

**ETHICAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR PRACTICES IN SELECTED
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF PUBLIC
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Peter Ganetsang Rakgalakane, hereby declare that this dissertation titled “**Ethical leadership behaviour practices in selected public secondary schools: A case study of public secondary schools in Limpopo Province**”, which I have handed in for the degree of Master of Education, is a true copy of my own work. All sources are recognized and cited. I additionally declare that I have not previously submitted this study or part of it for a degree in any other institution of higher learning.

Signature.....

Date.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Master of Education dissertation to my wife Kentse Christinah Legodi-Rakgalakane for her tremendous assistance in advancing my academic career. To my beloved children Kopano and Lebone, I appreciate your patience and understanding while I was working. My footsteps are visible there.

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ABSTRACT

Ethical leadership behaviour practices in schools foster a compassionate, respectful, transparent, and ethical learning environment that is favourable to educators, principals, learners, and other stakeholders in the school community. Promoting values, morality, and a feeling of responsibility in learners, educators, and the larger community is made easier by ethical leadership. The purpose of the research was to investigate ethical leadership behaviour practices in selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. In particular, the study probed the causes of unethical leadership behaviour practices in public secondary schools from the perspective of educators, deputies, and principals. The researcher went further to determine the strategies which could be employed to promote ethical behaviour practices in the school settings. The study also determined to what extent educators could be effective and efficient in the advancement of ethical behaviour practices in the school context.

The study adopted a case study research design, using the interpretative paradigm, where qualitative research approach was applied. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted to accumulate data from six educators, three deputies and three school principals of three public secondary schools in Waterberg District. The findings revealed that for the success of the school as an institution, educators and school principals should keep strong ethical standards as leaders, such as honesty, respect, accountability, and transparency. The participants identified numerous causes that influenced unethical behaviour practices of educators and principals. These included factors such as greed. The findings of the study showed that there was an urgent need to train educators and school principals about the value of ethics in the setting of school. In addition, the Department of Basic Education should organize workshops on ethics and ethical leadership. Based on the above findings, six recommendations were proposed to the Department of Basic Education in guaranteeing that all educators and principals are adequately prepared for promoting ethical behaviour in public secondary schools. The Department of Basic Education should provide ongoing professional development opportunities for educators and principals. These opportunities should improve their awareness of ethical leadership, ethics, and teaching strategies.

Key Words: Ethics, ethical leadership, ethical behaviour, unethical behaviour, leadership, schools.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

DBE	Department of Basic Education
EL	Ethical Leadership
SASA	South African Schools Act
SACE	South African Council for Educators
EEA	Educators Employment Act
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
WHO	World Health Organization
IOL	International Online
SGB	School Governing Body
SLT	Social Learning Theory
SCLT	Social Cognitive Learning Theory

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DEFINITION AND CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

This section defines and clarifies the concepts that are used throughout the study. In this research investigation, the concepts recorded below were utilized.

Ethics

Ethics, according to Ekwokoma and Osagiobare (2021), is the study of moral precepts that govern conduct on a personal or organizational level. In educational contexts, ethics is the study of right and wrong in relation to routine actions.

Unethical leadership

Zahra, Ahmad and Waheed (2017) define unethical leadership as an action or behaviour that transgresses accepted moral and societal standards. These include dishonest, unjust, or damaging actions or behaviours, or going against integrity and fraud standards. When a group of people or a school violates the ethical standards set out by the community, it is considered unethical behaviour.

Ethical leadership

Ethical leadership is characterized by reflection, honesty, and confidence in one's own talents as a leader, dedication, adaptability to change, progress, socialization, and fairness in relationships (Zahra et al., 2017). A person of moral character who demonstrates justice, respect, honesty, responsibility, transparency, and regard for others is what Ghanem (2018) defines as an ethical leader.

Ethical behaviour

According to Moore, Detert, Trevino, Bake and Mayer (2012), the phrase "ethical behaviour of educators" describes behaviour that conforms to widely recognize ethical standards when it comes to education. As stated by Burke, Sims, Lazzara and Salar (2007), morally acceptable action in any given circumstance is what is referred to as good behaviour.

Unethical behaviour

Acting in a way that is morally unpleasant or breaching a high moral norm is considered unethical behaviour (Shepa, 2018). Unethical behaviour is defined as any behaviour that differs from what a person or society considers being morally right or appropriate.

CHAPTER ONE:

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

One of the biggest challenges facing educational systems internationally is ethical leadership. Prior to 1994, unethical behaviour practices posed significant challenges for South African public schools, negatively affecting learner achievement. In Limpopo the province, the problem of unethical leadership behaviour practices has grown to be a difficult one for every stakeholder namely learners, parents, educators, school principals and school governing body (SGB) involved in public secondary education Mthiyane & Mudadigwa (2021). Public schools are particularly accountable for carrying out their work in an ethical manner, in addition to serving the community. This chapter presents the introduction, study background, problem statement, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study and organization of the research study. The chapter also provides a brief explanation and clarification of the concepts used in the research project.

1.2 The background of the study

According to Transparency International's (TI) 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of 2020, South Africa is experiencing an increase in theft, ineptitude and misconduct, and its anti-corruption efforts are falling short of average. The lack of ethical leaders in South Africa's public schools has been a moral dilemma for many years, even before democracy was established in 1994 (Mthinyane & Mudadigwa, 2021). As a result, schools are faced with a great deal of ethical conundrums that are related to many environmental elements. Global school systems face a great deal of difficulty when it comes to ethical leadership (Reddy, 2017). While ethical leadership is a global issue, the study concentrates on the Republic of South Africa's Limpopo Province, specifically the Waterberg Education District. The Waterberg Education District, which is a part of the Waterberg District Municipality in the province of Limpopo's southern region, serves as the research context. It borders the provinces of Northwest, Mpumalanga, and Gauteng. It is 110 kilometres on the N1 North from Pretoria and is easily accessible.

The semi-rural Waterberg District is devoid of any significant industrial or commercial activity. This is one of the provinces of Limpopo's five districts. The area is renowned for its abundant wildlife, bushveld savannah, and natural beauty. According to Statistics South Africa (2022), the projected population of the Waterberg District is 762 572. Over 80% of the population lives in rural areas with few resources (Stats, 2022). There are 347 secondary public schools in the Waterberg Education District (Limpopo Province Department of Education, 2023). Furthermore, most schools are overcrowded, which poses a moral dilemma for school principals and educators in terms of maintaining discipline and taking learners' needs into account (Matsepe, Maluleke & Cross, 2019).

The Department of Basic Education provides little annual funding to most schools, which are categorized as quintile one. As a result, schools which have debts to pay face morally difficult circumstances due to a lack of funding. According to Hlongwane (2018), most schools struggle to achieve their objectives on a tight budget. Some are not adhering to the 1999 Public Finance Management Act. The ongoing unethical behaviour of school principals, educators, union leaders, and school governing bodies (SGBs) was brought to light by the Corruption Watch (2018) report. Numerous educators, principals, and members of the school governing body who were connected to high-profile scandals and other wrongdoings have tarnished the institution's reputation (Mthiyane & Mudadigwa, 2021). Isiramen (2021) avers that there is growing global agreement that unethical behaviour is pervasive in the educational system (Hlongwane, 2021). In the past ten years, a great deal of research on the impact of ethical leadership in education has been done (Reddy, 2017).

Previous studies have indicated that many schools have encountered challenges when attempting to incorporate moral leadership behaviour standards (Christensen & Darling 2020; Naidoo, 2015, Madiga, 2022). Mlambo, (2021) confirms this point, stating that ethical leadership difficulties like fraud, mishandling of school resources, sexual harassment, and absenteeism are plaguing educators and school principals. Similarly, Zahra, et al., (2017) assert that in order to avoid burnout , school principals and educators must confront the challenging work of fostering morality, ethical

ideals, and connections among educators. Furthermore, Da Jani (2015) claimed that unethical leadership behaviour practices in schools impeded the vision and mission of the institution.

1.3 Statement of the research problem

Ethics is the ability to discern between right and wrong, or evil and good, and it is demanded of those who aspire to be leaders of the people. According to Schoeman's (2012) effective leadership is always perceived as occurring when individuals or leaders chosen to leadership roles are goal-oriented and/or competent in achieving organizational goals. Equally significant, ethical leadership conduct and practices have a vital role in shaping the behaviour of followers. Concern is developing over the prevalence of unethical leadership behaviour patterns in most South African schools. The unethical behaviour practices that have destroyed many government agencies and private companies still exist in South Africa's schools. The unethical behaviour practices of principals and educators present the schools with several ethical challenges. The sheer volume of complaints that have been documented in print and other media outlets attests to the difficulties' enormity.

Key guardians of education, including principals and educators, are directly held to higher standards and are expected to practice, protect, and demonstrate ethical leadership in the context of public secondary schools. Within the setting of public secondary education, there is an issue since there is a lack of ethical leadership behaviour practice. This absence fosters an immoral atmosphere in several schools. Consequently, when this lack of ethical leadership behaviour practice surfaces in the public education sector, it is imperative that an inquiry be conducted to address it in full. In light of this, the purpose of this study is to investigate ethical leadership behaviour practices in public secondary schools, in Limpopo province, as well as how educators, deputies, and school principals in particular public secondary schools view it in their daily operations.

1.4 Research questions

1.4.1 Main research question

- ❖ Will ethical leadership behaviour practices resolve ethical challenges in public secondary schools?

1.4.2 Sub research questions

- ❖ What are elements of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools from the perspective of educators and school principals?
- ❖ What are the causes of unethical leadership practices in public secondary schools?
- ❖ What strategies could be employed by educators and school principals to ensure the promotion of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools?
- ❖ To what extent are educators and school principals effective in the enhancement of ethical practices in public secondary schools?

1.5 Objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate ethical leadership behaviour practices in selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province.

- ❖ To determine the elements of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools from the perspective of educators and school principals
- ❖ To investigate the causes of unethical leadership practices in public secondary schools
- ❖ To determine the strategies that could be employed by educators and school principals to ensure the promotion of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools.
- ❖ To examine the extent to which educators and school principals are effective in the enhancement of ethical practices in public secondary schools.

1.6 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine whether ethical leadership behaviour practices will resolve ethical challenges in public secondary schools in Limpopo Province by investigating ethical leadership behaviour practices in schools. The

study aims to advance knowledge, improve school leadership and ultimately benefit learners, educators and the broader educational community. The study is equally significant because the study on ethical leadership behaviour practices aimed to support educator ethical development programs that would lead to better teaching practices and learning initiatives. In addition, the aim of the research is to help educators and school principals to make decisions that are fair and honest. Furthermore, the study sought to investigate strategies that educators and school principals could use to promote ethical leadership behaviour practices within the school. The study sought to explore the factors that cause unethical behaviour practices in the school environment. Its aims include fostering a healthy school climate, encouraging moral decision-making among learners and educators, and fostering a sense of respect, accountability, and trust among every stakeholder involved in the schools. Above and beyond, the study aims to decrease unethical behaviour practices prevalent in schools.

1.7 Significance of the study

Ethical leadership practices in schools are important to study because they influence the school's climate, values, and norms, which have an impact on learner well-being and academic performance. The study's findings will benefit the Department of Basic Education, school principals, learners, educators, and others who want to conduct research on related topics.

The study on ethical leadership practices in schools will help the Department of Basic Education improve its ethical guidelines and school improvement initiatives. Ethical educators serve as role models for learners, influencing their moral development, character, and sense of responsibility. The research is significant because it can provide additional insight into the unethical activities that exist in public secondary schools. The study's findings will help to provide information those educators, principals, and learners can use to advance ethically conscious educational environments.

1.8 Organization of the research study

This research is divided into five chapters, which are arranged as follows:

Chapter one: Orientation and background

The study's backdrop and introduction are given in this chapter. The chapter includes the study's goals and objectives, problem statement, the significance of the study, research questions, and definitions and explanations of key terms employed in the investigation.

Chapter two: Literature review

This chapter reviews the research on ethical leadership behaviours, with a focus on practices that are grounded in Albert Bandura's (1973 & 1999) social learning theory and 1978 social cognitive theory.

Chapter three: Research methodology

This chapter covers the research paradigm and methods. Presentations of the study research approach, design, population, and sample.

Chapter four: Data analysis and interpretation

Data collection, analysis, and presentation are covered in chapter four.

Chapter five: Summary, recommendations and conclusion

The summary, suggestions derived from the study results, and closing remarks are covered in this chapter.

1.9 Chapter summary

The orientation and backdrop of the investigation are the main topics of chapter one. The problem statement and the study's aims and objectives were also emphasized. The relevant literature on ethical leadership behaviour practices in public secondary schools is presented and analysed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provided an overview of the study. This chapter presents an outline of the literature regarding ethics and ethical leadership. The chapter examines challenges of ethical leadership behaviour practices. The study critically analysed previous studies, empirical evidence and existing literature related to the phenomenon under study in order to elicit more information into the research questions, which provided a foundation for the theoretical framework. In addition, the chapter discusses pertinent literature regarding the practices of ethical leadership behaviour in public secondary schools.

2.1.1 Ethics

Ethics is defined as norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour needed in certain professional or social settings (Daniel & Sapo, 2021). The word "ethics" is derived from the Greek word "ethos" which means "character" or "behaviour" (Mathur & Corley, 2014). It is described as "the science of morality" by Aydin (2013). Decisions and behaviours based on ethics are in line with our moral convictions (Ryan, 2016). Whether identified or not, ethics is a set of moral principles that guide every decision made in schools, from assigning consequences to having educators speak to learners in class (Matur & Corley, 2014).

