

PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS
OF THE APPLICATION OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP AND ITS
IMPACT ON THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
PRINCIPAL AND THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM AT PRIMARY
SCHOOLS IN THE SISONKE EDUCATION DISTRICT, IN THE
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU/NATAL.

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Maurice Vivian Kok, (5502115104085) hereby declare that the thesis submitted for the PhD degree entitled: ***Perceptions of Principals and School Management Teams of the Application of Distributed Leadership and its Impact on the Working Relationship between the Principal and the School Management Team at Primary Schools in the Sisonke Education District, in the province of KwaZulu/Natal***, is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher education. I further declare that all sources that have been cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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MV Kok

(Researcher)

.....

Date

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I thank God for making it possible for me to complete the thesis.

DEDICATION

The project is dedicated to my late dad, Adam Matthew Kok and late brothers and sister, Leslie, Eugene, Howard and Eunice. You would have been so proud of me. It is also dedicated to my dearest wife, Kholeka and my mum, Catherine ('Girls') for their constant patience, encouragement and support.

ABSTRACT

The main focus of the study was on the working practices and relationships of the principals and school management teams (SMTs). The emerging demand placed on principals to act as organizational change agents prompted the need to determine whether distributed leadership was being exercised among a group of principals in a district undergoing school reform. I wished to find out whether a good working relationship existed between principals and SMTs within the case study schools and whether this relationship could be attributed to the distributed leadership of the principals.

The study of distributed leadership has potential for illuminating school management teams (SMTs) since it provides a lens to understand the dynamics of the team and the interactions between and inter-relationships amongst their members. This distributed leadership lens was concerned with how principals and SMTs use a variety of strategies such as power, coercion, co-operation, co-option and influence to obtain resources and achieve goals. 'Being listened to' and 'having a voice' were some of the features of distributed leadership that were clearly illuminated in this study. The implication was that not only was it necessary to provide the SMT members with an opportunity to express their views, but also to ensure that their 'voices' would be considered when decisions were made.

Throughout the study certain commonalities and diversities in the principals' *modus operandi* in their distributed leadership and working relationships with school management teams (SMTs) have surfaced. These are related to attitudes, opinions, views and ideas about their distributed leadership and working relationships as evidenced by, in some cases, diametrically opposed responses and complete unanimity in other responses.

This study was interpretive in orientation, and utilized mixed data gathering techniques in all six primary schools. Key issues that may be linked to either facilitating or inhibiting the effective working relationships of principals and the SMTs of the primary schools have been identified.

Findings of this study suggest that a positive working relationship between principals' distributed leadership and the presence of good working relationships associated with effective school does exist. I have also found that distributed leadership is an influence relationship – the ability to influence the practices of others in ways that bring about a major change in form, nature and function of some phenomenon.

The study's findings support those of Wilson and McPake (2000) for small Scottish primary schools. Also Harris' (2003) perception of distributed leadership is reinforced by the perceptions of principals and SMTs in this study. The efficacy of achieving school improvements that enhance a

school's working relationships in ways associated with effective schools is closely related to the principal's distributed leadership style.

In this study the underpinning principles of distributed leadership focused on multiple sources of leadership. Distributed leadership is a collective form of leadership in which principals and the SMTs lead the school and collaborate to improve education practices for quality teaching and learning at schools in the Sisonke Education District. Distributed leadership entails that principals of primary schools should not only strive to be useful themselves, but that they should contribute to make others useful by them creating an environment in which the principal and SMT are able to grow as leaders. Proponents of distributed leadership prefer to examine how principals manifest leadership in their work place and how it improves working relationships between the two management entities. Distributed leadership was given prominence in the primary schools in the Sisonke Education District because leadership at five of the six schools was found to be inclusive and flexible.

The emphasis was on collective action, empowerment and that leadership is a form of agency that can be distributed and shared. Cultural change at primary schools in the Sisonke Education District is both challenging and demanding. Hence an important implication of the findings for distributed leadership must be development in the context of team management. A useful framework has been provided for principals and SMT members to critically reflect upon as they seek to build shared purpose, cooperation and collaboration. Not only was it necessary to provide the SMT members with an opportunity to express their views, but that these 'voices' would be

considered when decisions were made. A focus away from the principal towards the leadership roles played by the SMT provided a better understanding of school leadership.

Underpinned by the theory of distributed leadership, the research sought to examine the factors feeding into the autocratic or more democratic relations in each school and took a snap-shot view of what was currently happening in the six schools chosen. The findings revealed how leadership was distributed and how it involved the SMT in the sense that working relationships were improved and that accountability was distributed within the school. The skill of working in teams in South African schools is in progress since distributed leadership has gained prominence during the last ten years of democracy. The study has recognised the complexity of the subject distribution of leadership and the challenging environment in primary schools in the Sisonke Education District. The modern style of leadership poses serious challenges to the conservative school principals.

KEYWORDS: Working Relationships; Distributed Leadership; Principal; and School Management Team.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
B.A.	Bachelor of Arts
B.A. (Hons)	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
B.Ed (Hons)	Bachelor of Education (Honours)
CBD	Central Business Development
DAS	Development Appraisal System
DL	Distributed Leadership
DoE	Department of Education
DET	Department of Education and Training
EEA	Employment of Educators' Act No. 76 of 1998
ELRC	Educators' Labour Relations Council
FIRO	Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOA	House of Assembly
HOD	House of Delegates
HOR	House of Representatives
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
MA	Degree, Master of Arts
ME.D	Degree, Master of Education
M+4	Teacher's Higher Diploma or Junior Degree
M+5	Teacher's Higher Diploma and Senior Degree
M+6	Teacher's Higher Diploma and Senior Degrees
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PAM	Personnel, Administration Measurers
PDP	Personal Development Profile
PTD	Primary Teacher's Diploma
SASA	South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996
SGB	School Governing Body
SIP	School Improvement Plan

SMT(s)	School Management Team(s)
SNES	Special Needs Education System (for learners with special education needs)
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
STD	Secondary Teachers Diploma

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CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the background, the statement of the problem, research questions, the purpose, thesis statement, delineation and limitations, definition of terms, significance of the study and brief overview of the chapters. The background of the study will be discussed first.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to Williams (2008), before 1994 the prevailing situation in South Africa militated against teachers fulfilling their potential as leaders. South African teachers were generally expected to fulfil the role of enactors of state policy while making very little meaningful contribution to the decision making process. The main purpose of the education system, which was characterised by hierarchical and authoritarian relations, was to restrict wider participation and ensure political control by the top echelons of the education department (African National Congress Education Department 1994: 20, cited in Mathebula 2002).

The situation was exacerbated by the fact that teachers were generally not prepared for the role of educational leadership. Workshops on education management were only presented to prospective and newly-appointed school principals. These workshops were generally geared towards enabling school leaders to fulfil managerial and routine clerical

responsibilities. Informal help and “trial and error” were regarded as the most important means of developing leadership (Ramdass 1987: 169, cited in Hlongwane 2009). The result was that many school leaders were self-made men and women or ended up emulating other school leaders (Theron and Bothma 1990: 86, cited in Steyn 1999). This resulted in the perpetuation of the existing authoritarian leadership practices.

Cotton (2003, cited in Harris 2008) argues that distributed leadership is a powerful way to understand leadership activity in schools in more complex and interconnected ways. Furthermore, Cotton (2003, cited in Harris 2008) states that distributed leadership is constituted through the interaction of leaders, educators and the situation as they influence instructional practices.

The distributed leadership style was introduced to the South African schools when the South African Schools Act No. 108 of 1996 (SASA) made provision for the establishment of school management teams (SMTs) and school governing bodies (SGBs). The aim of the SASA is to “... redress the past injustices in education; provide an education of progressively high quality for all educators and learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all our educators’ talents and capabilities, and advance the democratic transformation of society...” (SASA: 1996).

Southworth (2002: 2) writes that “...school leadership is often taken to mean headship”. For him “... such an outlook limits leadership to one

person and implies lone leadership". He further argues that "... the longstanding belief in the power of 'one' is being challenged". Southworth (2002: 2) further states that "... currently there is much more talk about shared leadership, leadership teams and distributed leadership than ever before". Distributed leadership is an influence relationship – the ability to influence the practices of others in ways that bring about a major change in form, nature and function of some phenomenon (Diamond 2007). According to Whitehead (1926: 61) it is a common view of many scholars that leadership by its nature and form is something that cannot be centred in one individual but must be distributed across all members [SMT] in the organisation. Scholars have used a number of terms to denote leadership; Bass (1990) argues that they all point in the direction of distributed leadership. Bryman (1996, cited in Spillane 2005) reinforces the point by stating that amongst such commonly used terms the most prominent are democratic leadership, collective leadership, participative leadership and dispersed leadership. Spillane (2005: 1) argues that distributed leadership seems to contradict other forms of leadership, where for example, individual leaders would act and take decisions unilaterally and expect other people to follow or implement such decisions; in the distributed leadership perspective leaders and so-called followers' co-produce leadership practice.

The Department of education now emphasizes that management should be "...seen as an activity in which all members of educational organizations engage" and should "...not be seen as the task of the principal" (DoE 1996: 27). Wasley (1991) argues that, school

management teams (SMTs) need to be involved in the process of deciding on what roles, if any, they wish to take on, and must then feel part of and supported by the principal in doing so. There is also a view among some scholars that leadership should not be seen as being the task of the few, but should be seen as an activity in which all the stakeholders engage (Bennet 2003; Gronn 2000; Muijs and Harris 2003).

These writers argue that distributed leadership will bring about improvement in the working relationship and, ultimately, effectiveness in schools. It is a generally accepted view among researchers and leaders that good leadership in education and in schools in particular, is an essential aspect of promoting effective working relationships between principals and SMTs (Godden 1996). Leadership that stimulates “bottom-up” participation by teachers and principals in efforts to restructure schools has been recommended (Rowan 1990 cited in Serrat 2009).

The implementation of change since the introduction of SMTs in the school system has not been an easy process for many principals and educators. Coleman (1994: 102, cited in Sergiovanni et al 2007) states that to be able to manage change successfully, “...principals as leaders will have to change their old ways of doing things”. The DoE (1996: 28) states that, “...the extent to which schools are able to make necessary changes largely depends on the nature and quality of their internal management”. The implication here is that the principals are expected to empower their staff and build capacity so as to be able to manage change and become effective leaders in their classrooms and schools. In

essence, the centralized control of schools, according to the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (SASA), should give way to a system of empowerment of teachers, parents and students; shared decision-making; and the development of professional learning communities. The South African Schools Act (1996) therefore requires schools to transform themselves from being institutions which relied on the Department of Education (DoE) to being institutions which can manage themselves.

The South African research base according to Hoadley (2007, cited in Torrance 2009) is very limited. Bush (2006) in their review of research on leadership and management, argue that most of the research on leadership is “not conceptually rich”, and assert the need for a theory of leadership relevant to the South African context. Knowledge of how principals’ practice distributed leadership is limited. In their work Hoadley (2007, cited in Torrance 2009) found that although there are detailed normative frameworks on what principals should do, there is little consideration of the reality of the work of principals in particular contexts, and what they actually do.

Whilst much research has been done on distributed leadership by Bennet, Wise, Woods and Harvey (2003), Harris (2004), Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001), Bennet, Wise, Woods and Harvey (2004), and MacBeath (2005), the research done does not relate to distributed leadership and its impact on the relationships between primary school principals and SMTs in the Sisonke Education District. This study, therefore, investigated the perceptions of principals and SMTs of

distributed leadership, and its effect on the relationships between the two management entities at primary schools.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Elmore (2000 cited in Wright 2008) argues that while there are extensive studies within educational research about structures and processes which impact on school improvement, relatively few studies seek the informative voice of school principals regarding their experiences and understandings of *how* and *why* leadership is undertaken in diverse contexts. Wright (2008) further states that Heck and Hallinger (1999) substantiated this claim through a review of the educational literature – citing many “blank spots”. Wright implies that “there is a lack of in-depth description of how principals and other school leaders create and sustain the in-school factors that foster successful schooling”. Wright (2008: 141) further mentions “blind spots” that is, epistemological and theoretical biases that limit understanding, such as scholarly preoccupation with principals’ leadership that “ignored other sources of leadership within the school”.

Hoberg (1999) suggests that various kinds of societal changes are making it necessary to change the way we run organizations such as businesses and schools. They suggest the move from hierarchical and authoritarian structures towards flatter and more participative organizational styles as a key change. This argument is taken further by Harris (2004) when she shows how society is changing, and then argues

how and why organizations should restructure in order to play a meaningful role in the society.

In addition, the Ministerial Committee's 2004 Review of School Governance in South Africa suggests that the ideal of distributed leadership is not yet a reality in South African schools. Instead, despite years of reform principals continue to practice in the more traditional rigid and authoritarian ways (Barth 2001). As a consequence reform efforts have not had the desired impact on the working relationships of the two management entities at primary schools. The implementation of change in the way schools are managed, as introduced by the South African Schools' Act (1996) is still a matter of concern. The emphasis on partnership in education in order to promote effective working relationships, whereby the principal would influence the SMT and staff members towards goal setting and goal achievement without force or coercion has not had the desired effect.

The leadership of many primary schools remains firmly entrenched in the formal management structure at the top of the hierarchy despite an enabling democratic framework as introduced by the SASA (1996) which championed the implementation of distributed leadership in our local schools. The researcher's observation is that the potential of SMTs in the leadership at primary schools remains relatively untapped and only minimally used.

Sergiovanni (1990), states that although principals are formally required to lead the school, leadership is not the sole province of the principal. Sergiovanni (1990) observes that the leadership of schools is a complex phenomenon and that the outcomes of successful leadership are readily identifiable. The Department of Education, in collaboration with Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), has invested money and time to promote a paradigm shift in our education system with the aim to transform our communities and the country as a whole. Without this shift, according to Grant and Singh (2006), a culture of genuine collegiality in schools is unlikely and the effects of this on working relationships will be felt for years to come. However, the grave importance ascribed to good working relationships among educators has not materialized in the relationships between the principal and SMTs in many primary schools (SASA 1996). Various forms of indifference mark their working relationships (Kooreng 1998).

According to Kooreng (1998) educators often find themselves technically divided when it comes to principals and SMTs working together on certain management issues. He found principals to be working in isolation in many of the schools in the Sisonke district. That impacts negatively on the working relationship between the principal and the SMTs. Some principals in consequence tend to exclude the rest of the management team from important decision-making.

Also, despite the fact that the school-based management structure in primary schools comprises of the principal, deputy principal and heads of

department (HODs) in most cases the principal deliberately excludes the SMT. That has an adverse effect on the working relationships (SASA, 1996). Although many workshops have been conducted by the Department of Education and NGOs to train principals and SMTs both these workshops have not had the desired effect.

The result is that members of the SMT often do not have the support of the principal. Consequently, the co-operation and joint management that the SASA envisaged seems not to be happening in practice. While much has been written about the concept of Distributed Leadership, not much has been written on the perceptions or live experiences of principals and their relationship with SMTs. The research questions will shed more light on the problem statement.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

After observing differing leadership and management perceptions in primary schools for a decade, the following research questions appeared to stand in need of answers.

4.1 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

What perceptions are held by both principals and SMTs regarding their working relationships?

4.2 SUB-QUESTIONS:

- How do primary school principals perceive distributed leadership and its impact on working relations?
- How do primary schools SMTs perceive distributed leadership and its impact on working relationships?

5. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to:

Provide answers to several questions relating to principals' and SMTs' perceptions of the working relationship between them at primary schools in the Sisonke Education District in the province of KwaZulu/Natal, in order to highlight the importance of distributed leadership to good working relationships between the two management entities.

6. THESIS STATEMENT

The co-operation and joint management that was envisaged with the establishment of school management teams seems not to be happening in practice.

7. DELINEATION AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this study the perceptions of principals and SMTs of the relevance of distributed leadership and its impact on this relationship at six primary

schools in the Sisonke Education District have been investigated. The study did not consider the impact that distributed leadership will have on teaching and learning. The very term 'distributed leadership' assumes that change must be practical, beginning with the existing bureaucratic structure, and must include the politics, legislation and lines of authority in the whole department and at each tier level. This study was more restricted in scope.

While other aspects of distributed leadership could have been considered such as horizontal and vertical change in structures to achieve transformation this would require the study of all schools, which would be impossible and unmanageable in terms of time and cost. A study of vertical relations would entail an investigation of finance, policies and relationships and lines of authority.

A study of horizontal relationships would entail consideration of every school in a system such as a particular circuit or district office. Easier than the study of the whole system in a circuit or district would have been the study of every aspect of one school system. This would have required me nonetheless to consider the whole range of school aspects, including the structure, personnel, policies and rules of the school, curriculum, learner assessment and promotions, finance and a whole range of other issues, too numerous to include in one study.

This study focused on only two school constituents and structures, namely: principals and SMTs and their perceptions of the impact of

distributed leadership on their working relationships. A range of other factors then were excluded above from the scope of this study, even though these too merit study since meaningful improvement in schools requires fundamental changes affecting all aspects of all schools.

Another major limitation of this study was that the distribution of questionnaires was limited to six primary schools in the four circuits of the Sisonke Education District of the KwaZulu/Natal Province. Furthermore, the sensitivity of the problem of working relationships between principals and SMT members contributed to a moderate response rate to the questionnaires, and the validity of some of the responses to the questionnaires may have been threatened due to the following reasons:

- There is a high probability that this exercise would be construed to be a government-funded project meant to identify those educators who failed to implement the new procedures.
- Some respondents may have felt that the researcher was prying into their political views and into their relationships with their principals and may for that reason, have given misleading responses.
- Some SMT members may have feared being victimized by the principal and may have given misleading responses for that reason. The respondents were given the assurance that their identity was protected and that all the information furnished was confidential and would not be made known to the other participants.

8. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Concepts are building blocks of theory – ideas are expressed in symbols or words. According to Sergiovanni (1989), everyday culture is filled with concepts, but many of them are vague and have multiple meanings. Also, people's cultural values and experience may limit the meaning of everyday concepts. Quite often, in social sciences, concepts are expressed in the form of words. Sergiovanni (1989) noted that the use of everyday words, in specialised ways in social science may create confusion. Thus, Sterling et al (2000) holds that it is imperative to clarify concepts in the study as they bear different meanings for different people, and as a result, may be misunderstood.

The concepts clarified below are critical to an understanding of the discourse in this study. More detailed explanations are provided in relevant sections of the study. For the purpose of this study, the key terms, Distributed Leadership, Working Relationships, Principal, School Management Team, ex-House of Assembly (HOA), ex-House of Delegates (HOD), ex-House of Representative (HOR) and ex-Department of Education and Training (DET) schools need to be clarified from the outset.

8.1 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Yukl (1999: 292, cited Moyo 2007) defines distributed leadership as the kind of leadership that is not provided by an individual who performs all

the essential leadership functions but by a set of people who do so collectively. He further argues that some leadership functions (for example, making important decisions) may be shared by several members of a group, whilst other leadership functions may be allocated to individual members, and as well, that a particular leadership function may be performed by different people at different times. Yukl (1999: 292, cited in Moyo 2007) posits that the leadership actions of any individual leader are less important than the collective leadership provided by members of the organization. The next concept to be defined is working relationships.

8.2 WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

In this study the term working relationship is used in the sense in which Sergiovanni (1994) uses it. Sergiovanni maintains that in the theory of *Gesellschaft* (bonding), individuals relate to each other in order to reach some goal or to gain some benefit. Hence, according to Sergiovanni the modern formal organization is seen as a *Gesellschaft* in which working relationships are prescribed by roles and expectations. Policies, rules and protocols determine the nature of working relationships.

Mentz (1996, cited in Teske et al 1999) suggests that in *Gesellschaft* relationships are characterized by competitiveness, objectivity, rationality and self-interest. This study concentrated on the leadership style that leaders used to influence others in the organization to move towards goal setting and goal achievement and on how these leaderships and

management styles promote good working relations in the workplace. There are many different definitions of principalship, but for the purpose of this study researcher focused on the definition of Sergiovanni (1992).

8.3 PRINCIPAL

The word principal was originally an adjective used to designate who among educators was the one 'in charge' (Sergiovanni 1980). For Sergiovanni (1992) the term principal teacher represented the notion that the person was truly a teacher, or even a "super teacher". As far back as 1947 with the rise of industrialization and the development of scientific management techniques Taylor (1947) argued that the term principal teacher simply became "the principal" when his work took on a management focus. Recent demands for the principal to become more involved in the instructional program of the school suggest something of a "return to roots" approach.

In 1980 Sergiovanni defined the school leader (principal) "... as the individual charged with the task of directing and coordinating the group activities necessary to achieve or change goals". By 1992, Sergiovanni's definition of school leader evolved into a more holistic one. For the purpose of this study the principal is seen as the head of the institution, the accounting officer, the director in the sense that he gives direction to all the stakeholders at the institution. Sergiovanni (1992) argues that the principal's leadership is instrumental to school effectiveness, and emerging research evidence indicates its causal link to student outcomes

(Leithwood and Riehl 2003). In the present study the researcher suggested that principals are concerned with value-addedness (Harris 2004), commitment to improving student performance (MacBeath 2005). They are also concerned with school improvement and facilitating change processes in the management of the school (Lambert 2002) by fostering leadership that includes sharing vision, providing explanation, shared decision-making based on practical and clear principles. In the new education dispensation the department of education expects principals to empower others and to build consensus and coalition within the school context (Leithwood 2000).

8.4 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS

The SASA (1996) introduced the implementation of SMTs in the schools. The term school management team is here used in the sense in which DoE (1996) uses it. DoE (1996) argues that "...a school management team is a group of professionals who are interdependent, who share common goals and who must contribute their activities to achieve those goals". In this study the focus is on school management team performance and school management team development and on the working relationships between the SMT and the principal. The underlying assumptions of this study also required clarification at the outset.

8.5 Ex-HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY SCHOOLS

During the tri-partheid government, prior to the 1994 elections in South Africa, the House of Assembly made provision for the education of 'White' learners only despite the fact that they were public schools. The professional staff members at these schools were only 'Whites'. At a later stage the schools were also known as model C schools which charged exorbitant school fees.

8.6 Ex-HOUSE OF DELEGATE SCHOOLS

Prior to 1994 the House of Delegates schools catered for the education of 'Indian' learners. 'Indian' educators were allowed to teach at the House of Delegates schools.

8.7 Ex-HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SCHOOLS

The House of Representative schools were occupied by learners from the 'Coloured' community's prior to the democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. 'Coloured' educators taught at these schools.

8.8 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SCHOOLS

The Department of Education and Training schools was responsible for the education of 'Black' learners. 'Black' educators taught at the DET schools before the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa.

9. UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

Fundamental to this study are the following assumptions:

Distributed leadership has not been implemented effectively in primary schools in the Sisonke Education District. Distributed leadership has the potential to change the working relationships between principals and SMTs for the better as the SASA also assumes. Teamwork is essential to enhance effective, efficient and economical working relationships in primary schools. Distributed leadership by its nature and form is something that cannot be centred in one individual at a primary school. Key employees (SMT members) are frustrated by failure to implement distributive leadership. There is an absence of collaboration between principals and SMTs at primary schools. This assumption has been corroborated by the research of MacBeath (2005).

10. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study is of both theoretical and practical significance.

10.1 THEORETICAL SIGNIFICANCE

It provides a new perspective in terms of which to study distributed leadership as a phenomenon. Distributed leadership, is shown to be absolutely vital for good working relationships and must be properly understood by educators.

10.2 PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Managers will be given a 'snap-shot view' of what is currently happening in the schools so as to clearly see both the autocratic and the more democratic working relations. Knowledge of how principals practice and fail to practice distributed leadership in primary schools in the Sisonke Education District will be provided. This study will also make clear that in the current context of transformation in our country, a paradigm shift in the managing of schools is urgently required. Key factors in bringing about pedagogic change through distributed leadership will be identified. Lastly, the findings of the study will assist district, provincial and national training officers to understand 'why' policies have not been implemented as was envisaged by the Department of Education.

11. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The thesis is organised into five chapters. Having presented an overview of the study in chapter 1, chapter 2 reviews the literature related to distributed leadership in order to contextualise the issues under discussion.

Chapter 2 begins with a discussion of the concept 'distributed leadership', to continue with its meaning in the context of teamwork and working relationships. The challenges facing distributed leadership are next discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of distributed

leadership in an international and South African context and shows how it serves as a framework for the present study.

Chapter 3 deals with the methodology used to find answers to the questions set forth in chapter 1. The chapter includes descriptions of the sample for the study, the instruments used for collection of data, the procedure adopted in the administration of the instruments.

Chapter 4 presents the data analysis and interpretations. It discusses and interprets the outcomes of the analysis of the data.

Chapter 5 contains the discussions and conclusions. It discusses some implications of the findings for working relationships between principals and SMTs in primary schools in the Sisonke Education District and indicates avenues for future research.

12. SUMMARY

An overview of this study of distributed leadership and how it affects the working relationships between principals and SMTs in primary schools in the Sisonke education district of the KwaZulu/Natal Province has been given. In this chapter the background information, the problem statement, research questions, purpose of the research, the thesis statement of the study, delineation and limitations, definitions of terms and concepts, underlying assumptions, significance of the study and chapter overviews

were highlighted. Chapter two review the literature relating to distributed leadership.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. INTRODUCTION

Wright (2008), remarks that studies of distributed leadership are relatively few, but that Spillane (2006) has contributed the most recent and illustrative empirical data about distributed leadership to the scholarly literature. Wright (2008: 23) further states that Spillane (2006) adopted a cognitive perspective when offering the distributed leadership framework as a diagnostic and design tool to help practitioners to explore *how* the practice of leadership is “stretched over” multiple leaders, followers and the situation – either by design, default or necessity. Wright (2008) also states the *situation* to be an integral and constitutive component of leadership practice for Spillane.

Harris (2008) argues that unlike many other leadership ideas, that of distributed leadership is strongly based theoretically. She refers to Spillane’s leadership theory as drawing upon distributed cognition and activity theory. Harris, like Spillane contends that distributed leadership is best understood as “*practice distributed over leaders, followers and their situation and incorporates the activities of multiple groups of individuals*”. Crucial is a social distribution of leadership where the leadership function is “*stretched over the work of a number of individuals and the task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders*”. Both Harris (2005) and Spillane (2005) argue that the social context and the inter-relationships therein is an integral part of the leadership activity.

Harris (2005a: 162) observes that the notion of distributed leadership is at least sixty years old and has been promoted in various guises over the years: institutional theory, site-based management, dispersed leadership, distributive leadership and collaborative leadership. Bottery (2004: 119 – 20) in his contribution about the underpinning principles of distributed leadership argues that, until very recently, an individualistic view of leadership has dominated studies of leadership. Harris (2005b) points out that theory on leadership has recently undergone a major paradigm shift: from the traditional view of leadership as centred in individual roles or responsibilities to alternative leadership theories which place the focus on multiple sources of leadership. Distributed leadership is not the exclusive domain of one individual, but resides in many people.

This study's literature review is to serve the purpose of examining the perceptions of both principals and SMTs regarding their working relationships. Gronn (1999) observes that distributed leadership suits our schools well since the competencies required are often greater than any one person is able to possess and where team structures and increasing empowerment of individuals is becoming the norm (cited in Southworth 2002). Over the last quarter century distributed leadership has been identified as crucial in enhancing performance in educational institutions.

This study's consideration of distributed leadership and its underlying principles is in contexts of micropolitics and institutional transformation. The focus therefore is on possibilities and challenges of distributive leadership.

The literature is considered in terms of:

- The concept of distributed leadership,
- Distributed Leadership: Teamwork and working relationships,
- Distributed Leadership: Limitations and Challenges,
- Distributed Leadership: International Context,
- Distributed Leadership: South African Context,
- Implications of Distributed Leadership regarding teamwork and working relationships

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Oduro (2004) argues that distributed leadership has long proven its worth where people seek to meet organizational goals. He takes note of ancient sayings to prove it. Examples are the English adage 'two heads are better than one' and the Ghanaian 'etsir kor nko egyina', literally meaning, 'problem-solving through consultation is impossible with a single person's wisdom' and 'Nunya adidoe, asi mesu nei o', literally translated as 'knowledge is like the baobab tree, no one person can embrace it'. Especially the baobab tree, metaphor drives home the fact that leadership wisdom, knowledge and skills needed for solving an organisation's problems go beyond the capacity of a single individual.

Oduro (2004) suggests that the notion of distributed leadership was well expressed as early as 1250 B.C. by the biblical Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. This was Jethro's advice to Moses:

Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as men that fear God, men of truth, men that are hating covetousness, and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, and of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens, and let them judge the people at all seasons; and it shall be that every great matter they shall bring unto thee but every small matter they shall judge so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee (Exodus 18: 21- 22, cited in Bible Classics.com 2003).

Jethro's model was based on the principle that great men should not only strive to be useful themselves, but contrive to make others useful. At issue here is not mere delegation of authority but the creation of an environment in which people are able to grow into leadership (MacBeath et al 2004). Oduro states that the principle was tacitly at work over the centuries and was not explicated theoretically until the latter half of the last century by social psychologists and as organizational theory (Gronn 2002).

Oduro (2004), note that the idea became an issue in school leadership literature, in the late 1990s. Then in the USA one strategy for improving the standard of school leadership was to provide educational institutions with multiple leadership or distributed leadership teams (Oduro 2004).

2.2 REDISCOVERING DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

According to Serrat (2009) the widely distributed interconnected and virtual forms of organisation that have emerged require that organisations unlock the knowledge of their members and empower them to act on their own behalf and on behalf of their organisations. For Serrat (2009) positional leadership does not meet the needs of high performance organisations: when working with knowledge workers, managers can have no direct authority over how their “subordinates” perform, they can at best coax them to do their best. According to Serrat (2009) managers will deliver more by not clutching the reins, instead, they should entice others to hold them as the situation warrants.

The literature on distributed leadership according to Serrat (2009) is recent and modest. It rests on a handful of articles written in the late 1990s and 2000s, mainly in the field of educational leadership, (Sometimes interchangeable notions of collaborative, delegated, democratic, dispersed, shared, teacher leadership in these do not make for clarity). It constitutes a clear-cut break from leadership theories enquired into the traits behaviours and situations that might allow individuals to transact or transform for excellence. Quite simply, he states that it is a different way of thinking about leadership, a new lens through which to view and study leadership as a phenomenon, not just as something that is brought to a team (or organisation).

Serrat (2009) explains that the starting point of distributed leadership is the division of labour that characterises most organizations not the binary division of leaders and followers. Proponents of distributed leadership prefer to examine how organizations manifest leadership in their work practices and the various forms that takes. To the extent that leadership is shared or dispersed it is likely to be aggregated or holistic.

International and national literature shows that there are many different definitions of distributed leadership. More recently concepts like democratic leadership (Bass 1990), collective leadership (Burns 1998), shared leadership (Cotton 2003), dispersed leadership (Harris 2004), distributive leadership (Duignan 2006) have been used to describe situations where leadership functions are believed to be shared. I have selected the following definitions that underly the study:

Harris (cited in Moyo 2007) states that distributed leadership is “characterized as a form of collective leadership, in which educators develop expertise by working collaboratively”. Similarly, Hopkins and Jackson (2003, cited in Wright 2008) refer to leadership as “the intellectual capital of the organization residing (sometimes dormant or unexpressed), within its members”. Barth (1988) argues that distributed leadership is based on the premise that all educators can and must lead. In his definition of distributed leadership, Spillane (2005) argues that “distributed leadership seems to contradict other forms of leadership, where, for example, individual leaders would act and take decisions unilaterally and expect other people to follow or implement such

decisions. He further argues that it must be borne in mind that in distributed leadership practice leaders and so-called followers co-produce leadership practice. Woods (2004) develops this definition further when he regards distributed leadership as a “conceptual counterweight” to transformational leadership, insofar as it opens the boundaries of leadership to all teachers whether or not they are in formal leadership positions.

Based on the abovementioned definitions, the researcher formulated his own definition of distributed leadership for the purpose of this study:

Distributed leadership is a collective form of leadership in which principals and SMTs lead the school and collaborate to improve educational practices and ensure effective teaching and learning.

In this definition the emphasis is on collective action, empowerment and shared agency suggesting that primary school principals and SMTs can lead and that leadership is a form of agency that can be distributed and shared.

The literature on SMT leadership almost always includes reference to collaboration, collaborative work practices or collaborative cultures (Gronn 2000, Spillane 2001, Muijs, and Harris 2007, Grant 2006). Distributed leadership includes interaction among colleagues and involves practices

that 'stretch over' a number of people in developing the school as a community.

2.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Bassey (1999:5) argues that for distributed leadership to be successfully implemented, a number of issues must be considered. It should, for example, respond to an existing climate and to perceived priorities for development. Bassey (1999:5) states emphatically that there is no "blueprint" for implementing distributed leadership. Situations on the ground differ from school to school. Therefore there can never be an umbrella strategy for implementing distributed leadership.

Like Bassey (1999:5), Harris (2005) argues that patience is required in the process of implementing distributed leadership because acceptance of such a novelty by staff members could prove difficult. After all, cultural change is both challenging and demanding.

Burns (1978) suggests that implementing distributed leadership should start by working on sharing vision, values and the mission of the school. He argues that leadership participation can never be achieved overnight, it has to be gradually introduced and patience has to prevail. He suggests that the school management structure may begin by inviting leadership participation from, say, two staff members followed by creating opportunities allowing everybody to stand a chance of being in leadership.

MacBeath (2005) notes that “what to hold and when to let go”, is a leadership dilemma both in general terms and in the highly specific situation. The newly appointed principal should downplay his/her role as ultimate decision-maker and trust others to make the right decisions. MacBeath (2005) points out that a head teacher who acknowledges authority of others can extend his/her leadership even as he/she lets go more. Teams should have intrinsically interesting tasks to perform. People will work harder if the tasks they are asked to perform are intrinsically interesting, motivating, challenging and enjoyable. Where people are required to fit the same nut on the same bolt hour after hour, day after day, they are unlikely to be motivated and committed to their work. Where teams have an inherently interesting task to perform, there is generally higher commitment, higher motivation and more cooperative working. Work teams’ objectives and tasks must be carefully designed and set to be meaningful.

There should be clear goals and built-in performance feedback. That is as important for teams as it is for individuals, and for the same reasons. Where people are set clear targets performance is generally improved. Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008) point out that the manuals issued by the Department of Education (DoE) are of little of use for SMTs in South Africa. Schools cannot function properly without clear procedures, firm guidelines, and clear lines of accountability. To achieve the implementation of distributed leadership in the school, a newly appointed principal must make sure that there are clear goals in all that needs to be done.

Gronn (2002) suggests that the potential of leadership is present in the flow of activities in which a set of organisation members find themselves enmeshed. Distribution culturally allows the strength of the school to be seen in its collective intelligence and collective energy (MacBeath 2004). The importance of having a say is stressed in distributed leadership (Wasley 1991). Team members have a right to be heard. This fits the democratic aspirations of 21st century South Africa. With distributed leadership, principals need to facilitate participation by educators, parents, learners and the school community in all issues that affect their interests. The SMT is one vehicle for achieving this objective.

The introduction of democratically and representative school governing bodies during the post-apartheid era provides evidence that political space was created for the implementation of a form of distributed leadership. The need is for leadership theories which place the focus on multiple sources of leadership and this distributed leadership does.

2.4 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEAMWORK AND WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Theories of teamwork shares the view that cooperation produces results beyond what may be expected from individuals working alone. The literature on teamwork often makes the distinction between formal and informal teams but suggests that both types operate best in a culture that

fosters an open climate where relationships are based on trust, mutual protection and support (Bennet 2003).

Teamwork is a key element of distributed leadership (Harris 2004) in that the nature and purpose of distributed leadership is “the ability of those within a school to work together, constructing meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively” (Lambert 1998: 5). However, the existence of structured teams alone does not guarantee distributed leadership. In fact, distributed leadership practices may not emphasise the formal structured approach to teamwork at all but rather acknowledge that groups of teachers work together as appropriate in order to achieve a particular objective at a given time. This would mean that the composition of leadership teams should vary according to the task in hand; the teams would not necessarily operate within a hierarchical structure and their constitution would depend on the function and objective of the team. Leadership of, and within teams may vary, thus providing opportunity for the emergence and development of leadership across a number of people, whether or not they are in formal positions of leadership.

Primary schools like all organisations have leadership structures, people that are at the helm of the organisation. It is interesting and worthwhile to find out how leadership may be distributed to include all staff members, not just the principal or school-head.

Spillane (2005: 4) argues that principals all over the world will admit that, to a large degree, they depend on other educators for the execution of key school leadership function activities. A focus away from the principal and towards the leadership roles played by other educators may provide a better perspective and understanding of school leadership. The critical question says Spillane (2005), is not whether or not leadership is distributed, but how it is distributed and how it involves leaders, followers and their situation.

According to Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008) an interesting dimension of team management that emerged in the study that they conducted was the notion of acting in ways that arise from having to be 'politically correct' rather than to be truly participative. They discovered that at times, because of the political attitudes of some educators, principals felt pressurised to consult more broadly than they wished to. Asked whether post level one educators should be included in the SMT, Van der Mescht and Tyala found principals to be hesitant.

They also found principals who saw variable levels of competence among team members as a threat. One principal stressed that relying on other team members may mean that "You might not meet certain due dates and the major thing is to meet due dates by the department". Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008), reveal that principals found some educators to be lazy: "You get educators who would want to do the basic minimum work, saying that's where my job description ends". Negative educators of course can result in derailed attempts at team-building.

Today we face new demands that make cooperative work in teams more vital and more challenging (Bennet 2003). There is accumulating evidence that when students work in cooperative groups rather than individually, they work harder, help less able group members and learn more. Bennet (2003) further argues that teams enable organisations to develop and deliver products and services quickly and cost effectively. Time is saved if services formerly performed sequentially by individuals, can be performed concurrently. Thus, a newly appointed principal can capitalise by working cooperatively with all stakeholders of the school. Within team work participation is central (Bennet 2003).

Involving all those affected by organisational change in the process of change is vital in order to gain commitment and reduce resistance. Working in teams, especially where the teams are focusing on ideas for change encourages commitment to that process. Those who make up the team have valuable experience to add to the team's deliberation. Such experience should be used as a resource. Also, innovation is promoted within team based organisations because of cross-fertilisation.

MacBeath (2005) asserts that problems arise where there is a lack of participation. This will be the case with principals who find it difficult to let go. Although team working can be effective for all the reasons listed above, it is not so that the introduction of team working is inevitably successful. People have to learn the skills of working in teams. There are also many barriers to effective team working which newly appointed

principals and team members must overcome or avoid if they are to succeed in achieving synergy.

MacBeath (2005) points out that distributed leadership is premised on trust. However, while principals believe in the importance of trust they remain accountable to external sources and trusting others to deliver implies a risk for which they pay a price. It is therefore important for a newly appointed principal to understand that without mutual trust relationship and respect are compromised and mistrust exerts a corrosive influence.

