning outcomes (Ovando and Cavazos, 2005). This study argues that the instructional leadership behaviour of the principal drives and influences educational outcomes through the vision, mission, goals, and culture of the school, making the role of the instructional leader instrumental in showcasing the diverse responsibilities of school leaders.

Kruger (2003), who extended the work of Hallinger's instructional leadership theory, interestingly found similarities in the instructional leadership responsibilities of some school

principals in South Africa. Kruger's study indicated five general functions common to all instructional leaders:

- They define and communicate a clear vision, goals, and objectives to teachers and staff, involving them in the process to gain their acceptance.
- They manage the school curriculum and instruction, ensuring efficient curriculum coordination and resource support for teachers.
- They supervise teaching in their schools, offering guidance and direction to teachers.
- They monitor the learners' progress through periodic assessments, providing feedback to teachers, learners, and parents.
- They promote an instructional climate conducive to effective teaching and learning, creating an environment where both teachers and learners can enjoy the learning experience.

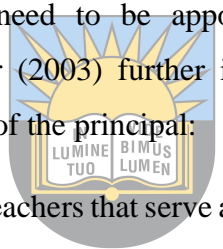
Understanding the conceptualisation of the instructional leadership theory was crucial for this study in several ways. A critical analysis of this theory revealed the outcomes that provide a foundation for comprehending the role of school leaders and their impact on teaching and learning. First, these theories emphasise the instructional role of the school principal as a primary responsibility. The effectiveness with which a school leader fulfils this instructional responsibility significantly influences not only the quality of teaching and learning but also the learners' performance and overall school success. Second, the theory of instructional leadership offers insights into how school leaders can indirectly enhance the quality of teaching and learning by positively engaging with both staff and learners. However, it is important to note that this theory does not directly guide the current study in developing a leadership framework aimed at addressing the persistent underperformance of South African schools. Instead, it highlights the central role of school leaders in improving teaching and learning within schools.

2.2.1.3 Limitations of Instructional Leadership

A critical analysis of the findings in instructional leadership literature reveals a strong connection between the role of instructional leaders and school achievement, learner success, and improved teaching and learning (Blase & Blase, 2000; Hallinger, 2010b; Hallinger & Heck, 1998). This literature widely recognises substantial evidence that supports the efficacy of instructional leadership. However, substantial criticisms have also been raised in many instructional studies. For example, Leithwood (2016) pointed out that instructional leadership

was primarily intended for smaller primary schools and may not apply to secondary schools where many principals are not responsible for directly supervising and monitoring teachers as proposed by instructional leadership. This implies that school principals would need to be subject matter experts in numerous disciplines to affect teacher and learner commitment, as well as school curriculum and instruction (Gurly et al., 2016).

Kruger (2003) observed that despite decentralised decision-making in schools, it also means that the responsibilities of school principals have increased, including monitoring and supervising school management teams and school governing bodies. This heightened responsibility has various implications that could negatively affect teaching and instruction, as well as the effective operation of the school. These negative effects on the school may manifest in several ways: first, the increased responsibility places an excessive amount of power in the hands of principals, which can lead to potential abuse. Second, the increased responsibility does not allow the principal to focus on the core business of the school, which is teaching and learning, as other personnel may need to be appointed specifically for the effective administration of the school. Kruger (2003) further identified factors that undermine the effectiveness of the instructional role of the principal:

- 
- Poor attitudes of learners and teachers that serve as opposition to the instructional leader role in school administration.
 - An inadequate and poor state of school infrastructure and lack of facilities.
 - Shortage of teaching and learning resources and materials in schools.
 - Overpopulated classrooms and multi-grade situations.
 - Poor management skills that make it difficult to address the challenges that have an impact on the culture of teaching and learning.
 - Poor relationships between the school principal, teachers, learners, and parents.

These identified lapses in the effectiveness of instructional leadership make it challenging to rely solely on this theory as a framework for addressing school issues related to performance, teaching, and learning. Education is continuously evolving locally and globally, and the schooling context and environment are constantly changing (Anderson, 2017). School leaders are expected to adapt to current educational trends and incorporate them into their curriculum as necessary. However, because the instructional leader's focus is primarily on instructional responsibilities, it can be challenging to transform the school environment and introduce the

necessary changes that influence school success and learner achievement. The evident gaps necessitate the complementing of the instructional leadership theory with other leadership styles that address how the school environment can adapt to rapid changes in the educational landscape. The next section introduces transformational leadership as a complementing theory that underpins the current study.

2.2.2 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership, as a theoretical framework used in this study, holds significance due to the inherent limitations of instructional leadership in achieving comprehensive school effectiveness. Moreover, many scholars have argued in favour of transformational leadership as both a complement and an alternative to instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2010a). Thus, combining the two theories will not only provide a balanced conceptualisation of the role of school leadership, but also to offer the best perspective for understanding school effectiveness and quality education. James McGregor Burns first introduced the concept of transformational leadership in 1978. It has gained prominence because of its ability to address the shortcomings of instructional leadership. Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as a form of leadership that aims at changing the behaviours and attitudes of followers to improve the outcomes. Transformational leaders prioritise uplifting the morals, motivation, and values of their followers and inspire commitment to organisational goals. They build trust relationships and earn respect from their followers, acting as role models for the organisation.

Givens (2008) emphasised the importance of understanding follower behaviour and its implications for the future of the organisation. Leadership plays a major role in shaping future changes within the organisation. Moreover, the literature demonstrates a positive relationship between transformational leadership and school effectiveness as a workplace (Burns, 1978; Givens, 2008). Schools become more effective due to the positive influence of transformational leaders on their followers, encouraging them to perform at higher levels. Burns's transformational leadership, as elaborated upon by other scholars (Givens, 2008; Hallinger, 2010a), accentuates the importance of transformational leadership in initiating positive change within an organisation.

The relevance of the transformational leadership theory to the current study lies in its exploration of the role of leadership in creating a positive environment that enhances teaching and learning in schools. An examination of the literature reveals significant connections

between transformational leadership and school improvement (Givens, 2008). School improvement, as explained in Givens' study, reflects the transformational capacity of the principal to promote a positive school environment. Transformational leadership is also linked to positive educational outcomes and a commitment to the school as an organisation (Anderson, 2017).

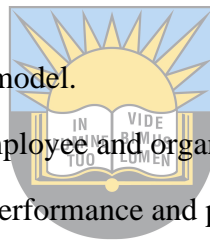
2.2.2.1 Transformational leadership models

Various transformational models are explored in this section to further comprehend the concept of transformational leadership.

2.2.2.1.1 Sarros, Cooper and Santora's Transformational Leadership Model

In examining transformational leadership, Sarros et al. (2008) proposed six important factors that are considered instrumental in achieving school effectiveness:

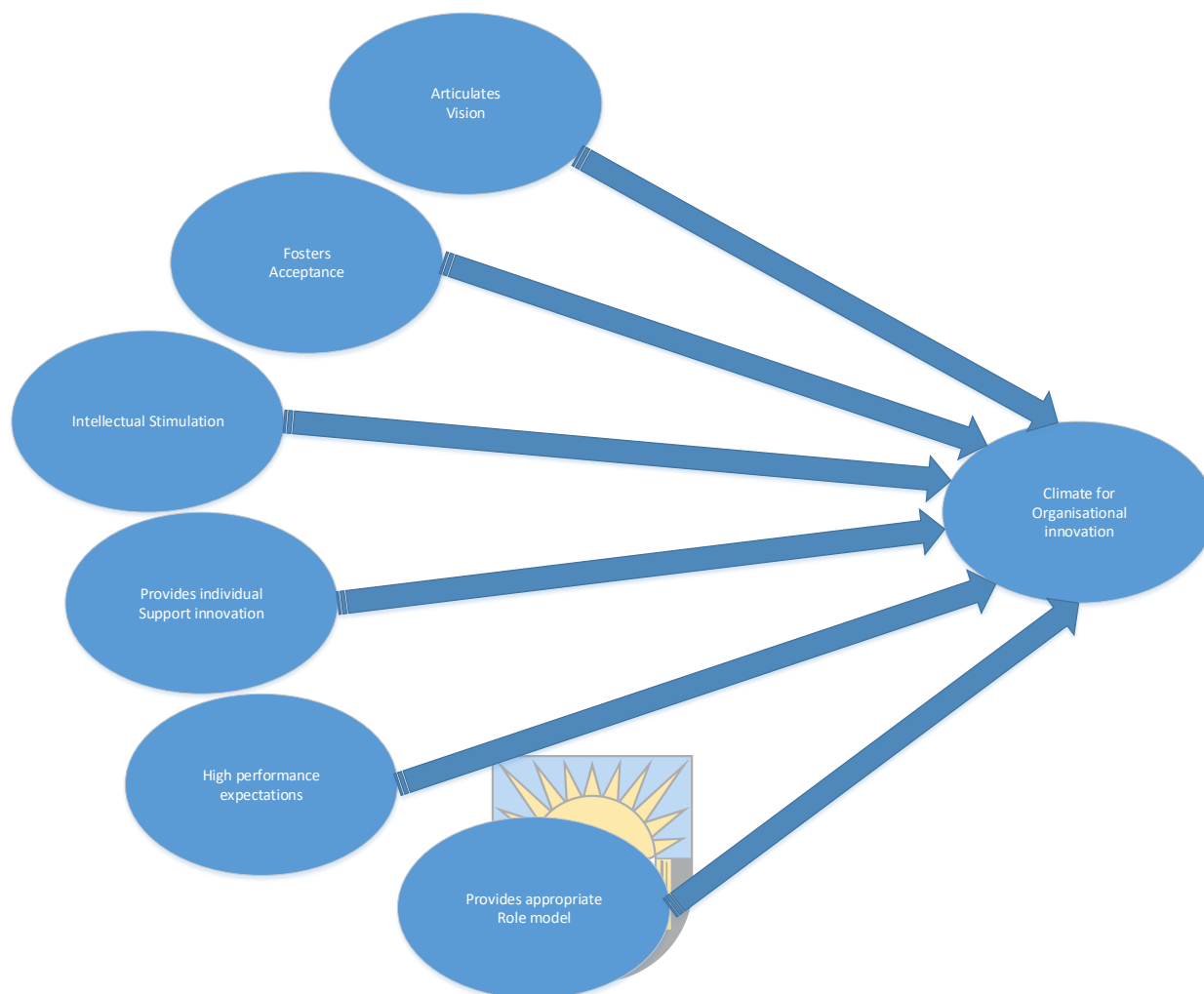
- Clearly articulating a vision.
- Providing an appropriate role model.
- Fostering the acceptance of employee and organisational goals.
- Setting expectations for high performance and providing support for individuals.
- Creating intellectual stimulation.



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These factors shape our understanding of the impact of transformational leadership on individuals and the school as an organisation. This approach is consistent with other leadership styles that aim at inspiring others through the ethical behaviour of the leader and a well-communicated vision (Al Kindy et al., 2016; Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978).

When explaining transformational leadership as an approach, Sarros et al. (2008) emphasised how this leadership style is crucial for addressing the culture and change within schools. Figure 2.1 illustrates the structural model, depicting the relationship between transformational leadership and organisational climate.



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Figure 2.1 Transformational leadership and climate for organisational innovation

Source: Sarros et al. (2008).

The diagram in Figure 2.1 illustrates the role of the principal as a transformational leader in creating a climate conducive to organisational innovation. This is crucial because, by fulfilling the various roles depicted in the diagram, the school leader can readily adjust to today’s dynamic educational landscape. Adapting to a constantly changing environment helps the principal transform the school environment and positively influences the attitudes and behaviours of employees through motivation.

2.2.2.1.2 Effelsberg, Solga and Gurt’s transformational leadership model

Effelsberg et al. (2014) focused on the ethical dimension of transformational leadership in their study. These authors asserted that transformational leaders not only inspire their followers but also uphold a “high standard of ethical and moral conduct” that followers readily embrace. Their study aligned with a similar view held by proponents of positive perceptions of the

transformational leader, emphasising the leader’s ability for moral reasoning and concern for others (Al Kindy et al., 2016; Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Givens, 2008). This perspective highlights the leader’s capacity to set a positive example for followers to emulate. To comprehend the impact of the leader’s ethical and moral behaviour on followers, the study illustrated this with a leadership model that guides the leader’s disposition to make the right decisions and to act ethically, as shown in Figure 2.2.

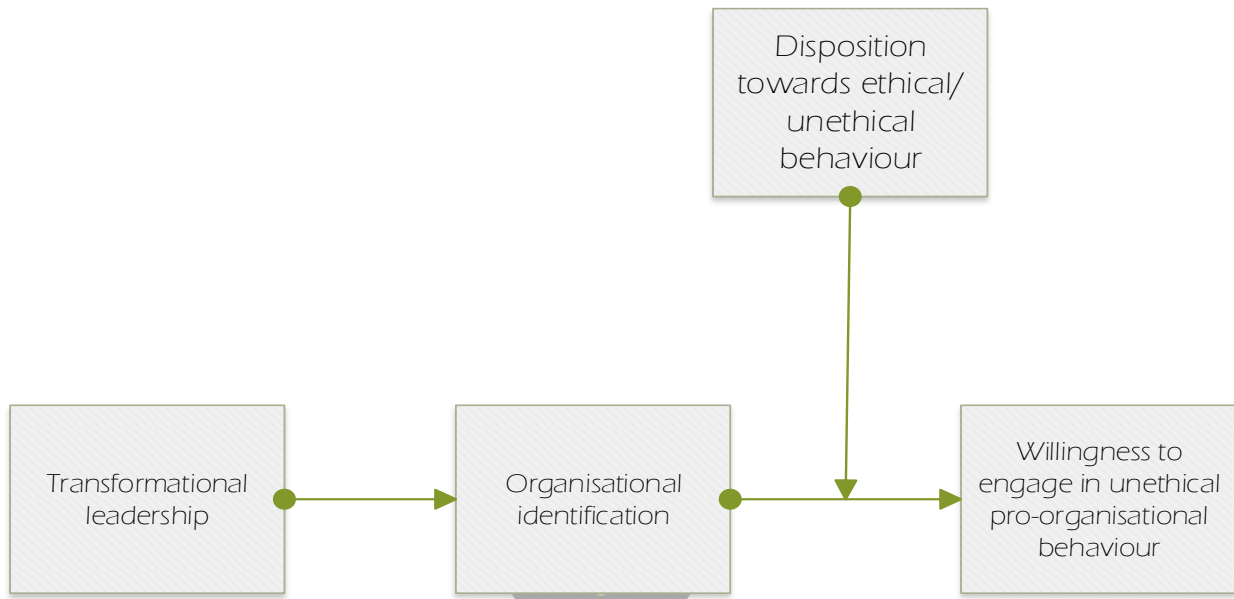


Figure 2.2 *Transformational leadership behaviour and followers’ ethics*

Source: Effelsberg et al. (2014)

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In this model, Effelsberg et al. (2014) illustrated how a transformational leader can create an environment that raises employees’ awareness of ethical and unethical behaviour. In the context of education, the ability of teachers and learners to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable conduct is key because it contributes to the overall well-being of the school as an organisation. Moreover, it is crucial to establish a strong culture that continuously seeks to transform attitudes and behaviours in ways that enhance the quality of teaching and learning in schools. While the transformation of teachers’ and learners’ attitudes and behaviours is essential for an effective teaching and learning environment, it is equally important to focus on transforming the existing leadership practices within the school. As a result, the transformation of leadership behaviour and practices will be examined in the following section.

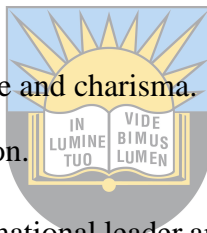
This model focuses the significance of the principal’s ethical and moral behaviour within the school. School principals who demonstrate good ethics and acceptable behaviour set a critical example for teachers to follow. When teachers and learners witness leaders setting a positive

example, it becomes easier for them to accept the leader's authority and strive to emulate their good conduct.

2.2.2.1.3 Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam and Brown's transformational leadership model

Shatzer et al. (2014) observed that transformational leadership, in its broadest sense, encompasses leadership practices and behaviours that make organisational change achievable. Consequently, leaders who initiate transformation in their schools can effectively communicate the vision of the school, set an example for followers to emulate, provide support for culture and intellectual stimulation, and foster the growth and development of individuals and staff members. To initiate change and influence the environment, Shatzer et al. (2014) maintained that there are four distinctive practices and behaviours of leaders who are transformational, namely:

- Inspiring and motivating the leader.
- Considering individual needs.
- Idealising the leader's influence and charisma.
- Initiating intellectual stimulation.



These four dimensions of the transformational leader are crucial for understanding how school leaders transform their schools to create a climate for teaching and learning.

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Both Blase and Blase (2000) and Shatzer et al. (2014) agreed and suggested that schools seeking substantial reforms and changes in administration would opt for a transformational leader. In addition, these studies argued that transformational leadership is associated with optimistic and progressive outcomes, such as school improvements and positive relationships among learners, teachers, and management. However, contrasting findings from this study revealed a weaker relationship between the transformational leader and learners, as well as their academic achievement. This weakness is supported by the findings of a similar study conducted by Leithwood and Jantzi (2006). Their study found that while transformational leadership had a positive effect on teachers, staff members, and the school environment, the same cannot be said about learner achievement and school academic performance.

2.2.2.2 Transformational leadership and change

Transformational leaders are recognised as change agents within any organisation (Al Kindy et al., 2016; Blase & Blase, 2000; Hallinger, 2003). The concept of transformational leadership is considered highly instrumental due to its positive impact on the school environment and its followers. This has resulted in a favourable perception and opinions that followers have of transformational leaders and grant them the authority and influence over their teams (Platt, 2015). Platt was of the view that transformational leaders who exhibit “idealised influence” prioritise the needs of their followers over their own, openly share potential challenges with employees, and demonstrate unwavering commitment to important principles and values. Leaders perceived as transformational often inspire the development and realisation of their followers’ full potential (Platt, 2015). This positive influence of leaders on their followers is considered a critical and inherent aspect of transformational leadership. However, it remains unclear how these dynamics manifested in the selected schools.

Change in the school, as a workplace, is an essential factor for the success and competitive advantage of every educational institution. Many organisations and schools continually undergo changes in their work environments that influence social needs, educational policies, and the attainment of their goals. Hallinger (2010a) explained that change in the organisation is facilitated by transformational leaders through the leadership approach they adopt. The transformational leadership theory, in contrast to other leadership theories, promotes a shared or bottom-up approach to leadership functions, while other leadership theories often endorse a top-down approach (Hallinger, 2010a). This leadership approach is deemed vital for ushering in and driving change within the school.

However, a study conducted by Shatzer et al. (2014) found that although transformational leadership significantly influences follower commitment and the work environment, it fails to explain how these influences and changes contribute to improved organisational performance. While change is essential for achieving transformation in schools, it is equally important that this change is linked to enhanced teaching and learning, which is evidenced by improved performance.

2.2.2.3 Transformational leadership and performance

Transformational leadership behaviours are recognised as significant contributors to individual and group performance within organisations. Arokiasamy et al. (2016) asserted that behaviours

leading to individual and group performance stem from transformational behaviour, emphasising its role in effecting change within an organisation. These behaviours, as clearly pointed out by different leadership scholars, encompass several key factors, including inspiring followers' commitment to the organisation's vision, encouraging creative and innovative problem-solving, developing followers' leadership capabilities through coaching, providing support, and challenging followers to excel in their work (Arokiasamy et al., 2016). This distinctively show the different perspectives that different authors have about transformational leadership. These transformational leadership behaviours are crucial as they motivate followers to be highly productive and perform at their best, particularly by embracing the organisational vision. This perspective is supported by Gözükarar and Şimşek (2015), who argued that the transformational leader's style and role in reshaping followers' core values, beliefs, and attitudes influence them to deliver performance far beyond their own expectations.

However, findings from a study by Gomes (2016) revealed inconsistency in predicting significant outcomes related to transformational leadership and follower performance at both individual and group levels. For example, Effelsberg et al. (2014) demonstrated that while transformational leadership was associated with employee satisfaction and commitment, it did not consistently predict individual or group performance. In contrast to earlier leadership theories that prioritised high performance from followers, the transformational leadership theory notably emphasises the emotional attachment between leaders and their followers (Gomes, 2016). Nonetheless, according to Al Kindy et al. (2016), the behaviours of transformational leaders significantly contribute to the individual's work output and overall workplace performance. While these functions may not lead to immediate high performance, they have a positive impact on how followers behave.

To illustrate the influence of transformational leadership on followers' work performance, Al Kindy et al. (2016) employed a five-practice transformational model, as depicted in Figure 2.3. These five behaviours, as shown in the figure, are expected to foster positive work behaviours and attitudes among employees and cultivate a work environment conducive to optimal performance.

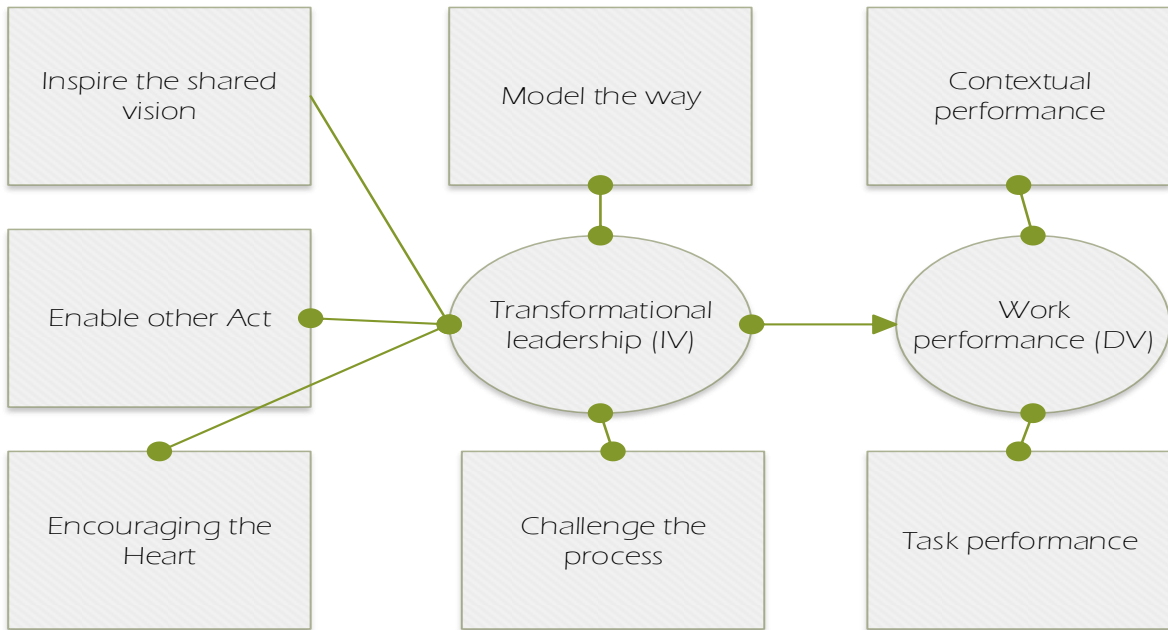


Figure 2.3 Relationship between transformational leadership behaviours and work performance

Source: Al Kindy et al. (2016)

As depicted in Figure 2.3 above, transformational leadership operates by setting exemplary standards and fostering commitment among followers through consistent practices. The transformational leader designs a sound programme, establishes a positive tone, and expects followers to follow suit (Al Kindy et al., 2016). Hallinger’s theory of transformation and change holds significant relevance to this study, as it explains the importance of transformation of ideologies, a crucial aspect for driving educational institutional change and enhancing academic performance. This issue as pointed out, has clearly been a point of contention in both public and academic discourse in recent years, and this study aimed to delve into it.

Transformational leaders are known to provide essential support to followers, enabling them to expand their skills and capabilities, ultimately resulting in enhanced productivity within the organisation (Al Kindy et al., 2016). The study further posited that high follower productivity is fostered through the transformational leader’s efforts to promote teamwork. When employees have confidence in their ability to effect change and make a meaningful impact, it boosts their morale and makes them integral participants in the ongoing organisational transformation.

2.2.2.4 Weakness of transformational leadership models

While transformational leadership is widely acknowledged for its role in fostering a positive climate for effective teaching and learning in schools, it is, however, faced with certain challenges. For example, Al Kindy et al. (2016) discovered that the scarcity of resources and economic constraints, especially in developing countries such as South Africa, often hampers the ability of transformational principals to leverage available resources to influence teachers and followers for effective performance. These challenges, rooted in contextual factors and day-to-day tasks, may account for the limitations of transformational theories. Moreover, while there is substantial empirical evidence of the impact on followers' commitment, Angell (2017) noted a lack of empirical studies, demonstrating the direct connection between transformational leadership and effective teaching and learning in schools. These findings shed light on the inherent weaknesses of transformational leadership theories and the challenges faced by school leaders in the selected schools.

Notwithstanding the numerous shortcomings of transformational leadership, it has gained increased approval and popularity in recent times (Alqatawenh, 2018). Odumeru and Ogbonna (2013) found that school principals in various contexts considered transformational leaders to be more efficient, effective, progressive, and sensitive to interrelationships than other leadership styles. Similarly, Gözükarar and Şimşek (2015) discovered that transformational leadership was positively associated with various positive educational outcomes, such as reduced teacher absenteeism, improved learner and school performance, increased teacher and staff satisfaction, greater innovation and creativity, improved teacher commitment, and overall well-being. This suggests the need for a deliberate effort to equip school leaders with the skills and behaviours of transformational leadership to cultivate a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning in schools.

The present study draws on instructional leadership and transformational leadership to establish a methodology and research design relevant to its objectives. These two theoretical frameworks also guided the selection of pertinent literature for this study. In the following chapter, the research will review the relevant literature that addresses the research questions at hand.

2.2.2.5 Transactional Leadership Theory

Transactional leadership is a management style that motivates employees through a system of rewards and punishments (Skopak & Hadzaihmetovic, 2022). Akpa et al. (2022) clarify that clear expectations and consequences can enhance efficiency and productivity. This approach positively influences employees, motivating them to fulfill their roles in exchange for incentives and reducing workplace uncertainty (Akpa et al., 2022). Klein (2023) characterizes transactional leadership by its focus on routine tasks and goal achievement through rewards and punishments. Leaders set clear guidelines and use contingent incentives to motivate employees (Klein, 2023). Primarily, the goal is to ensure employee commitment and timely task completion rather than inspiring creativity.

According to Skopak and Hadzaihmetovic (2022), by setting clear expectations and offering rewards, transactional leadership can boost productivity and efficiency. However, overreliance on external motivation can limit creativity, decrease morale, and hinder individual development, potentially prioritizing short-term goals over long-term objectives. Santosa, Nuryakin, and Wahyuningsih (2023) found increasing interest in using transactional leadership to improve commitment and organizational outcomes. This leadership style can enhance employee performance and commitment by focusing on achieving organizational goals through reward systems (Akpa et al., 2022). This study further argue that, while transactional leadership leaders provides increased productivity and efficiency, its weaknesses in promoting innovation and long term development of employees require a blend of different leadership approaches to improve organisational contexts.

Research has identified transactional leadership as a management style focused on achieving organizational objectives through a system of incentives and punishments (Akpa, Olawore, Adasanya & James, 2022). Klein (2023) found that transactional leadership can positively influence employee behavior, contributing to increased commitment and productivity. Mabasa (2022) claimed that transactional leadership enhances employee performance and commitment by establishing clear reward systems. By linking incentives to specific tasks, employees are motivated to improve performance (Mabasa, 2022). Akpa et al. (2022) noted that employees are motivated to fulfill their responsibilities in exchange for rewards, reducing workplace uncertainty. Thus, transactional leadership can be effective in achieving short-term goals like increased profits and production. However, the study cautioned that a focus on extrinsic motivation could result in superficial leader-follower relationships (Akpa et al., 2022).

A notable weakness of transactional leadership is its limited focus on creativity and change. Primarily emphasizing existing procedures rather than inspiring innovation (Klein, 2023), it may hinder adaptability. While effective in achieving goals, Santosa et al. (2023) suggest further exploration of this leadership style. Overreliance on incentives can diminish employee motivation (Mabasa, 2022), and a passive leadership approach can negatively impact performance and morale (Mabaso, 2022). Chpkirui, Kitonga, and Peten (2023) argue that while transactional leadership can create structure, it may also stifle innovation. To address these limitations, combining instructional and transformational leadership approaches can enhance the effectiveness of transactional leadership in educational settings.

2.3 Legislative frameworks

This section of the chapter provides a review of school legislative and leadership policies that affect the instructional role of the school leader in teaching and learning. The reviewed policies encompass those that have an impact on the school leader's role in teaching and learning. These policies include the National Curriculum Statement, the National Education Policy, the policy for South African Schools Principals, SASA, and the Norms and Standards for Educators.

2.3.1 National Curriculum Statement

According to the NCS, the primary goal of the South African school curriculum is to impart the knowledge, skills, and values that are essential for learning in South African schools (Bush & Glover, 2016). Though this policy clearly outlines what should be taught and the content of learning, it however also expects school leaders to comprehend and effectively implement it. Therefore, through the NCS and the successful execution of this policy, learners can acquire and apply the relevant knowledge and skills in a manner that can have a significant impact on their lives. The implementation of this curriculum is designed to foster effective teaching and learning in schools, facilitating the acquisition of knowledge within the local context, while also preparing learners to engage with global perspectives (Mestry, 2017).

2.3.2 National Education Policy

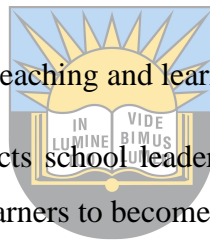
The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 envisions the establishment of a school environment that effectively supports teaching and learning. This policy aims at empowering school leaders to implement it for the personal development of each learner, with the added goal of influencing the moral, social, cultural, political, and economic development of learners

so that they can make meaningful contributions to nation-building. Consequently, the behaviour and values of learners are expected to be shaped in a way that promotes the advancement of democracy, human rights, and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, section 4(a)(ii), among its various objectives, seeks to achieve the following:

- Ensure that every child in South Africa is protected against unfair discrimination by school leaders and teachers on any grounds.
- Guarantee access to basic education and equal educational opportunities for every South African child.
- Require parents to ensure that their wards and children are treated with respect when it comes to accessing education.
- Promote equitable education opportunities and address past inequalities in education provision.
- Foster a culture of respect for teaching and learning within educational institutions.

In essence, this policy not only expects school leaders and teachers to be effective in their instructional roles but also to guide learners to become valuable contributors to society.



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2.3.3 Policy on the South African standard for principalship

The *Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship* (DBE, 2015) expects school principals to play a crucial role in creating a safe, nurturing, and supportive learning environment that promotes effective teaching and learning. Accordingly, school principals are anticipated to establish a positive climate that encourages high levels of performance and commitment from both teachers and learners. This DBE policy emphasises the importance of having a clear and mutually agreed-upon set of expectations for South African teachers and aspiring leaders who are entrusted to lead and manage schools. Furthermore, the policy envisions that school leaders will be capable of successfully implementing and managing the curriculum in schools to achieve positive outcomes. It also aims at promoting and supporting visible growth and improvement in teaching and learning. As a result, the policy outlines seven distinct and interdependent areas that constitute the core responsibilities of school principals in the context of education in South Africa. Therefore, leading and learning in schools should focus on the following key areas:

- Shaping the direction and development of the school.
- Managing quality and ensuring accountability.
- Developing and empowering oneself and others.
- Managing the school as an organisation.
- Collaborating with and working for the community.
- Managing human resources (staff) within the school.
- Managing and developing extracurricular activities.

These key interdependent areas are designed to ensure that school leaders are equipped to meet the increasing demand for credible support for teaching and learning and to provide quality education as a top priority.

2.3.4 South African Schools Act

SASA (1996) establishes a common framework for organising, governing, funding, and managing schools. As per this policy, school leaders and heads of the department are required to maintain a record of learner attendance and exemptions from attendance at any given time. This act also mandates that school principals and other educational officials provide all necessary support to the SGB to enhance the efficient operation of schools. Some of the key functions assigned to the SGB include:

- Promoting the best interests of the school and striving to ensure its development by delivering quality education to all learners.
- Formulating a constitution that governs interactions and leadership within the school.
- Developing a mission statement that serves as the guiding vision for the school.
- Establishing a code of conduct for learners at the school.
- Providing support to the principal, teachers, and other staff members in the performance of their professional roles.

The overarching objective of this policy is to ensure that school leaders and the SGB collaborate to facilitate sustainable school administration and the creation of an educational environment that fosters high-quality teaching and learning. It remains unclear how the school leaders in the selected schools being studied implemented all of the aforementioned policies.

2.3.5 Norms and standards for educators

The National Education Policy Act: Norms and Standards for Educators 27 of 1996 established the norms and standards for teachers in South African schools. This policy takes into account South Africa's history, which was characterised by inequality and segregation. With the advent of democracy, this policy places a significant responsibility on school leaders and teachers to address the social imbalances of the past. This is achieved by promoting a higher quality of education for all learners and laying a strong foundation for developing the inherent qualities of each learner. Hence, the policy expects school leaders to advance quality education through improved teaching and learning.

This policy clearly delineates seven critical roles of teachers that play an integral part in promoting teaching and learning in schools. These seven roles encompass the following:

- Learning mediator.
- Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials.
- Leader, administrator, and manager.
- Scholar, researcher, and lifelong learner.
- Community, citizenship, and pastoral role.
- Assessor.
- Learning area, subject, discipline, and phase specialist.



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These descriptions of the seven roles not only serve as indicators of the competence of the teacher but also provide appropriate guidelines for initial teaching and qualified specialist.

2.4 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the theoretical foundations that underpin the study, along with the legislative frameworks governing the role of school leadership in enhancing teaching and learning in schools. By examining these theoretical and legislative frameworks, it becomes evident how crucial instructional leaders are in the realm of teaching. This chapter delved into instructional and transformational leadership theories and explored why they are regarded as effective leadership approaches when it comes to teaching and learning. The chapter also outlined the legislative landscape of leadership in South Africa, emphasising the key role of

school leadership, its impact on teaching and learning, and the challenges they face in effectively managing schools.

The following chapter, the literature review, provides an in-depth examination of relevant and interconnected literature on the role of school leadership and its influence on teaching and learning in schools. This comprehensive review is aimed at substantiating the rationale for this study.



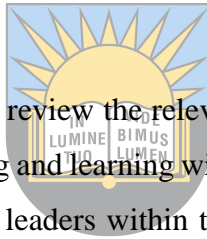
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Chapter 3

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The role of school leadership in enhancing teaching and learning in schools provides the basis this literature review. As such providing a comprehensive understanding of the different aspects of the role of school leadership in teaching and learning in schools is considered essential. The study explored the role of leadership in schools, the relationships between leadership and teaching and learning, the different leadership styles used to influence teaching and learning, the challenges that affect school leadership as well as leadership frameworks used to address teaching and learning challenges. An in-depth understanding of these concepts contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the role of school leadership in enhancing teaching and learning in schools.



This chapter aims to comprehensively review the relevant and related literature regarding the impact of school leadership on teaching and learning within schools. The main aim of the study was to investigate the roles of school leaders within the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality and how they contribute to the quality of teaching and learning in a rural context. Therefore, this chapter reviews the literature concerning the historical development of school leadership in South Africa, the various types of school leadership implemented in educational institutions, the significance of school leaders, and the challenges they face. Given this below are some of the key issues and relevant literatures that frame this study and collectively underscore the the role and challenges of school leadership in improving teaching and learning:

- Role of School Leadership, Teaching and Learning (Ahmad & Ghavifekr, 2015)
- The different types of leadership styles used in schools to improve teaching and learning (Abu-Hussain, 2014).
- The role of leadership in teaching and learning in schools (Allen W. E., 2018)
- The challenges that school leaders encounter in influencing teaching and learning in their schools (Bass, 1985)

- Leadership framework can be used to improve teaching and learning in schools (Leithwood, Department-head leadership for school improvement, 2016)
- The conceptual review of related literature to the study was carried out in accordance to the four research questions stated in chapter one (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

The key areas and literature reviewed in this chapter highlight the crucial role of school leadership in enhancing teaching and learning in schools. By examining the historical context, different leadership styles, and the challenges that impact school leadership roles, this study aims to contribute to the conceptualization and understanding of the role of school leaders and their contribution to improved teaching and learning.

3.2 The role of school leaders in improving teaching and learning

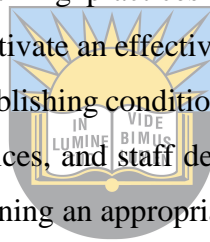
Various scholars and educational practitioners have highlighted the importance of school leadership from various perspectives and contexts. In their research on the effects of school leadership, Al-Mahdy et al. (2018) discovered that the enhancement of school and learner achievement can be attributed to a positive school climate and culture. The study further asserted that school leadership plays a vital role in shaping the attitudes, commitment, and job satisfaction of teachers and staff, ultimately resulting in improved learner and school performance. This finding aligns with the study by Sarros et al. (2008), who argued that school leadership influences educational outcomes by affecting the school climate and fostering the capacity for change.

To understand how school leadership affects the climate, Hompashe (2018) identified three distinct dimensions through which school leadership promotes a positive teaching and learning environment in schools. First, school leaders define the vision and mission of the school, which encompasses two tasks: delineating and communicating the objectives of the school. The second dimension involves the management of instructional activities, which consists of three functions: supervising and evaluating teaching and learning, coordinating the school curriculum, and monitoring learner progress. Lastly, the third dimension focuses on fostering a conducive climate for teaching and learning, encompassing the protection of teaching and learning time and the provision of incentives to teachers and learners. These dimensions of promoting a positive school climate are significant as they reveal the role of leadership in enhancing teaching and learning in schools.

For school leaders to be able to effectively improve teaching and learning, these findings suggest the need for school leaders to prioritise creating a supportive and inclusive school environment, foster a commitment towards a common goal and recognise the efforts of teachers and learners. These findings seem to align with prior literature findings which highlight the pivotal role of school leader in teaching and learning. Focusing on the development of school leaders can help leaders to create a conducive climate that supports teaching and learning

3.2.1 School leadership and school culture

Research on school leadership highlights the critical role that principals play in promoting the culture of teaching and learning in schools. Hompashe's (2018) findings revealed how school leaders foster a positive culture of teaching, learning, and accountability by providing empowerment and support to both teachers and learners. Millar (2015) emphasised that the improvement of the teaching and learning culture primarily hinges on enhancing leadership, implementing good teaching and learning practices within schools. Miller (2015) further asserted that school leadership can cultivate an effective culture that translates into success for both the school and its learners by establishing conditions such as rigorous academic standards, enhanced teaching and learning practices, and staff development. These findings are critical, especially as they show leaders combining an appropriate school culture and improved human relations to induce a positive school environment.



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On the contrary, Gençer and Samur (2016) discovered that the extent to which school culture is affected depends on factors such as the changing policy context and the evolving demography of learners and teachers. These factors, as identified in the study, have significant implications for the teaching and learning culture of the school, which can, in turn, influence the quality of teaching and learning in schools. In contrast, Mestry (2017) disagreed with the notion that school culture has a direct impact on school and learner achievement. He argued that school and learner achievement is influenced more by leadership practices, such as providing direction, promoting staff development, and managing instructional activities, rather than school culture. Hence, Naidoo (2019) argued that promoting a culture of teaching and learning, as well as accountability, is a challenging task that requires school leaders to earn the trust and support of teachers, learners, and other staff members.