Worldwide, ethics is fundamental to educational practice (Crawford, 2017). The study of ethics focuses on moral reasoning and concepts that determine what is good or evil, right or wrong (Gottardello & Mar Pamies, 2019); it directs our actions as humans. When faced with moral conundrums, ethics helps one make morally sound choices (Sigh, 2021). It imparts the appropriate behavioural standards that both educators and learners should know (Yildirim, Albez & Akan, 2020). When it comes to managing interpersonal problems and making decisions regarding many elements of their job, educators' general practice is guided by ethics (Shapira, 2020).

Ethical leadership is a fundamental element of effective leadership. In each difficult situation on school premises, ethics empowers educators to act as leaders and make moral decisions with ease. According to Naidoo (2015), the educators' code of ethics establishes unambiguous standards and guidelines to direct conduct and promote the professionalism and excellence of educators.

When it comes to behaviour in the classroom, ethics supports accountability, respect, discipline, and honesty. Reddy (2017) opines that ethics is making the appropriate decisions and serving as a guide to affect behaviours. Furthermore, it facilitates rule compliance and responsible behaviour in both educators and learners. Education ethics contribute to a school's smooth operation (Dladla, 2020). It supports educators' and learners' investigation of moral dilemmas, conversations about ideas with others, and development of educator accountability (Kleinhans, 2017). By virtue of ethics, moral behaviour on the part of educators positively influences learners' moral development, and schools are transformed into settings where moral behaviour is taught (Balci, 2016).

2.1.2 Ethical leadership

A thorough discussion of the concept of ethical leadership is necessary before moving on to the specifics of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools. "The demonstrative normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" is how Brown, Trevino and Harrison (2005) define ethical leadership. According to this concept, a manager should regularly communicate ethics to staff members through words and actions. A moral manager would be honest and fair (Trevino, Hartman, & Brown, 2000).

Schwartz (2015) states that ethical leadership involves increased trust, increased commitment and effort, less cynicism, decreased counterproductive behaviour, increased willingness to report issues, and decreased bullying. According to Ishak,

Haron and Ismail (2019), ethical leaders act and behave in a way that benefits other staff members while also exercising self-control over their own conduct.

The worldwide community's advocacy for effective and efficient educators in schools has been put to the test by the application of ethical leadership (Mthiyane & Mudadigwa, 2021). Not to mention, it's more crucial than ever to pursue ethical leadership (Naidoo, 2015). Reddy (2017) echoes this sentiment when he suggests that scholars and researchers have focused more on ethical leadership. According to Yasir and Mohamad (2016), moral leadership has an impact on the institutional moral culture of a school.

Given the kind and extent of unethical behaviour that is documented on social media, South African schools require moral leadership. The main responsibility of an ethical educator is to treat their co-workers, learners, and other stakeholders with decency, accountability, learning, and sharing. Respect and compassion are essential components of ethical behaviour for all educators and learners in the school (Mlambo, 2022). Empathy and compassion are promoted in the school by upholding others' rights and dignity, establishing justice and fairness, and nurturing these values. Educators appreciate their colleagues and treat everyone equally. They also perform their work with excellence.

2.2 Elements of ethical leadership practices

Moral principles that guide everyone's moral behaviour within the educational environment are included in ethical leadership. The success of any school depends critically on its ability to lead ethically (Hlongwane, 2021). Ethical aspects are the elements or principles or characteristics that characterize the mindset of a person who continuously maintains high moral standards (Shapira, 2020). Ethical standards can motivate conduct in a number of different ways in the school setting.

The capacity of ethical values to foster a thriving workplace is what makes them so important. The advancement of principles like integrity, responsibility, and decency depends on ethical norms (Jimenez, 2019). The basis of ethical behaviour is found in

ethical principles (Shapira, 2020). The study now addresses important elements that are essential to the growth of morally sound, effective leadership.

2.2.1 Respect

Dladla (2020) points out that respect for educators, learners, and parents in the school is a fundamental component of ethical leadership. Respect, in the words of Shapira (2020), entails showing their followers that one supports their approaches, ideas, standards, and values. Briefly, leaders who are respectful treat others like deserving people. Everyone in the school should be treated with respect, according to the ethical leadership component (Dladla, 2020). In the same line, respect is a fundamental component of ethical accountability. It is my view that everyone will be respected by ethical educators, regardless of their roles within the school.

Daft (2014) asserts that one facet of being an ethical leader is upholding one's integrity and being truthful with followers, clients, shareholders, and the general public. Moreover, being honest also means being trustworthy and not lying (WGU, 2020:13). Additionally, a leader who upholds ethics respects each team member by listening to their varied contributions and considering opposing viewpoints (Northhouse, 2013). Gaining trust can be ensured by treating people with respect (Dladla, 2020). A successful leader upholds the complex ethic of respect. The aspect of respect and trust is what determines a leader's credibility.

Credibility as a leader depends on respect (Odole, 2018). A leader that is respected is paid attention to by their following (Hlongwane, 2021). Those who exhibit respect and selflessness and prioritize the interests of others over their own are considered ethical educators (Hlongwane, 2021). Finally, a moral and ethical educator promotes ethical awareness by acting with justice, fairness, integrity, and honesty toward others (Mlambo, 2022). Leaders must be fair, believable, honest, and trustworthy in order to practice ethical leadership (Kleinhans, 2017). Respect is seen as one of the key elements of moral leadership (Hlongwane, 2021).

2.2.2 Honesty

Honest and courteous leaders are recognized as ethical leaders (Odole, 2018). Being honest requires school administrators to tell it like it is, to act fairly, and to be open and honest with everyone around them. Ethical educators are compassionate leaders who make just and impartial decisions (Villirilli, 2021).

Daft (2014) asserts that one facet of being an ethical leader is upholding one's integrity and being truthful with followers, clients, shareholders, and the general public. Moreover, being honest also means being trustworthy and not lying to the people you are leading. According to some researchers, integrity is the main source of trust (Wang & Hsieh, 2014); others regard honesty as a source of trust (Avey, Werrising & Palavski, 2012; Northhouse, 2013).

Establishing trust with subordinates is a necessary ethical characteristic that should be paired with honesty in leadership (Tripathy, 2019). Sincerity is critical in all facets of school leadership and is employed in the development of bonds between individuals among all the stakeholders at schools. Hlongwane (2021) argued that educators and principals will get the respect and loyalty of their staff members if they act honourably. Being dishonest encourages people to engage in unethical behaviour, such as giving false information. A bond that is formed between and among people was described by Lymn and Adler (2011). Being able to rely on someone to act in a way that will improve one's own health and wellbeing is a sign of trust, which is a mental and emotional bond.

Ethics in leadership is characterized by the principle of integrity. Trust is important from all angles, not just in and of itself but also in relation to other factors like job satisfaction, performance, motivation, and involvement (Mesekiran, 2016). It has to do with having high expectations that will not be broken. Similar to this, Raichur (2015) asserts that integrity, honesty, and other values flow from the top down; if the leader values honesty, exemplifies it, stresses it, gives instructors the freedom to practice it, and celebrates it, then the rest of the organization will follow suit.

To sum up, in order to encourage a strong work ethic in both teachers and students, school leaders should embody these components of ethical leadership. As a result, educators and principals of educational institutions need to be aware of these

components of moral leadership. For school principals and educators to maintain high standards of ethical behaviour, they should adhere to these ethical principles. The foundation of effective and efficient ethical leadership is honesty, accountability, integrity, and respect.

2.2.3 Transparency

Transparency, in the words of Tielkemeier (2023), is the practice of being honest with others—no matter how difficult that may be—and being open about mistakes and wrongdoing. Leading with transparency also encourages accountability behaviours in school principals and educators (Velaquez, Andre, Shanks & Meyer, 2017). In the context of education, transparency entails maintaining an open line of communication, welcoming criticism, and providing people with the knowledge they require to complete their jobs (Villirilli, 2021). It is my view that transparency permits learners and other stakeholders begin to trust an ethical educator or principal who is open and honest.

2.2.4 Accountability

According to Villirilli (2021), accountability means accepting responsibility for one's choices, actions, and outcomes. Accountability, as defined by WHO (2017), is the duty of an organization, like a school, to answer to its subordinates and hold them responsible for attaining goals and outcomes in compliance with the program budget, regulations, and standards. Accountable leaders consent to be held responsible for their choices and deeds (Reddy, 2017).

According to a recent study, responsible leaders are truthful when disclosing details of their reactions to pertinent parties (Othman & Rahman, 2014). Accountability systems aid in ensuring that educators act in a way that fosters a secure, encouraging, and educational environment. When resolving moral quandaries, ethical leaders must exhibit kindness and compassion. Ethical leaders are imbued with the qualities of kindness, compassion, generosity, and benevolence. When faced with moral dilemmas, educators who show mercy and compassion foster moral behaviour on school grounds.

Further, ethical leaders who exhibit accountability, openness, and responsibility cultivate trust. This trust is essential for collaboration and effective communication within the school community. Maintaining moral behaviour in schools requires accountability because it fosters equity, certainty, transparency, and ongoing learning.

When it comes to encouraging ethical conduct practices in the school, educators who uphold moral values, including honesty, fairness, responsibility, and transparency, are more successful and efficient (Kaya, 2022). Another aspect of accountability is making sure that moral and legal standards are respected. As a result, honesty gives principals and educators confidence to carry out their duties in schools. For their subordinates to follow them, school leaders must constantly be loyal to themselves (Shapira, 2020).

Ethics in leadership is characterized by the principle of integrity. Trust is important from all angles, not just in and of itself but also in relation to other factors like job satisfaction, performance, motivation, and involvement (Mesekiran, 2016). Trust has to do with having high expectations that will not be broken. Similarly, Raichur (2015) indicates that transparency in the school environment builds trust, respect and honesty among educators and learners. Hlongwane (2018) argues that if the leader is honest, the rest of the people within the school will emulate him or her. Mlambo (2022) corroborates the latter statement by asserting that If the leader is honest, personally demonstrates honesty and emphasizes it, this empowers educators and learners to be honest and celebrate honesty.

The research indicates that in order to encourage a strong work ethic in educators and learners, educators and school principals need to embody these elements of ethical leadership (Hlongwane, 2021). As a result, educators and principals of educational institutions need to be aware of these elements of moral leadership. To uphold high ethical standards, school principals must adhere to these ethical principles. Educators and principals can influence or inculcate interest in their job, ideals, or strengthen relationships with co-workers and learners by putting ethical leadership concepts into practice. The situation has gotten worse since there are still

no sanctions for unethical behaviour, and school principals and educators are not holding themselves accountable (Mthiyane & Mudadigwa, 2021).

Educators that exhibit these qualities—honesty, respect, transparency, accountability— are considered ethical. Results from previous research have supported this notion that the commitment of educators and learners to the school is influenced by ethical leaders' actions that demonstrate respect, reliability, honesty, respect, accountability, and transparency (Brown & Trevino, 2006).

2.3 The causes of unethical leadership behaviour

The most difficult problem facing the majority of South African public secondary schools

has historically been unethical activities. Prior to 1994, the South African government enacted a number of laws and regulations to encourage moral behaviour among all public employees and to lessen the prevalence of unethical behaviour practices in the various ministries, especially the Department of Basic Education.

For instance, the South African Constitution (1996) in section 195(a) states that public administration must be accountable and a high standard of professional ethics must be protected. Furthermore, the South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act 84 of 1994) stipulates the ethical conduct of school governing body members and learners. Thus, the Act creates a positive teaching and learning environment in schools.

Among other things, the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) (Act of 76 of 1996) specifies what constitutes ethical behaviour for educators. The SACE Act 31 of 2000, which was passed by the South African Council for Educators, stipulates, among other things, that educators must act in a way that upholds the dignity of the teaching profession and refrains from defaming it.

Ethical quandaries and significant violations of the code of ethics have persisted despite all efforts by the South African government and Department of Basic

Education to stop the rise in unethical behaviour practices in public secondary schools (Mthiyane & Mudadigwa, 2021). There are several factors that contribute to unethical behaviour at public secondary schools, some of which are covered below: Thus, the goal of the study is to ascertain what factors contribute to unethical leadership behaviour practices in the public secondary schools of Limpopo's province.

2.3.1 Greed as the prime motivator of unethical practices

When wealth abundance and salary disparities coexist, some educators and school principals become avaricious and resort to immoral behaviour to bring about justice (Belle & Cantarelli, 2017). In addition, Winterich, Mittal and Morales (2014) found that those who prioritize their personal interests also have a tendency to act more dishonestly. Put differently, high levels of unethical behaviour are caused by conflicts of interest. According to Reynolds and Hirsh (2014), educators are more inclined to act unethically if they believe they are receiving unjust treatment.

It is possible for the probability of engaging in unethical behaviour to increase when one is surrounded by corrupt co-workers (Belle & Cantarelli, 2017). According to Yam, Reynolds and Hirsh (2014), educators are more inclined to act unethically if they believe that their peers are treating them unfairly. Moreover, it has been observed consistently that peer pressure has a significant impact on ethical judgment. Educators and school principals are more inclined to participate in unethical behaviour themselves if they witness others engaged in it (O'fallon & Butterfield, 2012).

Hitch (2015), who contends that school principals and educators engage in unethical conduct in order to enrich themselves, lends credence to the latter statement. Indeed, it is possible that educators may act unethically because they are purely greedy. Selfishness and moral lapses in schools were seen as the root causes of these social evils.

2.3.2 The operating environment as a factor in unethical practices

According to Prentice (2014), certain elements go into unethical leadership behaviour practices. These reasons are:

(1) Environmental factors:

The workplace might encourage moral or immoral behaviour without the employee even being aware of it. To put it another way, the surroundings can influence educators and school principals to act improperly (Madiga, 2022). According to the study, this environment makes it difficult for school principals and educators to maintain their performance and talents in line with high ethical standards. Mthinyane and Mudadigwa (2021) indicate that pressure to participate in unethical actions, such as ignoring ethical considerations in decision-making processes, comes from an unfavourable operating environment and intense rivalry for some educators and principals. Establishing a supportive atmosphere where educators are at ease talking about moral conundrums promotes an ethically conscious culture.