Bennett (2003) implies that distributed leadership has gained prominence during the last ten years. While Cotton (2003) claims that distributed leadership help us understand leadership practice and how leadership practices might work more effectively in the context of schools. A distributed perspective takes the situation to be an integral part of the leadership context; it is an integrated view of leadership's thinking, their activity, behaviours and the situation.

Spillane (2006) refers to leadership as the intellectual capital of the organisation residing within its members. It assumes that all educators can and must lead. It is important that their leadership capacity be unleashed and engaged in the interest of the school as an organisation.

According to MacBeath (2005) distribution also implies teachers' mutual acceptance of one another's leadership potential. In the same vein,

Luckett (2003) observes that, individuals should feel they are important to the fate of the team. Social loafing is most likely to occur when people believe that their contributions to the team are dispensable. By careful exploration of the roles of each team member, together with the identification of team and individual objectives, team members can experience and demonstrate their importance to the overall success of the team.

Individual contributions should be indispensable, unique and evaluated against a standard (Bush 2007). This implies that people have to feel not only that their work is indispensable, but also that their performance is noted by other members of the team. As Inglis et al (2003) points out where team members know that the products of their performance will be observed by other members of the team, they are much more likely to perform optimally.

People who make up schools may hold different views, and so a newly appointed principal should respect, and give attention to the diverse and individual perspectives of stakeholders. According to Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008), schools are complex organisations, peopled by complex individuals, often drawn from a range of cultures, all working towards the goal of effective teaching and learning. Newly appointed principals should therefore avoid reliance on a fixed hierarchy since this unduly restricts the flexibility of the organisation.

In traditional hierarchical schools, leadership is defined by what the person in charge does for or to the other members of the community. In schools with distributive leadership, the focus shifts to how people interact with one another to make change happen. It is also defined by people's relationships to one another, their personal connections, mutual respect and shared knowledge.

Distributed leadership needs a chance in the South African educational context because it extends the boundaries of leadership significantly as it is premised upon high levels of involvement and embraces the widest variety of "expertise", "skills" and "input" (Harris and Lambert 2003: 16). Engaging many people in leadership activity is at the core of distributed leadership in action and this resonates well with Ubuntu. The values of Ubuntu are respect, sharing, compassion, humanness and caring which the post 1994 education system seeks to accommodate. Hlongwane (2009) posits that Ubuntu presupposes mutual knowledge and understanding. As a philosophy of co-existence, reconciliation, cooperation and integration Ubuntu highlights relationships of interdependence with the sole purpose to hold communities together (Day 2000).

Distributed leadership should be given prominence because as Gronn (2004) indicates, it is the form of leadership most closely associated with improved learning outcomes. There is a growing recognition of the positive correlation between decisive and sustained school improvement and distributed leadership (Harris 2003a: 7).

Among the reasons why distributive leadership should be given prominence is that traditional notions of how schools should be run must be left behind. Many schools are still marked by an authoritarian style of leadership with the principal determining the course for the school, and educators adhering to directives. Principals in successful schools are inclusive and flexible. They provide opportunities for staff, students and community members to gain skill in leadership functions. These principals model collaborative learning and decision making by the way they engage and empower others (Diamond 2003, cited in MacBeath 2005).

Lambert (2002) states that building working relationships should contribute to and offers participants a rich variety of tools and processes to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and to build strong and lasting agreements. He notes, however, that collaboration is a skill and involves a set of practices that principals and SMT's are rarely taught. Just so Gronn (2000) view a partnership as a cooperative process of planning that brings together school staff, parents and learners to enhance learner accomplishment and development. Lambert (2002) and Gronn (2000) say partnerships have served as an important tool in advancing education globally. The South African education system, witness the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), Subsection 2, provides for partnerships. It stipulates that all stakeholders in a school enter into a partnership with the government, thereby accepting and assuming responsibility for the organization, the governance and the management of the school.

Brown (2001), states that interpersonal human dealings are fragile and demand tender loving care. Nowhere is this tender loving care more important than in working relationships between principals and SMTs. However, observe that the importance placed on good working relationships the respondents among principals and SMTs by education officials has not really materialized in the schools.

2.5 DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP: LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Grant (2006) asserts that research conducted locally has shown that many schools in South Africa are still bureaucratically and autocratically organized with top-down structures as major impediments to the development of SMTs. Grant and Singh (2007) found that SMTs feel threatened by their colleagues' ideas, leading to SMTs overloading themselves with leadership roles. The research also found principals resisting change as many of them still believe that it is the principal's role to lead and the SMT's role to comply with the instructions of the principal. That is why SMT members are seen as taking on extra management tasks and burdens and some are simply afraid to use their own initiative.

A study by Lieberman, Saxl and Miles (2000) of 17 SMT leaders showed that educators who take on leadership roles were isolated from their colleagues. Smylie and Denny's study (1990, cited in Teske et al 1999) of 13 SMTs concluded that organizational factors, such as lack of time to adequately perform leadership functions, made it difficult for SMTs to perform new tasks assigned to them. Rajagopaul (2007) found that the

leadership roles of educators are too time-consuming and impact heavily on their personal lives. He further notes that educators felt that time should be set aside during school hours for educators to meet. He too noted that educators complained about their enormous workload. These educators felt that the teaching hours should be reduced and that time should be allocated in the timetable for meetings, staff development and planning.

Bartlet (cited in Spillane 2004) in her study of SMT found that those educators who took powerful teacher roles soon cut down on their leadership involvement because they found that teaching and leading at the same time took too great a toll on their personal and professional lives. Although the will and support for SMT leadership was present, the structures, time and distribution of work to enable it were lacking.

Wasley (1991) in her in-depth international study of three SMT leaders each with a different focus, geographical location and roles shared common problems such as difficulty in working within bureaucratic systems, lack of incentives for educators to assume new roles and educator resistance to becoming involved in reform efforts. Wasley concluded that for SMT leadership to become a reality, educators must be given real support for their work and that school cultures be altered to accommodate these new roles. Lack of support for educators to engage in leadership roles eroded their willingness to become SMT leaders.

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) assert support of SMT leadership means understand the concept, to awaken the understanding of the educators themselves to their leadership potential, and to provide for the development of SMT leadership. Singh's (2007) research in two primary schools in Pietermaritzburg showed that leadership activities there were delegated by the SMTs and that the SMT culture at both schools was contrived. Both local and international research make mention of time constraints, workloads, bureaucratic systems and lack of incentives that negatively impact on educators' willingness to engage in leadership roles.

In view of the above out an in-depth research was carried out in the Sisonke Education District in the KwaZulu/Natal Province to determine if these barriers were also prevalent at the six primary schools and to find out what other factors might constitute barriers to SMT leadership at these schools. Although the literature does show that school cultures and structures may militate against the development of SMT leadership, educators themselves can also create barriers to their own development. Nevertheless there are teachers who are eager and willing to expand their abilities and engage in leadership roles provided they will be given the opportunities and are supported by their colleagues and the principal.

Research findings have proven that the "distributed leadership movement is a call for leadership to be shared throughout the organization in a more democratic fashion" and that the fundamental premise of the concept of distributed leadership is that leadership activities should not be left in the hands of a sole individual but, should be shared among a number of

people in an organization or team” (Storey 2004, cited in Torrance 2009). This study enquires after the perceptions of both principals and SMTs of the effect of distributed leadership on their working relationships. For greater clarity it may be asked: Is all distribution intended to enhance good working relationships? Is it possible that some forms of leadership distribution could support abuse of power (Maxey and Nguyen 2006 cited in Torrance 2009). Educators can become stressed out by shared decision-making and the benefits of participation do not necessarily result in better teaching practice and may not benefit the school as a whole, especially if the educators’ and organization’s goals are not well aligned (Teske et al 1999). According to a study by Inglis et al 2003 it is not clear whether shared or democratic leadership leads to school improvement.

Distributed leadership’s contribution to efficiency and effectiveness has been contested. While some possible advantages and benefits have been outlined, distribution of leadership may not necessarily entail school improvement. Leithwood and Jantzi (1998) found that “distributing leadership is a risky business and may result in the distribution of incompetence”.

In addition the abovementioned barriers to distributed leadership, Harris (2004) outline some additional difficulties. She recognizes structural and cultural barriers in schools that could make it very difficult for some teachers to show leadership. Jockeying for power positions in a school can create a climate hardly conducive for quality teaching and learning, for example, young teachers expressing their opinion, especially if their

opinion differs from the traditional or prevailing one. They could be perceived as threatening to the status quo. Educators are usually very aware of the micropolitics within a school – perhaps more so than the principal – and may exercise wise caution:

Teachers placed in positions that bear titles and resources of leadership display a caution towards their colleagues that is both poignant and eminently sensible (Muijs et al 2003).

This raises serious questions as to how leadership is distributed and by whom? It is understandable that teachers who are used to working with their colleagues as friends and 'equals' would be apprehensive about the expectations of the SMT and the principal, especially the principal, when they are placed in a leadership role.

Finally, in a climate of accountability, principals may be less willing to relinquish power as it might leave them vulnerable due to lack of direct control. This may be particularly true for financial, legal and human resource issues, but also for the educational operation of the school.

According to Bauer and Bogotch (2006: 446, cited in Van der Mescht and Tyala 2008), distributed leadership would seem to be an appropriate approach to follow in leading and managing an organisation in which team work is valued. Yet distributed leadership is not unproblematic. Bauer and Bogotch (2006: 446) warn that distributive leadership can have negative effects, arguing that 'individual possessiveness and security

became secondary to the needs of the school'. In systems still geared towards rewarding members on an individual basis this could become problematic. A more significant threat seems to be the tension schools may experience between "holding on and letting go" (MacBeath 2005: 354). This refers to a tension between a desire on the part of school heads to "let go" and enable the distribution of significant responsibilities and the opposing desire to "hold on" for fear of losing control and perhaps being exposed in the event of team failure.

Lack of commitment is another problem generated through distributed leadership. Working in groups may cause some to become lackadaisical in their work. They count on somebody in the group to "carry" them. Distributed leadership may also cause inauthentic democracy. This develops into favouritism. Most popular members in the group will always be listened to and he/she will have the majority's support. Time, which is a limited resource, is always wasted if all members in the group participate in decision-making. In the practice of democracy and freedom of speech much time will be wasted on one agenda before moving to another. This can delay decision-making processes since distributed leadership, which enhances collegiality and group participation, may create uncertainty and lack of status of the stakeholders.

According to Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008) an interesting dimension of team management emerging from their study concerns the notion of acting in ways that arise from having to be 'politically correct' rather than truly participative. Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008) say that at times,

because of the political attitudes of some educators, principals at times felt pressurised to consult more broadly than they wished to. Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008) found that some principals were hesitant to include post level one (PL 1) educators in the activities of the SMT.

According to Grant (2010: 15) some principals find it difficult to trust all team members at all times. She points out that some principals believed that teamwork was difficult since "...the job may not be done the way you would like it, you may not get that personal satisfaction". Grant (2010: 5), further says that there are problems when implementing resolutions taken by the team because certain teachers do not practice what they preach: "You get people who can tell you the most beautiful things in a meeting situation, the most beautiful ideas; but when it comes to reality it is not implemented".

Individuals sometimes work less hard in groups than they do individually (Spillane 2005), especially if the task is not intrinsically motivating or when a strong sense of team cohesion is lacking. It is in the rope-pulling of the following kind: the person at the front of a rope is instructed to pull on the rope and told that there are six people behind him/her, also pulling. Each person pulling was blind-folded and unable to see what was going on behind him/her. In some cases the other 'pullers' will simply stand behind the person at the front and make grunting noises to suggest that they are pulling when, in fact, making no effort.

MacBeath (2005) observes that leaders must know their people. It is imperative that newly appointed principals know their staff members in order for them to make judgements as to who has the skills to perform a task successfully.

2.6 DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP: ADVANTAGES OF THE FRAMEWORK

According to Wagner (2001) distributive leadership spreads decision-making authority throughout the school, by creating a “flatter”, and more representative governance structure. Unlike the traditional, principal-dominated school leadership models, distributive leadership provides opportunities for everyone – including teachers, students, parents and community members to participate in key decisions.

Wallace (2001) posits that there are a number of advantages that accrue from participating in distributed leadership. Firstly, distributive leadership emphasizes a peer support network rather than superior/subordinate relationships. Secondly, distributive leadership is self-sustaining. The more educators participate, the better they are able to do so. Thirdly, distributive leadership ensures a greater commitment, motivation and sense of responsibility on the part of the SMT members. Fourthly, distributive leadership fosters the realisation that each SMT member has professional rights and obligations, thus enhancing professionalism. Fifthly, distributive leadership makes the SMT members agents of their own destiny – to a certain extent. Participation maximises the number of

views expressed, and in the process it nurtures a respect for diversity. As it encourages decision-making by discussion rather than by faith it promotes tolerance, respect and care for other people. It has an integrative effect and stimulates the development of democratic attitudes and qualities. Finally, participation acts as a check on pomposity and abuse of power. Stated differently, it provides SMT members with the space and capacity to resist hegemonies which could marginalise them as professionals.

Distributed leadership needs to be promoted in South Africa because of its concepts, its theoretical underpinning and potential benefits. This leadership framework will help the educational system of South Africa to overcome its legacy of Apartheid that marginalised blacks, women and coloureds. It is this entrenched marginalisation, at many schools and in the educational system that has created leadership challenges. The introduction of distributed leadership has epistemological implications for SMT members: instead of being passive recipients and implementers of revealed knowledge as contained in official policies, they can become generators of knowledge. By allowing SMT members to work together they empower each other as legitimate sources of authority (Harris 2005a: 169).

2.7 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP: INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Spillane (2004: 4) contends that research into education leadership has been premised on a singular view of leadership and has focused on the difference principals make to schools and, in so doing, has reinforced the assumption that “school leadership is synonymous with the principal”. He further explains that, in direct contrast, more recent theories work from the premise that leadership need not be located only in the principal of a school but should be “stretched over multiple leaders”, including the SMT. Similarly, Harris and Muijs (2005: 133) contend that “both principals and SMTs have to function as leaders and decision makers and try to bring about fundamental changes”.

Distributed leadership has been referred to by Gronn (2003: 324) as alternative theory which, at its best, can be conceptualised as “an emergent property of a group or network of individuals in which group members pool their expertise”. Grant (2010: 57) and Barth (1988: 640) say that it requires the “re-distribution of power” and “the capacity to relinquish, so that the latent creative powers of the SMT can be released”. Spillane (2004) agrees by stating that the distributed leadership perspective foregrounds leadership practice which is “constructed in the interactions between leaders, followers and their situations”. Accordingly, the shared decision-making in distributed leadership requires a school context and culture which is supportive, collaborative (Lieberman, Saxl and Miles 1988) and collegial (Muijs and Harris 2003) and which opens up

a safe space for life-long learning and continuing professional development (Katzenmeyer and Moller 2001).

It requires a range of leaders, whether educators or SMT members, who are emotionally intelligent (White 2003), purposeful (Diamond 2003, cited in MacBeath 2005), courageous (Grant 2006), and willing to take considered risks (Lieberman, Saxl and Miles 1988) in the quest for school improvement.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the idea of distributed leadership was taking shape and being refined. The practice of developing SMT leadership was being explored and promoted (Lieberman 1988 and Wheatley 1999). This was a wide-ranging concept, incorporating ideas such as principals and SMTs working together in teams and SMTs taking on a variety of responsibilities within the school. On the positive side, it was considered beneficial to students if teachers discussed their practice with colleagues, gave and accepted critiques of their work and was open to learning from each other. However, this interaction between principals and SMTs was not always easy to achieve. The idea of principals and SMTs working together on teams resulted in the concept of 'educator leaders' which encourages active participation for teaching and learning to take place effectively and efficiently.

As far back as 1984, Murgatroyd and Reynolds stressed that "leadership can occur at a variety of levels in response to a variety of situations and is not necessarily tied to possession of a formal organisational role" (cited in

Leithwood and Jantzi (2000). A new input in the research on distributed leadership at this time did not confine the SMTs engagement to pedagogical issues but broadened the scope of their leadership role to decision-making in the overall operation of the school. These concepts of shared decision-making and the democratisation of the school were advanced in studies by Greenleaf (1966) and Hallinger and Heck (1996). Their findings differed. Hallinger and Heck, for example found a paucity of evidence linking distributed leadership to improved student outcomes while Greenleaf found that SMTs' involvement in whole-school changes could detract from classroom teaching. On the other hand, Greenleaf found a positive effect on SMT efficacy and levels of morale.

These early studies already evince differing interpretations of distributed leadership and its impact on schools. The concept of principals and SMTs working together to improve their teaching practices is a move away from the isolation and individualism of SMTs as authors such as Spillane (2001) and Fullan (1993) pointed out. In an era of rapid and significant change, it was essential that principals and SMTs would work together rather than separately. Teamwork was one of the structural changes that supported the introduction of distributed leadership.

2.7.1 DUIGNAN'S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

In the current educational leadership discourse, distributed leadership is variously interpreted. Duignan (2008) offers an interesting critique of distributed leadership, which, he claims, may be mere rhetoric rather than

reality in many schools. While he acknowledges that “the idea of sharing leadership responsibilities more widely in schools is desirable because leadership of contemporary schools is too much for any one person” (Duignan 2008) he questions what it is that is being distributed. He challenges distributed leadership as being ‘the way to do it’, in education today. “The language of distributed leadership may actually provide practitioners with the comfortable and comforting sense that if they distribute duties, tasks and responsibilities, the leadership density, capacity and quality of their organisation will be greatly strengthened” (Duignan 2008). He further argues that while this may be the case, there is an equally strong chance that it will not be. He suggests that distributed leadership cannot be practised in schools which operate within a hierarchical paradigm. He places a strong emphasis on trust and highlights the need to identify a “moral purpose for sharing leadership practices around maximising opportunities and outcomes for students” (Duignan 2006: 14, cited in Grant and Singh 2006).

Duignan (2006) argues that “leadership is an influencing process effected through authentic relationships and, as such, does not lend itself to distribution, especially if this term is interpreted within a hierarchical and/or control paradigm” (Duignan 2006:15, cited in Grant and Singh 2006). However, what he does encourage and promote is the development of leaders within each organisation, and a development of an “allowed-to-be-a-leader” culture. The process of developing these leaders depends largely on the manner in which the principal carries out his/her leadership role. For example, he suggests that principals should

stop behaving as if they are leading followers and start acting as if they are leading leaders. He also suggests that they actively seek out talent within the organisation and ask “do those who work with me grow as persons?” Finally, he asks if principals are providing user-friendly mediating processes and structures to empower people with regard to making decisions that profoundly affect their lives.

Duignan’s approach, then, rejects the idea of distributed leadership if operated in either a hierarchical or control paradigm. He sees the value and necessity of sharing leadership, particularly in the area of decision-making that affects the lives of those involved. In difficult ethical situations he considers it particularly important to share leadership. His critique and his views are founded on ethical principles and, in particular, draw on the concepts of community, the common good, and the principle of subsidiary, servant leadership and love-driven leadership (Duignan 2008).

Duignan (2006) advocates shared leadership and defines it as “a product of the on-going processes of interaction and negotiation among all school members as they construct and reconstruct a reality of working productively and compassionately together each day” (Duignan 2006: 107). This is not just a splitting of tasks but requires a mind shift – the principal must be prepared to ‘let go’ the idea that leadership is hierarchically distributed. Assumptions about leadership – such as those underpinning power, authority, influence, position, status, responsibility and accountability – also need to be articulated, critiqued and adjusted if

necessary. The quality of relationships greatly influences everything else in the organisation.

Duignan's concept of distributed leadership contrasts with Spillane's in that he places a heavy emphasis on community and relationships. Duignan's theory penetrates the organisation as a whole and could be described as an ethical view of distributed leadership. His theory seeks empowerment of individuals through the recognition of their worth as people. The community aspect is to ensure that a sense of unity and shared vision prevails. In contrast, Spillane (2007) states that "leaders don't have to see eye to eye or even get along with one another to co-perform leadership routines and tasks" (Spillane 2007: 11). Grant and Singh (2006) states that in the current educational leadership discourse, distributed leadership has a variety of interpretations. The work of various eminent researchers on the topic has been examined and analyzed in this chapter. These researchers see distributed leadership to be central to the teaching and learning process in the school and they agree that leadership involves all members of the school community, not just the head of the institution. This means that the principal together with the SMT are responsible for the management of the school.

2.7.2 SPILLANE'S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Differing interpretations of distributed leadership have caused people to use terms like collaborative leadership, shared leadership, co-leadership, democratic leadership, situational leadership and distributed leadership

interchangeably, in their discussion of distributed leadership. Spillane (2006) contends that, although collaborative leadership is by definition distributed, all distributed leadership is not necessarily collaborative. Similarly, distributed leadership allows for leadership that can be more or less collaborative, depending on the situation. Scholars of leadership use distributed leadership to indicate that school leadership involves multiple leaders. Spillane (2005) argues that leadership is an organizational quality rather than an individual attribute. He states that all educators have the potential and the right to contribute meaningfully to leadership.

Spillane (2004) makes several important points concerning distributed leadership when he emphasizes that “distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership practice rather than leaders, leadership roles, leadership functions or leadership structures”. The point is that leadership practice is basically a question of how and why people act in certain manners. Furthermore, leadership practice works as “a product of the interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situation (ibid). Hence, it is to be seen as “a co-production of all three elements”. He explains it to be like a two step dance, where the two partners, leaders and followers, interact. For him this interaction is crucial as one that must not be isolated from the situational background such as the music, which enables the partners to choose the suitable rhythm. As in dancing, leader, follower and situation make up distributed leadership. Leadership is distributed across people and the situation. Therefore he sees the implementation of distributed leadership in companies, and particularly in

schools, as essential for a well functioning and satisfying working environment.

Spillane (2004) argues that leadership happens in a variety of ways throughout the school and is centred in the interactions between people. Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001) argue that "... depending on the particular leadership task, school leaders' knowledge and expertise may be best explored at the group or collective level rather than at the individual leader's level".

Spillane (2006) further explains that distributed leadership moves beyond the superman and wonder woman view of school leadership. For him it is about leadership practice as a product of the joint interactions of school leaders, followers and aspects of their situation. Woods (2005) and Spillane (2006) reinforces his previous argument in his work of 2004 that the distributed view of leadership shifts the focus from school principals, and other formal and informal leaders, to the web of leaders, followers and aspects of their situation that shapes leadership practice. Spillane (2006) elaborates by stating that this kind of leadership is more than shared leadership. The assumption is that multiple individuals take responsibility for leadership, and that there is a leader plus multiple other leaders.

This does not necessarily mean that distributing is equal to delegating. "Leadership is distributed not delegating it or giving it away, but by

weaving together people, materials and organisational structures in a common cause” (Spillane 2006).

The time when leaders were seen as lonesome heroes, managing and fulfilling different tasks by simply “ruling” and spreading commands has been displaced by a wider understanding. Gronn (2000), who provides one of the most sophisticated attempts at understanding the theory of distributed leadership, strengthens the argument by stating that “central to the idea of distributed leadership is not the agency of individuals, but “structurally constrained conjoint agency, or the concrete labour performed by pluralities of independent organization members.

His view of distributed leadership evolves from activity theory, which “might be summarized as describing social life as a process of ever-moving relationships between technologies, nature, ideas (concepts), persons and communities, in which the focus of actions circulates to one person, then another, according to the social and environmental context and the flow of action within this. One person can initiate change, with others following, contributing and adding to or altering it in various ways. Their actions react back and alter the conditions, relationships, rules of that context”.

Though Spillane (2006), Gronn (2000) give a very detailed overview of how distributed leadership is performed in theory, we are hardly ever introduced to specific tools which might help to understand and implement distributed leadership in practice. Alma Harris (2004) agrees that “...

contemporary discourse about distributed leadership theory remains a way of analyzing rather than describing leadership practice”.

Spillane et al (2001: 13) evoke a way of understanding leadership that focuses upon interaction and the exploration of complex social processes. In this sense, leadership is best understood as practice distributed over leader, followers and their situation. For them a distributed view of leadership ‘incorporates the activities of multiple groups of individuals in a school who work at guiding and mobilizing staff in the instructional change processes’. It calls to mind a social distribution of leadership where the leadership function is stretched over the work of a number of individuals and where the leadership task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders (Spillane et al 2001: 20). It also stresses interdependency rather than dependency in how leaders of various kinds and in various roles share responsibility. Distributed leadership in theoretical terms means multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organisation, made coherent through a common culture.

Abdel Magid A1-Araki (cited in Al-Omari et al 2008) designed what he calls ‘The Octograph’ to illustrate matters. He merges theoretical data based on complex systems theory, by way of a 3D cube that simplifies diverse and often incoherent theoretical matters concerning distributed leadership in practice. This cube consists of eight unique and inevitably connected corners. These in turn divide into separate groups emerging from the lines meeting at each corner. “The eight components defining the corners of the cube are abbreviated as follows: Input and Demand;

Distribution of Authority and Roles; Objectives and Control Systems; Leadership; Group Status and Cohesion; Welfare and Economic Results; Human Outputs; Development of Resources and Conformity of Outcomes.'

Al – Araki (cited in Al-Omari et al 2008) takes us further towards implementation and conduct of distributed leadership in schools. He explains the coherent strings of leadership which are supposed to cover every single unit in a working environment. Taking into consideration diverse and dispersed opportunities of converging towards leadership practice “the authors conclude that effective principals do not just string together a series of individual actions, but systematically distribute leadership by building it into the fabric of school life”.

2.7.3 GRONN’S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Gronn (2000) like Muijs and Harris (2003), want to shift from traditional thinking about leadership to thinking about leadership as something that can be distributed. He emphasizes that distributed leadership allows for the flow of influence in organizations and has no automatic connection with leadership and headship. Distributed leadership knows flatter organizational structures (Gronn 2000: 334). Gronn’s (2000: 324) description of distributed leadership as “an emergent property of a group or network of individuals in which group members pool their expertise” is similar to Bennet et al (2003) that leadership is a shared activity whereby all SMT members are to be offered the opportunity to show their potential

in leadership roles. Gronn (2000) then, suggests that leadership needs to be understood and viewed as something that can be distributed. He views distributed leadership as allowing and providing opportunities for SMTs who are connected with formal leadership.

Gronn (2003: 679) makes a distinction between two forms of distributed leadership – additive and holistic. The additive form of distributed leadership is concerned mainly with the *dispersal* of tasks among participants within an organization. The holistic form focuses primarily on the *interdependence* of those providing leadership. Taken together, additive and holistic forms of distributed leadership assume a high degree of involvement in the process of leadership that places weight on the reciprocal learning processes that result in shared understanding (Lambert 2002). The main point to note here is that distributed leadership is primarily a way of analysing leadership activity in schools rather than a way of describing actual practice.

2.7.4 BENNET'S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Bennet et al (2003) also think it is not easy to reach agreement about the precise meaning of the term 'distributed leadership'. They describe it as "not something done by an individual to others" (2003: 3). As stated earlier, this suggests leadership to be a shared activity whereby all SMTs are to be offered the opportunity to show their potential in leadership roles. They further agree that distributed leadership is based on trust and requires "letting go" by principals rather than mere delegation of tasks

(2003: 6). The latter occurred at the school where the researcher taught. The principal delegated tasks not with the intention of developing SMTs as part of management, but only to assist when he was not in a position to perform the task himself. Leadership should be viewed as “fluid rather than located in specific formal roles or positions thus blurring the distinction between leaders and followers” (Bennet et al 2003: 6).

According to Bennet et al (2003) and Grant (2006) distributed leadership encompasses leadership initiatives by both formal and informal leaders. Bennet et al (2003) talk about ‘distributed or devolved leadership’ while Kets de Vries (1990) defines distributed leadership in terms of effective team working as in social activity theory. Bennet et al (2003: 2) also suggest that it is best to think of distributed leadership as ‘a way of thinking about leadership’ rather than as another technique or practice. In contrast to traditional notions of leadership premised upon individuals managing hierarchical systems and structures, distributed leadership is characterized as a form of collective leadership in which educators develop expertise by working together.

2.7.5 STEYN’S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Steyn (2000) emphasizes that SMTs need to be fully empowered and committed to take on leadership roles. This will make SMTs feel part of the school management in the understanding that they have something to offer to the school. Essentially, distributed leadership is an emergency property of a group or a network of interacting individuals. It is also a form

of concerted action which is about the additional dynamic that occurs when people work together or that is the product of conjoint agency.

2.7.6 SERGIOVANNI'S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Sergiovanni's (2001) concept of leadership density parallels with distributed leadership in some ways. He argues that high leadership density means that a larger number of people are involved in the work of others, are trusted with information, are involved in decision-making, are exposed to new ideas and are participating in knowledge creation and transfer. In such a situation a large number of members of the organisation have a stake in the success of the school. Similarly, the idea of distributed leadership resonates well with the idea of 'teacher leadership' that has not been fully reflected in the contemporary debate about leadership despite well developed literature (Muijs and Harris 2003).

2.7.7 LEITHWOOD'S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Leithwood et al (2004: 59) have also noted that 'the concept of distributed leadership overlaps substantially with shared, collaborative (Wallace 2002) and participative leadership concepts'. In the process links have also been made to democratic leadership although arguments for the distinctive nature of these concepts can be found (Woods 2004). Distributive leadership, like democratic, share, devolve or diffuse leadership; assumes that leadership is a social phenomenon rather than a

set of individual characteristics, traits or competences. Distributed leadership therefore means multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, which is made coherent through a common culture. This leadership style focuses on how leadership practice is distributed among formal and informal leaders. It can thus be argued that distributed leadership is a form of collective agency incorporating the activities of many individuals in a school who work at mobilizing and guiding other teachers in the process of instructional change (Spillane et al 2001).

Leithwood (2000) observes that leadership distribution may result by design or through crisis. He accepts that design decisions of individuals and agencies beyond the school can influence the distribution of leadership. For example, an educational department and Social services directive may direct that schools should teach sports and make sport development as part of the curriculum. Structures and routines are then created that enable the distribution of responsibility for leadership. While Leithwood (2000) focuses on leadership activities that are directly tied to improving the quality of classroom instruction cognisance should be taken of the fact that student discipline and attendance are important. He further states that the principal, alone cannot address situations adequately and he/she cannot commit significant time and energy to improve instruction. Leithwood (2005) posits that distribution through crisis occurs when a school encounters an unanticipated problem or challenge and formal leaders and teachers find themselves working together to address it.

Leithwood (2000) suggest that distributed leadership entails the exercise of influence over the beliefs, actions and values of others. In contrast to traditional notions of leadership premised upon an individual managing hierarchical systems and structures, distributed leadership is characterised as a form of collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working together. It has been suggested by Goleman (2002: 14) that this distributed view of leadership offers a frame for studying leadership practice where 'every person at entry level in one way or another, acts as a leader'. In his definition of distributed leadership Gronn (2003) observes that distributed leadership refers to the distribution or delegation of leadership to all stakeholders partaking in aspects of the daily running of the schools. Furthermore, scholars such as Spillane (2005:3) posit that distributed leadership means that leadership roles involve multiple leaders, both administrators and teachers.

2.7.8 YUKL'S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Yukl (1994: 3, cited in Singh 2007) states that 'most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person (or group) over other people (or groups) to structure activities and relationships in a group or organisation'. Leithwood et al (2004) add that 'distributed leadership entails the exercise of influence over the beliefs, actions and values of others ... as is the case with leadership from any source'.

Distributed Leadership, also called variously participative, democratic, dispersed and teacher leadership is a strongly emergent theme in the educational leadership literature, as well as in the 'official' discourse of the sector, as represented by the National College of School Leadership (Southworth 2002). It is often used interchangeably with "shared leadership", "team leadership", and "democratic leadership".

2.7.9 DIAMOND'S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Diamond (2003) associates leadership with influence or ability to influence the doings of others in bringing about change in the form, nature and function of some phenomenon. However, he takes distributed leadership to involve far more than the actions and beliefs of single leaders.

2.7.10 COTTON'S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Cotton (2003) finds distributed leadership to be constituted through the interaction of leaders, SMTs and the situation as it influences instructional practices. It allows us to understand leadership activity in schools in much more complex and interconnected ways. At times he speaks of distributed leadership as though it were the same as transformational leadership, or a form of it.

West Chester University (cited in the British Association of Teacher Leaders 2008: 12) takes distributed leadership seriously in everyday practice. They understand distributed leadership practice as "a central

goal ... for individuals to succeed in a climate of shared purpose, teamwork, and respect – an atmosphere in which we can reach out to help one another and feel free to turn to your colleague to ask for help”. In other words, distributed leadership supports and strengthens the individual.

2.7.11 WILLIAMS' VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Williams (2008) sees leadership as a function to which all role players within the school as an organisation contribute. It is the shared responsibility of the principal, school management team, the parents, the non-teaching staff members and the learners. He further explains that distributed leadership seeks to engage expertise from wherever it exists within the organisation rather than only from formal positions or role players.

2.7.12 WOODS' VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

According to Woods (2005), distributed leadership emphasizes involving staff, engaging their commitment, encouraging dispersal of discretion and responsibility and placing the highest value on continual learning, creativity and innovation. In a similar vein, MacBeath (2005) points out that distributed leadership clearly implies a principal's ability to relinquish his/her role as ultimate decision-maker, by trusting the SMT to make proper decisions. Very importantly, it must be noted that in distributed leadership, leadership is regarded as a function to which all SMT

members contribute, as a shared responsibility. This means that all SMT members are regarded as leaders with varying responsibilities depending on their capabilities and hierarchical position in the school as well as the specific task that has to be fielded (Williams 2008).

According to Woods (2005) it is the collective interaction of leaders, followers and their situation that is paramount. Hence, distributed leadership allows for both democratic and autocratic leadership. For example, Nyama (2009) states that leadership practice in mathematics may be autocratic in that it typically involves principals doing most of the talking, telling SMTs about resources and leadership and management strategies. Leadership practice in literacy, by contrast, involves more 'interactive' communication between principals and SMTs as they work together to construct leadership and management strategies. She argues that even though it is more autocratic, the maths leadership is still distributed in that it is defined in the interactions of leaders, followers and the situation.

This is not to suggest that ultimately no one is responsible for the overall performance of the organisation or that those in formal leadership roles are redundant. It is still the job of those in formal leadership positions to hold the pieces of the organisation together in a productive relationship and their central task remains the fostering of a common culture of expectations around the use of individual skills and abilities. In simple terms, distributed leadership equates with maximising the human capacity within the organisation.

Co-leadership reflects some distribution of leadership but distributive leadership involves more, and focuses on how leadership practice takes shape in leaders, followers and aspects of the situation. According to Spillane (2006) co-leadership happens when “power and responsibility are dispersed among co-leaders with shared values and aspirations, all of whom work together toward common goals”. Distributed leadership differs from this view by focusing on practice, taking followers and the situation into account.

The literature provides no agreed upon definition of transformational leadership, although it is typically associated with transactional leadership. Transformational leadership as defined by Spillane (2006) is ‘the ability to empower others’ with the purpose of bringing about a “major change in the form, nature and function of some phenomenon”.

2.7.13 BOTTERY’S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Bottery (2004) states that to understand the need of the individual staff member is more important than trying to coordinate and control them. For Bottery (2004) a transactional approach in leader/follower interactions as a social exchange relationship of the type is, ‘you scratch my back and I will scratch yours’. Spillane (2006) points out that conceptually, distributed leadership differs from transformational leadership in that it does not privilege transformational over transactional leadership. In other words distributed leadership can either be transactional or transformational. This means that distributed leadership puts leadership practice at the

centre rather than the principal. In addition, it allows for others as key players in leadership practice either by design or practice.

2.7.14 BOLDEN'S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Bolden (2007) considers Gronn (2000, 2002) and Spillane et al (2004) to have provided the most comprehensive model of distributed leadership. Engerstrom (1999, cited in Bolden 2007) have used Activity Theory as a theoretical approach to frame the idea of distributed leadership practice by using it to bridge agency and structure (in Gronn's case) and to link distributed cognition and action (in Spillane et al). Bolden (2007) sees distributed leadership as integrally part of the daily activities and interactions of everyone across the enterprise, irrespective of position. It takes place equally in small, incremental, informal and emergent acts and large-scale transformational change from the top. Finally, he notes that the more members across the organization exercise their influence, the greater the leadership distribution.

2.7.15 OTHER SCHOLARS' VIEWS OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Elmore in Davis (2005: 145) pointed out that in a "knowledge-intensive enterprise like teaching and learning there is no way to perform this complex task without widely distributing the responsibility for leadership among roles in the organisation".

Distributed leadership involves multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organisation. It is made coherent through a common culture hence it focuses on how leadership practices are distributed among formal and informal leaders. In this sense, distributed leadership is a form of collective agency incorporating the activities of many individuals in a school who work at mobilising and guiding other educators in the process of instructional change (Spillane et al 2001). Harris and Lambert (2003: 16) claim that it extends the boundaries of leadership significantly as it is premised upon high levels of educator involvement and encompasses a wide variety of “expertise, skills and input”. For them to engage many people in leadership activity is at the core of distributed leadership in action.

In the following paragraph MacBeath’s models of distributed leadership so similar to the recent study of distributed leadership that was mentioned by Serrat (2009) will be discussed.

2.7.16 MACBEATH’S MODELS OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

According to MacBeath (2005) distributed leadership can only be successful in schools and organisations if the dilemmas of trust and accountability, of “holding on” and “letting go”, a balancing of command, consultation and consensus are dealt with. MacBeath explains his models of distributed leadership as models of developing process, which he describes under six headings. He also asserts that *distribution* is done *formally* through designated leadership and management roles for which

responsibility is delegated. This formal process of distribution has the advantage of lending a high degree of security, not only to staff who occupy those formal roles but also to other staff who as a result, know where they stand. The first model to be discussed is the pragmatic model of distributed leadership.

2.7.16.1 PRAGMATIC DISTRIBUTION

This type of leadership is a top down approach. For MacBeath (2005), *pragmatic distribution* is characterised by its ad hoc quality. It is often a reaction to external events in response to a demand from the ward manager or the Deputy Chief Education specialists (DCEs) in the district. Principals may then ask SMTs to take on responsibility to ease the logjam and to spread the workload. In an environment of increasing demands and decision-making the “right people” are pragmatic informed by knowledge of staff members who are capable of sharing the burden and judging where individual capacity allows further happening. This type of leadership is a “top down approach” that may actually alleviate pressure.

2.7.16.2 STRATEGIC DISTRIBUTION

For MacBeath *strategic distribution* is goal-oriented. It is not about pragmatic problem-solving but is focused on a longer term goal of school improvement. This concerns itself less with individual competencies and more with people as team players. MacBeath (2005) holds that when

distribution becomes concentrated rather than distributed it weakens the school.

2.7.16.3 INCREMENTAL DISTRIBUTION

MacBeath argues that formal, pragmatic and strategic leadership tend to involve a process of top-down delegation. Although incremental distribution has a pragmatic ad hoc quality, it is also strategic. Its distinctive purpose is to foster growth. Its orientation is essentially a professional development one in which, as people prove their ability to exercise leadership, they are given more responsibilities or tasks to perform. Although capacity is inherent in everyone the crucial ingredient is confidence; problem arise where it is lacking. He also claims that SMTs' confidence is boosted when they engage in team teaching, improve practice or carry out joint research and evaluation with colleagues. Confidence in people develops through appropriate interpersonal relationships. Central to these relationships are trust and self-belief.