However, Al-Mahdy et al. (2018) considered several possible ways of creating a positive school culture. They claimed that strict adherence to the code of conduct of the school by

teachers and staff, monitoring the commitment of teachers and staff, and supporting the initiatives and innovative practices of the DBE significantly contribute to the development of a positive school culture. This, in turn, leads to positive changes in school outcomes and learner achievement.

To promote an improved teaching and learning culture in schools and improve instructional outcomes, school leadership need to focus on clear communication, empowerment, professional development, recognition and partnership. The findings highlight the crucial role that leaders in schools play in influencing the teaching and learning culture in the school. By employing effective strategies, leaders can inspire a conducive environment that enhances teaching and learning in schools.

3.2.2 School leadership and learner achievement

A review of scholarly literature clearly demonstrates a positive relationship between effective leadership and learner achievement. For instance, Sarros et al. (2008) discovered that transformational school leadership behaviours have a motivating effect on teachers and learners, resulting in enhanced performance. This motivation arises from the leader's ability to inspire both teachers and learners. The study further argued that due to the positive behaviours exhibited by transformational school leaders, teachers and learners feel engaged, satisfied, and personally recognised in their work. According to Naidoo (2019), self-managing schools that entrust more responsibility, authority, and accountability to school leaders for decision-making within a defined framework of policies and goals not only achieve sound educational outcomes but also high levels of learner achievement. In contrast, Mestry (2017) found that school leaders lacking the necessary skills and expertise struggle to effectively lead their schools, which adversely affects learner achievement.

However, Seobi and Wood (2016) provided a different perspective by pointing out that poor learner achievement can be attributed to various factors beyond the role of school leaders. The authors argued that factors such as socio-economic challenges, inadequate initial teacher training and development, and a lack of school infrastructure all contribute to poor learner performance. Namutebi (2019), on the other hand, disagreed with this view, highlighting that the poor performance of learners is not necessarily linked to these external factors, but rather to the effectiveness of the school leader. Namutebi (2019) found that regardless of the prevailing conditions in the schools, leaders who practice instructional leadership by defining

the mission of the school were able to effectively manage the instructional programmes of the school, thus fostering a positive teaching environment. The study attributed the high learner achievement to the leader's ability to promote such a conducive teaching climate. Therefore, the significance of the school leader cannot be underestimated.

Based on these findings, enhancing learner achievement requires school leaders to focus on implementing effective leadership practices, creating a supportive school environment and mitigating contextual factors that influence teaching and learning outcomes. These findings highlight the critical role of school leaders in influencing improved learning experiences and learner achievement. By emphasising effective leadership strategies, creating a conducive climate and addressing specific school challenges, school leaders can support teachers and learners to be committed.

3.2.3 School leadership and teacher commitment

The literature consistently demonstrates that effective school leaders can significantly enhance the commitment of teachers and staff in fulfilling their roles (Naidoo, 2019). Cheng and Szeto (2016) revealed that most teachers attributed their commitment to school leaders who actively contributed to their professional development by providing quality support and facilitation. The study emphasised that when school leaders prioritise the professional growth of their teachers, it does not only foster a strong sense of dedication to their responsibilities but also encourages loyalty to the school. This understanding of how leaders influence teacher commitment is central to the enhancement of teaching and learning within the school. For example, Kuriloff et al. (2019) found in their research that teachers who displayed high levels of commitment were more inclined to promote and support cohesive teaching and learning communities within their schools.

Ross and Gray (2016) contended that while principals may not have a direct effect on teaching, learning, and learner achievement, they significantly contribute to learner success through teacher commitment and their beliefs about collective efforts. This study suggests that school leaders, by promoting the professional development of their teachers, play a crucial role in enhancing school outcomes and learner achievement. According to Madanchian et al. (2016), teachers become more committed and experience less work-related stress when a conducive work environment is established. The creation of a favourable school climate is vital, as it sheds light on ways to enhance teacher performance and improve learner achievement. However,

Arokiasamy et al. (2016) argued that to effectively influence teachers to be genuinely committed and engaged in teaching and learning, leaders must first address teachers' self-worth needs and interests. Addressing teachers' concerns is essential because meaningful commitment from teachers can be challenging to achieve without considering their needs.

Enhancing teacher commitment and creating a conducive school environment requires school leaders to focus on professional development and providing supportive and inclusive school and classroom space. This assists leaders in addressing the instructional needs of both teachers and learners. This, therefore, shows the crucial role of school leadership in fostering the commitment of teachers to the achievement of learners. Supporting teachers with the necessary training helps create an improved teaching and learning environment and address challenges that affect teaching and learning.

3.2.4 Influence of school leaders on school leadership

School leaders are recognised as integral figures in school administration. A review of research on school leadership reveals that, in addition to the core educational activities of teaching and learning, principals play a crucial role in the overall management and administration of the school (Arshed & Danson, 2015). Manaseh (2016) identified several responsibilities of school principals, including the vital task of interpreting and implementing policies that influence school administration. This role is essential for efficient management and the uninterrupted execution of the instructional programme.

The effective contributions of school leaders in school leadership and administration ensure the optimal utilisation of resources, efficient time management, and an improved environment for teaching and learning. This is substantiated by Turkoglu and Cansoy (2018), who have demonstrated how school leaders exhibit a strong commitment to efficiently manage instructional time and facilitate effective teaching and learning in the classroom. In this regard, principals make a deliberate effort to ensure the prudent use of the available resources of the school and manage time effectively. Namutebi (2019) also concurred by illustrating how principals plan the overall programme of the school, oversee instructional planning, and exercise control over resource utilisation. As a result, it seems like much attention and resource allocation are directed to areas where they are most needed to achieve specific objectives. Furthermore, the role of school leaders seems to be critical in enhancing teaching and learning through competently managing the resources, teaching, and learning time, and ensuring that

policies are effectively implemented. In the process, they can create a positive environment for student success. These findings show how effective school leadership is vital for creating a supportive teaching and learning environment for improved teaching and learning. By managing teaching and learning resources, time and policies effectively, school leaders can contribute to general educational outcomes and effective teaching and learning outcomes.

3.3 School leadership role

The role of school leadership is integral to the framework of any educational institution. In light of the nationwide educational reforms, Hou and Zhang (2019) stressed the importance of school leaders as key variables that influence the effectiveness and functioning of a school. This highlights the crucial need for competent and qualified school leaders in schools. In 2016, the DBE recognised the role of leadership within schools, particularly as it has evolved to adapt to changing circumstances in South Africa. These transformations, as highlighted by Naidoo (2019), were conceived to address the problem of underperformance in South African schools. A DBE study conducted in 2016 uncovered that shifts in policy context and the dynamic demographic makeup of teachers and learners have significant repercussions for school leadership. The study also emphasised that as school culture has become increasingly associated with sociability and solidarity, school leaders are tasked with effectively managing these complexities to enhance the quality of education provided. While these findings show the importance of the role of school leaders, they however do not explain how school leaders can influence the overall success and improve teaching and learning in schools.

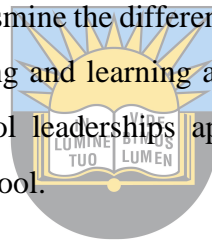
In South Africa, the SGB bears the responsibility for managing and improving school achievement (DBE, 2008). The SGB collaborates with the school principal, teachers, and other stakeholders to fulfil this role (Bush & Glover, 2016). According to SASA, 1996, the SGB is constitutionally mandated to oversee the day-to-day management and administration of the school (DBE, 2015). To gain a better understanding of the role of the SGB as the ultimate school leader in South Africa, SASA meticulously outlines the components of the SGB membership (Bush & Glover, 2016). This membership includes elected members, the principal in their official capacity, and a limited number of co-opted members. From these studies it appears as if the SGB, as stakeholders, are expected to fulfil a critical role in ensuring that the school operates effectively. One of these roles is maintaining and enhancing teaching and learning, as well as improving educational outcomes. However, because most of the SGB members are not properly trained and inducted into their position, they are not able to play their

role effectively Msila (2015). Thus, a comprehensive understanding of school leadership necessitates an examination of the various leadership styles employed in educational institutions.

The findings of this review of how school leaders influence teaching and learning are critical to understanding the effectiveness of school leaders' instructional role. While SGBs play an instrumental role in supervising and managing the school, their effectiveness depends on how they are able to involve others and provide training for SGB members. Effective helps them to contribute meaningfully to enhancing teaching and learning.

3.4 Different school leadership styles used to improve teaching and learning in schools

In exploring the different types of school leadership, it has become obvious that different leadership styles approaches are used to enhance teaching and learning within the school context. This section of the stexaminesmine the different types of school leadership approaches that are employed to improve teaching and learning and student achievements. Through the examination of these types of school leaderships approaches leadership practices can be adjusted to the needs of t needs of school.



3.4.1 Instructional leadership style

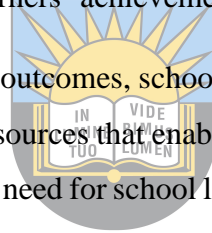
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Instructional leadership holds a paramount role in school improvement, a particularly crucial aspect in South Africa, where the current educational system necessitates school leaders who can continually develop and empower their staff in alignment with the specific needs of the school. It is commonly observed that the effective delivery and completion of teaching and learning activities are impeded by limited competence and training among teachers and learners (Nurdianti & Nurdin, 2019). In their study, Nurdianti and Nurdin noted that achieving quality education in schools has become increasingly challenging without robust instructional leadership to provide guidance. Their research emphasised that instructional leadership is indispensable for school development as it endeavours to cultivate a conducive environment that fosters improved performance and achievement. In spite of this, it is important to take note that promoting effective instructional leadership could face some challenges when there is scarcity of resources in schools. This may especially inhibit the full potential of leaders in such rural contexts. Moreover, considering that the primary focus of leaders involves not just

improving academic standards but also fostering the advancement of teaching and learning, which plays a pivotal role in enhancing overall educational quality.

Hompashe's (2018) multivariate analysis unveiled the significance of instructional leadership's understanding of the curricular goals of the school and the extent to which teachers effectively implement the curriculum. These factors were found to have a substantial impact on learners' achievement and performance. Similarly, Francis et al. (2015) argued that the ability of instructional leaders to employ both direct and indirect teaching methods is highly desirable and beneficial for learner progress. These leaders are not just responsible for the academic performance of the learners; they also hold the responsibility for enhancing teaching and learning through the effective use of instructional activities, methods, and strategies. This expectation of school principals to be instructional leaders serves as a driving force for the school, teachers, and learners to strive for high performance and achievement. Moreover, the findings by both Hompashe (2018) and Francis et al. (2015) highlighted the crucial role of instructional leadership in shaping learners' achievement and progress.

To improve the quality of educational outcomes, school leaders should capacitate instructional leadership skills, competencies and resources that enable them to support teachers and learners in instruction. The study maintains the need for school leaders to be given guidance and support to improve learning outcomes.



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3.4.2 Transformational leadership style

Transformational leadership is described as leadership that inspires followers to reach their full potential and perform effectively according to the organisational requirements of the school (Jiang et al., 2017). According to Jiang et al. (2017), the role of transformational leaders in schools is critical because they emphasise the vision and mission of the school. Furthermore, most scholars consider their role in the school as impactful, as they focus on making the necessary changes needed in the school. Khumalo (2019a), in support of the study by Jiang et al. (2017), also discovered in his research that transformational leadership plays an instrumental role in contributing to sustainable commitment among teachers and learners. However, Ebot-Ashu et al. (2022), in their findings, discovered that adopting various appropriate leadership styles assists leaders, schools, and the school system in developing a clear vision and effective lines of communication. The ability of the leader to have a clear

vision and engagement in place allows leaders to influence the behaviour of teachers and learners.

Khumalo (2019a) revealed that five identified components make the role of transformational leadership more significant than other leadership styles, namely shared vision, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, and participation in decision-making. Therefore, in justifying the role that transformational leadership plays in schools, Khumalo (2019b) argued that schools, as educational institutions, play a crucial role in promoting sustainable development. As such, without the commitment of transformational leaders, it will be impossible to achieve such an objective. Furthermore, the study opined that through committed transformational leaders, the future success of learners is guaranteed because these leaders create a strong foundation for teaching and learning. Despite conflicting findings on the impact of leadership styles on school performance, most current literature shows a positive connection between transformational leadership activities and the productivity of teachers and learners.

Because the transformational leadership style contributes to the school environment's sustainability, performance and improvement, school leaders should focus on providing a shared vision, motivation, commitment and involvement in decision-making. By providing inspiration and motivation to teachers and learners, transformation leaders are able to improve the quality of education through improved school environments as well as drive learner achievement.



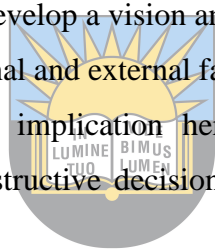
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3.4.3 Participative leadership style

Research indicates that participative decision-making in schools has been found to encourage teachers' commitment to the school (Meintjes, 2018). Sagnak (2016) claimed that the participative leadership role involves several conceptualisations, which encompass joint decision-making and the delegation of responsibilities. Participative leadership, as described by Buthelezi (2016), is a process in which subordinates share a degree of decision-making authority with their principals. According to these studies, it seems teachers take the initiative to involve employees in decision-making when deemed appropriate. On the other hand, Bell and Mjoli (2018) defined participative leadership style as a process of reaching a collective decision or influencing decision-making by both the principal and teachers in the school. This shows that this style of leadership generally views teachers as critical human and knowledge resources who are at the core of the school as an institution. To ensure cohesion in the school,

the participative school principal focuses on interpersonal relationships and socialisation. As a result, teachers are empowered and committed to the objectives of the school (Bell & Mjoli, 2018).

The process of participative leadership takes place when the leader consciously involves employees and transfers the necessary authority, responsibility, and accountability for the decisions they make (Buthelezi, 2016). Buthelezi argued that participative leadership does not mean that school principals completely relinquish their responsibility and authority over the school to their subordinates. Instead, they monitor and control the authority given to other teachers to act. In contrast, Meintjes (2018) found that lower participation of teachers in decision-making has a negative impact on teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the study found that joint decision-making between the leader and teachers is linked to innovation, creativity, and collaboration, as the teachers and leaders together share common knowledge and understanding that leads to new processes and ideas. However, Ashu (2020) believed that leaders need to develop a vision and strategy that influences teachers and other stakeholders regarding the internal and external factors that promote collective decision-making in the school system. The implication here is that school leaders should be knowledgeable enough to make constructive decisions and not rely solely on teachers for decision-making.



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While there have not been many empirical studies on participative leadership in the education sector, researchers concur that employing participative leadership in schools is effective, not only for team situations but also for enhancing socialisation in the school environment (Ali et al., 2018; Al Kindy et al., 2017). This is crucial because shared decision-making in schools, involving both the principal as a leader and the staff, has the potential to enhance school effectiveness. This is primarily because it facilitates the acceptance and implementation of decisions by everyone. Using participative leadership does not only improve collaboration and teamwork in schools, but also deepens interaction as well as shared decision-making among teachers and leaders. As a result, this significantly contributes to the acceptance of decision-making and improvement of teaching and learning.

School leaders should use participative leadership to encourage team work, collaboration, shared decision making and open interaction between them, teachers, learners and other stakeholders. This will help leaders to improve the performance of schools. These findings show the significant role of participatory leadership in schools. By involving stakeholders in

decision-making, teachers, learners, and other school stakeholders develop a sense of ownership and teamwork.

3.4.4 Democratic School Leadership Style

Most educational institutions use a democratic leadership style as a strategy to promote active involvement and representation in schools. Meintjes (2018) defined democratic leadership style as individuals in the school who make a conscious effort to build and direct their efforts towards creating opportunities for individuals to experience participation and representation in the school. Democratic leadership is currently receiving significant attention because research shows that when combined with other leadership styles in schools, it improves commitment from subordinates (Moorosi & Bantwini, 2016). In contrast to the autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership involves subordinates in discussions about educational prospects and consultations on emerging and unforeseen challenges in the school (Dyczkowska & Dyczkowski, 2018). Engaging subordinates in decision-making appears to enhance teachers' commitment and positively affect students' achievements. However, it is critical to measure positive results achieved as a result of implementing democratic leadership to the vision and objectives of the school.



Buthelezi (2016) argued that democratic practices in schools have become critical for ensuring social justice and preventing the abuse of power in South Africa. Through democratic practices in the school, flexibility and creativity can be promoted by the deliberate decentralisation of authority. This can be achieved through a continuous process of shifting responsibility from the leader to other teachers in the school. Meintjes (2018) found the role of democratic leadership to be critical in school development because it is dedicated to creating an environment that promotes democracy. Although there have been parallels and dichotomies drawn between democratic leadership and other leadership styles due to their collaborative nature, democratic leadership is more inclusive than the rest of the school leadership styles. Furthermore, the environment created by school leaders make teachers more responsive and committed to the core mission of the school. This is in line with the findings of Cruickshank (2017) which revealed that democratic practices of leaders in schools encourage social justice, prevent abuse and promote participation of decision among teachers and other stakeholders. This helps in the achievement of learning outcomes and improves the learning experiences of learners.

To create an effective school environment, school leaders should practice democratic leadership to encourage maximum participation, collaboration, and shared decision-making by all stakeholders. The study findings emphasise the need for school leaders to adopt a democratic leadership style. This approach helps teachers and other actors make critical decisions to promote inclusive education.

3.4.5 Supportive leadership style

Supportive leadership, as described by Wachira et al. (2017), involves leaders being approachable and friendly, focusing on the well-being of their followers, and adopting supportive behaviours to create a congenial work environment. Supportive leadership is considered as one of the primary components used to foster sustainable professional communities in schools (Nkengbeza & Shava, 2016). These communities seem to be instrumental as they support and drive reforms within the school environment. In the context of schooling, supportive leaders seem to rely more on the presence of appropriate policies to facilitate school development.

Research has shown that the supportive behaviour of the leader contributes to improved performance and productivity from followers, as well as improved effectiveness (Wachira et al., 2017). This study suggests that support from the leader is essential for a school to function well. This should be the key to any organisation. On the other hand, Botha (2016) agreed that successful school leaders make use of various organisational structures and systems, including planning processes, setting targets, communication, and monitoring. While the role of monitoring is critical, as outlined by these authors, it seems that other measures need to be put in place to improve the systems and structures of the school. Therefore, it is assumed that whatever systems are put in place by school leaders in the selected schools they are being monitored. This aspect is a key area of this study that revolved around examining the efficacy of leadership in monitoring and evaluating the school structures and policies implemented to ensure improved teaching and learning.

Furthermore, Paramboor et al. (2015) found in their study that providing support for school leaders contributed to their job satisfaction and the perceived motivation received from educational authorities and external stakeholders. These findings indicated the need for school education authorities to continue to support and empower school leaders. Providing the needed support to leaders, along with implementing appropriate policies, combined with learning,

teaching, and proper assessment systems, contribute to quality education and outcomes in the school.

Some scholars argued about the need for leaders to provide essential support to teachers and learners. Findings from Wilson (2016) revealed that supportive leaders, apart from engaging teachers in a democratic manner, also share power, authority, and make joint decisions. This was found significant because supportive leadership is linked to a positive work environment, quality performance, organisational cohesion, and employee job satisfaction, as argued by Nkengbeza and Shava (2016). In comparison, Wilson (2016) noted that supportive leaders enhance school conditions and provide resources for teacher support and professional development. These findings contrast with the findings of Wachira et al. (2017) that asserted that supportive leadership, when combined with other types of leadership, improves educational outcomes and performance. This is important because it reduces employee stress and burnout, and decreases staff turnover in the school (Wachira et al., 2017). This shows how supportive leadership can create a positive school environment as well as improving the achievement of educational outcomes.

These findings reveal the pivotal role of a supportive leadership style in building a positive school environment to support teaching and learning. By supporting teachers and learners, supportive leaders foster collaboration and shared decision-making. Additionally, this role of supportive leadership helps to create a conducive workplace that mitigates the challenges that affect teaching and learning. These findings demonstrate that this leadership approach not only influences the school culture but also impacts learning outcomes.

3.4.6 Authoritative leadership style

According to Yalçinkaya et al. (2021), autocratic leadership is characterised by leaders who derive their power and authority from established laws. In the context of schooling, autocratic leadership refers to a lack of principal involvement and collaboration in joint decision-making, leaving little room for input from the staff (Moorosi & Bantwini, 2016). Autocratic school leaders, as highlighted in Wangomo's (2021) study, closely monitor teachers, and ensure that tasks and responsibilities are completed within specified timelines. This shows how leaders typically make decisions with limited or no input from their staff and teachers. To exercise their power and authority, school leaders seem to closely monitor performance, encourage competition among their followers, and use a system of rewards and consequences to manage

success and address poor performance (Yalçinkaya et al., 2021). Dyczkowska and Dyczkowski (2018), however, argued that autocratic leaders provide their followers with clear and precise instructions about their expectations. Critical examination of these findings show that this approach ensures effective task performance, problem-solving, and the meeting of targets and deadlines, particularly during critical periods.

In contrast, Moorosi and Bantwini (2016) observed that the autocratic leadership prevailing among school principals, is largely due to the bureaucratic nature of South African schools. Consequently, it is not surprising that many school principals lack complete autonomy in managing and administering their schools. While autocratic leadership is typically considered the least recommended style for school leaders because it tends to be avoidant, Yalçinkaya et al. (2021) have identified task orientation as a notable characteristic of this leadership style. However, Moorosi and Bantwini (2016) argued that autocratic leadership in schools can be problematic as it discourages school principals from collaborating with their staff in making collective decisions.

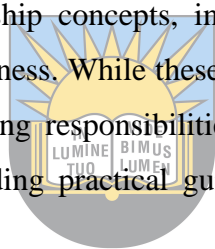


As a result of difficulties in using autocratic leadership, this study asserts that leadership styles that fail to promote participation within schools undermine policies that require principals to work collaboratively with all education stakeholders. In line with this, Yalçinkaya et al. (2021) found that autocratic leaders may sometimes allow group members to work independently on many tasks, focusing on their work without addressing their needs and well-being. However, it is noted that resistance can occur because decisions made by autocratic leaders are imposed on employees without discussion or acknowledgement. This lack of collaboration can lead to reduced cooperation among teams led by autocratic leaders compared to other leadership styles. While the autocratic leadership is not a preferred leadership style, it is sometimes instrumental to influence teachers and students to be committed to teaching and learning because of the possible consequences.

Whilst authoritarian leadership style may have their relevance in the context of teaching and learning in school, it is important school leaders implement them in conjunction with other leadership styles in order to significantly benefit from them. These findings on autocratic leadership style reveal leadership constraints when they are used in isolation, as they discourage participation, prevent collaboration, and create a hostile work environment. As a result, it is mostly effective when used with another leadership style that encourages participation and collaboration.

3.4.7 Distributing leadership theory

Different studies and scholars have offered diverse conceptualisations of democratic leadership style. Sibanda (2017) defined it as multiple sources providing direction and guidance based on the expertise within an organisation, unified through a shared culture (Nkengbeza & Shava, 2016). These studies do not only show the effective direction that leaders provide, but also show the significance of collaboration and making decisions that are culturally aligned for success. In contrast, Nkengbeza and Shava (2016) described democratic leadership style in schools as a scenario in which schools decentralise the principal's responsibilities. In this model, the leader delegates responsibilities to groups or individuals within the school, and they share tasks with shared responsibility as a community of leaders. Botha (2016) argued that the understanding of democratic leadership is not just a blueprint for practice but a framework that helps teachers focus on diagnostic responsibilities and guides stakeholders in improving school practices and outcomes. Conversely, Shava and Tlou (2018) noted that democratic leadership style can overlap with other leadership concepts, including shared leadership, making it challenging to define due to its vagueness. While these findings emphasise the importance of democratic leadership and role sharing responsibilities to subordinates, Shave and Tlou's study, however, falls short in providing practical guidance on the implementation of this leadership style.



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Sibanda (2017) further posited that democratic leadership is rooted in the belief that all teachers can and should be able to lead and contribute to leadership. He conceptualised democratic leadership styles as a form of parallel leadership in which teacher leaders collaborate with principal leaders in distinct, yet complementary ways aimed at a common goal. In this model, democratic leadership styles involves social interactions among leaders as they share their perspectives on how to lead. As such, all stakeholders in this model are seen to play crucial roles within a decentralised framework of school-based leadership (Botha, 2016). On the other hand, Gómez-Hurtado et al. (2020) asserted that successful schools require the involvement of various leaders in formal and informal positions with significant responsibilities. They argued that the democratic leadership role in school organisations extends beyond task distribution to promote collaboration. This perspective aligns with Botha's (2016) assertion that democratic leadership styles is primarily used to improve practices and provide a framework for design and diagnosis. However, their study does not clarify how democratic leadership styles can be improved when many people are involved. This shows how democratic leadership styles

empowers different actors to contribute to teaching and learning, as well as fostering a collaborative environment which is supportive of teaching and learning.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of school leadership, schools should adopt democratic leadership styles practices. This will strengthen the role of teachers and other stakeholders in decision-making processes and improve teaching and learning. The findings reveal that distributive leadership theory can create a collaborative and supportive school environment. Distributive leaders can effectively improve school administration and management, and foster a positive learning culture.

3.4.8 Directive leadership Style

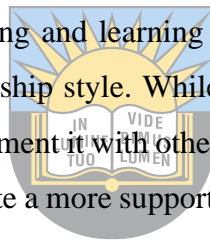
Directive school leadership has been associated with effective decision-making in organisations. Bell and Mjoli (2018) described directive leadership as the process of providing subordinates with a clear framework for taking actions and making decisions that align with the leader's objectives. The finding further shows how this leadership involves the leader in offering precise directions to the followers on what is expected to be achieved, the approach to be used, and the required quality standards (Solomon and Steyn, 2017). As such, school principals using this leadership style retain the final authority and control over the decision-making process (Bell & Mjoli, 2018). In alignment with Bell and Mjoli, Saleem et al. (2020) asserted that leaders employing a directive leadership style, typically issue explicit instructions to their employees, including expectations, methods of execution, and deadlines. To make this approach effective, they establish performance standards, rules, and regulations that are clearly defined and must be adhered to by employees. They place significant emphasis on the relationship between themselves as leaders and teachers. Consequently, the leader is viewed as a supervisor who guides followers in the workplace, with attention given to the structure of rewards and the leader's legitimacy (Ricard et al., 2017).

Bell and Mjoli (2018) viewed directive school leaders as those who exhibit task-orientated behaviour along with a strong inclination to control interactions with subordinates. Hence, they tend to have an additive effect on the effectiveness of teachers in schools. Conversely, Saleem et al. (2020) observed that directive leadership in schools have a significant impact on teachers' performance and is a positive predictor of performance. For school principals to be effective in using this style of leadership, they must foster friendly and approachable relationships with teachers. Furthermore, school principals should cultivate positive and pleasant relationships

with teachers and create conducive work environments. From these findings it seems that this leadership style is effective when leaders can foster relationships and collaboration to improve a positive environment for teaching and learning.

Ricard et al. (2017) therefore argued that directive leadership is typically employed by school principals who believe that the best way to run the school successfully is to lead with a directive style. This means the leader must provide clarity on the organisation's goals and monitor the behaviour of followers. However, Saleem et al. (2020) contended that directive leadership is preferred in a work environment where followers are expected to perform under high pressure and achieve challenging goals. Solomon and Steyn (2017) suggested that this leadership style is beneficial when the leader exercises legitimate authority and assists followers in organised, logical, and straightforward tasks. It is evident that directive leadership can improve teaching and learning by promoting a conducive environment, guiding the effectiveness of teachers and helping to attain educational goals.

In order to cultivate a positive teaching and learning environment, school principals should consider embracing a directive leadership style. While this style can be beneficial in certain school contexts, it is crucial to complement it with other leadership styles, such as participative and instructional leadership, to promote a more supportive teaching and learning environment.



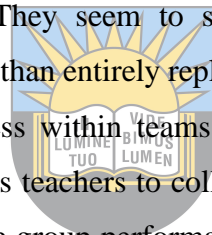
3.4.9 Shared leadership style

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Shared leadership is regarded as an instrumental leadership style for delegating decision-making that is acceptable by different stakeholders. Han et al. (2021) defined shared leadership as a mutual process where team members collectively lead one another in pursuit of a common goal. Ali et al. (2018) described shared leadership as a form of collective team leadership characterised by dynamic shared influence among individual group members aiming at achieving a shared goal. In the school context, shared leadership is regarded as the role of the school leader, which is fulfilled by many teachers who may not hold official senior positions (Cobanoglu, 2020). This approach is crucial because it seems to empower school leaders to delegate powers and authority to team members, involving them in the decision-making process related to their responsibilities, rewarding them for their participation, and thereby enhancing employee motivation (Song et al., 2019). With shared leadership, hidden talents among employees are uncovered, individuals can overcome their limitations, and it emphasises engagement between employees and their leaders (Cobanoglu, 2020).

Song et al. (2019) observed that shared leadership has been shown to enhance group performance. This is because shared leadership involves a dynamic and interactive process of influence among team members, all directed towards the attainment of a common goal (Ali et al., 2018). This finding identifies shared leadership as a form of collective team leadership characterised by a dynamic shared influence among individual group members working to achieve collective team objectives. For shared leadership to be effective, team members must have confidence in their competence and knowledge to produce creative outcomes, directing their dynamic shared influence towards the achievement of group creativity objectives (Ali et al., 2018).

Han et al. (2021) argued that shared leadership is well-suited to the increasingly challenging school context and environment, in which no single principal can provide all the answers and make all decisions. Most of these findings indicate that shared leadership is advantageous for team members to involve each other in decision-making, provide support to one another, and share responsibility for outcomes. They seem to suggest that shared leadership should complement vertical leadership rather than entirely replacing it. Furthermore, it should be used to enhance cohesion and effectiveness within teams. Through fostering collaboration and inclusive, shared leadership empowers teachers to collectively contribute, provide support to each other and in the process improve group performance and achieve improved educational outcomes.



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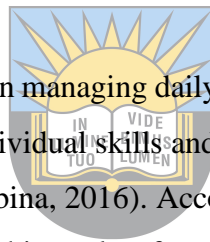
The findings highlight the importance of shared leadership in creating a collaborative and supportive learning environment. Empowering teachers and other stakeholders through shared leadership practices contributes to improved decision-making and shared responsibility. This leadership style helps school leaders enhance group performance, improve interaction and engagement, and ultimately foster a positive and supportive learning environment.

3.4.10 Transactional leadership style

Transactional leadership, as asserted by Karabina (2016), is primarily centred on the leader's ability to interact with employees. This is initiated by emphasising the mutual benefits outlined in a contract where the leader acknowledges commitment and loyalty by providing deserving employees with rewards. According to Nazim and Mahmood (2016), the fundamental goal of transactional leadership is to encourage followers to work by offering appealing rewards in exchange for their efforts. In this manner, transactional leaders enhance worker motivation

through compensation. To achieve this, leaders establish clear goals and articulate the relationship between followers and performance. In a study by Mkhize and Bhengu (2018), which focused on the reward systems utilised by principals, it was concluded that these reward systems had a direct impact on teachers' engagement within the school. The study highlighted the critical role of reward systems in promoting engagement among both teachers and learners.

Transactional leadership, as theorised by Malechwani (2018), encompasses a contingent reward system and leadership through exemption. In a contingent reward system, the leader classifies tasks and outlines anticipated rewards for task accomplishment, fostering positive exchanges among team members. In the school context, Jekelle (2021) contended that among the various leadership styles employed by school principals, transactional leadership places emphasis on supervision, organisation, and follower efficacy. While this could be achieved by keeping followers focused through a system of rewards and punishments for a set duration, it seems that for this leadership style to be successful there is a need for positive exchange between leaders and followers.



Transactional leaders typically focus on managing daily workplace operations, handling labour issues, assigning tasks, addressing individual skills and opportunities, and tending to the daily needs and values of individuals (Karabina, 2016). According to Jekelle (2021), school leaders who employ the transactional leadership style often lack a transformational vision for the organisation, in contrast to transformational leadership. Malechwani (2018), however, argued that school principals using a transactional leadership style collaborate, with their followers to establish predetermined objectives, which both parties agree to uphold. In this context, the leader holds significant authority to periodically assess the achieved results and make corrections when the set objectives are not met. Consequently, if performance of followers falls short of the predefined standards, penalties are applied.

It is, however, unclear whether this type of leadership was practiced in the selected schools in this study. If it is, it may be assumed that school leaders face challenges due to South African school policies, as certain punitive measures could be perceived as human rights abuses. Therefore, how school leaders employing this type of leadership manage schools when objectives are not met, remains to be seen. Through its focus on rewards and clear goal setting, transactional leaders are able to improve teaching and learning by providing motivation by rewarding teachers and learners.

Transactional leadership style, while effective in certain contexts, can be limited in its ability to create an inclusive and supportive environment. To address this, school leaders should consider using a combination of transactional, transformational, and instructional leadership styles. By adopting these different leadership approaches, leaders can create an enabling environment to enhance teaching and learning to meet the diverse needs of learners.

3.5 Challenges encountered by school leaders in influencing teaching and learning

School leaders face a multitude of challenges in their pursuit of effective management and the facilitation of quality teaching and learning within their schools. In South Africa, these challenges are compounded by the historical legacy of the apartheid-era education policies that segregated the system along racial lines, perpetuating discrimination and limiting infrastructure development in black schools (DBE, 2014). Consequently, in this context, leaders may not always see the value in involving followers in decision-making processes and may emphasise compliance with directives issued by the leader (Moorosi & Bantwini, 2016). Naidoo (2019) concurred by highlighting the impediments presented by the nature of leadership responsibilities within such a historical context.

Saidun et al. (2015) revealed that newly appointed principals navigating these challenges often face issues such as isolation, difficulties in time management, a lack of position-related knowledge, and struggle in making informed decisions to enhance teaching and learning. These challenges, as argued by these authors, combined with the diverse expectations and requirements of various stakeholders, further complicate the operational responsibilities of school leaders. Mulford (2008), in his study, identified four overarching categories of challenges that confront school leaders, as well as the educational landscape:

- A complex, changing, and challenging environment.
- Advances in science and technology.
- Demographic shifts and changing work patterns.
- Addressing these multifaceted challenges necessitates effective guidance and orientation for school leaders within their specific contexts by educational authorities.

3.5.1 Complex and changing landscape of South African schools

The South African education and schooling system has undergone significant policy and structural changes, presenting numerous challenges for school principals. In particular, the transition to a democratic government in South Africa necessitated extensive changes, including improvements in school infrastructure, the school environment, and the administration and management of schools (Bhengu & Myende, 2016). Bhengu and Myende stressed that the ongoing challenges faced by South African schools demand resilient leaders who can effectively cope with and adapt to these changes. While the South African education system has undergone significant policy and structural changes, it is evident that school leaders play a crucial role in surmounting obstacles and ensuring effective adaptation to ongoing transformations in the curriculum.

The nature of the curriculum in South African schools after the end of apartheid has caused many scholars to raise concerns about inherent challenges in education (Mbongo, 2016). As shown by these findings, the curriculum during the apartheid era primarily emphasised Western values. Consequently, a significant number of African scholars advocated for an urgent shift towards a curriculum that reflects African values and identity (Msila, 2015). According to Msila (2015), the proposed curriculum should actively engage the community and learners in understanding their environment and historical background. This demand places a considerable responsibility on school leaders to incorporate indigenous, African, and traditional knowledge systems into the school curriculum and assessment. School principals face the challenging decision of transitioning from a curriculum that predominantly focuses on Western values to one that incorporates indigenous cultures to affirm African identity.

Steyn (2017) passionately argued that the inclusion of African values and indigenous knowledge systems in the school curriculum is a hallmark of quality education. To ensure a seamless transition and transformation of the school curriculum, school leaders are entrusted with the authority, accountability, and responsibility to make appropriate decisions that do not adversely affect teaching and learning (Naidoo, 2019). However, in the South African context, many school leaders are ill-equipped to oversee these changes and transformations in schools. Consequently, leadership transformation to address the prevailing challenges is not given the priority it deserves in certain schools. In the same vein, the dynamic and evolving school environment in South Africa presents difficulties for school leaders to effectively implement

policies and manage resources, which requires effective decision-making to ensure that teaching and learning are not affected.

3.5.2 Advances in science and technology

In South Africa, high school education faces numerous challenges when it comes to effectively integrating technological advances into teaching and learning (Jaffer et al., 2015). These schools are under increasing pressure to maximise technological integration to meet their unique needs. Science and technology are widely recognised as the driving forces behind the transformation of the global educational landscape (Johnson et al., 2016). Hence, some studies emphasise the importance of national governments providing support to schools to promote the integration of science and technology into the classroom (Johnson et al., 2016). However, it seems that many of these schools are still struggling to fully harness the benefits of science and technology.

According to Makgato (2015), both school leaders and teachers share the responsibility for failing to adequately prepare learners with the knowledge necessary to keep up with the dynamic world of technology and science. School leaders are not only responsible for enhancing teaching and learning but also for acquiring resources that enhance education in their schools. To address this issue, Makgato (2015) argued that the integration of science and technology into teaching and learning would be more effective if both teachers and learners receive proper education on the knowledge and importance of science and technology.

The implementation of science and technology in schools faces various challenges, such as limited time, insufficient institutional support, and a lack of teaching and learning support resources (Bush & Glover, 2016). These challenges significantly hinder the effective participation of learners and teachers in instructional activities. To address these issues, Bush and Glover (2016) suggests that school leaders and teachers, who play a role in driving technology and science in schools, should receive comprehensive training.

While science and technology offer substantial benefits to education, Barakabitze et al. (2019) found that there are costs, technical challenges, and pedagogical implications associated with the introduction of new educational science and technologies into teaching and learning. To mitigate these challenges, Preston et al. (2015) recommended that education authorities formulate policies to guide the smooth implementation and integration of science and technology into the education system. Schools have not fully integrated technology into their

curriculum because they have yet to comprehend the full potential of technological advancements in revolutionising teaching and learning. Although the use of technology schools have profound influence on teaching and learning, there seems to be a challenge of its integration. Moreover, because of financial constraints, most of these schools find it difficult to procure these important tools. Education authorities may have to help secure these gadgets and the necessary support be given to teachers to maximise their use.

3.5.3 Changes in demography and changes in work

Changing demographics and work environments continue to pose major challenges to teaching and learning. According to Siyongwana and Chanza (2020), the changing demographics in South African schools have significant implications not only for the transformation of schools but also for the effectiveness of school leaders. For instance, the post-apartheid era posed a serious challenge to schools as many learners opted for white schools, leading to a situation where school leaders in rural areas and townships had to grapple with low learner enrolment (Mestry, 2017). Conversely, school leaders in Model C schools (well-funded and autonomous) and formerly white schools had to manage high learner enrolment (Siyongwana & Chanza, 2020) because of changing demography. In a changing educational environment, education authorities and stakeholders are expected to continuously seek ways to improve teaching and learning (Sechudi & Olivier, 2016). However, these findings clearly show that most school principals are inadequately prepared to handle these dynamics, which hinder their effectiveness in managing the changing learner populations.