(2) The Department of Basic Education's shortage of resources:

Madiga (2022) posits that shortage of resources is one environmental element that fuels the growth of unethical leadership practices in public secondary schools. Cheteni and Shandika (2017) argue that lack of suitable qualified staff encourages unethical practices among some educators. Sabir (2021) asserts that immoral behaviour practices in many institutions make the working atmosphere unsuitable for teaching and learning.

(3) Lack of ethical leadership:

Hlongwane (2021) avers that unethical behaviour within the school operational environment is encouraged to go unchecked by unethical educators and principals. Cheteni and Shindika (2017) assert that the Department of Basic Education cannot effectively address the moral deterioration in the workplace. When Madiga (2022) notes that teachers and school administrators are well aware that no legal action will be taken against them even if they steal a penny, it supports the aforementioned claim. Unethical behaviours are sustained by these lax penalties for corrupt activity. The educational climate will be adversely impacted by educators and principals who lack ethical ideals.

It is apparent from the research that to promote an ethical climate in schools, the Department of Basic Education needs to provide a setting of transparency and responsibility for educators' and principals' unethical behaviour (Mthiyane & Mudadigwa, 2021). According to Jabhar (2022), there is a correlation between the work environment and ethical leadership practices and the productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness of the teaching staff.

2.3.3 Inadequate training of educators and school principals

While it is often expected of educators to act ethically, many of them have not benefited from specialized training or courses in their educator preparation programs that would have made them ethically equipped (Mathur & Corley, 2014). Thus, inadequate preparation makes school principals and educators vulnerable to misconduct.

Hlongwane (2018) asserts that inadequate training of educators and school principals revealed itself in the poor implementation of the Department of Education legislation and policies. Teaching is a profession that is infused with a code of conduct and work ethics. As a result, educators and principals who lack ethical training are vulnerable to misconduct.

2.3.4 Lack of ethics education in schools

Education programs do not place as much emphasis on ethics as they do on other professional school subjects like law and medicine (Mathur & Corley, 2014). Ethics are crucial, especially in educational settings (Gottardello & Mar Pamies, 2019). It is a crucial element that moulds ethical behaviour modelling in both educators and learners. Ethics helps educators discern between morally right and wrong behaviour in several facets of their work. Additionally, ethics develops and demonstrates good character. Educators are held in high regard both inside and outside of the classroom as models of moral behaviour who can firmly and clearly distinguish between good and bad (Bergman, 2013). Making ethical decisions is necessary to

address many of the issues facing educators today. In light of this, ethics is extremely important in all facets of school life.

Unfortunately, the majority of public secondary schools have a significant prevalence of unethical behaviours and practices (Mthinyane & Mudadigwa, 2021). Educators' discontent, poor work ethics, high absenteeism, lack of personal enrichment, and poor working relationships are the results of this. From a different angle, it may also be said that managers must lead ethically in public schools and that recently appointed school principals' ethical leadership behaviours are not widely accepted by educators (Erani & Ozbalen, 2017).

Madiga (2022) postulates that the violation of generally acceptable norms, values, and standards results from a lack of ethics. Most educators, school principals, learners, and school governing body members engage in unethical behaviour because they have low ethical standards (Hlongwane, 2018).

2.4 Strategies of promoting ethical behaviour leadership practices

2.4.1 Modelling ethical behaviour

The application of role models has a profound impact in teaching morality and improving character. Educators are considered to be the role models in character education. Educators are perceived as positive role models by learners and parents. Furthermore, educators play a crucial role in how learners and educators' attitude and beliefs are formed (Corrigan et al., 2010).

Ethical educators hold a powerful position in stimulating organizational behaviour like that of schools (Guo et al., 2023). Educators are there to instil respect, accountability, and responsibility in learners and other stakeholders. As they occupy influential positions, they must teach the learners how to behave morally. Huang, Du, Lu, Ma, Lai and Li (2022) opine that it is through ethical behaviour modelling that an ethical leader will inspire followers to follow a moral code of conduct, and will assist schools in implementing ethical policies and processes. Learners look up to the educators and school principals as their role models, because they are school

leaders who they must emulate. At school, subordinates take cues from a range of ethical behaviours displayed by their educators and school principals.

Role modelling behaviour can be an effective contributor to educators' moral and character development. Educators have the obligation to show respect, fairness, and to be transparent and accountable to their followers because the aim of education is the full development of learners. Principals, deputies, and educators are positioned strategically to promote moral behaviour that is both acceptable and excellent.

Honesty, intelligence, trustworthiness, integrity, and fairness are all essential elements of a role model leader (Tushar, 2017). If leadership is seen to be ethical in all that it does, it too will have a lasting influence on subordinates (Tak et al., 2019). Many previous studies indicate that ethical leaders encourage constructive emotion, and the development of a strong bond/relationship with their followers (Tushar, 2017). Ethical educators are eager to enhance the ethical behaviour of their subordinates by providing guidance. Ethical leaders set an example of ethical behaviours for their co-workers.

Ethical leaders are reliable role models for their subordinates and treat them with respect and dignity. Further, ethical leaders motivate educators and learners to work harder toward school development (Chareosap, Virakul, Senasuk & Anymau, 2019). Ethical leaders provide an example for the school by acting as credible sources of respect, honesty, integrity, and trust. Educators and principals inspire a sense of responsibility in the behaviours other educators and learners.

2.4.2 Ongoing educator development program

The efficacy and efficiency of educators' character education and ethics programs can be enhanced by ongoing professional development and training. The persistence and growth of unethical behaviour patterns, such as hostile work settings, have been facilitated by inadequate ethical leadership knowledge and abilities. Programs for training educators would cover how to deal with issues pertaining to ethics, morals, and values.

Since only on-going education and training can guarantee a high level of knowledge and keep educators abreast of new research on how learners might acquire acceptable behaviour, continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) is a crucial component of educator education (News Media, 2017). According to Fernando and Bandara (2020), educators and school principals should receive ethical behaviour training and awareness campaigns at schools. Ongoing educator development will assist the educators to cope with the ethical challenges they are encountering daily in the school. Educators will acquire relevant knowledge and skills to help them in the promotion of ethical behaviour practices.

2.4.3 Implementation of legislation and policies in the school setting

To combat the pervasive spread of unethical behaviour in public institutions, the South African government has enacted a number of laws and policies since 1994 to promote good ethical behaviour among all public servants, particularly educators. Section 195 (a) of the South African Constitution (1996) states that public administration must be accountable and maintain a high standard of professional ethics. This statement is supported by Manyaka and Sebola (2013) who state that all government officials and departments must carry out their duties to the best of their abilities in a fair, moral, and ethical manner. In other words, public institutions such as schools are expected to engage in ethical behaviour.

Batho-Pele, which means "people first", was launched by the South African government in 2005. Its principles include service standards, information, openness, consultation, value for money, and redress. Furthermore, this legislation requires public servants to not abuse their positions and to treat all people equally. The law aims to improve the integrity of public administration. Public officials are required to follow ethical practices at all times.

To encourage ethical behaviour in schools, the Department of Basic Education passed a number of laws, such as the South African School Act 84 (1996) 1994 which stipulates the ethical conduct of learners and school governing body members. In addition, the law provides measures of discipline. For instance, the

disciplinary process taking place must be fair, just, corrective, consistent and educative.

Additionally, the Department of Basic Education created the Educators Employment Act, 76 (EEA, 1988), which outlines the duties and ethical conduct of educators at work. Furthermore, the Department of Education established the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA, 1999) with the view of promoting ethical practices.

A growing percentage of educators and school principals are acting unethically in the educational system despite the laws and regulations that are in place (Mthinyane & Mudadigwa, 2021). Even with strong legal and regulatory protections, unethical behaviour in schools persists. Hlongwane (2018) asserts that educators have a moral obligation to follow Department of Basic Education policies and procedures both inside and outside of the classroom. The laws and school policies have not always been applied uniformly by educators and school principals.

In conclusion, the research suggests that to help educators encourage ethical behaviour, laws and policies pertaining to schools should be put into place and maintained. According to Dladla (2020), to stop unethical behaviour practices by educators and school principals in schools, the Department of Basic Education should carry out laws and school regulations as prescribed. Likewise, Madiga (2021) concurs with the previous statement that the Department of Basic Education ought to designate a monitoring team to oversee the application of these regulations to address these moral dilemmas in an effective and efficient manner. Supporting educators and school principals in putting laws and regulations into practice is necessary.

2.5 Effectiveness and efficiency of educators in the promotion of ethical behaviour practices

Several factors can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of educators in the promotion of ethical behaviour practices in the school environment. These include ethics as part of the school curriculum and support and monitoring and development from the Department of Basic Education.

2.5.1 Ethics as part of the school curriculum

According to Yirei (2014), since schools are structurally open systems, ethics in school administration is immensely important. According to Reddy (2017), educators face challenging moral decisions in their school environments.

These moral dilemmas put their decision-making processes to the test. Consequently, ethics and its applicability should be taught to educators in schools. The moral atmosphere in schools is influenced, either directly or indirectly, by the moral dimension of educators' instruction (Balci, 2016). Additionally, educators have the power to affect learners' moral behaviour on a psychological and spiritual level (Madiga, 2022).

Any effective leader in society, especially in the school, must possess ethics (Costa et al., 2022). The value of ethical behaviour in the school can be better understood by educators if ethics education is inclusive and respects a variety of viewpoints. For every institution or group to flourish, ethics and ethical leadership are essential. Including ethics education in the curriculum aids in educators' comprehension of the ideals and guiding principles of moral behaviour.

Ethics of the school therefore gives direction on what constitutes the acceptable and non-acceptable policies. Educators with a strong sense of ethics are more likely to encourage ethical work behaviour within an organization, like the school (Guo, Xue, He & Yasmin, 2023). Ethics ensures successful school and its environment.

Hlongwane (2018) maintains that the prosperity of the school and its surroundings is ensured by ethics. Consequently, educators must understand that teaching is fundamentally value-laden, moral, and ethical endeavour. Most educators lack ethical awareness (Madiga, 2022). Ethics was not taught to some of the educators in their postsecondary education. Educators and school principals with moral character and integrity are desperately needed (Reddy, 2017). Many of the ethical concerns regarding the falling standards in schools stem from these unethical behaviours.

Encouraging ethical behaviour in the school is crucial, and there are several things that might make educators more effective and efficient at doing this. Empirical research has shown how ethics education and conduct guidelines can enhance educators' behaviour (Mlambo, 2021). An ethical educator always exemplifies the high values they uphold. A distinct concept of leadership that emphasizes the importance of ethics in the exercise of successful and efficient leadership is called ethical leadership (Albeza, Yildirim & Akan 2020).

Strong ethics and an ethical fibre that guides their behaviour and decision-making are essential qualities for principals and educators (Hlongwane, 2021). Educators with knowledge of ethics have a greater chance of motivating learners and other educators, as well as achieving the school's goals (Susilowati, Kusmuriyanto & Abiprayu, 2021). Good educators make decisions based on their own ethical standards, decide what is right or wrong, and behave appropriately to uphold ethical standards.

Respecting and honouring their subordinates is how effective educators build strong, positive relationships with their learners. The ethical standards of the school are successfully and efficiently established by ethical educators through the ideals they uphold in both their actions and words. Educators have a significant influence on how educators and learners behave in the school.

Over time, improvements can be achieved by routinely evaluating the success of ethical education initiatives and making necessary modifications in response to input. Including ethics education in the curriculum aids in educators' understanding of the underlying values and principles that underpin moral behaviour. Educators who invest in their own professional growth and ethical development will greatly inspire their colleagues and the principal of the school.

By regularly assessing the effectiveness of ethics education programs and adjusting in response to feedback, improvements can be made over time. According to a study by Kalshoven et al. (2016), moral educators are productive because they have clear expectations for their staff members. According to Yasir and Mohamad (2016), one of the essential components of ethical educator skill and capacity is ethical

awareness. The primary objectives of ethics training are to establish common standards of behaviour and to acquire information and skills that may be useful in identifying unethical activity.

2.5.2 Support, monitoring, and development from the Department of Basic Education

The Department of Basic Education (2021) has the following as its strategic goals: monitoring, development, and enhancement of moral educators; and effective and efficient support.

According to Welsh and Ordonez (2014), monitoring lessens the belief that unethical behaviour goes unnoticed, and that the perpetrator would escape consequences (Mazar & Aggarwal, 2011). Monitoring makes people aware of their moral principles and promotes self-awareness (Belle & Cantarelli, 2017). Educators will try to be truthful and behave morally when they are aware that they are being watched. Monitoring is a tool that can be used to help educators act morally in an open and transparent manner. This approach encourages moral behaviour.

Any school's success depends on the constant assistance of educators and principals. As a result, to keep an eye on the job being done, educators require consistent support from department officials. It can make a big difference if educators and school administrators consistently practice what they teach. For a school, like any other organization, to meet its performance goals, it needs to be run by moral instructors. Educators ought to get supervision that is ethically sound.

Educators must adhere to moral norms and ethical behaviours to enforce them in the school (Zehra et al., 2017). Dladla (2020) opines that educators who make an investment in their own moral and personal development are better able to motivate learners and other educators in the school. The ethical behaviour challenges encountered on a national, continental, and international level are presented and discussed in the section that follows.