2.7.16.4 OPPORTUNISTIC DISTRIBUTION

MacBeath (2005) argues that the top-down to bottom-up models of leadership emphasises leadership shifts from what the principal does to what the SMT in the school can do. Leadership in this category does not appear to be distributed at all. MacBeath calls it 'dispersed'. Here leadership is taken rather than given. There is a natural predisposition to

take a lead, to organize, to see what needs to be done and make sure that it gets done. Consequently, in this era in the educational context, distribution does not just happen. There are structures and expectations that create and infuse a certain kind of climate. From SMTs' perspective, this climate is invisible. It is just the way things are done in that climate.

2.7.16.5 CULTURAL DISTRIBUTION

Here the emphasis is on the 'what' rather than the 'who'. 'Distribution' as a conscious process, is not applicable here because people exercise initiative spontaneously and collaboratively, requiring identification of leaders or followers. The emphasis switches from leaders and leadership to a community of people working together towards a common end with all the tensions and challenges that really vibrant SMTs display. MacBeath explains that team work, leading and following and looking after others in this kind of distribution is a reflection of the culture, ethos and tradition in which shared leadership is simply an aspect of "*the way we do things round here*". Distribution needs to go through all these processes to reach its full capacity. MacBeath stresses that when distribution becomes a culture it means people will listen to and value the views of others. This implies that intimate and sustained personal relationships undergirding professional ones have been established. Personal integrity, truthfulness and honest relationship are respected and valued here.

MacBeath (2007) further argues that distributed leadership is a conceptual framework for thinking about and studying school leadership and management. The distributed perspective emphasises how leadership practice is constituted in the interactions among school leaders, followers and their situations. Distributed leadership raises SMTs' expectations and increases their sense of responsibility for school improvement. This is actually achieved through coordinated efforts of all SMT members. It is important to note that if distributed leadership is given a chance in schools, and in the educational system as a whole, school staff will become confident to talk about leadership in action in their own schools and classroom settings. They will be able to promote and develop a climate more receptive to risk taking, innovation and creativity. Finally, all stakeholders will be able to understand and gain new insight into what distributed leadership means in the real world of school and education.

2.7.17 TYPES OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Distributed leadership according to many scholars is implemented variously.

2.7.17.1 NUMERICAL ACTION

Miller (1998) says that distributed leadership may take the form of Numerical or Multiple Actions. Multiple Actions is where leadership is dispersed among the members of staff in a school in such a way that all

members may have an opportunity of being leaders in the future. Numerical Action is where distributed leadership is understood as a collection of all activities that the individual is expected to perform.

2.7.17.2 CONCERTIVE ACTION

Another type of distributed leadership is referred to as Concertive Action. Concertive Action may come about in three ways, namely: spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations and institutionalised practice (Gronn 2002). Spontaneous collaboration occurs regularly between individuals as in activities such as budgeting, planning of meetings or during an emergency, when there is a crisis in the organisation.

Intuitive relations crop up naturally between individuals who work together or close to one another or who depend on one another in their working, for example, teachers who are teaching the same subject may interact about the nitty-gritty of the subject they are teaching. Institutionalised practice is commonly manifested where there is a leadership team and where it is viewed as inappropriate for one person to be in charge (Gronn 2002).

There is growing interest in distributed leadership in a South African context. The next paragraph therefore outlines the framework of distributed leadership in this regard.

2.7.18 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP: SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The South African education system must undergo far reaching changes to conform to the country's new constitution. Adoption of the South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA) was an important step to that end. The aim of the Act is to "... redress the past injustices in education; provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, and advance the democratic transformation of society..." (SASA 1996).

Good intent is one thing; good practice another. Harvey, Bertram and Mattson (1999: 149-150) researched the 'fit' between policy and practice in education. They concluded, inter-alia, that policy assumptions about the context in which policy is implemented are problematic. Educators' roles are clearly affected very substantially by different school contexts. While differing levels of resourcing is a major issue, differing value systems is so even more. Different value systems were emerging at the level of individual SMTs and in the culture of the school and the community. Some of the value systems encountered by Harvey et al (1999: 149-150) were accorded with policy, others did not. These differences were manifested most clearly in disciplinary practices (in which regard schooling appears to be in a state of near crisis) and in broader beliefs about human rights issues, such as gender equality. In commenting on the crisis in education and the need for research to be sensitive to conditions in schools Jansen (1997: 5-14, cited in Harvey et al

1999) notes that the single most important reason for the crisis is the distance between politicians, policy makers and bureaucrats and the schools; they simply do not know what is happening inside our schools and classrooms.

For this reason guidelines in the form of major policy documents were compiled so as to ensure uniformity of all the interested parties. The major policy documents are: the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (SASA), The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 (EEA), the Constitution of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), The South African Council of Educators Act No. 31 of 2000 (SACE), National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996 (NEPA), and The Further Education and Training Act No. 98 of 1998 (FETA). It must be noted that these Acts operate under the aegis of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996. The policy Handbook for Educators (2003) commissioned by The Educator Labour Relations Council (ELRC) contains the above mentioned Acts which define the foundations for the management style to be adopted in South African schools. The specific sections of the Acts which have direct bearing on the leadership style to be adopted by South African schools are:

- Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) in the Employment of Educators Act No. 31 of 2000 (E-17 to E-18);
- Norms and Standards for Educators in the National Education Policy Act No.27 of 1996 (A-44 to A-57).

Although the management style is not prescribed by the policy documents they do contain numerous phrases which indicate a democratic, consultative, participatory, interactive and transformational management and leadership style as desirable.

A few of these phrases are:

- Working with other practitioners in team teaching and participative decision-making;
- Develop supportive and empowering environment;
- Construct...atmosphere which is democratic but disciplined and which is sensitive to culture, race and gender differences as well as disabilities;
- SMTs are expected to adopt systems, procedures and actions according to circumstances;
- Educators...participate in school decision-making structures;
- Uphold the Constitution and promote democratic values and practices;
- Work in democratic and participative ways to build relationships and ensure efficiency and effective delivery;
- Prioritise the promotion of critical engagement, reasoning and reflective thinking;
- Encourage problem-solving within authentic contexts;
- Respect the role of parents and the community and assist in building structures to facilitate this;
- Principals and SMTs should operate as mentors through support systems to student educators and colleagues;

- Behave in a way that enhances the dignity and status of the teaching profession;
- Develop programmes and an institutional ethos which develops educators as extended professional and lifelong learners;
- Promotes the ongoing development of teaching as a profession;
- Refrains from undermining the status and authority of his/her colleagues;
- Teaching staff is involved in policy and development activities;
- Avoids any form of humiliation, and refrains from any form of abuse (physical or otherwise) and
- Promotes gender equality.

The DoE (1996: 1-8) suggests the need for a move towards a more participatory and reflective management style in South African schools. Its emphasis on participation, on goal setting and on frequently assessing whether these goals are being met, reflects the broader paradigm shift within South African education towards a learner-centred, outcomes-based pedagogy supported by continuous assessment. For Harley et al (1999) these policies mark a shift from the non-democratic educational practices of apartheid to new democratic ones; these policies firmly uphold the principles enshrined in the Constitution, while in other matters they provide a degree of flexibility and sensitivity to contextual diversity; and the documents combine to promote teaching as a profession, and attempt to create a balance between professional accountability and professional autonomy.

The Department of Education (DoE) emphasises, inter-alia, the following:

- Managing through participation and collaboration;
- Decentralised decision-making and promote a significant process of democratisation;
- Sharing of one's power with others;
- Ensure that changes occur;
- Management should not be seen as the task of a few. It should be seen as an activity in which members of educational organisations agree;
- Drawing on all levels of the system for support (DoE 1996: 1-8).
- Education management must be more supportive than directive;
- Develop schools as learning organisations.

The South African Schools Act (1996) enhances a democratic, gender conscious, consultative, participatory, interactive decision-making and transformational leadership style.

According to Hlongwane (2009), leadership and management have to be administered meaningfully which demands that learning in schools is grounded upon human concerns. Leadership and management should also be connected to the major cultural activities of the society and also be attuned to the realities of everyday life which the administration endeavours to transform away from the traditional separation of the individual from the community forwards their essential union. Although

not all stakeholders can participate in leadership roles, their opinions and perspective should not be ignored.

The implication is that the principals should work collaboratively with school management teams and schools should be viewed as “open systems” exchanging inputs with the external environment. While the principal expects to be respected, there should also be awareness that parents deserve respect and that learners should be dealt with compassionately and caringly. This will encourage a sharing of information and the possibility of inculcating appropriate community values like those espoused in ‘Ubuntu’, requiring caring cooperation to foster good and strong relationships.

2.7.18.1 GRANT’S VIEW OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

As Grant’s (2005) put it, distributed leadership allows a collective form of leadership in which teachers work collegially and develop expertise by working collaboratively. Grant argues that leaders must have “the right balance of confidence and humility to distribute leadership wisely where strengths in colleagues are evident” (2006: 524). For South African education “a form of distributed leadership is needed where principals are willing to relinquish power to others and where fixed leader-follower dualisms are abandoned” (Grant 2006: 574). Principals should shift away from a system where the school is led by a single individual. Activities should involve both the principal and the SMT. Grant supports Caldwell and Spinks (1992) in their argument that leadership should be dispersed

when she writes, from a South African context, that “while traditional notions of leadership are premised upon an individual managing the organization alone, distributed leadership is characterized as a form of collective leadership, where all people in the organization can act as leaders at one time or another” (Grant 2005: 44).

As already noted distributed leadership extends the boundaries of leadership significantly as it is premised upon high levels of ‘teacher involvement’ and encompasses a wide variety of ‘expertise, skill and input’. Engaging many people in leadership activity is at the core of distributed leadership in action. It is the responsibility of the hierarchical leaders to facilitate this process by creating the requisite organizational conditions and climate and by providing the required support in order to unleash what Hopkins and Jackson refer to as “the kinetic and potential energy of leadership” (2003: 100).

Principals and SMTs should work collaboratively to manage constant changes taking place and to promote good working relationships in the school. Harris (2002: 5) characterizes distributed leadership “as a form of collective leadership, in which SMTs develop expertise by working collaboratively”. Instead of relying on an individual, managing hierarchal systems and structures, this view of leadership sees guidance and direction coming from multiple sources, following the “contours of expertise in an organization made cohesive through a common culture” (Harris cited in Moyo 2007). Formal leadership is about “...holding the pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship” and about

empowering others to lead. Harris too suggests we need more empirical evidence about the workings of leadership and “... *about the ways in which distributed leadership currently operates in schools. We need to know more about how it is developed and promoted. In particular we need to know if, and how, it contributes to better teaching and the learning processes in schools*” (Harris 2002: 5).

Distributed leadership paves the way for effective team work as opposed to a hierarchical structure of leadership domination by a single individual. Required is joint decision-making irrespective of status, position and authority in the hierarchy. Muijs and Harris (2003) rightly suggest distributed leadership helps to clarify the concept of good working relationships by paying much attention to various groups in which is something distributed.

Gronn (2000) too proposes alternate view of leadership differing from the old orthodox ways of thinking about leadership. Leadership should allow for the flow of influence in organizations quite apart from an automatic connection headship. For Gunter (2005) this raises questions about the location and exercise of power, and about what is distributed; are only technical tasks distributed or is authority, responsibility and legitimacy also distributed? Bennett, Harvey, Wise and Woods (2003) concede that there is little agreement about the meaning of the term ‘distributed leadership’. They suggest that it is ‘a way of thinking about leadership’ and describe distributed leadership as “not something done by an individual to others” (2003: 3). They argue that leadership is ‘fluid’ in

comparison to traditional notions of leadership that distinguish the leader from the follower. Rather, distributed leadership can be described as “an emergent property of a group or network of individuals in which group members pool their expertise” (Gronn 2000: 324). It is based on trust (Lieberman, Saxl and Miles 1988; Grant 2006) and requires ‘letting go’ by principals, as sole leaders of the school rather than just delegating tasks.

Gunter (2005: 5) usefully suggests that distributed leadership is currently, in research, being characterized as variously as are authorized, dispersed and democratic leadership. She takes distributed leadership to be at work where tasks are distributed from the principal to others and are usually accepted as legitimate within the hierarchical system of relations and because it gives status to the person who takes on the work.

Woods (2004: 6) argues that this type of leadership is a form of ‘delegated leadership’ and occurs where there are “teams, informal work groups, committees who are, operating within a hierarchical organization”. He is also of the opinion that educators often accept the delegated work, either in the interests of the school or for their own empowerment. However, power remains at the organizational level and SMT leadership is dependent on those who hold formal leadership positions. He further comments that dispersed distributed leadership refers to a process where much of the workings of an organization take place without reference to the formal working hierarchy. It is more autonomous, bottom-up and emergent and is accepted because of the knowledge, skills and personal attributes of organizational members who, either individually or in

autonomous work groups, develop work (Gunter 2005). This type of leadership according to Gronn (2003) centres spontaneity and intuitive working relations and as Gunter explains, “while formal structures exist with roles incumbents and job descriptions, the reality of practice means that people may work together in ways that work best” (2005: 54). Through sharing the leadership work more widely and redefining roles, the power relations in the schools are shifted away from the formal leaders in the accomplishment of the organizational goals. Gunter (2005: 56) further argues that democratic distributed leadership is similar to dispersed distributed leadership in that both have the potential for concertive action and both have an emergent character where initiative circulates widely.

For Woods (2004: 57) this is, however, different in that it does not assume political neutrality, but instead engages critically with organizational values and goals and raises questions of inclusion and exclusion which include “how meaning is developed, how experiences are understood and how we work for change”. In the words of Shields (2006: 77) democratic distributing leaders transform not only individual understandings of self and others, but they “lay the groundwork for challenging social inequities and iniquities”.

Implicit within the framework of distributed leadership theory, are the leadership practices of SMTs. The concept of SMT leadership is, however, understood and defined differently by different writers internationally. But, as Harris and Lambert emphasise, the definitions

tend to have one point in common which is what “[SMT] leaders are, in the first place, expert educators, who spend the majority of their time in the classroom but take on leadership roles at times when development and innovation is needed” (2003: 44). They further explain that SMT leadership has as its core “a focus on improving learning and is a model of leadership premised on the principles of professional collaboration, development and growth” (Harris and Lambert 2003: 43).

It is evident that South Africa’s colonial and apartheid history has created a society suffering the consequences of inequality based on issues of race, class and patriarchal power relations. In schools in this society the primary school hierarchical and bureaucratic management structures remain the norm. In this context SMT leadership in school management is unlikely to emerge unless there is a shift in the understanding of leadership at the organizational level.

It is imperative that a form of distributed leadership be introduced in primary schools so that principals are willing to relinquish their power to SMT members and fixed leader-follower dualisms are abandoned”. Schools should no longer be “led by a lone figure at the top of the hierarchy”. Required leadership must rest on the immediate expertise of SMTs rather than seniority or position and is more likely to be exercised through ad hoc, rather than formally constituted groups (Bennett et al 2003: 5). SMTs must be enabled to become leaders and principals have to develop “the right balance of confidence and humility to distribute

leadership wisely where strengths in colleagues are evident” (Grant 2006: 524).

2.7.19 ENCOURAGING SMT LEADERSHIP THROUGH DISTRIBUTION

In the past, research on education leadership was premised on a singular view of leadership and on individual impetus (Muijs and Harris 2003). In the South African context, and especially during the apartheid era, education leadership was often equated with headship and understood in relation to formal position, status and authority (Grant 2006). School principals were often cast as the only leaders but, while they were accountable to the Department of Education (DoE) because of their formal position in schools, they were necessarily good leaders and nor did they have a monopoly in issues of leadership. The style of leadership adopted by principals was often autocratic in nature and involved a process of ‘delegation’ without consultation or negotiation. In my view the potential of leadership is severely restricted if it is sought only from one individual at the apex of a hierarchy since leadership potential is spread throughout an organization and emerges from different individuals and groups of people at different times as they go about their work. I align myself, in this study, with Harris and Muijs (2005) who suggest that leadership is more to do with the relationships and connections among individuals within a school than positions as such. As Gunter, from a critical perspective, argues:

Education leadership is concerned with productive social and socializing relationships where the approach is not so much about controlling relationships through team processes but more about how the agent is connected with others in their own and others' learning. Hence it is inclusive of all, and integrated with teaching and learning (Gunter 2005: 6).

2.7.20 REFORM INITIATIVES OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

This section comprises reform initiatives in South Africa education with similar trends in the rest of the world. Mosoge and Van der Westhuizen (1998) state that, these reform initiatives rest on the assumption that the participation of SMTs will contribute to the desired transformation in education. They include the devolution of authority and responsibility from the district office to the schools' management teams.

Callahan *et al.* (2002) observes that the days of the lone genius quietly toiling away in pursuit of that 'Eureka' moment to revolutionize an industry are all but over ...school management teams and principals are now in the days of asking and listening to colleagues and customers and working with them in our innovation cycles.

This research investigated whether the vision for a transformed education system, as set out in the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) and new legislation, is still being undermined by the ethos, systems and

procedures inherited from the apartheid past. The report of the National Task Team on Education Management Development in South Africa suggests that it certainly is when it states that:

...the public administration legacy: Public administration was characterized by a hierarchical structure infused with authoritarian management styles. The new department of education inherited these structures and management styles (Department of Education 1996).

Garson (2000) states that the restoration of the culture of teaching and learning after its breakdown during the apartheid era is currently one of the most important aims to improve the quality of education in South African schools. Garson analysed certain leadership and management initiatives to address the poor quality of education in many South African schools.

Garson (200) notes that work is done in teams or through partnering with colleagues. Educators are part of a web of relationships within, across, between and among many teams and organizations relating to the Principal, the School Management Team (SMT), School Governing Body (SGB), Ward Managers, the Human Resource Development Sub-directorate (HRD) and the Teaching and Learning Services (TLS:GET) in the Department of Education. These relationships must develop quickly and productively to allow for high trust and creative collaboration. Garson also claims that, '...the relationships that educators create and sustain with colleagues in schools are, perhaps the most important yet often over-

looked factor in many school reform efforts'. Moreover mutually rewarding relationships will enrich the lives of those involved and so contribute to increased productivity.

Various forms of indifference have surfaced in these relationships. Cases of principals working in isolation are common (Kooreng 1998: 4) and at the departmental level, work collegiality has become superficial in many respects. Brown (2001), however, say that difficulties in the working relationships between principals and SMTs are not unique to the education system and schools in South Africa. Still to build effective working relationships principals must be able to engage with others, starting relationships in a positive and productive way. In fact, they need skills to negotiate fair agreements with the SMT when vested interests are at issue. Brown (2001) make the point that principals need to be able to manage or resolve the conflicts that inevitably arise among the SMT with whom they are in close working relationship, while at the same time welcoming the innovation that productive conflict can bring.

Research by Lockett (2003) has indeed shown that good working relationships in schools are strongly associated with improved educational efficiency and effectiveness. As the standard of education improves effective teaching and learning take place and in turn parents, learners and educators benefit. Formal education is a complex issue and the research of the working relationship between the principal and the SMT is no less complex.

The complexity is brought about by many factors. It includes the context in which research is being undertaken, the definitions used by different researchers (Teske et al 1999), and the study design used. Not surprisingly, extensive research has been done on collaboration in the workplace especially in America and Europe (Inglis et al 2003), but only and in adhoc in Africa.

2.8 SUMMARY

Leadership practice typically involves more than one person. No one person can single-handedly lead efforts to improve instruction in a complex organisation such as a school. Situations, contexts, culture and arising crises can affect the practice of leadership. It is therefore important for distributive leaders and educators to have a clear vision of what they want to achieve and how they want to achieve it.

Distributed leadership may have been with us for quite some time although not all institutions have been successful enough in implementing it. Importantly, there are still some leaders, especially in our schools, who seem to believe that one person can do it all without the assistance of those that form part of the organisation (that is, other stakeholders).

It is also clear that there are issues with the implementation of distributed leadership in most schools as researchers have discovered (Burns 1978, Van der Mescht and Tyala 2008). Some staff members might find it hard to assume leadership roles in their respective organisations, for one

reason or another. People generally resist change in the culture of an organisation. Some leaders may be reluctant to pursue the concept of distributed leadership in their schools.

Nowadays, where many societies claim to subscribe to democratic values and principles, distributed leadership may be welcomed as it seems to fit in well with the aspirations and principles of democracy and decentralisation of power. For now it is a conceptual framework for thinking about and also studying school leadership and management. The distributed perspective, in this case, emphasises how leadership practice is constituted in the interactions among school leaders, followers and their situations. Distributed leadership raises SMTs' expectations and increases their sense of responsibility for school improvement. This comes about through the coordinated efforts of many school personnel. When distributed leadership is given the chance in schools, and in the educational system as a whole, school staff will become more confident and talk about leadership in action in their own school and classroom settings. The principals will be able to promote and develop a climate more conducive to risk taking, innovation and creativity. Finally, all stakeholders will be able to understand and gain new insight into what distributed leadership means in the real world of school and Education.

The discussions in this chapter are a synthesis of literature and research into distributed leadership and principals' and SMTs' perceptions of the effect of distributed leadership on their working relationships. Through this review of literature the key factors in bringing about pedagogic

change with specific reference to distributed leadership have been identified. Attention was also focused on the 'fit' between distributed leadership theory and practice. Finally, factors that potentially mitigate educators' perceptions of principals' exercise of distributed leadership were discussed. Chapter three, of the study, will discuss the methodology of the study, paying special attention to research processes.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is an influence relationship involving the abilities to influence the practices of others in ways that brings about a major change in the form, nature and function of some phenomenon (Diamond 2007, cited in MacBeath 2005). Distributed leadership involves more than the actions and beliefs of single leaders. It is constituted through the interaction of principals, SMTs and the situation as they influence instructional practices (Cotton 2003). Distributed leadership is a powerful way to understand leadership activity in schools in more complex and interconnected ways.

This study explores and describes the perceptions of the principals and SMTs of distributed leadership and the effect it has on their mutual relationship in primary schools. To address the purpose of this study, the researcher used a multiple method research strategy to suit the exploratory and descriptive nature of the research. This chapter discusses the overall study design and the study's multiple data collection and data analysis activities used to collect sufficient data to answer the research questions. To argue for mixed methods research as a specific research design requires not only an accepted term but also a common definition (Hosler and Vesper 1993). The mixed method study involves the collection or analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data in this single study in which the data were collected sequentially and involved the integration of the data at different stages in the process of research

(Hossler and Vesper 1993). This means that for the purpose of this study, the researcher used a multiple-method research strategy to suit the exploratory and descriptive nature of the research. This chapter discusses the overall study design and the study's multiple data collection and data analysis activities used to collect sufficient data to answer the research questions. Qualitative and quantitative researches are often described as two research paradigms, but they are more - they represent two worldviews that need to be understood. In an effort to understand the working relationships between the principal, as an instructional leader, and the SMT the researcher made use of both a qualitative and quantitative research framework, entailing an interpretative approach.

A hallmark of most qualitative research is the narrative presentation of data (McMillan and Schumacher 1993: 506). The inductive nature of this qualitative methodological approach, and its emphasis on participant perspectives caused the researcher to search for the ways in which those being studied make sense of their experiences. Hence, the interest is in what the subjects experience and how they interpret these experiences (MacMillan and Schumacher 1997). Data are usually presented as quotations from the participants' own narrative using field notes and interview transcripts as sources. Semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, documents and artefact collections were chosen as data collection strategies. The data are therefore presented using the actual statements of respondents to show how they construct their world and the meanings they give to working relationships in the new democratic education system.

Words are wonderful conveyors of meaning, perhaps more powerful than statistics (Collins cited in Hlongwane 2009). The use of the actual statements or direct quotations from the data makes the research more meaningful and significant for the reader, since it reveals insights into the actual social setting to which the reader may relate his/her experience.

The task therefore is to arrange the respondents' views regarding working relationships of school management teams in a logical manner, making their meaning unmistakable to the reader (MacMillan and Schumacher 1993: 506). Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires have been used. Two questionnaire instruments, the multifactor questionnaire (Bass 1990) and the revised FIRO element B Questionnaire (Thompson 2000) were used for the two groups sampled. The choice of the questionnaires was guided by and focused on the groups' specific job responsibilities in relation to the phenomenon being researched. A common semi-structured interview guide was developed and used to collect data from the two groups.

The whole process of identifying the setting for the study, gaining permission from the District Education Department and the participants and the data collection process took place over a period of six months (from the 11th February 2009 to 24th of July 2009) in the Sisonke Education District, which is in the Midlands Cluster of the KwaZulu/Natal Province. It is well to mention that the study also intended to analyse the participants' understanding of the policy documents on SMTs which they

used to execute their respective responsibilities. It was however, not possible to get all the participants to a common venue to discuss their understanding of the different policy documents. Hence, an analysis of the participants' understanding of such documents could not be done.

The data was provided in response to questions used in the interviews. These questions and why they were asked required some comment. The researcher's questions were directed at working relationships within the new democratic, educational dispensation because he was interested to hear the respondents' own perceptions of collegial, collective, participatory and distributive leadership at the primary schools in the Sisonke District of Education. The researcher wanted them to tell their stories, instead of telling him what is traditionally considered principalship. In other words, the researcher wanted to move from the generalization to the particular. In telling their own stories of what an effective principal is or does, without reference to gender, race or creed, the researcher gained a better understanding of how they perceive the phenomenon of distributed leadership as prescribed by the South African Schools Act (1996) which is informed by the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996.

The researcher further asked Deputy Principals and HODs to tell about both male and female principals who were doing well in their respective schools and what they thought the principals were doing that fostered good working relationships within the school and the local community. The researcher also asked about the qualities they thought a good leader,

who involves all the stakeholders, should have. A further question was based on the nature of the working relationships between the principals and the SMT. The purpose of asking such a question was to ascertain whether they preferred qualities that are normally associated with a shared vision and distributed leadership, in other words, to find out whether there is a paradigm shift in the way they perceive distributed leadership in the democratic dispensation.

In addition, the researcher sought to minimize or counteract the recalling of stereotyped attitudes in order to get to the SMT members' real experiences. Cook (cited in Ngcobo 1996: 3) states that perceptions are seldom accurate or stable and may be brought about by superficial characteristics or stereotypes, such as sex roles, age, race, occupation and appearance and that stereotyping often leads people to regard positively those that are similar to them and negatively those that are not. Hence, for as long as possible, questions that could lead the respondents to present superficial prejudices were avoided. Interview schedules for the two different groups of participants are appended (Appendices D and E).

This section of the chapter therefore presents the findings from six schools in two sections. Section A presents a socio-historical analysis of the school, a profile of each school principal and an analysis of the interviews with the different participants for each school. Section B presents a formal-discursive analysis of the interviews and questionnaires. Before presenting the data in this manner a detailed

description of the participants is provided in the ensuing paragraphs for more clarity and understanding of the respondents. The process of data analysis and the method used is also explained.

White (2005: 80) states that research methodology includes:

- An explanation of the research paradigm,
- A description of the research design,
- The participants (population and sample),
- Measuring instruments (data collection techniques), and
- Data analysis methods.

3.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM (PHILOSOPHY)

In this section, the concept of normal point is defined and the research design presented.

3.1.1 THE CONCEPT OF “PARADIGM”

There are many definitions of the concept *paradigm*. Kuhn (1996) used the term in at least twenty-one different senses. It originates from the Greek word *paradeigma* which means to represent something or offer it as a model (Jordaan and Jordaan 1986: 13). Jordaan and Jordaan (1986: 13) say a paradigm reflects progress of scientific practice based on people’s philosophies and assumptions about the world and the nature of knowledge. Leithwood (2000) says it is a philosophical scheme of thought or a theoretical formulation on a subject which relates to a set of

concepts, categories, relationships, values and methods which are generally accepted by a community of practitioners at any given period of time.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 645), a paradigm is a model/framework for observation and understanding, which shapes both what we see and how we understand it. In short, a paradigm is a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular worldview – it addresses fundamental assumptions taken on faith, such as beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology), the relationship between knower and known (epistemology) and assumptions about methodologies (Lieberman 1988).

Qualitative and quantitative researches are often described as two research paradigms, but they are more - they represent two worldviews that need to be understood. Lieberman (1988) states that, a paradigm is much more than a model or pattern; it is a view of the world – a *Weltanschauung* that reflects our most basic beliefs and assumptions about the human condition.

To understand the concept of paradigm, it is necessary to understand its characteristics. According to Jordaan and Jordaan (1986: 13), a paradigm has a basic proposition or series of propositions, it is influenced by and influences the cultural climate or spirit of the time in which it arose; it is influenced by the psycho-epistemologies. Also, different paradigms can exist concurrently. Lieberman (1998) briefly discusses their

characteristics. These characteristics include, among others, disciplinary matrix, view of the world, types of paradigms, scope of paradigms, and period of “normal science”, of extraordinary science and of scientific revolution: paradigmatic crisis, growth science, set of assumptions and practice of discipline.

Kuhn (1996) differentiates three types of paradigms: *metaphysical*, *sociological* and *construct*. The *metaphysical* paradigm represents the most encompassing consensus possible within a science: a worldview or *Weltanschauung* (Kuhn 1996). Worldview, as understood by Kuhn (1996), always reflects perception as influenced by experience.

According to Kuhn (1996), a change in our *Weltanschauung* does not imply a change in our environment, but in the way we perceive it. Kuhn (1996) maintains that to change one’s worldview to another is not a continuous process, but constitutes a radical shift. It is impossible to view the same world through one or the other ‘lens’. The world, as seen with the old worldview, has a different *Gestalt* than the one seen with the new one. The two cannot be compared, they are incommensurable (Kuhn 1996).

Kuhn (1996) held that the *sociological* paradigm encompasses “*the entire constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community*” and is a concretion of the metaphysic paradigm. The social dimension of the sciences, the socially contextualized subjectivity of scientists’ self-conception and the notion of objectivity in science, need to be discussed. In Kuhn’s (1996) opinion, the

construct paradigm is the most concrete form of a paradigm. It refers to the methodical dimension of science, to specific tools, instruments and procedures for producing and collecting data.

It is apparent, then, that paradigms could possibly serve as the lens or organizing principles by which reality is interpreted. Cheng (2005) described paradigms as enabling us to tell a coherent “story” by depicting a world that is meaningful and functional but culturally subjective.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton and Marais (1992: 193), a research design is a plan which includes every aspect of a proposed research study from conceptualisation of the problem right through to the dissemination of the findings. Cohen et al (2000) contends that research designs are merely guidelines for the investigation of an activity and are not hard-and-fast rules that cannot be broken. He warns that the design chosen should be appropriate if it is to yield the best results for the problem being investigated. The research design is thus a general plan or blueprint and structure of the investigation which the researcher undertakes to obtain evidence for answers to the research questions (De Vos et al 1998:80; Booyse et al cited in Dzivhani 2000: 11). It guides the manner in which the study is to be conducted and creates a framework for the research (Brink and Wood 1983: 89; Hysamen cited in De Vos et al 1998: 123-124).

According to Sellitz (cited in Brink and Wood 1983:252), the function of the overall framework which guides a research study is to arrange conditions for the collection of data in a manner that intends to combine relevance of the research purpose with economy in methodology. But more so, it is to provide answers that are valid and accurate to the research questions (Dzivhani 2000; 11). Even at the most fundamental stage of building a research design, however, one other factor should be considered: sensitivity to the potentially adverse effects on the participants. These effects may be inherent in the characteristics that make the participants eligible for inclusion in the sample. Sensitivity to these effects has become an integral, initial consideration in shaping research designs.

In an effort to understand the working relationships between the principal, as an instructional leader, and the SMT the researcher made use of both a qualitative and quantitative research framework, entailing an interpretative approach. Hence, this research is rooted in the interpretivist paradigm. According to Borg and Gall (1989, cited in Dzivhani 2000), interpretivism as an approach to qualitative data analysis has a long intellectual history. It is underpinned by the conviction that human discourse and action cannot be analysed with the methods of natural and physical science, for social interactions and interpretations come via the understanding of group action and human interaction.

The interpretive paradigm believes in reality that consists of people's subjective experiences of the external world (Terre Blanche and Durrheim

1996:6). Researchers who share this view usually adopt an intersubjective and empathetic epistemology and use qualitative, often interactional methodologies that rely on the subjective relationship between the researcher and the subject to reveal the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action (ibid). The interpretivist research paradigm requires research that is qualitative, descriptive and holistic in nature.

Cuban (1990) contends that an interpretive approach represents a systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through direct detailed observation of people in a natural setting in order to arrive at an understanding and interpretation of how people create and maintain their social world.

Interpretivism has a local rather than global orientation and is concerned more with the limited contexts of particular schools and the ways individuals understand and act in there than with finding general laws or all-encompassing explanations (Kader 2007). Hence working from an interpretivist paradigm will enable the researcher to interpret and explore the socially constructed meanings of working relationships between principals and SMTs by thoroughly reviewing the literature on the topic and by developing a conceptual understanding of actual working relationships so as to compare them with leadership practices as discussed in the literature review.

Since the researcher agrees with Yin (2003) who argued that “qualitative methods such as interviews take the researcher to the real world”, he decided to interview principals and SMT members who are engaged in leadership at primary schools in the Sisonke Education District. The reason why the researcher was interested in qualitative research is that the interpretive model is accepted as an integral part of the qualitative method, characterised by the description and interpretation of the phenomena in the world of the participant in an attempt to obtain shared meanings (Basse 1995: 14). Also, the interpretive paradigm is characterised by a concern for the individual and his/her understanding the subjective world of human experience, in this case experience of different principals and SMTs.

The properties of the interpretive paradigm are logically suitable for the purpose of the research. According to the interpretive paradigm, the scientific method of studying the social world is partial, because human activity involves beliefs, values, intentions and goals, which give activities meaning. The methods one employs to articulate knowledge of reality necessarily flows from the beliefs and values one holds about the very nature of reality (Rist 1977: 43). According to Schwandt (cited in Moyo 2007) the interpretive paradigm posits that the world, including educational organizations, district offices and schools is socially constructed. He argues that research operating in this framework focuses on social interactions and the meanings attached to them. To reveal these meanings is to enable participants to peer into their own belief systems, attitudes, assumptions and ideologies as they inform their practices.

Guided by this perspective the researcher used interviews and observations of interactions in an interpretive mode to uncover meanings and perceptions of ‘what is happening’ in our schools.

Schwandt (cited in Moyo 2007) further states that the question of what is happening in an education organization involves more than meanings. It also has to do with establishing the practices engaged in by the actors. This study seeks to discover not only leadership knowledge but also enquires after actions actually undertaken by those who participated in the study.

This research further sought to examine the factors feeding into the autocratic or more democratic relations in each school and to take a snapshot view of what is currently happening in the six schools chosen during the months February 2009 to July 2009 when the fieldwork was carried out. The researcher also wanted to find out whether the six schools exhibited similar characteristics or also differed from each other and how. The research sought to “uncover” what happens in the everyday work situation by deploying an interpretive case study.

Schwandt (cited in Moyo 2007) states that according to the interpretivist perspective, people attach meanings to various everyday activities undertaken within the school. Different meanings may be attached to an activity, such as an official meeting, with intended or unintended consequences. From an interpretivist point of view meaning is what

distinguishes human action from that of objects. The researcher must understand the meanings that constitute an action.

What is to grasp means a hotly debated issue between interpretivism and the philosophy of hermeneutics (Schwandt cited in Moyo 2007). Schwandt (cited in Moyo 2007) states that there are four ways of theorizing the “notion of interpretive understanding (*Verstehen*), three that constitute the interpretive tradition and a fourth that marks the distinction of philosophical hermeneutics from that tradition”. These are:

(a) Empathic identification. Schwandt (cited in Moyo 2007), argues that to understand the meanings of human action requires grasping the subjective consciousness or intent of the actor. In other words it entails empathic identification, that is, acquiring an “inside” understanding of the actor’s definition of the situation.

(b) According to Sergiovanni (2000) one of the central concerns of the phenomenological approach is to understand how the everyday intersubjective world within the context of an education organization, called the life world, is constituted. Without going deeply into the phenomenological methodology, it suggests that in attempting to achieve interpretive understanding the researcher must be aware of the research context and strive to minimize misinterpretation (Schwandt, cited in Moyo 2007).

(c) The language approach reasons that human action is meaningful by virtue of the system of meanings to which it belongs. Wittgenstein (cited in Moyo 2007) speaks of life as one of language games, each with its own rules to make the game meaningful; there is no meaning outside of language (Schwandt cited in Moyo 2007). Accordingly, to understand the institutional culture, values, and beliefs and so on is the goal of *Verstehen*. Moyo (2007) in his interpretation of Schwandt's work (cited in Moyo 2007), states that meaning is constituted in language. Schwandt (cited in Moyo 2007) summarises the common beliefs of interpretivists as follows:

- They view human action as meaningful.
- They evince an ethical commitment in the form of respect for and fidelity to the life world.
- They emphasize the contribution of human subjectivity (i.e. intention) to knowledge without thereby sacrificing the objectivity of knowledge.
- They take the meanings they reproduce or reconstruct as the original meaning of action.
- To avoid misinterpretation, they employ some methods allowing them to step outside their own historical frames of reference.

They assume an understanding of *understanding*. In other words, they consider understanding to be an intellectual process whereby the subject inquirer gains knowledge about the object (i.e., the meaning of human action).

d. With the hermeneutic approach the goal is to understand what is involved in understanding. In other words, meanings are not fixed entities that can be discovered independent of the interpreter. To discover what is happening in the school leadership practices, in this study, the researcher has been informed by the stance of philosophical hermeneutics in ways described by Schwandt (cited in Moyo 2007) because it allowed me to frame the interpretive project.

The researcher cannot accept the idea of there being a reality “out there” which exists independently of people, for he sees reality as a construct of the human mind. People perceive and construe the world in ways that are often similar but not necessarily the same. The interpretative researcher should consider that what one person sees as rational, might not be seen as such by another. This study caters for the understanding of the different perceptions of people involved in the same primary schools.

Bassey (1995: 13) argues that the interpretative researcher sees language as a more-or-less agreed symbolic system in which different people may have somewhat different interpretations. Interpretativists seek to explore individuals’ subjective perceptions. Sergiovanni (1994) suggests that in order for the researcher to identify the participant’s motives and intentions correctly, he/she needs to grasp the “subjective meaning” the action has for the participants. Accordingly, objectivity is clearly not possible and the results of an inquiry are always shaped by the interaction between researchers and the researched. The findings of the

researcher are subjective and reflected interaction (collected data) between the participants and the researcher.

There is no foundational process by which the ultimate truth or falsity of these constructs can be determined. Thus, one needs to take a relativist position. The researcher does not eschew the idea that during the research process the researcher constructed knowledge or the results of the inquiry.