Carolissen (2016) expressed concern about the evolving demographics of South African schools, with foreign national learners being enrolled in the education system. This situation presents a significant challenge for school principals and teachers in how they carry out their work. To manage this phenomenon, both school principals and teachers must recognise the differences in the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds of all learners (Carolissen, 2016). It is further assumed that a better understanding of diversity in schools will encourage the participation of learners in class and school activities.

These perspectives contrast with the findings of Siyongwana and Chanza (2020), who identified pull factors drawing black South African learners to formerly white schools, including political, educational, and environmental factors. This resulted from learners experiencing segregation challenges in schools and classrooms. While black learners from

affluent backgrounds could adapt to these circumstances, most black learners from poor backgrounds struggled to do so. This situation potentially affects the effectiveness of school principals. To mitigate the impact of this situation, it is crucial for policies promoting inclusivity in education to be strictly applied in schools to ensure that learners, regardless of their socio-economic or racial background, feel at home in the school environment. The constantly shifting demographics in schools present a significant challenge for school leaders, involving the management of diverse learner enrolment patterns, cultural diversity, and socio-economic disparities among students. This necessitates effective policy implementation by leaders to address the evolving school environment and support teaching and learning through inclusive practices.

3.5.4 Globalisation

Globalisation continues to affect education, and school leaders are expected to be aware of its implications on teaching and learning all over the world. According to Taylor (2016), the forces of globalisation have necessitated transformation within the South African education system to ensure that learners are prepared not only to pass examinations but also to acquire knowledge, values, integrity, and creativity that will make them competitive in a knowledge-driven global economy. For example, Dzvimbo and Moloï (2013) found that globalisation activities and the influence of major international organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have a significant impact on the education systems of many African countries, especially in terms of funding and policy direction. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2011) is another influential global institution that plays a substantial role in shaping education policies in South Africa and other sub-Saharan African countries. However, UNESCO's influence, which is often shaped by global considerations, may not fully account for the unique context and challenges faced by African countries. Consequently, this approach can either deepen or strengthen inequality between affluent and impoverished communities within African countries.

Popescu (2015) noted that globalisation and internationalisation are key drivers for change and reforms in education systems worldwide. This global imperative requires school leaders to not only be attuned to the expectations of local stakeholders, but also to be aware of global trends and initiatives affecting their country's educational landscape. Akoojee and McGrath (2014) highlighted the influence of global programmes such as Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (known as GEAR), which aimed at enforcing fiscal discipline in African

countries but had negative consequences on South African education. The authors argued that the emphasis on fiscal discipline in the public sector affected the government's direct investment in education, resulting in inadequate school infrastructure, both in terms of quantity and quality. Ibrahim (2013) identified a specific drawback of globalisation that have an impact on the role of leadership in schools, particularly in the political sphere, where global imperatives often take precedence over local considerations. This shift towards external factors can create complexities in effectively managing schools in African contexts. Globalisation has influenced not just the quality of education, but also the expectations for academic achievement, the acquisition of essential knowledge, values, and skills crucial for advancement in life. Hence, it is crucial for leaders to comprehend global trends and address their effects on teaching and learning.

3.6 Leadership framework used to improve teaching and learning in schools

Leadership models and frameworks are essential for improving school outcomes and enhancing teaching and learning. While school effectiveness involves more than just administrative tasks, the principal's ability to create a supportive environment by reducing environmental barriers is crucial (Gogo et al., 2022). Research in rural South African secondary schools (Gogo et al., 2020) highlights the significant impact of leadership frameworks on student and teacher performance. This review focuses on leadership frameworks used to enhance teaching and learning. One critical approach adopted by school leaders in rural South Africa involves setting clear goals, managing instruction effectively, and fostering strong relationships with parents and the community (Gogo et al., 2022). Leaders can positively influence teaching and learning by addressing challenges within the school environment. Collaborating with stakeholders has proven beneficial in significantly improving teaching and learning outcomes. While the text effectively highlights the importance of leadership frameworks in rural South African schools, it would be strengthened by providing more specific examples of leadership practices and their impact on student outcomes.

Leadership frameworks in schools have been described by Mwaisaka et al. (2019) as structured sets of guidelines delineating the behaviours, skills, and strategies that school principals adopt to manage and guide the teaching and learning environment effectively. Critical aspects of leadership frameworks include vision setting, instructional leadership, stakeholder engagement, and resource management (Mwaisaka et al., 2019). By adhering to these frameworks, principals can align their practices with the school's vision. In school contexts,

instructional leadership frameworks provide blueprints for school leaders to follow in creating supportive and conducive environments for student success (Heystek & Shula, 2024). This typically involves employing critical leadership styles such as instructional leadership, which emphasises enhancing teaching practices, and transformational leadership, which focuses on inspiring and motivating staff toward a shared vision. Heystek and Shula (2024) assert that by adhering to a transformational and transactional leadership framework, leaders can align their actions with the school's vision, fostering an improved environment that promotes student achievement and overall well-being.

Leadership frameworks in teaching, learning, and education are grounded in social justice and human rights principles. Ramango and Naicker (2022) highlight the role of school leaders in fostering inclusive teaching and learning environments. According to Eliyana et al. (2022), the social justice of the transformational leadership framework is recognised in the support, concern, and motivation that leaders provide to their followers. This support is critical for implementing educational policies and encouraging maximum commitment from followers. The support that leaders provide within the leadership framework is characterised by actively involving employees (Gogo et al., 2022). This makes a structured leadership framework crucial for school administration and management to achieve their goals and objectives. Contrastingly, Mwaisaka et al. (2019) recognised that leaders in the manufacturing industry have been seen to function effectively within a transformational leadership framework by delivering high-quality products that meet the diverse needs of customers. These supports are seen to improve customer experience satisfaction significantly.

Heystek et al. (2024) claim that the transactional leadership framework positively influences customer satisfaction in the service industry. Transactional leaders enhance service quality by providing clear direction, feedback, and motivation. This contrasts with Ramango and Naicker's (2022) findings in education. They argue that the instructional leadership framework prioritises equity, human rights, and social justice, motivating teachers and students through inclusion. Such practices are crucial for eliminating barriers to learning and fostering a respectful, empathetic culture. Similarly, Eliyana et al. (2022) identify transactional and transformational leadership frameworks as critical in schools, focusing on change through inclusive vision and addressing inequalities. This aligns with the strategic leadership framework identified in Western education, which emphasises inclusion through school policies and practices (Gogo et al., 2022).

While leadership frameworks primarily aim to guide school leaders in creating sustainable, inclusive school cultures and supporting students and teachers, thereby addressing challenges to teaching and learning, there is a need for further research and improvement of existing leadership frameworks to optimise their impact on educational outcomes.

3.7 Summary

This chapter offered a comprehensive literature review on the role of school leadership in the context of teaching and learning within schools. It began by examining the historical evolution of school leadership in South Africa from 1994. The chapter delved into various types of school leadership, including instructional, transformational, participative, democratic, supportive, authoritative, distributed, directive, shared, and transactional leadership, emphasising their significance within the education system. Furthermore, it explored how school leadership contributes to the creation of a positive learning environment, the cultivation of an educational culture, the enhancement of learner achievement, and the promotion of teacher commitment. Additionally, the chapter addressed the challenges that school leaders face, encompassing the intricate and ever-changing school landscape, the impact of technological advancements, demographic shifts, and the consequences of globalisation on the education system.

The next chapter offers a comprehensive presentation of the research methodology employed in this study. It explains the selected approaches and tools used to understand the subject under investigation and the context of the study. The chapter further provides a detailed account of the measures taken to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the study, which includes the systematic participant selection process. Moreover, it delves into the role of the primary researcher, the steps taken to safeguard participant rights and privacy, and the procedures for collecting and analysing data.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed relevant literature on the role of school leadership in teaching and learning within schools. It also highlighted the evolution of school leadership, its impact on fostering a positive environment, and the challenges faced by school leaders. This chapter introduces the research methodology employed to comprehend the phenomenon under investigation and the contextual background of the study, elucidating the chosen approaches and tools. It also provides a detailed account of the measures put in place to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the study, including the systematic approach used for participant selection. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the main role of the researcher, measures taken to protect participant rights and privacy, the data collection process, as well as the procedures for data analysis.



4.2 Research methodology

Methodology in research is defined as the systematic and theoretical analysis used in a particular field of research (Igwenagu, 2016). According to Igwenagu, methodology does not aim at providing answers, but rather offers the theoretical framework that underpins the study and understanding of the methods used. Research methodology serves as a strategic approach that guides the research process, moving from underlying assumptions to research design and data collection (Myers, 2009). In contrast, Creswell (2003) stated that research methodology is a strategy or plan of action that links methods to the results and findings, ultimately governing the choice and use of methods. It assists the researcher in comprehending the phenomenon being studied.

While various approaches are employed by researchers to understand the role of school leaders in teaching and learning, this study utilised the phenomenological approach as a case study. As explained by Umanailo (2019), the phenomenological approach seeks to understand and depict the lived experiences of individuals of the phenomenon under investigation. This approach places an emphasis on how individuals experience specific phenomena within their environment (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). Therefore, the research explored how

individuals interpret the meaning of their lived experiences and how these meanings shape their worldview and culture.

Moreover, Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009) argued that phenomenology delves into the nature of the phenomenon being studied, uncovering what it is and how it could not exist in its current form without certain elements. Consequently, the phenomenological approach is rooted in the philosophy that acknowledges the existence of the true essence and structure of every experience. One key feature of phenomenology is the researcher's commitment to withhold judgment about the participants' realities. The researcher maintains the view that individuals' experiences make sense to them because those experiences are about what they have lived and have become an integral part of them.

The objective of phenomenology is to describe the phenomenon being studied, including the emergence of phenomena like an individual's emotions, thoughts, and actions (Umanailo, 2019). The phenomenological approach is significant as it systematically uncovers the understanding of human psychology in a social-cultural context (Bhar, 2019). In this particular study, the phenomenological approach is employed to investigate the specific phenomenon of leadership in selected schools. Therefore, the experiences of principals, teachers, and learners are utilised to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of leadership in enhancing teaching and learning.



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4.3 Research paradigms

Paradigms, as defined by Rehman and Alharthi (2016), form the foundational system of beliefs and theoretical approaches that encompass various assumptions, including ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods. These theoretical assumptions are essential in any study as they shape our comprehension of people's experiences and the world they inhabit. Kamal (2019) emphasised that a paradigm encompasses a set of beliefs that explain the occurrence of specific phenomena and a set of principles that dictate the study of these phenomena. Moreover, it is instrumental in describing a set of beliefs that influence the actions inherent in all educational research (Kamal, 2019). Kaushik and Walsh (2019) contended that paradigms serve as practical concepts employed to address research questions, each offering a distinct view of the axiology, ontology, epistemology, methodology, and rhetoric of a study.

Kankam (2019) highlighted that a research paradigm is a framework encompassing an array of integrated concepts, variables, and substantive issues related to methodological approaches.

Conducting research focused on human behaviour and attitudes typically necessitates the use of a research paradigm to enhance the credibility and generalisability of the phenomenon under investigation (Kankam, 2019).

While various paradigms are employed in social studies, for example, post-positivism, constructivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism, it is crucial to recognise them as inherently philosophical in nature, sharing common components, such as axiology, ontology, epistemology, methodology, and rhetoric's that shape our perspective on specific social phenomena (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). The choice of which paradigm to use in a study can vary between researchers and often depends on the specific phenomenon being investigated (Kankam, 2019). The decision to employ a paradigm in a particular study hinge on the foundation upon which the design and methodology of the study are based (Kankam, 2019). To gain a deeper understanding of the use of paradigms in research, Kankam distinguished between theories and paradigms. Theories are employed to provide explanations for the phenomena under study, while paradigms serve as the framework through which researchers perceive the world. This understanding of research paradigms is crucial because it provides researchers with a framework and direction for interpreting the phenomena they investigate.

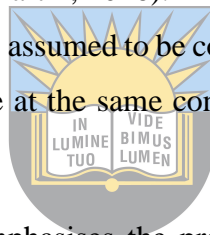
Comprehending the various paradigms and their philosophical underpinnings within each method and methodology helps researchers better to have a better understanding of the lived experiences of study participants, including principals, teachers, and learners (Scotland, 2012). Such understanding shapes the researchers' perspective and influences how they interpret their own thoughts and the thoughts of others, aligning them with the researchers' opinions (Kamal, 2019). Most importantly, a grasp of the paradigm is critical to the outcomes of the study, as it offers the researcher insights into how paradigms represent their beliefs and values about the world, how the world is defined, and the framework through which the world operates. Essentially, the paradigm serves as a blueprint and guide for the researcher's investigation, including data collection and analysis procedures.

As emphasised by Mackenzie and Knipe (2006), the choice of a research paradigm reflects the intent, motivation, and expectations of a particular research study. This shows the significance of selecting a research paradigm with a specific orientation from a wide range of possible orientations, including positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, constructivism, pragmatism, realism, and critical science.

In this study, aimed at understanding the behaviours and opinions of participants regarding the role of school leadership and its impact on teaching and learning, the researcher employed the interpretive paradigm.

4.3.1 Positivist paradigm

According to Welman et al. (2009), the positivist approach is rooted in the natural scientific method of researching human behaviour. Positivists contend that a study should exclusively focus on what can be observed and measured, disregarding individual feelings and opinions (Welman et al. 2009). This paradigm posits an independent existence of reality apart from humans, regulated by immutable laws rather than mediated through human senses (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Additionally, Rehman and Alharthi argued that positivists seek to draw parallels between their understanding of the social world and the natural world. This is because in nature, cause-and-effect relationships of phenomena can be easily established and precisely predicted in the future (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). This perspective is often applied to social and real-world situations, and reality is assumed to be context-independent, as researchers from diverse settings are expected to arrive at the same conclusions about the phenomenon under study.



The positivist paradigm primarily emphasises the prediction and control of the researched phenomenon within the field of social sciences (Sefothu, 2018). It is predominantly utilised in qualitative studies, especially when the researcher interprets the phenomenon as a doctrine describing observation and reason as the means of comprehending the behaviour of the participants (Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013). The literature suggests that researchers favour the positivist paradigm when their study seeks to establish facts and logical reasoning if reality operates independently of the researcher. This choice is deemed significant as it is believed to ensure precision, objectivity, and consistency (Foluke, 2018). However, many scholars have critiqued the positivist approach due to its limitations, leading them to opt for the interpretivist paradigm.

4.3.2 Post-positivism paradigm

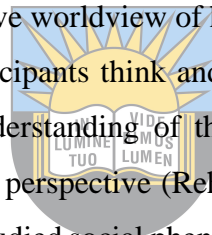
Post-positivism acknowledges that we cannot be entirely certain about claims of knowledge when studying human behaviour and actions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Post-positivists, therefore, emphasise the importance of identifying and evaluating the factors that influence outcomes, particularly in experimental research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is worth noting

that post-positivism is often utilised in mixed method studies, which makes it unsuitable for this interpretive study.

Fox (2018) described post-positivism as an approach that has evolved beyond positivism. This study asserts that post-positivism is seen by researchers as a critique of positivist epistemology and ontology, rejecting the objectivity of the nature of reality and the ability of science to determine what is real. Post-positivism includes approaches to knowledge development that are considered unscientific by positivism, making it a critical aspect of research due to its pluralistic nature, combining elements of both positivist and interpretivist approaches (Panhwar et al., 2017).

4.3.3 Interpretivist paradigm

According to Bryman (2008), the interpretivist approach is an epistemological stance requiring social researchers to subjectively grasp the meaning of a studied phenomenon. This approach focuses on understanding the subjective worldview of human experiences (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It aims at exploring how participants think and create meaning in a specific context; thus, emphasising a researcher's understanding of the phenomenon from the participants' viewpoint, rather than imposing their perspective (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Therefore, its objective is not only to comprehend studied social phenomena but also to grasp their contextual intricacies.



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However, the interpretive paradigm has limitations. Putnam and Banghart (2018) noted its heavy reliance on interpreting meanings within texts, potentially limiting understanding within the social world of participants. It is criticised for a focus on descriptive methodology, possibly overlooking empirical findings (Bullock et al., 2021). Resolving this challenge, requires researcher to employ the mixed method approach that uses both interpretive and empirical examination. Ethically, it is questioned for potentially disregarding participants' beliefs and morals (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Foluke (2018) highlighted that the interpretivist paradigm acknowledges multiple realities as sources of knowledge, emphasising a subjective understanding. It is favoured in qualitative studies, exploring experiences of researchers and participants (Okesina, 2020). However, it faces criticism for subjectivity, prompting the need for varied data collection methods (Okesina, 2020).

Despite criticisms, the interpretivist approach was chosen for this study to understand the views of principals, teachers, and learners comprehensively. Unlike a positivist approach that focuses

on one perspective, the interpretive paradigm allows multiple interpretations of human understanding and experiences (Neuman, 2014). It facilitates collecting rich in-depth data and empirical knowledge about participants' social world and experiences (Bryman, 2012).

4.4 Research approaches

A research approach can be described as a blueprint that guides researchers in conducting a study systematically and efficiently (Mohajan, 2017). Grover (2016) agreed, stating that the research approach serves as a blueprint for systematically studying a problem within a chosen field. In essence, it outlines the plans and procedures for conducting a study, including the steps involved in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Daniel (2016) pointed out that researchers in educational and social fields can utilise various research approaches based on the data collection and analysis needed at a given time. There are three main research approaches: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research (Mohajan, 2017). Research related to problem-solving has shown that all these approaches – quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods – can be valuable in research.

Daniel (2016) observed that there has been ongoing debate about which research approach is most appropriate for conducting social research. Each of these approaches has its own distinct way of collecting and analysing data. Nevertheless, regardless of the approach chosen, all of them have contributed to a deeper understanding of phenomena. Daniel (2016) further noted that qualitative and quantitative researchers are often characterised as constructivist and objectivist, respectively, regarding the strategies they use. In terms of epistemology, qualitative researchers tend to be subjectivists and anti-positivists, while quantitative researchers are typically objectivists and positivists in their approach to research.

Almalki (2016) emphasised that the research approach broadly pertains to the various methods by which research can be conducted, each rooted in a different type of inquiry. The challenge researchers face is selecting the most appropriate approach, as each requires distinct skills set to effectively conduct the study. These skills are vital in aligning with the expectations of each approach. Therefore, researchers must make a well-informed decision about which research approach to employ, considering its suitability for their study. In light of these considerations, this researcher has chosen to employ a qualitative approach for the study. The qualitative approach allows for the use of various instruments that result in a rich collection of data. To

gain a deeper understanding of the relevance of this chosen qualitative approach, the researcher conducted a more critical examination of it.

4.4.1 Qualitative approach

The qualitative research approach focuses on meanings, concepts, definitions, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of phenomena (Daniel, 2016). This definition makes it evident that qualitative research methods inherently encompass the instruments that elicit participants' recollections and aid in problem-solving. Elkatawneh (2016) stressed that qualitative research is exploratory and often involves research questions that begin with words like *what* or *how*. This approach aims to delve into and predict the perspectives of participants. Elkatawneh (2016) further asserted that qualitative research is inductive, with researchers exploring meanings and insights associated with specific situations. It primarily involves a range of data collection and analysis techniques, such as purposive sampling, semi-structured, and open-ended interviews. Consequently, qualitative research is well-suited for uncovering in-depth meanings and experiences of the study participants.

Mohajan (2018) highlighted that the qualitative research approach enables researchers to capture detailed, rich experiences by taking place in a natural setting. It involves interpretive practices that provide visibility into the world. Importantly, a qualitative approach is the preferred choice when researchers seek to address inquiries about experiences, meanings, and perspectives from the participants' viewpoint (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Conversely, Hammarberg et al. (2016) argued that qualitative research is often viewed sceptically by researchers who consider it of limited value due to its use of small, non-representative samples and perceived lack of objectivity, leading to potentially biased outcomes.

Nevertheless, many researchers favour a qualitative approach over a quantitative one when exploring the experiences and worldviews of participants (Daniel, 2016; Tie et al., 2019). Daniel (2016) contended that the use of instruments such as observation, open-ended questions, in-depth interviews, and field notes to collect data from natural settings, facilitates the collection of rich, valuable data. These instruments enable researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. In the current study, the researcher employed a qualitative approach to align with the nature of the research. Furthermore, this approach facilitated the exploration of participants' broader experiences and the understanding of how culture influences meanings (Tie et al., 2019). The qualitative research approach was

chosen for this study because it aimed at uncovering a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, which was the role of leadership in improving teaching and learning in selected schools in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality.

4.5 Research design

Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018) defined research design as the blueprint that guides the research process, outlining how the study will proceed from defining its purpose and research questions to delivering results. Research design involves the collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of data in research (Lelissa, 2017). It serves as a plan for addressing the conceptual problems of research through empirical studies. Sileyew (2017) reinforced this by highlighting that research design is the path researchers follow to conduct their studies. It outlines how researchers formulate their research problems, objectives, data collection, and data presentation.

Research design encompasses a comprehensive process for planning how to collect and analyse data to enhance understanding of a specific topic or phenomenon under investigation (Abutabenjeh and Jaradat, 2018). This study categorises research design into three distinct stages that are essential for any study: posing research questions for investigation, collecting data to address these questions, and presenting responses to the questions. However, Lelissa (2017) contended that the classification of a research design depends on the purpose of the study, as each research design serves a different objective. Consequently, research design dictates how research results align with the objectives of the study (Sileyew, 2017). It encompasses the methodology employed in the study, from research strategy to result dissemination, providing a suitable framework for the study (Sileyew, 2017).

This study adopted a phenomenological case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences and perceptions of school leaders and individuals involved in the study. According to Goad and Jones (2017), phenomenological case design emphasises the exploration and comprehension of the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals that are affected by the phenomenon being studied. Researchers who employ this design aim to understand how people make meaning of their lived experiences and uncover the phenomenon's relevance (Goad & Jones, 2017). As Asenahabi (2019) pointed out, the phenomenon case study is relevant for qualitative studies that apply methodologies like interviews and content analysis to collect data and make meaning of the data. By understanding

the lived experiences of individuals in the school context, they can design teaching strategies and manage curriculum effectively to meet the needs of students (Schad, 2022). According to Schad (2022), the phenomenological case design is particularly essential in investigating complex school contexts where traditional research methods may not completely capture participants' nuanced perspectives of the phenomenon.

Using a phenomenological case study requires the research to follow a number of steps (Moser & Korstjens, 2017). Firstly the researcher needs to identify the phenomenon of focus and participants who have had an experience of this phenomenon. Secondly, an interview is used to collect in-depth data where individuals are encouraged to share their lived experiences according to their own perspectives. Thirdly, data collected are analysed through an inductive content analysis in order to come up with emergent themes as well as patterns that show the importance of this phenomenon. In the context of school and teaching and learning, this design was used to explore the role of school leaders in influencing teaching and learning. Achieving this aim requires in-depth knowledge and insights into participants' views and experiences regarding schools, teaching, and learning (Tie et al., 2019). Hence, this study employed the qualitative method, involving well-structured interviews with participants and focus groups. This, the phenomenological research design facilitated the collection of a broad range of data on the role of school leaders in teaching and learning at schools within the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality.



4.5.1 Advantages of using case study design

Various researchers have highlighted the benefits of using a phenomenological case study design, particularly in qualitative studies. According to Schoch (2020), a phenomenological case study design allows the researcher to focus on a specific phenomenon within the confines of a specific location, space, and time. It also enables the collection of various forms of data, including interviews, documents, observations, and surveys, offering an in-depth perspective on the phenomenon under investigation. This design is particularly suitable when studying a phenomenon in its natural setting, as it aligns with qualitative inquiry and facilitates the exploration of complex real-world phenomena (Patnaik & Pandey, 2019).

Despite its advantages, it is essential to note that the phenomenological case study design has limitations. Schoch (2020) argued that it is more suited to post-positivist paradigms, which presuppose the existence of a reality that can only be approximated, making it less effective for

other paradigms. Additionally, using a phenomenological case study design often involves data collection instruments and analyses subject to the researcher's subjectivity and biases. Ebneyamini and Moghadam (2018) pointed out that relying solely on a phenomenological case study approach can hinder a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied and may leave novice researchers confused about the issues under investigation.

Despite these limitations, this study chose to adopt a phenomenological case study design for specific reasons. For instance, using a case study allows for thoroughly examining a phenomenon, context, or subject under study (Priya, 2021). Furthermore, it provides a detailed understanding of complex issues, offering in-depth insights into the context and yielding rich data that might not be attainable through various other research approaches (Crowe et al., 2011). As noted by Schoch (2020), phenomenological case study design offers outcomes that provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied, which can benefit other researchers by allowing them to apply the same principles and lessons to similar studies. Patnaik and Pandey (2019) further highlighted that phenomenological case study design is particularly suitable when a study poses *how* and *why* questions, and the researcher has limited influence over the setting. Moreover, the flexibility of a case study design makes it a valuable choice for various qualitative research endeavours (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018).

4.5.2 Research site

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Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality is a local authority within the Chris Hani District Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province (Figure 4.1). It was originally established on 5 August 2016, through the merger of three large local municipalities: Tsolwana Local Municipality, Inkwanca Local Municipality, and Lukhanji Local Municipality. Enoch Mgijima falls under a Category B municipality and is situated in the heart of the Eastern Cape province (Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality, Annual Report 2017/18). These local municipalities were predominantly rural in nature. Among the six local municipalities comprising the Lukhanji District Municipality, Enoch Mgijima is the largest, covering approximately one-third of the geographical area. The municipality's strategic location makes it a vital business and economic centre in the Eastern Cape province.



Figure 4.1 Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape province

Source: Municipalities.co.za

These local municipalities are centrally and strategically connected to major South African provinces such as Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, and Northern Cape, as well as the key economic cities in the Eastern Cape, including Mthatha, King Williams Town, Grahamstown, East London, and Port Elizabeth. To ensure efficient functioning as a national corridor to these provinces and cities, significant infrastructure, including railways, roads, and minor airports, have been developed (Monyae, 2011). As a result of the vibrancy of economic activities in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality, it seems that most learners relocate to this area to benefit from good education and the social facilities that the community offer. Because of its economic growth and development, the local municipality continues to experience migration of people from other parts of South Africa because of their educational needs (Auriacombe & Van der Waldt, 2020). To serve the growing needs of this municipality, there is widespread effort on the part of the government to build schools to serve their educational needs.

While only a few of these schools are established in the major cities and towns such as East London, Port Elizabeth, Queenstown, Mthatha, and Grahamstown, the majority of the schools are found in disadvantaged townships and rural communities. Most of these areas are not only marginalised but also characterised by a high rate of poverty, unemployment, economic inequality, and lack of infrastructure and other critical social amenities (Hajdu et al., 2020). These factors have been a contributing factor to the underperformance of most of the schools. To improve these schools, government intervention is required, as well as research into the causal factors for the underperformance of the schools and possible interventions to change

this trajectory. It is for this reason that this study was deemed necessary in this municipality, to improve school leadership and the performance of students.

4.5.3 Population

According to Taherdoost (2016), a population is commonly related to the number of people living in a particular geographical area. In contrast, Etikan's (2016) population does not necessarily have to do with people. In this sense, it can also mean the total quantity of the things or cases that are considered as the subject of a study. Asiamah et al. (2017) posited that, to contribute to a field of knowledge or debate, researchers have to collect data or information from participants. These participants are part of the research population. In this sense, the research population was perceived by this study as a group of individuals who share one or more characteristics and a common interest (Asiamah et al., 2017), as such, understanding why the research findings are linked to the population either by attributing them to specific or general participants. These make the role of the population in a study to be more crucial than often imagined (Asiamah et al., 2017). The population of this study included school principals, teachers, and learners from schools in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality, which were selected for the study. The Eastern Cape as a province boasts of a substantial learner population of about 1974 215 across all education sectors. Approximately 10% of this population resides within the Enoch Mgijima Municipality (ECSECC, 2017). From this report, a total of 62,727 educators serve the entire province, with an estimated 5% or 3136 educators based in the Enoch Mgijima municipality. Lastly, the Eastern Cape Province has about 5865 schools, with an estimated 324 schools that are found in the Enoch Mghijima Municipality (ECSECC, 2017). Thus, the population chosen was relevant and suitable for the study because these individuals who were involved were affected directly by the school leadership role in teaching and learning. Their views and opinions were considered appropriate since the leadership role in teaching and learning directly affected them.

4.5.4 Sample and sampling technique

Taherdoost (2016) described a sample as a group of objects or items typically selected from a larger population for measurement. Taherdoost further argued that a sample should be representative and reflective of the population. Daniel (2016), on the other hand, viewed a sample as a subset of elements from the population that is considered for inclusion in the actual study, essentially a subset of measurements drawn from the larger group in which the

researcher is interested. Alvi (2016) asserted that a sample is necessary because it is not feasible to assess the entire population, so a group of people is selected to represent the larger group. Therefore, the selection of a sample plays a crucial role in any study because it requires careful consideration of who to include as participants.

Taherdoost (2016) argued that for a researcher to adequately address a research question, it is often necessary to gather data from the entire population. Hence, the researcher must select a manageable sample that is reflective of the population. The choice of the sample for a study is often influenced by various factors and considerations, including the research approach, time constraints, the cost involved, and the data requirements of the study (Baran & Jones, 2016).

The sample for this study was purposefully selected to include all the relevant elements necessary to provide appropriate answers to the research questions. The total sample comprised 36 participants who were drawn from four schools within the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality. This sample consisted of four principals, four school management teams, four heads of departments, and four teachers from the selected school leaders. These leaders were selected because of their leadership experiences in the school. Additionally, a focus group (named focus group discussion learners) consisting of five learners from each of the four selected schools were also purposefully selected. The inclusion of these leaders are vital because they collectively provide direction for the teaching and learning activities in the schools. As their perspective is deemed critical to the understanding of how teaching and learning are enhanced in schools.

The sampling technique involves the act or process of selecting an appropriate sample that accurately represents the population, with the aim of determining the characteristics of that population (Baran & Jones, 2016). Alvi (2016) suggested that the sampling technique is the method used to select a sample from the entire population. Essentially, sampling techniques are necessary because it is not feasible to assess an entire population, so these techniques enable the selection of a smaller group for evaluation. In a broader context, sampling techniques can be categorised into two main groups: probability and non-probability sampling, as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

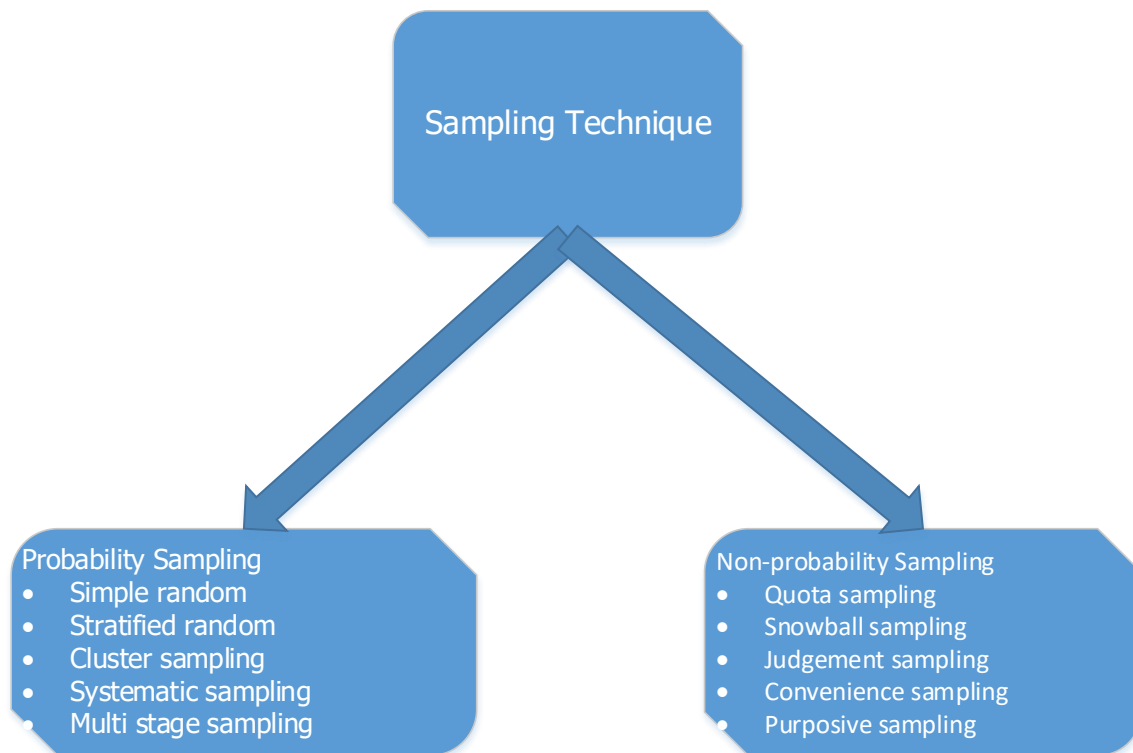


Figure 4.2 *Sampling techniques*

Source: Alvi (2016)



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Probability sampling implies that every item within the population has an equal chance of being selected as a sample (Taherdoost, 2016). The types of probability sampling, as indicated in Figure 4.2, include simple random sampling, stratified random sampling, cluster sampling, systematic sampling, and multistage sampling. In contrast, non-probability sampling does not provide everyone in the population with an equal chance of being selected for a study (Taherdoost, 2016). While researchers have various sampling techniques to choose from, it is crucial to let the research objectives and questions guide their choice.

In this study, purposive sampling was employed. Purposive sampling is the technique that a researcher intentionally uses to select participants of studies that contain a unique feature or meet criteria that is suitable to the focus of the study (Ames et al., 2019). According to Ames et al. purposive sampling is preferred because its usually relevant to the objectives of the study, elicit the gathering of rich and in-depth data, as well as providing efficiency in the use of resources. The selection of purposive sampling was based on the researcher’s discretion to work with a sample that would facilitate a comprehensive understanding and the collection of rich data.

Table 4.1 Summary of participants taking part in the research study

Nature or type of participants	Number of participants
Principals	4
School management team (School Governing Body Chair)	4
Head of department	4
Educators	4
High school learners	20
Total	36

Source: Author's own (2024)

4.6 Profile of participants

The demographic characteristics of the principal participants, heads of departments, school management teams, educators, and the focus group discussion learners, are presented in this section.

Demographic data describe the characteristics of the participants being interviewed. These characteristics are obtained during the responsive design phase (Axinn et al., 2011). Demographic data allow the researcher to describe characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, education, profession, occupation, income level, and marital status (Eacker et al., 2017). These are obtained through a survey instrument. According to Eacker et al. (2017), responses to the survey allow the researcher to break down the data responses into a logical group of respondents. These make it possible to assess demographics based on certain considerations. Demographic questions in a survey allow researchers to gain background information on their participants (Cleland, 2018). These questions provide context for the collected data, allowing researchers to describe their participants and better analyse their data. Table 5.1 gives a detailed description of the in-depth interview participants to this study.

The demographics of this study included participants from diverse educational backgrounds. These included educators who serve in various capacities within the school system and high school learners across different classes. Specifically, 16 educators (four principals, four school management teams, four heads of departments and four teachers) were carefully selected from the four chosen schools, while 20 learners (five from each of the four selected schools) were purposefully chosen from schools within the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality. Hence, the total number of participants amounted to 36 individuals. The educators were specifically chosen for their extensive expertise and practical understanding of the pivotal role school

leadership plays in shaping the dynamics of teaching and learning within educational institutions. Moreover, the selected students belonged to the further education and training band, possessing substantial knowledge concerning the impact of school leadership on the teaching and learning processes. The primary focus of the study was to delve into the perspectives of these participants regarding the role of school leadership, elucidating the challenges encountered by school leaders, and proposing potential strategies to enhance the quality of teaching and learning within schools.

Table 4.2 Characteristics of the interview participants

Participant	Gender	Age (years)	Marital	Race	Qualifications	Years of experience
SP 1	Male	Above 56	Divorced	Black	Masters	21
SP 2	Male	46 to 55	Married	Black	Doctoral	15
SP 3	Female	46 to 55	Married	Black	Diploma	10
SP 4	Male	46 to 55	Married	Black	Masters	8
SMT 1	Female	36 to 45	Single	Black	Diploma	23
SMT 2	Female	Above 56	Married	Black	Degree	18
SMT 3	Male	46 to 55	Divorced	Black	Degree	18
SMT 4	Male	26 to 35	Single	Black	Doctoral	15
HoD 1	Male	Above 56	Married	Black	Diploma	15
HoD 2	Female	36 to 45	Single	Black	Diploma	17
HoD 3	Female	26 to 35	Single	Black	Diploma	19
HoD 4	Female	Below 25	Single	Black	Bachelor of Education	15
ED 1	Male	46 to 55	Divorced	Black	Bachelor of Education	5
ED 2	Male	Below 25	Married	Black	Diploma	3
ED 3	Female	26 to 35	Single	Black	Degree	2
ED 4	Female	36 to 45	Married	Black	Degree	8

Note: SP = school principal; SMT = school management team; HoD = head of department; ED = educator

Source: Author's own (2024)

The demographic composition of the study involved participants categorised based on their roles within their respective schools: principals, school management teams, heads of department, and educators. The participants displayed a diverse mix, encompassing gender, age ranges, marital status, educational qualifications spanning from lower (diploma) to higher (doctoral) degrees, and work experience ranging between 2 to 23 years. The participants were all from a black racial background. Notably, most principals in the study were older males with

advanced qualifications and significant leadership experience. Conversely, the school management teams exhibited a mix of gender, age, and varied educational backgrounds. The heads of department were predominantly female, spanning from different age groups, holding diplomas and degrees, and possessing moderate years of experience in educational settings. Educators were diverse in terms of gender and age categories and showcased different levels of experience and qualifications (Table 5.1).

Table 5.2 presents the characteristics of the focus group discussion participants.

Table 4.3 Characteristics of focus group discussion participants

Number	Participants	Gender	Age	Race	Grade
1	FGDL 1.1	Girl	19	Black	11
2	FGDL 1.2	Girl	19	Black	11
3	FGDL 1.3	Boy	18	Black	11
4	FGDL 1.4	Boy	21	Black	12
5	FGDL 1.5	Boy	18	Black	10
6	FGDL 2.1	Girl	20	Black	11
7	FGDL 2.2	Boy	19	Black	11
8	FGDL 2.3	Girl	20	Black	11
9	FGDL 2.4	Girl	18	Black	10
10	FGDL 2.5	Girl	18	Black	10
11	FGDL 3.1	Boy	18	Black	10
12	FGDL 3.2	Boy	21	Black	12
13	FGDL 3.3	Girl	21	Black	12
14	FGDL 3.4	Girl	20	Black	11
15	FGDL 3.5	Girl	19	Black	10
16	FGDL 4.1	Boy	19	Black	11
17	FGDL 4.2	Girl	20	Black	11
18	FGDL 4.3	Girl	18	Black	10
19	FGDL 4.4	Girl	18	Black	10
20	FGDL 4.5	Boy	20	Black	11

Note: FGDL = Focus group discussion participants

Source: Author's own (2024)

The above demographics show the main characteristics of the focus group participants included in the study. The characteristics of the participants detailed their gender, age, race and their school grade. The participants of each of the focus groups were assigned a pseudonym, namely FGDL to FGDL 1.5. This helped in differentiating between the individual participants in the

focus groups. The age limit of the students ranged between 18 and 21 years old. This age difference reflected on the age limit within the high school system. While all the participants were found to have come across grades Grade 10 to Grade 12 in the high school, the demographics also showed that the race of all the students were black. These demographics of the focus group participants offer an understanding of the profile of the participants. Moreover, it helped the researcher to contextualise and analyse the results of the study from the framework of the demographic characteristics.