2.5.3 Indian perspective of ethical behaviour challenges

India is one of the five nations with the most unethical and corrupt behaviours worldwide (Education World, 2022). Kirya (2019) agrees, pointing out that unethical and fraudulent methods by educators, school principals, and education department officials have ruined human development, increased inequality, and damaged public trust. According to Sigh (2021), a plethora of corrupt activities and maladministration include frequent incidents of embezzlement of school funds allocated by the education department to purchase teaching and learning materials, leakage of examination question papers, and plagiarism. Rani (2014) also reveals that contractors pay kickbacks to school principals, school governing body members, and education departmental officials in exchange for awarding those tenders. Furthermore, he claims that educators bribe education department officials to be appointed to positions in government schools.

Despite the passing of the Comprehensive Prevention of Corruption Act in 1988, which was intended to combat widespread unethical practices and misdemeanours, unethical behaviour in schools is uncontrollable (Mthiyane, 2018). It is obvious that India's educational legal framework requires strengthening. Furthermore, strong ethical leadership is required to reduce the rise in unethical behaviour by school principals and educators.

2.5.4 Botswana perspective of ethical behaviour challenges

In the Corruption Perception Index for 2019, Botswana was ranked 34th out of 180 countries assessed (Economic Report on Africa, 2020). Corruption scandals have risen sharply in various public institutions, including the education sector, contrary to expectations.

Education in Botswana has been shaken by numerous instances of unethical behaviour and poor management (Baputaki, 2009; Serite, 2018; Kabelo, 2021). This is supported by Basimabotlhe's (2017) account of a case of misappropriation of school finances in a particular Botswana school. Similarly, Diraditsile and Rankopo (2018) note that Botswana has a pervasive culture of sexual assault and discrimination against female students. In a different development, Baputaki (2009)

revealed results that were investigated for possible cheating, according to an official from the Ministry of Education's purported allegations of examination misconduct. Equally important, the misallocation and delivery of books to public primary schools cost the Ministry of Education millions of rand (Good, 1994).

Unethical behaviours continue to be a major obstacle even after the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime was established to combat corruption, fraud, and misappropriation of public funds. According to empirical research, there is a lack of an implementation framework and unclear communication of Botswana's ethical norms (Cheteni & Shandika, 2017). Based on the information above, it is clear that unethical behaviour practices are still rampant despite government's effort to eradicate it.

2.5.5 South African perspective of ethical behaviour challenges

One of the biggest challenges affecting educational systems worldwide, but especially in South Africa, is unethical leadership practices. The 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International (TI) (2020), the global coalition against unethical practices showed that South Africa is on the rise with the plundering, incompetence, misdemeanours, malfeasance, and malpractices (International Transparency, 2020). Naidoo (2015) corroborates the latter sentiment as he points out that South Africa has become fertile ground where malpractices are rampant. Similarly, Serfontein and De Waal (2015) indicate that unethical practices and corruption have infiltrated schools in South Africa. South African schools have become hotspots for corrupt practices. Moreover, Mthiyane and Mudadigwa (2021) argue that South African schools are no longer institutions of higher learning but rather vendors for poor quality education. In same vein, Van Zyl (2014) and Corruption Watch reports (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 & 2021) maintain that educators' misconduct has increased at an alarming rate.

In closely examining malpractices in the provincial sphere, the School Governing Body Council of South Africa (2021) reported on the alleged corruption within the Limpopo Department of Education relating to promotional posts. Cronje (2016) corroborates the aforesaid statement as he reveals the jobs-for-cash misdemeanour

and Limpopo Department of Education textbook scandal. Equally important, Serfontein and De Waal (2015) and Corruption Watch (2020) revealed that some educators display dishonesty by reporting late or leaving school early. They further indicate that absenteeism has reached unacceptable levels in South Africa. Additionally, the embezzlement of school funds and awarding of tenders to close family relatives erode the reputation of the schools and education sector (Singh & Twala, 2015).

In another development, a report by the South Africa Council for Educators (SACE) (2020) reveals the alleged involvement of about 650 school principals and educators in diverse misconduct, which includes assault of learners, verbal abuse, alcohol abuse, harassment, assault, sexual misconduct, and negligence. Equally important, the South African Department of Basic Education of South Africa enacted diverse laws and regulations to curb corrupt practices and misdemeanours in the education sector. For instance, the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998, requires educators and school principals to maintain high ethical standards. Similarly, the Constitution of South Africa section 195 of 1996 compels all public servants to promote high ethical behaviour.

Despite efforts made to combat unethical practices and corruption in the education sector, there are pervasive unethical practices still taking place in the school system (Dladla, 2020). Unethical behaviour in schools eradicates public trust and heightens inequality. It is clear that perpetrators of corruption and unethical behaviour use loopholes in the legislative framework to enrich themselves (Naidoo, 2012). The Department of Basic Education takes lenient action against school principals and educators who are alleged to have engaged in unethical behaviour (Dladla, 2020). In addition, Dladla (2020) further opines that there is no consequence management in the Department of Education.

In conclusion, it is apparent from the research that little progress has been made on the promotion of ethical behaviour practices of educators and school principals on and of the school premises. The crisis in ethical leadership behaviour practices is still a great concern not only in South Africa but to the rest of the world (Basoro &

Tefera, 2021). Ethical leadership is important to ensure sound ethical decisions are taken as well as build the long-term success of the schools.

2.6 Conceptual framework

According to Galleto and Bureros (2017), a conceptual framework is a textual representation of the research concepts and relationships that guides the study. The conceptual framework helps the researcher to formulate the hypothesis and plan the investigation. The conceptual framework is essential to this study because it provides a clear and consistent understanding of ethical leadership principles (Grant, 2014), thereby ensuring that all stakeholders involved at the school have a shared vision and set of values to refer to.

The researcher opted for this conceptual framework because it provides a roadmap for the research process. The latter statement is corroborated by Amankwaa (2016) who articulated that a conceptual framework in ethical leadership behaviour practices provides a structured approach for understanding and implementing ethical principles. The conceptual framework assists educators to navigate complex ethical dilemmas and establish a shared moral compass, and it guides decision-making processes (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). The following conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 2.1 below is used to conceptualize the research: Ethical leadership behaviour practices.

Figure 2.1: Ethical Leadership



Figure 2.1 represents the conceptual framework that guides the study.

2.7 Theoretical framework

Phillips (2000) asserts that a theoretical framework provides both criteria for accounting for knowledge in a non-foundationalist and post-positivist manner, as well as guides knowledge creation. Comparably, Elsenhart (1991) described a theoretical framework as a framework that directs research by means of a formal theory that is limited using a stable, cogent explanation of certain relationships and events.

Furthermore, Grant (2014) clarifies that the theoretical framework serves as the structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions. This research investigates ethical leadership behaviour practices in selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province.

Albert Bandura (1977, 1973, 1999) developed the Social Learning Theory (SLT) and Social Cognitive Learning Theory (SCLT), which postulate that learning is a cognitive process that occurs in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement. These theories are the foundation of this research. Aggressive behaviour modification theory developed by Bandura in (1973) states that when people with behavioural issues have access to a constructive behaviour model, their behaviour can be modified.

Because unethical behaviour is a behavioural issue that needs to be positively addressed in order to be altered, Bandura's theoretical framework is important to this study. In this sense, Bandura (1986) argues clearly that an undesirable behaviour can be changed provided a consistent modification strategy is applied.

According to research by Green and Peil (2009), this theory offers a paradigm for comprehending, projecting, and modifying human behaviour. In terms of behaviour, certain researchers, including Beth (2007), backed up Bandura's fundamental tenet

of social cognitive learning theory (SCLT), highlighted the fact that behaviour is goal-directed and eventually develops self-regulation.

Leadership that is motivated by respect for others' rights and dignity as well as moral convictions and values is referred to as ethical leadership. Thus, it has something to do with ideas like fairness, charisma, equality of treatment, honesty, integrity, and consideration.

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1973) states that people pick up social norms through verbal persuasion, direct modelling, and vicariously observing others. Furthermore, according to social learning theory, followers are inclined to follow the example set by their school leaders by modelling their behaviour after them.

Madiga (2022) states that educators and learners will benefit from ethical leadership behaviours by improving their behaviour and developing greater self-assurance in their skills. Furthermore, moral leadership behaviours help educators and learners to develop and gain confidence. Learners learn best when they observe and mimic their educators and principals.

Furthermore, role modelling is crucial for efficient task performance, according to Bandura (1997, 1986), particularly when leaders are more appealing and believable. Therefore, leadership has an impact on learners' performance because educators act as role models for learners, allowing them to broaden their knowledge and pick up new techniques and abilities that will help them perform better.

According to social cognitive theory, followers could look to leaders for ethical guidance and modelled behaviour (Kohlberg, 1969; Trevino, 1986). It is clear therefore that educators and principals who treat learners fairly and in an unbiased and impartial manner will be able to provide guidance through their leadership behaviour. Furthermore, learners' perceptions of being led by ethical educators will inspire them to be committed to their schoolwork. According to Bandura (1997) learners with a high moral identity are characterized by high moral self-regulation. Because they view their educators as excellent role models. Learners and other

school stakeholders pay attention to and try to imitate the attitudes, emotions, values, and behaviours of their educators (Bandura, 1986; Brown et al., 1978).

For social learning of ethical behaviour to occur, educators and principals need to serve as credible and appealing role models. By acting morally upright, honest, and thoughtful toward others, they make themselves worthy of the admiration of other educators and learners in the school.

Educators, learners, and other school stakeholders pay attention and attempt to emulate the attitudes, emotions, values, and behaviours of their educators because they see them as outstanding role models (Bandura, 1986; Brown et al., 1978). For ethical behaviour to be socially learned, educators and principals must act as likable and trustworthy role models. Educators and school principals earn the respect of other educators and learners in the classroom by behaving morally pure, truthful, and considerate toward others. Bandura's (1997, 1986, 1973, 1999) social cognition learning theory (SCLT) and social learning theory (SLT) frameworks are in line with the subject of ethical leadership behaviour practices in public secondary schools.

Waheed et al. (2018) assert that people learn by imitating the values and behaviours of models they find appealing and believable. This is the principle behind social learning theory (SLT) and social cognitive learning theory (Bandura, 1997, 1973). Each one is discussed below, highlighting its history and contents. The study presents ethical leadership as a key distinction using the social learning theory as its theoretical foundation.

An additional perspective on social learning theory concentrates on the learning that takes place in social interactions. Because social learning theory takes attention, memory, and motivation into account, it can serve as a bridge between social learning theories and cognitive learning theories, according to research by Muro and Jeffrey (2008).

Bandura (1997, 1986) states that the foundation of social learning theory (SLT) is the notion that people pick up skills by observing and imitating the attitudes, values, and behaviours of believable and appealing role models. Furthermore, Bandura (1996)

postulates that the social learning system learns new behavioural patterns through direct experience or by seeing how others behave. The motivation to learn can be influenced by behaviour, and meaningful learning can only start when learners are driven to learn. Human learning and behaviour are influenced by a combination of cognitive and environmental elements, which are involved in social learning.

As Bandura (1999) correctly notes, social cognitive learning theory is a theory of learning that emerged from the notion that people learn by seeing others and that an understanding of personality is largely dependent on human thought processes.

Accelerated counterproductive behaviour, such as criminality, corruption, anarchy, and the threat to the community's social structure, is a defining feature of South African public secondary schools (Corruption Watch, 2018). In public secondary schools, the prevalence of unethical behaviour has increased significantly. Being an ethical leader means not only talking the talk but also practicing what you preach. Learners look to their educators and school principals to set an example for them.

It is necessary for ethical leaders to set an example of moral behaviour for other educators and learners around them. School principals are frequently viewed as role models, with expected behaviours and policies that align with ethical standards (Brown et al., 2005). Educators, principals, and union representatives set an example of moral behaviour and conduct by acting with justice, integrity, and reliability in order to motivate learners to give their best work on and off the school premises. The ethical behaviour of learners is the responsibility of educators and school principals.

In other word, the way learners behave is directly influenced by the models that educators and school principals set. Waheed et al. (2018) astutely points out that ethical actions and behaviour on the part of school leaders are necessary preconditions for successful change in the school setting (Burners & By, 2012).

2.8 Chapter summary

The review closes with a discussion of important issues raised regarding the promotion of ethical behaviour practices in public secondary schools. The literature

review revealed causes that impede the promotion of ethical behaviour practices in schools. Further, it identified effective strategies that could be employed to enhance good ethical behaviour practices by educators and principals. The chapter examined strategies which could be employed to forge ethical behaviour practices in public secondary schools. In addition, the chapter presented a discussion on the extent to which educators could be effective and efficient in the promotion of ethical behaviour practices.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study discussed the conceptual framework, the theoretical foundation of ethical leadership behaviour practices, as well as literature on ethical leadership behaviour practices. This chapter describes the research methodology employed throughout the research process, including the research approach, research paradigm, research design, research population, and sampling. In addition, this chapter describes in depth data collection strategies such as semi-structured interviews, documents reviews and document analysis. This chapter also highlights the study's ethical considerations to be observed throughout the study.

3.2 Research methodology

Methodology is the framework a researcher employs to acquire knowledge about social phenomena and obtain answers to research questions (Ngulube, 2019). A research methodology is cited as a plan of action that serves as a guideline for conducting research in a methodical and efficient manner (Mohajan, 2017). Jansen and Warren (2020) confirm the above as they describe research methodology as the systematic design of a study by a researcher to ensure valid and trustworthy findings that address the research aims and objectives. The research methodology helps to ensure ethical standards and integrity in research practice.