Interpretation is a search for deep perspectives of particular events and for theoretical insight. It may offer possibilities, but no certainties as to the outcome of future events. As an interpretative researcher interested in how principals, as leaders, perceive their roles at primary schools in the Sisonke Education District, the researcher searched for deeper perspectives on the working relationships between principals and SMTs through interviews.

Furthermore, to understand human interaction within the primary schools in the Sisonke Education District meanings have been placed within a social context, that is, interpretations of human actions needed to be contextually bound, socially and historically (Turner, Prochnow and Chapman 2003: 90). This study's interpretive approach thus "looked for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world (Crotty 1998: 67). Similarly, an interpretive qualitative research facilitates a more intensive examination of phenomena and their deeper meanings, leading to a thick description (Rubin and Babbie 2001: 125).

According to the distinction made by Booyse (cited in Hoberg 1999: 26) as well as Glaser and Strauss (1965: 261), the design is more closely aligned with inductive theory building than to deductive testing or theory extension. Qualitative research emphasizes the dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of human experience and attempts to capture those aspects whole, within the context of those who are experiencing them (Hungler and Polit cited in Mathebula 2000: 24). It includes the identification, study and analysis of subjective and objective data in order to know and understand the internal and external worlds of people (Mathebula 2000: 24). Through this design it has been possible to examine the working practices and relationships between principals and SMTs in the primary schools of the Sisonke Education District. The qualitative design was most suitable as it facilitated flexibility and allowed participants to describe their perceptions from their own frame of reference (Lewin et al 1990: 11).

Best and Khan, (cited in Gwarinda 2005), argue that the interpretive paradigm uses a variety of research methodologies. It accepts that the researcher acquire social meaning through observations and people's descriptions of their experienced social relations with principals and their leadership styles which reflected the principals' ability to use distributed leadership strategies to accomplish school reform initiatives. Different variables that may explain SMTs' perceptions of their principals' use of distributed leadership was also investigated.

The approach of this study, rested on the premise, formulated by Teske et al (2009), that “knowledge is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of people’s imitations, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self understanding”. Such a paradigm allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the respondent’s perceptions, values and actions as regards issues relating to the leadership style of primary school principals. Themes for most research areas utilizing the qualitative approach were arrived at by using techniques such as observation, documented studies, interviews and questionnaires. The case study will be discussed next.

3.2.1 CASE STUDY

Drawing on the work of Yin (2003) and Gronn (2000), this study took the form of a case study designed with due consideration of Gronn’s (2003) ground rules for good research. According to Schwandt (cited in Moyo 2007) these rules are based on generally agreed assumptions by the research community about what constitutes good research in terms of the purpose, relevance, resources, originality, accuracy, accountability, generalisability, objectivity, ethics and proof. Yin (2003: 5) has distinguished five research strategies along the three criteria which are, to suit the research question, required control of behaviours and focus on contemporary events. With these criteria in mind Yin (2003: 5) argues that the conditions that suit the use of the case study design are those that answer the research question of “how and why” focusing on contemporary events? This study which was concerned to find out if

working practices and relationships have shifted, or have begun to shift towards more democratic relations between principal and SMT, and so it lend itself to a case study design.

In choosing to do a case study, the researcher's intention was to learn about the distributed leadership of six primary schools in the Sisonke Education District. The researcher was influenced to do so by the nature of the research questions which is to learn how the practice of leadership can be a vehicle for social change. The researcher decided to do so against the backdrop of all the policies and efforts currently aimed at transformation in the Province of KwaZulu/Natal, not 'in a vacuum'.

In the approach used each case was analyzed according to the three phases of depth-hermeneutics. The first section of each case operates largely at the level of socio-historical analysis describing each school in terms of temporal characteristics, geographical parameters, economic status, and human and material resources. The second operates largely at formal/discursive level 'breaking down' matters.

The working relationship and leadership styles of the primary school principals of each school was analyzed in terms of SMT procedures, effectiveness of SMT performance, effectiveness of leadership of SMT's, roles and responsibilities of SMT's and the principal's support with the implementation of educational policies. The second section also operated along the lines of interpretation/re-interpretation to explain the SMT's

understandings of working relationships, based on socio-historical and formal-discursive analysis.

The case study provided a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling the researcher to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles (Cohen and Manion 2000). In the same vein Fullan (2005) argues that human systems have a wholeness or integrity to them that are maintained in case studies.

The case study investigation revealed how the educational leadership styles of principals influence the working relationships at micro level, and to explain the findings in terms of macro level factors. Similar school contexts, as in the cases studied, revealed similar practices, however, it was not the aim of this study to stress generalisability of any findings.

3.2.1.1 WEAKNESSES OF CASE STUDIES

Case studies have been criticized severely. According to Gunter (2001) the case study method ...is the logically weakest method of knowing and the study of individual careers, communities, nations and so on has become essentially passé. Demonstrating reliability and validity is problematic in case study methods because of the uniqueness of the cases.

Lieberman (1988) contend that a weakness of case studies is that they are open to cross-checking, and may be selective, biased, personal, subjective and prone to observer bias. These shortcomings of case studies have been mitigated by building in three types of triangulation in the design process.

While the study was heavily interpretive it borrowed some elements from positivism. Its design enabled the researcher to unravel the respondents' understanding of the situations in which they operated. In this case, the principals and SMT members of primary schools from a specific geographical area (Sisonke Education District) have been studied as a case or social entity through their personal narratives, by completing questionnaires and by observation. In the following paragraph the qualitative phenomenological approach adopted by this study is discussed.

3.2.2 QUALITATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

Schulze (cited in Brown 2001: 16) specifies that qualitative approaches are useful when the researcher seeks to develop an understanding of human phenomena and to investigate the meaning given to events that people experience. This study involved interaction with the principals, and SMTs in the setting of their workplace and was directed towards understanding what they think was crucial to promote good working practice and relationships against the backdrop of public policy efforts to transform our schools. For the purpose, the phenomenological form of

qualitative research was deemed most appropriate. It allowed the researcher to enter the participants' life worlds (De Vos et al 1998: 80) and to understand, describe and interpret the meaning they give to their experiences of these relationships. This was a naturalistic inquiry, aimed at understanding phenomena holistically as they occur naturally. An exploratory design was also selected since it allowed the researcher to share in the understanding and perceptions of the participants.

3.2.3 ETHNOGRAPHIC DESIGN

An ethnographic design was chosen as main strategy for data collection and analysis in this inquiry. Ethnography focused on culture and uncovered and described beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behaviour of the groups (Merriam 1998: 10). According to Merriam (1998: 11, 13), ethnography is a form of qualitative research employed by anthropologists to study human society and culture. This study differentiated between educational and other ethnography. Merriam states that educational ethnography typically deals with the culture of a school community or the culture of a specific group within an educational community.

There are two distinct meanings of "ethnography". Firstly, it is a set of methods used to collect data and, secondly, it is the written record that is the product of using ethnographic techniques. The purpose of the study was to obtain objective accounts of lived experiences, known as fieldwork. Fieldwork means that the researcher went "into the field" to study a group

of people and events in natural settings in which participant observation was used as the main method for data collection. For this reason, the researcher went into the school “field” to observe the participants in their natural settings. The aim was to obtain a holistic picture of the subjects of study by observing and interviewing them and by analysing the relevant documentation of the schools. The act of going to schools to observe principals, including SMTs, meant that the researcher used educational ethnography as a data collection strategy, since the researcher focused on the culture of the school community or the culture of a specific group within an educational community (Merriam 1998: 11). The researcher conducted direct observation as participant observer of the participants in natural settings, with the aim of obtaining data on their lived experiences, an approach that helped the researcher to interact closely with the participants. Interaction with the participants enabled the researcher to interpret the meanings they assigned to their actions and behaviours. The ethnographic design also helped the researcher to focus on the culture found in the phenomenon, which is referred to as emic or “insider’s perspective”, versus the etic or “outsider’s perspective” (DePoy and Gitlin 1994: 141; Merriam 1998: 6, 156; Henning et al 2004: 44). In this manner, the researcher collected objective data that encompassed decentralisation.

Decentralisation is the process of delegating power and authority from higher levels to lower levels within the organisation. The findings of the researchers who conduct research on decentralisation of authority among team members provided them with enhanced ability to make decisions

about their work and to take responsibility for their decisions. In this way knowledge of decentralisation provides team members with greater job awareness and satisfaction (Sergiovanni 1992).

The decentralisation of power and authority among SMTs resulted in innovation. Innovation is the process of introducing new and improved ways of doing things (Torrace 2009). Innovation in this study implied that for SMTs to be empowered, decentralisation would make them more effective in achieving the goals of the organisation. An organisation strategy is a comprehensive action or whole plan that guides the utilisation of resources to accomplish the mission and objectives and to achieve the ultimate goals of an organisation (Daft 2004: 20, Van der Westhuizen 2002: 248). Thus, power and authority need to be decentralised among educator teams in an effort to empower the school management teams to implement the policies such as the SASA.

The use of SMTs in a team-based organisation was to ensure team effectiveness of the teams since a team-based organisation reveals on a flat structure that decentralises decision-making authority and shares it among team members. Team effectiveness has three dimensions. The first dimension is the extent to which the team's "productive output" (that is, products, services or decisions) meets the standards of quantity, quality and timeliness. The degree to which the team enhances the capability of team members to work together constitutes a second dimension. The third dimension is the extent to which the team addresses the development and needs satisfaction of team members

referred to as “satisfaction” (Godden 1996). The researcher’s assumption was that when educator teams are empowered to function in a horizontal structure of a team-based organisation the teams would be effectively able to align themselves with the purposes of SASA. It is important therefore to transform these schools into team-based organisations to ensure team effectiveness in the widest sense.

The use of SMTs in a team-based organisation is effective only if these teams be empowered to function as a horizontal structure of decentralised decision-making authority among team members making decisions on how to perform their responsibilities effectively. The use of SMTs in a team-based organisation is to empower educators with innovation and team effectiveness to achieve the goals of the organisation. Hence, the researcher’s conviction that if educator teams in primary schools are used in a team-based organisation the teams can be empowered to implement the SASA successfully since this organisation allows team members to function as core units due to the horizontal structure. The horizontal structure decentralised decision-making authority among team members enabling them to make decisions and provided a lateral communication system in which members of a team communicated directly with one another in an organisation in order to respond with effectiveness to a changing environment. Thus, educator teams should be utilised if the schools were to be team-based organisations. However, the use of educator teams as SMT in a team-based organisation alone was not enough to empower these teams to implement the SASA successfully. This study was also guided by a micropolitical perspective.

3.2.4 MICROPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

There are several definitions of micropolitics in the literature. The main focus was on the strategic use of power in organizations to achieve preferred outcomes (Bacharach and Lawler 1980; Ball 1987; Hoyle 1986 cited in Brown 2001). Hoyle's (1986: 126) definition served the purpose of the research: "micropolitics consist of the strategies by which individuals and groups in organizational contexts seek to use their resources of influence and authority to further their interest". Hoyle (cited in Brown 2001) also distinguishes micropolitics from administration and management in that micropolitics is more likely to focus on (a) individual and group self-interests than on organizational goals, (b) power and influence among individuals and groups than on the structure of authority in the organization, (c) informal strategies exercised at the individual and group levels than on formal procedures. Micropolitics concern it with hidden agendas, with the implicit rather than the explicit and with those activities that occur among individuals and groups outside rather than inside the formal structures of organizations (Hoyle cited in Brown 2001).

Blasé and Anderson (cited in Brown 2001) state that a key element of the micropolitical perspective is interpersonal interaction and strategic transaction among individuals and groups that take place in the absence of formal operating procedures. The exchange theory according to Blau provides a complementary view of this element (Blau cited in Hoyle 1986). Exchange theory suggests that many aspects of social life can be explained in terms of implicit and explicit bargaining and negotiating

between individuals and groups. It further assumes that even though individuals may enter into a working relationship with different degrees of relative power or influence, each necessarily must reach accommodation with the other to serve their mutual interests (Hoyle cited in Brown 2001).

The bargaining and negotiation involves a calculus of benefits and costs, or that which can be gained and that which must be lost to achieve that gain. Benefits and costs are defined according to individual and collective normative frameworks. These frameworks therefore incorporate beliefs and assumptions regarding self-interests, rewards and interests of others as well as beliefs and assumptions regarding roles, responsibilities and rights and obligations in relationships (working or otherwise). As held by individuals and as grounded in collective contexts, such frameworks suggest which types of working relationships, for instance, are in the individuals' best interests, which are most legitimate and which are most costly. These frameworks also suggest how individuals are to interact with each other or how and in what directions they are to shape their activities.

In this study, the micropolitical perspective is employed to describe and explain factors crucial to the development of working relationships among principals and SMTs from their perspectives and how these factors function in the development of such relationships. The micropolitical perspective suggests that these relationships can be products of intentional strategies employed by both principals and SMTs to maintain or advance their own prerogatives and self-interests. These prerogatives

and self-interests are likely to be grounded not only in the educators' beliefs, expectations and the social normative context of their schools, but also in their cultural context, previous work orientation and relationships to which they may have become socialised. The following aspects of the research design will be explained next: population and sampling, research instruments and data collection methods.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

3.3.1 POPULATION

Roscoe, as cited by Inglis et al (2003), refers to population as a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. He states that the population is the sum total of all the cases that meet the definition of the unit of analysis. White (2005:113) maintains that a population may be described as all possible elements that can be included in the research. For the purpose of this study the principals and SMTs of all the primary schools in the Sisonke Education District of the Province of KwaZulu/Natal was the population.

3.3.2 SAMPLE

For the purpose of this study participants were selected by means of applying a purposive sampling technique and two groups of participants

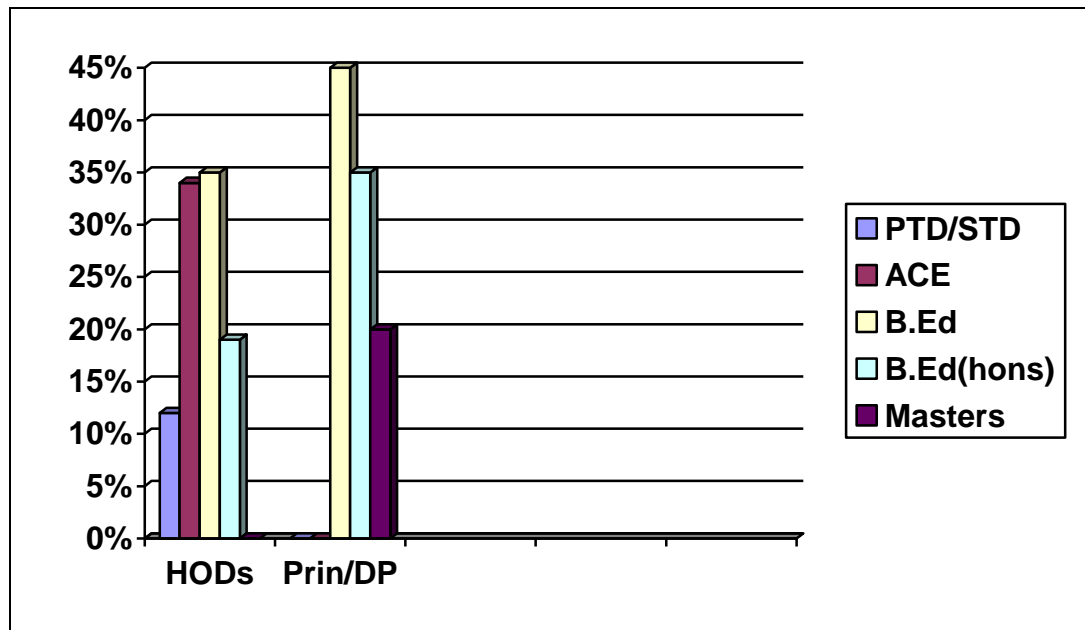
were sampled. The information was extracted from the biographical data on the questionnaires that were distributed for the research.

The first group was made up of participants who are categorised as HODs; these are participants who by virtue of their post levels spend most of their time in the actual teaching and learning environments in their respective schools. The second group was made up of principals and deputy principals; these are participants who spend most of their time with management and administrative issues in their respective schools. Starting with the HODs, 72% of the participants were males and 28% were females. In the principals' group 83.4% were males and 16.6% were females. These participants had different lengths of employment experience. In the HOD group 12% have experience of between 5 – 15 years; 55% have 15 – 20 years experience; 23% have 20 – 25 years experience and 12% have 30-35 years experience. In the principals' group 6% have less than 10 years experience in current positions, while 94% have between 10 – 35 years experience.

The participants' ages ranged from 40 – 63 years. Participants from both gender groupings were sampled for the purpose of the study to give a broader perspective on the group of the participants. The participants have a variety of education qualifications. Of the HODs sampled, 12% hold Secondary Teachers' Diploma (STD) and Primary Teachers' Diplomas (PTD) as their highest education qualification, 34% have Advanced Certificates in Education (ACE), 35% have B.Ed degrees and 19% have Honours degrees. From the principals and deputy principals'

group 45% hold B.Ed degrees as their highest qualification, 35% have Honours degrees and 20% hold Masters' degrees. Table 4.1 gives a clear indication of the participants' qualifications.

GRAPH 4.1: PARTICIPANTS' QUALIFICATIONS

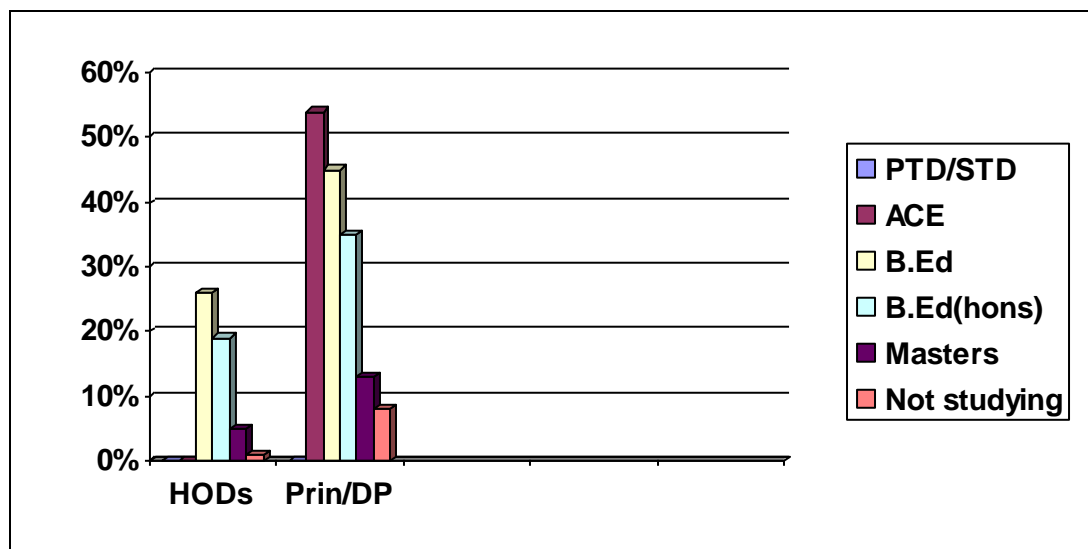


All but one of the participants was still pursuing studies in both education and non-education related disciplines. 26% of the HODs were studying for the B.Ed (Honours), 37% were pursuing Advanced Certificates in Education (ACE) while 31% were pursuing Masters' degrees. 5% of the educators were pursuing disciplines that are not related to education.

From the principals' and deputy principals' group 25% were studying for the ACE, 54% for the Masters' degree, 13% were pursuing other studies not education related, while 8% were not studying at all (see table 4.2 below).

The participants included Whites, Coloureds, Indians and Blacks. As used here these terms have no negative racial connotations whatsoever. They are only used for the purpose of further describing the demographics within which the study was conducted.

GRAPH 4.2: PARTICIPANTS' CURRENT QUALIFICATION



The study was conducted in the Sisonke Education District which is also predominantly rural. 55% of the participants teach in urban, 35% peri-urban schools and 10% in rural schools. Of the principals' group 33.3% were White, 16.6% were Coloured, 16.6% were Indian and 33.3% were Black. In the HODs group 35% were White, 15% were Coloured, 5% were Indian and 45% were Black.

Apart from selecting educational settings and negotiating access to the participants (Gough 2003), one of the most important tasks for a qualitative researcher is to decide on the participants to select as sample for the investigation. According to White (2005: 114) a sample can be

described as a portion of the elements in the population. De Vos et al (cited in Brown 2001) and Hoberg (cited in Brown 2001) indicate that the participants forming the sample should be information-rich. Hence information-rich participants are the central consideration in the selection of the sample for this study. Leithwood (2005), states that the key concept in sampling is representativeness. He contends that unless the sample from which we generalize, 'truthfully' or 'faithfully' represents the population from which it was drawn, we have no reason to believe that the population has the same properties as the sample. This type of sampling is suitable for heterogeneous populations because it provides for the inclusion of small sub-groups (De Vos et al 1998). De Vos et al (1998) state, "...stratification consists of the population being divided into a number of strata which are mutually exclusive, with members who are homogeneous with regard to some characteristics, for example, age, gender, race or home language. This kind of sample is mainly used to ensure that the different groups or segments of a population get sufficient representation in the sample. The desired number of persons is then selected within each of the different strata.

The population at the Sisonke Education District consisted of males and females from the different population groups. Stratified sampling was done to ensure gender and racial representativity. A sample that consisted of principals and SMT members of the six schools was decided upon to ensure validity of the data collected. The sample of six schools chosen was done purposively hence the researcher was mindful to include at least one of each of the previously ex-House of assembly

(HOA), ex-House of Representative (HOR) and ex-House of Delegates (HOD) and ex-Department of Education and Training (DET) schools. This purposive sampling procedure gave all the members of the staff an equal opportunity of being selected. Duignan (2008) advocate that pure chance is the only factor that determines who actually participates in the sample. Morse (cited in Mathebula 2000: 26) states that in purposive sampling the researcher selects the participants according to the needs of the study.

Purposive sampling was done in this study, because of the need to engage participants who are information-rich, and who can inform the investigation adequately (De Vos et al cited in Brown 2001). The researcher's knowledge of the research problem and purpose of the study was used to make crucial decisions about the choice of participants. The participants that have been selected have numerous years of working with educators from different race groups and nationalities, either in their current posts or in current and past posts combined.

In order to select six schools for interview purposes, three traits were identified in advance, that is, schools that function well, schools that function moderately well, and schools that were not functioning well. The researcher used question number fifteen (15) (rate the effectiveness of the working relationship between the principal and school management team (SMT) on the following functions, as indicated in Appendix G) in the questionnaire, to categorize the six primary schools accordingly. The classification of six primary schools came about as follows:

The researcher assigned a number to each primary school. In the “very good” category there were thirty-nine (42%) primary schools, in the “good” category, there were forty-three (46%) primary schools, and finally there were eleven (12%) primary schools in the “poor” category. The researcher selected six primary schools, two from the category “very good”, one from “good”, one from “poor” and one from each of the private and special schools.

From schools A and B (categorized as very good), there were altogether ten (10) members, that is, two (2) principals, two (2) deputy principals and six (6) HODs. It was found that the ex-HOA, ex-HOR and ex-HOD schools were some of the schools that were functioning very well. In school C (special school), there was one (1) principal, two (2) deputy principals, and four (4) HODs, while in school D (categorized as good) there were two (2) members, the principal and one (1) HOD. At the ex-DET school (school E) the principal, two deputy principals, and three (3) HODs were the participants. The same numbers of participants, as at the special school were selected at the private (independent) school.

Information-rich participants and the notion that small samples are usually adequate to capture a full range of themes emerging in relation to the phenomenon being studied (Cobin and Strauss cited in Torrance 2000) influenced the restriction to six schools. The population and sample was also influenced not only by the general geographic location of the schools and the foreseeable time constraint in reaching them, but also by the need to improve the validity of the research which was enhanced when

the investigation was based on one context. According to the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998, the number of SMT members in each school is determined by school enrolment. Thus, the number of SMT members in primary schools in the Sisonke District of Education varied.

Once the sample was selected, a letter was sent to each member introducing the researcher, give details about the research. The contents of the letter stipulated that the participants were protected; they were promised anonymity, confidentiality of information shared, protection from deception and the liberty to withdraw at any time (see appendix F). A form which the participants had to complete to indicate their consent to participate was also attached to the letter.

3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Interviews, questionnaires and information gathered from the school records were used to supplement the literature review.

3.4.1 INTERVIEWS

An inductive analysis method was used to analyse the data collected for the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the two groups sampled, using a common interview guide developed for the study.

To capture data in the interviews the researcher used an audio USB digital recorder and compiled some notes during the process. The

principals and SMT members of the six primary schools were interviewed. As part of the interview guide and data collection strategy, respondents were requested to answer question 1 by completing a table that was distributed after the interviews. After conducting the interviews, the researcher transcribed the interviews in word format (notepad) by listening to and typing the conversations.

According to Tuckman (cited by White 2005: 141) an interview “provides access to what is inside a person’s head, makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences) and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs)”.

Interviews are skilled performances Travers (1958: 182-183). Conducting an interview is a more natural form of interacting with people than making them fill out a questionnaire, do a test, or perform some experimental task, and therefore it fits well with the interpretive approach to research. It gives an opportunity to get to know people quite intimately so that the researcher can really understand how they think and feel.

Interviewing is the most commonly used source of data for constructionist research (Bush et al 1994). Interpretive approaches see it as a means to an end (namely, to try to find out how people really feel about or experience particular things), and will therefore try to create an environment of openness and trust within which the interviewee is able to express himself/herself authentically (Bush et al 1994). Respondent’s

privacy was also taken into consideration. In short the interviews were planned well in advance.

Semi-structured face-to-face conversational form of phenomenological interview was used (Bush et al 1994). Yin (1984) noted that this form of interview served to give the participants the opportunity to describe their experiences and problems in their working relationships with colleagues in their own words, without being restricted so as to obtain an “insider view”. The interview method has its advantages and disadvantages.

3.4.1.1 ADVANTAGES OF THE INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

The interview allowed the researcher to control and direct the responses of the interviewees. He explained the objectives of the research and dealt with specific problems of the respondents, and by so doing created a co-operative atmosphere. A great advantage of this technique is that the follow-up was done on the spot. Travers (1958: 182-183) indicates the following advantages of the interview:

- A higher percentage of responses are obtained.
- The interviewer is able to answer questions concerning the purpose of the interview, and the interviewee is put at ease in a way that is not possible with the questionnaire technique.

The net effect of these points should not be construed to mean that the interview technique is flawless or without disadvantages. That would be

showing only one side of the coin. The disadvantages of this technique, as pointed out in the next paragraph, need mention as well.

3.4.1.2 DISADVANTAGES OF THE INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

Interviews are time consuming; responses may be biased; it requires skilful communication and good interpersonal relations; data obtained are difficult to qualify; and the responses obtained do relate to the behaviour of the interviewer.

3.4.1.3 JUSTIFICATION FOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In-depth semi-structured interview schedules were compiled for all the interviews. The interview schedule for principals comprised of fifteen (15) questions, the one for the SMT of sixteen (16) questions. The questions were carefully prepared together with a response sheet to record immediately what was said in relation to the key areas of the prepared questions. The questions were briefly outlined and a justification for each question provided.

Question 1 required an answer from principals and SMT members about their perceptions of their working relationships as the school management team. The purpose of this question was to obtain a general idea of the possibilities and limitations of working relationships between the principal and the SMT.

Question 2 required an answer from principals as to their perceptions of distributed leadership and how it impacted on their working relationships with the SMT. The aim was to ascertain whether the principals' distributed leadership had an affect on their working relationships, whether it is positive or negative.

Question 3 required an answer from SMTs as to their perceptions of distributed leadership and how it impacted on their working relationships with principals. For the SMT, too the aim was to ascertain whether the principals' distributed leadership had an effect on their working relationships, whether it is positive or negative.

3.4.1.4 POST-OBSERVATION INTERVIEWS

The research interview has been defined as 'a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation' (Bush et al 1994).

The interviews conducted involved the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals. The researcher conducted post-observation interviews as the main way of gathering information to obtain an understanding of the working relationship between the principal and the SMT. Yin (1984) notes that the interview makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge of information), what a person

likes or dislikes (values and preferences) and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs). The researcher used the interview in conjunction with two other methods – observation and questionnaires.

With reference to the 'insider' view Yin (1984) writes that the researcher has to obtain data 'in the form of descriptive accounts from the actors of their understandings of the social world. The use of interviews was underpinned by the view that knowledge is generated between humans, often through conversations (Travers 2001). The centrality of human interaction to knowledge production is foregrounded in interviews and it emphasizes the social situatedness of the research data. The interviews were conducive to discussion a topic of mutual interest and concern.

Kitwoods (cited in Cohen *et al.* 2000) mentions three conceptions of the interview: interview as pure information transfer and collection; as a transaction that inevitably has a bias that has to be recognized and controlled; and the interview as an encounter necessarily sharing many of the features of everyday life. The researcher's intention was more closely aligned with the second conception, while attempting to be systematic and objective within the constraints of everyday life.

Sergiovanni (1990) lists five unavoidable features of the interview situation. Firstly, there are many factors that inevitably differ from one interview to another, such as mutual trust, social distance and interviewer's control. The researcher established mutual trust by engaging in conversations with teachers during my observations of the

SMT meetings. The researcher tried to reduce the social distance in terms of race, class and gender between him and the interviewees by focusing on the common professional interests they shared. In situations where the researcher felt threatened due to racial distance his ability to speak Afrikaans, IsiXhosa and IsiZulu provided the credibility needed by the participants.

Secondly, as Sergiovanni (1990) points out, the respondent may well feel uneasy and adopt avoidance tactics if the questioning is too deep. The researcher did not get any sense of this probably because the topic was fairly neutral and not controversial nor sensitive to participants. At the beginning of the interview the researcher spent a few minutes talking about how the interviewee felt about my research. An elaborate introduction was unnecessary as the educators and I had become quite acquainted during my observations of the SMT meetings.

Thirdly, both interviewer and respondent are bound to hold back part of what it is in their power to state. However, the researcher found participants really did enjoy talking about the topic – some because they wanted to ‘let off steam’ about their perceived intransigence of the education department and others found it intellectually stimulating. The researcher certainly did. A deputy principal of the larger rural school was reticent at the beginning saying that he did not have much time to answer my interview questions. After an hour of sharing views the researcher asked him how he felt about the interview in the light of his reticence – he said that he found the session quite refreshing and offered to share ideas

again if needed. Many interviewees likewise offered their time, if needed, in future. The principal of the ex-HOA school gave a lucid account of his views and of the strategies the school employed and offered to contribute when write a manual for SMT's. The researcher's experience of the interviews was positive. It was a largely enriching experience for the participants; the researcher also obtained new insight into the views of the respondents.

Fourthly, many meanings which are clear to one will be relatively opaque to the other, even when the intention is genuine communication. Before the interview the researcher thought the likely response to the first question 'what is your understanding of the term 'working relationship', would be 'what do you mean'? Most educators were able to present lucid accounts of their views about the working relationship between the principal and the SMT, and their rejection or acceptance for pedagogical or political reasons.

Fifthly, it is impossible, just as in everyday life, to bring every aspect of the encounter within rational control. Fortunately all the interviews went more or less according to plan. In terms of Sergiovanni (1990) ideal interview the researcher was able to meet most of the 'quality criteria' for most of the interviews. The first criterion the extent of spontaneous rich, specific and relevant answers is illustrated in Nick's responses to the questions (see Appendix I). His answers indicated that he was thinking very deeply about the issues, not only because of the questions being asked but because it was of personal significance to him and the whole idea of

SMT's was a common topic in the school and in the Human Resource Development Sub-directorate in the province of KwaZulu/Natal. One can also see that his answers were specific and relevant and used specialist terminology.

The second criterion of 'the shorter the interviewer's questions and the longer the subject's answer the better' was also met in the interview excerpt (Appendix D and E). To a great extent the third criterion following up and clarifying responses was satisfied. The fourth criterion, verification of interviewer's interpretations of the subject's answers in the course of the interview, was carried out expertly. Undoubtedly, the later interviews were of a higher quality than the earlier ones. The fifth criterion, that the interview be 'self communicating', a story contained in itself that hardly requires much extra description and explanation is satisfied by more than half of the interview accounts. Many of the interviewees were able to present very reflexive, lucid, coherent and analytical accounts that were a pleasure to listen to.

3.4.1.5 PLANNING FOR THE INTERVIEW

TABLE 3.2: SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEW DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

PARTICIPANTS	SPECIAL SCHOOL (MEGA)	PRIVATE SCHOOL	EX-DET	EX-HOA	EX-HOR	EX-HOD	TOTAL	TIMELINE
1. PRINCIPALS	1	1	1	1	1	1	06	FEB .2009
2.DEP. PRINCIPALS	2	2	2	1	2	1	10	MARCH – APRIL 2009
3.HODs	6	5	4	2	4	1	22	MAY – JULY 2009

DET = DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING; HOA = HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY; HOD = HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; HOD = HOUSE OF DELEGATES

3.5.1.6 PILOT TESTING

The two research instruments were pilot tested at primary schools in the Umzimkhulu Circuit, involving a sample 10% of the envisaged research sample. Following that exercise the construct, reliability and validity indexes were determined.

3.4.1.7 RECORDING THE INTERVIEWS

The researcher used a USB voice recorder to record each interview. In the cases where the full SMT was interviewed the researcher also wrote brief notes wherever possible and he listen attentively to the interviewees so as to be able to probe their responses. The USB voice recording was

not the best method but it did assist in the interview process – the researcher was able to engage fully with the interviewee because he did not frantically have to write everything down. The researcher was aware of the fact that it would have been most disconcerting to the interviewee if he/she had to wait as the researcher wrote down their responses.

The researcher transcribed each interview. This greatly assisted him in getting to know each educator and it facilitated the analysis greatly. Observation is the next instrument to be discussed.

3.4.2 OBSERVATIONS

A key method used was participant and non-participant observation. It involved the researcher taking part in the ordinary everyday life of the SMT. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) suggest that there is a strong relationship between people's identities and the situations they are in. Sergiovanni (1992) asserts that understanding identities removed from the situations and persons that normally evoke these identities runs counter to the main tenets of symbolic interactionism, that behaviour can only be understood within a particular situational context. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) conclude that all three components – identity, situation and behaviour are closely related.

Observation is a key method used in case studies. The purpose of observation is to establish generalizations about the wider population to which a unit belongs. There is a range of studies that used case study

methodology (Inglis and Sarros 2003). Observation may be of the participant and non-participant type.

Kets de Vries (1999) identified the advantages of the participant observation approach: because case study observations take place over an extended period of time, researchers can develop more intimate and informal relationships with those they are observing, generally in more natural environments than those in which experiments and surveys are conducted. Case study observations are less reactive than those types of data-gathering methods because of the extended and prolonged engagement of the researcher in the case. Woods (2004) cautions researchers against 'going native', which may happen if the researcher do not guard against such practices.

Observation for research purposes is deliberate, systematic, question-specific observation. The purpose of the observation guides the observation.

Karl Popper (1963, cited in Mathebula 2009) described observation as follows:

Observation is always selective. It needs a chosen object, a definite task, an interest, a point of view, and a problem. Its description presupposes a descriptive language, with property words; it presupposes similarity and classification, which in its turn presupposes interest, points of view, and problems (Popper 1963).

Observation of many SMT meetings enabled 'live' data to be collected from 'live' situations. Ngcobo (1996) argues that observation enables the collection of data about the physical setting, the human setting, the interactional setting and the programme setting. Of the three types of observation – highly structured, semi-structured and unstructured – semi-structured observation was used most.

The semi-structured observation had an agenda of issues but gathered data to illuminate these issues in a far less pre-determined or systematic manner than in structured observation. It allowed me to experience, observe and record the meetings as they progressed, to describe the phenomenological complexity of participant interactions, to be open to whatever was most important at the time even though it was not part of the issues being investigated.

For example, at the ex-HOA, ex-HOR, ex-HOD, Special and Private (Independent) schools correct meeting procedures are followed and everything for the meeting was planned well in advance. An agenda was attached to the notice of the meeting. Meetings are held weekly. It was the direct opposite in the other schools; no minutes, any agenda, notice was given verbally on the day of the meeting. Transcripts of meetings observed were done immediately after the meeting. To reduce reactivity of participants the researcher suggested guidance in cases where guidance was needed.

Nabudere (2002) argues that by being “immersed in a particular context over time not only will the salient features of the situation emerge and present themselves but a more holistic view will be gathered of the interrelationship of factors”. Field notes that were made comprised quick, fragmentary jottings of key words/symbols, more detailed observations written out fully and description of the physical setting. The SMT meeting observations were recorded on a prepared form. Photo copies of the minutes of meetings are included in appendix J.

As to how many meetings were observed the researcher stopped when ‘theoretical saturation’ (Adler and Adler 1994, cited in Hlongwane 2009) was reached, when nothing new was being observed and when data began to be repeated. Generally, two meetings per school seemed sufficient to get an idea of the manner in which the working relationship of the principal and the SMT takes its form.

Sergiovanni (1990) offers a well-known classification of researcher roles in observation – complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant and complete observer. The researcher’s role tended to be observer-as-participant apart from non-participant observing. There was minimal deliberate intervention on my part. The researcher wanted to observe the situation and influence it as little as possible. At each meeting the researcher entered with the SMT, greeted the principals and SMT members and asked permission to observe. The researcher always sat away from the staff so as to be least intrusive. All SMT’s were

generally very welcoming with the first visit and, although they did not say it, the researcher sensed some uneasiness at the second meeting.

3.4.2.1 OBSERVATION AS A MEANS OF REPRESENTING REALITY

Any tool or approach used to observe an event provides only one representation or view of the phenomena under study. Lieberman (1988) points to the value of diversity. Hoyle (1986) claimed that an anthropologist's aim is to obtain a grammar not the grammar of people or an event under observation. Consequently, observations are descriptive statements about natural phenomena that are 'directly' accessible to the senses and about which several observers can reach consensus with relative ease.

In this study there were two sources of data that were 'directly' accessible to the senses. One was the observation of SMT meetings and the other was listening to SMT members explain their understanding of transformational leadership, their views about managing schools through SMTs, how they feel about the way SMTs are functioning, their perceptions of the principal's educational leadership and management style and their knowledge of prescribed policies, roles, responsibilities and functions of the principal, and SMT.

3.4.3 DOCUMENTS

Documents such as copies of minutes of staff and SMT meetings were collected. Examples of minutes of SMT meetings held are attached as Appendix K.

3.4.4 QUESTIONNAIRES

White (2005: 126-127) states that, "...a questionnaire is an instrument with open or closed questions or statements to which a respondent must react. A questionnaire is a qualitative data collection tool and is normally distributed to a large number of respondents". Two different questionnaires were used to collect information from participants. One is the multifactor questionnaire and the other the revised FIRO questionnaire of Schultz (1958). The FIRO questionnaire was given to the principals and SMT members.