4.7 Data collection instruments

Data collection instruments, as described by Kabir (2016), are tools that enable researchers to gather pertinent information on variables of interest, facilitating the answering of research questions. These instruments play a crucial role in achieving the objectives of the study by capturing high-quality evidence that supports in-depth data analysis, ultimately leading to convincing and credible responses to research queries (Kabir, 2016). According to Mohajan (2017), data collection instruments serve as a means for researchers to gather raw, unprocessed, and unorganised information. This information lacks meaning until it is analysed and interpreted. Abawi (2014) underlined the importance of having precise and systematic data collection tools for scientific research. Consequently, the data collection instruments employed in this study allowed the researcher to gather information about the participants and the phenomenon under investigation. *Together in Excellence*

While data collection instruments may vary across disciplines, their primary goal is to ensure accuracy and honesty in the data collection process (Kabir, 2016). Kabir further contended that the aim of data collection instruments is to ensure that the data gathered are of the highest quality. The study emphasised that regardless of the field of study or data definition preferences, precision in data collection instruments is vital for research. In the current study, data were collected through interviews, focus groups, and complemented with document analysis. Using multiple data collection instruments to explore the same phenomenon enhance the credibility and quality of the study (Abawi, 2014). There is a wide range of qualitative data collection instruments available for researchers to utilise in their studies.

4.7.1 Interviews

According to Ryan et al. (2016), interviews serve as a research strategy for gathering information from participants regarding their experiences, views, and beliefs about a particular

research inquiry or phenomenon under investigation. Interviews are primarily used as a data collection tool for qualitative studies. Interviews enable the researcher to explore the views, perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and interpretations of participants, related to specific events or situations. Interviews also help the researcher to investigate whether there are any conflicting ideas, attitudes, or meanings regarding the same phenomenon or situation (Ahmed, 2010).

On the other hand, Oltmann (2016) described interviews as a process that involves using a tape recorder, sitting down with the participant, and making notes of nonverbal cues during the interview. In this study, interviews were considered as face-to-face interactions. However, in some cases, face-to-face interviews may not be feasible, and researchers may resort to telephone interviews, which have become increasingly common.

Interviews in a study can take various forms, including structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, informal conversational interviews, non-directive interviews, and focused interviews. Additionally, interviews can be conducted in different formats, such as face-to-face, over the telephone, via email, or group settings (Adeleke, 2018). The choice of interview mode depends on the research questions and the objectives of the study. As Ahmed (2010) suggested, interviews provide the researcher with a first-hand account of participants' perspectives, which is crucial because this information cannot be easily obtained from other sources. Furthermore, interviews with key participants can also help the researcher subject available documents to more in-depth scrutiny (Ahmed, 2010).

4.7.1.1 Strength of interviews

Interviews, as emphasised by DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019), enable interviewers to collect rich, open-ended data that delves into the thoughts, feelings, and belief systems of participants about the phenomenon under investigation. They also facilitate the exploration of personal and sensitive issues. McGrath and Palmergren (2019) have noted that interviews provide the researcher with the opportunity to delve into aspects unique to the experiences of the participants and to capture their opinions regarding those experiences. Interviews serve as a means for researchers to unravel participants' experiences, shedding light on their lived world and contributing to scientifically sound explanations (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017).

4.7.1.2 Weaknesses of interviews and how they could be overcome

For interviews to be effective, the researcher needs to possess both relational and practical facilitation skills. However, many novice researchers often lack these essential skills (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). To address this challenge, DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) suggested that novice researchers should grasp the purpose of the study, formulate relevant questions for participants, and develop a comprehensive interview guide.

Researchers who employ interviews may face difficulties, especially when a discipline demands a fresh theoretical understanding (McGrath & Palmergren, 2019). This situation may necessitate the exploration of various methods of knowledge inquiry and data collection approaches. Consequently, it is imperative for researchers to precisely delineate the scope of the study and gain a deep understanding of its context to navigate this challenge.

One significant challenge associated with interviews is determining who to interview, which is distinct from the selection of participants (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). Therefore, the issue of identifying the right individuals to interview, alongside the selection of the participants, must be clearly defined. Additionally, the researcher should have a clear understanding of the nature of the population the research aims to interview.

4.7.1.3 In-depth face-to-face interviews

The study used a semi-structured interview to obtain data from the participants. According to Adams (2015), semi-structured interviews are regarded as a flexible method of collecting data and information. This approach, in contrast with a fixed interview question, include an interview protocol, which is a planned list of topics and questions to be asked. The semi-structured interview is seen to be flexible because it offers a space for adaptability and interaction and also provides in-depth face-to-face interviews (Adams, 2015). The use of semi-structured interviews is critical in qualitative studies because it enables the researcher to gain a profound understanding of participants' perspectives on the investigated issue (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Semi-structured interviews also offer flexibility, allowing the researcher to refine the interview guide and questions during the interview process (McGrath & Palmergren, 2019). This adaptability enables the researcher to delve deeper into the subjects under investigation and to elicit responses from participants that are more insightful. Consequently, semi-structured interviews facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the issues

at hand, shedding light on personal and pertinent matters relevant to the study (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017).

In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to interview the selected schools' participants, including the school principals, school management team members, heads of department, and educators. In addition, these interviews were also used to interview learners in the focus groups to gather the necessary data to respond to the study's objectives. Semi-structured interviews were preferred over other types of interviews because it helps to obtain in-depth and rich qualitative data, which provide insight that could be overlooked in purely quantitative or more rigidly structured methods. Interviews of the participants were scheduled on the school premises after the normal school hours in order not to disrupt teaching and learning periods. The interviews were scheduled to last a period of an hour, whereby the participants were introduced to the research objective and were allowed to reflect upon the questions and respond.

The triangulation of instruments was to provide more comprehensive and varied views of the phenomenon being studied, which is the role of school leadership in promoting teaching and learning. According to Bans-Akutey and Tiimub (2021), triangulation in research is described as a process of ensuring that there is an increase in the credibility and validity of a study. Triangulation allows the research to produce reliable findings by using different research instruments (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). Thus, ensuring triangulation in a study ensures an in-depth understanding of the study's findings from the different perspectives of the participants.

The research instruments that were used in this study to corroborate the evidence collected from the semi-interview instrument are the focus group discussions. In addition, the reviewed documents were also used to complement the semi-structured interviews to ensure validity and reliability.

4.7.2 Focus group interviews

A focus group interview, as defined by Hyman and Sierra (2016), is a qualitative research approach where a group of participants, led by an interviewer, discusses a specific topic. This method offers researchers an opportunity to delve deeply into complex issues, emotions, and the lived experiences of participants, often challenging to obtain through methods like surveys (Hyman & Sierra, 2016). It is a valuable method for gathering pertinent data, allowing

participants to explore specific issues within a study. Flynn et al. (2018) and Sim and Waterfield (2019) defined focus groups similarly, emphasising their role in exploring diverse perspectives within a group setting. Then et al. (2014) asserted that these groups are used in various contexts to understand investigated phenomena, providing in-depth insights into participants' experiences and beliefs. Focus group discussions are usually used in a study to complement other research methods (Basnet, 2018). According to Basnet (2018), focus group discussion provides a social context that allows a phenomenon that is being studied to show the participants' views through the data collected.

In this study, five students were purposefully selected from each of the four chosen schools within the Further Education and Training Band (Grades 10 to 12). Their understanding and involvement with school leadership, teaching, and learning made them ideal participants. The focus group discussions, lasting one hour each, were held after regular hours on the school premises to avoid disrupting school activities. Focus groups, renowned for their ability to delve into participants' experiences, beliefs, and perspectives on a specific topic, contribute to a nuanced understanding of the issues being explored (Sim & Waterfield, 2019). They allow for the revelation of diverse opinions and experiences among participants, aiding in a comprehensive exploration of the subject matter (Winlow et al., 2017).

These discussions are favoured by researchers for their participative nature, leveraging group dynamics to bring forth varied opinions and viewpoints on the subject at hand. Unlike interviews, focus groups facilitate the exploration of differences, contradictions, and diverse perspectives among participants, enhancing the depth of exploration (Winlow et al., 2017). However, concerns exist regarding focus group discussions. Some limitations highlighted by Moore and Mckee (2016) and Nyumba et al. (2018) included their potential limitations in illustrating social processes and effectiveness, depending on group dynamics and participant competence. Ethical concerns, as raised by Sim and Waterfield (2019), pertain to the potential for manipulative techniques, influencing vulnerable participants to disclose sensitive views. It was also essential to explore some documentary evidence that talks about leadership in schools to provide a broader lens of the role of leadership.

4.7.3 Validity of research instruments

The research took several measures to ensure the validity of the interviews and focus group discussions (Abawi, 2015). Firstly, a clear and structured interview guide was developed to

cover all areas indicated in the research questions. Secondly, the researcher ensured that participants with diverse experiences in school, teaching, and learning were selected to share their perspectives. Third, the interviewer established a friendly rapport with the study participants to create a comfortable environment for sharing their responses (Archer, 2018). Probing and follow-up questions were used to encourage detailed responses. Lastly, participants' responses were transcribed for interviews and focus group discussions, and the data was systematically analysed using a rigorous approach (Chowdhury, 2015). These steps ensured the validity of the research instruments.

4.7.4 Document reviews

According to Bowen (2009), document review is a systematic procedure for reviewing and examining various types of documents, including material documents, printed or electronic documents. Document reviews offer insight into how people represent and organise themselves (Tie et al., 2019), shedding light on their efforts to make sense of both their past and future (Wood et al., 2020). Busetto et al. (2020) described document review as the process of systematically analysing written materials. Dalglish et al. (2020) described the review of documents as a procedure for reviewing and evaluating identified documents, which can provide context, generate questions, and complement other types of research instruments in a study. Document review allows textual documents to be within a certain environment to be analysed (Dalglish et al., 2020). This review process encompasses both personal and non-personal documents, including archives, reports, guidelines, policies, diaries, and letters. However, the approach to document review is influenced by the researcher's understanding and worldview of human beings (Tie et al., 2019).

Document review in research can take different forms, containing text and images that researchers have collected (Tie et al., 2019). For this study, the document review included materials such as registers, class attendance records, minutes of meetings, manuals, papers, and relevant printed documents (Bowen, 2009). These documents were selected because the researcher wanted to understand the extent to which certain activities and records in the school affected teaching and learning. The inclusion of these different documents, as outlined by Brown (2015), served to offer comprehensive data, contextual understanding, detailed perspectives, supporting evidence which could enrich and validate the findings of the study in the school context. Wood et al. (2020) explained that the document review process is both recursive and reflexive, with researchers moving between developing concepts, sampling, data

collection, data analysis, and interpretation to ensure triangulation of sources of data collected. For the purpose of this study the following documents were reviewed in the schools: teacher attendance registers, learner class registers, SGB meeting proceedings, syllabus, and learner activities.

Document analysis, as described by Busetto et al. (2020), involves a systematic review of various documents to extract relevant information. Researchers must ensure the accuracy and timeliness of these documents to avoid misinterpretations that could affect the study's outcomes (Busetto et al., 2020). Bowen (2009) emphasizes the importance of document analysis in qualitative research, as it allows researchers to focus on stakeholder perspectives and gain insights into the research context. Wood et al. (2020) highlight the versatility of document analysis, enabling researchers to employ various methods such as thematic, content, and discourse analysis to make sense of documentary evidence. While document analysis offers a rich data source, it also has limitations. As noted by Bowen (2009), interpreting images and text can be subjective and may require researcher intervention. Additionally, relying solely on document analysis can introduce biases, as institutions may only release documents that align with their organisational values (Morgan, 2022). Researchers should triangulate their findings with other data sources to address these limitations. Document analysis plays a crucial role in this study by enriching interpretations, validating or challenging collected data, and contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Bowen, 2009).

Document review was adopted for this study because it is an essential technique in research, especially for examining past events, official documents, and policies of organisations' discourses in public. Through analysis of school documents, reports, notes, books and registers, the researcher obtains insights into the school and class context and perspectives of teachers, learners and principals who were part of this study. Using document review provides a rich of primary data, which allows the research to evaluate past events, reveal trends and identify hidden themes that are not quickly revealed by research methods (Naem et al., 2023). Thus, using document review assists in establishing credibility and validity in qualitative research, offering concrete proof to support arguments and claims made.

4.8 Credibility, validity and reliability of the study

In order to ensure the credibility, validity, and reliability of the study's findings, the research employed a variety of methods to gather data. Along with conducting interviews, the study also utilized focus group discussions and document reviews. This approach, as recommended by Abutabenjeh (2018), allowed for triangulation of the data, ensuring that the findings were corroborated by multiple sources. Moreover, to enhance the study's validity, the researcher engaged in prolonged interactions with the participants, as indicated by Archer (2018). This extended engagement enabled a deeper understanding of the study's context, ultimately contributing to the credibility of the research. In terms of reliability, the study followed the recommendations put forward by Armstrong (2016), focusing on ensuring that the research findings were dependable and consistent. By employing these methods, the research aimed at enhancing the validity, credibility, and reliability of the study, while also aiming to make the findings generalizable.

4.9 Data analysis

Research findings only become relevant to a study when they are analysed. Therefore, data analysis is a critical part of the research process (Mbongo, 2016). Data collected must be promptly examined for the researcher to derive meaning from it in relation to the research purpose and problem. Data analysis is the tool researchers use to make sense of a large volume of collected data, allowing them to present the data in a coherent manner to readers (Archer, 2018). It is a process that brings order, structure, and meaning to the relationships within the collected data categories (Foluke, 2018). Essentially, it enables the researcher to sift, organise, summarise, and synthesise the data to arrive at findings and conclusions based on the responses of the study. These responses encompass themes, phrases, words, concepts, and patterns that are connected to the identified units of analysis. This process is crucial as it facilitates the understanding and interpretation of emerging issues in the phenomenon studied.

In the current study, a qualitative approach was adopted to address the research problem, leading to the use of qualitative analysis methods. These methods included face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews. For qualitative data analysis, the researcher recorded the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions using a voice recorder, while also taking notes of relevant information provided by the participants. This information was categorised into themes and subthemes, guided by the dataset (Bryman, 2012). Because of the dense nature of the data collected, not all information was utilised. Only the

pertinent information that aligned with the themes was considered. The interview guide for both face-to-face interviews was divided into two parts: biographic information and questions related to the participants' views on the role of school leaders and their contributions to school improvement. It is important that the methods are aligned with the research questions (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Alignment of methods of collecting data to the research questions

Research focal questions	Unit of analysis	Method of collecting data	Participants	Nature of data collected
What are the different leadership styles used in schools to improve teaching and learning?	Types of leadership	In-depth interviews and documentary analysis	Principals and SMTs HoDs Teachers and learners	Qualitative data
Why is leadership important in teaching and learning in schools?	Importance of leadership	Face-to-face interviews Documentary analysis	Principals and SMTs HoDs Teachers and learners	Qualitative data
What are the challenges encountered by school leaders?	Challenges encountered in school leadership	In-depth interviews	Principals and SMTs HoDs Teachers and learners	Qualitative data
Which leadership framework can be suggested to improve teaching and learning in schools?	Leadership Model	All	All	Diagrammatical

Note: SMTs = School management teams; HoDs = Heads of Department.

Source: Author's own (2024)

The next step involved segmenting, coding, and developing a category system (Bryman, 2012). In this phase, the researcher grouped data into meaningful analytical units, identified keywords, and noted emerging themes and patterns. The collected data took the form of field notes, transcribed audio voice recordings of interviews, and categorised focus group interviews. Ideas that emerged were used to form themes and patterns. Similar items were grouped and analysed using descriptive statements and inferences to draw logical conclusions based on derived themes. These themes covered aspects such as leadership styles in schools, the significance of school leaders, and the challenges they face in carrying out their responsibilities. To analyse the data, the researcher

- sorted items based on their features;
- assigned codes to items according to their features;

- grouped items into classes according to their features; and
- gave meaning to items according to their contextual situations.

Lastly, document analysis was employed in the study because document review was one of the data collection methods used. The analysis of documents as a data source involved evaluating and verifying all documents related to the studied phenomenon. These documents included minutes of meetings, school policies, staff and learner attendance registers, and other relevant documents that guided school leadership, teaching and learning. These documents were cross-referenced with information collected during the interview sessions with participants. To ensure their authenticity, the researcher verified that all the reviewed documents were authored by authorised education bodies accredited to them (Strydom, 2011). It was ensured that all analysed documents in this study were authentic, accurate, and reliable, further confirming their authenticity, accuracy, and reliability. Subsequently, the data report took the form of descriptive writing and verbatim quotations.

4.10 Trustworthiness and Credibility

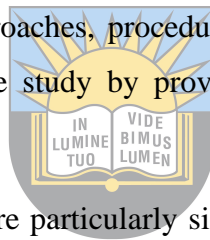
Trustworthiness is an essential aspect of data collection that underlines the researcher's commitment to the integrity of the study (Elo et al., 2014). According to Elo et al. (2014), trustworthiness is the primary stage in qualitative content analysis that involves the analysis of processes related to preparing, organising, and reporting research findings. To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher must focus on factors such as credibility, dependability, transferability, confirmability, and data triangulation. In the next section, the researcher elaborates on the measures that contribute to evaluating the quality of a qualitative study and achieving trustworthiness.

4.10.1 Credibility

The credibility of a study is established when both the participants of the study and others can place their trust and confidence in the data collection process (Olsen & Raunak, 2019). Anney (2014) reinforced this by highlighting that credibility is related to the trustworthiness and accuracy of the findings of a study. To ensure credibility, several measures were implemented. First, a comprehensive review of the relevant literature was conducted to gain an understanding of prior studies and theories pertinent to this research. This step ensured that the research questions and objectives were framed appropriately. Second, the research design was thoughtfully chosen to align the selected methods and procedures with the research objectives.

Furthermore, the sample of the study was purposively selected to accurately represent the population of the study. Participants were chosen based on their extensive experience in leadership roles, which assured their knowledge and expertise in the subject matter. Additional measures and guides as recommended by Gagani (2019) to ensure credibility, are summarised below:

- Member checking was ensured in this study by sharing findings with participants to ensure that the data collected represented the exact views of the participants. Participants were given the opportunity to review and cross-check the data transcribed to verify the accuracy of the data captured to improve the credibility.
- Peer debriefing was followed by ensuring that peers had the opportunity to critically look at the research process, protocols, and findings of the study to assist in validating the interpretations and conclusions arrived at.
- Thick description of the study was ensured by providing detailed descriptions of the context of the study, the approaches, procedures, and findings. This was to help to improve the credibility of the study by providing a comprehensive insight of the phenomenon being studied.



These measures taken in this study are particularly significant in a qualitative study as they ensure the minimisation of potential biases which could affect the credibility of the results.

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4.10.2 Dependability

Dependability in a study signifies its ability to remain reliable even when faced with changing study conditions and the selected research phenomenon (De Vos, 2009). Korstjens and Moser (2018) provided a definition of dependability as the consistency of study results over time, encompassing the assessment of the research findings, interpretations, and research recommendations supported by participant data. This facet is considered a critical indicator of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Chowdhury, 2015) and plays a significant role in evaluating the quality of social inquiry. To ensure dependability, researchers must maintain an audit trail that transparently documents each step undertaken in the study, from its inception to the development and reporting of findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This comprehensive documentation preserves the path followed by the researcher throughout the study, thereby ensuring the dependability of the research.

In this study, ensuring dependability involved implementing multiple measures to bolster the reliability and consistency of findings, achieved through meticulous documentation covering data collection tools, coding procedures, and analytical methods. The purpose of maintaining clear documentation in this study was to create a comprehensive record that enables other researchers to replicate the study based on the provided documentation. Furthermore, dependability was ensured by using an audit trail. Participants were consulted to cross-check if the transcribed information accurately represented what they had conveyed. By incorporating these measures, the dependability of the study was fortified, ensuring that the findings remained consistent and reliable, even in the face of changing circumstances. This commitment to dependability enhanced the overall trustworthiness of the research, thus contributing to the quality of social inquiry and the assessment of its findings.

4.10.3 Transferability

Transferability, defined as the applicability of study findings to different contexts (De Vos, 2009), is described by Korstjens and Moser (2018) as the extent to which the results of a qualitative study can be transferred or replicated in other contexts or settings with different participants. Ensuring transferability involves facilitating other researchers' judgement using thick descriptions. This means not only describing the behaviour and experiences of the participants in their specific contexts, but also making those experiences and behaviours meaningful (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Transferability, as suggested by Korstjens and Moser, relates to the extent to which findings can be applied to situations outside the original research context. The objective is for researchers to produce ideas and results that have broader applicability. To achieve this, researchers should prioritise collecting rich and in-depth data to ensure the relevance and transferability of their findings to other environments, settings, or participants.

In this study, several measures were taken to ensure transferability. First, participants were selected from diverse backgrounds, each with different experiences, as indicated by the provided demographics. These participants were actively engaged in various schools and represented different age groups, genders, and contextual settings. The inclusion of focus group participants from a range of ages and genders further enhanced the ability of the study to capture the diversity of the participants' unique school experiences. Second, the study implemented triangulation by using multiple sources of data collection, including interviews, focus groups, and document reviews. Furthermore, a variety of data analysis methods, such as

thematic analysis and content analysis of the documents, were employed to comprehensively analyse the findings. These combined efforts aimed at strengthening the transferability of the results of the study and their relevance to different contexts, settings, or participants. These measures were found to be critical in ensuring the transferability of this study.

4.10.4 Generalisability

Generalisability in qualitative research is regarded as the extent to which the findings of a study is deemed applicable to other contexts or groups that is beyond the study sample (Kamper, 2020). Generalisability is considered important to a qualitative study because it permits the researcher to make inferences for a larger group of people. According to Kamper (2020), this is achieved by only using a target population, by focusing on a part of it, known as a sample, while generalisability can be achieved through a purposive sampling that has to do with selecting participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research questions. It is, however, critical to note that it is not always the objective in qualitative study (Falk & Guenther, 2021).

To ensure the generalisability of this study, a thorough description of the population and sample was provided, along with justified reasoning. Additionally, diverse participant selection, comprehensive data collection, contextual understanding of the schools, and a foundational theoretical framework were detailed, enabling potential application of the findings of the study to similar populations and contexts.

4.10.5 Confirmability

Confirmability ensures that the findings of the study can be replicated or confirmed by another researcher (De Vos, 2009). It is typically utilised in qualitative studies to demonstrate that the emergent findings stem from the collected data rather than the researchers' predispositions (Chowdhury, 2015). Confirmability involves the researcher's ability to establish that the findings are a true representation of the participants' viewpoints, not influenced by the researchers' pre-existing biases. This is accomplished by describing the data interpretation process, presenting data themes with direct quotations in the reporting, and maintaining a transparent research process (Truter et al., 2020).

According to Chowdhury (2015), confirmability is achieved and conveyed by the researcher when the results are grounded in the information collected from participants, free from the

researcher's interpretations and biases. To ensure confirmability in this study, the researcher implemented peer debriefing. Several colleagues were given an overview of the methodology, key results, and emerging themes of the study, with the aim of soliciting their feedback to determine whether any adjustments were necessary in the methodologies. Additionally, participants were consulted to review the findings, considering the need for alternative interpretations of the results.

4.10.6 Data triangulation

Triangulation is considered significant because it enables researchers to select appropriate data collection methods, data analysis approaches, and note-taking methods in qualitative studies (Chowdhury, 2015). Carter et al. (2014) defined triangulation as the utilisation of diverse data sources or methods in qualitative research to construct a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. The study identified four types of triangulations, including method triangulation, investigator triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and data source triangulation. The choice of which type of triangulation to employ depends primarily on the nature of the study.

Noble and Heale (2019) found triangulation to be an approach that enhances the credibility and validity of study findings. In this study, triangulation was ensured by employing various methods, including interviews, focus groups, and document reviews. Research has indicated that the use of multiple data sources facilitates the identification and validation of relevant issues (Johnson et al., 2017).

4.11 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations, as described by Akaranga and Makau (2016), encompass the norms and principles that guide a researcher in pursuing the objectives and aims of the study. These ethical norms include practices such as transparent information dissemination, providing honest feedback to participants, and rectifying any potential errors that may arise during the research process (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). Consequently, ethical concerns surrounding a study must be comprehensively addressed with the full understanding and consent of the participants involved before a researcher initiates a study and discloses its findings.

Throughout the research process, the researcher must make ethical decisions at each stage (European Commission, 2021). As a result, the researcher should consistently reflect on ethical dilemmas that may arise during the study and consider their potential implications on the study,

participants, and society at large. In the context of this study, the following ethical issues were considered.

4.11.1 Gaining permission

For research to be conducted on a particular site, the researcher must request permission from the appropriate authorities concerned (Al Tajir, 2018). This is crucial because of the privacy of the site and the participants of the study. Al Tajir (2018) described privacy to mean being protected against any possible invasion or observation without seeking permission. Thus, the confidentiality of the site and participants are concerned with who has the right to gain access to information about the site and participants. Before the study was conducted in the selected schools, the researcher requested permission to conduct the study. Thus, a request for a permission letter from the Faculty of Research Ethics Committee and Institutional Research Ethics Committee of the University of Fort Hare (see Appendix A) was given to schools. This request was subsequently granted, which allowed the researcher to proceed with the study. Furthermore, permission was requested from both the DBE and the school principal and was granted, which gave the researcher permission to go ahead with the study in the selected schools (Appendix B).



4.11.2 Informed consent and voluntary participation

Informed consent is one of the critical requirements of research ethics and without that prospective participants cannot take part in a study unless they are adequately informed about the study (Dranseika et al., 2017). Islam (2015) described informed consent as seeking the willingness and cooperation of participants in a study. Thus, the participants must be informed of the nature of the study and what it entails. After the participants have gone through the materials of the study, the participants can therefore agree or disagree to be part of the study. In essence, the participants in a study must be adequately informed about the study as well as understand the information and have the right to decide whether to continue with the study or withdraw.

Informed consent plays a crucial role in every research process, and as such, it has more to it than just the participant appending his or her signature (Nnebue, 2016). The researcher also has a responsibility to enlighten the participants about the nature of the study and the possible risks involved so that an informed decision about participating in the research can be made (Nnebue,

2016). The process of informed consent is crucial for a study because it ensures that the rights and the welfare of the participants in a study are protected.

To ensure informed consent in this study, the researcher explained to the participants what the study was all about and what it sought to find out. Subsequently, the participant's informed consent was then sought before the study began (Appendix F). This was done for the study not to be seen as illegal and unacceptable. Participants were neither coerced nor pressurised to consent to their participation in the study. To confirm their participation, they were given an informed consent letter to sign before the interview process and their participation in the study began. The participants who were under the age of 18 were given a consent letter for their parents to sign upon the commencement of the study (Appendix H).

4.11.3 Avoidance of harm to participants

Preventing harm and minimising risks to participants is of utmost importance in qualitative research, as it significantly influences the credibility of the findings of the study (Asenahabi, 2019). Parveen and Showkat (2017) supported this notion by emphasising that researchers conducting qualitative studies must clearly describe and justify all the necessary protocols in their research design to ensure the physical safety of the participants. Moreover, it is essential to avoid any research that could potentially harm participants (Parveen & Showkat, 2017). On the other hand, Ariffin (2018) asserted that ethical protocols should be applied throughout the various phases of the research process to mitigate possible harm and risks to participants, while considering the potential benefits of the study. Therefore, this study focused on the significance of understanding the diverse backgrounds of participants during the interviews to prevent any harm or injury.

To minimise unnecessary risks and protect the participants, Fleming (2018) recommended maintaining the confidentiality of the identities of the participants, ensuring their protection, and refraining from using statements that could inadvertently reveal their identity. In this study, the participants were assured that the research posed no physical danger or harm to them. They were informed that should they feel coerced or uncomfortable at any point during the study, they had the right to withdraw their participation. In this study, avoidance of harm was ensured by establishing clear and comprehensive protocols for participants' informed consent and confidentiality and providing support to the participants throughout the entire process of the study.

4.11.4 Confidentiality and anonymity

The British Educational Research Association (2018) emphasised the importance of recognising participants' rights to privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity during interviews in qualitative studies. This perspective was corroborated by Dougherty (2020), who asserted the necessity of providing anonymity to participants, especially when researching sensitive topics, to ensure the reliability of qualitative data. This approach is fundamental as it encourages participants to provide honest responses without fear of potential consequences. Researchers often consider data collected under such conditions as credible and reliable, as it does not necessitate verification or replication by third parties (Dougherty, 2020). In line with this perspective, the British Educational Research Association (2018) argued that, due to the potential for data misuse or breaches, researchers should establish an ethical agreement ensuring anonymity with participants before using their data.

To guarantee anonymity and confidentiality in this study, the names of the participants were not disclosed in the collected responses. Additionally, only the researcher and the supervisor had access to the data, including the interview questions that were returned. The participants were informed that their data would be retained by the researcher for five years and then destroyed permanently. In this study, only the researcher and the supervisor were granted access to the data collected for the project. To uphold anonymity, the information obtained from the participants was not shared with other researchers for any reason without obtaining explicit consent. Furthermore, the actual identities of the participants were not revealed in the collected or analysed data; instead, coding was employed in place of their real identities.

4.12 Summary

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of school leadership on teaching and learning in educational institutions. To fulfil this objective, a qualitative research approach was employed, utilising interviews, document analysis, and focus groups. The primary participants in the study included four school principals, four school management teams, teachers, and five learners from each of the four selected schools in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality, located in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis and document analysis to assess and interpret the information gathered from the interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews.

The following chapter presents and analyse the findings derived from the interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews.



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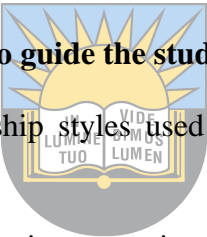
Chapter 5

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The research methodology that was employed for the study was presented in the previous chapter. The chapter looked at the approach, design, and other procedures that were used in the study to investigate the role of school leaders and how they influence teaching and learning in schools. This study aimed at investigating the role of school leadership to enhance teaching and learning. Consequently, this chapter offers the findings and an analysis of the data gathered through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, documentary analysis, and a discussion of the results. The primary research question that guided the study, in addition to four sub-research questions, are presented as follows:

Research questions were employed to guide the study and include the following:

- 
1. What are the different leadership styles used to improve teaching and learning in schools?
 2. Why is the role of school leaders important in teaching and learning in schools?
 3. What are the challenges that school leaders encounter in influencing teaching and learning in their schools?
 4. Which leadership framework can be used to improve teaching and learning in schools?

The findings are presented according to the demographic characteristics of the participants and research objectives that guided the study. The main theme and subthemes that emerged from the in-depth interviews with principals, heads of departments, teachers, school management teams as well as focus group discussions with learners, are presented according to the research questions. Data from the sample of 36 participants were coded and identified using different codes, namely school principals are indicated as SP 1–4, heads of departments as HoD 1–4, educators as ED 1–4, school management teams as SMT 1–4, and the learners who participated in the four focus group discussions as focus group discussion learners (FGDL 1–20). These codes will only be used in the findings.

5.2 Results of the Findings

This section of the study presents the major findings of the study, based on the analysis of data collected from participants through interviews, focus group discussions and document reviews.

5.2.1 Data analysis procedure

The researchers began by transcribing all of the interviews and focus group discussions word for word. They then identified key themes and categories from the data using a combination of predetermined coding and an emergent coding approach (Abawi, 2015). The coded data was analyzed to identify common patterns, relationships, and recurring themes. Finally, the findings from the data were interpreted in relation to the research questions and relevant literature to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences (Abutabenjeh, 2018). This thorough analysis process is essential for extracting valuable insights that contribute to the study's overall objective.

When conducting document reviews, I first transcribed and photocopied the relevant parts of the document for the study. Then, I thoroughly read through the documents to understand the content and identify themes (Abawi, 2015). After that, I used a coding framework to group the important segments of the text, which helped me uncover patterns and connections between the emerging themes (Adams, 2015). This, in turn, allowed me to draw conclusions related to the research questions and relevant literature.

Finally, to ensure the credibility of the findings, a rigorous and systematic approach was followed in the data analysis process (Abawi, 2015). Additionally, the transcriptions of the interviews, focused document reviews, and other data were shared with experts in the field to receive feedback for validation. The use of multiple sources, along with data triangulation and member checking, further enhanced the trustworthiness of the study (Adams W. , 2015).

5.2.2 Results concerning the different styles of school leadership used in improving teaching and learning

The data collected from the participants' responses regarding the leadership styles employed in various schools have been organised in the following tables, according to the themes and subthemes that emerged during the study. This approach ensures that the themes, as well as similarities and differences regarding leadership styles, are clearly presented and identified.

Research Question 1: What are the different leadership styles used to improve teaching and learning in schools?

Table 5.1 Themes and subthemes regarding the types of leadership used to improve teaching and learning in selected high schools in Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality

Theme	Subthemes	Categories/Issues raised	Participants
Leadership styles used in school	Dominant leadership styles used by leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead by example • Everybody has something to say • Not everyone's opinion is taken for granted 	SP 4, SMT 4, HoD 4 and ED 4
	Transformational and transactional leadership styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivates teachers to understand and meet their goals • Focus on the traditional hierarchical relationship between teachers and learners 	SP 4, SMT 4, HoD 4 and ED 4
	Collegial leadership style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with teachers to make decisions for the overall activities for the smooth running of the school 	SP 4, SMT 4, HoD 4 and ED 4
	Participative and delegative leadership style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A key role is consistency, monitoring and evaluation 	SP 4, SMT 4, HoD 4 and ED 4
	Distributed leadership theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegate and share responsibilities 	SP 4, SMT 4, HoD 4 and ED 4
	Transactional leadership style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward positive behaviours and punish or rebuke negative behaviours not to repeat again 	SP 4, SMT 4, HoD 4 and ED 4
	Consultative leadership style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal shares responsibilities with other teachers 	SP 4, SMT 4, HoD 4 and ED 4
	Delegated leadership style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are instructed on what to do 	SP 4, SMT 4, HoD 4 and ED 4

Note: SP = school principal; SMT = school management team; HoD = head of department; ED = educator

Source: Author's own (2024)

5.2.3 Theme 1: Leadership styles used to improve teaching and learning in schools

Theme 1 is made up of eight subthemes that will each be discussed separately: democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership style; transformational and transactional leadership style; collegial leadership style; participative and delegative leadership style; distributed leadership theory; transactional leadership style; consultative leadership style; and top-down approach to teaching and learning.

5.2.3.1 Subtheme 1: Dominant leadership styles used by school leaders

The responses of the participants regarding the dominant and prevalent leadership styles in schools demonstrate their understanding of these styles. The findings indicated that democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles were the most frequently employed approaches to enhance teaching and learning. As per the feedback from the participants, these leadership styles were utilised to enhance behaviours, foster a positive teaching and learning environment, inspire both teachers and learners, and reinforce positive conduct within the school and classrooms. According to one of the participants:

In my school, we use different types of leadership including democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire, depending on the situation and what we intend to achieve. Whilst I use the autocratic [style] when urgent decisions need to be made, I also allow the teachers and learners to be actively involved in decision-making in the school such as organising extra classes, SGB meetings, electing learner leaders and formulating a learner code of ethics. This means that we have teachers and learners who participate in decision-making and are allowed to take decisions that directly affect them. This makes them to be committed because they are involved in decision-making and their voices are heard.
(SP1)

Some of the participants, including the principals, heads of departments and educators shared a similar view with SP1 about the leadership style used in schools. ED 1 also agreed with HoD 1 who had this to say:

First, I think the leadership style used, includes participative, deliberative, and laissez-faire leadership styles. This is because I as a leader consult and involve all teachers and other stakeholders on issues that affect the school. Using this approach allows us to work as a team for the betterment of our school.

The assumption here seems to indicate that ED1 and HoD1 employed democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles, as they permitted teachers and learners to freely make their own decisions.

5.2.3.2 Discussion on Subtheme 1: Dominant leadership styles used by school leaders

According to the responses of the participants, the school management teams utilised various leadership styles for different purposes, and the choice of leadership style was significantly influenced by the context. Given that schools operate in diverse circumstances and contexts, it is reasonable for school management teams to employ a range of leadership styles to varying degrees, depending on the context and the desired outcome. This was consistent with the findings of Meintjes (2018), who suggested that democratic leadership is employed in schools

when principals aim to encourage participation by individuals in decision-making related to teaching and learning. On the other hand, Wangomo (2021) argued that an authoritative leadership style is employed when the goal is to monitor teachers and ensure that responsibilities are assigned and fulfilled as expected. It is evident that when teachers are both monitored and involved in decision-making, teaching and learning become more effective. Furthermore, these findings seem to suggest the important role that the context of the school plays to ensure that whatever leadership style is adopted, shall be successful.

These findings are aligned with Maponya's (2015) conceptualisation of the instructional leadership theory. According to Maponya, leaders influence teacher behaviour in various ways, which contribute to improved learning and achievement by learners. This shows that providing teachers and learners with a voice, responding promptly to their needs, and involving them in critical decisions that affect them, are just a few of the methods leaders use to influence learners. This perspective agrees with the study conducted by Mkhize and Bhengu (2018), which argued that leaders promote learner progress through direct and indirect approaches.

These findings revealed different approaches utilised by leaders to persuade teachers and learners to support the goals of the school, while also improving educational outcomes. The study showed that different approaches are used by school leaders to motivate teachers and learners to be committed. However, these findings did not indicate the extent to which these leadership styles are used to motivate teachers and learners. Furthermore, the study clearly showed how school leaders do not confine themselves to a single approach when addressing school issues to enhance teaching and learning in schools. Adopting different leadership styles could present significant challenges for the achievement of educational goals.