Additionally, the research methodology provides a comprehensive plan that helps the researcher focus, making the entire research process smooth, efficient, and workable (Neuman, 2012). Equally important, Igwenagu (2016) referred to the research methodology as strategies and methods used to gather, process, and analyse data related to the research topic. The research methodology describes how the research outcomes will be achieved in accordance with the study's objectives (Sileyew, 2019). The benefit of research methodology is that it provides the researcher with a particular plan to adhere to throughout the study. For this study, the underlying theoretical paradigm influences the selection of the research

methodology (Sarantakos, 2013), the purpose of the research, and the research questions. The research questions determine the methodology employed to understand the study (Ngulube, 2015).

3.3 Research approach

Creswell and Creswell (2019) identified three main research approaches, namely, quantitative approach, qualitative approach and mixed methods research. The quantitative approach entails collecting and analysing statistical data (James & Warren, 2020). In addition, Maree (2016) defines a quantitative approach as a systematic and objective process of using statistical data from only a subset of a human world to generalize the findings to the human world under study. According to Mohajan (2018), the researcher is the primary person for data collection and analysis. In McRoy (1995), as cited by Fouche and Delport (2002), a qualitative research approach is described as a study that collects participants' narratives of explanation, expertise, or perspectives. Creswell (2007) states similarly that a qualitative approach is an investigation process in which a researcher examines a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports in-depth participant views, and undertakes the research in a natural environment. In the same vein, Holloway and Wheeler (1996) argue that a qualitative research approach examines individuals or systems by having contact with and observing participants in their natural settings, with a focus on their meanings and perceptions.

For this study, the qualitative approach is the appropriate method because it focuses on how individuals and groups perceive and understand the world, as well as how they make sense of their experiences (Mohajan, 2018). The qualitative research approach provides a holistic picture of social phenomenon, and the research framework is based on available data (Conger, 1998). The qualitative research approach employs an inductive approach, it draws on a small sample size, and is flexible, open, subjective, and will address the research questions and problem statement (McCombes & George, 2022). The research utilized the qualitative approach to explore the behaviour perceptions and experiences of the participants regarding the role of school principals and educators in implementing ethical behaviour in public secondary schools.

Additionally, a qualitative research approach is concerned with the opinions, experiences, and feelings of individuals producing subjective data. The advantage of a qualitative research approach is that it allows the researcher to explore and better understand the complexity of the phenomenon (Mohajan, 2018). Moreover, in the qualitative approach, smaller sample sizes are used which saves costs, and it is flexible to follow unexpected ideas during research and explore processes effectively (Conger, 2019).

According to Creswell (2014), mixed methods research is defined as an approach for collecting, analysing, and combining quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a specific research study to better understand a research problem. In this approach, the researcher incorporates methods of collecting or analysing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Shannon-Baker, 2016). To answer the research study questions, the researcher collects both statistical data and text information (Maree, 2019).

The qualitative research approach is a process in which the participants being studied explain about their lives, impressions, and points of view with the researcher (Mohajan, 2016). Furthermore, as Mohajan (2016) maintains, the advantage of the qualitative research approach is that it allows the researcher to hear the participants' perspectives, in this study, educators, and understand the ways they make meaning of their experiences. In other words, the researcher would comprehend the processes involved in the ethical behaviour practices and the social settings within which the beliefs, attitudes and practices of the educators are developed.

Macmillan and Schumacher (2014) explain the qualitative approach as employing direct observations to obtain information or data from individuals. White (2005) is of the idea that research fieldwork is typically used in qualitative research and the researcher will personally travel to the individuals, sites, or institutions to observe behaviour in its natural setting. The qualitative approach was appropriate for the current study because the researcher was directly involved in a natural setting that helped the researcher to uncover the meanings that participants place on their actions, how they understand situations, and what their viewpoints are on specific

topics. In other words, the qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to capture educators' viewpoints and how they interpret their daily experiences (Patel & Patel, 2019).

The research was carried out in three public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. Data were as gathered from experienced educators who were working in their natural environment and were requested to provide information to the researcher. This approach is important because it allowed the researcher to investigate the research questions and objectives, or even contribute a new perspective to the body of knowledge. To gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon, the researcher employed an inductive approach in this study.

3.4 Research paradigm

The term “paradigm”, according to Kuhn (1962), refers to a philosophical way of thinking. Denzin and Lincoln (2000), on the other hand, define paradigms as human constructions that deal with first principles, indicating where the researcher is coming from, in order to construct meaning embedded in data. A paradigm is a set of hypotheses or beliefs about central features of reality that support a particular point of view (Maree et al., 2019). They further state that it acts as a mirror or organizing principle through which information is interpreted. Babbie (2010) corroborates the latter assertion as he states that a paradigm is a useful approach for looking at, making assumptions, and for thinking in research.

Furthermore, Bunnis and Kelly (2010) assert that research paradigms direct and lead all aspects of the study process. Wahyuni (2012) affirms that the philosophical features of the social sciences are addressed by research paradigms. Equally important, she perceives a paradigm as a set of fundamental assumptions as well as how the world is viewed, which serves as a guide for the researcher. A paradigm is a way of examining social phenomena, and from which a particular understanding of these phenomena can be gained, and explanations attempted (Mohajan 2018).

According to Nquyen (2019), a paradigm comprises three components, namely, ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of reality of being as well as the basic categories of things that exist and their

relations (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This philosophical assumption assists to orientate ones' thinking about the research problems. Furthermore, ontology is so essential to a paradigm because it helps to provide an understanding of the things that constitute the world as it is known (Scott & Usher, 2004). The ontology of paradigm helps to understand the problem under investigation and contribute to its solution. This axiology of paradigm assumes that there is no single reality (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The ontology of interpretivism assumes that knowledge can be generated from the point of view of the individual who is directly involved with reality (Morgan, 2007).

Epistemology of paradigm derives from the Greek concept 'episteme', meaning knowledge (Krauss, 2015). On the other hand, Hlongwane (2018) elucidate epistemology as the study of the nature of knowledge. In this case, since epistemology allows for the interpretation of participants' perceptions of their own experiences or realities, an interpretivist epistemology is preferred. According to Scott and Usher (2004), ontology helps to provide an understanding of the things that contribute to reality, whereas reality is what is being researched.

Keeves (1997) avers that the paradigm methodology refers to the research design, methods, approaches, and procedures utilized in a well-planned study to find out something new. Methodology determines the specific practices used to acquire knowledge of it (Krauss, 2015). The preferred research paradigm influences the research approaches, designs, and methods used in the study. A research paradigm integrates axiology, epistemology, and methodology in a research study (Saunders et al, 2019). The methodology that should be used to comprehend reality is determined by the research questions for this study (Ngulube, 2015).

Creswell (2014) identifies five paradigms, namely, positivism, interpretivism, initial realism, pragmatism, and postmodernism. The interpretivist paradigm is based on the assumptions identified by Morgan (2007) and Enworo (2023), namely, the belief that individuals' words are evidence of realities and that realities are multiple and socially constructed. To align with the study's objectives, the researcher chose the interpretive paradigm, which is found in the qualitative research approach. The interpretivist paradigm's central goal is to comprehend the subjective world of human experience (Enworo, 2023). In this approach, thematic analysis was used to examine

the participants' lived experiences. This paradigm guarantees that the focus is on understanding and interpreting the world around them, while individuals' actual words become proof of realities (Krauss, 2015).

The interpretive paradigm takes precedence because it focuses on people's subjective experiences, on how people create the social world by sharing meanings, and on how they engage with or relate with each other (Maree, 2019). Maree (2019) further posits that human life can only be understood from within. The interpretivist paradigm is appropriate for this research because the study investigates various forms of ethical behaviour challenges in selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. Furthermore, the interpretivist paradigm attempts to understand if and why schools may be indulging themselves in unethical activities. The interpretivist paradigm also examines what strategies could be employed to prevent the rise of malpractices in public secondary schools. In this case, the reality is interpreted through the meanings that the research participants provide to their daily lives (Krauss, 2015). The interpretivist paradigm contributes to the understanding of the relationship between paradigm and methodological choice (Enworo, 2023).

3.5 Research design

Research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted (Kumar, 2016). Conger (2019) asserts that the mechanisms for doing research, including when, from whom, and under what settings, are described in the research design. Punch (2009) concurs with the latter assertion that based on the approach and framework, research design connects the research study to data. It shows from whom, and how, the data will be collected and analysed. Kothari (2004) describes research design as a master plan for a research study's chosen methodologies, structure, and strategy to seek alternative methods to tackle the problem and decrease inconsistency. He further explains that research design serves as the template for data collecting, assessment, and analysis. Furthermore, the key strength of research design is that it allows for the gathering of valuable information with the least amount of time, effort, and money. Research design provides tools for data collection and choosing sources of information. It provides procedures of data

analysis and methods of data collection to adopt. The advantage of a qualitative research design is that it helps to generate ideas and develop a theory or thesis (Creswell & Creswell, 2019). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), a research design is a broad, general plan that outlines all the details, steps and methods on how empirical data will be extracted from the participants to respond to the research questions of the study. The structural framework of numerous research methodologies and procedures used to collect data is known as research design (Bhandari, 2022). This implies that the research design provides extensive information about the research. For instance, the research design describes where and when the research will be conducted and biographical information of the research participants, as well as the procedures for sampling, data collection and analysis of the study.

Leedy and Ormond (2001), Maree (2019), and Creswell and Creswell (2019) identify five research designs, namely, grounded theory, narrative research, phenomenology, ethnography, and case studies. Milfs, Durepos and Wiebe (2010) assert that a case study is an up-close, in-depth, and extensive examination of the subject and linked contextual conditions. In support of the foregoing assertion, Manion and Morrison (2011) point out that case studies offer readers with a special case of real people in actual situations, allowing them to grasp ideas more vividly than just presenting them with theoretical approaches or principles. Equally important a case study is deeply intertwined with the phenomenon under investigation (Yazan, 2015) and that it does not necessarily mean that one site only is studied (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Taking these findings together, the researcher adopts a case study research design to align it with study.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2014) identify four main case study designs: the single-case design; the embedded single-case design; multiple-case design; and the embedded multiple design. Creswell (2014) corroborates the latter assertion as he explicates a case study as an extensive examination of a single system within a specific setting.

The researcher believes that the single-case approach is the most appropriate design because the researcher sought to explore a single embedded case of ethical

behaviour difficulties in public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. In addition, case study allows the researcher to connect with study participants on-site for a set amount of time (Williams, 2012). The research method is consistent with the case study research design. On the grounds of the foregoing assertions, this research design is considered an appropriate research design for this study.

3.6 Population and sampling

3.6.1 Population

The population is the complete group of persons about whom the researcher wishes to draw conclusions (Bhandiri, 2022). Barrierjee and Chaudhurys (2010) define the population of the study as a total collection of persons with a unique set of characteristics. Shukla and Satishprakash (2020) corroborate this as they assert that this term population refers to a group of members of all categories who have various characteristics on which the study's findings can be employed. Equally important, Polir and Hungler (1999) argue that the population is described as the total number of participants who meet a set of criteria in the study project. Shukla and Satishprakash (2020) assert that population basically relates to any unusual group of individuals. A population is a group of persons about whom the researcher is interested in conducting study (DeCarlo, 2018). Majid (2018) points out that a research population is a huge gathering of persons who are the main focus of a scientific inquiry. The target population for this study is educators from Waterberg District in the Limpopo Province. The research draws a sample from this group of educators because they have valuable information about the study.

3.6.2 Sampling

Taherdoost (2016) identifies two main sampling techniques, namely, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling refers to a sampling technique by which a person's likelihood of being chosen for membership in the sample is unknown; it is commonly used in exploratory research. The research adopts non-probability sampling because it is aligned to the qualitative methodology of the study.

Gravetter and Wallnau (2017) define a sample as a number of people selected to reflect the population of interest in the study. Casteel and Bridier (2021) concur, stating that a sample is a group of individuals chosen for analysis in a study, about whom or what information is provided. Shukla (2020) posits that a sample represents a representative subset of research participants. Wani (2022) explicates that a sample is a selected group of people from the entire population. Bareirjee and Chaudhurys (2010) posit that a sample is any part of the fully defined population. A sample is a group of persons that were carefully chosen from the sampling frame (DeCarlo, 2018). DeCarlo (2018) further explains that the group from whom the researcher collects data is referred to as a sample. The sample design is a precise strategy that is developed before any data is acquired for the purpose of taking a sample from a given population (Patel and Patel, 2019). Sampling refers to the process employed to select a portion of the population for the study (Maree, 2019). Daniel (2012) concurs and posits that the selection of a subgroup of a population for inclusion in a research study is known as sampling. Acharya, Prakash, Saxena and Nigan (2013) postulate that a sample is a subset of the population that has been picked to reflect the entire population. Sampling in qualitative research is flexible and often continues until no new themes emerge from the data gathering process (Maree, 2019). Equally important, a sample often represents the population of interest. The advantage of using a sample is that the research process deals with fewer research participants and the study will be completed in time.

Sampling involves selecting the observations that the researchers will analysis (DeCarlo, 2018). Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of individuals from a specific population to determine the features of the entire population (Igwenagu, 2016). Furthermore, Majid (2018) avers that the process of selecting a broadly representative sample of people from a population of interest is referred to as sampling. The assumption is that what is revealed about the sample will be true for the entire population.

Moreover, non-probability sampling incorporates purposive sampling and convenience sampling. According to DeCarlo (2018), there are numerous sorts of nonprobability sampling, including purposeful samples and convenience samples.

Etikan (2020) defines purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are identified based on specific criteria relevant to the study's purpose, with the goal of gaining in-depth insights into a particular population. Purposive sampling is a technique that involves selecting participants based on their experiences, expertise, or knowledge linked to the research topic, to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2019). The study employed purposive sampling to select the three public secondary schools and the research participants. The purposive sampling was beneficial to the study because it would aid in reaching all of the study's objectives. The researcher used convenience sampling because data may be quickly acquired from research participants, saving time and money on research (Maree, 2019).