Of the seventy-six (76) questionnaires (QUESTIONNAIRES A and B) distributed some were completed without further prompting. Questionnaires were distributed to Principals, Deputy Principals and HODs. Other SMT members had to be reminded, even several times to do so. A few SMT members had not handed theirs in even by the last day of the fieldwork. The researcher re-visited these SMT members and given them new questionnaires to complete – only three of eight of these returned the questionnaire.

Sixty-six (86.8%) questionnaires were returned. Ten (13.2%) of the returned questionnaires were incomplete, that is, respondents only filled in four questions.

3.4.4.1 THE REVISED FIRO INSTRUMENT

The revised FIRO instrument, called Element-B is an inventory, composed of six nine-item scales developed by means of the Guttman scaling technique, which makes it possible to derive a scale that measures only one dimension. Unidimensionality of a scale means that all the items in the scale measure the same dimension and that the items are in order of increasing intensity or of decreasing “popularity”. The primary measure of unidimensionality for a Guttman scale is reproducibility, that is, the prospect or possibility of deriving the actual responses to the items of a scale solely on the basis of the respondent’s total score for the scale.

The Element-B instrument elicits data on the interpersonal behaviour needs of Inclusion, Control and Openness. The instrument was, thus, to provide data in terms of how the respondents behaved towards others, how others behaved towards them, how the respondents wanted their behaviour towards others to be, and how they wanted other people to behave towards them, on each of the three interpersonal behaviour areas of Inclusion, Control and Openness. Three of the six scales in the instrument measured how one behaved towards the focal person or what one received from others. Each scale was responded to twice: once for

the perceived (as happening) level of behaviour and the second time for the wanted or would-like-to level. Thus data was collected on twelve variables, representing different aspects of the three basic interpersonal behaviour needs. Seventy-six instruments were given to twenty principals, fifteen deputy principals and fifteen heads of department to complete. An application (Annexure I) to use this questionnaire has been submitted to Dr Schultz, however, he never responded to my request to use the FIRO Element B instrument. The researcher made numerous attempts to get a response from Dr Schultz without success.

3.4.4.2 QUESTIONNAIRE DATA COLLECTION

Six primary schools in the Sisonke Education District were used as the sample for this study. Following district permission to conduct the study, a mailing list of teachers' school addresses was obtained for each school. In January 2010 via the districts' inter-school mailing service, SMT members within each primary school received an envelope containing an explanatory letter of the study's purpose, questionnaires, a return envelope, and a postcard verifying participation. At the same time, principals received an envelope containing an explanatory letter of the study's purpose, a questionnaire and a return envelope. The principals were not given a postcard because of their known affiliation to only one school.

Follow up correspondence with principals was conducted on four occasions in the same manner approximately every two weeks. Non-

respondent principals were supplied with a new survey upon each contact. SMT members were encouraged to return surveys two weeks after the initial mailing and were sent a reminder letter after that date passed. SMT members were provided new surveys four weeks following the initial mailing and again were prompted to complete their surveys after two more weeks passed. Finally, a collection of blank SMT surveys was sent to principals who were encouraged to inform SMT members in need of another survey that additional ones were available in the school's main office. Responses to the questionnaires were coded and entered into an SPSS data file.

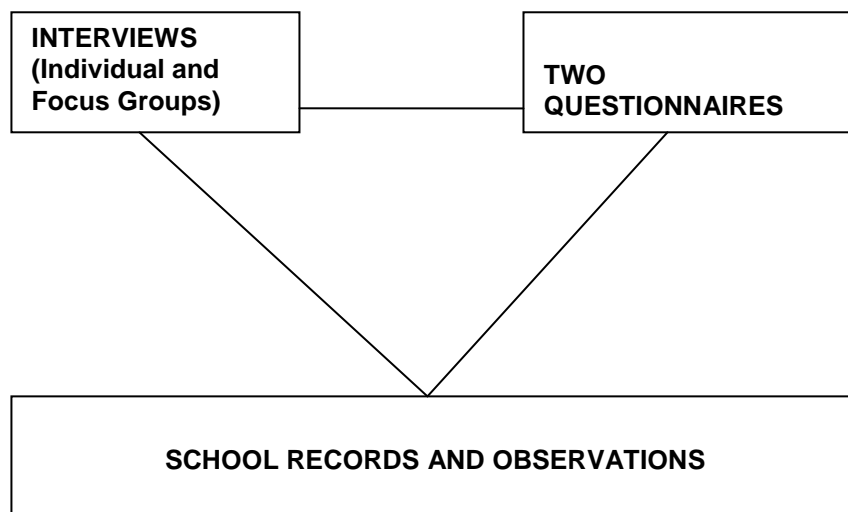
3.4.5 TRIANGULATION

The strategy of triangulation was used to improve the credibility of the research findings. Marais and Mouton (cited in De Vos et al 1998: 359) point out that triangulation refers to, *inter alia*, the use of multiple methods to collect data. In this study, triangulation was applied in three forms based on Duffy's categorization (cited in De Vos et al 1998: 359): *methodologically*, (that is, via the use of semi-structured face-to-face in-depth interviews, observation and documentation analysis and questionnaires) and *theoretically*, (that is, through the reliance on not only the investigator's analysis of the data but also on the analysis of the same data by at least one additional coder familiar with the situation and with qualitative research.

Three of the four basic types of triangulation identified by Gough (2003) were utilized. Hence, theory triangulation, the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data, as an eclectic theoretical approach has been used. Methodological triangulation, the use of multiple methodologies to study a single problem was beyond the scope of this project. Figure 3.2 shows that interviews, questionnaires and information from the school records were used to gather data to make the findings more reliable. According to White (2005: 89) triangulation refers to the use of:

- More than one source of data to support a researcher's conclusions
- More than one theory to support the researcher's arguments, or
- More than one investigator to collect the data to make findings more reliable.

FIGURE 3.1: TYPE OF TRIANGULATION USED IN THIS RESEARCH



3.4.6 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

A mixed methodology of data analysis was adopted. Constant comparative analysis was used to identify patterns, code data and categorize findings of the extended interviews. Specific themes emerging there from were discerned. Tables and figures were used where appropriate. The data were complemented by givens from documented primary and secondary literature sources. Data from the questionnaires was analyzed using the SPSS programme in tandem with the respective research questions and assumptions. This strategy has given the study the requisite triangulation necessary in data analysis and interpretation.

Thereafter the researcher condensed all the interviews into one copy using the questions used in the interview guide as my preliminary categories to help me to analyse and classify my data and determine

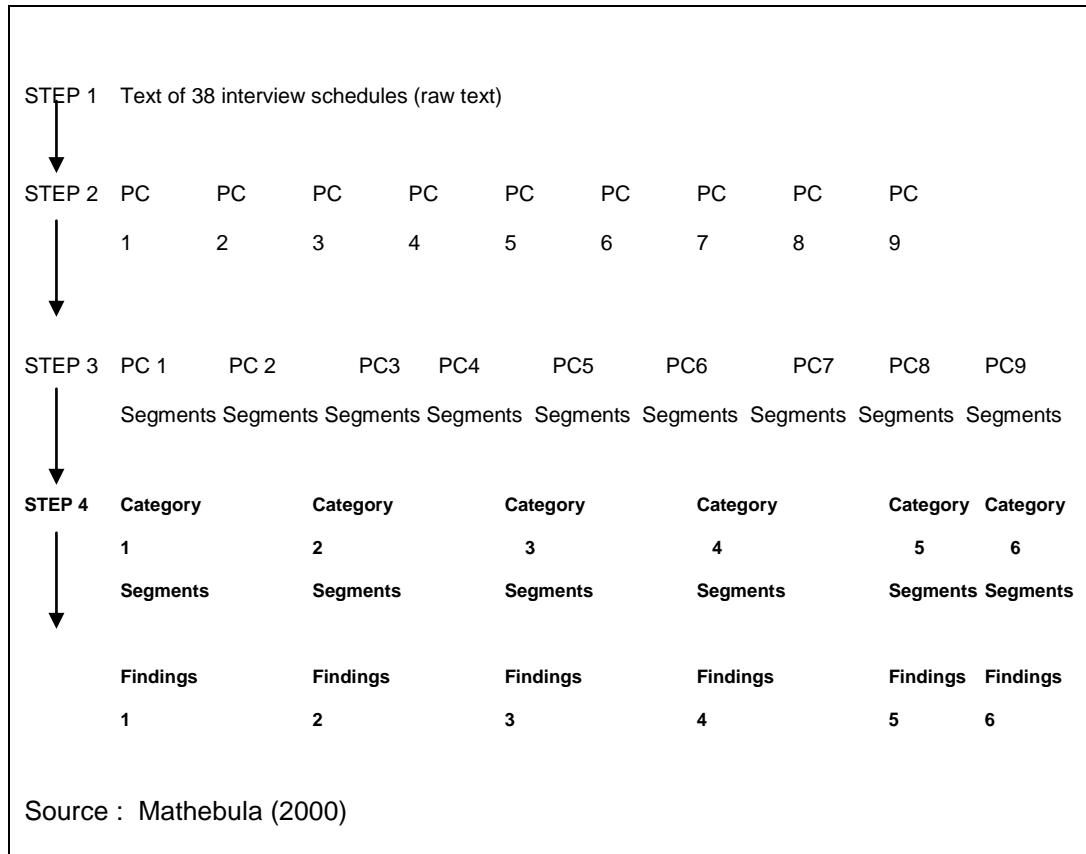
categories. For example, the question "*What is your understanding of the concepts working relationships and distributed leadership?*" was included in the interview guide. This question was then classified as category 1 and all the responses by interviewees to this question were then captured under this question to form a category. The same process was then used for all questions of the guide. The researcher then printed one consolidated copy of all interviews guided by the abovementioned process and thirty-eight (38) copies of all individual interviews for comparison and checking the original wording which might be lost in the consolidated copy.

The consolidated copy, which the researcher labelled "summary of interviews", was used as my working document; in it the researcher underlined significant words, phrases and sentences to identify patterns that seemed to explain the respondents' understanding and experiences of the phenomenon. The words, phrases and sentences with a similar line of thought were marked with a specific colour pen.

Subsequent to the abovementioned process, nine (9) categories emerged. The researcher then read the consolidated transcript carefully and also marked significant words, phrases and sentences, as they were said by the respondents, to determine their relationships. The researcher also replayed the interviews on my computer and carefully listened to the interviews to obtain a clearer and better understanding. Significant relationships were identified and this allowed me to reduce the initial

categories from nine to six by comparing and contrasting each topic and category to determine distinctive characteristics.

TABLE 3.3: ANALYSIS OF DATA (INTERVIEWS)



For example, similarities were identified in the responses that were given to question 1 which read: *“What is your understanding of the concept working relationships and distributed leadership?”* and question 2, which read: *“What is the purpose of distributed leadership in a school context in the new education dispensation?”*

Before analysing and interpreting these questionnaires the researcher employed a short procedure to classify the data from the questionnaires.

The researcher began by determining the exact total number of each set of questionnaires. After determining the total number of each set, the researcher then consolidated each by adding similar and different responses according to the questions in the questionnaires. Thereafter the researcher converted the number of responses into percentages by dividing the actual number of responses by the total number of the questionnaires and multiplied by one hundred to convert into a percentage.

The findings from the questionnaires were then interpreted using percentages. This process was applied to both questionnaires.

3.4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A brief background of Sisonke District of Education is given by presenting the profiles of the six schools and the professional profiles of the six principals, that is, a description of the context and principals will also give a broader view of the participants' perceptions of the working title in the study. All the principals and their schools are referred to by using pseudonyms and devices, in this case school 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' and 'F'. The principals are referred to as principal of school 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' and 'F'. The rest of the participants have been allocated a number, for example, Deputy Principal 1.

Before interviews could be conducted, there were ethical considerations that needed attention. The researcher observed the provisions of the

University of Fort Hare, Faculty of Education handbook (2006). Ethics is a set of moral principles which offers behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards participants (De Vos et al 1998:24). The researcher was aware at every stage of the research process of ethical issues, whether straightforward or not. Throughout the interests of the participants were considered (Angus 1998:111 cited in Hlongwane 2009).

Ethical principles have guided this research from the beginning. The researcher therefore, undertook to consider the following ethical measures throughout the study. Prior to the commencement of the study the researcher had to get the consent of the participants.

De Vos et al (1998:25-26) postulate that informed consent relates to the communication of all possible or adequate information, as accurately as possible, about the research – its purpose, procedures, possible benefits, drawbacks, dangers, et cetera which it poses for prospective participants so that they can choose whether or not to participate in the process or discontinue such participation. Such measures help to ensure the full knowledge of participants and safeguard their rights (Brink & Wood 1983:161 cited in Kader 2007).

The participants in this study, principals and SMT members of six schools in the Sisonke Education District, are adults who have the capacity to give informed consent, directly. Informed consent was requested formally after all issues related to such consent had been explained. Participants had been informed in the language of their choice of the potential risks that

they might be exposed to, and their right to participate or not to do so. Issues related to the study such as its goal, procedures of investigation, possible advantages or disadvantages were shared with them. The researcher's credibility was also communicated to them, verbally and in writing, prior to the commencement of the study, even if the participants showed no interest in knowing (Loewenberg and Dolgoff, cited in De Vos et al 1998: 26-27). The participants were enabled to give the necessary informed consent by completing the section that grants consent (see letter requesting consent, Annexure B).

The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary hence sufficient information on which to base a decision was given to them. Informed consent further implies that the research participants should not be coerced, in any way, to participate in the study. The participants' participation was strictly voluntary allowing the option to withdraw at any time. This was explained to them before the commencement of the research. They were also informed that the research was not sponsored by any institution which meant that there was no financial remuneration or coercion of the participants (whether direct or indirect as in job promotion or contract loss) to participate.

It was necessary to inform the participants of my identity. The researcher disclosed his identity, despite the fact that some of the participants knew me very well. It was part of a strategy to establish rapport with the participants and to become part of the environment as quickly as possible.

This is desirable when the researcher is to observe as participant (Gold's cited in De Vos et al 1998: 260).

Brink and Wood (1983: 163, cited in De Vos et al 1998:31) maintain that the researcher must not only ensure that he is competent and skilled to do the proposed research but in his actions must also reflect awareness of the ethical responsibilities involved. This is even more important when the investigation involves participants from across cultural boundaries. Also, of significance is the view that my manner of conduct during the investigation was not to create undue stress or undermine any characteristic (cultural, work or otherwise) of the participants in their setting.

The researcher also took cognisance of the possibility that the participants could be harmed in both physical and emotional ways as they participated in the study (De Vos et al 1998: 25). Godden (1996) states emotional harm is known to be far more difficult to predict or determine than physical harm. Hence protection from emotional harm was the main concern in this study, given the problem being studied. Everything possible was done to assess the manner in which participation in this investigation could be stressful to the participants in relation to their normal everyday activities (McBurney cited in Dzivhani 2000: 14). This included elimination of questions that might have caused unnecessary stress and identification of participants who may have been too sensitive to participate in the study (De Vos et al 1998: 25). Debriefing sessions were also provided when necessary.

Relationships with the participants had to be fostered (De Vos et al 1998: 257) to ensure the success of the study. The onus is on the researcher to establish and maintain a relationship with participants that is most appropriate to produce valid research. Throughout this study the researcher ensured that a relationship of trust was maintained with the participants. This means that the researcher had to be honest and candid in my interactions with the participants in order to gain their trust and cooperation. The researcher was also guided by Gold's description of the observer-as-participant role (Gold, cited in De Vos et al 1998: 260).

Also, anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. Brink and Wood (1983: 165 cited in Kader 2007) maintain that confidentiality implies that the researcher will keep all records and the identity of the participants known to him only. This makes the information privileged (Robinson cited in De Vos et al 1998: 28). In contrast Babbie (1990: 342) suggests that anonymity indicates that no one, including the researcher, should be able to identify any participant afterwards. Strict confidentiality and anonymity of participants was maintained in this study. This was formally communicated to the participants. Consequently, the names and addresses of data sources will not be published and every attempt will be made to group the data collected so that personal characteristics or details of participants will not become known. The locations where the study was conducted will not be identified by name; participants' responses will not be labelled, except to the extent needed to discuss the results. In addition, no concealed media were used in the data collection process. A voice recorder was used with the consent of the participants.

All the necessary steps were taken to ensure that the participants were not deceived during the interviews and completion of the questionnaires. Loewenberg and Dolgoff (cited in Hlongwane 2009; De Vos et al 1998: 27) regard deception of participants as intentionally misrepresenting facts in order to make another person believe what is not true, thereby violating the respect to which that person is entitled. Corey et al (cited in De Vos et al 1998: 27) think of deception also as withholding information. The deception of participants who participated in this study was avoided at all costs. Where deception did occur inadvertently, it was promptly discussed with the participants (De Vos et al 1998: 27).

After the study was completed a debriefing session between myself and the participants was held where we had an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss the data and its collection process. It represented the end of the learning experience that began when the participants agreed to participate (Dane 1990: 45 cited in Hlongwane 2009). Debriefing sessions were conducted after the study as part of a strategy to allow the participants and the researcher to work through the experience gained during the investigation and its aftermath (Judd et al cited in Kader 2007, Hlongwane and De Vos et al 1998: 33). During the debriefing sessions any misconceptions or inadvertent misrepresentations whether on the part of the participants or the researcher were rectified. The participants' anonymity, respect for information provided in confidence and use of data for the agreed purpose only was also observed after the study.

3.4.8 SUMMARY

The research design and methodology was discussed in this chapter. This discussion contained a detailed description of the concepts of paradigm and research design. In addition, the instruments for data collection were discussed in conjunction with the procedure for data collection and analysis. The measures to ensure ethics in the research and trustworthiness of the findings were also discussed. Chapter 4 will present the findings and their analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the research design and methodology used for the study. In this chapter the method used to analyse data from the observations, documents, interviews and questionnaires is discussed to find answers to the following research questions:

- What perceptions are held by both principals and SMTs regarding their working relationships?
- How do primary school principals perceive distributed leadership and its impact on working relations?
- How do the primary schools SMTs perceive distributed leadership and its impact on working relationships?

The researcher discussed the themes that have emerged from the abovementioned process under the following headings:

1. Consultation and communication
2. Teamwork
3. Decision-making
4. Vision
5. The nature of working relationships
6. The principal as a role model

4.1 SECTION A: SCHOOL CONTEXT AND PRINCIPALS'

PROFESSIONAL PROFILES

For the purpose of this study the six schools and the six principals will be discussed individually, followed by a summary of the similarities and differences and finally the conclusion for section A. The researcher presented the data for each school in the following order: firstly, the school profile, secondly, the profile of the principal and lastly the findings.

4.1.1 SCHOOL A: SCHOOL PROFILE

This prestigious ex-House of Assembly (HOA) school in the little town of Kokstad is located in a middle-class previously White suburb. The school is regarded as one of the leading schools in the field of academics and sport in East Griqualand and students from as far away as Mthata, Mount Fletcher, and Ntabankulu and Lesotho study at this school.

The school has deep historical roots. The school historically took its cue from the British, especially English education, and symbolically aligned itself with English values. A strongly value-based education is offered.

The school is tailored to 'free' learners to participate and contribute 'in the real world' and secondly, a Christian value base is overarching. It is a public school and religious practice and education are an important aspect of the school. The school sets out to develop each learner's full potential in academic, sporting, cultural, social and spiritual spheres.

Aerial photographs of the school show that the physical layout of the school certainly gives credence to Lockett's (2003) observation that many of the traditional country schools in South Africa were modelled on the British public school system such that they constituted '*a little England in the veld*'. Sprawling gardens and trees surround elaborate and beautiful buildings, a swimming pool, tennis courts and a well developed sports field.

Befitting its status, the school buildings are imposing, yet they project a sense of relaxed elegance. Propriety was the hallmark of this school. Its distinctive nature arose out of pronounced specialization in every aspect of the school's life. Strong boundaries underpinned the naming and use of buildings and rooms, and of the fields and gardens.

Roles were specialized within a complex division of labour, with well-trained administrative and support staff and a fleet of ground staff. A wide range of professionally coached sporting and extra-curricular activities are available. The school has a wealth of intellectual, managerial and material resources. The school kept up to date with information technology and a global perspective is encouraged. Communication through e-mail and the Internet together with the use of technologically relevant equipment is available to every educator. Educators are computer literate and incorporate IT into their lessons.

In addition to general audio and visual teaching aids such as overhead projectors (OHP), computers, television (TV) sets and Video/DVD

machines, each class was furnished and decorated in subject-specific ways. The classrooms are well equipped for effective teaching and learning to take place.

One of the distinguishing features of the school is its focus on Creative Arts. Musical ability is nurtured in school choirs and through individual tuition in a wide variety of musical instruments. Art, speech and drama, debating and public speaking, the appreciation of literature and a respect for various languages provides for the aesthetic and cultural development of learners.

An outstanding characteristic of the ethos of this school is the ideological homogeneity amongst parents, educators and learners. The school caters for reception class and primary education up to grade seven. Accordingly, from as early as age five children are being socialized into distinctive mannerisms and routines valued by the school. The majority of the parents occupy very high-level senior professional and managerial occupations such as educators, specialist doctors, commercial farmers, businessmen, attorneys, nurses and pharmacists.

Another indication of elite socio-economic status is the upper middle class residential areas that learners are drawn from. SMT profiles described below indicate their positioning in the advantaged socio-economic strata also. The social class alignment of parents, learners and staff provides a high degree of cultural continuity between home and school. These factors combine to produce a happy, caring and stimulating environment

that is ideal for school improvement. This prestigious school has a dedicated, determined and committed principal. The medium of instruction is English. The school had an enrolment of 466 learners.

4.1.2 SCHOOL A: PRINCIPAL PROFILE

The principal is an elderly person who is very dedicated and takes responsibility as leader of such an established school very seriously. In my interviews with him he indicated that he succeeded a principal that advocated that there was dire need for an appropriate conceptualization of educational change and quality education. He has a clear understanding of distributed leadership and teamwork.

This man is a good listener. While the researcher was in his office some learners had a problem and after applying the *audi alterim partem* principle they resolved the problem in an amicable way. The principal is an enthusiastic leader with a sense of humour which contributes towards his relaxed but firm approach. He is a keen sportsman and has served on the executive of Athletics South Africa in Natal. Furthermore, he has arranged many successful athletics, cricket and rugby tournaments in the district and the province.

The principal is highly respected in the community. The researcher has also noticed that he was professionally competent and was trained in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). In addition to that he has a clear sense of direction for the school which is communicated effectively to all

stakeholders. Meetings with staff are regular and are fully participatory. Reviewing the progress of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is a regular part of SMT meetings for this man. He involves the SMT and they analyze data and whole school evaluation together, especially the performance of learners. This principal believes that the SMTs at the school should engage in many educational goals, a complex and changing educational environment, need for educational reforms, school effectiveness, and the pursuit of quality. The principal of this school is a man who fosters creative change through a vision by creating a meaningful work context, communicating the vision, and developing trust and so doing, empowering the SMT.

Similarly, the principal is able to ensure that SMT members and educators have opportunities to access quality professional development in order to improve their teaching. He is a person that endeavours to work with others in the school community and he motivates the SMT in the building of a shared school culture and a school climate which promotes collaborative working relationships and effective teaching and learning. He is a person who leads by example and he models the values and vision of the school in everyday work and practice.

Lastly, this principal works with all the stakeholders in the school in order to ensure that the vision and mission of the school is translated into agreed goals and operational plans that are designed to promote and sustain ongoing school improvement. Table 3.3 gives a detailed

explanation of the SMT of the school. The following information was obtained from the staff records at the school.

Table 3.3 shows that SMT comprises of two whites and one coloured. This is in keeping with transformation, which emphasizes representation and empowerment of all races.

TABLE 3.3: SMT PROFILE

CRITERIA	PRINCIPAL	HOD (JP)	HOD (SP)
RACE	W	W	C
AGE	58	55	43
GENDER	M	F	M
EXPERIENCE (YRS)	34	30	25
QUALIFICATIONS	M+5	M+4	M+5
EXPERIENCE AS SMT MEMBER (yrs)	18	12	8

W = White, C = Coloured

4.1.3 FINDINGS

During the school visits the researcher observed that consultation was a powerful tool that enriched and shapes educational policies such as SASA, the PAM document, EEA, Public Administration Amendment Act No.30 of 2007 and the Constitution (Act No.108 of 1996) at school A. The responses to the interview questions painted a clear picture that the principal and SMT at this school strived to promote and maintain high

standards of professional ethics. The documents that were examined was ample evidence that the principal and SMT worked hard to provide teaching and learning services that are impartial, fair, equitable and without bias. It is clear from the report that was given by the principal and SMT members during the interviews that they are working hard as a team to render accountable, transparent, and development-oriented service to the local community.

During the SMT meetings the researcher observed that the principal and SMT of school A worked together as a team to promote strategies to encourage high expectations and to set challenging targets for achievement. It was also observed that these two management entities share and transmitted ideas and stimulated discussion on pedagogic and welfare issues with all the staff members at staff development sessions which were held on a weekly basis. The principal's behaviour during the SMT meetings made the researcher understand that he is a person that embraces the philosophy of *Ubuntu* and therefore values and respects the SMT and their contributions. The researcher's observations were that the principal has established effective communication mechanisms within the school and its community. In addition, there was equity and fairness in the delegation of work and the devolution of responsibility since all educators were given an opportunity to lead. Furthermore, the principal was engaged in an ongoing review of his own practice and he was prepared to accept responsibility for personal and professional development hence his preparedness to be workshopped by the Heads of Department (HODs) on the new developments on the curriculum.

The researcher's observations were that the head of this institution worked hard to develop and maintain an effective partnership between himself, the SGB and SMT. Also, that the principal was able to build and maintain effective, collaborative relationships and partnerships with other agencies in the community which were concerned variously with the well-being of learners, their families, educators and the SMT. The responses to the interview questions has shed light on the fact that this leader also gives attention to the articulated needs of the learners, among other things, by encouraging and supporting the work of the prefects.

It is clear from the graph 4.4 that the SMT was satisfied with the performance of the principal as their leader. Diagram 2 on page 203 illustrate the working relationships that existed between the principal and SMT at school A. The dotted lines indicated that there was a free flow of interpersonal relationships between the principal and the staff members.

In his responses to the interview questions the principal emphasized the fact that collaboration marks the effective and efficient implementation of educational policies at that school. The frequency chart (diagram 2, p. 203) revealed a weak classification regarding the leadership and management structure that existed at the school. From the observations the majority of the SMT members at school A reported that they find the working relationship between the principal and SMT to be absolutely beneficial. It was acknowledged that teambuilding was an important determinant of effectiveness in the operation of teams, by virtue of the fact that sound teambuilding recognizes that it is not possible to fully separate

one's performance from those of others (Tuckman 1985: 133 cited in Kader 2007).

The individual interviews at this school revealed that a great SMT is made up of knowledge workers who have a focused vision, believe in their mission, and empower each other in their initiative and skill development (McKee 2003 cited in Hlongwane 2009). From the inputs from the different educators, there was a desire amongst them for continuous improvement and renewal. The researcher's observations were that it is evident that the principal and SMT at school A were entrepreneurial, visionary and creative. This was a dynamic team that had strong faith and trust in the vision and mission of the school.

4.1.4 SCHOOL B: SCHOOL PROFILE

This seventy-nine year old school is approximately three kilometres from the centre of the little town Ixopo. The school has established itself as a sound centre of education during its long history.

The learners come from all walks of life, from working class as well as upper class families. Their school fees are R1800 per annum. Approximately two thirds of the learners come from middle and working class families in the townships, which are more than twenty kilometres from the school. About twenty percent of the learners have lost one or both of their parents. Many of the learners live with guardians and not with their own parents.

It is a diverse, multi-cultural school that includes all the race groups of our country. The school won a National Teacher's Award in 2007. This school is a section 21, peri-urban, self-reliant, ex- House of Representative School. Nearly half of the learners do not use the language of school instruction at home or in their community. The school has adequate resources. English is the medium of instruction at this school. There are 1487 learners at this school.

The buildings and grounds are well maintained. The school has satisfactory facilities and specialist classrooms such as a Computer Room, two Science and Biology laboratories, a Workshop and Media Centre. The school has a soccer field and a netball field. The classrooms have enough furniture, overhead projectors, tape recorders, chalkboards and relevant learning aids. The library is well stocked with non-fiction and fiction books in a variety of languages and is used on a weekly basis by all the classes. There is a proper supply of electricity and water. Forty-nine of the educators are paid by the state and the Governing Body of the school employs four extra educators.

The school is managed by a system that uses a participatory process of policy formulation where all role-players are involved in the conceptualization, development and final ratification of the documents. The school has a very strong SGB, with its chairperson being the chairperson of the district forum. The SGB members are directly involved in decision making. About sixty percent of the SGB members have tertiary

education of three years or more. These parents, serving on the SGB of the school, have a sound understanding of their roles in developing the school. The rest of the parents are making a limited contribution towards the running of the school.

The institution is renowned for its academic high flyers and values the concerns of the quite demanding parents as far as academic results are concerned. There is a positive culture of learning that accounts for the high levels of respect between the learners and the educators, as well as the punctuality and the average daily learner attendance of ninety-six percent. The learners are well disciplined and very few serious transgressions occur.

Staff teamwork is evident and the principal has a good understanding of the challenges faced in the classrooms. The school is not only respected in the immediate community, but also in the wider community. It has received numerous awards of excellence, of which two were from Universities for the fine school leavers fed into the tertiary institutions from this school. Within the positive learning culture that exists, an interesting fact has arisen: with the exception of two years, all the learners have voluntarily chosen mathematics as part of their secondary school package when they proceed to the secondary school.

It has received numerous awards of excellence and has an outstanding grade eight pass rate over the years. The school has received the award for the top academic primary school in the district for the past three years.

4.1.5 SCHOOL B: PRINCIPAL PROFILE

The principal studied for the Secondary Teacher's Diploma (STD) at the Betchet College of Education in Durban and obtained his B. Ed in 1991. He majored in Educational Management. He has had a long and respectful career in education and started his teaching career at the school, where he is currently the principal, in 1989. The gentleman has experience in both primary and secondary school teaching. He served as a level one educator (assistant) from 1989 to 1992, teaching English, Mathematics and Science.

He became an education specialist in 1995 and managed the English department of the High School. He became a principal in 2004 and has served as principal at his present school since then. He attended workshops on HIV/AIDS and National Curriculum Statement (NCS), but was not trained as a school manager. Through trial and error he gained experience as a distributing leader at his present school.

This energetic young man is a dedicated principal, taking his responsibility as leader of such a recognized school very seriously. He is an experienced educator and he concentrates on his accountability as an instructional leader. This is due to his many years of teaching experience in the classroom.

4.1.6 FINDINGS

The principal had many years of education experience and seems to manage from a classroom situation point of view. He has a passion for education and contributes towards the success of the school by being actively involved in curriculum management and does not shy away from innovation and change. He has a hands-on approach. The principal is intensely concerned with the challenges faced in the classroom.

TABLE 3.4: SMT PROFILE

CRITERIA	PRINCIPAL	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL	HOD (SP)	HOD (SP)	HOD (SP)	HOD (JP)	HOD (JP)
RACE	C	C	B	W	C	B	C	B
AGE	44	48	41	38	34	44	45	43
GENDER	M	F	M	M	F	M	F	F
EXPERIENCE (YRS)	19	23	16	14	12	20	25	20
QUALIFICATIONS	M+4	M+5	M+6	M+6	M+5	M+6	M+5	M+4
EXPERIENCE AS SMT MEMBER (Yrs)	10	15	5	7	8	14	16	14

C = Coloured, W = White, B = Black

It became evident during the interview with him that he is cautious about simply following new policies without questioning their content.

The principal uses his perception of changes that are needed to work both inside and outside the organization, to map new directions, to secure new resources and refocus existing resources, and to respond to the realities of a very unstable present and, at times, an unforeseeable future. Change is inevitable and the challenge is to make the most of it in increasingly more productive ways. He understood his role as distributing leader during change very well. His staff agreed that favourable conditions for the pre-implementation stage of the proposed educational management and distributed leadership were created by the principal by him involving the SMT members in decision-making processes. The principal and SMT felt strongly about their accountability towards their community and were prepared to make use of their own resourcefulness.

He revealed strong charismatic leadership qualities, although the researcher also noted some distributed leadership qualities such as to delegate tasks to SMT members and joint decision-making with them. He is self-confident when he discussed the school based assessment, with an exceptionally tenacious determination to achieve success. Furthermore, he has a good command of both English and Afrikaans hence his ability to communicate his ideals to educators, parents and learners with confidence; he creates a feeling of excitement and adventure whenever he addresses the staff and learners at the morning devotions. He also reveals social sensitivity and empathy. The researcher noted strong classification and weak framing within the social relations in the management style of the principal (see diagram 2 on page 203).

At the management level, Morias, Rocha and Pires (cited in Mabeba 1985) found that a relative weakening in pacing, which is part of internal framing, is an effective strategy in promoting the working relationships relative to high-level scientific concepts. This must however occur within strong external framing of the intended working relationships. In other words what is to be taught and learnt over the course of the year is determined by the good working relationships between the principal and SMT, while on a day-to-day basis the principal needs to exercise flexibility within the terms of the policy and working relationships, to ensure that all SMT members and educators are keeping up. Not all SMT members manage to grasp concepts and apply them easily and consequently they need more time to internalize knowledge.

This energetic gentleman, as distributing leader, felt that the top-down implementation of policies (SASA, in particular) approach of the department of education often causes tension among principals and SMTs. He also felt that the policy was not thought through properly and that practitioners were not adequately involved. He felt that it was idealistic and not realistic.

The correct interpretation of education policies provides the primary tool for monitoring the extent to which the system is succeeding in the transmission and acquisition of the social and cognitive competences deemed desirable. This aspect seems to be the most worrying regarding the information passed on to the principals to date. The principal made elaborate comparisons between the present and the amended policy

documents. He felt the inadequate information would hamper their planning for the implementation because the knowledge of the policies is actually the starting point of the educational change implementation as explained below.

The shift to participative management is the key issue that has emerged from the meetings with the principal. It was thus found that the principal cannot lead and manage the school alone. The core to participative management is the fact that the SMT and educators at this school are allowed and even encouraged by the principal to participate in the management of the school, and in the decision-making process. It is clear from my observations that participative management allows the best utilization of human resources and the principal demonstrates trust in the abilities of the SMT, hence "... ample evidence that people were trusted to work as autonomous individuals, within the clear collegial value frameworks which were common to all the SMT members" (Cunningham 2001). Among the SMT members there was a strong emphasis on teamwork and participation in decision-making. The goals of the principal and SMT, at this school, were clear and agreed, communications were good and everyone had high expectations of themselves and others as evidenced by the outstanding results of the school (Day et al 2000).

During the interview sessions with the principal, he was also extremely concerned about the fact that principals are not being trained in leadership and management. He felt that the principals would have to do self-training and that the school and ultimately the learners would be the

ones to suffer the consequences. The diagram 2 on page 203 illustrates the working relationships between the principal and the SMT at school B. The continuous lines in the diagram are a clear indication of good, strong working relationships between the two management entities in this particular school.

4.1.7 SCHOOL C: SCHOOL PROFILE

This school is situated approximately fifteen kilometres from the centre of Highflats. It was started by the community, and during its forty-one year existence has proven itself to be a shining star, illuminating the path to education excellence. This is a “Mega School” which includes a mainstream, special and vocational school. The school also accommodates learners with special education needs (SNES). The majority of the learners come from working class families. The surrounding community varies from unemployed to working and middle class. The school fees are R450 per annum. This is a section 21, rural, ex-Department of Education and Training (DET) School. The learner enrolment was 765.

Fifteen percent of the learners have lost one or both of their parents. Many of the learners live with caregivers and a fifth of the learners live in the school hostel. The staff and learners are constantly reminded of the past when they contemplate the mono-cultural face of the school. This school has only Black learners and is mainly funded by the Department of Education and foreign donors.

There is electricity and fresh water supply. The buildings and grounds are very well maintained. Nearly fifty percent of the school income is spent on repairs and some of the buildings are dilapidated. A secure fence and security guards at the entrance ensure the safety of both educators and learners. There are adequate teaching and learning facilities and specialist classrooms such as a Computer Room, a library, specialized rooms for learners with special education needs (LSEN) and two classrooms for the vocational side of the curriculum. The school has gravel, non-standard sports facilities such as a soccer field, a netball field and a volleyball court. The classrooms are neat, with enough furniture, overhead projectors, video cameras, chalkboards and relevant learning aids. The Library is well stocked with non-fiction and fiction books and is used on a weekly basis by all the classes. Sixteen of the educators are paid by the state and three extra educators and nine care-givers are employed by the SGB.

The parents serving on the SGB of the school prefer to be supportive and leave most of the decisions to the principal and SMT. Only three educators serving on the Governing Body have tertiary education. Policies are in place and the principal keeps a firm hand on the execution of all the policies. A strong culture of learning exists in the school and the school has an extremely proud history of excellent results.

It is a school of excellence where learners and educators respect each other, and the punctuality and the average learner attendance of ninety percent per day reveals the positive learning culture that exists. The

learners are well-disciplined and very few serious transgressions occur. It has received numerous awards of excellence as a special school such as bursaries for outstanding academic performance.

4.1.8 PRINCIPAL PROFILE

The principal completed his Bachelor of Arts (BA) and BA Honours at the University of Zululand. He then obtained his Secondary Teacher's Diploma (STD) at the Vista University. He completed his Master of Arts (Clinical Psychology) at the University of Natal. He is currently busy with his Doctorate in Psychology.

TABLE 3.5: SMT PROFILE

CRITERIA	PRINCIPAL	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (PRIMARY)	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (SPECIAL)	HOD (SPECIAL)	HOD (SPECIAL)	HOD (SP)	HOD (JP)
RACE	B	B	B	B	B	C	B
AGE	37	49	45	32	39	33	40
GENDER	M	F	M	M	F	M	F
EXPERIENCE (YRS)	17	25	22	14	18	14	18
QUALIFICATIONS	M+6	M+5	M+5	M+5	M+5	M+5	M+4
EXPERIENCE AS SMT MEMBER (Yrs)	12	19	13	5	10	9	14

B = Black, C = Coloured

He started his teaching career in 1981 and served as Acting Principal of the Special/mainstream school in 1982 and 1983. In 1984 he became a Deputy Principal and in 1986 became the principal of this school. The

man has a special place in his heart for Learners with special needs in education (LSEN). He has served on many committees and was the convener of the Top Schools Principal Society to initiate strategies for improvement and empowerment of educators and has a strong sense of duty. He is task-orientated, and performance and production are at the top of his priority list for his learners, staff and himself. Furthermore, he is actively involved in his school and leads by example.

The principal is a dynamic man, who strives towards excellence at all times. Of the six principals, he is faced with the most serious challenges due to our country's neglect of special schools and consequent education inequalities. He nevertheless succeeds against all odds and has proved to be resilient as shown by the service standards at this institution for learners with special needs.

Three of the SMT members reported that the principal is the central figure in the school for the building and development of an organizational culture that is conducive to collaboration and change. Successful leadership at this school is seen to be a key factor, and here depends on a principal with a vision. Instilling ownership of the process of change by the principal and the stakeholders actualizes psychosocial characteristics. Ownership is instilled by following a democratic process of change. Participation in decision-making by all stakeholders of the school, especially educators (SMTs), contributes positively to change.