5.2.3.3 Subtheme 2: Transformational and transactional leadership style recommended by school leaders

Based on the findings of the study, it was evident that schools employed the transformational and transactional leadership style to motivate and support teachers in embracing the vision and goals of the school. Most of the responses indicated that some school leaders utilised transformational and transactional leadership styles to improve the school environment and the interactions among leaders, teachers, and learners. As mentioned earlier, these leadership style were preferred due to their focus on creating an environment that encourages the commitment and active engagement of both teachers and learners in instructional activities at the school. For instance, one principal stated:

I use the transformational and transactional leadership style. With the transformational leadership style, the leader primarily sees the big picture and motivates the teachers to understand and meet their goals. We do this by developing vision, goals and objectives, developing a culture of teaching and learning and promoting interactions among teachers. With transactional leadership style, I focus on the traditional hierarchical relationship that should exist between teachers and learners. In this sense, as a principal I pass message to the HoD and SMT members and they also pass it on to teachers and students. (SP3)

Some of the participants supported this view by pointing out the benefits of using transformational and transactional leadership in schools. A principal and school leadership member responded by saying:

The principal use different types of leadership in our schools to improve teaching and learning. The leaders focus on organising workshops on how teaching and learning can be improved, we make sure that teaching materials are provided in time through transformational leadership approach. Brilliant learners in the school are groomed to assist their peers in class. Besides that, I as a leader myself. I believe in using transactional leadership style to create a positive learning environment by making sure that teachers and learners attend classes all the time as well as trying to minimise loitering and absenteeism. (SMT3)

On the contrary, SMT2 had a different view of the dominant leadership style used in schools, pointing out how other leadership styles are the preferred leadership style used in their schools:

The principal uses the transformational and transactional leadership style to reinforce certain kinds of behaviour in the school and classroom to motivate teachers and learners by giving awards for exceptional performance. (SMT2)

5.2.3.4 Discussion on Subtheme 2: Transformational and transactional leadership style recommended by school leaders

The findings of the study emphasised the prevalent use of transactional and transformational leadership styles by school leaders, particularly showcasing the inclination of transformational leadership towards improving the teaching and learning landscape within schools. While transactional leadership is commonly embraced by leaders, teachers, and learners to boost commitment, performance, and collaboration, there are situations where alternative motivational strategies may be more suitable. For instance, as highlighted by Khumalo (2019), the pivotal roles of this leadership style in school environments contribute significantly to long-term commitment among both teachers and learners, thereby enhancing the overall teaching and learning experiences.

These observations resonate with Burns's (1978) transformational leadership theory, elucidating how leaders strive to instigate behavioural and attitudinal changes among their followers to uplift the educational milieu. Additionally, Ashu et al. (2022) research acknowledges that a leader's ability to establish a clear vision and effective communication channels positively influence teachers and learners. Collectively, these studies show the potential of employing diverse transformational leadership approaches to augment the school environment and shape the attitudes and behaviours of educators towards teaching and learning. However, it is apparent that while leaders are familiar with transformational leadership concepts, their effective implementation in improving schools may require further attention and strategies.

5.2.3.5 Subtheme 3: Collegial leadership in school decision-making to improve teaching and learning

The participants indicated that one of the leadership styles that was used in their schools is the collegial leadership style. The participants responded to this by describing the collegial leadership style as being used to improve the consultation and participation of teachers in leadership decisions. SMT4 stated:

I use collegial and consultative leadership in which the principal shares responsibilities with not only HoDs but also other teachers.

Some participants agreed with SMT4 by explaining how teachers and principals work together in taking decisions for the school management team for smooth administration of the school. SP4 maintained that:

As a leader, I always have teachers and managers be responsible to report their work every week to HoDs and HoDs to me as the principal. Moreover, all the work done is checked including syllabus coverage and I signed my signature. Come up with action plans that may change the negative situation and come up with strategies.

Some participants had an opposite view of the leadership styles used in schools. HoD 3 reported as follows:

The dominant leadership style used is the one that is vested in the principal by the policy and others leading by our discretion as teachers. In this case, school policy makes it clear what is expected of the principal and other leaders, and the roles and responsibilities of teachers and learners. And the policy expects us as leaders to be able to work with other teachers as leaders and colleagues to manage the school. Though, not everything is written down for us to follow. Other leaders and teachers have to ensure that teachers and learners go to class, and they take their studies

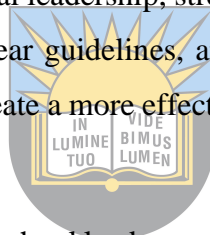
seriously. For instance, to improve results we make sure that learners stay behind for extra classes.

In support of HoD 3, SP3 argued about the importance of defining tasks delegated to teachers and colleagues:

Tasks delegated to teachers should come with a clear rule and powers delegated and must be supervised to avoid abuse of power and encourage collaborative decision-making and teamwork within the framework of collegial leadership.

5.2.3.6 Discussion on Subtheme 3: Collegial leadership in school decision-making to improve teaching and learning

The participant responses paint a mixed picture of leadership styles in the schools studied. While collegial leadership appears to be prevalent, there are variations in its implementation. Some participants emphasized the importance of consultation and participation, while others highlighted the role of policy-driven leadership and accountability. To enhance their leadership practices, schools can promote collegial leadership, strengthen accountability and supervision, ensure policy compliance, provide clear guidelines, and foster a positive school culture. By addressing these areas, schools can create a more effective and equitable learning environment for all stakeholders.



The findings of the study indicate that school leaders employ collegial leadership to bring about positive changes within the school. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, seems to be the choice of school leaders when the objective is to enhance the teaching and learning environment. Transactional leadership, in contrast, is employed when the goal is to enhance commitment, performance, and interactions among leaders, teachers, and learners. This is often achieved by rewarding good behaviour and using various other forms of motivation. According to Khumalo (2019b), the role of collegial leadership in schools is of paramount importance as it contributes to the long-term commitment of both teachers and learners, resulting in significant improvements in teaching and learning within schools.

5.2.3.7 Subtheme 4: Participative and delegative leadership style to improve teaching and learning

As found in the study, the schools employed the participative and delegative leadership style because this style is deemed essential for maintaining consistency in monitoring and evaluation. Some of the participants confirmed that this leadership style empowers leaders to delegate responsibilities to teachers, such as addressing absenteeism, managing disciplinary

matters, conducting parent meetings, and assisting with administrative tasks. The delegation of responsibilities to teachers contributes significantly to the advancement of teaching and learning. For instance, HoD1 expressed:

First, the leadership style we used in my school includes the participative, delegative, and laissez-faire leadership styles. These leadership styles make us work as a team for the betterment of our school.

HoD4 agreed to the use of the participative and delegative leadership style:

The leadership style used in my school is the delegative and participative leadership style whereby teachers are given responsibilities such as dealing with absenteeism, disciplinary issues, meeting with parents and assisting with administration. This helps to maintain discipline in diverse ways vis-a-vis promote teaching and learning.

On the other hand, some of the participants had an opposing view of this. HoD2 responded:

Schools are different so leaders adopt different leadership styles. There are strong and weak leaders based on how they choose to lead. Consistency, monitoring, and evaluation are key roles of the leader.

This participant regarded it as not only about the delegation of duties as previously mentioned, but it is also about being consistent in monitoring and evaluating the different responsibilities.

5.2.3.8 Discussion on Subtheme 4: Participative and delegative leadership style to improve teaching and learning

According to the responses of the participants, school leaders utilise the participative and delegative leadership style to foster better working relationships and teamwork, which are essential for social cohesion. This leadership style also enables leaders to involve all subordinates in leadership roles by delegating duties. While this strategy allows the sharing of leadership duties, it is crucial to supervise and monitor delegated tasks to ensure their successful execution. Therefore, Botha (2016) asserted that for schools to benefit from participative leadership, principals must encourage teachers to strive for professional improvement and enhanced performance. Similarly, it has been found in other studies how schools' benefit from delegated responsibilities and proper monitoring. Furthermore, evaluation of teachers and individuals with delegated responsibilities are essential, as claimed by Al-Mahdy et al. (2018). It is obvious that, without proper monitoring of responsibilities assigned, the desired impact of delegated responsibilities may not be fully realised. Saleem et al. (2020), however, argued that principals must develop teachers' confidence and competencies through monitoring, for them to effectively share and execute leadership

responsibilities. While the delegative leadership style seems to be vital in sharing responsibilities and involving others in decision-making, it however seems that school leaders have limited authority to supervise and monitor, therefore making it challenging to achieve the desired goals.

It is in this direction that instructional leadership has been found to effectively complement transformational leadership. Hallinger's (2010b) instructional leadership theory has been regarded to promote best practices by decentralising functions to enhance teaching and learning. According to Hallinger's conceptualisation of instructional leadership, this aligns with the utilisation of participative and delegative leadership styles in schools to support teaching and learning. From Burns's (1998) perspective of the transformation theory, having to delegate responsibilities and encouraging other stakeholders to participate in leadership responsibilities appears to be one of the best practices leaders could uphold to transform schools. While this approach may have a positive impact on teachers' and individuals' commitment to leadership roles, challenges arise when accountability is required. Consequently, Leithwood (2016) asserted that participative and delegative leadership are most effective in smaller schools where the principal can directly oversee teacher supervision and monitoring. This finding suggests that school leaders should identify a smaller group of committed and competent teachers to entrust with responsibilities. Otherwise, the leader may become burdened with additional monitoring and supervision tasks. Most school leaders likely engage a small group of dedicated teachers to assist in monitoring and maintaining the reputation of the school, especially in the event of the principal's absence.

5.2.3.9 Subtheme 5: Using distributed leadership theory for instructional improvement

According to the responses of the majority of the participants, schools use the distributed leadership style to share leadership responsibilities with teachers. A few participants believed that the leader employs this style while delegating leadership responsibilities to staff members. It appears that these leadership styles are used to solicit teacher involvement in decisions that affect teaching and learning. The following is an excerpt from ED 4:

The school principal uses the shared leadership style to share responsibilities and involve other teachers in decision-making. Thus, the principal as a leader share and distribute tasks to the HoDs and the SMTs as well as involve them in many of the decisions that need to be taken. Some of these duties include assigning responsibilities to teachers to monitor school and class attendance, appointing class teachers, placing teachers on committees, etc. This role is sometimes called share leadership style because it makes leaders to delegate and share responsibilities.

This view is supported by HoD3, SMT4 and ED 4. In the words of ED4:

The school leadership uses the shared leadership style. Where the HoDs, SMTs and teachers are not only consulted but become part of the decisions in the school that need to be taken.

However, some of the participants held an opposite view of the use of shared and consultative leadership styles in schools. SMT3 argued that:

To improve this leadership style, there is a need to focus on providing supervision, workshops, and training programmes so that we as leaders can use them effectively to achieve the objective of the school. The negative side of using distributed leadership is that it is not flexible in the sense it could make members oppose change, especially when a swift decision needs to be taken.

5.2.3.10 Discussion on Subtheme 5: Using distributed leadership theory for instructional improvement

The findings from participants suggested that in situations where the goal is to reduce the burden and responsibilities of leaders, some school leaders have chosen to distribute responsibilities and consult with teachers and other stakeholders. This approach allows teachers to take on leadership roles and participate in crucial decisions that affect them. Additionally, it can be inferred that the use of a distributed leadership theory helps prepare teachers for leadership positions. This aligns with the findings of Nkengbeza and Shava (2016), who argued that principals employ delegated leadership style to decentralise responsibilities and ensure cohesion and a shared culture. On the contrary, Shava and Tlou (2018) discovered that while distributed leadership theory has many advantages, it can overlap with other leadership styles such as democratic and shared leadership styles. The findings show the importance of the choices made by school leaders to share and reduce their burdens and responsibilities as leaders. This approach is critical for leadership development and sustainability because it empowers teachers to take up leadership functions and participate in decisions that potentially affect their commitment.

Similarly, Kruger's (2003) study found that sharing and decentralising leadership responsibilities through a democratic leadership style increases the principal's responsibilities. A school principal will be responsible for monitoring and supervising teachers who have been given leadership responsibilities. In contrast, Hallinger (2011) discovered that shared leadership responsibility is successful and affects the quality of educational delivery when it is aligned with the structures of the school, as well as the vision and mission, as theorised in

instructional leadership. However, the use of these leadership styles can be seen as rigid in the sense that it may cause teachers to resist change when urgent decisions are required from the principal or leaders. Additionally, delegating responsibilities may result in the leader having to supervise and monitor teachers who have been delegated responsibilities. The fact that some teachers fail to fulfil their responsibilities makes teacher supervision and monitoring critical.

The implication here is that teachers and learners may resist changes in certain policies, which can pose challenges for leaders in implementing certain decisions, as implied by the participants. As a result, the conceptualisation of this leadership style appears to be somewhat unclear, which is a cause for concern for those who are using it. Another concern is observed when schools occasionally go on strike due to the incorrect implementation of some leadership styles. These issues are all related to resistance to change. To address this situation, leaders need to develop a comprehensive strategy that not only raises awareness among teachers and stakeholders of external and internal factors that can affect decision-making (Ashu, 2020), but also provides the necessary support for those with delegated responsibilities to succeed.

5.2.3.11 Subtheme 6: Transactional leadership style

The participants indicated that transactional leadership were used in schools to improve behaviour, values and positive attitudes in the school. For instance, SMT1 mentioned that the transactional leadership style was used to reward positive behaviours and punish or rebuke negative behaviours by responding to them. This leadership style as indicated was primarily used to attempt to influence the behaviour of teachers and learners through a mix of rewards and punishments to promote compliance and commitment. This contrast with the autocratic leadership, which focuses on dictating to followers to be committed to teaching and learning in schools as opposed to the autocratic leadership style which dictates. SMT2 responded by saying:

There are various leadership styles used by the principal to manage the school and address various issues depending on the situation we are trying to address. At times I as a leader, have to be harsh when I am dealing with difficult teachers and indiscipline, by inviting culprits to discipline hearings and giving them warning when I have to. And there are times I use the reward system to reward good behaviour and hardworking teachers and learners by giving awards and certificates of recognition. Transactional leadership style is applied where positive behaviours are acknowledged, and misbehaviour and indiscipline are rebuked or punished.

The responses of the school management teams to the question, revealed a divergent view about carrot-and-stick leadership. In support of this view, SMT2 pointed out the importance of motivating learners and teachers to commit to their work by responding:

The principal needs to keep providing the needed support, like supplying learning and teaching support materials, teaching aids and other necessary assistance to motivate learners and teachers to be committed to their work. The leaders and the principals can also use rewards, incentives, and giving praise to teachers and learners when it is due.

On the other hand, SMT3 indicated the need to support teachers and learners by pointing out:

There is a need for constant support for teachers and learners from the school leadership. That is by providing teaching and learning resources like stationery and teaching aids, e.g. computers and projectors where necessary.

HoD4 stressed the importance of providing support to teachers and learners, as opposed to using the carrot-and-stick leadership style by asserting:

They must provide an environment which supports teaching and learning. Ensuring that learners are given a lot of activities and are assessed, with feedback being given.

5.2.3.12 Discussion on Subtheme 6: Transactional leadership style 5,2,3,12

While some principals may welcome the use of measures to promote commitment among both teachers and learners, most of the participants seemed not to be in favour of the transactional leadership style. However, the transactional leadership style was one of the leadership styles that emerged from this study. This leadership style appeared to be used when leaders wanted to motivate teachers and learners to be committed to teaching and learning. The carrot-and-stick approach is like transactional leadership, which is used as a punitive measure to reward good behaviour and punish wrongdoing. This leadership style seems to be employed to motivate teachers and learners to be committed while discouraging them from wrongdoing. According to Malechwani (2018), transactional leadership employs a reward system and leadership by exception. Transactional leadership is effective in environments that demand a clear structure and immediate results (Bwalya, 2023). According to Bwalya (2023), by providing clear expectations, rewards, and directives, these leaders excel in efficiently completing and resulting in achievement. In addition, the transactional leadership style is considered valuable in times of crisis, which enables them to make urgent decision-making and maintain stability.

This finding suggests that transactional leadership, which is likened to the carrot-and-stick leadership, can be used to reward and motivate teachers and learners to be committed. However, these findings do not specify how it can be used to improve the morale and motivation of teachers and learners who are already demotivated. Additionally, this leadership style itself can be problematic in that it does not spell out the criteria for rewarding teachers. Therefore, for such a reward system to be effective, it should focus on task classification, with an expected reward to be given for task completion and positive interactions among team members.

On the other hand, Jekelle (2021) discovered that leaders who use a transactional leadership style do not have a vision of transforming the school as an organisation. Thus, it appears that carrot-and-stick leadership styles, as well as transactional leadership styles, do not really promote teachers' commitment. Principals who use this leadership style may not promote transformation or have a long-term impact on the school, as alluded to by Jekelle (2021). Therefore, for school leaders to benefit from the use of this style of leadership, they must be familiar with the principles of that leadership style to avoid unfair practices or ignorance of the leadership style. Furthermore, as observed through the findings of the study, school principals need to understand the principles and practices of the leadership style they choose to use, especially with the carrot-and-stick approach. To encourage commitment and achievement among teachers and learners, school leaders can probably have a clear vision and plan for improving the school. While the study showed that most of the leaders understood school leadership styles, it was evident that some of them had little understanding of how these leadership styles could be used to improve teaching and learning. By comprehending the advantages and disadvantages of various leadership styles, school leaders can make informed decisions regarding how to best lead their schools and foster an effective learning environment.

5.2.3.13 Subtheme 7: Role of consultative leadership style in teaching and learning

The findings revealed that the consultative leadership style is used in schools by principals to get the involvement and participation of teachers in decision-making. Consultative leadership allowed leaders to engage teachers and learners on important decisions that affect them. Some of the participants pointed out that the consultative leadership style was used when school leaders want to involve participants in decision-making that affected them. SMT4 responded:

This is where the principal consults us about important decisions as well as sharing responsibilities with other teachers through the chairing of meetings, supervising

attendance registers, monitoring learners' behaviour and maintaining discipline in school.

In support of the use of the consultative leadership style, HoD 4 pointed out:

The principal in my school use the consultative leadership style to take decisions. This happens when the HoDs, SMTs and teachers are consulted before important decisions about teaching and learning need to be taken.

In disagreement with the consultative leadership style being used in schools, all the focus group participants, especially FGDL 2 and FGDL 3, expressed concern that their voices are not given an audience. For instance, FGDL 2 pointed out:

School leaders and managers must involve other teachers in decision-making. They need to be patient and not harsh towards learners. Involving learners in decision-making on matters requires leaders to cooperate with learners.

In support of FGDL 2, the following participant mentioned:

We just want school leaders to understand us and allow us to air our voice and contribute to whatever decisions they take concerning us. (FGDL 3)

5.2.3.14 Discussion on Subtheme 7: Role of consultative leadership style in teaching and learning



The interpretation here is that the consultative leadership style is used when a leader wishes to solicit ideas and information from participants to make an informed decision. This seems to be supported by the findings of Ross and Gray (2015). According to these authors, the involvement of staff, teachers, learners, and parents in decision-making is not only important for promoting commitment and teamwork but also contributes to positive school outcomes and learner achievement. Nevertheless, it becomes a challenge when participants complain that their voices are not heard. This indicates that, despite their involvement in decision-making, their contributions are not considered, giving them a reason to complain that their voices are not heard. However, this finding seems to suggest that one critical benefit for using this leadership style is its ability to foster a sense of ownership and commitment among teachers and learners towards the decisions that are made. Consultative leadership seems to be used widely in schools because it ensures that the opinions and interests of all stakeholders are considered by involving them in the decision-making process, leading to improved decision-making and implementation. Thus, it has the ability to contribute to the development of mutual respect and trust between the leader and the group, as members perceive that their opinions are valued.

This assumption appears to be aligned to the instructional leadership theory as well as the transformational leadership theory. According to the findings of research conducted by Shartzter (2009), leaders who successfully establish an environment in which all relevant stakeholders participate in decision-making can effectively improve teaching and learning outcomes. Similarly, Sarros et al. (2008) proposed that, for leaders to set high expectations and improve performance, they must consult, support, and involve teachers and learners in decision-making on issues affecting teaching and learning in schools. It could therefore mean that the need and pressure for leaders to involve other actors force them to adopt consultative leadership to engage teachers and learners. Consulting teachers and learners on issues of teaching and learning not only improves the school environment but also contributes to job satisfaction (Paramboor et al., 2015) among teachers. However, this leadership style becomes difficult to adapt because it stalls decision-making when an urgent decision needs to be made.

5.2.3.15 Subtheme 8: Using the delegated leadership style to improve teaching and learning

One key finding that emerged was the top-down approach of leadership. The responses indicated that the top-down leadership style is used in schools to instruct what needs to be done and what not to be done. Many of the responses from participants, especially the teachers, supported that the top-down approach of leadership is used by leaders to engage teachers and learners in critical issues that affect teaching and learning in schools. ED 2 responded that:

Leaders in my school often use a top-down approach where you will be told what to do. This makes us always wait on our leaders to tell us what to do.

In support, most of the principals' responses also indicated a top-down approach relationship between the teachers and learners in schools. SP1 responded:

In my school, I focus on critical and sensitive issues whilst leadership responsibilities that have to do with the achievement of goals and objectives are delegated to other staff members. This means allowing me to focus on major issues like the implementation of policies and curriculum that affect the school.

In contrast, only a few of the participants disagreed with the top-down leadership style being used in schools. For instance, responses by a few teachers agreed with the following, as voiced by ED2:

The principal relies much on the use of leadership styles that do not involve us in decision-making. We are only told and instructed what we should do. This leadership

style does not promote commitment because we as teachers don't feel like we are important or recognised in the school.

5.2.3.16 Discussion on Subtheme 8: Using the delegated leadership style to improve teaching and learning

According to the findings, most of the school principals were found to use the top-down leadership style to instruct and direct teachers and learners on what is expected of them. This approach appears to be necessary when school leaders are dealing with sensitive and critical issues. Malechwani (2018) found that a top-down leadership style is important when school principals need to establish and communicate goals, as well as establish clear relationships between followers and performance. According to the study, the top-down approach enables the principal to use a contingent reward system to influence the behaviours of teachers and learners. This finding demonstrates how school leaders can effectively use this leadership style to improve communication and build relationships. As shown by this finding, this appears to be a critical approach of improving the school environment.

Conversely, Wangomo's (2021) findings indicate that top-down leadership allows the school leader to closely monitor the work of teachers and ensure that set goals are met on time. Moorosi and Bantwini (2016), on the other hand, found this leadership style to be problematic because it does not encourage school principals to collaborate with their staff in making joint decisions. As the participants pointed out, this leadership style not only discourages consultation but also does not empower teachers and learners to make decisions on their own. While this leadership style may be used to address important issues, the findings suggest that it may lead to a situation in which teachers do not fully support the decisions made by school leaders.

5.2.4 Research Question 2: Why is the role of school leaders important in teaching and learning in schools? tance of school leadership in improving teaching and learning in schools?

R6When the participants were asked to explain the importance of leadership in their schools, six subthemes emerged, as shown in Table 5.4. These include motivating learners and teachers; creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning; providing supervision and monitoring, ensuring teaching and learning resources; effective leadership and management; and maintaining school discipline. According to the participants, school leadership is critical

for monitoring and supporting teachers to help them perform well and improve their performance.

Table 5.2 Themes and subthemes regarding the importance of school leadership in teaching and learning

Theme	Subthemes	Categories/issues raised	Participants
The importance of school leadership in improving teaching and learning	Improving teaching and learning through motivation of learners and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners and teachers tend to imitate leaders Learners and teachers get inspired by the leaders' behaviours 	SP1, HoD 3, and FGDL 2
	Creating a conducive environment to improve teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that the school environment is safe Improving physical structures Improvement in learners' performance Supporting teaching and learning Improving a working relationships and cooperation between teachers and learners 	ED 2, ED 3, SMT3, and SMT4
	Providing supervision and monitoring to improve teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequently checking the performance of the various departments Checking school and class attendance by learners and teachers Ensuring that teaching and learning go on uninterrupted Supervision of teaching and learning 	SP4, PR3, ED 1 and ED 4
	Providing resources for improved teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the timeous supply of resources Making it easier for teaching and learning 	ED 2, HoD 4, FGDL 3 and FGDL 4
	Provide vision, influence, effective communication, innovation, strategic planning and Planning, organising, directing, supervising, coordinating, budgeting, staffing etc. some how missing in the findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring effective management of the school Ensuring that teaching goes on uninterrupted Long-term planning Managing teacher and learner behaviour Demanding adherence to school policies 	SP2, SP1 and HoD 3
	Maintaining discipline for improved teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking corrective and punitive measures against learners and teachers Improving security in the school Ensuring that rules and regulations are adhered to 	HoD 1 and FGDL 2

Source: Author's own (2024)

5.2.4.1 Subtheme 1: Improving teaching and learning through motivation of learners and teachers

The participants' views on the importance of school leadership in teaching and learning revealed that most of the participants believed school leadership is employed to motivate, inspire, and mentor both learners and teachers, fostering their commitment to teaching and learning in schools. For instance, many of them agreed that their roles involved motivating teachers and learners to be committed to teaching and learning. SP1 indicated that:

As a leader I have to lead by example. That's doing what I am preaching. When to come to school and so on. But to answer this question as a leader, I have different roles I must play. That's including supervising administrative work, teaching, learning, and making sure the school is viable.

Some participants disagreed with leadership using motivation and mentoring to improve teaching and learning in schools. Some participants expressed a concern about the lack of authority on the part of the school principal, which undermines their ability to motivate and mentor. HoD 3 responded:

One thing that is lacking is the authority given to leaders. Principals have limited power to deal with problematic teachers. Leaders' hands are tied as far as dealing with undisciplined learners and teachers. No matter how bad learners are, they have no right to chase them out than to keep them in the school.

FGDL 2, on the other hand, expressed the need for participants to attend classes:

Leaders must ensure that teachers attend classes. Teachers must attend each period. They should ask for assistance from learners. There are classes but some don't attend extra classes. How do you think teaching-learning can be improved? They must be around to monitor us during study time. Because it helps learners to focus on this study and stop disturbing it.

5.2.4.2 Discussion on Subtheme 1: Improving teaching and learning through motivation of learners and teachers

The participants' responses highlighted the vital role of school leaders in motivating teachers and learners, particularly in challenging environments such as rural and low-income communities where schools grapple with issues such as high indiscipline and drug abuse among learners. This challenging context is perceived as a significant contributing factor to the underperformance of both schools and learners. Consequently, there is substantial pressure on school principals to enhance learner achievement and teacher commitment, necessitating effective motivation of both groups to improve overall performance. In addition to these

challenges, school policies, exemplified by the National Education Policy Act of 1996, provide a clear operational framework for school principals and teachers associated with the Educational Labour Relations Council (DBE, 1996). However, these policy directives may pose limitations, constraining school leaders from effectively motivating teachers and learners in ways not explicitly mandated by these policies.

On a positive note, Wachira et al. (2017) demonstrated in their study that a leader's supportive behaviour not only improves the performance of teachers and learners but also motivates them to exhibit commitment. This aligns seamlessly with the instructional leadership theory, emphasising the motivational role that instructional leaders play in enhancing performance through a focus on teaching (Anderson, 2017). Burns (1978) supported this perspective by highlighting the importance that transformational leaders place on boosting the morale, motivation, and values of teachers and learners in the classroom. These findings illustrate the significant influence that school leaders can exert on shaping positive behaviour among teachers and learners, contributing to effective teaching and learning environments. The findings seem to imply that for teachers and learners to be motivated, it is imperative for school leaders to utilise diverse strategies and approaches.

However, the study also acknowledges the responses from other participants, who indicated that some leaders' and teachers' behaviour may not effectively inspire commitment; thus raising concerns about the overall effectiveness of certain leadership approaches. The findings of the study seem to clearly suggest that supporting the leader effectively contribute to shaping an improved school environment and subsequently effective teaching and learning in schools.

5.2.4.3 Subtheme 2: Creating a conducive environment to improve teaching and learning

According to the study participants, school leaders play a crucial role in establishing a conducive environment for teaching and learning. Participant responses indicated that this is achieved by ensuring the safety of the school environment, enhancing physical structures, and fostering positive working relationships and cooperation between learners and teachers. The consensus among the school management teams is that effective school leadership contributes significantly to the improvement of the overall school environment. SMT4 emphasised:

Funding need to be invested in improving the physical infrastructures to ensure that the right environment is created that supports teaching and learning.

In support, participants ED 2 and ED 3 agreed on the role of leadership in improving the school environment through the following responses:

School principals and leaders must ensure the betterment of the school setting, and they ease matters for everybody by improving the school infrastructure, ensuring that classrooms are clean and improving security. They also improve work relationships and cooperation between learners and teachers by involving learner representatives in meetings. (ED 2)

They make and allow the entire school, classroom, and school environment to be in harmony. (ED 3)

A few participants however disagreed by alluding that for school leaders to be able to create a positive climate, they first need to be empowered through training and development for them to be able to improve the school environment. Some members of the school management team were in disagreement, respectively reported the following:

Leaders have to be empowered with the needed skills and they need to be proactive about the core business of the school. (SMT3)

Organising constant workshops on school policies, curriculum, and other important teaching strategies could help teachers to develop their skills, as well as improve the school environment for effective teaching and learning. (SMT4)

5.2.4.4 Discussion on Subtheme 2: Creating a conducive environment to improve teaching and learning

University of Fort Hare

School principals are responsible for continually improving the school environment to support teaching and learning. The participants' findings revealed their contribution to a positive school environment, involving the provision of conducive spaces and essential support systems for teachers and learners. Key measures included enhancing physical infrastructure, security, and fostering positive relationships. However, the participants emphasised the need for training leaders and teachers to transform the school environment, which were lacking due to financial constraints. Feedback highlighted difficulties in maintaining security, cleanliness, and infrastructure, which had an impact on teaching and learning.

Gençer and Samur's (2016) findings highlighted that shifting policy contexts and changing demographics of learners and teachers influenced the school environment. The study noted that challenges such as migration and urbanisation made it difficult for schools to continuously adapt and improve. The dynamic nature of these challenges posed obstacles for school leaders in effectively implementing policies such as CAPS and the NCS to enhance the school environment. Despite the critical role of these policies, it is crucial to sensitise school leaders

through workshops on the importance and effective implementation of these policies. Naidoo (2019) suggested that fostering a culture of teaching and learning to enhance learners' experiences, emphasises the importance of promoting an improved school environment. This, in turn, could enhance accountability and support from school leaders, gaining trust and support from teachers, learners, and staff members.

Contrary to previous findings, Hallinger et al.'s (2017) study on instructional leadership argued that principals bear the responsibility of creating a culture that establishes expectations for learners and teachers. Burns (1978) supported this, highlighting the impact of transformational leaders in fostering positive relationships. The findings of the above authors indicated the significance of improved relationships between leaders and followers for workplace harmony and effective communication. To enhance the school environment, school leaders must prioritise improved working relationships and interactions through effective communication. Certain leadership styles, like autocratic and top-down approaches, may hinder effective communication in some schools, potentially causing dissatisfaction among teachers excluded from decisions affecting them. Leaders adopting these styles should handle them cautiously to improve the school environment. Elasu et al. (2018) suggested that leaders embracing such styles should acknowledge the efforts of teachers and learners by establishing a reward system for deserving individuals. The findings from the study seems to suggest that different measures can be used by the school leader to improve the school environment. It is obvious that using a blend of leadership styles, improving communication, and motivating both students and teachers help to foster a positive environment for improved teaching and learning in schools.

5.2.4.5 Subtheme 3: Providing supervision and monitoring to improve teaching and learning

According to the findings, school leaders play a crucial role in overseeing and tracking the work and attendance of both teachers and learners with the aim of ensuring their commitment to the goals and vision of the school, as expressed by SP4, who alluded to the rationale for such supervision and monitoring:

I check frequently with the various departments about the responsibilities and tasks given to teachers, and the performance of learners to understand what is happening in the school. In addition, I check the attendance of teachers in school and class because they are the ones driving the school. I need to check if resources are available, especially the ones I may have to provide for teaching and learning.

The importance of supervising and monitoring teachers and learners cannot be overstated in achieving the goals of a school, as it is crucial for identifying areas of improvement, addressing issues, and tracking the progress of both teachers and learners. This process ensures that teachers are dedicated and competent in their roles. However, perspectives differ, with participants expressing a belief that while monitoring and supervision are essential, an excessive approach may not necessarily result in improved commitment or effectiveness in fulfilling responsibilities. In the words of SP3:

Responsibilities should be assigned and monitored by other staff members or members of the SMT and not necessarily the principal. Individuals should be made to understand their roles and responsibilities and allow them the room to function independently because we are trained to do what we do. Putting in place tight supervision and monitoring is demotivating because it looks like we don't know nor understand what we have been appointed to do. Responsibilities should be spelt out clearly to us by the principal and we are allowed to work.

In support, some of the participants also concurred by pointing out that tasks given to them should be accompanied by the authority for them to execute their responsibilities effectively without the leader having close supervision and monitoring:

This makes us feel like we don't understand our work without the leader having the authority, effective supervision and monitoring cannot be achieved. (ED 1)

ED 4, on the other hand, responded as follows:

The responsibilities that are assigned to us must come with assigned authority. As this allows us to focus on the work and take critical decisions when they are necessary. Without the principal telling us every time what to do and what not to do. This can frustrate you and make us ineffective with tasks that are assigned.

5.2.4.6 Discussion on Subtheme 3: Providing supervision and monitoring to improve teaching and learning

Improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools necessitates school leaders to institute effective supervision and monitoring mechanisms, preventing disruptions in the educational process. These mechanisms are vital for closely overseeing and supervising activities impacting teaching and learning within the school. While specific measures may vary, the overarching goal is to instil responsibility among individuals in the school and align their efforts with organisational objectives. However, the participant responses indicated that many schools grapple with inadequate supervision and monitoring, often attributed to school principals lacking the necessary authority to enforce effective oversight. Consequently, their control over school activities is compromised, leading to a decline in the quality of teaching

and learning, with learners and teachers potentially not being held sufficiently accountable for their actions.

Mestry's (2017) findings highlighted the necessity of implementing stringent measures for the supervision and monitoring of teachers' and learners' conduct and work. Effective oversight is crucial for enhancing school and learner performance, as well as fostering teacher commitment. However, the challenge faced by many schools in implementing these mechanisms seems to arise from school leaders' reluctance to delegate responsibilities, resulting in an overburdened leadership. In contrast, Namutebi (2019) disagreed, suggesting that poor learner performance cannot be solely attributed to a lack of supervision or monitoring. The study implies that other factors, such as the school environment and the availability of teaching and learning materials, have a significant impact on the educational process. This indicates that even with effective supervision and monitoring in place, the quality of teaching and learning can still be compromised if the school environment and available resources do not adequately support it. Therefore, improving educational quality extends beyond effective supervision and monitoring; it necessitates the provision of adequate teaching and learning resources. It is obvious that effective supervision and monitoring of teachers and learners significantly contribute to improved teaching and learning in schools.

5.2.4.7 Subtheme 4: Providing resources for improved teaching and learning

The availability of teaching and learning resources plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of the educational process. Participant responses highlight that the timely provision of relevant materials facilitates the organisation of teaching and learning in schools. Some participants acknowledged that school leaders hold the responsibility for supplying the necessary resources, with most principals agreeing that, despite their commitment to providing these resources, it is challenging to meet all the requirements of teachers and learners. Participants ED 2 and HoD 4 expressed their views as follows:

As a teacher, I must be the organiser of teaching and learning in the classroom. Also, I am responsible for ensuring the provision of teaching and learning resources which are to be used by learners and other teachers. (ED 2)

I need to check if the resources that are needed by me and the learners are available before I go to class. Especially resources that are critical for me to deliver and facilitate effectively, are provided by the school principal. (HoD 4)

In contrast to this view, most of the focus group participants were not supportive of the leader's role of providing resources for teaching and learning. For instance, the majority complained of a lack of resources in their schools. FGDL 3 responded:

We do not have enough resources in our school, and this makes teaching and learning to be difficult because when we go home, we cannot follow up on what was taught in class. Some of us have to get money from our parents to go and buy the required textbooks.

In support, FGDL 4 responded:

There must be no shortage of resources at all in the school, but we always struggle to have the textbooks we need. As a result, they only make photocopies for us, or we share a few textbooks in class. The school principal provides the textbook and other resources that we need. They must make sure that they provide everything that teachers and learners need.

5.2.4.8 Discussion on Subtheme 4: Providing resources for improved teaching and learning

Improving teaching and learning requires school leaders not only to enhance the school environment but also to address challenges affecting education, with a significant hurdle being the provision of teaching and learning resources that have a direct impact on the quality of education. The findings of the study indicated that essential resources for teaching and learning are often either insufficient or not provided promptly, hindering the facilitation of effective education. Carolissen's (2016) research emphasised how inadequate resources have a significant impact on teaching, learning, and learner performance, identifying it as a major contributing factor to poor academic outcomes. The lack of teaching and learning materials may arise from under-resourced schools or mismanagement of allocated resources for learning and teaching support materials, a prevalent issue, particularly in rural schools. Many rural and less privileged schools consistently face challenges such as textbook shortages and leaders' negligence in providing the necessary resources and infrastructure.

Furthermore, given the socio-economic background of the school and its learners, acquiring resources for teaching and learning becomes a formidable challenge, resulting in most learners underperforming in their studies. There is an urgent need to develop strategies to ensure that school leaders address these challenges related to the inadequate provision of resources affecting schools. Hallinger and Heck (1998) emphasised the pivotal role of teaching and learning materials as tools for instructional leaders to facilitate effective education, implying that the lack of resources in schools can pose a significant challenge for school leaders.

However, despite the presence of adequate infrastructure, competent teachers and leaders, and a positive school environment, many schools struggle to maintain consistent performance. Nonetheless, provision of resources for learning seems to play a significant role in improving teaching and learning in schools.

5.2.4.9 Subtheme 5: Providing leadership and management for improved teaching and learning

According to the findings, a fundamental responsibility of school leaders is to provide effective leadership and management, with the aim of enhancing teaching, learning, and educational outcomes. School leaders are entrusted with guiding, delegating, and sharing authority with other teachers to ensure the efficient administration of the school. Several participants concurred that school leaders, including principals and the school management team, are tasked with ensuring effective leadership and management within the school, as expressed by SP2:

As a leader, I ensure that there is effective leadership and management of the school as well as teaching and learning. My leadership role is ensured by making sure that work is delegated and monitored to ensure that the core business of the school goes on uninterrupted.

SP1 supported this by responding:

There is a need to effectively involve parents in what we do in the school in addition to sharing responsibilities. Also, teachers must take their work seriously. Because they must know they are paid to do their jobs. Support school leaders with management training programmes, and promote a conducive environment and unity.

HoD 3 responded:

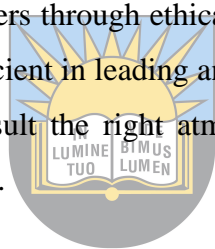
The indiscipline in our schools can be attributed to the fact we as leaders have not been firm on learners. Because we don't stem our authority in dealing with indiscipline and learners' misbehaviour, most learners tend to misbehave on the school premises.

5.2.4.10 Discussion on Subtheme 5: Providing leadership and management for improved teaching and learning

The principal, as the instructional leader, holds the primary responsibility for ensuring effective teaching and learning within the school by fostering collaboration and making informed decisions. Beyond general leadership roles, school leaders bear instructional responsibilities to ensure the smooth functioning of the primary functions of the school. These duties include providing direction, vision, and managing the school for positive educational outcomes. As discovered by Manasseh (2016), one of the myriad responsibilities of school principals is to

ensure that policies influencing the quality of education and administration are well interpreted and implemented for efficient management and an uninterrupted instructional programme. However, as pointed out by some of the participants, it appears that school leaders have not been efficient in fulfilling these responsibilities, leading to disruptions and interruptions in instructional activities throughout the school.

These findings align with Turkoglu and Cansoy's (2018) research, emphasising that the principal's management of instructional time significantly contributes to enhancing teaching and learning in educational institutions. These insights provide crucial guidance on how school leaders should effectively govern schools to improve teaching and learning. In this context, Shatzer's (2009) study found that high-performing schools were led by individuals who were not only qualified and skilled, but also had the ability to provide leadership that positively affected educational outcomes. This aligns with the conceptualisation of transformational leadership by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), asserting that a leader's role is to ensure organisational change and inspire others through ethical conduct. Despite the expectation for school leaders to be effective and efficient in leading and managing schools, this has not been the case in most situations. As a result the right atmosphere for teaching and learning to effectively take place is often affected.