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, is the process of selecting participants who can explain the study's aims and objectives, as well as identifying people who have experience and knowledge of the topic under study (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2014). Taherdoost (2016) corroborates this, stating that purposive sampling is a method used by researchers to select certain participants to gather useful information that cannot be obtained from other people (Maxwell, 1996). Creswell (2013) contends that purposive sampling is the planned selection of study participants based on the characteristics and attributes they possess (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

According to Leedy and Ormond (2005), a purposive sample is used since it is a non-representative subgroup of the same huge population and is designed to meet a very specific need and goal. Given the above arguments, the research adopted purposive sampling to select the research participants who best qualified to assist the researcher to answer the research questions. The main goal was to focus on educators that satisfy specific criteria for participation in the study project, which would enable the researcher to find solutions to the research problem.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill et al. (2020) explicate that the sampling method is used to select the right population that falls within the limits of the research aims and objectives of the research project. Equally important, Malterud et al. (2016) posit that the more information the sample has that is pertinent to the actual study, the fewer

respondents is required. For instance, research participants in this study were chosen on the ground of the wealth of information they possessed and as key role players in relation to the research project. The researcher controlled the sample size using the information power strategy, as explained by Malterud et al. (2019). As the research participants, 3 school principals, 3 deputy principals, and 6 posts level one. Educators were chosen from the three selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. The total number of research participants was 12. The aim of choosing these participants was to gather the most comprehensive information feasible to answer the study questions and address the problem statement (Maree, 2019). The objective of the study is to investigate whether ethical leadership behaviour practices resolve ethical challenges in public secondary schools?

School principals were chosen for this research project because they meet the inclusion requirements for research participation, they are school managers, and have professional experience related to this study. Furthermore, school principals are responsible in providing ethical leadership in schools. In addition, educators were identified because they are class managers and are expected to guide pupils ethically on and off school grounds. Equally important, the principal is looked up to by educators as a role model and the one who must exhibit zero tolerance for unethical practices. Purposive sampling is the practice of collecting specific people for the sample based on their different qualities and viewpoints (DeCarlo, 2018). The researcher selects research participants from their sampling frame because they possess the attributes/experiences and viewpoints required for the study (DeCarlo, 2018). Based on the above evidence, purposive sampling was deemed an appropriate sampling method for this research project.

Participants in the study were chosen for their convenience and ease of participation (Cohen, Manion & Morriso, 2011). This is supported by Ackoff (1953) who opines that convenience sampling is a method of selecting research participants who are always readily and easily accessible to the researcher. Casteel and Bridier (2021) assert that convenience sampling is a method of selecting research participants based on their proximity to the researcher, in which the researcher uses an opportune sample frame.

Emerson (2015) indicates that participants in convenience sampling live or come from the same territory because they are accessible and convenient for the study; as such, school principals and educators are included in the research effort. With the foregoing in alignment, this study sought to investigate the ethical leadership challenges that constitute unethical leadership practices in selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. The subsequent section presents the profile and coding of the participants. Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 below show the profiles of the group of participants of schools A, B and C; respectively. Purposive sampling was employed to select school A, B and C.

Table 3.1: Profile of group of participants of School A

	Participant	Age	Gender	Occupation	Expertise
School A	P1	51-53	Male	Principal	Management
	DP1	54-55	Female	Deputy Principal	Management
	E1	47-48	Female	Educator	Class-
					Manager
	E2	50-51	Male	Educator	Class- Manager

Table 3.2: Profile of group of participants of School B

	Participant	Age	Gender	Occupation	Experience
School B	P2	53-55	Male	Principal	Management
	DP2	48-50	Male	Deputy Principal	Management
	E3	47-48	Female	Educator	Class- Manager
	E4	51-52	Female	Educator	Class- Manager

Table 3.3: Profile of group of participants of School C

	Participant	Age	Gender	Occupation	Experience
School C	P3	54-55	Female	Principal	Management
	DP3	53-54	Male	Principal	Management
	E5	52-53	Male	Educator	Class- Manager
	E6	49-50	Female	Educator	Class- Manager

The tables above show a summary of the biographical details of the participants. The total number of research participants is 12.

3.7 Data collection methods

According to Mohajan (2016), data is raw information that has not been processed, organized, or analysed. To put it differently, data consists of un-interpreted elements upon which a choice is to be made, and these are based on facts, which can include anything known to be factual or to exist. Maree (2019) explicates two major methods for data generation about a phenomenon, namely, primary sources and secondary sources of data collection. In qualitative research, the primary data is usually gathered directly from participants through semi-structured one-on-one interviews and observation methods during the research. In addition, participant observations, questionnaires, occupational exposure, and expert opinions are also used to acquire primary data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Furthermore, secondary data is typically drawn from past and current literature on the phenomenon under examination (Naidoo, 2015). According to Sileyew (2019), secondary data refers to information gathered by someone other than the owner. He further indicates that secondary sources provide information into the current state of the art method's research area. Maree (2019) identifies five data generation methods: interviews, document reviews, observations, and audio-visual materials. For this study, the researcher employed both semi-structured one-on-one interview and documents reviews to generate primary and secondary data.

3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

According to Maree (2019), an interview is a two-way conversation in which the researcher asks the participants questions, to collect data and to learn about views, opinions, behaviour, and beliefs of the participants. Interviews are a type of data collection procedure in which two or more people exchange information through a sequence of questions and replies (DeCarlo, 2018). Maree (2019) suggests three kinds of interviews, namely, semi-structured interviews, structured interviews, and open-ended interviews.

The study adopted for semi-structured one-on-one interviews at schools because these were suitable for the phenomena under study. According to Sileyew (2019), this strategy enables the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of the current working environment's contributing factors as well as effects. He further opines that it enables study participants to express concerns that the researcher may not have anticipated during the interview. Moreover, according to Kumar (2016), the semi-structured interview method is quite adaptable and helps the researcher to collect enough information from the participants. Similarly, it further explores issues, as well as probes as the situation requires. The researcher subscribed to the semi-structured one-on-one interview because it was the most appropriate data gathering technique to extract information from participants of their views, opinions, and experiences about ethical leadership behaviour practices in public secondary schools (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Equally important, the benefit of conducting face-to-face interviews is that it enables the researcher to gain participants' cooperation by establishing a relationship with them, which therefore facilitates the production of high response rates (Leedy & Ormond, 2001).

In this study, a semi-structured one-on-one interview was conducted with 3 school principals, 3 deputy principals, and 6 educators from 3 selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. The researcher created an interview schedule that included questions about the research topic of ethical leadership behaviour practices in selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. Prior to the interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the research project to the participants. The

participants were then to be given the research information package, which included the consent form to sign.

As part of the data gathering approach, the researcher scheduled interviews at a suitable time and site convenient for the researcher and participants. Furthermore, the researcher began interviews at 14H00 to avoid disrupting educators' work schedules, and interviews also took place at the participants' respective schools. Each research participant was interviewed for one hour. The interview was tape recorded. According to Khan (2014), audio recordings permit the preservation of accurate information from the interview, which are replayed at regular intervals for analysis purposes. Furthermore, detailed notes were recorded in a field notebook during the interview. A reflective diary was kept by the researcher throughout the duration of the study and contained ideas and thoughts as well as reflections regarding experiences (Maree, 2019). The participants were given an opportunity to ask questions or make comments at the end of the interview.

3.7.2 Document review

In this study, for data generation, the researcher also used secondary sources known as document review. According to Petty, Thomas and Stew (2012), the purpose of document review is to learn more about the topic under examination. Document review covers both published and unpublished documents pertaining to the study (Maree, 2016). Creswell (2013) asserts that document reviews help to triangulate data generated from interviews with study participants. For this study, the following documents were reviewed, namely South African School Act (Act no 84 of 1996), Public Finance Management Act (Act no 1 of 1999), the South African Council for Educators (SACE), Employment of Educators Act (Act no 76 of 1998), as well as school financial policies. The two major methods are important in data generation, yielding answers to the research questions and problem statement.

3.8 Data analysis

There are two approaches to data analysis, namely, quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis. Ngulube (2015) posits that qualitative data analysis is a

process of converting raw data by seeking, evaluating, recognizing, coding, mapping, investigating, and documenting patterns, trends, themes, and categories to comprehend and give their true meaning. Ngulube (2015) further reveals that the finding, exploration, correlation, and presentation of patterns and themes are all part of qualitative data analysis.

Maree (2019) explicates several methods of qualitative data analysis, namely, content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, grounded analysis, and thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is an effective data analysis technique that enables researchers to summarize, analyze, identify key features of, and interpret a large number of data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Kiger and Varpio (2020) assert that thematic analysis is an appropriate method of analysis for seeking to understand experiences, thoughts or behaviours across a data set. King (2004) also maintains that thematic analysis is one method of summarizing significant aspects of a huge data set because it compels the researcher to take a well-structured approach to data processing, culminating in a clear and cohesive final report.

The same is propounded by Maree (2019), who describes the process of analysing qualitative data as a means of assisting the researcher in examining how research participants make sense of the above-mentioned phenomenon by analysing their perceptions, experiences, attitudes, values, feelings, and views to describe their formation of the phenomenon. Braun and Clark (2013) describe thematic analysis as a strategy for identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to a research question. Considering the above reasons, this study opted for thematic analysis because it provides the researcher with rich information, to answer the research questions in the whole research process. It is a flexible approach to qualitative analysis that enables researchers to generate new insights and concepts derived from data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Plowright (2011) reiterates the point that qualitative data analysis focuses on the meaning of events and activities as described by the participants rather than statistical significance and interactions between variables.

The advantage of this method is that it is a methodical means of eliciting rich information from the generated data, and it provides the researcher with the

opportunity to find more about educators' profound experiences and opinions on ethical leadership behaviour practices in public secondary schools. The study subscribed to thematic coding because it was appropriate for the study.

The researcher employed a qualitative thematic analysis method to analyse the generated data because it is flexible, accessible and can provide a detailed account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2016). Thematic analysis is a method of systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Equally important, Castleberry and Nolen (2018) assert that thematic analysis is a technique for recognizing, analysing, and documenting patterns within data. From the discussion above, thematic analysis was an appropriate method for examining the surface of reality (Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2006). The researcher implemented Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis process of analysing data.

The researcher decided to convert the generated data into soft copies of documentation, which aided in the notation of preliminary ideas during the familiarization process (Gamage, 2019). During this phase, the researcher became acquainted with the collected data by reading and re-reading the data sets and listening to audio recordings several times in order to gain an understanding of what the data is, how it relates to the research questions, and to confirm the accuracy of the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Investing sufficient time in data review increased the probability of developing credible findings (Enworo, 2023). In this study, the researcher familiarized himself with the textual descriptions.

The researcher moved on to generate initial codes from the data. Qualitative coding is a process of reflecting and a way of interacting with and thinking about data (Savage, 2000). Coding enables the researcher to simplify and concentrate on specific elements of the data (Nowell et al., 2018). Creswell (2014) asserts that systematic data-coding is a procedure whereby specific statements are analysed and classified into themes that reflect the phenomenon of interest. More importantly, the coding system guarantees the anonymity of the participants and schools, and data confidentiality (Conger, 2019). The researcher searched through the data for regularities and pattern topics. Codes that showed the same features were clustered

together so that they could reflect and describe coherent and meaning patterns and constructed one theme or subtheme. The data was divided into manageable patterns. The identification was applied in relation to the research questions and objectives of the study. The emergent patterns were color-coded. Each coded highlighted data point was collected, recorded in the codebook, and incorporated into the audit trail to try and establish confirmability. Miscellaneous codes were saved in separate free notes to ensure they were not lost. Each codebook was given a suitable name. Initial codes formed themes and others developed into subthemes.

In the next process, the researcher reviewed the coded data extracts from each theme to check whether they appeared to form a coherent pattern (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once the researcher had refined and defined the themes, the process of writing up commenced (Braun and Clark, 2013). The objective was to identify themes that were relevant and related to the research questions. These themes formed the framework within which the researcher presented the data and led to the findings of the study.

3.9 Trustworthiness of the study

According to Pilot and Beck (2014), trustworthiness of the study is the level of trust in the data, interpretation, and methods employed to guarantee the quality of a study. In the same vein, Yin (1994) defines trustworthiness as a criterion for determining the quality of a research design. Manning (1997) describes trustworthiness as analogous to the empiricist concepts of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity. He continues that trustworthiness is the study's goal, as well as a factor to be assessed both during and after the research is completed. Amankwaa (2016) avers that researchers should develop the protocols and procedures required for a study to be recognized worthy of consideration by students in each research project. The researcher followed the four criteria identified by (Enworo, 2023) in determining the study's trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, transferability, conformability and authenticity.

3.9.1 Credibility

(Enworo, 2023) assert that credibility is the conviction that the research findings are completely accurate. They further state that credibility determines whether the research findings show credible information drawn from the participants' original information and whether the participants' original manuscript is correctly interpreted. Validity is a concept that describes the quality of research; it refers to how well the result of analysing the data of participants in the study shows true findings among similar individuals outside of the study's population (Rodon & Sesa, 2008).

To establish trustworthiness of the study, the researcher prolonged and varied the engagement with each setting. The researcher invested a significant amount of time with the research participants in the research area in order to establish trust, become acquainted with the settings, and collect data. Furthermore, the researcher conducted interviews with educators, deputy principals, and school principals in selected public secondary schools about ethical leadership behaviour practices. For this study, the selection of suitable methodology relevant to the phenomenon under study increases credibility. After data was generated from semi-structured interviews, the researcher read and reread the data, analysed and revised them to build trust.