The principal of this special school maintains that the challenge in team learning 'lies at the point where people collectively interact to overcome the forces that work against honest communication, especially in situations fraught with conflict' a view shared by Cardno (2002: 202). Thus it becomes important for teams to learn how to overcome defensiveness and other barriers so that open communication amongst members of the team can result.

The principal, when asked about his views on the leadership abilities of the SMT members, was of the opinion that change is needed and can only take place if professional development and capacity building by the education authorities support it by them conducting regular workshops and seminars on leadership and management. He maintains that schools will only change where principals ensure that allocation of resources, procedures and policies and technology are in alignment with the vision of change.

4.1.9 FINDINGS

In South Africa training is not a requirement for appointment as a principal, and there is still an assumption that good educators can become effective managers and leaders without specific preparation. This man for instance, taught for merely four years before taking on a management position in his school, despite a lack of training and experience. The principal at this particular school delegates power to the two deputy principals with the aim to develop them. Julius Nyerere

(1973:45, cited in Mabeba 1985) said that 'development brings freedom provided it is development for people. He further states that people cannot be developed, they can only develop themselves. This means they develop themselves by what they do, hence the promotion of popular and active participation in education. Most importantly people have to develop themselves by making their own decisions, by increasing their own knowledge and ability and by their own full participation. The structure of the school is conducive to participation and decision-making processes. It can therefore be maintained that a flattened structure facilitates change, and that structural changes lead to changes in the behaviour of people who experience them and have their ramification in the whole school.

The duty of the principal as distributing leader includes educator empowerment. The principal at this Mega school sees his role as a facilitator and educational leader, who empowers the SMT and the educators in such a way that they will make a contribution to preparing learners more effectively for the society within which they will have to live. The implication is that the principal believes that it is his duty to oversee and encourage staff development so that the SMT and educators can be effective. Jones (1990:30, cited in Torrace 2009) sees principals as initiators and supporters of innovation, imparting their ideas about professional development to educators to secure their participation and support. At this school the principal was driving the planning and implementation process of the SASA and the principal has adequate knowledge regarding SASA and its expectations.

The continuous arrows in diagram 2 on page 203 represent directions of strong relationships between the principal and SMT. The effectiveness of this school is due to the fact that the principal and SMT work well as a team. Team building helps, *'... the team to create a clear and shared vision of what the members are trying to achieve. Our team members also identify the practical issues we face, we start to tackle them together and we learn how to work together (Principal C).*

4.1.10 SCHOOL D: SCHOOL PROFILE

This school is situated in the centre of town, near the business houses. The school is steeped in tradition, and has a proud history. The learners attending the school come from both privileged backgrounds and working class families. There were 445 learners at this school. Approximately a third of the learners come from middle class and working class families in the townships, which are more than ten kilometres from the school. About ten percent of the learners have lost one or two of their parents and may live with guardians. The school fees are R1200 per annum.

It is a multicultural school community including all race groups, apart from Whites. It is an Ex-House of Delegates (HOD), section 21, urban School, with adequate resources and is mainly self-reliant. Most of the learners do not use the language of school instruction at home or in their community.

Within the school gates are beautifully maintained buildings. The school offers a multitude of sport, academic and cultural choices. It has limited sports facilities at the present site. Within the plastered, brick walls excellent specialist classrooms accommodate many interests and hobbies. The school boasts a Computer Room, equipped with state of the art machines, and runs advanced programmes which are able to do everything that the learners need for effective teaching and learning to take place. Add to these internet access and Media Centre. The classrooms are inviting, with adequate furniture, overhead projectors, voice recorders, chalkboards and relevant learning and teaching aids. The library is well stocked with non-fiction and fiction books in three languages and is used on a weekly basis by all the classes. Six of the educators are paid by the state and the Governing Body of the school employs four extra educators.

About ninety percent of the SGB members have tertiary education of three years or more. Participative management is present and policies and procedures are implemented on a trial and error basis. An effective management structure ensures that a positive learning culture exists.

The staff members generally have a good relationship with the learners, and parents or guardians. Elmore (2000); Harris and Muijs (2003) and Lambert (2002) argue that when collegial approaches to leadership focus on teaching and learning there can be real and marked benefits for learners. The learners are usually punctual and the school has an average daily learner attendance of ninety-seven percent, revealing the

positive learning culture that exists. The research findings further reveal that leadership and management change occurs hence participation promotes self-determinism and collective accountability between the principal and SMT. Slavin (1998, cited in Teske et al 1999) speaks of 'Seeds schools' to refer to those where SMTs are involved in decisions. In order to entrench a democratic process this school utilizes a school based management because it entrenches ownership of the process.

The learners are well-disciplined and no serious transgressions occur. Staff teamwork is encouraged by the management.

TABLE 3.6: SMT PROFILE

CRITERIA	PRINCIPAL	HOD (JP)	HOD (SP)
RACE	I	I	C
AGE	43	39	41
GENDER	F	F	M
EXPERIENCE (YRS)	15	12	17
QUALIFICATIONS	M+6	M+4	M+5
EXPERIENCE AS SMT MEMBER (Yrs)	11	4	9

I = Indian, C = Coloured

4.1.11 SCHOOL D: PRINCIPAL PROFILE

The lady was an A-student in the matriculation examination and after that studied B.Ed at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg). She obtained

this degree in 1993. In 1996, she obtained her Higher Diploma in Education Management.

She worked at First National Bank for one year. Her calling as an educator then brought her to her present primary school where she served as a level one educator teaching languages from 1994 to 1997. She became an Education Specialist (then known as Head of Department), from 1998 to 2002 managing the Senior Phase. From 2003 to 2005 she served as Deputy Principal of the school and became the Principal in 2006.

The principal is a dedicated person, who takes her responsibility as leader of such an established school very seriously. She is an enthusiastic leader with a firm approach to leadership and management. .

4.1.12 FINDINGS

She gained experience of a managerial nature outside the education background. Her distributed leadership approach is most probably due to the ability to involve all the SMT members in the day-to-day running of the school. She is an exception to The Commonwealth Secretariat (1996, cited in Mabeba 1985) opinion about much of Africa where: ‘...without the necessary skills, many heads are overwhelmed by the task . . . strategies for training and supporting school heads are generally inadequate throughout Africa’ (Commonwealth Secretariat 1996: iii, cited in Mabeba 1985). This school is different since this lady, like her colleague at school

A, is committed, determined and dedicated to work towards good and strong working relationships due to her vast experience and patience in working with people.

This dedicated and committed lady emphasized the fact that a collaborative effort in preparation for the implementation of change in educational management exists at her school. This opinion reveals weak classification regarding the leadership and management structures. She also felt that she had to keep her current resources, including human resources, in mind during the implementation stages of education policies, because she could not rely on the Department of Education, due to time constraints. Based on responses on the questionnaires, the staff supported and trusted her in the planning stage of the proposed change. This approach to change also reveals weak internal framing. The principal is not prepared to simply throw everything overboard and blindly dive into change.

This principal encouraged responsibility by allowing her staff the autonomy and authority to match the task. Confidence, based on a foundation of trust in education structures, their capacity for reflection, and their potential for professional self-motivation, is required. She is creatively making the best use of all available human, material and financial resources, and so uses a variety of training and support techniques. Furthermore, she took on a symbolic and inspirational role and did not hesitate to have a trial-and-error approach towards the initial planning stages.

Similarly, she revealed the qualities of a distributive leader, coupled with charismatic and democratic characteristics. Very weak classification and framing is present in the structures of this school (diagram 2 on page 203). The lady encourages collaborative efforts. She felt strongly about her visionary and motivational role as a leader.

The only female principal, in the study, is able to work in democratic and participative ways to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective delivery. The staff members have a shared understanding about strategic and operational education management needs, priorities and development strategies. Weak classification is obvious in this school and recognition and realization is adhered to.

She provided a personalized rationale for her actions in the planning stage of the implementation of the new policies. The educators are collaboratively involved in the process. Commitment to excellence at successful schools results in implementing change cautiously.

During the interview, the lady revealed this kind of action:

“In our planning we have and will collaboratively compare the old and the new policies and retain fundamental concepts” (Principal D).

The management approach of the principal reveals a weaker kind of classification. It is evident that she seemed to realize that staff teamwork is vital and that all her educators must be encouraged to fulfil their

potential and be comfortable about their contributions being acknowledged.

The principal of this school stated that one of the strengths of her school is the common culture of teaching and learning. Her staff members have a strong sense of duty and responsibility towards teaching and learning. Educator leadership is encouraged at all levels of this school. The questionnaires completed by the middle managers of the school showed them to be at ease with the change process due to this attitude of their school leader.

The continuous arrows in Diagram 2 on page 203 represent a strong working relationship between the principal and the SMT at school D. The interviews with the SMT at this school made it clear that the principles of an effective relationship are universal; they apply in both private and work relationships, and they are not dependent on age and class. Regardless of age, race, and class difference the working relationship of principal and SMT is reinforced by collaboration, consultation, delegation, trust, knowledge and motivation.

Communication within the SMTs and between SMTs and other members of staff are key elements in enabling meaningful decision-making to proceed. Competence and credibility are characteristics that have been identified by the focus group as vital for teachers to develop positive perceptions of the principal and SMT. They emphasized the need to develop a shared culture among SMT and to work effectively together to

achieve consensus and avoid conflict hence their advocacy of uniformity of members' values and their commitment to team work.

4.1.13 SCHOOL E: SCHOOL PROFILE

The school is situated in the township two kilometres from the central business development area of the town (CBD). It is a former ex-DET, section 21, urban school with inadequate resources. This is a monoculture school community with only learners from the Black South African population group. The school accommodates learners from grade R to grade 8. The learners attending the school are from working class families. About thirty percent of the learners are orphans and many live with their grandmothers or relatives. The buildings are vandalized and furniture and equipment is ruined.

The staff has a satisfactory relationship with the learners and parents, however their relationships with the principal is a matter for concern. The grade 8 results over the past five years raises much concern since the pass rate was below fifty percent during this period.

4.2.14 SCHOOL E: PRINCIPAL PROFILE

The principal of school E appears to depend too much on the Department of Education for training, support, structures and procedures. Being an autocratic leader, with an autocratic leadership style, his vision of staff needs, is limited to what he expects from the Department officials. This

could help to explain why he has adopted the attitude of waiting for the Department to deliver, instead of getting started with the planning.

TABLE 3.7: SMT PROFILE

CRITERIA	PRINCIPAL	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (SP)	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (JP)	HOD (SP)	HOD (SP)	HOD (JP)	HOD (JP)
RACE	B	B	B	C	B	B	B
AGE	48	53	37	49	39	33	40
GENDER	M	F	M	M	F	M	F
EXPERIENCE (YRS)	17	25	22	14	18	14	18
QUALIFICATIONS	M+6	M+5	M+5	M+5	M+5	M+5	M+4
EXPERIENCE AS SMT MEMBER (Yrs)	12	19	13	5	10	9	14

B = Black, C = Coloured

This principal's management team members revealed that they felt restricted by their principal, as they were not involved in the planning stage of the implementation.

The questionnaire responses revealed that they were unsure about many aspects regarding the educational policies and the new curriculum. They did not know what the teaching and learning in their school would be like the following year and disagreed with the notion that the principal had ensured favourable conditions for the pre-implementation stage. As pointed out in the literature review, high-achieving schools had principals who boldly led the academic program, set goals, examined the curriculum, evaluated educators, and assessed results. Such 'facilitative'

leadership exercises power through others, not over them. This sophisticated form of instructional leadership is not part of this principal's approach.

Strong classification is evident from his responses, as he felt that his staff would resist the change. This principal is apprehensive about the change process. The gentleman seems to be losing the support and trust of his staff with good reason. He showed adequate knowledge about distributed leadership yet allows no collaborative planning. They also added that training of principals and SMTs in distributed leadership had not been included in their school's development plan and they were unsure about their school's readiness to implement the policy of distributed leadership as envisaged by the department of education and the NGOs.

In addition the principal also reveals strong classification and framing in his relationship with his staff. He does not want to involve his staff in the planning for his school. To lead by empowering people, releasing their creativity, and finding different ways to bring them together so they can learn to improve continuously, scan the environment and solve problems effectively as they emerge (Gunter 2001), is a bold step for a principal to take. He seems to be hesitant to do this. This could be due to his cultural traditions and beliefs, where strong hierarchical systems are evident.

The hearts and minds of the people in schools ultimately dictate what happens in classrooms, not changes in policies or procedures. The

response by the principal during the interview confirms this when he refers to the feelings among his staff:

The retraining will cause tension and changes, and educators will question the change. Social relations with the Departmental officials will worsen as they create confusion and they make us unhappy.

It is my opinion that many disadvantaged schools have too many other day-to-day functionality concerns to deal with. They experience considerable difficulty to implement new policies and it is my opinion that the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged learners will increase. The principal of school E felt that he would be ready for implementation only if the Department could move faster. He did not have any plans of his own.

4.1.15 FINDINGS

The principal is a nomothetic manager who follows rules according to the book (Hoy and Miskel 1982: 71). Nomothetic managers are those who will not compromise since they follow rules and policies strictly according to the Education Department's handbook.

At this school meetings are not held, hence leadership style of the principal is autocratic despite the fact that he follows rules to the letter. The poor grade 8 examination results of the school are ample proof that the principal was an incompetent manager. After all, how can a leader

guide the staff-team towards realizing a long term vision if the day-to-day management functions aren't there to give structure and support?

There is no blueprint for effective leadership and management and our diverse country needs context-based strategies. The principal was quite confident that he was doing the 'right' thing by not informing his staff about amendments to policy until he knew exactly what was going on.

In my discussions with both principal and SMT it appeared that micropolitics, as Hoyle (1986:125) said, 'is a favourite theme of the organizational gossip as people talk about playing politics (belonging to different teacher unions and political parties), hidden agendas, organizational Mafias', Machiavellianism and extra jobs. Indeed, there appears to be a 'domain of micropolitics' ... again defined by Hoyle (1986:126) as a continuum, one end of which is virtually indistinguishable from conventional management procedures but divergent on a number of dimensions-interests, interest sets, power, strategies and legitimacy.' Morgan (1986, cited in Torrance 2009) rightly noted that systemic analysis of organizational politics can be simplified by focusing on the relationship between '...interests, conflict and power'.

The questionnaires revealed that the principal and his staff did not share mutual sentiments. The interviews and questionnaires revealed contradicting views and feelings within the school. Very strong classification regarding the management structures of the school exist. Strong framing as regards to handing down of information from the principal to the staff is also evident. The administration at this school is

questionable and so there were also no proper documents available when the researcher requested them from the principal. On that score he was very defensive and also evasive. It also appears that the ward managers do not monitor and evaluate the functionality of the school.

In diagram 1 on page 202 the continuous lines represent strong boundaries; continuous arrows represent direction of strong relationships. Dotted lines represent weak boundaries and dotted line arrows represent the direction of weak relationships which is a clear indication that the working relationship between the principal and some of the SMT members is not sound.

4.1.16 SCHOOL F: PROFILE

This independent school was established in 1997 at the garage of the principal's house. It started with 15 learners. Due an increase in enrolment the school was relocated to a warehouse of the ex-railway station. At the time of the visit to the school it boasted with an enrolment of 965 learners. Some of the furniture was borrowed from the local ex-HOA School. The rest was made by the principal himself. The good results of the then grade 9-learners led to extension of the curriculum as well as of infrastructure. The school has produced outstanding results with a 100% pass rate in the grade 9 examination for the past ten years. The current building is situated in the centre of a small town, near the Police Station and the Magistrate's Court in the central business development area (CBD). The learners attending the school are from

varying backgrounds, both privilege and working class. Seventy percent of the learners come from working class families in the townships located more than twenty kilometres from the school. The infrastructure has been greatly developed and the school boasts a school hall and sports facilities. The institution is renowned for its academic high flyers and values the concerns of the quite demanding parents as far as academic results are concerned. The parents serving on the SGB have a sound understanding of their roles which contributes to the good working relationships that exist between them, the principal and the SMT.

TABLE 3.8: SMT PROFILE

CRITERIA	PRINCIPAL	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL	HOD (MST)	HOD (LANG.)	HOD (SP)
RACE	W	W	W	W	W
AGE	62	59	41	40	53
GENDER	M	F	M	F	F
EXPERIENCE (YRS)	34	33	17	15	32
QUALIFICATIONS	M+6	M+6	M+6	M+6	M+5
EXPERIENCE AS SMT MEMBER (yrs)	25	20	8	6	18

W = White

4.1.17 SCHOOL F: PRINCIPAL PROFILE

The principal has an M+6-qualification. This elderly man is a humble and approachable person who is always willing to lend a helping hand. He has vast teaching experience hence his ability to work with people from all

walks of life. His leadership style influences educator efficiency and also affects morale positively hence educators work hard to produce good results. A healthy school culture is achieved hence the manager's attention, at this school, is directed at improving the morale and motivation of SMT members and educators by "spending more time with the educator/learner who is dissatisfied rather than the satisfied" (Harris 2004).

This experienced leader is of the opinion that the principal alone cannot lead and manage the school. He claims that he needs the participation of all the stakeholders within the school.

4.1.18 FINDINGS

The staff members at this school are highly qualified. The traditional authoritarian style of leadership, which was accepted in the past and suited an earlier era, has been replaced in this school. The shift to participative management emerged as central during my interviews with the principal and the SMT. The core to participative management is the fact that the SMT and educators at this independent school are allowed and even encouraged to participate in the management of the school, and in the decision-making process. Participative management allows for the best utilization of human resources and demonstrates trust in the abilities of the SMT and educators (Van der Westhuizen 1991).

The working relationship between the principal and the SMT is evident of the flexible management style of the principal. Furthermore, it is evident from the responses of SMT members that the principal knows how the Process and Content models of motivation work and what it is that specifically reinforces human behaviour. The first school (Process model) focuses on common human needs while the second school (Content model) concentrates on human motivation at work. At this school it is clear that the principal knows that his duty, as a distributive leader, is to empower his SMT and staff. This entails keeping the SMT and educators informed about curriculum innovations. The principal's responses to my interview questions reveal that he was a person who values and nurtures participation and ensures trust and agreement on decisions taken.

It is clear that the principal at this independent school applies the concepts of McGregor's Theory Y viewpoint where human-beings are viewed as full of potential and as real assets (More and Wagener 1990: 91 cited in Van der Westhuizen 1996 and Mabeba 1985). The members of staff at this school are viewed as having a capacity for growth, development, creativity and responsibility.

The principal in his endeavour to develop the human potential in his school provides his workers with a supportive climate, gives feedback and recognition of achievement and enhances opportunities for growth and promotion in the form of skills development and awards. He finds it necessary in his working relationships with the SMT and educators to create an atmosphere in which they are given 'a sense of purpose and

confidence'. By supporting, inspiring and motivating the SMT the principal is able to create situations where morale and attitudes are improved. Regular team-building activities are held at and away from school.

It is imperative to develop successful educational institutions; a leader with a clear vision is required. The principal at school F believes his tasks include giving pastoral support to and mentoring staff to raise the level of professional development and introduce individual and group accountability and responsibility.

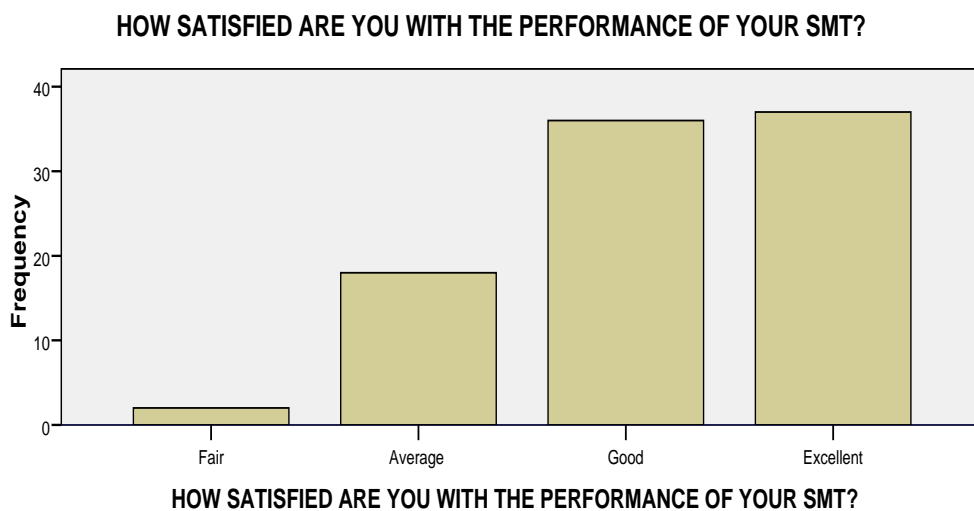
Although theorists have prepared a variety of needs components operating in human-beings, they all assume that people are motivated in pursuit of the fulfilment of their own individual needs. The major task of leadership is to provide opportunities for workers to satisfy these needs. To motivate SMT members, leaders should consider building motivation into employees' jobs, giving them a sense of achievement and formal responsibility (Harris et al 2003).

The principal at school F allows members to express their opinions about discrepancies in the SMT and that promotes effective working relationships between the two management entities. The effectiveness of the working relationship between these two management entities is due to the fact that the SMT's effectiveness is evaluated all the time. In diagram 2 on page 203 the continuous arrows represent direction of strong relationships. Dotted lines represent weak boundaries and dotted line arrows represent direction of weak relationships. The dotted lines in the

diagram therefore give a clear indication that the relationship between the principal and SMT is strong.

4.1.19 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PRINCIPALS

GRAPH 4.3: PERFORMANCE OF SMT



The graph indicates the responses of the SMTs of the six schools. It is clear from the above frequency bar graph that the SMTs are satisfied with the performance of the principals, except for school E where the frequency on average is fair. The following diagram illustrate the working relationships that exist between the principal and SMT at schools A, B, C, D and F.

For five of the six principals in the study, principal leadership is instrumental to school effectiveness, and emerging research evidence indicates its causal link to student performance (Leithwood and Riehl

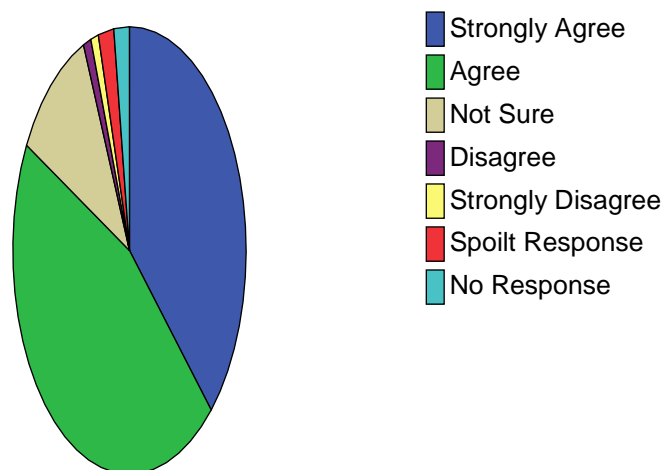
2003). The evidence gathered reveals that the five effective principals ensure structured teaching, effective learning time, lesson time being on task (Greenleaf 1997) and a safe and orderly environment (Sergiovanni 1995: 146). They are concerned with value-addedness (Handy 1984), commitment to raise student standards (Harris et al 2005), and school improvement and facilitating the process of change (Hopkins 1994). They develop their repertoires of leadership skills, styles and strategies (Lambert 2002). Important skills for principals to develop are many, for example, interpersonal relations (Bolman and Deal 1997 cited in Fullan 1993), problem-solving (Leithwood et al 1992) and communication (Blasé and Blasé 1998). It has also come to the fore that for the five principals ideal leadership styles included sharing vision, providing explanation, shared decision-making based on practicality and clear principles, empowering staff and building consensus and coalition (Blasé and Blasé 1998).

Their perception is that the complexity of change requires leaders to put in extra effort in creating units, groups or new communication frameworks (Lieberman 1988), to take part in training programs Bush (cited in Kwindt 2002), to network and collaborate (Leithwood 2005), to participate in leadership and management and to ensure information technology (IT) support for staff (Leithwood et al 1991). For the five principals, successful initiatives of change require leadership (Fullan 1993, 1995, 2001) which is flexible, credible, motivates the reform with a moral purpose with the support of a collaborative school culture as stated by Hargreaves et al

(cited in Fullan (2003). Furthermore, they imply that when implementing reforms successful experimentation and elimination of shortcomings in implementation is very important as Lefan (cited in Cheng 2005 and Fullan 1999: 81) also noted.

During the interviews with the two management entities of the primary schools, the aim was to ascertain the principals and SMT members' perceptions of the concepts 'working relationship' and 'distributed leadership' and also to determine what power dynamics influence the working relationship between these two school management entities. Furthermore, to find out how distributed leadership contribute to their working relationships. The 60% responses in graph 4.4 reveal the evidence that the working relationship between the principals and SMTs is good.

GRAPH 4.4: DOES THE SMT AS A TEAM HAVE A RECOGNISED LEADER?



The majority of the SMTs in school A, B, C, D and F gave an indication that they recognise the principals as the leader of the SMT. The case at school E is different hence deputy principal 1 and two of the HODs do not show respect to their principal. At schools A, B, C, D, and F the approach adopted is a bottom-up approach which facilitates good working relationships. This entails that staff members and SMTs are recognised in decision-making, the shared vision of the school as well as in leadership activities. There is also a free flow of information from and to the district office by all stakeholders which contributes to effective leadership and management and ultimately the implementation of the policy on SMT that further enhances good working relationships.

DIAGRAM 1: SCHOOL E

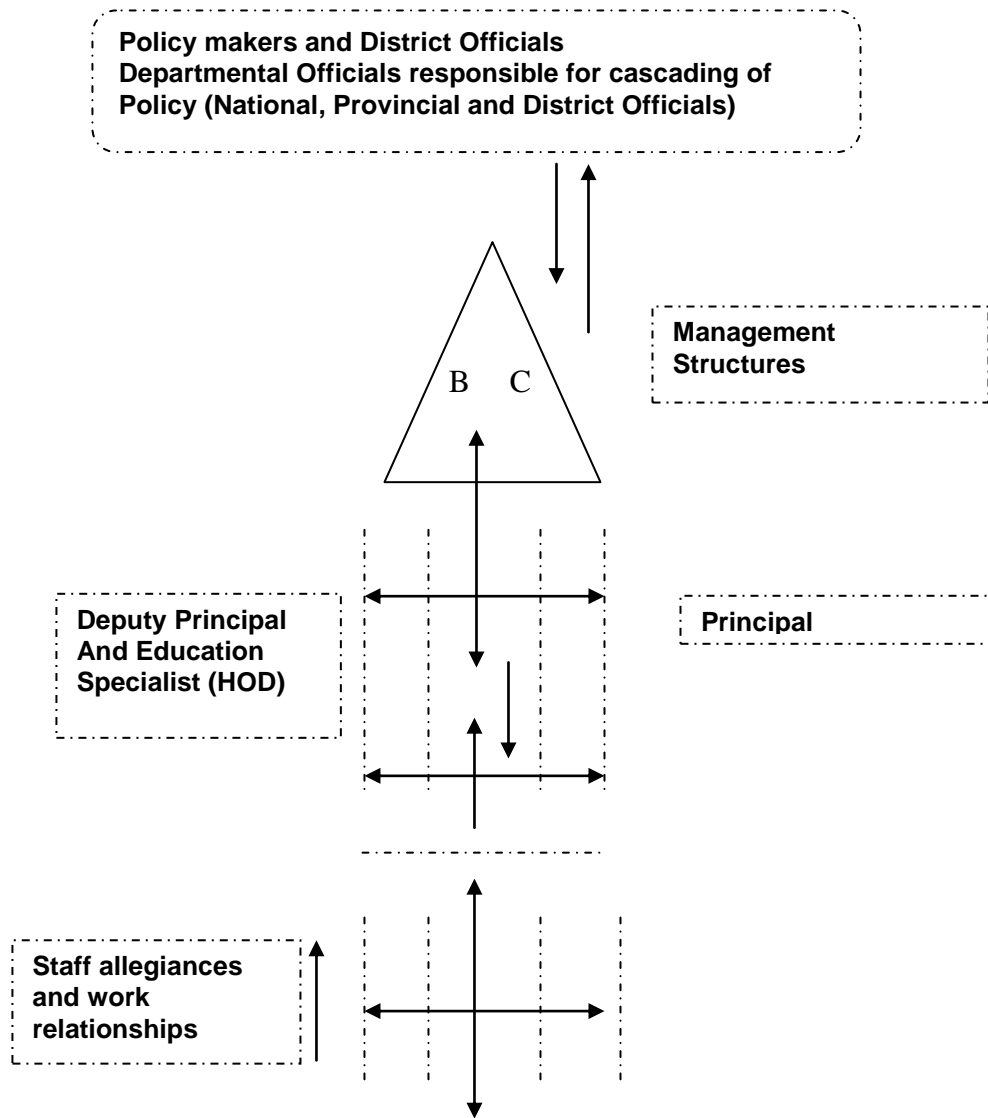


Diagram adapted from Bernstein (1996)
 Key: Continuous lines represent strong boundaries; continuous arrows represent direction of strong relationships. Dotted lines represent weak boundaries and dotted line arrows represent direction of weak relationships.
 Collection code type = strong classification: strong frames
 Integrated code type = weak classification: weak frames
 Diagram 5

DIAGRAM 2: SCHOOL A, B, C, D and F

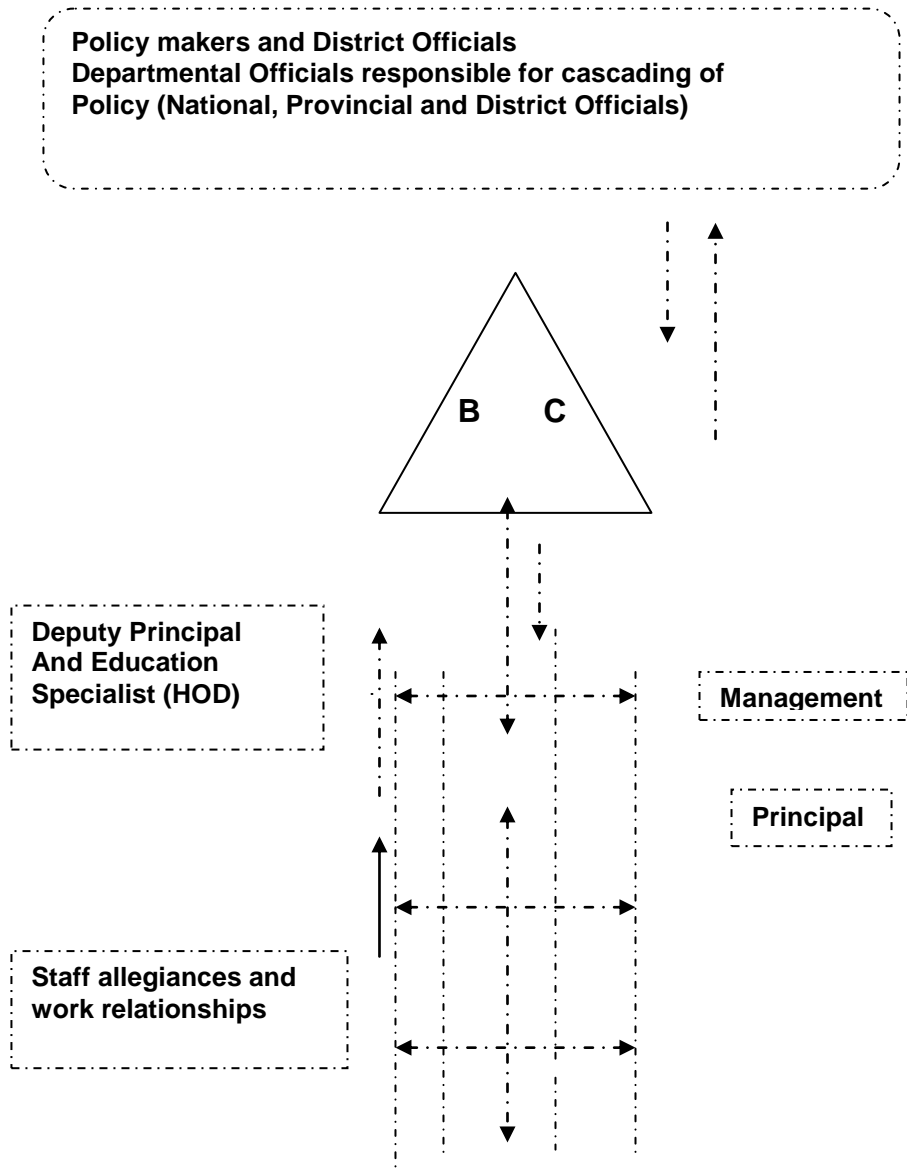


Diagram adapted from Bernstein (1996)
 Key: Continuous lines represent strong boundaries; continuous arrows represent direction of strong relationships. Dotted lines represent weak boundaries and dotted line arrows represent direction of weak relationships.
 Collection code type = strong classification: strong frames
 Integrated code type = weak classification: weak frames
 Diagram 5

At school E strong boundaries exist between the principal and the SMT; this is also the case with the PL 1 educators at the school. It is evident that there are strong boundaries between the principal and the district office which has a negative effect on working relationships in the sense that this principal is not approachable; he prefers to do things alone and he is afraid of competition and control. It is clear that the policy of openness, inclusion and external control does not feature in the mindset of this principal.

4.1.20 SUMMARY

For the purpose of this study the qualities and characteristics of the six schools and the six principals have been discussed individually, followed by a summary of the similarities and differences and finally by the conclusion for section A. In this section the researcher has presented the data in the following order: firstly, the school profile, secondly, the profile of the principal and lastly the findings for each school.

The literature on distributed leadership emphasizes the interaction and collaboration between principal and SMT. Leadership is therefore not domination but the art of persuading people to work towards a common goal. The researcher has observed that the SMT, in five of the six case studies, are part of the management structure, and have the support of the site principal. In practice the co-operation and joint management envisaged seems to be happening.

In summary, the perceptions of principals and SMTs have been focused on during the individual interviews conducted at the respective schools.

4.2 SECTION B: ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

The analysis of the interviews conducted in the study has further shown that the implementation of SASA is well entrenched within the minds of the SMTs and principals. Six themes have emerged from the analysis of the interviews. The findings will therefore be discussed as per the different themes.

During my visits to the six schools in the case study the researcher was interested to know what the perceptions of principals and SMTs were of distributed leadership and working relationships. The researcher's observations during my visits and the interviews with principals and SMT members were that the participants gave perceptive and valuable insights into distributed leadership and working relationships. The following themes emerged from the interviews. The first theme is consultation and communication.

4.2.1 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The response of one of the principals was, *"I conduct regular staff meetings with the aim to foster good consultation and communication practices within the school. In this way important information is*

disseminated and explained to all the stakeholders, thus any form of uncertainty or distortion of information is avoided” (Principal F).

This was, however, not the case at all the schools since an HOD from school E remarked that the principal communicates with them on important matters by issuing them with copies of various policy documents to peruse and apply. The principal’s response to this allegation was that this was to avoid conflict as far as implementation is concerned. One interviewee expressed her concern by saying that, “... there is no detailed clarity on how to implement such policies”.

HOD 4 from school E – in expressing his frustrations about communication had this to say: *“We are called into a meeting to be briefed on urgent matters by the principal and thereafter we are left alone to cascade that information down to the rest of the staff members and to ensure that they implement them - deputy principals and HODs lack understanding of what is expected of them and how they should implement the policy without prejudice”.*

The method of issuing circulars was found to be popular with 80% of the respondents. The other 20% percent argued that information is explained in the vernacular languages at SMT meetings which do not benefit them at all. This was specifically the case at school E. One deputy principal at school E had this to say: “The principal attends all management workshops and on his return communicates with us through circulars and those circulars are given to the relevant HODs in the school for

implementation". At the same school the second deputy principal confirmed the previous statement, observing that "*Communication is done through issuing circulars directly to us SMT members; unfortunately interpretation of the circulars is left to the individuals*". It was also found that the effectiveness of this communication method depends on the time at which the circulars are sent. "If they are sent on time they receive the necessary attention but those sent late will not be adhered to", as one HOD put it.

Three of the participants indicated that in their institutions meetings are called to discuss new business emanating from the department. All six principals, including the principal of school E, indicated that they encourage educators, especially SMTs, to share their experiences and understandings with fellow educators.

Fortunately it was also found that meetings are used as another method of consultation and communicating information to all staff members. A principal from school A had this to say: "We provide all the educators including the SMT members with copies of minutes of previous meetings and the agenda for the coming meeting seven days before the meeting". This is done in order to ascertain that all the staff members will be able to participate actively in the deliberations during the meeting.

The training of educators also fits into the category of consultation and communication. One HOD at school C mentioned that, "... *in some instances a delegation from the SMT is sent to train the rest of the staff*

members on how to work as a team or a cluster within the school or district, which I regard as a good gesture on the part of our principal and SMT". At school A, B, C, D and F principals indicated that staff development teams were actively involved in training staff members to compile their personal development profiles (PDP). At school E very little is done at school level since all decisions are exclusively made by the principal. The principal appears to be a selfish person and the only person from the management team who attends all management meetings at district level. During the researcher's four visits to school E no staff or SMT meetings were conducted. There were no special meetings held to pass down the information that emanated from the district management meeting. When asked about his approach the principal's comment was that he preferred to communicate with the SMT and staff members through the medium of circulars which they have to sign to ensure that they have read the documents. The main objective for this kind of behaviour by the principal was to protect himself against possible allegations the information was not passed on by him to SMTs and staff members. Although there is a lack of consultation the bottom line is that communication is taking place at this particular school.

In some schools morning briefings are held by the principal and SMT and thereafter information is passed on to the rest of the staff members in the staff room. Here the principal and SMT speak with one voice, demonstrating consensus among them on the topic of discussion. However, this is not so at all the schools. Only school A follows this

practice on a daily basis; the principal at this school ensures that his SMT is well informed and that decisions are taken collaboratively.

It has come to the fore during the researcher's observations and also during the interviews that all the principals, except for the principal from school E, was actively involved in creating a climate where staff across the school felt free to express their ideas and views. A great deal of consultation and feedback takes place through staff meetings, also through extensive committee structures where SMT members are involved in extended management teams and particular projects. The principal from school A talked about the "*Staff being aware that you value their views. That consultation is not a paper exercise*".

The researcher noticed during his numerous visits to the six schools that the principals of 5 of the 6 schools often consulted directly with educators and SMT members, on a face-to-face basis or in groups. Before setting up a new and particularly significant committee in the school structure the principal from school B "*... consulted widely on the format of groups, and who is representative and remit thereof*". In school F (private school) the principal said: "*Everyone knows that his/her viewpoint will be considered*". In school C the principal said that her task was "*to make everyone aware that they can influence*". Moreover, this consultation led to changes and as the principal from school D said his model of management was one where he was prepared to change his mind and "*take ideas on board*".