5.2.4.11 Subtheme 6: Maintaining discipline for improved teaching and learning

Maintaining discipline in schools is crucial for creating an environment conducive to teaching and learning, with the majority of those surveyed concurring that it is the responsibility of principals and other school leaders to uphold discipline. Despite the evident existence of indiscipline in most schools, the participants indicated that maintaining school discipline is the duty of school leaders and the SGB. They acknowledged that indiscipline in the classroom significantly contributes to poor learner and school performance, expressing their views as follows:

One thing that is lacking is the authority for school principals to act accordingly when the need arises. School policies do not empower principals with the authority and power to deal with problematic teachers. Leaders' hands are tied as far as dealing with indiscipline[d] learners and teachers. No matter how bad learners are, they have no right to chase them out than to keep them in the school. (HoD 1)

However, most of the focus group participants interviewed had concerns with indiscipline in their schools. FGDL 2 responded:

Indiscipline[d] schools make it difficult for learners to focus on their studies. This has affected the performance of many learners. Schoolteachers must find ways of using appropriate discipline measures to control the misbehaviour of learners.

5.2.4.12 Discussion on Subtheme 6: Maintaining discipline for improved teaching and learning

The findings of the study revealed that effective teaching and learning in most schools are hindered by a high rate of indiscipline among both learners and teachers. This issue can be attributed to several factors, including the learners' socio-economic backgrounds, the location of the school, the high levels of poverty of learners, and leadership challenges in many schools. As mentioned earlier, these factors make it challenging for schools in townships and rural areas to achieve good academic performance. To enhance the current state of schools, measures need to be implemented to improve the school environment, address issues of indiscipline, and mitigate the negative impact of poverty and other socio-economic factors on teaching and learning. It is also worth noting that the effectiveness of school leaders in addressing these challenges, which affect teaching and learning, hinges on the principal's ability to collaborate with parents, teachers, learners, and other external education stakeholders.

As pointed out by Ahmad and Ismail (2016), strict adherence to discipline rules by teachers and learners is crucial for enabling leadership to have a positive impact on the educational quality of the school and the cultivation of constructive behaviour. This enforcement improves the school environment where leaders can effectively enhance educational quality and encourage positive behaviour within the school. However, many participants found it challenging to reprimand both learners and teachers due to policies that appear to restrict their ability to take appropriate disciplinary actions. This policy stance, as recognised by Saidun et al. (2015), not only leaves newly appointed leaders feeling isolated and unsupported but also erodes the leader's authority. This seems to be a contributing factor to leaders' inability to deal with indiscipline in schools. According to Millar (2015), it is imperative to establish measures that maintain discipline and regulate learner behaviour to encourage positive conduct among learners. This highlights the importance of maintaining an orderly classroom environment where everyone is under control for effective teaching and learning. The findings of the study align with both instructional and transformational theories, indicating a significant level of indiscipline due to principals lacking the authority to address it directly. To improve school discipline, school principals must work collaboratively with parents and other stakeholders.

5.2.5 Research Question 3: What are the challenges that school leaders encounter in influencing teaching and learning in their schools?

The third theme comprises eight subthemes, encompassing various challenges faced by school leaders. These themes include the impact of the school and children’s disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds; the implications of Covid-19 protocols and their impact on teaching and learning; policy challenges and their impact on teaching and learning; disruptions in teaching and learning in schools; limited parental involvement and its impact on teaching and learner; indiscipline among learners; shortages of teaching staff in schools; and inadequate supply of resources. This is outlined in detail in Table 5.5.

Table 5.3 Themes and subthemes regarding the challenges faced by school leaders

Theme	Subthemes	Categories	Participants
Challenges encountered by school leadership	Poor socio-economic background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor communities Learners from poor families/parents Difficulty in attracting qualified teachers 	SMT 1 and HoD 4
	Covid-19 protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interruption of schooling Lack of support from teachers Lack of technology for online teaching Loss of academic year 	SP1, SP3 and HoD 4
	Policy challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of understanding of school policies School policies promote indiscipline among learners Policy interpretation strengthened learner indiscipline against teachers 	SP2, SMT2 and ED 3
	Disruptions in teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The academic calendar does not make room for other events that happens The inability of parents to assist their kids Teacher’s non-attendance and absenteeism Teacher Union activities in school 	SP1, FGDL 1 and SP2
	Lack of parental involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most learners stay with their grandparents Illiterate parents The apathy of parents towards their children’s education 	SP2 and SP1
	Indiscipline among learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor attendance and absenteeism of learners Use of drugs in school Bullying and gangsterism in schools 	SMT2, ED 3 and FGDL 4

Theme	Subthemes	Categories	Participants
	Shortage of teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff establishment • Quality teaching is affected • Multigrade system • Technological challenges (Covid-19) 	HoD 3, SP4 and HoD 4
	Inadequate supply of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of teaching and learning materials • The lack of classrooms leads to overcrowding • Infrastructural deficit • Theft of textbooks 	SP4 and HoD 2

Note: SP = school principal; SMT = school management team; HoD = head of department; ED = educator
Source: Author's own (2024)

5.2.5.1 Subtheme 1: Disadvantaged socio-economic background of schools

School leaders operating in areas with low socio-economic conditions encounter substantial challenges stemming from factors such as poverty, impoverished communities, and learners hailing from low-income families. Additionally, the geographical location of the school may lead to difficulties, including a shortage of qualified teachers. The study participants acknowledged that the socio-economic backgrounds of the learners and the environment of the school negatively affected teaching and learning. As articulated by one participant, SMT 1, school leaders must grapple with challenges such as poverty and complex family backgrounds. To overcome these hurdles, school leaders must develop a profound understanding of the community's needs and implement effective strategies to address them. These strategies may include increased community involvement, targeted resource allocation and support, and a focus on professional development for themselves and their staff. SMT 1 added:

Poverty, dysfunctional family background, technological challenges, infrastructural deficit, bullying in school, bad attitude and behaviour of the learner, and lack of parental involvement.

Conversely, HoD 4 was of the view that the right environment is provided to support teaching and learning:

As a school, we have to provide an environment which supports teaching and learning. Ensuring that learners are given a lot of activities and are assessed, and feedback is given.

5.2.5.2 Discussion on Subtheme 1: Disadvantaged socio-economic background of schools

These findings indicate that socio-economic status significantly hinders educational outcomes in schools. This may be attributed to the fact that these schools are situated in rural and township areas characterised by low socio-economic status among the local populations, parents, and families. Many of these communities lack profitable business ventures to support the schools and learners. While initiatives such as school nutrition meal programmes and the provision of sanitary pads to adolescent girls have been implemented to mitigate these effects, they have proven ineffective in counteracting the negative consequences of impoverished socio-economic conditions on classroom instruction and learner development. Steyn (2017) revealed the need for government assistance to uplift rural schools, allowing them to compete academically with their counterparts in urban and suburban areas. However, the specific methods for accomplishing this in underprivileged schools remained unclear.

Anderson (2017) contended that dysfunctional schools can undergo transformation when a transformational leader mobilises various stakeholders to engage in the teaching and learning process. In this scenario, learners take ownership of their schoolwork, parents provide support from home, teachers deliver the curriculum, and the principal ensures the provision of resources, monitoring, and support. Such an approach may lead to a positive change in the school environment. In spite of measures that schools can adopt to improve teaching and learning, it seems that the geographical and sociocultural location of the schools have a significant impact on the quality of teaching in the schools. Certain social factors such as poverty, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate supply of teaching and learning resources have a detrimental impact on teaching and learning in schools.

5.2.5.3 Subtheme 2: Covid-19 protocols and their impact on teaching and learning

According to participant responses, the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated protocols had far-reaching effects on not only learners and teachers but also on the entire education system and instructional activities in schools. As some of the participants indicated, the pandemic led to school interruptions and significant time loss during the academic year. The majority of responses from principals revealed that the situation was exacerbated by a lack of resources, particularly online teaching platforms, to compensate for the lost teaching and learning time. Participants' views on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic showed how the crisis was a major

setback with profound consequences for teaching and learning in schools. SP1 responded as follows:

The Covid-19 crisis interrupted the schooling system which made it difficult for teachers to complete the curriculum. This affected the performance of learners and the school in both internal and external exams.

SP3 responded:

I have lost almost half of the year due to Covid-19 pandemic. It's difficult to cover the lost time because learners will be writing end-of-year examinations which will not be extended.

HoD 4 was of the view that online teaching and learning were affected because of the lack of online technology and platforms:

We are supposed to teach learners online and through other online platforms. However, the school has not provided us and the learners with this technology to make teaching and learning much easier.

5.2.5.4 Discussion on Subtheme 2: Covid-19 protocols and their impact on teaching and learning



The Covid-19 pandemic emerged as a major concern that greatly disrupted teaching and learning in schools. The participants' responses showed the extent to which Covid-19 has affected teaching and learning, thus, revealing the severe effect of Covid-19 on teaching and learning, because most schools were ill-prepared to handle such a crisis of this magnitude. In response to the pandemic, the South African government and especially the DBE, were compelled to implement certain protocols and measures to control this pandemic in schools. However, most of these protocols and measures aimed at controlling the impact of Covid-19 on teaching and learning were not adequate nor effectively implemented.

Additionally, due to the lack of essential resources required to provide alternative teaching and learning platforms for remote learning, most schools were forced to abandon any tentative plans for educating learners at home. Johnson et al. (2016) argued that global issues like Covid-19 have a detrimental effect on education. This seems to suggest the failure of education authorities to recognise the role of global trends on the country's education. This is also the reason why most schools were completely caught off guard when the pandemic started. It is therefore important that schools must consider the incorporation of essential technologies and online teaching and learning platforms that offer alternatives to traditional in-person

instruction. To avert this in future, it is important for school leaders to continue to explore the use of online platforms as a measure to keep teaching and learning uninterrupted.

5.2.5.5 Subtheme 3: Policy challenges and their impact on teaching and learning

Policy-related issues were among the concerns raised by participants regarding teaching and learning. Most policy challenges mentioned by the participants included a lack of comprehension of school policies, policies that inadvertently promote learner indiscipline, difficulties in interpreting policies, and ineffective policy implementation. Most principals and participants agreed that policy interpretation and implementation posed significant challenges for teachers and leaders. SP2 stated the importance of understanding the SASA policy, curriculum and assessment policies, the NCS and other important school policies and their implications for education:

With regard to school policies, there is a South African School Act and the human rights which are enshrined in the National Constitution make it difficult for learners to be disciplined and also maintain good behaviour in school. According to these policies, the school principals and teachers could be fined or even imprisoned for trying to expel learners or discipline learners. These policies embolden learners to misbehave. As a leader, you must understand all these policies and their significance to education. Some stakeholders are only interested in the learner's rights. This makes it difficult to keep discipline in school. (SP2)

In contrast, SMT2 responded that indiscipline in schools is high because it is either school policies that are not clear on how indiscipline should be handled or it is difficult for school authorities to interpret indiscipline policies:

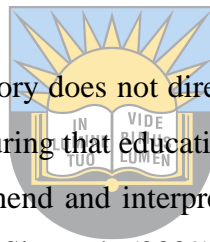
Some of the policies on learner indiscipline are not clear, so it becomes difficult to implement them. Some of these policies have to be implemented in line with the national Constitution on human rights. As such it becomes difficult for us as leaders and teachers to be able to interpret all these policies and use them to curb indiscipline.

In support, ED 3 explained the need for policies to be put in place to be followed by both learners and teachers:

There are policies in place like SASA, NCS and schools' attendance policies that need to be followed by teachers and learners in schools. For us to be able to implement these policies, we must understand them and know how to implement them to control indiscipline.

5.2.5.6 Discussion on Subtheme 3: Policy challenges and their impact on teaching and learning

The findings of the study unambiguously demonstrated that policy issues, along with their implementation and interpretation, are substantial hindrances to effective school curriculum delivery. According to the findings, most school leaders lack a comprehensive understanding of school policies, as well as the curriculum, which should serve as a framework for teaching. Even though these policies are designed to guide effective teaching and learning in schools, it is evident that most leaders struggle to correctly interpret and implement them for effective instructional intervention. Therefore, as Akoojee and McGrath (2014) found, teaching and learning in schools often suffer because the curriculum and other critical school policies are not effectively implemented to promote quality teaching and learning in schools. School policies are intended to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. consequently, inadequate policy implementation knowledge may affect the quality of teaching and learning in some schools.



While the instructional leadership theory does not directly endorse this finding, it does show the significance of school leaders ensuring that educational outcomes are achieved (Hallinger, 2010b). School leaders must comprehend and interpret school policies to attain educational outcomes. This notion is reinforced by Shatzer's (2009) discovery that school principals should not only be qualified but also proficient in their role as instructional leaders. This implies that a transformational leader, through a thorough understanding of school policies, can initiate positive change in the school environment for effective teaching and learning (Anderson, 2017). While school policies are meant to improve the quality of education in schools, it is evident that most of the school leaders struggle with implementation; hence, teaching and learning are affected. To effectively implement these policies, it is important that workshops on these policies are periodically provided.

5.2.5.7 Subtheme 4: Disruptions in teaching and learning in schools

According to the participants, extracurricular activities in schools disrupt teaching and learning, presenting a significant challenge to school leadership. Activities such as staff meetings, sporting events, cultural activities, and teacher union meetings held during instructional hours have an impact on teaching and learning in schools. Other concerns raised by participants include the loss of time, absenteeism, and non-attendance at school, all of which are considered major disruptions to teaching and learning. Some participants concurred that school disruptions

are a notable challenge that affects the leadership's responsibility to ensure effective teaching and learning. SP2 provided the following response:

It becomes difficult to complete the academic calendar because of unforeseen circumstances that come to play. Some of these include sports events, entertainment, cultural activities, and meetings which the academic calendar doesn't make room for other events that happen.

FGDL 1 responded in support of the above:

There is not much improvement because a lot of them are lazy. Some of the teachers are old and are to be replaced with young teachers. Some teachers always give us a lot of assignments and activities to do, which is good but also has its negative side. I feel like it doesn't contribute much as they can teach and punish in a resentful way.

However, SP 1 was of the view that to make up for the lost time, remedial classes should be organised for learners:

There are remedial classes but not all learners and teachers attend. Weekend classes are organised, and extra classes are also organised. Learners are motivated to join JENN.

5.2.5.8 Discussion on Subtheme 4: Disruptions in teaching and learning in schools

The findings of the study uncovered disruptions in schools that significantly affected teaching and learning. It is evident that most schools lack measures to control the disruptions of teaching and learning caused by various events within the schools. Absenteeism and meetings emerged as major contributors to disruptions in most schools. For instance, it is evident that many teachers were absent from school without valid reasons, and no punitive or disciplinary actions were taken against them. While teachers are expected to take leave if they want to absent themselves, most teachers will absent themselves without informing the school principal. This results in a situation where learners are not being attended to. Other findings that had an impact on teaching and learning time were extracurricular activities. It seems most of the schools spent a lot of time engaging in extracurricular activities. As noted by Mestry (2017), while extracurricular activities are important for the development of learners, they should not replace teaching and learning time. It can thus be inferred that schools and learners were excessively engaged in other events such as meetings, sporting activities, and other extracurricular activities that interfered with teaching and learning time.

In alignment with this concern, Naidoo (2019) suggested strategies to improve extracurricular activities and other events in schools without competing with teaching and learning time. Some

of Naidoo's recommendations include extending teaching and learning hours, shifting extracurricular activities to weekends and after regular school hours, and scheduling school meetings after school hours to ensure the completion of the school curriculum and syllabus. The present scenario, where school meetings and other extracurricular activities occur during school hours, poses a significant challenge to teaching and learning. School leaders must consider either extending teaching and learning time to accommodate extracurricular activities or pushing these events to weekends so that teaching and learning periods can be used for the right purpose. While extracurricular activities play a significant role in the physical development of students, it is important that they do not interfere with teaching and learning, which is the core business of schools. Therefore, school leaders should consider moving extracurricular activities and other events that compete with school time to either weekends or after school hours.

5.2.5.9 Subtheme 5: Lack of parental involvement and its effect on teaching and learning

The participants highlighted a lack of parental involvement as one of the challenges faced by school principals and learners. They provided several reasons to explain the lack of parental involvement and the difficulty of the school in engaging parents. These reasons included learners living with their grandparents, the high illiteracy rate among parents, and parental disinterest in their children's education. Some participants concurred that the lack of parental involvement in schools has a detrimental impact on the school environment as well as teaching and learning. SP2 emphasised the role of illiteracy in contributing to the lack of parental involvement in their children's education:

Most of the learners are staying with their grandparents who do not participate in meetings. Illiteracy also plays a major role in the poor quality of education in school. Parents are not able to assist their children with schoolwork.

SP1 stressed the need for school leaders to play their parental role in the school:

There are quite a few learners who are from dysfunctional homes and poor backgrounds. As a result, they don't have the kind of parental support that they need to be supported in their studies. This situation compels us to act as parents and provide the parental support that learners need. By way of assisting them with their assignments and trying to motivate them about the importance of their studies.

5.2.5.10 Discussion on Subtheme 5: Lack of parental involvement and its effect on teaching and learning

The findings of the study highlighted the crucial role parents play in enhancing the school environment and promoting teaching and learning. Parents who are instrumental in their children's education can contribute significantly to the overall success of the school. SASA (1996) provides clear guidelines on how school leaders should involve the SGB in school leadership and governance. This legislation outlines a framework in which parents are expected to play a vital role in enhancing teaching, learning, and the effective administration of schools. However, the involvement of parents in schools is found to be very minimal, which affects teaching and learning. Their role is particularly evident in the support they offer to schools in matters of discipline, teaching and learning, and, most importantly, governance and leadership. However, it appears that many schools lack significant parental involvement. This lack of parental engagement poses a significant challenge and may be one of the reasons for the educational shortcomings in these schools.

Many parents are illiterate and therefore face difficulties in actively participating in school activities due to a lack of understanding of the value of education. To improve teaching and learning, as well as other school programmes, Hallinger (2018) suggested that school leaders should involve parents in school leadership because they can influence and shape attitudes, commitments, and motivate teachers and learners to enhance learner performance. Some schools do not adhere to this practice, which contradicts SASA (1996), making it challenging for schools and leaders to function effectively. These findings suggest that the limited involvement of parents is not because school leaders do not invite them to participate in school leadership. However, most of these parents are either illiterate or not the real parents, so they do not either understand the importance of education or are not genuinely concerned about the children's school education. For parents to play an effective role in the school, authorities and leaders should consider organising workshops and seminars about their roles in the school.

5.2.5.11 Subtheme 6: Indiscipline among learners in schools

Some participants concurred that there is a high level of indiscipline in schools, which have a negative impact on teaching and learning. Indiscipline in schools affects the school environment, creating difficulties for teachers and learners in improving educational quality. Furthermore, this study revealed that indiscipline in schools and classrooms is a significant contributing factor to ongoing underperformance in schools. School indiscipline manifests

itself in various ways, including poor attendance, drug use, bullying, and gang-related behaviour, all of which disrupt teaching and learning. The response by SMT2 illustrates the challenges posed by indiscipline, including resource theft and drug abuse, which make it difficult to control learners' behaviour:

Disciplinary issues come from learners like theft of textbooks and money. These behaviours make it difficult to control learning. Drug and alcohol abuse is a big challenge which affects behaviour and performance.

ED3 supported by responding:

Absenteeism of learners during the teaching and learning process leads to some learners having an information gap.

FGDL4 also responded:

Because of the attitude of learners. If a teacher shouts at a learner, that learner undermines the teacher. You find a lot of the learners are ill-disciplined and this affects teaching and learning.

5.2.5.12 Discussion on Subtheme 6: Indiscipline among learners in schools

One significant challenge adversely affecting teaching and learning in the school is learner indiscipline, both in the school as a whole, and within the classroom. The findings unambiguously revealed that school leaders have struggled to effectively manage indiscipline in schools, leading to unintended repercussions on teaching and learning. As indicated by the findings, many factors contributed to school leaders finding it difficult to address this challenge, including apathy, a lack of parental involvement, and policy directives that restrict the ability of school leaders and teachers to effectively manage indiscipline and learner behaviour. In their efforts to tackle this issue, most schools have attempted to involve the parents. Unfortunately, these attempts have had limited effect because many parents were reluctant to participate in the leadership and management of the school. It becomes evident that one significant reason for this lack of parental support is rooted in illiteracy and a general disinterest in their children's education. This lack of involvement makes it challenging for parents to actively support the school and maintain strict discipline.

Although most schools have disciplinary policies in place, the rules and regulations are not consistently enforced. This aligns with the findings from Mulford's (2008) study, which indicated that the nature of indiscipline in schools is influenced by the changing demographics in South African schools, raising concerns about the effectiveness of existing policies. According to the instructional leadership perspective proposed by Hallinger and Murphy

(1985), improving learner discipline within the school necessitates that school leaders maintain high visibility within the school environment. By being visible and effectively monitoring learner behaviour, leaders can prevent learners from engaging in misbehaviour. Furthermore, as suggested by Ovando and Cavazos (2005), improving school discipline requires school leaders to not only develop but also consistently implement a code of conduct for learners. These findings show that indiscipline in schools can affect teaching and learning. To deal with indiscipline, it is important that school leaders and the SGB put in place measures to combat and control indiscipline among students.

5.2.5.13 Subtheme 7: Shortage of teaching staff in schools

The findings highlighted a challenge affecting the roles of school leaders, namely, a shortage of teaching staff. This issue is exemplified by the staffing establishment of the school and the utilisation of a multigrade system. The DBE, as the sole employer of teachers, determines the number of teachers assigned to a school base

and on learner enrolment, rather than the subjects offered. To address teacher shortages, the participants revealed that schools hire teachers through SGB positions. HoD 4 suggested that schools should consider engaging external tutors to organise additional classes for learners:

To encourage extra time to do extra classes to save lost time for remedial teaching. Call and use external people to assist. For example, we are looking for tutors to assist such as inviting teachers from outside. We call the parents to explain to them their role in the school.

This is supported by SP4 who pointed out that the shortage of teaching staff due to staff establishment in small schools affects teaching and learning:

It's a human resource, especially in small schools due to staff establishment. This affects the quality of teaching. Some of the classes do not have teachers. Teaching and learning materials are other problems we encounter.

In contrast, HoD 3 disagreed by responding that the issue with teachers is the small pay that they are paid for long hours of work:

Teachers complain about the hours they are paid and the small pay. Leaders have limited authority to act against people for what they are supposed to do and not do. For example, teachers who refuse to carry out scheduled tests can only be requested to give a test.

5.2.5.14 Discussion on Subtheme 7: Shortage of teaching staff in schools

The shortage of teaching staff in schools significantly affected the quality of teaching and learning, leading many schools to resort to multigrade teaching by combining different grades and classes. Additionally, a considerable number of SGB positions have been filled by unqualified teachers, further exacerbating the issue of poor teaching and learning and placing additional burdens on teachers. The quality of teachers is crucial to the success of the school, and a shortage or inadequacy of qualified teachers can severely hinder the effective functioning of school leaders and impede performance. While school leaders take steps to employ unqualified teachers to fill the gap, it is important to provide basic training to ensure that teaching and learning are not adversely affected.

However, this finding contrasts with the results of Makgato's (2015) study, which argued that to mitigate the impact of teacher shortages, school leaders can effectively incorporate the use of information and communication technology and online teaching, providing substantial benefits to learners. This study suggests that promoting the use of technology and online teaching can enhance learners' experiences. Furthermore, these findings indicate that technology and online teaching should be integrated into the teaching and learning process as they complement teachers' efforts and have a significant impact. Consequently, Bellibas et al. (2016) proposed that the instructional role of the leader is to support teachers in effectively implementing the school curriculum, ensuring that teaching and learning goals are achieved. The underlying assumption is that school leaders should provide support to unqualified teachers through in-service training workshops and mentoring to enhance their skills and, consequently, academic performance. However, it is evident that many schools lack the financial resources to provide the necessary gadgets for online teaching and learning. One possible solution to this is to use SBG posts that are much cheaper and funded by the parents of the school.

5.2.5.15 Subtheme 8: Inadequate supply of resources

The participants in the study expressed concerns about a lack of resources, hindering the leaders' ability to improve teaching and learning in schools. This shortage of resources manifested in various ways, including a lack of teaching materials, insufficient classrooms, overcrowded classrooms, infrastructural deficits, and a shortage of textbooks. Several participants noted that the inadequacy of resources had a substantial impact on the effectiveness

of school leaders in facilitating teaching and learning. SMT 3 highlighted the challenges posed by a lack of resources, stating that it makes teaching and learning difficult in the school:

Lack of resources is also a major challenge that makes it difficult for us to improve teaching and learning.

This was supported by SP4:

In terms of human resources, we try to cut down the number of subjects. We share the available human resources. We try to involve community stakeholders. We attach someone from SAPS [South African Police Service] known as an area manager to monitor our schools against the use of drugs.

However, HoD 2 responded:

Ensuring that resources and materials like textbooks, computers, resource centres, photocopiers, writing material, and qualified teachers are adequately provided on time and available.

5.2.5.16 Discussion on Subtheme 8: Inadequate supply of resources

Resources play a crucial role in facilitating effective teaching and learning in schools. However, it has become evident that a significant number of schools lack the essential resources necessary for quality education. This deficiency is often attributed to schools not having adequate funds to acquire the required educational materials. The responses indicated that both human and material resources are crucial, and shortages in critical teaching materials such as textbooks and computers have a negative impact on teaching and learning. Furthermore, the low socio-economic status of both the school and parents adds to the challenge of obtaining the necessary resources for effective teaching and learning. To overcome this challenge schools, school leaders should make budgetary plans to resources the schools.

Al Kindy et al. (2016) supported this claim, emphasising that a scarcity of resources within schools, coupled with financial constraints, posed a significant challenge for school leaders to effectively motivate teachers and learners to perform. This pressing issue requires the attention of school leaders and education authorities, highlighting the importance of timely provision of the necessary resources to prevent disruptions in teaching and learning. A report by Bush and Glover in 2017 further confirmed these challenges, indicating that the implementation of science and technology programmes in schools faces various obstacles, such as limited time, insufficient support, and a lack of resources for learning and teaching support materials. The shortage of learning and teaching support materials and a conducive environment is evidently

impacting teaching and learning in these schools, emphasising the need for collaborative efforts between school leaders, education authorities, and parents to address the resource shortage.

5.2.6 Research Question 4: Which leadership framework can be used to improve teaching and learning in schools?

The fourth theme includes seven subthemes, which are measures that school leaders take in order to improve the school environment and the quality of teaching and learning in schools, as shown in Table 5.6. These subthemes are: improving school leadership competencies and skills; formulating and interpreting school policies; developing and empowering teachers, class visits and signing of registers; school intervention plans; participation of teachers and learners in decision-making; and providing support services for teachers and learners.

Table 5.4 Themes and subtitles regarding measures that can be put in place to ensure that the school leader's role in teaching and learning is improved

Theme	Subthemes	Categories/issues raised	Participants
Measures put in place to improve school leadership	Improving school leadership competencies and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading of qualification • Workshop and training programmes • Improving through best practices 	SP2 and HoD 4
	Formulating and interpreting school policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deal with challenges that affect teaching and learning • Rules and regulations • Consequences of breaching school policies 	SP2 and SP3
	Developing and empowering teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To complete the syllabus in good time) • To teach effectively • To deal with indiscipline 	SP2, FGDL 2 and HoD 4
	Implementation of intervention plans in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise classes for slow learners • To make up for the lost time • Organising extra and weekend classes 	SP2, HoD 2, SMT 2 and SMT 3
	Class visits and signing of attendance registers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prevent absenteeism • To prevent nonattendance of classes • To maintain discipline 	SP3, HoD 3 and SP2
	Participation of teachers and learners in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through delegation and consultation • Giving teachers and learners an audience • Promote collaboration and teamwork 	SP1, SP3 and FGDL 3

	Providing teaching and learning resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing teaching resources on time • Improving school building and environment 	FGDL 4, FGDL 2, FGDL 3 and ED 2
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Note: SP = school principal; SMT = school management team; HoD = head of department; ED = educator
Source: Author's own (2024)

5.2.6.1 Subtheme 1: Enhancing school leadership competencies and skills

The participants stressed on the importance of school leaders possessing not only the requisite qualifications but also essential leadership skills and competencies for the effective management of schools. Some of the participants concurred that school leaders must work on honing their leadership skills to enhance school environments and support both teachers and learners. Furthermore, several participants emphasised the necessity of workshops and training programmes in this endeavour, aiming to improve the overall school environment and provide support to teachers and learners.

According to SP2 school leaders have the responsibility of providing training programmes to improve the school environment:

I think school leaders and management teams must be provided with training programmes that promote a conducive environment and unity in the school. We can improve our teaching methods in teaching and learning as the learners that we teach are from different and diverse backgrounds.



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This is collaborated by FGDL 2 who expressed the need for workshops to be organised for teachers:

Workshops should be organised for a teacher to improve their knowledge and how to share information in class.

Some participants were of the view that schools need to appoint leaders who are competent and have a good track record. A few participants argued that instead of organising workshops for school principals, the school authority should rather ensure that principals that are appointed are qualified and have the requisite competencies. HoD 4 opined:

It is important that principals are appointed on merits and come on board with vast experience and competencies that will make them improve the school.

5.2.6.2 Discussion on Subtheme 1: Enhancing school leadership competencies and skills

The findings indicate that a notable number of appointed principals lacked essential experience, competencies, and skills for enhancing teaching and learning quality. This is crucial for school leaders as it significantly influences their ability to achieve school goals. Therefore, it is imperative for leaders and the education department to organise training programmes, equipping them with the necessary leadership skills. Measures can be implemented to ensure that newly appointed principals have verifiable management, planning, organising, directing, budgeting and staffing track record and requisite qualifications. A substantial portion of principals may be appointed based on connections or influence, not guaranteeing the most qualified candidates. Poor school performance can be attributed to leaders' inability to competently manage the school. Even in schools with competent leaders, consistent improvement in education quality and learner performance is evident.

Effelsberg et al. (2014) emphasised the importance of appointing qualified and competent individuals with a proven track record as school principals. This suggests that effective principals have the potential to have a positive impact on the satisfaction and commitment of teachers and learners, enhancing both individual and collective performance. Additionally, Nurdianti and Nurdin (2019) asserted that achieving high-quality education requires qualified and competent leaders who can proactively create a conducive environment for teaching and learning, while continually striving for improvement. This finding is critical as it demonstrates how competent and qualified leaders can motivate teachers and learners, fostering commitment to the mission of the school. This contributes to improved individual efforts, teamwork, and collaboration among stakeholders. Having skilled and competent leaders appears to be an essential ingredient for enhancing the quality of the education offered. To improve teaching seems like school leaders must upgrade their leadership competencies to be able to provide instructional leadership in schools.

5.2.6.3 Subtheme 2: Formulating and Interpreting School Policies

To enhance teaching and learning in schools, several participants concurred on the importance of establishing comprehensive school policies, rules, and regulations to address the challenges faced by the school. Additionally, they emphasised the necessity of clearly outlining the consequences for violating these policies, rules, and regulations for both learners and teachers. SP2's perspective aligns with this view:

As a leader, I must be able to formulate policies to deal with school challenges that affect teaching and learning. This can be done by identifying areas of challenge in the school and educating teachers and learners about this policy.

Principal SP3 supported this by responding that rules and regulations on discipline must be strictly adhered to and enforced:

We must stick to our rules and regulation. If the rules and regulations say that visitors are not allowed, those at the gate need to be prevented by enforcing these rules and regulations.

5.2.6.4 Discussion on Subtheme 2: Formulating and interpreting school policies

The findings of the study exposed a lack of clear policy guidelines in many of these schools, particularly concerning pervasive issues such as indiscipline. For the improvement of teaching and learning, schools require a comprehensive understanding of educational policies. Additionally, educational leaders should formulate and effectively implement school policies that offer precise guidance for enhancing teaching and learning while addressing challenges that impede effectiveness. The study indicated that, despite existing school policies outlining a framework for administration and operations, their inadequate implementation negatively affected teaching quality and the overall school environment.

According to Bush and Glover (2016), the dynamic shifts in teacher and learner demographics, coupled with changes in the school context, emphasise the necessity for school leaders to develop and implement policies that align with the evolving needs of the school. Naidoo (2019) agreed, asserting that achieving improved teaching and learning, as well as a transformed school environment, requires school principals to possess the competence to interpret and effectively execute school policies. These findings illustrate the critical role of leaders in interpreting and implementing school policies to enhance teaching and learning. The arguments about changing demographics and dynamic contexts highlighted the importance of school principals to not only formulate but also effectively implement policies that consider the evolving needs of schools. Moreover, the ability of competent leaders to interpret and execute existing policies to mitigate the effects of these changes is crucial for schools to remain relevant.

While the instructional and transformational theories that underpin these studies may not explicitly endorse these findings, their essence emphasises the importance of leaders having a comprehensive understanding of school policies. Angell (2017) found that instructional leadership emphasises the school principal's role in coordinating, supervising, and promoting

the curriculum and instruction, while Burns's (1978) research demonstrated that transformational leaders, through ethical behaviour and effective communication, inspire teachers and learners. To significantly improve instructional activities and transform the school environment, leaders must be well-versed in school policies and operate within the framework they provide. Moreover, it is critical that school leaders effectively implement policies to improve teaching and learning in schools.

5.2.6.5 Subtheme 3: Developing and empowering teachers to be effective

The participants indicated that there was a need for teachers to be empowered and developed in teaching and learning. Poor results in schools were mostly attributed to the fact that most teachers were either underqualified or needed support in facilitating teaching and learning, as simply responded by SP2:

We need to develop and train teachers to teach and complete syllabi and schedules in good time.

This is corroborated by FGDL 2 who pointed to the need that most teachers need a workshop on teaching and learning:

Workshops should be organised for a teacher to improve their knowledge and how to share information in class.

HoD 4 disagreed with the training and development of teachers:

As a supervisor, I should be able to control the work of my teachers and learners to ensure that teaching and learning are effective. I also need to provide the needed support when it is necessary.

5.2.6.6 Discussion on Subtheme 3: Developing and empowering teachers to be effective

Based on the responses, it can be concluded that for teachers to be effective in both teaching and learning, school leaders and authorities must make teacher training and development a continuous process. This is especially important for developing and empowering teachers to easily adapt to changing challenges and effectively deal with the challenges of teaching and learning in schools. Botha (2016) found that supportive school principals not only improve the school environment but also identify the needs of teachers and provide them with the necessary support to be effective and committed. Wilson (2016) agreed, emphasising the role of encouraging school leaders. The study discovered that well-trained teachers make a significant contribution to the achievement of positive educational outcomes. These findings highlight the importance of implementing teacher development programmes, showing how necessary it is

for the continuous training and development of teachers to improve teaching and learning in schools. It appears that the strength of supportive leaders in schools is their ability to identify the different challenges regarding the effectiveness of schools and, in the process, formulate and implement intervention programmes to develop teachers.

According to Shatzer et al. (2014), transformational leaders begin by communicating the vision of the school, setting good examples for teachers and learners to follow, and providing support to teachers and learners for improved culture and intellectual stimulation, all of which foster teachers' and learners' growth and development. This is consistent with Hallinger's (2010) findings on instructional leadership, which emphasised the leader's day-to-day administration and support for teachers, allowing the school to function effectively. Coordination, monitoring and supervision, curriculum development, and instruction are all important functions of transformational leaders. While this finding shows how instructional leadership could provide effective measures to improve teaching and learning, it does not, however, demonstrate how leaders can develop the capacity of teachers to contribute to a supportive school environment.

5.2.6.7 Subtheme 4: Ensure the implementation of intervention plans in schools

The findings of the study revealed the need for schools to have intervention plans to make up for disruptions and time lost in teaching and learning. Most of the participants responded that there is a need for schools and principals to organise intervention plans in the form of extra classes, remedial classes, and weekend classes to assist learners in making up for time lost and disruptions to teaching in the school. SP2 responded that slow learners need to be supported by saying:

Remedial classes for slow learners are organised as some sort of intervention.

HoD 2 and SMT2 responded in support:

We conduct extra classes to cover the time lost. For example, in our school, we organise extra classes from 3 to 6 pm. (HoD 2)

To encourage remedial and weekend classes to ensure that teaching and learning time lost is made up to avoid high failure of learners. (SMT2)

However, SMT3 recommended:

School and staff meetings should be scheduled for after school hours so that teaching and learning are not interrupted. Meetings in schools should not be random. Extra activities should not be organised during teaching and learning time.

5.2.6.8 Discussion on Subtheme 4: Ensure the implementation of intervention plans in schools

The findings of the study revealed that several factors undermined leadership efforts to achieve effective teaching and learning in schools. These factors include the location of the school, its poor socio-economic background, a high poverty rate among parents, and various other challenges. These challenges make it difficult for learners to focus on the class and hinder improvements in teaching and learning. To enhance instructional activities in the school, certain measures must be implemented to support learners and address disruptions in teaching and learning, as well as time lost. These measures may include remedial classes for struggling learners, after-school enrichment programmes, and weekend classes. The lack of intervention plans by leaders could be a causal factor for the poor learner performance witnessed in schools.

This finding aligns with Wangomo's (2021) research, emphasising the need for close monitoring and supervision of teachers to ensure that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively and within the budget. Hompashe (2018) argued that improving the school climate, along with the commitment of teachers and learners, served as a significant intervention plan to enhance learners' achievement. The study revealed the need for involving various school stakeholders in decision-making to foster a sense of belonging and commitment among the personnel to the vision of the school. While these studies yielded distinct but interconnected findings, it is evident that to prevent disruptions in schools, leaders must implement measures to control activities that compete with teaching and learning time. Intervention plans by schools are effective measures for improving the school environment, and teaching and learning. Although Burns (1978) claimed that leaders' relationship and interactions with teachers and learners contribute to improving the school environment, leaders need to ensure that there are intervention plans implemented to support teaching and learning in schools.

5.2.6.9 Subtheme 5: Class visits and signing of school and class attendance registers

According to the findings, regular classroom visits by school principals are essential to ensure that teachers and learners attend classes, thereby improving teaching and learning in schools. Some participants also emphasised the importance of both learners and teachers signing registers. They believed that principals conducting class visits and the signing of registers would motivate teachers and learners to attend school and classes. As stated by SP3:

I have to visit classes to ensure that teachers honour their periods and that learners regularly attend classes. I also insist on the marking of registers by teachers and

learners. To do these registers in the school are to be submitted to me on Friday morning for inspection and the marking of registers by Friday.

One of the participants concurred by saying:

There is a need for us leaders to make sure that teachers who attend are always in school and the classroom and teachers don't sit in the staff room talking the whole day and leaving the learners alone. (HoD 3)

In contrast, SP2 suggested the need for teachers to be motivated to improve their attitude and do their work very well:

Teachers need to be motivated and encouraged by school leaders to change their attitudes about their work. Knowing and understanding the differences and individual needs help us to know how to inspire them. We can also use strategies like praising the teacher when it is due.