Another way to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings was the implementation of methodological triangulation. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple sources of information or procedures from the research area to establish repeatable patterns (Enworo, 2023). In this study, in qualitative research, the researcher used triangulation because it allowed the researcher to use multiple methods or data sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999). Triangulation and member checking were accomplished by regularly checking data and interpretations with the research participants from which data was collected. In ensuring credibility of the findings, the researcher kept detailed notes of all the decisions and analysis and allowed other member checking to review the information and to prevent biases. Data triangulation was implemented to combine the various sets of data that appeared during the analysis process, such as concepts, codes, raw data, and theory building. The researcher recorded and labelled codes and core categories.

Methodological triangulation was used to obtain data through various data collection methods such as semi-structured one-on-one interviews and document reviews. According to Fush, Fush and Ness (2018), triangulation improves research validity, reliability, and data saturation. The primary goal of triangulation was to reduce individual biases about the phenomenon and to shed more light on the findings. The main objective of credibility was to inculcate trust that the results were true, credible, and believable (Schmidt & Brown, 2015).

3.9.2 Dependability

The reliability of findings over time is referred to as dependability (Enworo, 2023). Furthermore, (Enworo, 2023). contends that dependability entails participants' assessment of the study's findings, interpretation, and recommendations, all of which are supported by data obtained from the study participants. Polit and Beck (2017) concur when they state that the dependability of the data over a period of time and situations is indicated when the study's findings would be the same if it was to be repeated with the same or similar participants and in the same or a similar context. Noble and Smith (2015) define reliability as the implementation and validity of the methods used, as well as the truthfulness of the firm conclusions. In the same vein, Middleton (2022) states that the extent to which results are reliable over time and an accurate reflection of the total population in the study is referred to as reliability, and if the present findings can be replicated using a similar method, then the research method is trustworthy. Thus, the extent to which the results can be replicated when the research is reproduced under the same conditions is known as the reliability (Middleton, 2022). Brink et al. (2006) assert that dependability requires an audit trail of documentation of data, methods and decisions about the research which can be open to external scrutiny. In ensuring dependability, the researcher sought an audit trail of the data. Kock (1994) elucidates that an audit trail presents data on the researcher's decisions and choices regarding theoretical and methodological issues throughout the study, which necessitates an explicit justification for such conclusions. In addition, an audit trail provides basic information of the original creation of the record and allows for documentation.

3.9.3 Transferability

According to (Enworo, 2023), transferability is a measure of how well qualitative research findings can be implemented in different settings or situations with various participants. Nowell et al. (2017) states that transferability is concerned with the generalization of the investigation. In this study, the researcher has backed up the study findings with a rich detailed explanation of the context, location, and participants studied, as well as by being open about the analysis and trustworthiness of the study (Amankwaa, 2016). Transferability is also enhanced in this study by providing thick descriptions of the research respondents and employing the purposive sampling method.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Confirm-ability is the degree to which the findings of the research study could be confirmed by other researchers (Enworo, 2023). Moreover, as (Enworo, 2023) point out, confirm-ability is concerned with establishing that the data and the interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquiry's imagination, but are clearly derived from the data. The researcher will keep the tape recorder, field notes, verbatim transcripts, and document reviews to provide an audit trail. Furthermore, the researcher verified the accuracy of the data received from the original research participants by conducting informal checks with the research participants to obtain their approval of the collected data.

3.9.5 Authenticity

Authenticity refers to the extent to which researchers reveal a variety of different challenges and depict the lives of participants (Polit & Beck, 2014). To ensure authenticity of the findings, the researcher employed purposive sampling to select the participants who provided the study with relevant information. In addition, the researcher utilized the thematic analysis strategy to validate the findings.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The following ethical considerations were observed:

The correct requirements regarding conduct for the research were respected (Blandford, 2013). The researcher observed stringent ethical principles throughout the research process, and upheld three core ethical principles, namely respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Creswell & Creswell, 2019).

The researcher sought participants' informed consent to participate in the research project and showed appropriate respect for the participants without placing any pressure on them to participate. The researcher introduced the research topic: Ethical leadership behaviour practices in selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. The researcher explained fully the aims and objectives of the research to the participants. Upon accepting the invitation, they completed and signed the consent form. Further, the participants were protected from harm.

The participants were reminded that at any stage they would be allowed to withdraw from the research and that any statement they made could be retracted when the first draft was made available for them to read. The participant's identities were protected by changing identifiable names and locations. The researcher assured the participants that this process would be treated with strict confidentiality.

Informed consent was sought from:

- Individual participants
- Limpopo Department of Education

They were informed that their participation in the research is voluntary, and no compensation would be advanced for participating. The collected data will be kept in a safe place for a period of three years.

3.11 Limitations and delimitations

Limitations, according to Chen and Trevino (2022), are the obstacles that prevent the research findings from being broadly applied. Similarly, delimitations are

intentional decisions taken to specify the boundaries of this research, which can be done in an exclusive or inclusive manner (Meivert & Klevenparr, 2014).

Just three public secondary schools were included in the research's purview because it was a case study. The results might not accurately represent all South African public high schools. The research project's whole investigation was constrained by the scarce resources.

3.12 Conclusion

The chosen methodology facilitated the achievement of the research objectives, allowing the collection and analysis data that answered the research question and contributed to the existing body of knowledge on ethical leadership behaviour practices by providing deeper understanding of the study. The research methodology, research paradigm, research design, research population, population and sample were all provided and addressed in this chapter. Furthermore, data gathering, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study and ethical consideration were discussed. The subsequent chapter examines and displays the data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter explicated and illuminated the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population and sampling techniques and data generation methods and analysis utilized in conducting this study.

The principal objective of this study is to investigate the ethical leadership behaviour challenges that constitute unethical leadership practices in selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. This chapter outlines the participants' biographical profiles and coding. Furthermore, the present chapter presents and discusses the rich and descriptive analysis of the data collected in the study emanating from the responses of school principals, deputy principals and educators to answer main research question, '*Will ethical leadership practices resolve ethical challenges in public secondary schools?*', as well as the sub research questions and objectives of the research. The summary of findings in relation to the research participants' interviews and the themes that emerged is included in this chapter. The interpretation of the findings is organized within this perspective.

The researcher employed a qualitative research design because one of its features is that behaviour is studied as it occurs naturally (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Data was produced through semi-structured one-on-one interview with the respondents in the field and document reviews. For the purpose of enhancing the findings, the generated data was collated with the research questions and literature review which were extensively discussed in chapter two. The research questions were designed to elicit data that respond to the phenomenon of the study.

In order to keep the reader in touch with the aims of the study, the four critical questions are restated herein: What are the elements of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools from the perspective of educators and school principals? What are the causes of unethical leadership practices in public

secondary schools? What strategies could be employed by educators and school principals to ensure the Promotion of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools? To what extent are the educators and school principals effective in the enhancement of ethical practices in public secondary schools? The research questions were developed to examine participants' understanding of ethical leadership behaviour practices in public secondary schools. The presentation and analysis were directed by these critical research questions. This study is anchored in Bandura's theoretical framework of social learning theory (SLT) and social cognitive theory (SCT). Additionally, this point of view is employed to outline the analysis of the findings and the examination of the findings. The researcher employed a semi-structured one-on-one interview strategy engaging six educators, three deputy principals and three school principals for data generation from each of the three secondary schools respectively. The document review comprises the South African School Act (SASA), Employment of Educators Act (EEA) South African Council for Educators (SACE), Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and the school finance policy. The following section will present the summary of the findings.

4.2 Participants' profile and coding

This section commences with the profiles of the research participants and coding from the four selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. The researcher employed pseudonyms to conceal the identity of the respondents and schools in the study. Schools are referred to as School A, School B and School C. School principals are referred to as P1, P2 and P3. Deputy Principals are referred to as DP1, DP2 and DP3. Educators are referred to as E1, E2, E3, E4, E5 and E6. The presentation and discussion of the research's findings are carefully categorized into themes and sub-themes that emerged from information gathered through semi-structured individual interviews and document reviews. The information in Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 below discloses the descriptions and coding of the research participants who took part in the research project.

Table 4.1: Profile of group of participants of School A

Participant	Age	Gender		Occupation	Experience
P1	51-53	Male		Principal	Management
DP1	54-55	Female		Deputy	Management
				Principal	
E1	47-48	Female		Educator	Class- Manager
E2	50-51	Male		Educator	Class- Manager

Table 4.2: Profile of group of participants of School B

Participant	Age	Gender	Occupation	Experience
P2	53-55	Male	Principal	Management
DP2	48-50	Male	Deputy Principal	Management
E3	47-48	Female	Educator	Class-Manager
E4	51-52	Female	Educator	Class-Manager

Table 4.3: Profile of group of participants of School C

Participant	Age	Gender	Occupation	Experience
P3	54-55	Female	Principal	Management
DP3	53-54	Male	Deputy Principal	Management
E5	52-53	Male	Educator	Class-Manager
E6	49-50	Female	Educator	Class-Manager

The above tables display the age range of the participants, the number of participants based on gender, the rank and expertise of the participants.

Following the approval from the principals of three public secondary schools, the following dates were agreed upon and employed to conclude the research study. For illustrative purposes, see Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Timeline for the research project

School	Date	Time	Task Completed
A	19 October 2022	14h00 -17h00	Session 1. E1 interviewed Session 2. E2 interviewed Session 3. P1 interviewed
B	21 October 2022	14h00-17h00	Session 1. E3 interviewed Session 2. DP1interviewed Session 3. P2 interviewed
C	12 December 2022	14h00-17h00	Session 1. E4 interviewed Session 2. DP2 interviewed Session 3. P3 interviewed
D	14 December 2022	14h00-17h00	Session 1. E5 interviewed Session 2. E6 interviewed Session 3. DP3 interviewed

This study was carried out in public secondary school classrooms. During the interviews, educators, deputy principals, and school principals were asked questions about the research topic. A tape recorder was used as a data collection tool by the researcher. After each session, the researcher recorded a written journal entry detailing research participants' responses to the questions, whether positive or negative. Verbal comments made by the educators, deputy principals and school principals were recorded, transcribed and evaluated to enhance the research study.

4.3 Data presentation and analysis

Data was generated through semi-structured one-on-one interview with the respondents in the field and document reviews. The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed, reproducing all spoken words and sounds including hesitations and the interviewer's giggles ('mm', 'ah-ha', 'Yes'). In presenting this data, the

original voices of the research respondents are quoted in verbatim throughout the presentation and discussion to authenticate the research findings. The following data is provided and discussed in terms of themes that evolved from the transcription and document review. Thematic analysis is used to examine the findings.

4.4 Main themes and sub-themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Theme 1: Elements of ethical leadership practices	Sub-theme 1.1: Respect Sub-theme 1.2: Honesty Sub-theme 1.3: Transparency Sub-theme 1.4: Accountability
Theme 2: Causes of unethical leadership practices	Sub-theme 2.1: Greed as the prime motivator of unethical practices Sub-theme 2.2: The operating environment as a factor in unethical Practices Sub-theme 2.3: Inadequate training of educators and school principals Sub-theme 2.4: Lack of ethics education in schools
Theme 3: Strategies of promoting ethical leadership behaviour practices	Sub-theme 3.1: Modelling ethical Behaviour Sub-theme 3.2: Ongoing educator Program Sub-theme 3.3: Implementation of legislation and policies
Theme 4: Effectiveness and efficiency of ethical leadership behaviour practices	Sub-them 4.1: Ethics as part of the Curriculum Sub-theme .4.2: Support and monitoring from Department of Education

These are further discussed below.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Elements of ethical leadership practices

This theme discusses the findings of the study in response to the study objective 1 in chapter one which reads: to determine elements of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools.

This theme consists of four sub-themes as discussed below.

The participants' responses in this research are in line with literature by Villirilli (2021) as postulated in chapter two, that ethical leadership encompasses six essential elements, namely, respect, honesty, transparency, accountability, trust and justice. This set of values, beliefs or principles are accepted by the community as a sound basis for the common good (Landa, 2018).

In addition, this theme demonstrates the significance of elements or aspects of ethical leadership. Dladla (2020) defines ethical elements as characteristics of a person that demonstrate respect and responsibility. This is supported by the literature which points out that ethical leadership entails ethical elements or attributes that guide every educator's moral behaviours and decisions within the school premises (Mlambo, 2021). Northhouse (2015) lists five ethical leadership principles to promote ethical practices in the school. These ethical principles include respect, transparency, honesty, accountability and building community, which assist educators to become ethical, self-reflective role models to their subordinates.

This assertion is corroborated by Nevhutanda (2017) who agrees that leaders should possess positive personality traits to lead the organization and subordinates to the established destined goal. Brown and Trevino (2006) echo that the definition of ethical leadership infers that leaders are required to demonstrate good ethics.

The following sub-themes emerged from the research participants during face-to-face interviews. This section analyses sub-theme 1 that emanated from theme 1.

4.4.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Respect

Respect means to value all persons regardless of their socio-cultural and economic background (Villirilli, 2021). This is supported by the literature which explicates that ethical leaders should demonstrate respect for the dignity, worth, equality, diversity, and privacy of all persons without regard to gender, creed, race, nationality, position, age or marital status (WHO, 2017). Ethical leaders listen to each stakeholder, foster inclusion and value diversity within the school (Landa, 2018).

The question posed to the research participants was “What are the elements of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools?” The data from the interviewed respondents seemed to reveal that most educators were already acquainted with the elements related to ethical leadership practices in public schools. However, some seemed to have low sound knowledge of the elements of ethical leadership practices. Generally, all participants indicated the critical need for educators, deputy principals and school principals to possess elements of ethical leadership. The research participants mentioned several elements associated with ethical leadership practices. When asked about the elements of ethical leadership practices in public secondary school, participant E1 from school A articulated as follows:

I think educators and school principals are leaders in the school who must demonstrate love, respect and compassion towards other educators and learners on and off school premises...but here at school, some educators disrespect their colleagues and nothing is done about that.