Five of the six case study schools have established consultative committees. At school B the school management team (SMT), with representatives from the foundation, Intermediate and Senior phases was the formal mechanism for agreeing on collegiate time, the year planner and the staff development programme, DAS (Development Appraisal System). At this school the consultation committee is an important forum for people to raise issues and concerns. At one meeting that the researcher attended classroom observation and peer support was on the agenda and the SMT made suggestions for improvement. The principal saw major benefits and said that “...*the professionalism of educators is encouraged*”. Educators can speak freely in ways that they would not in large staff meetings and SMTs can raise issues that are then readily conveyed to the staff meeting.

The minutes of each meeting at school A were published; the principal of this school describes the SMT as “... *the cornerstone of communication and consultation*”.

For some of the principals the consultation process was about being visible to educators (staff members) on a daily basis and showing personal commitment. The principal of the special school felt that his main priority was “... *to get out and about and meet staff. Not just in my office but where they make it my business to go on trivial walks. It allows me to speak to people*”. The need to be out and about is illustrated by the words of the principal of school F who said that the principal and the SMT “*must try at least once a day to walk the parish*”. This high profile

approach not only allowed the principals' concern to tune into the environment of the school but to emphasize the high standards expected at all times from the staff members and learners. By communicating expectations to every individual, principals support the SMT so as to maximise their contribution to the leadership and management of the school and ultimately to good working relationships. It also helps to cultivate trust and good relations as the principal from school B said:

“You must bring others on board. It is easier said than done. Part of this is the whole business of the principal's personal touch. If you are some sort of remote figure then people don't know what you mean. They can misunderstand because they don't know you”
(Principal B).

It includes bringing people 'on board' who might be critical of a development. Sergiovanni (2001: 57) says that: “The sure-fire way to win over opposition is to give them a piece of the action by involving (indeed needing) their participation and absorbing their ideas in one form or another in the proposal, being considered. As ideas are absorbed into the proposal, so are the people”.

Clear communication was of paramount importance to the schools visited and was apparent in a range of approaches. These included systems of memos, systematic principal visits to the staff room, use of a whiteboard that the SMT members and principal would add notes to, weekly publications and regular SMT meetings (morning briefings). The principals of school A, B, D and F had a staff meeting every week. As previously

mentioned, the principal of school A conducted morning briefings with the SMT, every day, before the start of school. He explained his actions as follows:

“At 7:15 I start with morning briefings. SMT members must be present. I plant seeds in these sessions, go over issues and give updates. For example, I was at a meeting the previous day, not an issue yet but ...” (Principal A).

The principal of school D said: *“Communication is the name of the game. Everyone knows everything at our school”*. Effective communication allows everyone (the principal, SMT, staff members, SGB, parents, learners and all the stakeholders) to keep in touch with what is happening and to be part of the process. This is particularly important in times of change. Bennet et al (2007) states that in schools committed to effective communication in a collegiate atmosphere, strategies for improvement are open to consultation with all the staff members and are, crucially, subject to change as a result of responses. Through effective communication new ideas and approaches are developed throughout the school, along the with peoples’ commitment to them.

Baldoni (2003) notes that good communication both formal and informal can, however, take a huge amount of effort. Due to the many and often complex demands on principals’ time the vital importance of communication could be overlooked.

Baldoni (2003, cited in Mathebula 2009) further argues that frequent communication is vital to maintain:

“The secret to good communications is to do it every day. Leaders who communicate regularly and frequently, both in good times and in bad, will improve organisational and individual performance, get results, and create a successful enterprise” (Baldoni 2003).

The upshot of the findings on consultation and communication is that this form of distributed leadership requires the support of and interactions between the principal and the SMT. Collegiality is about interacting and supporting one another. Consequently, working relationships can be improved through effective consultation and communication. The next paragraph will highlight teamwork, the second theme to emerge from the observations and interviews.

4.2.2 TEAMWORK

Once again, in five of the six schools visited there was a clear emphasis on involving the SMT members.

The principal of school F said: *“The only way you are going to take the school forwards is not with a fight, but through teamwork and working committees” (Principal F).*

All six schools in the case study have an extensive system of working committees in operation. At school E the system left much room for improvement. It was clear from the researcher’s observations that the

principal there did not get the cooperation from the SMT members hence resorted to engaging the services of post level 1 educators at the expense of the SMT; this approach only fuels conflict in the school. However, in the remaining five schools several of the different committees occupied pivotal positions in the school and often included teaching and non-teaching staff members. In some cases learners and parents too were included. While in some of the five schools the practice was to have committees chaired by a member of management, this was not the case in every school since three of the five principals were keen that such positions be open to all SMT members. The remaining two principals were just careful not to lose control. In the three schools where the practice was allowed these committees addressed issues, discussed ideas, developed strategies and promoted good working relationships. While the number and function of committees in the five schools varied, the following examples give an idea of some of the characteristics that emerged at the respective schools:

(a). An ethos and discipline committee at school B asked the principal and the SMT *'how can we help you to improve the working relationships as well as a safer school for all the occupants of the school?'* This led to serious discussions and the committee concluded that a higher profile was needed for the SMT in the school. As a result, the senior members [older educators at the school who are not SMT members] each took over a particular section of the school for which they were responsible, popping into classes (to assist first time educators with classroom management

and discipline) and being available to assist the young and inexperienced educators (mentoring).

(b). At school B there was a staff development committee, made up of educators and HODs; they had a budget and considered bids from the staff members and sub-directorates in the education district. It encouraged staff members who had attended workshops and development meetings to do something in return, for instance conduct a workshop at the school where all the educators including the principal were informed of the new developments within the education department.

(c). In school D the management team covered classes each term to allow Post Level One (PL 1) educators to undertake half-day quality planning, especially in the foundation and the intermediate phases. The principal of this school said, *“Colleagues, for example the educators in the foundation phase, would meet after their learners had been dismissed for the day, to discuss: progress in their classes; individual learners; where outstanding learners were; testing; setting tests; effectiveness of courses and plans for the following school term. A member of the SMT is on stand-by, if needed. There might be similarities especially in areas like the grade 2 and 3 will have the same targets, but different learners in each class will mean differences in the plan. Real collegiality here; this is done with staff members coming together and sharing”* (Principal C).

In the schools the researcher visited, principals were determined to involve the SMT and staff members in a range of whole school issues and

supported structures and welcomed ideas that allowed colleagues real opportunities to engage in and be responsible for a range of developments and responsibilities. By empowering the SMT and staff members in this way the principals were sure that the school benefited. The SMT and staff members felt valued and supported in their work through the group structure and contributed positively to whole school issues. The principal of school C said: *“I firmly believe that you get more out of people by working with them, and getting their views, than you do if you are authoritarian”*. The principal of school D pointed out that: *“The days of autocratic heads have gone”*. The principal of school A said: *“The SMT and educators have an opportunity to be proactive on whole school issues with a focused remit and were not constrained by what he described as the ‘artificial hierarchies’ of schools”*. Kanter (1999, cited in Kets de Vries 1999) sums up this issue as follows:

“One of the temptations leaders must resist is to simply pile responsibility on team members. While it is fashionable to have people wear many hats people must be given the responsibility – and the time – to focus on the tasks of change” (Kanter 1999: 5).

This does not mean that the principal loses strategic control. The principal of school B said: *“I am not the only leader in the school [group] but the buck stops with me. There are people in this school who are far more effective leaders than I am. They may not have the management experience. Our job in the SMT is to nurture it, and give opportunities”*. Amabile (1998: 81, cited Kwindt 2002) says: “Creativity thrives when managers let people decide how to climb a mountain: they need not let

SMTs and educators choose which one”. A third theme that emerged was decision-making.

4.2.3 DECISION-MAKING

At school B the principal alluded to decisions taken at a formal SMT meeting but insisted that, there are cases where he has to make decisions without the input of the management team. What he usually did then was to inform them at a formal meeting of the actions he took and why he had to take those decisions without consulting the SMT. From the research findings it is clear that in all the schools the decisions are taken at management level during a formal meeting. However, there are exceptional cases when the principal takes decisions alone. As previously mentioned, concise accounts are given at formal meetings of these urgent, yet important decisions.

On the issue of decision-making, the principal at school A indicated that there were matters that did not need the involvement of the SMT. The principal continued by saying that when it came to matters involving the SMT, they were involved. “I know that we are in a democratic country where people have countless rights, including the freedom of speech, in particular, but I also believe that in a school situation, the SMT should operate within the boundaries set”. The clear message here is that while possibilities for shared decision-making exist in the schools, in practice the SMTs are not always fully involved in the process at schools D and E. This runs counter to Katzenmeyer and Moller’s (2001) requirement that

the SMT must be part of decision-making to avoid any form of unwanted behaviour.

The deputy principal at school E said,

“After 11 years working in this school, I do not remember even a single meeting or workshop organised by our principal where we are asked to voice our views on issues pertaining to leadership roles we can play as leaders. What happens is that we are given a communication book where we read and sign what the principal had decided upon” (Deputy Principal E).

In this school, it was clear that although the principal realised the need for shared decision-making in the school, he was afraid that the SMT might interpret democracy in a negative way. Because of this he did not involve the SMT in decision-making processes; the principal had all the say. In a sense, the principal agreed with Wallace (2001) who argues that the principal must ensure that the SMT operates within the boundaries set, so that the principal could have a final say over the clash of ideas on the roles of leadership.

In school B, both the principal and SMT indicated that everybody was free to raise his/her opinion. Thereafter, ideas from different people were taken into consideration, and eventually a joint decision was taken which would benefit all the parties involved. In response to a question on whether they were part of decision-making, one SMT member at school B said, *“The principal regularly calls meetings for us to have our views on school related activities. To be specific, the principal gives us a chance to elect*

one another to occupy positions of leadership in various committees". Another SMT member supported this response by saying, "I am the chairperson of the organising committee, so the principal does not tell us what to organise, but as a committee, we sit down and decide on our own what we want to organise, thereafter we go to the principal asking for time-off in particular. What the SMT members said here was that they were allowed to decide on the activities they wanted to organise to improve the school; this is done in collaboration and consultation with the principal. The researcher found these responses in line with one of the three types of distributed leadership offered by Gunter (2005), namely dispersed distributed leadership.

In school B, they used dispersed distributed leadership which, according to Gunter (2005), refers to a more collaborative work ethos by all members of an organisation with no consideration of formal position. At five of the schools the principals and SMT worked together, assisting one another. As previously stated, school E had a serious problem when it comes to collaboration. The Head of department (HOD) in school F stressed that as much as they took joint decisions with the principal, this did not change the notion that the principal, if deemed necessary, would have a final say in some of the issues.

In schools A, B, C, D and F the principals indicated that they involved the SMT in the decision-making processes, and the SMTs also indicated that they were involved in school related activities inside and outside their classrooms, but the principal remained the responsible manager at all times, irrespective of him/her decentralizing power to the SMT. It was

interesting to notice that in school F, SMTs were given a chance to decide on their own what they wanted to organise as a committee. Principals also highlighted that this was made easy by the small number of SMT members. Nevertheless, four schools indicated that as transparent or democratic as they were, this did not change the fact that the principal as the head of the school would have a final word if need be. The clear message from responses from these case study schools on decision-making is that SMTs are not involved in all decision-making processes. SMT members from the schools in question also understood that the principal as the head of the institution was accountable for everything that happened in the school. The different perception of distributed leadership by the participants in this study indicates that the concept is really new in South Africa (Grant 2005). From the responses one could conclude that after more than 10 years of democracy in South Africa, we still have leaders and managers in our schools that are still reluctant to give their colleagues the opportunity to develop as leaders.

Woods (2004:8) stresses that “distributed leadership opens up possibilities for leading SMTs because it widens their gaze from the perspective of the school as an organisation to the wider role of the school as a public institution within a democracy”. Only in schools C and E of the six case study schools was there evidence that distributed leadership, as defined by Woods (2004) was not happening effectively as desired by SASA (1996).

4.2.4 VISION

All the participants, the SMT members and principals, strongly believed that leadership required vision. They believed that principals should have a picture of what they wanted their schools to be and what their schools have to achieve.

HOD 6 had this to say:

“I have a very good principal, very good in terms of leadership, the person has a vision and mobilises SMT members to pursue this vision, getting them involved in his vision and planning to realise the vision” (HOD 6).

Asked why he thought his principal succeeded in leading her school, HOD 13 stated:

“She developed a school development plan, a mission statement for the school. One thing I would say: she has communicated her vision very clearly to everybody, the SMT, educators, learners and parents. She has the skill to communicate, to persuade and to mobilise people to align to the vision. I think she is a ‘visionary’ as people might call it ... she is a focused yet, very understanding principal” (HOD 13).

In the same vein Deputy Principal 6 described one of the best principals who managed to lead his school successfully, in this way:

“He is someone who has high expectations for his SMT and the school as a whole and looking at him he leads his SMT and school with a clear vision and continues to focus on fostering good working relationships” (Deputy Principal 6).

Deputy Principal 2 described her principal as:

“... someone who has the ability to motivate his SMT, staff members, parents, SGB and the community to come up with a very good school development plan, which is a long-term five year plan aimed at improving performance and ultimately working relationships” (Deputy Principal 2).

Having a good plan for the future and realising it was seen as a very important way of achieving success. Deputy Principal 3 also referred to this plan as a vision that the school community has to realise within three to four years, in order to improve the school. The principals and SMT members, in this case study, believe a vision shared with co-workers to be necessary to achieve success and also empowering others to contribute to the realization of the vision. The principal plays an important role as the responsibility manager hence many SMT members, educators and even learners perceive him/her as a role model.

4.2.5 THE PRINCIPAL AS A ROLE MODEL

The principal of school A, when asked about his perceptions of a principal stated that *“an effective leader can be a role model to others”*. The deputy principal at the private school (deputy principal 5) believed that her principal was developing their SMT and educators by helping them to become good resourceful persons themselves.

She said the following about her principal:

“My principal has always something to share with you, like one thing he shared with me was how he developed the SMT and educators, at his previous school, to become good leaders so that they do not need him always to come and push them to do what they have to do. He motivates them so that they become resourceful persons themselves ... that is something that I personally admire and expect other principals could emulate what he is doing” (Deputy Principal 5).

Deputy Principal 7 believes that if other principals could see the best principals as their role models and copy what they were doing, they too may become good principals. The issue of role modelling was also illustrated by the SMT of school B ... *as they believe role modelling encourages and motivates other stakeholders to take up the challenge too”*.

The nature of working relationships in some way enhances distributed leadership and thus fosters school improvement which both the principals and SMT, in this study, think influences the type of distributed leader a principal needs to be. The nature of working relationships is presented in the next paragraph.

4.2.6 NATURE OF WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Approximately 84% of the interviewees believed that the nature of work influences the working relationships in leadership positions. They mentioned that they would prefer someone who was hard working and focused to take up the position of principal. They further believed that the nature of the working relationships contributed to the fact that transformation in the leadership and management of primary schools is imperative.

HOD 9 stated that administrative tasks should be distributed when she reasoned as follows:

“An organization [the school] consists of people working together in order for the organization to function smoothly. Sound working relationships in the management of schools are needed. This also means that working relationships [between principals and SMTs] involves [them] being tolerant, collaborative, understanding, and participative and having a shared vision and common purpose (HOD 9).

The principal of school B explained his understanding of the nature of working relationships in this way:

“As principal I have to function on many different levels including with learners, teaching staff, administration staff, hostel staff, the SMT, SGB and members of the community. On each of these levels there is interaction between various role players. The effective running of my school is determined by this interaction or working relationships (Principal B).

The nature of working relationships is further explained by the principal of school D when she says:

“This is when people work together as a community in a specific area. They are able to communicate with each other on various levels. It is forming a team that is caring to put minds and ideas together for the enrichment of an establishment [the school]” (Principal D).

The premise of these arguments is that by flattening the decision-making process, and bringing it closer to the site where client needs are met, the effectiveness of the organization is improved. In this way, the principals and SMT, based on their knowledge and interactions with clients can reshape their products and services based on an understanding of client needs. The responses of HODs to the question: *How would you describe the working relationship between the principal and the SMT?* They were rather interesting.

HOD 1 commented in this way:

“Where principals and deputy principals know their roles, working relationship is good. But where proper induction and training was not done, there are problems. In most schools in my ward the working relationships between principals and HODs is good”.

This sentiment was echoed by her colleague, HOD 2, in a rather negative and also contradictory way:

“In most cases there are no good working relationships because deputy principals feel that they are equal to principals. There are good working relationships except that the HODs do not do their functions” (HOD 2).

In addition to the abovementioned contributions on the nature of the working relationships in schools in the Sisonke Education District, HOD 3 had this to say about his school:

“Deputy Principals perform duties in accordance with what the PAM dictates ... also perform duties that are delegated by the principals. Reports to principals on progress and seeks advice from the principal. The deputy principal automatically acts as principal in the absence of the principal. The HODs manage their components (science/commerce/SP) and report their findings of monitoring and assessment of work to the principal. The HODs also perform duties that are delegated by the principal. HODs conduct meetings and workshops for the PL 1 educators in their sections. HODs are appointed by principals to act as the person in

charge in his/her absence. HODs report on progress at SMT meetings”.

Mullins (cited in Kader 2007) observed that it is essential that any delegated work be clearly understood. As middle manager, one needs to ensure that one has the knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities to complete a task. Aspects of leadership can also be delegated but, primarily, it must ultimately remain the responsibility of the principal. Since bureaucracies are perceived to be ineffective in meeting the needs of the school, decentralized structures are considered to have the potential to be more responsive to the needs of the school than are bureaucratic organizational forms.

Undoubtedly, the notion of decentralization in educational decision-making and governance issues appeals to the social democratic principles of egalitarianism whereby local communities acquire a voice in institutional building and operation (Seddon, Angus and Poole 1990, cited in Torrance 1999). If this principle is actualized through the creation of democratic decision-making structures, a significant shift in the realignment of power relationships can be expected to occur. Devolution of authority enables the education constituency to become more inclusive and less narrowly restricted to technocrats.

The different principals and SMT members' responses to the question, *'How would you describe your working relationship with the SMT?'* revealed that there is definitely a move from centralized to decentralized

structures which implies that at some point during the process, those to whom power is being devolved, will develop the necessary skills that will allow them to effectively develop and execute decisions.

Thirty-seven (97.3%) of the thirty-eight respondents claimed the performance of the SMT to be excellent.

The principal of school A commented as follows:

"I believe I have a sound relationship with the SMT. We promote consultation and democratic decision-making. SMT members are given the freedom to lead and their input is valued. Support is given and collegiality is promoted" (Principal A).

The principal of school B echoed the sentiments of his colleague when he said:

"I have a good working relationship since we work according to the SMT's strengths. At our school we complement each other and are all supportive. When duties are delegated to individuals I know that they will be carried out to the best of their ability" (Principal B).

A further negative reinforcement of good working relationships is given by the principal of school C when he said:

"hum ...apparently working relationships are good but practically poor because the elderly [old, aged] HODs do not want to keep themselves abreast with the new educational policies (SASA 1996) and cannot manage distributed leadership very well"(Principal C).

However, at school D the principal's response was that, "*I have a very professional working relationship with my SMT. Not only are they part of the school's management but they are also responsible for the school reaching its vision and mission statements. This relationship is based on mutual understanding and respect. The success at our school can largely be ascribed to sound working relationships amongst the SMT, educators, parents and myself*".

The abovementioned statements are based on Action's (1989, cited in Kader 2007) argument that democratic practice in a school is caring for and valuing all the people involved in it. The principal who has the leader's 'hat' can move that hat willingly and not keep it for his/her head only (Action 1989, cited in Kader 2007). Dinham, Cairnay, Craigie and Wilson 1995, cited in Kwindu 2002) notes this kind of leader willing to relinquish and share power with others and is able to generate a community of leaders in which every member becomes a leader in some way, at some time.

The working relationship at school F was explained by the second deputy principal as, "*... for me a relationship is a matter of mutual respect; a symbiotic relationship where both parties see the need to work together for the good of the school*" (Deputy Principal F).

The responses of the SMT to the same question asked prove that there is synergy between the two management entities.

The deputy principal at school B was very satisfied and excited when he said:

“Pleasant! I know that I will be treated with respect at all times. I can always depend on the guidance and understanding of my principal. He is at all times open to suggestions and listens to the opinions of others” (Deputy Principal B).

HOD 2 said:

“In my school I have an excellent working relationship with the principal. He has a good manner of approach; he is approachable. He is transparent, involves us in decision-making. He gives us roles and trusts us to perform them to the best of our ability. Our views and opinions are welcomed. The principal consults everybody concerned about a particular issue. He values my opinions in every aspect. Furthermore, he guides me when I need guidance and praises me when I deserve that”.

HOD 15 at school F explained her understanding of working relationships in this way, *“... it is very good because we focus more on the tasks/goals to be achieved. In this way we are able to share ideas, make decisions in order to solve problems”.*

A rider to the comments provided comes from Reep and Grier (1992, cited in Kader 2007) who say:

“It is often difficult for principals to ‘let go’ and delegate responsibilities to SMTs. They feel without the necessary control they are, not respected and recognized by the SMT. Skilled principals, however, have saved themselves much time and created a tremendous sense of ownership by practicing delegation” (Reep and Grier 1992, cited in Kader 2007).

In contrast to what was said about the principal of school E the second deputy principal of school B said:

“I see him as a moving principal who bases his leadership style on democratic principles. This means a lot of dedication and shared accountability. The principle of bottom-up is implemented rather than a top-down approach. In his leadership style he gives all role players the opportunity to give input and by doing such they own the decision, policy, procedure. This method can never be regarded as 100% distributed leadership; it is much more collaborative” (Deputy Principal 2).

A further comment from HOD 8 at school D is that,

“... power-sharing and joint decision-making are common practices at our school. Empowering others’- opinions and suggestions of others are, never dismissed as unimportant, and may even be put to the test. This makes for good management and joint responsibility” (HOD 8).

Campbell and Southworth (cited in Bennet et al 2003) stated that, 'research studies investigating ... school effectiveness reveal SMT participation and collaboration as key process factors'. They argue that the quest for school improvement has also tended to underwrite the promotion of collegiality. As Lieberman (1986) says, "*schools cannot be improved without people working together*". In essence, good working relationship is seen by Wallace (1988) as a process where all professional staff participate actively in negotiating an agreed vision and mission and contribute jointly to planning, and the implementation and evaluation of its delivery.

In the early years of democracy, these were the concerns. More recent research in South Africa (Stoffels 1994, cited in Mathebula 2000) and comments of the principals interviewed, suggested that social classes and specifically, the change in the composition of schools are now the relevant issues. The infrastructure provides evidence of this as some schools in this case study have excellent facilities, while others lack the basic equipment for school improvement.

From the information obtained thirty-six (94.7%) of the respondents say that the principal's distributed leadership is flexible while two (5.3%) of them say it is democratic. From the perceptions of the SMT members at school E three claim that their principal is too traditional and authoritarian while the other three agree that circumstances in the school compel him to adopt this leadership styles despite the fact that he would want to be a

distributive leader. The comments of the SMT members reveal that micropolitics affect the working relationships at this school.

In summary, the perceptions of the participants from five of the six case study schools show that the principals at these schools are admired, respected and trusted by the SMTs and PL 1 educators and that the effective and efficient implementation of distributed leadership enhances good working relationships there.

4.2.7 SUMMARY

In this section, the researcher presented the perceptions of the different groups of participants which were shared during the interviews. In conclusion, distributed leadership did exist in all six schools in the case study, although more prominently in schools A, B, C and F than in schools D and E. This was demonstrated by the six leaders' responses and the actions of the SMTs and staff members. The principals felt that this situation [distributed leadership] was the most appropriate for their schools and that a sole leader would not be effective in the new education dispensation.

The distributed leadership in this study was found to have taken the form of numerical action (Miller 1998, cited in Mathebula 2000). Numerical action as a form of distributed leadership refers to distribution of leadership. At five of the six schools the SMT members were encouraged to lead at some stage. The distributed leadership in this study also adopted concertive action (Miller 1998, cited in Mathebula 2000). Each

SMT member was responsible for his/her own department, with the principal and SMT acting in concert to direct the activities of the school. The principals ensured they coordinated their activities and considered each other in all planning.

In the next paragraph, the researcher attempted to make sense of data obtained from the two questionnaires in terms of my research goal, my questions and my consultation of the literature.

4.3. ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES

4.3.1. INTRODUCTION

This section presents findings of analyses associated with three research questions that guided the study. The multifactor questionnaire and revised Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO) Element B Questionnaire (Schultz 1958) was used to capture data. The purpose of this study was to determine the principals' and SMTs' perceptions of distributed leadership and its effect on the working relationships between them. This section is an interpretation and discussion of the findings from the questionnaires within the constraints of this study. Conclusions have been drawn as they relate to this study and the related literature.

The data provided evidence of schools with a high distributed leadership level, schools with a low distributed leadership level as well as schools with a very low distributed leadership level. The findings have revealed

that schools A, B and F are schools with a high distributed leadership level whilst schools C and D show a low distributed leadership level. The data also reveal that school E has a very low distributed leadership level. The data gave evidence of a predictive relationship between principals' level of distributed leadership and the presence within their schools of good working relationships associated with effective schools.

The findings suggested that the more the principal is viewed by the SMTs as a distributive leader, the greater SMTs perceptions of the enhanced presence of good working relationships between the two management entities within their schools. The relationship observed between ratings of principals' distributed leadership and good working relationships was collaborative (Bennet et al 2008) in nature, not casual. Since distributing leaders work to promote SMT members' professional growth and commitment, associated with increased performance and organisational effectiveness (Bass 1985), the moderate to highly positive correlation found in this study's setting may reflect the effectiveness of principals in using distributed leadership strategies to succeed with successful school improvement initiatives.

The principals exercised distributed leadership strategies when they promote SMTs' access to management opportunities, occasions to collaborate, set shared school goals, and provide for certainty in a technical core of professional practice. Furthermore, external influences such as the policy on SMTs and internal influences such as the willingness to work with other people influenced the principals' distributed

leadership style. Bass (1985) argues that distributed leadership is most likely to emerge in schools where principals are required to provide new solutions, stimulate rapid responses and develop the SMTs.

The nature of the working relationship between principals and SMTs was further examined by way of the FIRO revised Element B Questionnaire (Schultz 1958) designed to more clearly attribute the relationship observed to the work of certain principals.

The differences between principals' and SMTs' perceptions of the exercise of distributed leadership was investigated to determine the nature of the working relationships between the two leadership entities. The findings suggested that principals who exercise distributed leadership were found in schools where working relationships are sound showing collaboration (Wallace 2002) and collegial leadership (Cotton 2004) associated with effective schools.

The role of principals has shifted to one requiring the practice of distributed leadership strategies through the decentralisation of authority from the principal to the SMT, through expanded decision-making roles for SMTs and through emerging conceptions of SMT leadership and professionalism (Hallinger 1992).

The researcher has noted that SASA (1996) requires school leadership to promote effective problem finding and problem-solving skills. In the literature reviewed for this study, successful school improvement

strategies of principals were to equate to distributed leadership strategies. Leithwood and Jantzi (1991) described the work of a distributing principal as helpful in building shared meaning among SMT members and the entire school staff as to purposes, the fostering of norms and beliefs among SMT members about the contribution colleagues may make to one's practices, and the encouragement of individual and group reflection on purposes and practices and how they might be continuously improved. These leadership practices are consistent with Rosenholtz's (1989) characterization of the principal's role in effective schools and the associated working relationships.

In this study, schools with high distributed leadership principals received greater support and cooperation from SMT members than schools with low distributed leadership principals. The leadership strategies used by these highly distributing leadership principals may account for the generally collaborative school environments reported. Therefore, schools with higher levels of working relationships in conjunction with the principal's high use of distributed leadership strategies appeared to reflect principals who enhanced efficacy in achieving school reform initiatives.

Principals' years of service in their present school was found to be a significant predictor of the SMTs' distributed leadership perceptions throughout the sample. Together they accounted for approximately 65% of the variance in the distributed leadership variable. Principals' years of service within their present school accounted for 52.8% of the variance in the distributed leadership variables. To some extent then, this variable

deserves attention as alternative explanation for the relationship observed between principals' distributing leadership and working relationships between the two management entities.

The overall relationship between principals' distributing leadership and working relationships within the school management team, along with the differences observed for these two variables between high distributed and low distributed leadership, may to some degree be explained by the difference in principals' average years of service within their present school. The principals of schools with high distributed leadership schools had worked in their present school for fifteen years compared to slightly more than seven years for principals of low distributed leadership schools. Distributed leadership literature emphasizes the need for distributing leaders to set long range visions and goals. Hence, seven years of working within the same school may not realistically be sufficient in which to expect to observe the intended effects of the work of distributing leadership principals. The FIRO Element-B questionnaire was used as an instrument for the sole purpose of establishing the principals' and SMTs' perceptions of working relationships.

4.3.2 THE FIRO ELEMENT-B QUESTIONNAIRE

The basic idea behind the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO Element-B) concept was first advanced by Schultz in 1958.

Schultz (1958) posits that:

“People need people and individuals seek to establish compatible relationships with others in their social interactions. As people form relationships and begin striving for compatibility in interactions, three interpersonal needs develop that must be satisfied if the individual is to function effectively and avoid unsatisfactory relationships (Schultz 1958).

The FIRO-B questionnaire was used as an instrument for the sole purpose of establishing the principals’ and SMTs’ perceptions of working relationships in the light of control, inclusion and openness, since this case study is about distributed leadership and working relationships.

The perceptions of principals revealed the following interesting findings with regards to working relationships. Basically, at all the schools the principals showed a need for inclusion. This statement was reinforced by the words of principal A that,

“Everyone needs to maintain relations with other people hence they need to be included in their activities and also to include them in their own activities (Principal A).

The findings show that all the principals, including the principal from school E, to some extent, seek to belong to some group. From the interviews the researcher noted that the principal from school E wanted to function separately from the rest of the SMT; he could of course have valid reasons for not being part of the SMT. In fact, there are certain

individuals who he does not want to be associated with. The researcher also found that he had 'pet' educators, favourites on whom he depended for assistance to execute his duties, showing inclusion. The researcher's observation of this particular principal tells that despite the fact that he had indicated in the questionnaire that he had a need to be included he had also given indirect indications during our conversations that at times he prefers to spend time alone. The findings from the questionnaire also show that he wants to include the SMT in the day-to-day running of the school, since he gave the high rating of 9 for the statement '*I want to include people*'. Just so, the statement '*I want people to include me*' had a high rating of 8. The majority of the principals indicated that they '*include people*' and also '*want to include people*' as well as that they want people to '*include them*' in the activities of the school. The overall ratings were considerably high for the three questions based on inclusion. In this section of inclusion the SMTs responded affirmatively. They all gave high ratings for all three statements. It may thus be concluded that the SMT members are ready for inclusion in the leadership and management of their respective schools.

Schultz (1958), states that control is concerned with achieving the desired amount of influence over people in the workplace, and noted that some people are comfortable when they are in charge of people. This kind of behaviour was displayed by the principals of schools C and E. However, the findings of the statements '*I control people*', '*I want people to control me*' and '*people control me*' indicated interesting ratings of 8, 4 and 2 for both these principals. The findings of this questionnaire confirm the

findings of the previous questionnaire, that these two principals practise low distributed leadership in their respective schools. However, the findings of this questionnaire have also reinforced the findings from the other questionnaire to the effect that the other four (4) principals practice high distributed leadership at their schools. Their responses in this section were similar to those of the previous section on inclusion. Once again the SMTs gave high ratings for the three statements on control, too. Control for them is an indication of seniority in the school management, hence their involvement with the post level one (PL 1) educators at the school.

As to working relationships and distributed leadership the principals of schools A, B, C and F gave high ratings for *I am open with people, I want to be open with people, people are open with me* and *I want people to be open with me*. The ratings given by the principal of school D were rather low compared to those of her colleagues. She had ratings that were not consistent like that of the other four principals. Interestingly she had a high rating for the statement: *I want people to be open with me* but rather low ratings for, *I am open with people, I want to be open with people* and *people are open with me*. It appears that she wants people to be open with her but is not prepared to be open to people nor is she open to people. This confirms the previous finding that this principal practices low distributed leadership at her school. In giving high ratings for openness they are sending a clear message that the Batho Pele principle of transparency must be practised in our schools in order to promote excellent service delivery. All the schools including school E, gave high ratings here.

In Schultz's (1958) FIRO-B instrument the third area is concerned with achieving just the desired amount of openness. For some people this is about working relationships in which they talk about their feelings and innermost thoughts. They have some person in whom they confide. Schultz (1958) argues that at other times they prefer not to share their personal feelings with colleagues. For Schultz (1958), such people like to keep things impersonal and businesslike, and they prefer to have acquaintances rather than close friends.

4.3.3 SUMMARY

The efficacy of achieving school improvements that enhance a school's working relationships in ways associated with effective schools is closely related to the principal's distributed leadership style.

The emerging demand placed on principals to act as organizational change agents prompted the need to determine whether distributed leadership was being exercised among a group of principals in a district undergoing school reform. We wished to find out whether a good relationship existed between principals and SMTs within the case study schools and whether this relationship could be attributed to the distributed leadership efforts of the principals. Findings of this study suggest that a positive correlational relationship between principals' distributed leadership and the presence of good working relationships associated with effective schools does exist.

This study suggests that principals within the district sampled, as a whole, practice high levels of distributed leadership. Moreover, principals ranking high in distributed leadership demonstrate greater levels of both distributed leadership and good working relationships than did principals ranking lower in distributed leadership. The evidence suggests that principals practising greater distributed leadership are associated with better, more efficient schools with good relationships. Only, one intervening variable, principals' length of service was found to be a significant predictor of principals' distributed leadership, and suggests that sufficient length of tenure is needed to establish principals' distributed leadership practice so as to have created good working relationships between principals and SMTs.

The emphasis on a partnership in education in order to promote the working relationship between the principal and the school management team (SMT), whereby the principal influences the SMT members towards goal setting and goal achievement without force or coercion apparently has had the desired effect in five of the six schools in the study. The principals of five of the six schools were content to share and develop leadership capability in the school. They viewed the school in a collegiate way and were prepared to show strong, direct distributed leadership in certain situations and in others would step back and let the SMT lead.

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CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5. INTRODUCTION

The principal has always been researched as the crucial figure in the school, the one who must bring about change (Lashway 1993, cited in Mathebula 2000). The study showed that the principal and SMTs working relationships were invariably affected by the personality of the principal. The principals' personal characteristics influenced change differently in the six case study schools.

This study's findings support those of Wilson and McPake (2000, cited in Bolden 2008) for small Scottish primary schools. Asked about their attitudes to change, all principals identified change as problematic because of the pace of change and lack of time in which to achieve it. They complained of too little time to cover all the targets. In a similar way interviewees in this study complained of too much to be done within a short time. The ex-HOA, ex-HOR, ex-HOD, and Private (independent) schools did not follow the DoE's transformation programmes to the letter. These schools' principals confidently defended what they did, whereas ex-DET and Special schools' principals were submissive. The first four schools refused to be externally controlled and managed change in an orderly and systematic manner.

Shortage of time according to one principal and an SMT member, interviewed can be addressed by prioritizing the initiatives of

management. Schools need the audacity to “practice fearlessness” so that once a school has determined its own destiny and plans for moving forward distributed leadership will result in improved working relationships. School leaders need to recognize that they cannot do all the things that the Government asks them to do, instead, leadership should be distributed to improve service delivery in our schools.

Throughout this study certain commonalities and diversities in the principals’ *modus operandi* in their distributed leadership and working relationships with SMTs have surfaced. These are related to attitudes, opinions, views and ideas about their distributed leadership and working relationships as evidenced by, in some cases, diametrically opposed responses and complete unanimity in other responses.

In this chapter these findings will be examined for their implications. While some recommendations will derive spontaneously from this study, others, because of their direct relationship with a thorough understanding of the substantive issues involved in this work, will also be suggested. The chapter closes with some recommendations of primary schools in the Sisonke District are departmental schools. Only a small number of these schools are private schools, however, they followed the management structures and educational policies of the department of education.

The purpose of this study was to examine the working relationships between principals and SMTs at primary schools and to note the use of distributed leadership strategies in them. These were our research

questions: What perceptions are held by both principal and SMTs regarding their working relationships? How do primary school principals perceive distributed leadership and its impact on working relations? How do primary schools SMTs perceive distributed leadership and its impact on working relationships?

Direct excerpts from the data were provided to illustrate the emerging categories and themes within a grounded theory approach as explained by Glaser and Strauss (1967, cited in Godden 1996). This chapter also presents the major themes which emerge from the data collected from the observations, documents, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. In this final chapter the researcher revisited some of the pertinent themes under the caption 'qualities of a distributive principal', namely; commitment, communication and consultation, decision-making, shared vision, teamwork and the nature of working relationships. In the analysis and discussion of the findings the researcher used the frameworks of distributed leadership, collaboration, collegiality and the notions of working relationships to interpret the data.

This chapter discusses the results and make recommendations for further research.

5.1 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results are presented in the order of the research questions that form the focus of this study.

5.1.1 QUESTION 1: What perceptions are held by both principals and SMTs regarding their working relationships?

The study has revealed that principals, deputies and heads of department (HODs) work together effectively as a school management teams. All the principals interviewed believed that their job was to harness the potential of the SMT and staff and to work with them to improve the working relationships at their respective schools. Also, by involving the SMT and staff in discussions and decision-making processes the principals of five schools and to a much more limited extent the principal of school E too, created a sense of teamwork.

The principals of five of the six schools were content to share and develop leadership capability in the school. They viewed the school in a collegiate way and were prepared to show strong direct distributed leadership in certain situations and in others to step back and let the SMT lead. One of the principals said it was all about: *“Communication, consultation and involving people in decisions”*. The principals of schools A, B, D and F also emphasized self-evaluation and development planning to deliver corporate decision-making processes. Very interestingly, it has also come to the fore that focusing on leadership capacity within the whole school, and not just that of the principal, improves a school’s capacity to deliver better performance, and develop higher levels of motivation and sustainable development. These principals have effectively widened the leadership capacity of the SMT and staff members throughout the school by creating leadership opportunities for the SMTs. They have paid

attention not only to ideas and practices of leadership and management, but also to issues such as working in teams, understanding of shared decision-making processes, benefits of cooperation, conflict resolution and understanding of different approaches to management and leadership.

The majority of the SMT members in this study believed that having good relationships with others would enable the principal to understand other people's roles in education and also to accommodate their views. They believed that other people's opinions and feelings should be considered. According to deputy principal 4 he would appoint a principal who showed good working relationships with others, such as SMT members, Post Level 1(PL1) educators and members of the community. He said:

“Normally good managers or principals, we identify them from others because they have a very good programme which is followed and they command this programme with the help of teachers, not as an individual, not commanding in the sense of enforcing, but that the respect must come from the people because of the way he is presenting himself” (Deputy Principal 4).

Deputy Principal 5 noted that since there were many people involved in a school, like the community or parents, *“one needs to understand their interests in order to work with them”*.