5.2.6.10 Discussion on Subtheme 5: Class visits and signing of school and class attendance registers

Based on the responses, it is evident that learner and teacher absenteeism, as well as nonattendance of class by both teachers and learners, are prevalent issues in schools. A significant number of learners and teachers do not attend classes regularly, possibly due to the absence of effective supervision and monitoring systems to ensure school and class attendance. This situation can be linked to the poor performance of many schools and learners. Consequently, some of the participants advocate for the implementation of measures such as class visits and attendance registers to reduce absenteeism and non-attendance in both school and classes. Class visits can help ensure that both teachers and learners adhere to class schedules, significantly improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

According to Sechudi and Olivier's (2016) findings, in an evolving educational landscape, authorities and school leaders are expected to make regular visits to schools and classrooms to explore ways to enhance teaching and learning. Namutebi (2019), in contrast, stated that motivated teachers and learners do not require continuous monitoring and supervision; their intrinsic motivation and commitment to teaching and learning drive their dedication. This suggests that motivated and committed teachers and learners exhibit strong self-discipline and commitment. Nevertheless, it is considered best practice to monitor and supervise teaching and learning to ensure quality.

The findings of this study align with those of Hallinger and Heck (1998) concerning the instructional leadership role in schools. According to this study, instructional leaders are

responsible for the day-to-day school administration and providing leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). This aligns with Maponya's (2015) findings about instructional leaders, which emphasised that the behaviour of instructional leaders influences the conduct of teachers and learners, ultimately leading to the achievement of educational goals. Positive school behaviour and effective teaching and learning can be improved in schools through the visibility of the school principal and other leaders in the school premises and classroom.

5.2.6.11 Subtheme 6: Participation in decision-making

Some participants concurred that, for school leaders to enhance the quality of education in schools, teachers, learners, and parents must be actively involved in decisions that pertain to teaching and learning in the classroom. Most principals recognised the necessity of involving teachers and learners in decisions that affect them. Some participants expressed this sentiment, as noted by SP1:

As leaders, we have to put in place measures to ensure that teachers and learners participate in management decisions that affect them in teaching and learning.

This is supported by SP3, who emphasised the need for school principals to adopt a participative leadership style that involves other school actors in decision-making:

As a school principal and other leaders have to use [a] participative leadership style as this makes teachers and learners own the decisions made regarding teaching and learning.

However, some learners expressed the need for school leaders to grant them the audience to contribute to decision-making, as expressed by FGDL3:

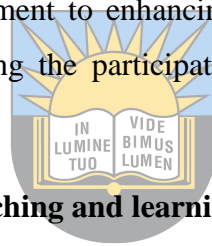
School leaders and the department should create platforms that allow interactions between school leaders, teachers, and learners.

5.2.6.12 Discussion on Subtheme 6: Participation in decision-making

The findings of the study revealed the significance of involving teachers, learners, and other school stakeholders in critical decisions pertaining to teaching and learning. This involvement is crucial as it directly affects the acceptance and implementation of these decisions within schools. Teachers, learners, and parents are fundamental stakeholders in the realm of teaching and learning; thus, it is imperative for school leaders to engage them in decisions that influence the educational process. Nevertheless, the findings suggested that, at present, teachers and learners are not commonly involved in major decisions related to teaching and learning. This

lack of participation in decisions affects teachers and learners, making it challenging for them to embrace and support the decisions made by school leaders.

Komariah et al. (2020) emphasised that participative leadership focuses on gathering insights from teachers and learners in school decision-making, fostering group support for the vision and objectives of the school. Saleem et al. (2020) proposed that involving various stakeholders and school participants enables leaders to promote collaborative decision-making, with employees consulted to share their ideas, which can then be integrated into important decisions. These findings suggested that for leaders to secure support from major stakeholders within the school, they must include them in decisions that pertain to their interests. This aligns with Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) conclusion that instructional leaders need to create a positive atmosphere engaging all key stakeholders in decisions related to teaching and learning. According to this conclusion, instructional leaders should work towards creating a positive environment that nurtures teaching and learning, setting high expectations for both teachers and learners regarding their commitment to enhancing teaching and learning. This can be effectively achieved through soliciting the participation of teachers and students who are affected by the decisions taken.



5.2.6.13 Subtheme 7: Providing teaching and learning resources

The responses from some of the participants revealed the issue of resource inadequacy in schools regarding teaching and learning materials. Most of the participants expressed an urgent need for school principals and educational authorities to enhance the availability of resources to facilitate quality teaching and learning within schools. FGDL 4 emphasised the necessity of providing resources such as *isiXhosa* in schools:

Provide the needed resources for learners that do not have textbooks. For example, isiXhosa textbooks are very rare in school.

This is supported by FGDL 2 who claimed that the lack of resources in the school made it difficult for them to understand the lessons:

There is a lack of resources that make us understand the lesson better. For example, teachers can explain but learners need a video to have a better understanding, but these resources are not there.

FGDL 3 concurred by responding that the DBE has to intervene by supplying schools with the textbooks needed:

The Department of Basic Education and school leaders should focus on supplying textbooks when they are needed.

Conversely, ED 2 was of the view that despite the challenge of the shortage of teaching and learning resources in this school, teachers must make the best of the prevailing situation:

We as teachers need to work with the limited resources that are available and try to rise above the challenges in the school that affect teaching and learning.

5.2.6.14 Discussion on Subtheme 7: Providing teaching and learning resources

According to participants' responses, many schools either lack the necessary teaching and learning resources or face shortages, potentially hindering the quality of education. This could significantly contribute to the poor performance of learners in most schools. Rectifying this situation requires school leaders to take the necessary measures to acquire the resources for effective teaching and learning. However, financial constraints pose a common challenge for many schools in obtaining these materials and resources. Despite these limitations, there are practical steps that teachers and school administrators can take to address this issue. In cases of limited teaching resources, one practical solution is for teachers to plan and make photocopies in advance for teaching purposes.

The findings of Johnson et al. (2016) suggested that both school authorities and the national government should make efforts to provide schools with the necessary teaching and learning resources, while promoting the integration of science and technology into the educational process. Similarly, Makgato (2015) pointed out that school leaders and teachers are responsible for the failure to effectively integrate the essential resources, such as online platforms and other educational technologies to equip learners with the knowledge required to enhance school performance. Alternatively, these findings may show that schools and teachers need to consider how they can best utilise the existing resources for the benefit of the school. One important solution to this issue is to involve parents and the community to donate for the cause of securing the necessary resources. Furthermore, the school should make it a priority to use their limited funding to secure the necessary resources for both teachers and learners.

5.3 Extracts from documents

5.3.1 Theme 1: Providing teaching and learning resources

5.3.1.1 Subtheme 1: Teacher Attendance Register

Analysing teacher attendance records in these schools revealed a troubling concern and pattern. Findings from document analysis revealed that not all teachers signed the attendance register during the school day. Though this seems to suggest that some teachers may not have been present at work on these days, it is essential to establish that teachers' absence from school was not documented. There could be a possibility that their absence was due to a leave that was obtained adequately with permission from the school management.

Nonetheless, even if educators were absent with approved permission, this adversely affects teaching and learning time. The time for teaching and learning is a valuable resource that needs to be honoured. Hence, when teachers stay away from school and class, either with or without permission, students tend to miss out on the facilitation of teaching and learning, assessment, engagement, and feedback from educators.

Mitigating this challenge requires school leaders to control and manage absenteeism from school and non-attendance of classes. Some of the measures that schools can adopt to address absenteeism and non-attendance of classes include: School leaders should establish clear policies on the attendance of schools and classes, monitor the attendance of teachers, give teachers the needed support and teaching and learning resources, hold accountable teachers who absent themselves without approval and analyse data in order to apply rewards and punitive actions to teachers behaviour. These measures are in line with the instructional and transactional leadership roles of the school principal and leaders.

For instance, a review of the literature shows that the principal needs to use his instructional responsibilities by putting in place appropriate measures to improve teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2010). Similarly, Shatzer (2009) maintained that, for leaders to effectively manage their schools, they do not necessarily have to be qualified, but proficient in their instructional responsibilities. This ensures that school leaders can effectively provide direction and leadership to improve teaching and learning. Adopting measures that use rewards and punitive actions is in line with the transactional leadership theory. According to Agasisti et al. (2018),

transactional leaders are effective when leaders use an incentive system to reward employees for performance.

5.3.1.2 Subtheme 2: Learners class attendance registers

The analysis of class attendance records across multiple schools reveals a concerning trend: many students are regularly absent from school. Regular absenteeism has significant implications for student learning experiences. Continuous absence and missing class lessons and learning content can significantly contribute to students' underperformance in these schools. Addressing this challenge requires school leaders to implement measures to improve student attendance. One effective approach to dealing with absenteeism is for school leaders to establish strong partnerships with the community and parents to report instances of student absenteeism. This will ensure that leaders promote shared accountability and responsibility among students and address this challenge.

Involving the school community and parents in decision-making regarding the school, teaching, and learning can enhance the school environment. Increased parental involvement promotes a sense of ownership and generates more significant support for quality education and student learning. Providing platforms for parents and other stakeholders to contribute can create a more collaborative atmosphere, allowing stakeholders to share their perspectives and views and enhancing teaching and learning. Additionally, school principals can implement positive initiatives to involve students in decision-making and improve their relationships with teachers to support teaching and learning. These measures create a conducive and supportive teaching and learning environment and enhance students' commitment and behaviour.

Involving stakeholders in decision-making to improve the absenteeism of students is aligned with the conceptualisation of democratic leadership principles. Moorosi and Bantwini (2016) assert that when democratic leadership is combined with other leadership styles, this helps improve followers' commitment and behaviour. Butelezi (2016) argued that the use of democratic leadership practices in the South African school context has become critical to ensure social justice for both teachers and learners. Democratically involving learners and teachers in the school's decision-making prevent the abuse of power and promotes flexibility and creativity by decentralising leadership responsibilities. Additionally, Wachira et al. (2017) claimed that the supportive behaviour of the school leader for teachers and learners can enhance the performance and productivity of teachers and learners. These findings support school leaders' role in improving poor attendance of learners in schools.

5.3.1.3 Subtheme 3: School governing body and parent meeting proceedings

The analysis of the minutes of SGB meetings revealed a lack of parental involvement in the school, with only a few parents attending these meetings. Several factors may contribute to this lack of involvement, which include communication breakdowns between school leaders and parents, high rates of illiteracy and poverty among parents, and the fact that many learners do not live with their parents for several reasons. These factors collectively contribute to the lack of parental interest in contributing to school activities. This eventually leads to a negative impact on the learning outcomes and learners' success. Mitigating this challenge may require school leaders to adopt strategies that increase the role of SGB and parents in the governance and management of the school.

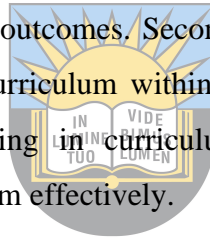
Furthermore, creating a dedicated platform for SGB and parents to participate in the decision-making process can be a practical approach to soliciting their involvement. Such a forum may give the SGB and parents a democratic voice and partly be involved in leading the teaching and learning of their children. Lack of parental involvement in the governance of schools can be attributed to language barriers and illiteracy. As such, schools should implement initiatives to support parents. One major initiative that can support parental involvement is language translation, workshops and support groups. In addition, involving SGB and parents through regular interaction platforms, such as social media, letters and meetings, can bridge the leadership gap between parents and their children's learning progress. Actively engaging SGB and parents can help address parental needs and commitment to their instructional activities in the school.

Findings from the literature support that improving communication between school leaders and stakeholders contributes to effective decision-making and improved teaching and learning. Ndaipa (2016) posited that ensuring an effective communication process between school leaders and followers ensures the achievement of a common goal. Contrastingly, Hompashe (2018) opposed this by emphasising how improved school culture can promote a positive culture for teaching, learning and accountability of instructional activities in schools. Miller (2015) collaborates this by asserting that cultivating an influential culture can translate into success for the schools and their learners by establishing favourable conditions. An improved relationship between SGB, parents, and school leaders can contribute to an enhanced school environment that supports teaching and learning.

5.3.1.4 Subtheme 4: Syllabus

The curriculum plays a pivotal role in providing guidance on implementing teaching and learning activities within schools. It provides a broad overview of subject content, details, and time allocations for various subjects to ensure a structured and organised approach to teaching and learning in schools. The school syllabus structure indicates the number of assessment tasks that learners are to complete within the year and provides a blueprint for teachers and learners. The school curriculum also includes an assessment program, which offers a framework for implementing teaching and learning in the school.

The curriculum specifies the materials and resources necessary for effective teaching and learning, ensuring that teachers have the required tools to facilitate teaching and learning. While the CAPS curriculum provides a clear syllabus for teachers to follow, it seems that most teachers were not able to strictly adhere to it. Several reasons may contribute to this issue. Firstly, the syllabus itself may lack clarity and direction, making it difficult to align teaching and learning practices with expected outcomes. Secondly, lack of time may hinder teachers from effectively implementing the curriculum within given timeframes. Lastly, inadequate professional development and training in curriculum may impede teachers' ability to comprehend and employ the curriculum effectively.



In order to tackle these challenges, there is a need for school principals to provide training workshops that emphasise improving the competencies of teachers in implementing curriculum. Such training workshops should capacitate teachers with the needed knowledge and tools to interpret and use curriculum and syllabus to facilitate instructional activities that ensure that intended learning outcomes are achieved. This is supported by findings from a study conducted by Behngu and Myende (2016). According to these authors, ineffective curriculum implementation in schools contributes to the inability of leaders to create a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning. The authors argue that many school leaders lack the ability to manage the rapidly changing school context due to neglect and discrimination in schools. This presents a contrasting view of the relationship between curriculum, implementation, leadership, and the school environment. According to Frimaningsih-Kolu (2016), the role of the leader is crucial in driving teaching and learning through their expertise. Thus, the role of leaders is to improve the quality of education in schools.

5.3.1.5 Subtheme 5: Learner activity

An examination of the learners' exercise books showed evidence of students' activities, suggesting that teacher and learner engagement has occurred. However, further investigation showed that students were not given sufficient activities. Given that the teaching and learning approach in South Africa is outcomes-based education, one expects learners to be engaged with diverse activities in the class and at home to ensure effective learning. The evidence suggests that students may not have adequately engaged with activities and provided the needed learning materials. Moreover, providing detailed feedback to learners may help strengthen their learning.

The inadequate provision of activities to students could adversely affect learning outcomes and make achieving overall quality in education more challenging. This requires school leaders to prioritise implementing varied, engaging activities that link to the curriculum and support students' learning. Additionally, teachers should be supported with the needed training development to improve their competencies and offer effective feedback to learners. School leaders can create a more supportive learning environment for students' success through this support.



According to Mwaisaka et al. (2019), for teachers and leaders to be able to facilitate effective teaching requires them to provide structured guidelines that outline the expected behaviours, skills and methods that should be employed to manage teaching and learning in schools. Key components of this framework that are critical for learners' learning experiences include setting vision, providing instructional leadership, promoting engagement of stakeholders and effectively managing teaching and learning resources (Mwaisaka et al., 2019). In contrast,

Ramango and Naicker (2022) argue that the educational instructional leadership style should prioritise equity, human rights, and social justice for students' learning. Teachers and learners can effectively overcome learning barriers by promoting inclusivity in schools.

5.4 Summary

This chapter has presented, interpreted, and discussed the findings of the study. It began with demographic information about the participants, revealing that most of them had 11 or more years of teaching experience. It was also noted that the male participants slightly outnumbered the female participants, although gender did not significantly influence the responses. The findings indicated that various leadership styles were employed for teaching and learning

depending on the school context and objectives. No single leadership style was found to be universally effective; instead, a combination of styles was often used, depending on the situation. The study affirmed the crucial role of school leaders in enhancing teaching and learning, even in the face of various challenges. Despite these challenges, school leaders can implement measures to address issues that have a negative impact on teaching and learning in schools. The chapter concluded with a review of the extracts of teaching and learning documents in the schools and their implication on teaching and learning.



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Chapter 6

Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter centred on presenting, interpreting, and discussing the findings within the context of the literature and the theoretical framework underpinning the study. This chapter commences by revisiting the research objectives and proceeds to provide a summary of the findings, the conclusions derived from these findings, and recommendations. Additionally, it introduces a model based on the conclusions, and concludes with suggestions for further studies, limitations of the current study, and concluding remarks.

6.2 Summary of findings

This section presents a summary of the findings in alignment with the objectives of the study:

- Objective 1: To investigate the different leadership styles used in schools to improve teaching and learning.
- Objective 2: To analyse the importance of leadership in teaching and learning in schools.
- Objective 3: To examine the challenges encountered by school leaders in influencing teaching and learning.
- Objective 4: To examine measures that can improve teaching and learning in schools.



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6.2.1 Different types of leadership styles used to improve teaching and learning in schools

The findings of the study based on this objective were categorised into eight subthemes:

6.2.1.1 Theme 1: Democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership

The responses from most of the participants indicated their awareness of common leadership styles employed in schools. Democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles were identified as the most prevalent styles from the participants' perspectives. These leadership styles were found to be utilised in diverse contexts and situations to enhance teaching and

learning. Importantly, the participants' responses aligned with the instructional leadership theory, which focuses on influencing the behaviour of both learners and teachers within schools.

6.2.1.2 Theme 2: Transformational and transactional leadership

The study revealed that transformational and transactional leadership styles play a crucial role in motivating teachers and learners, enhancing the school environment, and improving the relationship between leaders and teachers. The participants emphasised the significance of these leadership styles in fostering a conducive environment and positively influencing the behaviours of both teachers and learners. Many leaders preferred to employ a combination of transactional and transformational leadership styles due to the benefits they offer.

6.2.1.3 Theme 3: Collegial leadership

The study demonstrated that collegial leadership promotes interaction, consultation, and engagement between leaders, teachers, and learners. Collegial leaders were observed to create opportunities for principals, heads of departments, and teachers to collaboratively make decisions. However, some of the participants cautioned that collegial leadership should be employed judiciously, as it has the potential to undermine the authority of leaders. In the existing literature, collegial leadership is recommended for its capacity to foster commitment by involving various stakeholders in decision-making processes that influence teaching and learning.

6.2.1.4 Theme 4: Participative leadership

The findings indicated that participative and delegative leadership styles are employed in schools to enhance working relationships, teamwork, and the overall school environment. Most participants concurred that these leadership styles enable leaders to delegate responsibilities to teachers, thereby promoting various facets of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, some of the participants asserted that it is beneficial to integrate other leadership styles with participative and delegative approaches to maximise their effectiveness in improving teaching and learning. Furthermore, the study suggested that participative leadership could serve as a strategy to encourage shared leadership and decentralised responsibilities.

6.2.1.5 Theme 5: Distributed leadership

The study identified the use of distributed leadership by certain school leaders to distribute responsibilities and engage teachers in leadership tasks and decision-making. However, participants' concerns highlighted the importance of addressing aspects such as supervision, monitoring, organisation, performance, and communication to ensure the successful implementation of this leadership style. Moreover, the study found that distributed leadership fosters commitment and active participation among teachers. Nonetheless, some of the participants expressed reservations about the need for enhanced supervision to ensure that distributed leadership aligns with the vision and objectives of the school.

6.2.1.6 Theme 6: transactional leadership style

The findings of the study revealed that the carrot-and-stick leadership style is implemented in schools to enhance the behaviour, values, and positive attitudes of teachers and learners. This leadership approach involves the reinforcement of good behaviours and the correction of negative ones. Some participants emphasised that this leadership style motivates learners and teachers through encouragement and support for teaching and learning when necessary. However, there were varying opinions among participants regarding the effectiveness of this leadership style in motivating learners and teachers. It appears that further research is needed to gain a better understanding of how to effectively apply this leadership style.

6.2.1.7 Theme 7: Consultative leadership style

The responses from the participants indicated that consultative leadership is predominantly utilised by school principals to engage teachers in decision-making processes. Through consultations with teachers, learners, and other stakeholders, this leadership style was found to promote democracy, participation, commitment, and positive outcomes in teaching and learning. The literature supports the idea that consulting with stakeholders in decision-making reduces the challenges of obtaining cooperation from parents and teachers, thereby enhancing the school environment, and fostering commitment from both teachers and learners to their work. This finding aligns with both instructional and transformational leadership theories, which respectively advocate for an improved teaching and learning environment and the commitment of teachers and learners.

6.2.1.8 Theme 8: Democratic leadership style

The findings indicated the use of the top-down leadership style in schools, where leaders provide instructions to teachers and learners regarding their expected actions. Most participants noted that the top-down approach is especially employed when critical decisions need to be made. However, some of the participants expressed reservations about this leadership style, stating that it often relies on autocratic leadership methods and lacks the involvement of other stakeholders in decision-making. The literature supports the concept that the top-down approach enables principals to establish goals and relationships and influence teacher and learner behaviour. Despite this, some of the participants believed that this leadership style does not promote participation and commitment. This contradicts instructional and transformational leadership theories, which emphasise partnership and collaboration to create a conducive environment.

6.2.1.9 Theme 9: Transformational and instructional leadership style

The findings show transformational and instructional leadership style play a pivotal role in motivating and supporting teachers and learners by fostering a conducive school environment and enhancing the interactions between leaders, teachers and learners. The findings emphasised the importance of these leadership approaches and how they contribute to improved behaviours for teachers and learners. It was evident most of the participants preferred to use a combination of instructional, transformational and transactional leadership style to improve teaching and learning due to their effectiveness of improving leadership roles.

6.2.2 The importance of school leadership in improving teaching and learning

Six themes have emerged from the study, focusing on the importance of school leadership in enhancing teaching and learning.

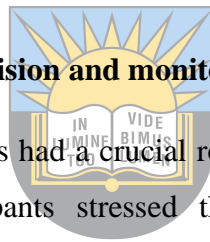
6.2.2.1 Theme 1: The motivation of learners and teachers

Some participants in the study recognised school leadership as key in motivating, inspiring, and mentoring both teachers and learners. Nevertheless, some of the participants expressed concerns about the limited authority and responsibility of school principals, which can have an impact on their capacity to effectively motivate, inspire, and mentor teachers and learners. These findings from participants and literature highlighted the positive impact of supportive leadership behaviour on teacher and learner performance and motivation. Moreover, this

leadership style was found to be particularly beneficial when leaders aim to motivate teachers and learners, enhancing their commitment and performance.

6.2.2.2 Theme 2: Creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning

The study identified that the school leaders played a significant role in establishing a conducive environment for teaching and learning. They achieved this by ensuring school safety, improving physical infrastructure, and fostering collaborative relationships between learners and teachers. Nevertheless, some of the participants emphasised the need for school leaders to be equipped with the requisite skills to enhance communication and collaboration among various stakeholders. They contended that most schools lacked strong leadership to create effective environments conducive to teaching and learning. Additionally, promoting a teaching and learning environment necessitated the trust and support of teachers, learners, and other staff members. However, it became challenging for many schools due to the high rates of crime, poverty, and indiscipline.



6.2.2.3 Theme 3: Providing supervision and monitoring

The study revealed that school leaders had a crucial role in supervising and monitoring both teachers and learners. The participants stressed the significance of leaders, ensuring commitment to the vision and objectives of the school through consistent checks, performance assessments, resource provision, and enhancing school security. However, challenges such as high rates of absenteeism, indiscipline, and underperformance among teachers and learners are prevalent in many schools, making it difficult for leaders to effectively fulfil their roles. Addressing these challenges necessitates stringent measures for supervising and monitoring teachers' and learners' behaviour and work, which is supported by existing literature.

6.2.2.4 Theme 4: Providing resources for teaching and learning

The study findings indicated that the availability of teaching and learning resources is crucial for effective education. Some participants asserted that the effectiveness of teaching and learning is hampered by the inability of the leaders to provide adequate resources and offer effective leadership, which ensures uninterrupted teaching and learning. Moreover, some of the participants linked indiscipline and poor learner performance to the school environment. Therefore, transformational leadership styles and other approaches involving stakeholders in

decision-making were important in enhancing the school environment for improved educational outcomes.

6.2.2.5 Theme 5: Providing leadership and management

The findings revealed that school leaders bear the responsibility of providing effective leadership, management, and administration within the school to enhance teaching, learning, and educational outcomes. Effective management involves delegating responsibilities and authority to other teachers to ensure that the school operates smoothly. Additionally, the study found that principals are responsible for involving parents in the management and administration of the school to promote support, and training and workshops for the leaders, ultimately fostering a conducive environment for teachers and learners to demonstrate commitment. However, some of the participants reported instances of poor learner performance, indiscipline, and drug abuse on school grounds due to the absence of effective school leadership in terms of management and administration.

6.2.2.6 Theme 6: Maintaining discipline in the school

The findings pointed to the significance of maintaining discipline in schools to foster an environment that facilitates and supports teaching and learning. Some participants concurred that school leaders bear the responsibility of enforcing discipline and curbing indiscipline, which has a substantial impact on learners and their school performance. To enhance discipline, the study findings emphasised the implementation of measures aimed at improving the school environment, addressing indiscipline, and mitigating the influence of socio-economic factors. Moreover, the establishment of partnerships between school leaders, parents, teachers, learners, and external stakeholders was deemed crucial in effectively addressing discipline.

6.2.3 Challenges encountered by school leadership

This theme encompassed eight subthemes that revolved around the challenges faced by school leadership. These subthemes included the socio-economic backgrounds of schools and children, the impact of Covid-19 procedures on teaching and learning, school policies, interruptions in teaching and learning, a lack of parental involvement, learner indiscipline, and a shortage of teaching staff.

6.2.3.1 Theme 1: Poor socio-economic background

The study findings indicated that school leaders in low socio-economic settings encountered significant challenges arising from issues such as poverty, dysfunctional family backgrounds, technological limitations, infrastructural deficiencies, bullying, negative learner attitudes and behaviour, and inadequate parental involvement. To address these challenges, the participants suggested that school leaders need to have a deep understanding of community needs and implement strategies such as increasing community involvement, providing targeted resources and support, and prioritising professional development. Some participants and the literature proposed that transformational leadership may offer a potential solution for improving academic achievement in underprivileged schools.

6.2.3.2 Theme 2: Covid-19 pandemic protocols and implications on teaching and learning

The study revealed that the Covid-19 pandemic had a substantial impact on teaching and learning in schools, resulting in interruptions and the loss of instructional time. The lack of resources, especially online teaching platforms and technology, posed significant hindrances to schools and teachers in compensating for lost time. Furthermore, the findings suggested that many schools were ill-prepared to handle the crisis, leading to severe disruptions in teaching and learning. To enhance the preparedness of schools for such emergencies, the participants recommend that school leaders introduce blended learning and consider integrating essential technologies and online teaching and learning platforms into the school curriculum.

6.2.3.3 Theme 3: Policy challenges

The study uncovered policy challenges that affected teaching and learning in the schools. The participants attributed difficulties in interpreting and implementing effective school policies as a major contributing factor to learner indiscipline and underperformance. The challenges in comprehending policies hindered the effective implementation required to address key issues that influenced teaching and learning in schools. Consequently, many of the participants refrained from fully adopting school policies due to a lack of proper guidance in handling policy implementation. Some of the participants emphasised the need for school leaders and teachers to have a comprehensive understanding of school policies, particularly SASA, which provides a framework for effective school administration and management. The findings suggested that leaders can improve the teaching and learning environment of the school by

addressing reforms and enhancing teaching and learning, aligning with the principles of the transformational leadership theory.

6.2.3.4 Theme 4: Disruptions in teaching and learning time

The study highlighted disruptions in teaching and learning caused by extracurricular activities, absenteeism, and meetings within schools. Instances such as time lost, absenteeism, and non-attendance of classes and school by both teachers and learners are major sources of disruption affecting the quality of teaching and learning and education in general. Some participants proposed that while extracurricular activities are important for the development of learners, steps should be taken to minimise their impact on teaching and learning time. Suggestions included extending teaching and learning hours, scheduling extracurricular activities on weekends and after school, and conducting meetings outside of school hours.

6.2.3.5 Theme 5: Lack of parental involvement

The study indicated that a lack of parental involvement is a significant factor affecting teaching, learning, and school discipline. The participants noted that the limited engagement of parents had detrimental effects on the school environment and the behaviour of both teachers and learners. Some participants highlighted that the low level of parental involvement was exacerbated by the high illiteracy rate among parents, which hindered their ability to assist their children with schoolwork. To address this issue, the study findings and some of the participants emphasised the need for school leaders to actively involve parents in school activities and decision-making processes. Furthermore, the lack of parental involvement contradicted the SASA policy, which advocates for the maximum involvement of SGBs and parents in school governance.

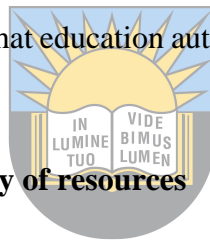
6.2.3.6 Theme 6: Indiscipline among learners

The study revealed a pervasive issue of indiscipline among both learners and, in some cases, teachers in schools, with adverse effects on the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning have been significantly affected by problems such as poor attendance, drug use, bullying, and instances of gangsterism within schools. School leaders have faced considerable challenges in effectively managing this indiscipline, often due to factors such as apathy, inadequate parental involvement, and policy directives. To enhance learner discipline, school leaders must prioritise their visibility within the school environment. Additionally, they can

establish effective measures for active monitoring of attendance, learner behaviour, and the development and implementation of a stringent code of conduct for both learners and teachers. Policy changes and increased parental support have been identified as necessary steps in addressing this prevalent issue of indiscipline within schools.

6.2.3.7 Theme 7: Shortage of teaching staff

The study highlighted a widespread shortage of teaching staff in many schools, significantly affecting the quality of teaching, learning, and overall school performance. To address this challenge, some schools have had no option but to appoint part-time teachers through SGB posts. These part-time teachers may, however, lack proper qualifications. In response, some schools have sought the assistance of outside tutors or teachers from other institutions to provide additional classes and support. In the face of the Covid-19 situation, certain schools have resorted to online teaching to make up for lost teaching time. However, these measures have been found to be ineffective in improving teaching, learning, and learner engagement. As a solution, the participants suggested that education authorities appoint more qualified teachers to enhance the quality of education.



6.2.3.8 Theme 8: Inadequate supply of resources

The study identified a significant lack of resources as a major challenge hampering the enhancement of teaching and learning in schools. This shortage encompasses various teaching and learning materials and resource-related issues, such as the unavailability of teaching materials, insufficient classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of textbooks. These deficiencies have adverse effects on the ability of school leaders to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, effective teaching and learning have been hindered by the unavailability of essential materials to support both teachers and learners. These findings underscore, underscoring the importance of resources in facilitating effective teaching and learning within schools.

6.2.4 Measures to improve school leadership

The final objective of the study focused on investigating measures to enhance school leadership, resulting in seven distinct themes.

6.2.4.1 Theme 1: Improving school leadership competencies and skills

The study findings emphasised the significance of enhancing the competencies and skills of school leaders to improve their effectiveness in school leadership and the facilitation of teaching and learning. The participants concurred that leadership training programmes, seminars, and workshops are essential for school leaders to effectively manage schools. Additionally, these programmes help leaders in creating a conducive environment, promoting inclusivity, and supporting teachers and learners to enhance their performance. However, some of the participants argued that it is crucial to appoint competent leaders with a proven track record to lead teams. These findings highlight the importance of qualified and competent leaders who understand the principles of school improvement and possess the capability to foster an environment that supports teaching and learning.

6.2.4.2 Theme 2: Formulating and interpreting school policies

The findings of the study showed the critical role of formulating and interpreting school policies in enhancing teaching and learning in schools. Some of the participants concurred that clear policies, rules, and regulations play a vital role in helping schools address challenges. Additionally, it is crucial to make the consequences for policy violations clear to both learners and teachers. The findings also revealed that existing school policies are often poorly implemented, leading to a decline in teaching quality and overall school performance. Consequently, this study highlighted the necessity for school leaders to develop clear policies, ensuring their effective implementation, and equipping themselves with the skills and knowledge to interpret and work within the framework of these policies for improved educational outcomes.

6.2.4.3 Theme 3: Developing and empowering teachers

The findings of the study emphasised the imperative need to develop and empower teachers to enhance teaching and learning outcomes in schools. Some of the participants pointed to the necessity for training workshops for teachers to bolster their knowledge and instructional skills. Furthermore, the need was highlighted for continuous professional development and training programmes to help teachers adapt to evolving challenges and changing educational environments. The role of school leaders was acknowledged as vital in supporting and empowering teachers, providing them with the necessary support and encouragement to be

effective and committed. Transformational leadership approaches were also identified as effective in promoting teacher growth and development.

6.2.4.4 Theme 4: School intervention plans

The findings stressed the significance of school intervention plans to address disruptions and time loss in teaching and learning. The study highlighted the need for extra classes, remedial classes, and weekend classes to help learners catch up on missed time and disruptions. Additionally, scheduling school and staff meetings after school hours is proposed to prevent interruptions. These measures align with literature findings that emphasised the importance of close monitoring and supervision of teachers, the improvement of the school climate, and the fostering of commitment among teachers and learners. The role of the school leader is key in ensuring that these measures are effectively implemented to enhance the school environment and maximise teaching and learning time.

6.2.4.5 Theme 5: Class visits and register management

This study revealed the necessity for school principals to conduct regular visits to classrooms to ensure that teachers and learners attend classes consistently, thereby improving teaching and learning in schools. The participants stressed the importance of school leaders verifying teacher attendance during scheduled periods and ensuring class attendance by regular learners. This approach aligns with the literature suggesting that education authorities and school leaders should make regular classroom visits as a strategy to enhance instructional activities within the school. Such actions are seen as critical in promoting positive attitudes, discipline, behaviour, and commitment among both teachers and learners.

6.2.4.6 Theme 6: Participation of teachers and learners in decision-making

Some of the participants concurred that teachers, learners, and parents should be actively involved in decisions that have an impact on teaching and learning. Principals are encouraged to adopt a participative leadership style that engages all school stakeholders in decision-making processes, while learners should have a platform to contribute to decision-making as well. These findings highlighted the importance of including all key stakeholders in school decision-making, creating an environment where everyone has a voice in crucial matters related to teaching and learning. This aligns with the instructional leadership theory, emphasising the

importance of leaders fostering a culture where major stakeholders are engaged in teaching and learning decisions, thereby promoting a positive environment for education.

6.2.4.7 Theme 7: Providing teaching and learning resources

The findings indicated a significant lack of teaching and learning resources and aids in schools, which had a negative impact on learners' comprehension of class material. Some teachers resorted to strategies such as photocopying limited resources to address this issue. As a result, school authorities and the government are urged to prioritise the timely provision of teaching and learning resources to schools. Furthermore, integrating online teaching, science, and technology into the educational process is suggested to enhance learning experiences and improve teaching quality. Consequently, instructional leaders are urged to stay informed about the use of teaching and learning resources and global trends, understanding how they affect the local educational context.

6.3 Limitations

The study encountered several minor challenges that, if not effectively managed, could have had adverse effects on the objectives and outcomes of the study. First, one limitation was the relatively short period allocated for data collection. This timeframe coincided with schools conducting examinations and preparing for the summer holidays.

Additionally, the collection of focus group data happened while the learners were busy with their examinations. To mitigate this limitation, the researcher coordinated with learners to meet after school when no examinations were taking place and learners had more available time. This adjustment meant that the researcher had to visit some schools' multiple times to ensure that face-to-face interviews could be conducted when the participants had sufficient time.

Finally, another challenge arose when some of the participants expressed their reluctance to have their voices recorded during interviews, despite the researcher explaining the interview procedures. To address this issue, the researcher took notes manually during the interviews to document important points. When necessary, the researcher also asked the participants to repeat crucial information to ensure accurate capture of their insights.



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6.4 Conclusions of the study

The conclusions of the study are drawn from the findings, which were guided by the research objectives.

6.4.1 Different types of school leadership used to improve teaching and learning in schools

The findings of the study, combined with the reviewed literature, focused on the vital role of school leaders in enhancing teaching and learning within educational institutions. It was evident that the school leaders employed various leadership styles, adapting them to the specific context and school environment to foster a positive school culture that facilitates improved teaching and learning. A school leader's core responsibility lies in making decisions that enhance learner performance and fostering a collaborative, inclusive working environment that involves all stakeholders in decision-making processes. While no single leadership style serves as a universal solution to all school-related issues, school leaders must be able to select the most suitable leadership style according to the context and its objectives. However, it is essential to acknowledge that underperforming schools often do so due to inadequate leadership and an inability to adopt the appropriate leadership style. To enhance the effectiveness of school leadership, leaders must receive the necessary training and attend workshops. This preparation will equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to comprehend their roles and adapt to different leadership styles as necessary to improve teaching and learning.

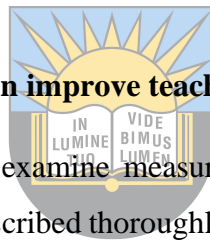
6.4.2 Importance of school leadership in improving teaching and learning

The study findings and the reviewed literature affirmed the critical role of school leaders in advancing educational outcomes within schools. School leaders are responsible for creating an improved school environment and fostering a positive culture of teaching and learning. They establish high expectations for learner achievement and performance while also providing the necessary support and resources to both learners and teachers. Furthermore, school leaders facilitate opportunities to enhance teacher capacity in effective instruction, motivate learners to remain committed to their learning, and collaborate with parents and other essential stakeholders to enable effective decision-making. Lastly, school leaders implement systems and measures to monitor the attendance of teachers and learners in the school and in classes

and track learner progress. Their ultimate role is to ensure the delivery of quality education to the satisfaction of all stakeholders and clients.

6.4.3 Challenges encountered by school leadership

The findings from the literature highlighted several key issues that had a significant impact on the effectiveness of the schools and the teaching and learning processes. These challenges have been extensively investigated and described in the literature. Some significant challenges plaguing schools include disruptions in teaching and learning time, resource deficiencies, poor leadership, adverse sociocultural backgrounds of schools, and learners from dysfunctional homes. Another major challenge that has affected the quality of teaching and learning in schools was the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many schools to transition online, even though they were unprepared for such an event. These challenges have made it imperative for schools to implement measures to mitigate these issues and reduce their impact on teaching and learning.



6.4.4 To examine measures that can improve teaching and learning in schools.

In this section, the study intends to examine measures that schools can adopt to improve teaching and learning. This section described thoroughly below provided recommendations for the study based on the findings and the conclusions and developed a leadership framework to improve teaching and learning in schools. The framework of the study was informed by examining the implications of the findings and the outcomes of the study. This section is further explained below.

6.5 Implications of findings for educational practice and policy

This study's findings hold implications for educational practice and policy, as discussed in the following subsections.

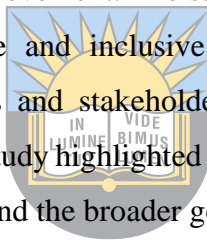
6.5.1 Implications for educational practice

This study has unequivocally demonstrated that effective school leadership plays an important role in creating a conducive teaching and learning environment. It is evident that improving the school environment has a profound impact on the commitment of teachers and learners, ultimately leading to improved performance. Furthermore, the study has identified various leadership styles that school leaders can employ to enhance educational outcomes in schools.

Therefore, the leadership styles utilised by school leaders have the potential to influence the school environment, learner performance, and teacher commitment. The results of this study have the potential to enlighten school leaders on how to effectively utilise and adapt leadership styles to enhance teaching and learning, as well as learner achievement.