The value of accommodating other people's views is highlighted by this remark:

"I think that it is important, accommodating other people's views, because you are not going to work in isolation; there will be a school board, teachers, learners, learners' representative council (LRC); there will be inspectors, so everybody might want to contribute to the development of the school. So it is not the question of what I want as a principal but what the people want (Deputy Principal 5).

Deputy Principal 2 reinforces the statement made by deputy principal 5 as follows:

"A good principal should be a person who has good relationships with others SMT, because if a principal does not have good relationships and a sense of caring he encounters problems with others SMT, PL 1 educators, parents and the learners (Deputy Principal 2).

Referring to one of his principal deputy principal 1 said:

"... he has a good relationship with his SMT, staff members, learners and the community; parents understand and appreciate what he requests them to do".

Deputy Principal 1 saw this good relationship as contributing to teacher and learner motivation.

He said:

“The principal at my school managed to win an award from an NGO because he had a very good development plan, which he produced by working together with his teachers and the community. This principal has the ability to motivate and he produces good results” (Deputy Principal 1).

The perceptions of principals revealed the following interesting findings with regards to working relationships. Firstly, at all the schools the principals showed a need for inclusion. This statement is supported by the words of principal A that, *“... everyone needs to maintain relations with other people, hence they need to be included in their activities and also to include them in their own activities”*.

Sergiovanni (1994) maintains that in the theory of *Gesellschaft* (bonding), individuals relate to each other in order to reach some goal or to gain some benefit. The modern formal organization is seen as *Gesellschaft* in which working relationships are prescribed by roles and expectations. The effective and efficient implementation of policies, rules and protocols determines the nature of working relationships. In *Gesellschaft* these relationships are characterized by competitiveness, objectivity, rationality and self-interest (Mentz 1996, cited in Mathebula 2000). The promotion of good working relations in the workplace is supported by the leadership style that a leader uses since it influences people and the organization to move towards goal setting and goal achievement. This means that the

influence of leaders would tend to be based on their expert knowledge and intentions to improve the effectiveness of SMTs.

The principals and SMT members in the study are aware of the complex demands on schools today and the dynamically changing environment in which they operate reinforces the need for consideration of more collegial approaches to school leadership. It is evident that where principals engage seriously with their SMT in terms of responsibility and decision-making the effectiveness of the school is improved. The principal of school E failed dismally in this regard; apparently he is 'the only bull that bellows at that particular school'. Egan (cited in Hlongwane 2009 and Pedlar et al 2004: vii) sums it up as follows: "If your organization has only one leader, then it is almost certainly short of leadership".

It is only at one school that the SMT meets regularly with full attendance. During meetings SMT members are encouraged to participate actively - the minutes of previous meetings and the agenda is distributed seven days before the actual meeting. At the meetings the quality of minutes kept is excellent with clear records of all resolutions. Also the action plans are fully described noting who should do what by when. The SMT members evaluate the SMT meetings as consistently well-managed and purposeful.

In short, working together as principal and SMT encompasses amongst other things, discussing school development priorities at staff meetings, engaging in professional development on whole-school issues,

collectively prioritising specific actions to improve working relationships and providing the best opportunities for SMT development. Principals' perceptions of distributed leadership and working relationships will be discussed in the following paragraph.

5.1.2 QUESTION 2: How do primary school principals perceive distributed leadership and its impact on working relationships?

The literature on distributed leadership emphasizes the interaction and collaboration between principal and SMT. Leadership is therefore not domination but the art of persuading people to work towards a common goal. The responses of five of the six principals in the case study were that leadership was shared amongst the school management team members.

During the interviews principals were asked if they were obviously the most dominant leader at the school. All of them were adamant that this could not be the case. Four of the principals interviewed stated that this could not be the case in the new education dispensation. They claimed that the principal was the accounting officer or the responsibility manager, but the deputy principal and the Heads of Department were equally important as leaders of the staff and different departments for which they were accountable. The principal's position, they felt, was different, but because of the principal's influence with the SMT, the principal's role was equally important. The principals felt that the shared leadership practiced in their respective schools was not unique; all institutions have a hierarchy

and leadership is distributed to promote working relationships everywhere.

The principal of school A cited the example of the national and provincial legislatures; when the President of the country or the Premier of a province is absent, the Deputy President or one of the Members of the Executive Council acts on his behalf; that is a form of distributed leadership. This kind of leadership is also practiced in our schools. While some of the principals struggled to find the words, they all, felt that distributed leadership was the best form of leadership to promote good working relationships in the workplace. The principal of school C reported as follows: "In the past we have had a principal who tried to dominate the deputy principal and the HODs and it has always caused problems, major problems". The Logbook at school A indicated that when the principal took leave of absence the HODs deputized in a revolving manner, that is, one week the one HOD acts as the head of the institution and the following week the other HOD gets a chance to act. A comment from the principal of school B was that, "One dominant leader just does not work at our school; every person is seen as a leader in his/her own field of expertise".

In summary, distributed leadership did exist in all six schools in the case study, however, in schools A, B, C and F it was more prominent than in schools D and E. This was demonstrated by the six leaders' responses and the actions of the SMTs and staff members. The principals felt that this situation [distributed leadership] was the most appropriate for their schools and that a sole leader would not be effective in the new education

dispensation. The distributed leadership in this study was found to be numerical as numerical action is distributed among many or all SMT members of the respective schools and it was possible for all SMT members to be leaders at some stage. Distributed leadership reflects concerted action. Each SMT member is responsible for his/her own department, with the principal and SMT acting in concert to direct the activities of the whole school. The principals ensured coordination of activities and considered others in all planning.

5.1.2.1 Principals' view of distributed leadership: questionnaires

The responses from principals to the question on their understanding of distributed leadership provoked discussion on a number of important issues, ranging from formal and informal roles, to activities SMTs might undertake and be coaxed to pursue. The principals' responses also highlighted traits such as potential, influence, initiative and authority which also incorporate the concepts of ownership, delegation, capacity, belonging to a team and the school as an organic structure.

Many of the concepts articulated referred to working relationships, practices and interactions as part of the management activities of the principal and SMT. The clear picture that was painted by the responses from principals was that in their view there was plenty of room for all SMT members to be involved in the distributed leadership of the school. There was general consensus that distributed leadership is about 'undefined' roles and these roles which could change and be taken by different

individuals in the management team at different times. The roles referred to could be either formal or informal.

The abovementioned interpretation of distributed leadership set the tone for distributed leadership as an inclusive concept, not specifically related to formal roles or posts of responsibility. The general perception of the principals is that they endeavour to will develop leadership capacity within the SMTs and they further state that through the particular roles they themselves are playing, that is, looking at the whole management structure in which the whole team potential is unlocked and channelled into different roles at different times. A further perception is that if a person can develop from one role to another they will develop various aspects of leadership.

Delegation, building capacity and the capacity to move forward with the team and in that way influence the SMT in the affirmative, were central to the principals' perceptions of distributed leadership and its effect on working relationships. Delegation in this context was viewed as the SMT member taking the initiative to undertake the roles which requires their intervention and expertise. With regard to leadership capacity, distributed leadership was perceived as operative when SMT members uses their initiative and, in that way, involve themselves in the leadership and management of the school. It reflects MacBeath's kind of culture of distribution. Influence in a model of distributed leadership takes the form of opportunities provided for SMT members to display initiative and to grow their influence.

In sum, there are strong similarities between the perceptions of principals and SMTs. These perceptions include empowerment, giving authority and interdependence, involvement in decision-making, recognizing expertise, ownership, having a voice, leading by example, delegation and creating an environment where they take risks and are encouraged to use their initiative for school improvement. The perceptions of SMTs on distributed leadership and working relationships follows.

5.1.3 QUESTION 3: How do primary schools SMTs perceive distributed leadership and its impact on working relationships?

The SMTs in this study base the perceptions of distributed leadership and its impact on the working relationships on desired behaviours of making suggestions, giving feedback, modelling effective instruction, soliciting opinions, supporting collaboration, providing professional development opportunities, and giving praise for effective teaching.

The participants' perceptions at the six schools do differ. In school A, SMTs' understanding of distributed leadership was linked to delegation, shared vision and decision-making activities, while in school B, their understanding of distributed leadership was linked to control of the different departments and decision-making but extended to include leadership activities confined to the classroom. At school C a distributing leader is viewed as a leader who develops the SMT and encourages active participation in planning and decision-making processes. School D shares the same sentiments as schools A and B even as there are still

signs of mixed leadership there. Distributed leadership is viewed at school F as shared leadership, consultation, communication and putting people first (Batho Pele).

In this case study distributed leadership is also concerted action. Concerted action appears in joint action, where each SMT member recognizes that they belong to the school management team and that they must synchronise their activities. Concerted action can, however, exist as spontaneous action, intuitive relations or as institutionalized practice. Concerted action, in the schools of this case study, was institutionalized as demonstrated by the organogram of the school designed to give some leadership activities to the principal, to the deputy principal and the Heads of Department (HODs). While in two of the case study schools there was little evidence of spontaneous collaboration at a leadership level, there was evidence that intuitively collaborative working relationships existed.

The principals and SMTs in four of the six schools have formed close working relationships. The two HODs and a deputy principal at school E seemed very aware that they were co-leaders, and while they did not have the same intuitive working relationship with the principal, they both respected his contribution to the running of their respective departments. "It is important that we work well together as we are the decision-makers in the school," was a comment from the principal of school E that surprised all the SMT members, including me.

One of the HODs at school E stated “... *it appears to me that the principal and the SMT members have different, but equally important roles to perform in the management of the school; this necessitates joint decision-making and cooperation of all the SMT members*”. Joint leadership at school A was demonstrated when a visitor asked the secretary if he could see the person in charge. The secretary spent some time in finding out exactly what the visitor required before referring him to the HOD. Demarcation of positions at the school was, of course, the main problem for the secretary here. In short, there was a strong intuitively collaborative working relationship between principals and SMTs in five of the six case study schools. The SMTs gave their perceptions of the qualities of an effective principal.

5.1.3.1 SMTs Perceptions: Qualities of an effective principal

A prime quality they single out was commitment.

5.1.3.1.1 COMMITMENT

SMTs felt that commitment to work was important in a principal and they expressed this idea in a variety of ways using words such as c‘hardworking’, interest in improving work and showing independence.

Commitment features strongly in distributed leadership literature. Horgan (in Mathebula 2000) defines commitment as passion seen through caring, concern, and building “perpetuation”. The researcher found that the SMTs saw commitment as being related to distributed leadership success in a school. They saw principals with a high concern for their work as

playing a major role in boosting the SMTs achievement because they instilled this commitment in their SMTs. Principals helped SMTs to channel their energies towards achieving the goals of the school. Commitment to work cannot be taken for granted in distributive leaders. Sterling and Davidoff (2000:27) maintain that:

“One may have the status, authority and responsibility of a leader, but this does not automatically make one an effective leader. The first step in turning around a negative situation is the commitment to lead. Commitment frees one from making excuses as to why a negative situation cannot change and allows one to make a real difference to practically any situation (Sterling and Davidoff 2000: 27).

For them commitment is thus fundamental to good distributed leadership and a quality that needs to be cultivated with dedication, because working with people can sometimes be disheartening. Their perception is that commitment carries one through difficult times and helps the distributed leader to overcome obstacles and difficulties. In other words, when the going gets tough you need to be committed in order to keep going. A committed principal must have a vision.

5.1.3.1.2 VISION

As in other studies (Martin and Henderson 2001; French and Bell 1995, cited in Hlongwane 2009) SMTs recognised the importance of vision in leadership. Without vision by which to challenge followers, there is no

possibility of a principal being a leader (Pejza 1985, cited in Hlongwane 2009).

The researcher found that the SMTs expected a principal to be able to project a vision and to convey this vision to others. This is confirmed by HOD 5s remarks about his principal who succeeded in communicating his vision to others. Principals should know where their schools ought to be headed and what their SMTs should achieve.

According to Senge (1990: 9) one idea about distributed leadership that has inspired organizations for decades is the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future that members seek to create. This is consistent with what was mentioned by participants about visionary principals. The quality in question is also referred to as “charisma”, a word used by one of the HODs at school B. Burke and Collins (2001: 248) see charismatic leaders as those who are admired and trusted by their followers; they serve as role models and their subordinates aspire to be like them.

What the SMTs particularly stressed is the notion of communicating, or sharing, the vision. When a personal vision is translated into a shared vision, people become empowered, so that “... *people excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to*” (Senge 1991: 9). The SMT members expected a principal to involve others in the enactment of the vision.

Bennis and Nanus (cited in Hlongwane 2009 and Handy 1999) put it as follows:

“It is however of no use having a dream if that dream is not shared by everyone else. It is best if everyone else has a part in the shaping of the dream, leaving it to the leader to articulate it and to capture it in some way so that it steals into the imaginations of the people” (Bennis and Nanus in Hardy 1999).

Some of the leaders did it with words, some with visual models, some just by living and breathing their vision in contact with their people. Martin and Henderson (2001:73, cited in Kwindu 2002) stress the same idea:

“One of the most prized aspects of leadership at all levels of an organisation is the ability to develop with others a vision that enables everyone to make a commitment to achieving it. This particular aspect of vision, as a feature of successful leadership, was recognised for a long time.” (Martin and Henderson 2001:73).

Sterling and Davidoff (2000:90) give the following reasons why vision building should be a participatory process:

“If followers are not part of the development process, they will be poor supporters at the implementation level. If stakeholders are involved from the outset, they will own the vision and feel a part thereof. If the school community is not a part of the process it may not abandon negative ideas and attitudes about the school, which may weaken the momentum towards a positive future. If the whole school community is not involved, one will not get the benefit of

everyone's creative input in the process. Since there are many aspects of school life that need to be accommodated into the vision one must be sure that all these concerns are involved in the vision-building process" (Sterling and Davidoff 2000:90).

From the perceptions of the SMTs it is evident that without the contributions from the entire school community, the vision cannot become a reality, because many will not be motivated and willing to strive towards achieving the vision they are not a part of. This is a particular challenge in Sisonke Education District, as it is in South Africa generally, where deputy principals and HODs have for so long been alienated from schools and often lack basic competences required to participate meaningfully.

Literature suggests a direct association between visionary leadership and distributed leadership. Burke and Collins (2001: 245) argue that distributing leaders achieve results by persuading employees to believe in the mission and its attainability. Similarly, Leithwood and Aitken (1995: 28, cited in Godden 1996) see the development of an organisational vision and mission as:

"A critical distributed leadership function and those assuming distributed roles feel responsible for helping to move the organisation in the direction of its goals" (Leithwood and Aitken (1995: 28).

5.1.3.1.3 COMMUNICATION

Communication has been described as the mutual exchange of ideas and interpretation of messages (cited in Van der Westhuizen 1991:204). The participants in this studies believes that open communication contributes to the empowerment of others and the building of positive relationships, whereas poor communication can create mistrust amongst people in an institution. Bennis and Nanus (cited in Handy 1999:116) identify communication as one of the four strategies regarded as a necessary condition for any freedom of action. They believe that without good communication, or some approximation of it, no aspiring leader would stand much of a chance (Handy 1999:116). Similarly, the principals and SMTs believed that without communication it would be difficult to realise a vision - effective principals succeed because they communicate their vision very clearly to everybody.

Reece and Brandt (1996: 22, cited in Mathebula 2000), claims it is not an exaggeration to describe communication as “the heart and soul” of human relations. They posit that communication is the means by which we come to an understanding of others and ourselves. To grow and develop as persons, we must communicate.

The importance of communication in a successful school was also confirmed by SMTs in Sherman’s (2000, cited in Hlongwane 2009) studies. The principals in this study felt responsible for ensuring good

communication at all levels. HOD 9 said the following about the importance of communication:

“If I don’t keep everybody informed, I’m simply not doing my job. It keeps everybody happy and it prevents unnecessary grumbling and questions about what we are doing here. I want everyone to think that they can come into the school at any time and that they will know what is happening” (HOD 9).

Mazzarella and Grundy (cited in Southwestern Educational Development Laboratory: undated) also note that *“effective principals in particular, are good at communicating”* and have the, *aptitude and skills they need to interact well with others; they know how to communicate”*. Smit and Cronje (cited in Kader 2007) view communication as an integral part of all leadership or management functions, claiming that in order to plan, lead, organise or control, leaders have to communicate with their followers. Thus, communication is central to democratic school leadership. Schmuck and Runkel (1994:119, cited in Hlongwane 2009) also point out:

“For educators to be clear about instructional goals, solve important problems, make effective decisions, and put plans into action many acts of communication are required. If the educational organisations remain responsive to demands of all sorts as an open flow of information from and to the various groups must be maintained” (Schmuck and Runkel 1994: 119).

The principals and SMTs saw good communication to be very important in making a school a happy place to work. They prefer principals with what Shum and Cheng (1997: 165) called '*human*' leadership, principals with '*human*' leadership skills who emphasise relationships and feelings and seek to lead through facilitation and empowerment. Good communication skills lie at the heart of such leadership. Besides the skill of good communication of vision and empowerment of vision and empowerment, this study showed "good listening" to be a desired quality in principals and leaders. Superintendents in Mahoney's (1990) studies (cited in Hlongwane 2009) advised "... people often are not looking for instant comments or solutions ... what they want, is for someone to listen to them". Listening skills are also an important characteristic of leaders who facilitate change.

The ability to communicate well ensures a better sense of networking with the entire school community. In a democratic society, involvement of SMTs in decisions is important and this can only be when there is good communication. Good communication enhances transparency all around.

5.1.3.2 SMTs' views of distributed leadership: questionnaires

In each of the six schools, all SMT members were asked to complete a questionnaire which included open-ended questions asking them what they understood by '*distributed leadership*' and '*working relationships*'.

The quotes reflect the common themes that emerged across the six schools:

- Working together to improve working relationships. The phrase 'working together' is used in the sense of working on whole school issues. Their interpretation of it concerned the context of the whole school.
- Another interesting theme that emerged from the responses to the question on distributed leadership was that, "... all SMT members are consulted on major decision-making processes ... because these decisions usually affect the full SMT". Decision-making, from the responses, can be divided into two categories, the first being that all SMTs be involved in making decisions and the other category being that where the SMT is consulted their voice be heard irrespective of whether their inputs are implemented in the end. The decisions referred to are those decisions that pertain to 'whole school' issues such as the vision and the mission of the school, or decisions that affect everybody such as changing the school to a five day or seven day cycle.
- The responses also indicated that all SMT members should be involved in the distributed leadership of the school. The responses in this regard were rather ambiguous in some responses there was referring to 'certain areas' which could mean delegation of responsibility for deputy principals only. 'Having a voice' was another theme that emerged from the responses to the questionnaire.

- For the HODs it is imperative for the principal and SMT to 'work as a team with the same goals' with a view to improving the working relationships between them and the principals. Teamwork referred to teams such as the different sub-committees within the school which involve both the principal and the SMT.
- The majority of the responses were that "... all SMT members should have a voice". 'Being listened to' and 'having a voice' were among the features of distributed leadership that were clearly illuminated. The implication was that not only was it necessary to provide the SMT members with an opportunity to express their views, but that their 'voices' be considered when decisions were made. The last theme to emerge was working as a team with the same goals.

The themes that emerged from the open questionnaire generally suggest a response that supports a view of distributed leadership which reflects community and collaboration rather than hierarchy or autocracy. The views of distributed leadership that were expressed by the participants in the questionnaires were reinforced by the responses to the interview questions.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The case study revealed that distributed leadership exists if it is shared amongst the principals and SMTs. The notion of team management is rooted in the theory of distributed leadership that stresses participation, notably in school management teams, teamwork and distributed

leadership. The study was interpretive in orientation, and utilized qualitative data gathering techniques in all the six primary schools in the Sisonke Education District in the KwaZulu/Natal Province.

The study revealed that while working relationships in a context of distributed leadership is generally welcomed and even celebrated by principals and SMT members there are fundamental tensions relating to the principals' understanding of their distributed leadership roles in the school management context. The call for a more collectively embedded notion of leadership has arisen from research, theory and practice that highlights the limitations of the traditional 'leader-follower' dualism that places the responsibility for leadership firmly in the hands of the 'leader' and represents the 'follower' as somewhat passive and subservient. Instead, it is perceived that, '... leadership is probably best conceived as a group quality, as a set of functions which must be carried out by the group (Gibb 1954).

As such the distributed leadership approach demands a dramatic reconsideration of the distribution of power and influence within schools. It is not simply about creating more 'leaders' which is a numerical or additive function (MacBeath 2008), but about facilitating 'concertive action' and pluralistic engagement (Gronn 2000, 2002). In fact, distributed leadership is far more than the sum of parts, and reflects synergism.

In this study, distributed leadership does not deny the key role played by the principal, and only enhances it. Spillane et al (2004: 5) posit that distributed leadership is 'stretched over the social and situational contexts' of the school and extend the notion to include material and cultural artefacts such as language, organizational systems and physical environment'. The situated nature of distributed leadership is perceived by principals and SMTs, in this study, as 'constitutive of leadership practice' (Spillane 2004: 20-21) and therefore demands recognition of distributed leadership acts within the wider context. It can thus be concluded that such a perspective draws heavily on systems and process theory and locates distributed leadership clearly beyond the individual leader or principal and within working relationships and interactions of SMTs and the situations in which they find themselves.

As Bennet et al (2003) suggested, despite some variations in definition, distributed leadership is based on three main premises, namely, that distributed leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals, reflects an openness in the boundaries of distributed leadership, involving players both within and beyond the school, and variety in expertise is distributed across the many, not the few. Distributed leadership is therefore represented as dynamic, relational, inclusive, collaborative and contextually-situated. Distributed leadership requires a system-wide perspective that not only transcends organizational levels and roles but also organizational boundaries.

Harris' (2003: 314) perception of distributed leadership is reinforced by the perceptions of principals and SMTs in this study. He said:

“... taking this view, distributed leadership is about learning together and constructing meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively. It involves opportunities to surface and mediate perceptions, values, beliefs, information and assumptions through continuing conversations. It means generating ideas together; seeking to reflect upon and make sense of work in the light of shared beliefs and new information; and creating actions that grow out of these new understandings. It therefore implies that distributed leadership is socially constructed and culturally sensitive. It does not imply a leader-follower divide; neither does it point towards the leadership potential of just one person” (Harris 2003: 314).

5.3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

In this study the underpinning principles of distributed leadership focused on multiple sources of leadership. Distributed leadership is a collective form of leadership in which principals and the SMTs lead the school and collaborate to improve education practices for quality teaching and learning at schools in the Sisonke Education District. Distributed leadership entails that principals of primary schools should not only strive to be useful themselves, but that they should contribute to make others useful by them creating an environment in which the principal and SMT are able to grow as leaders. Proponents of distributed leadership prefer

to examine how principals manifest leadership in their work place and how it improves working relationships between the two management entities. Distributed leadership was given prominence in the primary schools in the Sisonke Education District because leadership at five of the six schools was found to be inclusive and flexible.

The emphasis was on collective action, empowerment and that leadership is a form of agency that can be distributed and shared. Cultural change at primary schools in the Sisonke Education District is both challenging and demanding. Hence an important implication of the findings for distributed leadership must be development in the context of team management. A useful framework has been provided for principals and SMT members to critically reflect upon as they seek to build shared purpose, cooperation and collaboration. Not only was it necessary to provide the SMT members with an opportunity to express their views, but that these 'voices' would be considered when decisions were made. A focus away from the principal towards the leadership roles played by the SMT provided a better understanding of school leadership.

Underpinned by the theory of distributed leadership, the research sought to examine the factors feeding into the autocratic or more democratic relations in each school and took a snap-shot view of what was currently happening in the six schools chosen. The findings revealed how leadership was distributed and how it involved the SMT in the sense that working relationships were improved and that accountability was distributed within the school. The skill of working in teams in South

African schools is in progress since distributed leadership has gained prominence during the last ten years of democracy. The study has recognised the complexity of the subject distribution of leadership and the challenging environment in primary schools in the Sisonke Education District. The modern style of leadership poses serious challenges to the conservative school principals. The recommendations are the last to be discussed.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

As discussed in the literature review for this study, limited research has been conducted on the practice of distributed leadership in educational settings. Hence, the following recommendations for future study are suggested:

1. Replication studies should be conducted to validate the working relationships between principals and SMTs found in this case study.
2. Studies should also be carried out to examine the attitude and behaviours of principals practising distributed leadership within other educational institutions.

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Beverly.

ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH - DISTRICT MANAGER

MV KOK
PO Box 1863
MATATIELE
4730

21 AUGUST 2007

The District Manager
Department of Education and Culture (KZN)
Sisonke District of Education
Private Bag X 3560
KOKSTAD
4700

Sir

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Kindly be informed that I have registered with the University of Fort Hare for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree. My Supervisor is Dr PM Mahlangu. I herewith apply for permission to conduct research in six primary schools in the Sisonke District of Education. The working title for my research is:

Perceptions of principals and school management team members of the application of distributed leadership and its impact on the working relationship with school management team members at primary schools in the Sisonke Education District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

It is my contention that the findings of this study can be used as a basis for strengthening the working relationships between principals and SMT members during the process of transformation in education. It is also hoped that the findings of this research will aid the Superintendents of Education Management to better understand the climate and environment at school sites, at which the new education policies are being implemented. This research may also identify existing and potential obstacles impeding the successful implementation of the various new education policies and legislation. Moreover, the information can prove to be of relevance during induction and orientation workshops of school management teams.

Interviews will be conducted with educators at times when they are not engaged in teaching and learning. Observation of the SMT meetings will be arranged with the principal in order not to disrupt teaching and learning in any way. A questionnaire will be given to each member of the school management team of the six schools randomly selected in the district.

A copy of the research findings will be made available to the District Manager as well as to the principals of the six schools in the district.

Your favourable consideration will be appreciated.

.....

MAURICE VIVIAN KOK
RESEARCHER

ANNEXURE B: PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH - PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS

039 797 3832 (Work)

Box 1863

082 9610 178 (Cell)

Matatiele

073 4837 183 (Cell)

4730

26 July 2007

The Principal

.....
.....

Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FOR A PhD DEGREE

I am registered for the PhD Degree in Education Management at the University of Fort Hare. I am engaged in a research project to determine the degree to which distributed leadership is being practiced in primary schools. The working title is:

Perceptions of principals and school management team members of the application of distributed leadership and its impact on the working relationship with school management team members at primary schools in the Sisonke Education District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

I am keen to conduct my research atPrimary School. Please understand that the study involves no invasion of individual rights or privacy, nor will it apply any procedures which may be found to be ethically objectionable. No personal information regarding those who participate in the research, will be divulged to anyone and all information gathered will be strictly confidential. Qualitative research will be conducted. The principal and SMT members will be involved in the research. Qualitative research will be done by means of structured interviews (30% of sample) and

questionnaires (70% of sample). The Principal and management members will be interviewed. They will be asked to complete the questionnaires. The findings of the research will be used for the purpose of my thesis only. Attached please find the following:

- A copies of the questionnaires;
- A copies of the interview questions; and
- Suggested dates for conducting the research.

I thank you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

.....

MAURICE VIVIAN KOK



Permission is hereby granted / not granted to conduct the research at..... Primary School.

.....

Principal

.....

Date

ANNEXURE C INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - SUGGESTED DATES

Distribution of research questionnaires: 11 February 2009

Collection of completed research questionnaires: 20 February 2009

Interviews: 11 February 2009 to 17 February 2009 for School A.

Principal	:	11.02.2009
Deputy 1	:	12.02.2009
Deputy 2	:	13.02.2009
HOD 1	:	14.02.2009
HOD 2	:	15.02.2009
HOD 3	:	16.02.2009
HOD 4	:	17.02.2009

NB: The above dates were manipulated to suit the interviewees' time schedules. The timetables for the other five schools are done in the same manner.

ANNEXURE D INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your understanding of the concept working relationships?
2. What is your understanding of distributed leadership?
3. What do you think is the role of the principal?
4. School leadership and management is the sole responsibility of the principal. Do you agree? Support your answer.
5. Does your school have a vision and a mission statement? If yes, how was it drafted?
6. What would you regard as your (your principal's) leadership style?
7. To what extent does your (your principal's) leadership style contribute to the running of the school?
8. What are the relationships like between the principal and SMT?
9. To what extent do you (your principal) involve the staff in decision-making?
10. What would you regard as the qualities of a good or effective leader?
11. Does your school have appropriate policies and procedures in place to enable it to run smoothly?
12. In which areas of your (your principal's) leadership do you think there is still room for improvement?
13. To what extent do you (does your principal) acknowledge the SMT?
14. How do you (your principal) contribute to the professional development of the SMT?
15. How would you rate your school in terms of distributing leadership?

ANNEXURE E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS

1. What is your understanding of the term working relationships?

.....
.....

2. What is you're your understanding of the team distributed leadership?

.....
.....

3. What is its significance in the South African context?

.....
.....

4. How would you describe your working relationship with the principal?

.....
.....

5. What is your perception of the principal's leadership style and to what extent does this style parallel with instructional leaders?

.....
.....

6. What are your views about managing schools through SMTs?

.....
.....

7. How do you feel about the way SMTs are functioning?

.....
.....

8. Has the school policy documents, outlining the role functions of SMTs, been made available to the SMT members?

.....
.....

9. Do you see the need to have goals set for your SMT and how is it done?

.....
.....

10. Are SMT members given the opportunity to chair SMT meetings?

.....
.....

11. How do you ensure that decisions taken at SMT meetings are implemented?

.....
.....

12. How do you evaluate whether the SMT is performing effectively?

.....
.....

13. What skills do you think you possess that contributes to effective teamwork?

.....
.....

14. How do you manage conflict among SMT members?

.....
.....

15. Are members of the SMT represented on the admissions committee at your school?

.....
.....

16. What strategies of pressure and support does the principal use to promote the implementation of education policies and legislation?

.....
.....

ANNEXURE F: LETTER TO RESPONDENTS

Tel: 039 797 3832 (w)

Box 1863

082 9610 178 (cell)

Matatiele

073 483 7183 (cell)

4730

02 January 2008

Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss.....

RESEARCH FOR PhD DEGREE

I am currently engaged in a research project to determine the degree to which distributed leadership is being practiced in primary schools. Your school was randomly chosen for my research project. The title of my thesis is:

Perceptions of principals and school management team members of the application of distributed leadership and its impact on the working relationship with school management team members at primary schools in the Sisonke Education District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Permission has been obtained to conduct the research at school. I would appreciate your assistance, by completing the attached questionnaires. Please understand that the study involves no invasion of individual rights or privacy, nor will it apply any procedures which may be found to be ethically objectionable. No personal information regarding those who participate in the research, will be divulged to anyone and all the information gathered will be strictly confidential. The findings of the research will only be used for the purpose of my thesis.

It is important that you answer the questions honestly, without fear or prejudice of any type, so that I will be able to present a true state of affairs in my research findings.

Following the completion of the survey and the statistical analysis of the data, I will gladly send you a summary of the findings.

Should you wish to add any information not covered in the questionnaires, please feel free to do so at the end (in the space provided).

Hopefully, you will find time in your busy schedule to participate in this study. Thank you for your time and participation. I look forward to your early response.

.....

MAURICE VIVIAN KOK
RESEARCHER

ANNEXURE G: MULTIFACTOR QUESTIONNAIRE A

Use a cross(x) to indicate your choice. Kindly use a blue or black pen.

1. What position do you hold at the school?

- Head of Department
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

3. Indicate your race.

- Black
- White
- Indian
- Coloured
- Other

4. Were you at the school prior to 1994?

- Yes
- No

If yes, answer 4.1 to 4.5

4.1 Which statement best describes leadership at the school prior to 1994.

- There was a top-down approach. The DoE decided what was best for the school and the principal together with the staff had to carry out their decisions.
- There was a lot of participation and collaboration, by all the role players (DoE, management staff, educators, parents and learners), in decision-making.
- The principal delegated duties and let the individual get on with it

- Decision-making was in the hands of a selected few.

4.2 What were the racial demographics of staff members?

- Blacks only
- Whites only
- Indians only
- Coloureds only
- Mixed population

4.3 Indicate the demographics of people in management positions

- White males only
- White males and females
- Mixed population of males only
- Mixed population of males and females

4.4 Indicate the demographics of people in management positions

- Principal
- Principal and Deputy Principal
- Principal, Deputy Principal and Heads of Department
- All Staff Members

The remainder of the questions relates to the current situation at the school

5. Does the school have the following?

5.1 A mission statement	Yes	No	Don't know
5.2 A vision statement	Yes	No	Don't know
5.3 An admission policy	Yes	No	Don't know
5.4 A policy for staff development	Yes	No	Don't know
5.5 A finance policy	Yes	No	Don't know
5.6 Minute books	Yes	No	Don't know
5.7 A time book	Yes	No	Don't know
5.8 An effective RCL (Where applicable)	Yes	No	Don't know

6. Were you consulted when the items mentioned in question 5 were drawn up?

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Always

7. Which statement best describes leadership at the school?

- There is a top-down approach
- There is a lot of participation and collaboration in decision-making
- The principal delegates duties and lets the individual get on with it
- Decision-making is in the hands of a few.

8. To what extent are SMT members involved in decision making?

- Minimal involvement
- Involved in operational (day to day running of the school) decisions
- Involved in operational and tactical (organising, resource allocation, time tabling, etc) decisions
- Involved in operational, tactical and policy (school management guidelines) decisions

9. How does your principal relate with:

(Rating: 1 = very poor; 2 = Poor; 3 = Fair; 4 = Good; 5 = Very good)

9.1 SMT and Staff	1	2	3	4	5
9.2 Parents	1	2	3	4	5
9.3 Learners	1	2	3	4	5

10. How would you rate your principal in terms of the following:

(Rating: 1 = Agree; 2=Disagree; 3=Strongly agree; 4 = Strongly disagree)

10.1 Holds regular staff meetings	1	2	3	4
10.2 Updates staff on educational matters				
10.3 Cares about the welfare of staff				
10.4 Considers opinion of others to be important				
10.5 Encourages and motivates staff				
10.6 Always says 'This is our school'				
10.7 Praises staff for a job well done				
10.8 Creates an atmosphere of mutual trust				
10.9 Is always cool, calm and collected				
10.10 Treats staff with dignity and respect				
10.11 Treats all staff equally and fairly				
10.12 Colludes with certain members of staff				
10.13 Practices nepotism				
10.14 Shows transparency in all matters				
10.15 Is self-centred and arrogant				
10.16 Is easy to talk to				
10.17 Empowers staff				

11. Do you feel that your talents and ability are being adequately utilised?
- Never
 - Sometimes
 - Always

12. Eight descriptive statements are listed. Judge how frequently each statement fits you.

The word "other" may mean SMT or principal and or all of these individuals.

Use the following rating scale:

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
0	1	2	3	4

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 12.1 I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts | 0 1 2 |
| 3 4 | |
| 12.2 I get involved when important issues arise | 0 1 2 |
| 3 4 | |
| 12.3 I talk about my most important values and beliefs | 0 1 2 |
| 3 4 | |
| 12.4 I seek differing perspectives when solving problems | 0 1 2 |
| 3 4 | |
| 12.5 I in still pride in others for being associated with me | 0 1 2 |
| 3 4 | |
| 12.6 I discuss in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets | 0 1 2 |
| 3 4 | |
| 12.7 I talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished | 0 1 2 |
| 3 4 | |
| 12.8 I specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose | 0 1 2 |
| 3 4 | |

SECTION B

Please tick in the appropriate box.

Question 13. Do you find a working relationship between the principal and SMT absolutely beneficial?

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know

Question 14. When are you giving your SMT meeting agenda?

- 7 days before the meeting
- Handed out at the meeting
- Drawn up at the meeting
- No agenda is provided

QUESTION 15. How satisfied are you with the working relationships between the principal and your SMT?

Please rate from 0-10 by placing a tick or circling your choice.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
POOR			FAIR		AVERAGE		GOOD		EXCELLENT	

QUESTION 16. How satisfied are you with the performance of your SMT?

Please rate from 0-10 by placing a tick or circling your choice.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
POOR			FAIR		AVERAGE		GOOD		EXCELLENT	

SECTION C

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SMT

QUESTION 17. Does your principal use the skills, knowledge and experiences of individuals in the SMT effectively?

A lot	A great deal	A little	Very little	Not at all

QUESTION 18. How would you rate the effectiveness of your SMT?

Very effective	Effective	Not at all effective	Do not know

QUESTION 19. Are your contributions at meetings valued as a member of the SMT?

All the time	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION

Researcher : Maurice Vivian Kok
Research Supervisor : Dr PM Mahlangu

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BY TICKING THE BOX THAT DESCRIBES YOU BEST.

Key for questions:

SD = Strongly Disagree =1
D = Disagree =2
UN = Undecided =3
M = Maybe =4
A = Agree =5
SA = Strongly Agree =6

No.	SCALE NAME	1	2	3	4	5	6
01.	I include people						
02.	I control people						
03.	I am open with people						
04.	I want to include people						
05.	I want to control people						
06.	I want to be open with people						
07.	People include me						
08.	People control me						
09.	People are open with me						
10.	I want people to include me						
11.	I want people to control me						
12.	I want people to be open with me						

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION

Researcher : Maurice Vivian Kok

Research Supervisor : Dr PM Mahlangu

ANNEXURE I: PERMISSION TO FIRO ELEMENT B FOR RESEARCH – Dr Schultz

(+27)39 797 3832 (Work)

Box 1863

(+27)82 9610 178 (Cell)

Matatiele

(+27)73 4837 183 (Cell)

South Africa

4730

26 July 2007

Dr Schultz

.....

.....

Sir/Madam

**PERMISSION USE FIRO ELEMENT B QUESTIONNAIRE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
FOR A PhD DEGREE**

I am registered for the PhD Degree in Education Management at the University of Fort Hare. I am engaged in a research project to determine the degree to which distributed leadership is being practiced in primary schools. The working title is:

Perceptions of principals and school management team members of the application of distributed leadership and its impact on the working relationship with school management team members at primary schools in the Sisonke Education District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

I am keen to conduct my research at six primary schools in the Sisonke Education District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa. Please understand that the study involves no invasion of individual rights or privacy, nor will it apply any procedures which may be found to be ethically objectionable. No personal information

regarding those who participate in the research, will be divulged to anyone and all information gathered will be strictly confidential. A mixed research design will be used for the purpose of this study. The principals and school management teams (SMTs) of the six primary schools will be involved in the research. Qualitative and quantitative research will be done by means of structured interviews (30% of sample) and questionnaires (70% of sample). The Principal and management members will be interviewed. They will be asked to complete the questionnaires. The main purpose for the use of FIRO Element B is to assist me to get a true picture of the participants perceptions of their working relationships with their colleagues in the new democratic educational dispensation in South Africa. The findings of the research will be used for the purpose of my thesis only. Attached please find attached a copy of the questionnaire that i wish to get permission for.

I thank you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

.....

MAURICE VIVIAN KOK

Permission is hereby granted / not granted to use the FIRO Element B questionnaire for the research for the PhD degree.

.....

Dr Schultz

.....

Date