6.5.2 Implications for policy

The implications of this study for policy are significant, especially in highlighting the crucial role of education and school policies in fostering effective leadership and enhancing the quality of instructional activities in schools. Notably, a critical policy implication is the need for policymakers to prioritise the training and development of school leaders and the adaptation of effective leadership styles to address the challenges in schools under different circumstances. Another important policy implication of this study is how policies can be utilised to promote effective school leadership and the adoption of the right leadership styles to enhance instructional activities and learner achievement. The study illustrated how school policies can be employed to cultivate a positive and inclusive environment, fostering a culture of collaboration between school leaders and stakeholders in making decisions that improve teaching and learning. Moreover, the study highlighted the importance of aligning policies with the principles of effective leadership and the broader goals of improving education.



6.6 Recommendations

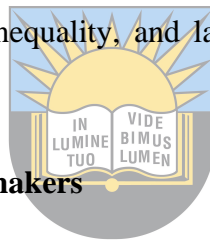
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The following recommendations are provided for both educational practices and policy.

6.6.1 Recommendations for educational practice

- School authorities should provide training and development for school leaders to enhance their competencies, skills and knowledge in areas such as leadership styles, instructional leadership, transformational leadership and transactional leadership in instructional management.
- School leaders should create a supportive and inclusive school environment that promotes collaboration, communication, and respect among all stakeholders.
- School leaders should provide teachers with the necessary teaching and learning resources and support to effectively facilitate teaching and learning that contribute to the objective of the school.

- School leaders should embrace delegating and sharing specific leadership responsibilities with other teachers and leaders to mitigate against the challenges that affect the role of leadership and foster enhanced teaching and learning.
- School leaders should undergo training and workshops on effectively interpreting and implementing school policies and curricula for better teaching and learning outcomes.
- School leaders should implement strategies to address the challenges faced by schools and affect teaching and learning in the school.
- School leaders should foster collaboration with SGB, parents, the community, and other stakeholders to create a shared vision and support for the school.
- School leaders should embark on regularly reviewing and updating educational policies to ensure that they are relevant and effective in addressing the needs of schools and students.
- School leaders should adopt and implement policies and initiatives to address systemic challenges such as poverty, inequality, and lack of access to education, that affect teaching and learning



6.6.2 Recommendations for Policymakers

The findings of the study have led to recommendations for educational policy based on the research context:

- School leaders should recognise the vital role of school leadership in policy implementation aimed at improving the school environment to support teaching and learning.
- Schools should implement policies to emphasise the need for capacity-building programmes that help school leaders understand their roles and employ different leadership styles to effectively manage the school curriculum to improve teaching and learning in schools.
- School leaders should formulate policies that enhance the instructional leadership responsibilities of teachers and other stakeholders, fostering students learning experiences.
- School authorities and SGB should hold schools and educators accountable for teaching and learning outcomes while providing necessary support and resources.

- School authorities should support schools with adequate resources to support schools, with funding for infrastructure, staffing, and teaching materials.
- Policymakers should ensure that the curriculum is current, relevant, engaging, and aligned with the needs of students and the labour market.

6.7 Suggested model

While school leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing teaching and learning and improving the quality of education, much of the existing research on school leadership primarily focuses on administrative and managerial aspects. Therefore, based on the findings of the study and the insights from the literature, a transformational–instructional leadership model is proposed. This model can serve as a valuable framework for school leaders to improve teaching and learning in schools.

The transformational–instructional and transactional–instructional models seek to address the existing gap in understanding school leadership by integrating key elements of both transformational leadership (vision and mission, goal setting, communication, and collaboration), transactional leadership (clear expectations, adherence to procedures, control, contingent reward, results driven) and instructional leadership (instructional support, feedback and evaluation, recognition, and rewards) to mediate school leadership, as well as teaching and learning. The transformational–instructional leadership model represents a paradigm shift in the role of school leadership, emphasising its potential to create a school environment conducive to instructional activities.

6.8 Transformational–instructional and transactional -instructional leadership model

A transformational–instructional and transactional-instructional leadership model should encompass the following characteristics:

6.8.1 School leaders' function

At the core of the transformational–instructional and transactional-instructional model, as depicted in Figure 6.1, is the school leader's role. In this model, school leaders have a dual function:

- To ensure the improvement of the school environment to sport teaching and learning (transformational functions).
- To inspire commitment from teachers and learners (transactional functions) to foster achievement.

The transformational–instructional and transactional-instructional leadership model is informed by the findings of the study and literature review, requires school leaders to combine the positive aspects of transformational leadership (vision and mission, goal setting and communication, collaboration) and the positive aspects of instructional leadership functions (instructional support, recognition and rewards, feedback and evaluation). This fusion of essential functions aims to create an enhanced school environment and fosters greater commitment. These two critical outcomes are considered necessary components of the model to yield positive educational results. The discussion of various elements in this model is presented below.

Figure 6.1 illustrates the transformational–instructional leadership model, highlighting six essential elements that can positively influence the role of school leaders in enhancing teaching and learning in schools. As depicted in the diagram, these six elements are fundamental for school leaders to be effective. School leaders can create a positive and transformational environment by embracing these elements. This transformation is realised through developing a clear vision and mission, establishing precise objectives, providing instructional support, regular feedback and evaluation, fostering collaboration and interaction, and recognising the contributions of exceptional teachers and learners.

Each of these elements plays a critical role in ensuring the practical improvement of the school environment and motivating teachers and learners to commit wholeheartedly to the vision and objectives of the school. This collective effort results in enhanced educational outcomes and improved teaching and learning within the school, as depicted in Figure 6.1: Transformational-instructional and transactional instructional model

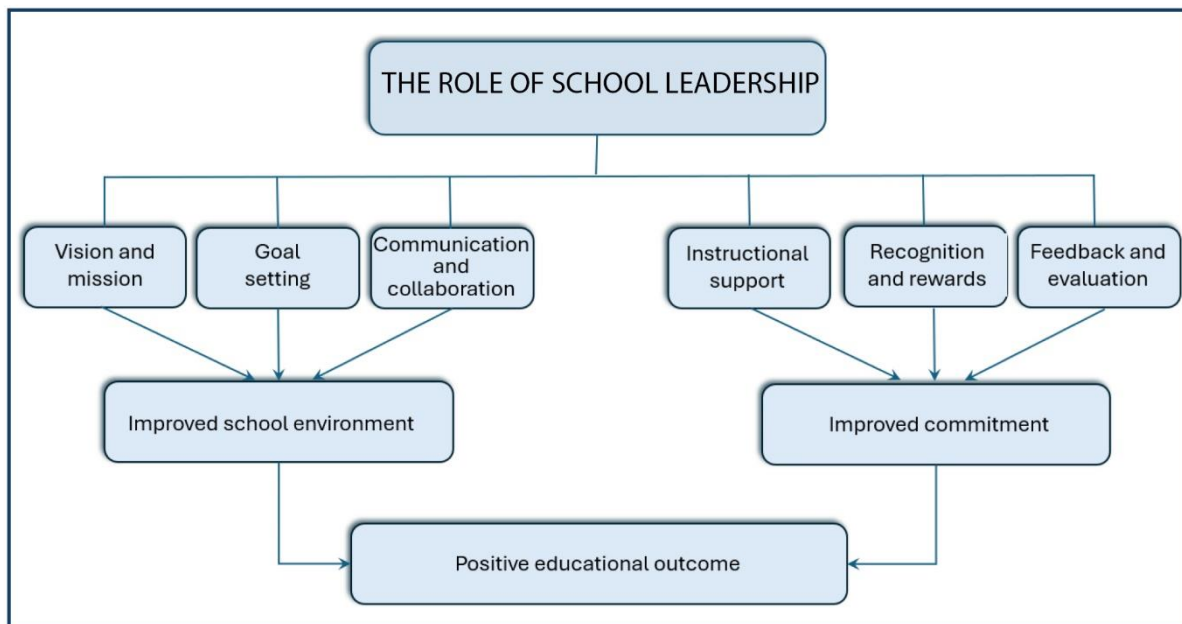


Figure 6.1 Transformational–instructional and transactional leadership model

Source: Author’s own (2024)

- Developing vision and mission statements:** As indicated by most participants, the findings showed the necessity for school leaders to create an enabling environment that supports teaching and learning. This aligns with the insights from the literature, which emphasises that school leaders must formulate a clear vision and mission for the school, focusing on enhancing teaching and learning for all learners. When there is a lack of a clearly defined vision and mission, it becomes challenging for leaders to convey the direction they intend for the school. Establishing a clear vision and mission for the school allows the leader, teachers, and other stakeholders to have a comprehensive understanding of the vision and objectives of the school.
- Setting achievable goals:** The leader should collaborate with teachers and learners to establish measurable and attainable goals and objectives. The findings from participants indicated that collaboration and stakeholder involvement in schools was often non-existent or minimal. By defining the school's objectives, the leader plays a significant role in providing a sense of direction. A shared understanding of the school's objectives among all stakeholders fosters collaboration and collective work towards a common goal and vision. Additionally, goal setting helps create a supportive environment for teaching and learning, ensuring successful educational outcomes. The leader must actively collaborate with other school stakeholders to instil dedication and teamwork to achieve the school's established goals and objectives.

- **Providing instructional support:** The responses from most of the participants revealed a lack of instructional support from leaders, which, in turn, affects teaching and learning. Therefore, it is imperative for leaders to consistently offer teachers ongoing instructional and professional development support to enhance teaching and learning, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes. This model proposes the need for leaders to continuously support teachers and learners to enhance instructional activities and learner achievements. To provide adequate support, leaders must understand the specific needs of teachers and learners. Some forms of support that leaders can offer to teachers include professional development opportunities, instructional coaching, and timely provision of teaching and learning resources while also improving the school environment to support teaching and learning.
- **Providing effective feedback and supervision:** The lack of supervision, monitoring, and feedback, as pointed out by most of the participants, is a significant concern affecting teaching and learning. School leaders must ensure regular feedback and establish measures to facilitate adequate supervision and monitoring for improved teaching and learning. One of the primary responsibilities of a school leader is to ensure constant supervision and monitoring of teaching and learning to enhance educational outcomes. This involves implementing measures to promote adequate supervision and monitoring of teaching and learning. Furthermore, using feedback as a tool is vital to enhance the quality of education provided, as it helps teachers and learners identify their strengths and weaknesses for improvement.
- **Improving communication and collaboration:** A significant finding of this study was the concern of some participants about the lack of involvement of other school stakeholders. Leaders are encouraged to foster transparent communication and collaboration among teachers, staff, and learners to achieve the school's goals. This model reveals the importance of effective communication and collaboration as critical tools for attaining the school's objectives. Promoting transparent communication is essential, as it allows stakeholders to participate in decision-making and improves the school environment, trust, and transparency. Improving the school environment and fostering commitment among teachers and learners necessitates school leaders' ability to communicate the school's vision, mission, and goals, along with the expectations set by school leadership and educational authorities. Clear communication in this model is essential to encourage stakeholders to work together towards a common goal.

- **Using recognition and rewards:** The study's findings indicated that some participants lacked commitment because their efforts went unrecognised, resulting in demotivation. According to the literature, to enhance teacher commitment, school leaders must implement measures that recognise dedicated teachers and learners whose actions contribute to improved teaching and the school's overall success. This model highlights the need for school leaders to establish measures to motivate and recognise hardworking and exceptional teachers and learners to enhance their commitment. Furthermore, to improve teacher and learner commitment, school leaders should continually explore innovative ways to motivate and inspire them to strive for excellence. A key finding suggests that recognising and rewarding the efforts of teachers and learners through a reward system for their hard work and achievements plays a critical role in enhancing commitment.
- **Improved school environment:** According to this model, the school leader's effective execution of their transformational and instructional leadership roles is crucial for creating a school environment that positively influences teaching and learning. Moreover, the leader's instructional responsibilities motivate teachers and learners to be more committed. Therefore, an improved school environment is considered essential for supporting teaching and learning and enhancing the overall educational experience. Several reasons highlighted the critical importance of an improved school environment. First, learners and teachers can engage in a safe and conducive teaching and learning environment. Second, a well-managed school environment minimises unnecessary distractions that can disrupt teaching and learning. Finally, a conducive school environment and committed teachers significantly contribute to improved learner performance.
- **Improved commitment:** This model emphasises that the school leader's instructional responsibilities foster commitment among teachers and learners, improving their performance. Within this model, the leader's instructional responsibilities encompass instructional support, recognition and rewards, and feedback and evaluation, all vital in instilling commitment among teachers and learners. These functions are essential for the leader in cultivating discipline and commitment in the school community. According to the findings in the literature, the leader's instructional support ensures the provision of the necessary resources required for uninterrupted teaching and learning.

The availability of essential teaching and learning materials facilitates effective teaching and learning.

As outlined above, these functions work in harmony to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Figure 6.1 above clearly illustrates the various functions of the school leader within the transformational–instructional and transactional-instructional leadership models.

6.9 Suggestions for further studies

In further research on investigating the role of school leaders and how they influence teaching and learning, the researcher may consider venturing into investigating the following areas:

First, there is a need for researchers interested in this study to explore how school leaders can effectively implement school policies as a catalyst for achieving positive educational outcomes, thus trying to understand how school policies can be used as a catalyst to enhance teaching and learning in schools.

Moreover, future studies should consider using a mixed-method approach to provide an in-depth and broader understanding of the role of school leaders in influencing teaching and learning in schools. A mixed-method approach could allow the researcher to investigate the phenomenon and provide deeper perspectives on the role of school leaders in teaching and learning.

Furthermore, a comparative study on the role of school leadership in rural and township schools and formal Model C schools can provide a deeper insight into the role of school leaders. Preferably, such a study could consider exploring the differences in leadership practices and their implications for teaching and learning outcomes in different contexts. Comparing these two contexts could provide critical insights and understanding of the challenges that confront school leaders to enhance teaching and learning.

Delving into these areas in future studies can expand our understanding of the role of school leaders in influencing teaching and learning and promoting a supportive environment for improved educational outcomes.

6.10 Concluding remarks

The findings established in the preceding points lead to clear conclusions: School leaders play an instrumental role in improving teaching and learning in schools. Principals, in their capacity as instructional leaders, bear the responsibility of fostering an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, they are expected to possess the competencies, skills, and knowledge required to support teachers and learners, ultimately leading to improved teaching and learning, reflecting enhanced performance. These qualities are often deemed crucial for leadership appointments, as they empower principals to facilitate quality teaching and learning and attain better school and learner performance.

Nonetheless, numerous challenges, originating both from within and outside the school, hinder school leaders from effectively fulfilling their instructional role, improving the school environment, and positively affecting teaching and learning for better educational outcomes. While multiple constraints influence the ability of school leaders to perform their instructional role and transform the school environment to support teaching and learning, this study has identified specific challenges that significantly affect their capacity to influence teaching and learning. These challenges include the poor socio-economic background of the school and its learners, the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, difficulties in policy interpretation and implementation, the lack of parental involvement, learner indiscipline, shortages of teaching staff, inadequate resource supply, as well as absenteeism among both teachers and learners. In summary, this study found that these challenges present obstacles for school leaders in their efforts to function effectively and positively impact teaching and learning.

The findings presented in this study paint a rather grim picture of the role played by many school leaders and their impact on teaching and learning. This situation falls short of the necessary standards to ensure that school leaders can effectively create and foster an environment in schools that supports teaching and learning. As a result, the study strongly suggests that the recommendations and contributions of the school leaders' framework for influencing teaching and learning in this research should be seriously considered and implemented by school leaders, teachers, and all other education stakeholders.

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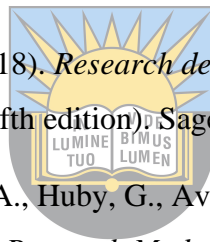
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Appendix A

Ethical Clearance



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ETHICS CLEARANCE REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Project Number:	LUG011SAGY01
Project title:	Exploring the role of leadership to improve teaching and learning in selected high schools in Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality.
Qualification:	Doctor of philosophy in Education
Student name:	Nana Yaw Brenya Agyeman
Registration number	201923360
Supervisor:	Dr S Luggya
Department:	Education
Co-supervisor:	Dr M Tanga

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby grant ethics approval for LUG011SAGY01. This approval is valid for 12 months from the date of approval. Renewal of approval must be applied for BEFORE termination of this approval period. Renewal is subject to receipt of a satisfactory progress report. The approval covers the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). The research may commence as from the 22/09/21, using the reference number indicated above.

Note that should any other instruments be required or amendments become necessary, these require separate authorisation.
Please note that UREC must be informed immediately of

Appendix B

Permission Letter from Eastern Cape Department of Education



CORPORATE PLANNING, MONITORING, POLICY AND RESEARCH COORDINATION
Steve Mkhic, Ishwato Camohax, Zolani F Zvelizala, 9836, Private Bag X0030, B-Ntsho, 6805 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
English: Ms. F. Pakelala Tel: 040 808 7071/4001. Fax: 040 808 4372. Email: fundisw@ecdede.gov.za
Website: www.ecdede.gov.za Date: 07 February 2022

Mr. Nana Yaw Bhenya Agyeman
12 Elm Avenue
Westbourne
Queenstown
5319

Dear Mr. Agyeman

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A DOCTORAL RESEARCH: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS IN ENOCH MGIJIMA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

1. Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research involving twenty (20) individuals from 4 selected high schools in Whittlesea (Chris Hani) under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved based on the following conditions:
 - a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;
 - b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;
 - c. no minors will participate without the consent from the parent/guardian;
 - d. it is not going to interrupt educators' time and task;
 - e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time;
 - f. no physical contact with educators and learners, only virtual means of communication should be used and that should be arranged and agreed upon in writing with the Principal and the affected teachers;
 - g. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;
 - h. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research.



Customer care line: 080 003 8636
Website: www.ecdede.gov.za



Appendix C

Application for Ethical Clearance Application



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The Director (ECDoE)
Department of Education
Eastern Cape Province
Bhisho

Agyeman Nana Yaw Brenya
Shepstone RD 281,
Whittlesea,
5360

2nd December 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE: AGYEMAN NANA YAW BRENYA (201923360)

I am applying for ethical clearance to do my PhD research study in four selected High Schools in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality. My name is Agyeman, Nana Yaw Brenya, and my student number is 201923360. The research I will be conducting in these schools is for my Doctoral dissertation which has to do with exploring leadership roles in schools to improve teaching and learning. The study will be carried out under the supervision of my two supervisors, Dr. S. Luggya and Dr. M. Tanga with the Faculty of Education, University of Fort Hare (UFH).

~~I am therefore seeking the consent of the UFH Ethical Committee's~~ for me to conduct my study with the selected schools in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality. I attach to this letter a copy of my research proposal, the research instrument that will be used in this study, and copies of letters to schools for permission to conduct a study, invitation to participants and consent letters needed for the study.

Upon the completion of this study and approval of UFH, I will undertake to submit to the Department of Education and the selected schools a bound copy of the full research report. The student (researcher) can be contacted for further information that will be required on the following contact number 0784433121 and email address nanavawymn@yahoo.com. Thank you for the consideration given to this matter.

Yours truly,

Agyeman Nana Yaw Brenya (201923360)

(University of Fort Hare)

Appendix D

Application to Conduct Interviews in Schools



University of Fort Hare
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To Whom It May Concern

3rd October 2022

Dear Principal,

Request to Conduct Interviews at Zamokuhle High School

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to respectfully request permission to conduct interviews at Zamokuhle High School as part of a research study for my doctoral program at the University of Fort Hare. The focus of this study is to explore the role of leadership in improving teaching and learning within the educational context of the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality. Your school has been identified as a valuable setting for this research due to its reputation for educational excellence and your leadership's active involvement in fostering a conducive learning environment. Your cooperation in granting permission for this study would be immensely appreciated.

The purpose of the interviews is to gather insights from educators, administrators, and other key stakeholders regarding their experiences and perspectives on leadership practices within the school. These interviews will provide valuable data that will contribute to a deeper understanding of effective leadership strategies in education. I assure you that all information obtained during the interviews will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic research purposes. Participation in the interviews will be entirely voluntary, and participants will have the option to withdraw at any time.

To ensure transparency and compliance, I have attached a copy of the consent form that will be provided to interview participants. Please review it at your convenience, and feel free to raise any questions or concerns you may have. If you grant permission for this study to be conducted at [School Name], I will coordinate with you to schedule the interviews at a time that is convenient for you and your staff. I anticipate that each interview will take less than an hour, and I will handle all logistics related to the process.

Your support and cooperation in facilitating this research study would be invaluable. I am sincerely grateful for your consideration of this request and look forward to the possibility of working with you and your team to advance our understanding of leadership in education.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Agyeman NYB



Doctoral Candidate
University of Fort Hare
Cell: 0784433121

201923360

Appendix E

Approval from Schools to Conduct Interviews



Agyeman Nana
University of Fort Hare
Alice
Dear Sir,

5th November 2022

Approval to Conduct Interviews at Zamokahle High School

I am writing to grant you the approval for your request to conduct interviews with students and teachers at Zamokahle High School as part of your research study for your doctoral program at the University of Fort Hare. We appreciate your interest in including our school in your study and believe that your research objectives align well with our educational goals.

Your study, which focuses on exploring the role of school leadership in improving teaching and learning, is of relevance to our school community. We understand the importance of contributing to academic research and are committed to supporting your efforts.

In granting approval for the interviews, I request that you adhere to the following guidelines:

- Conduct interviews at times that minimize disruption to the school's academic schedule.
- Respect the confidentiality and privacy of all participants throughout the research process.
- Obtain informed consent from participants prior to conducting interviews, ensuring they are aware of the purpose of the study and their rights as participants.
- Provide participants with the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.
- Ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to eliminate the risk of Covid 19 infection.

Please coordinate with our school administration to arrange access to the school premises and schedule interviews with teachers and students. We will assist you in ensuring that the interview process proceeds smoothly and efficiently. Thank you for considering our school as a research site for your study. We look forward to the insights that your research will generate and to the potential benefits it may bring to our educational community.

If you require any further assistance or information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly on 072 399 8428

Yours sincerely,

S.E Matumbu

Principal

Appendix F

Letter of Introduction to Participants to Conduct Interviews



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Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER FOR PARTICIPATION

I am currently undertaking my studies towards PhD in Education at the University of Fort Hare. The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of school leadership and its influence on teaching and learning in schools. The study is solely for academic purposes, which may eventually benefit schools in improving school leadership and teaching and learning in schools. The study does not have any direct or indirect repercussions on participants for their involvement. The study will require that the researcher have face-to-face interviews and discussions with the participants of the study.

For being involved in this study, you should know that schools in your community and South at large in the broader sense will benefit immensely from your contribution to this study. It would, therefore, be much appreciated if you can make an appointment date for the face-to-face interview upon receipt of this letter. Your responses during this interview are of importance to the outcome of the study, therefore, you are encouraged to give honest answers that stand for what is on the ground. You are assured that what information and responses you give to the interview questions will be treated with confidentiality. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw your involvement in this study at any time you consider appropriate.

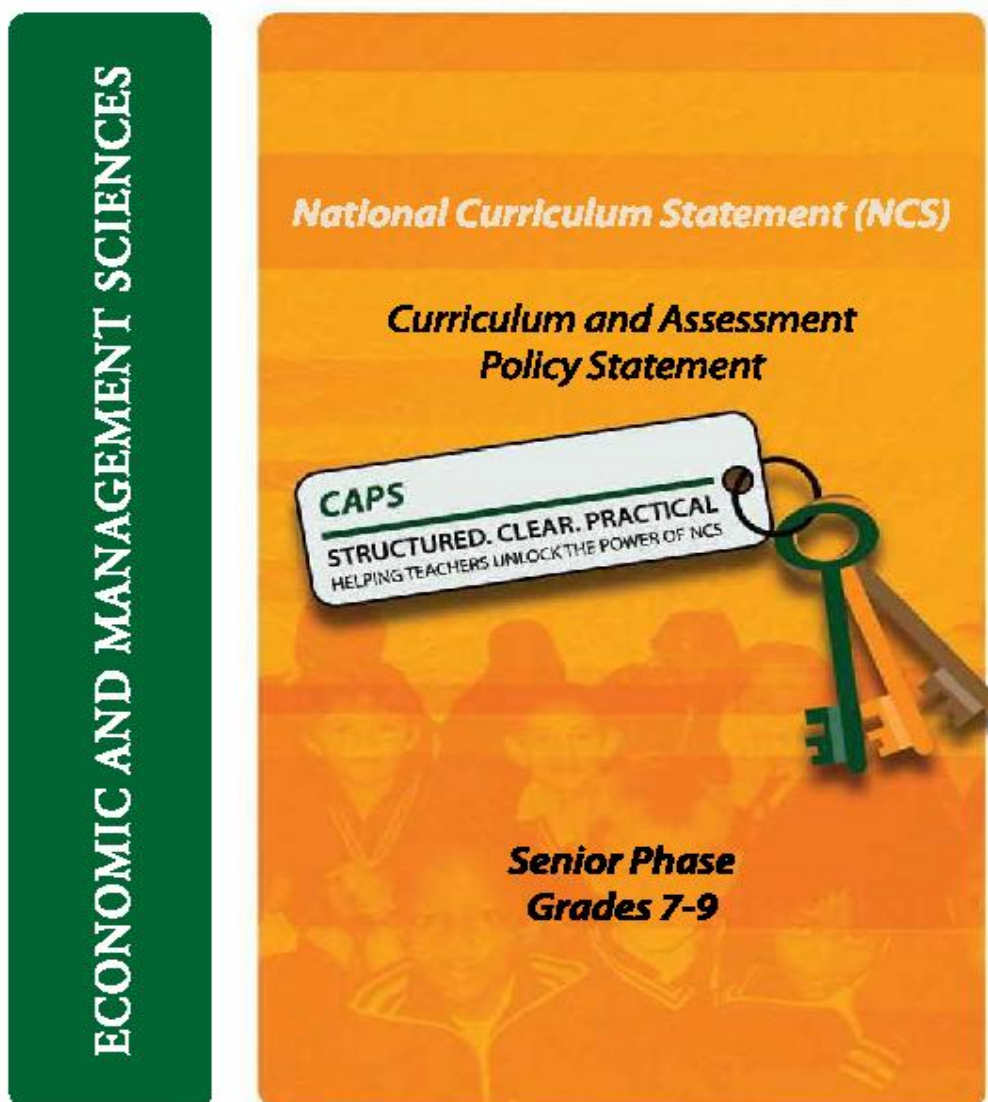
Thank you for your understanding and the time sacrificed for this study.

Yours faithfully,

Agyeman NYB
Cell: 0784433121
201923360

Appendix G

Syllabus



basic education

Department
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Appendix H

Interview Guide

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

CONFIDENTIAL

Name of School: Zamokuhle High School

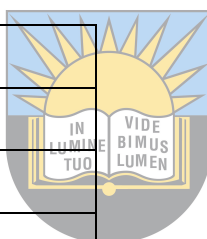
Date: 15th November 2022

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHY

INSTRUCTION: Tick the correct answer

1. What is your age?

Below 25 years	
26 to 35 years	
36 to 45 years	
46 to 55 years	
Above 56 years	



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2. What is your marital status?

Single	
Married	
Divorced	
Widowed	

3. What is your gender?

Male	
Female	
Other (Specify)_____	

4. Which race do you belong to?

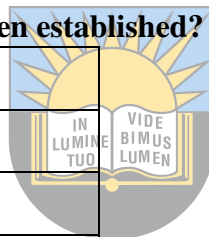
Black	
White	
Coloured	
Indian	

5. What is your highest qualification?

Diploma	
Degree	
Honours	
Masters	
Doctoral	

6. How long has your school been established?

Below 1 year	
2 to 4 years	
5 to 10 years	
Above 11 years	



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7. How many years have you been teaching in this school?

Below 1 year	
2 to 4 years	
5 to 10 years	
Above 11 years	

8. What is your employment status?

Full time	
Temporary	
SGB	
Student teacher/intern	

9. What is your position in this school?

Principal	
Head of Department	
Post level 1	
SGB teacher	
Student teacher/intern	

SECTION B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the different styles of school leadership used to improve teaching and learning in schools?

- 1.1. What are the leadership styles that are used in your school?
- 1.2. What is the dominant leadership style used in your school and how do you view it concerning how it contributes to teaching and learning?
- 1.3. In your opinion can this leadership style be improved for effective teaching and learning to take place in your school? How?
- 1.4. In addition to this leader's hip style, which other leadership style(s) will you recommend being used in your school to improve teaching and learning and why do you think so?

2. Why is the role of school leaders important in improving teaching and learning?

- 2.1. What do you think are the main roles of you the school leader(s)?
- 2.2. How do these roles significantly contribute to improved teaching and learning?
- 2.3. in your view, what do you think can make school leaders function effectively in their roles?
- 2.4. What measures as a school do u have in place to develop leaders and teachers to play their roles effectively?

3. What are the challenges that school leaders encounter in influencing teaching and learning in their schools?

- 3.1. What are the challenges that confront you as a school leader in striving for improved teaching and learning in your school?

- 3.2. What have you done to minimise the impact of these challenges on teaching and learning?
- 3.3. What other measures do you think need to be put in place for you and others to be able to rise above these challenges?
- 3.4. In what way does the leadership of your school ensure effective teaching and learning by teachers and students respectively?



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Appendix I

Focus Group Discussion Questions

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What is the different style (behaviour) of school leadership used to improve teaching and learning in schools?

1.1. What are the different leadership styles and their effect on teaching and learning in your school?

1.2. Do you think this leadership style improves teaching and learning in the classroom?

1.3. Which of these leadership styles will you suggest that it is used in your school and the classroom? Why?

2. Why is the role of school leaders important in improving teaching and learning?

2.1. How do you understand the role of your school leaders?

2.2. Why do you consider this/these roles important to teaching and learning in the classroom?

2.3. What do you think your school leaders and teachers can do to improve teaching and learning in your school?

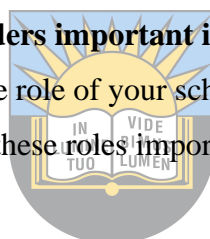
3. What are the challenges that school leaders encounter in influencing teaching and learning in their schools?

3.1. What do you think makes it difficult for school leaders to perform their roles effectively? Can you describe them?

3.2. What do you think these leaders can do to overcome the challenges that make it difficult for them to play their roles?

3.3. What do you think the department can do to assist your school leaders in improving teaching and learning?

4. In your view what measures can be put in place to ensure that school leadership role in teaching and learning is improved?



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Appendix J

Participant Informed Consent



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You are invited to participate in this study that will explore the role of leadership in improving teaching and learning in schools in the Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality. You are selected because of your knowledge of school leadership and involvement in a school. This letter is an informed consent which allows you to voluntarily participate in the study. Nana Yaw Brenya Agyeman who is doing his doctoral study with the University of Fort Hare is the researcher involved in the study.

Background Information

The objective of this qualitative explorative case study is to explore the role of leadership in improving teaching and learning in schools.

Procedures:

If you consent to participate in this study; (a) you will be informed to take part in a face to face interview that will be recorded by audio, and the duration of the interview will be about 40 to 60 minutes; and (b) Review of the of the interview report will made for meaning and provide feedback on the same.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your involvement in this study will be voluntary. By implication, your decision regarding your participation or not to participate will be respected in the study. Under no circumstance will you be subjected to any punitive action for your decision to participate in the study. Notwithstanding, you at liberty to opt out of this study at any point in time you want to redraw your participation from the study. Further you may also choose to redraw your participation if you feel being coerced or stressed at any point of the study. You are also at liberty to ignore questions that you feel uncomfortable to answer or you think it is too confidential to divulge such information.

Risk and Benefits of Participating in the Study

In consideration of the nature of the study, the possibility of participants being harmed is very negligible as the study only explore lived experiences, knowledge, and views of participants. The study does not intend in any way to illicit confidential information nor bribe for information. The likely benefit of being part of this study is your contribution to improving school leadership practices, as well as effective teaching and learning in schools.

Compensation

This exercise is strictly for academic purposes and as such no compensation will be provided to participants in the study.

Confidentiality

Any information given to the researcher will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Information obtained from participants, will not be used for any other purpose beyond the scope of this study. Moreover, names of participants will not be identified or given in any reports of the study.

Contacts and Questions

Any questions you may have after this study, should be directed to the contacts of the researcher. The contacts of the researcher are as follow. Any private discussion you want to have about your rights as a participants of this study, you can call the University of Fort Hare Research Department on (insert number) or email (insert email). The researcher Agyeman Nana Yaw Brenya will provide you a copy of this form for your personal filing.

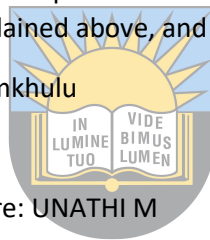
Statement of Consent

I have thoroughly gone through the above information and the purpose of the study enough to understand and make decisions for my participation in the study. By appending my signature below, I agree to the conditions and terms as explained above, and I will keep a copy of the consent form.

Printed Name of Participant: Unathi Mzimkhulu

Date of Consent: 15 April 2023

Participant Written or Electronic Signature: UNATHI M



University of Fort Hare
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Researchers Written or Electronic Signature

Appendix K

Student Activity

Okunle Nwando
Grade 11 G

3 2 + 8 1
SD 30/05

40/50 ✓
23 May 2023

Business studies Assignment

Question 1:

1.1 Creativity is coming up with new ideas and finding a way to solve problems. It can also include thinking out of the box and creating new things/products that will help the business to get more profit.

1.2. It creates a better teamwork and employees are given a chance to come up with new ideas and to give out their views and ~~own~~ opinions.

- Creative thinking can improve ability to attract and retain quality employees.

1.3. They can determine the problem they want to solve.

- They can also create a summary report.
- Ask more questions, summarize the results and report.
- After they've pointed out the problem they can lead to decision making and decide how they can solve it.

Appendix L

Educators' Attendance Registers

DAILY EDUCATOR AT

NAME OF SCHOOL:

EDUCATOR'S NAME		MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY	
		TIME	SIGNATURE	TIME	SIGNATURE	TIME	SIGNATURE
1. Silvan. I.	IN	07:25	<i>[Signature]</i>	07:20	<i>[Signature]</i>	07:20	<i>[Signature]</i>
	OUT	13:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	13:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	14:30	<i>[Signature]</i>
2. Smith. J.	IN	07:15	<i>[Signature]</i>	07:15	<i>[Signature]</i>	07:12	<i>[Signature]</i>
	OUT	13:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	13:30	<i>[Signature]</i>	15:15	<i>[Signature]</i>
3. Zandi. S.	IN	07:20	SSP	07:20	SSP	08:05	SSP
	OUT	13:00	SSP	13:00	SSP	13:00	SSP
4. Madonis. V.	IN	7:20	V.A	7:20	V.A	7:45	V.A
	OUT	13:30	V.A	13:00	V.A	13:00	V.A
5. Ngbezuge. N.	IN	06:50	<i>[Signature]</i>	06:55	<i>[Signature]</i>	06:47	<i>[Signature]</i>
	OUT	13:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	13:00	<i>[Signature]</i>		
6. Dimbraal. M.	IN	07:25	<i>[Signature]</i>	07:20	<i>[Signature]</i>	07:20	<i>[Signature]</i>
	OUT	13:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	13:30	<i>[Signature]</i>	15:00	<i>[Signature]</i>
7. Bongani. C.	IN	7:05	CB	7:10	CB	7:05	CB
	OUT	13:00	CB	12:00	CB	12:00	CB
8. Bucpa. L.	IN	7:00	LN	7:00	LN	7:27	LN
	OUT	13:30	LN	13:00	LN	13:00	LN
9. Dzala. G.	IN	7:20	<i>[Signature]</i>	7:20	<i>[Signature]</i>	7:20	<i>[Signature]</i>
	OUT	15:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	15:50	<i>[Signature]</i>	16:00	<i>[Signature]</i>
10. Jackson. O.	IN	7:15	<i>[Signature]</i>	7:15	<i>[Signature]</i>	7:15	<i>[Signature]</i>
	OUT	11:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	11:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	11:00	<i>[Signature]</i>
11. Jackson. M.	IN	07:30	MJ	7:20	MJ	8:40	MJ
	OUT	13:00	MJ	13:00	MJ	13:00	MJ
12. Jacobs. M.	IN	7:50	<i>[Signature]</i>	7:25	<i>[Signature]</i>	7:20	<i>[Signature]</i>
	OUT	13:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	13:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	13:00	<i>[Signature]</i>
13. Mpele. N.	IN	07:30	<i>[Signature]</i>	07:30	<i>[Signature]</i>	07:24	<i>[Signature]</i>
	OUT	13:30	<i>[Signature]</i>	13:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	13:00	<i>[Signature]</i>
14. Taseko. L.	IN	07:20	<i>[Signature]</i>	07:25	<i>[Signature]</i>	7:00	<i>[Signature]</i>
	OUT	14:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	14:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	14:00	<i>[Signature]</i>
15. Taseko. W.	IN	7:20	<i>[Signature]</i>	7:25	<i>[Signature]</i>	7:20	<i>[Signature]</i>
	OUT	14:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	14:00	<i>[Signature]</i>	14:00	<i>[Signature]</i>

..... (Administrator/Principal) Signed by:

Appendix M

Language Editing Certificate



PO Box 38917

082 635 0214

Langenhovenpark, Bloemfontein 9330

technicalediting.dora@gmail.com

CONFIRMATION OF TECHNICAL FORMATTING AND LANGUAGE EDITING

I hereby confirm that I have done the technical formatting and language editing for the following doctoral thesis:

Student: Agyeman Nana Yaw Brenya
Student number: 201923360
Title: The role of leadership in improving teaching and learning in selected high schools in Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality
Degree: Doctor Philosophy in Education
Faculty: Faculty of Education
University: University of Fort Hare

Technical formatting included the layout done on an MS Word template that I created specifically for this thesis. Technical editing also focused on the correct use of citations, style and formatting according to the APA Style. I also checked that all references mentioned in the reference list are cited in the text. I also made sure that dates and author names used in the text matched those in the list of references, and notified the student on missing references that still needed to be added.

Language editing focused on punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar. I tried to retain the student's own writing style, while making sure that the student's intended meaning was not altered during the editing process. All amendments were marked with the Microsoft Word Track Changes feature. I also left comments for issues that the student needed to check or revise. The student, therefore, had the option to accept or reject the suggestions and recommended changes to the document.

I have more than 40 years of experience in typing, formatting of documents and language editing for postgraduate students from universities all over South Africa and also abroad. I gained my experience during the years I was typing student dissertations and theses and while working at different departments at the University of the Free State from 1978 to 1981 and again from 1998 to 2014. I also assisted in compiling a document on technical layout and referencing methods and have presented a couple of guest lectures on referencing methods and technical layout issues to postgraduate students at the University of the Free State. In the past couple of years, I have also done language editing for a number of journal articles as well as seven books for publication.

Disclaimer: The ultimate responsibility for accepting or rejecting the amendments and recommendations made by means of track changes rests with the student. The editor cannot be held responsible for any later changes to the document in terms of format and style and subsequent amendments or additions to the text.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dora".

Dorathea (Dora) du Plessis
Technical & Language Editor

16 April 2024