In affirming the sentiment, Herrity (2023) avers that ethical leaders demonstrate appropriate values to those around them through their behaviour. The research has found that respect, justice, transparency, accountability, and community care are some fundamental values that enable educators to develop strong ethical leadership within an organization, particularly the school (Lee et al., 2021).

Participants E2 and P1 from school A echoed the same sentiments when they emphasized the significance of features associated with ethical leadership practices

at the school. Educators and school principals should respect all people irrespective of their status or background. They believed that learners emulate their educators. Participant E2 from school A shared her views by commenting that:

For me everyone at school must be treated with respect because that build self - confidence and self- esteem in the learners and educators... I think they will be motivated to carry out their duties.

In qualifying this assertion, Odole (2018) avers that when people are treated with respect, they turn out to be supportive and open to their leaders.

Participant P1 from school A concurred with the views of E2 when he explained that:

Yes, I can say it is imperative to treat your subordinates and learners with respect, honesty and professionalism at all time....So any leader who wants to be successful must recognize the existence and rights of other people.

Similarly, E3 and DP1 from school B had responses which corroborated the responses of the other participants from other secondary schools. Participant E3 explicitly stated:

Well, ethical leadership is basically about taking everybody's point of view...so ethical leadership incorporates principles such as respect and taking everyone into consideration. Leaders must behave in an ethical way so that people can respect them and the decisions they take.

Supporting the foregoing sentiment, Herrity (2023) denotes respect as listening carefully to others as well as confirming their inherent value.

Likewise, P2 from school B echoed the sentiments of E3 about the principles related to ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools when he responded:

Yes, respect plays an important part in leadership especially in the school environment. I would say respecting people in terms of speech, behaviour or manner and the approach towards other people will always bear fruits of respect to you as the leader. And again, educators or school principal who does not possess element of respect in his or her leadership is likely to fail in leading the people.

Participant DP1 from school B shared similar sentiments with other research participants regarding the elements associated with ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools. Participant DP1 responded:

I think one of the things that help a leader to succeed is showing respect to people around him or her, regardless of their position. In other words an ethical leader listens to each stakeholder and values their contributions...respect of the law simplifies both management and leadership as it encourages doing things right.

Ethical leaders are always fair to their subordinates, and they treat them with respect and equality (Odole, 2018).

Participant E4 from school C also agreed with earlier views of participants from other schools that believed that respect is one critical element that educators and school principals need to possess in their leadership role. Participant E4 commented:

Well, working with all stakeholders at school and community with respect will always yield positive atmosphere in the school premises...Schools will be better managed If the schools can be led by ethical leaders, learners and educators will respect each other and the school property.

Similarly, DP2 from school C had responses which supported the responses of the other respondents. This is evident as DP2 stressed that:

Ethical leaders who operate with reverence when working with the educators and learners will always maintain high standards of working together in the

school...this will make and turn the school to be a progressive school ... develops and empowers learners as responsible and ethical citizens as they grow into adulthood.

Similar opinions were also shared by P3:

Yes, I think, it is important for educators, deputy principal and school principal to respect their work...reporting at school in time...even learners grow in an ethical environment. Respect reciprocates, in other words if the leaders respect other learners or educators in turn, they will respect their school principal or educators.

Participant E5 from school C reiterated the sentiments of the previous respondents when he said:

And yes, if leaders do not act with honour and integrity, they quickly loose respect and trust of all those around them and will struggle to lead and develop them. Oh... there must be mutual and respect amongst educators, deputy principal and school principal.

Concurring with other respondents, E6 from school C responded that:

Respect to all and demonstrate respect to others is paramount for educators and school principals. For one to achieve the vision and mission of the school ...he or she respects everyone equally, communicates openly and practices what he or she preaches.

In qualifying the latter assertion, Herrity (2023) agrees that ethical leaders demonstrate respect for the subordinates in listening attentively, being compassionate and considering opposing viewpoints.

Participant DP3 from school C shared the same views as E6 articulating that:

Oh yes ...mmm respect is an essential element in ethical leadership practice...without it any leader will not be listened too...disrespecting other learners and educators is caused by how you treat them. Once the educators and principal respect each other ...learners will emulate them. Overall, responses from participants at schools A, B, and C all agreed that respect is one of the critical elements that ethical leaders in public secondary schools should possess to instil a culture of respect within the school environment.

Based on the information above, it is crystal clear that respect is an important element that makes any person to be an ethical leader. The research has found that respect, justice, transparency, accountability, and community care are some fundamental values that enable educators to develop strong ethical leadership within an organization, particularly the school (Lee et al., 2021). Respect makes educators or school principals worthy of the respect others place in them (Nevhutanda, 2017). Respect builds a good reputation for both the educators and other stakeholders within the school environment. Respect encourages performance. It also encourages educators and school principals to be emulated by their followers. Schools with educators and school principals who possess respect are more likely to be successful and achieve the desired objectives. According to the research, educators and school principals who display ethical attributes may make fair decisions or appear more trustworthy to the school and community at large (Odole, 2018).

4.4.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Honesty

Honesty means acting in a way you know to be right or staying true to your own values and beliefs (Villirilli, 2021). This is corroborated by the literature which maintains that ethical leaders are known as leaders who are honest and respectful (Odole, 2018). Honesty means school leaders commit to presenting facts as they are, being fair, as well as communicating honestly with others around them (Villirilli, 2021). Honest leaders are principled and caring individuals who make fair and balanced decisions (Trevino & Brown, 2006).

According to the study's findings, honesty appeared to be an important quality that educators, deputy principals and school principals in public secondary schools

should possess if they are to succeed in leading and developing their schools. When asked about other elements related to ethical leadership practices in schools, most participants expressed similar opinion; participant E1 from School A commented as follows:

Honesty in ethical leaders builds positive attributes like kindness and trustfulness. Educators and school principals without this virtue are doomed to fail in their function.

Similarly, E2 from school A echoed E1's sentiment on honesty:

Oh yes...honesty creates ethical leaders deserving of the faith placed in them. Honesty will always assist educators and school principals to communicate with each other.

In corroborating the latter assertion, Herrity (2023) emphasizes that ethical leaders must behave with honesty. Dishonest behaviour by educators and school principals can generate an environment of mistrust at the schools.

Participant P1 from school B shared his views:

...mmm... ethical leaders must be honest and lead by examples at all times. In other words when a school principal or educator is honest... always willing to admit mistakes or trustworthy person, subordinates tend to have confidence in his or her leadership.

Participants E3 and DP1 from school B shared similar views to P1. They both elucidated that honesty plays a pivotal role in ethical leadership practice at school. Participant DP1 stated that:

If the school principal or educator is honest, his or her followers will trust him or her too ...and honesty builds self-reliance. I also believe that such a leader

with honesty will create a conducive atmosphere of teaching and learning at the school.

Participant P2 from school C also emphasized the significance of honesty in leadership at school when she asserted that:

Honesty helps ethical leaders in the school deal with ethical quandaries...I can't think of leaders without honesty...because it is the basis of trust.

Participant DP2 from school C added some features of ethical leadership practices when he verbalized that:

Oh...honesty in ethical leadership practices helps educators and school principal to be sincere and also...create strong relationships in the school. I think educators who are honest with themselves become loyal to their subordinates...We do not have a good number of ethical leaders who can instill respect and honesty among the teachers and learners.

In qualifying this assertion, Naidoo (2015) states that ethical school leaders who are honest can earn the trust of their learners and other stakeholders. Furthermore, they might provide open communication, transparency, and dependability.

Participants E4 and P3 from school C also shared similar opinions as other participants.

They too asserted that honesty means leaders commit to presenting facts as they are.

Participant P3 went on to articulate that:

Yes, I think it is important that educators and school principal should always act with honesty...to be consistent and fair to everyone...acting in such a way will boost the morale of other staff members. Honesty plays an important role in our lives.

Likewise, E5 from School C reiterated the opinions of previous participants when he said that:

An honest school principal or educator builds strong relationships with people around him or her at school...he or she can be trusted more. In other words honesty is the greatest virtue that every leader must hold if he or she wants to successful in life.

Participants DP3 and E6 from school C also shared similar sentiments of honesty as the other respondents. They believed that honesty assists the leader to be seen as a transparent and reliable person. Participant DP3 from school C went on to say:

Well one of the principles of ethical leadership practice is honesty...and when the school principal or educator demonstrates honesty, always speak the truth and is trustworthy...follows the rules and regulation...and application of the laws is fair.

Based on the explanation above, educators and school principals who embrace honesty can receive the trust of their learners and other stakeholders in the school setting (Dladla, 2020). According to Villirilli (2021), honest educators will promote ethical values such as transparency, fairness, integrity, and open communication in the workplace. They will also support human relationships between educators and the learners. Educators who are honest are more likely to inspire learners as well as achieve the objectives of the school. Honest educators and school principals will eliminate unethical behaviours at the school (Odole, 2018).

4.4.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Transparency

According to Tielkemeier (2023), transparency is the practice of being open, providing regular feedback, being honest with others no matter how challenging it might be and admitting mistakes and wrongdoing. This is supported by the literature which elucidates that leading with transparency encourages accountability behaviours for both educators and school principals (Velaquez, Andre, Shanks &

Meyer, 2017). Transparency means keeping an open dialogue, accepting feedback, and disclosing the information others need to execute their tasks at the school setting (Villirilli, 2021).

Findings of the study seem to reveal that transparency is an important aspect of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools, which educators, deputy principals and school principals must demonstrate on the school premises. This is consistent with the existing literature, which confirms the significance of transparency in secondary schools. The majority of secondary school respondents were of the view that transparency could enhance ethical leadership practices in the school environment. Participants E1 and E2 from school A shared similar opinions. Participant E2 elaborated as follows:

Yes, it is very important for school leaders like educators, deputy principal and school principal to be transparent because the school is a public institution ...and as such... there is nothing to hide...but contrary important information is being withheld from certain people or have access to certain documents at the school.

Participant P1 from school A concurred with the opinions of participants from other secondary schools that transparency plays a critical part in ethical leadership. He went on to say that:

Yes, transparency is a principle that educators and school principal should possess...as such transparency makes it easier for stakeholders in the school to collaborate and foster strong relationships. There is lack of transparency on the part of the school principal and school governing body members.

This sentiment is supported by Lawton and Paez (2014) who state that the principles of transparency, respect and honesty are prerequisites for ethical leadership. Educators and school principals with ethical attributes will be able to build strong relationships in the school setting.

Participants DP1 and E3 from school B also shared the same sentiments. They defined transparency as being open to others and allowing them to enter your space. Participant DP1 explained that:

The keys to transparent leadership are allowing subordinates to ask questions without fear or hesitation... create opportunities for individuals to articulate their position.

Similarly, participant P2 from school C affirmed the submissions of the other participants in the study that revealed transparency as an open procedure. P2 articulated that:

My understanding is that educators who are kept informed are more likely to have confidence and trust in leadership of the school... being open and honest helps both educators and students solve problems.

Likewise, DP1 from school C echoed the sentiments of the other participants in that both were of the view that transparency foster positive result. Participant DP1 explained that:

When educators and school principal are transparent, pupils' performance will improve. Transparency helps staff members to share information freely...at our school, school issues are not being resolved openly and in line with the school policy and legislation.

Participant P3 from school C believed that transparency includes characteristics such as accountability, communication, openness and leading with honesty, and responded by explicitly explaining that:

If the school principal or educators are transparent, there is no way in which people can fill in the gaps with their own story...people cannot be manipulated easily because they have the correct information at their disposal.

Participants E4 and DP2 from school C agreed with previous views of participants from other schools. According to the respondents, transparency in the leadership allows engagement, particularly at school. Participant DP2 went on to state that:

Well, transparency promotes an environment of working together as a staff...in other words it opens communication.

In addition, E5 from school C expressed the view that transparency in leadership means sharing information with subordinates at the school. Participant E5 opined that:

.....mmm transparency is paramount for the purpose of accountability to the stakeholders at school... people have access to the information of the school...also concerns are being addressed.

Participants E6 and DP3 from school C also concurred with the opinions research participants from the other secondary schools that transparency provides complete information in the activity of the school. Participant E6 from school D articulated that:

I think, staff members who are being kept updated are more likely to have a clear picture about the developments at the school. A transparent leader is not afraid to be asked anything by his or her subordinates at any given time.

Based on the information above, the findings of the study seem to indicate that the behaviour of the educators, deputy principals and school principals displays a lack of the elements of ethics. Dladla (2020) asserts that educators' loss of respect of learners and other stakeholders is one of the main reasons for the deteriorating relationships in the school setting. Every person needs respect and transparency in the school is important; educators and learners will then produce the desired results. Lack of transparency is another factor influencing unethical practices in most public secondary schools. Educators and school principals need to acquire these ethical elements in order to advance ethical practices.

4.4.1.4 Sub-theme 4: Accountability

Villirilli (2021) defines accountability as taking responsibility for one's actions, decisions and their consequences. The current study's findings are in line with the literature of WHO (2017) presented in chapter two that defines accountability as the obligation of the leadership of an organization such as a school, to be answerable to its subordinates, and for that leader to be accountable for achieving objectives and results in accordance with the program budget, rules and standards. Accountable leaders allow themselves to be held accountable for their decisions and actions. As Othman and Rahman's (2014) study found, accountable leaders are honest in sharing information about their responses, to relevant stakeholders.

Data generated from the semi-structured interviews revealed that the majority of participants' responses unanimously agreed that accountability is an essential attribute that educators, deputies and school principals should possess to deter unethical practices in the school setting. When asked about the elements related to ethical leadership behaviour, most participants from schools A, B, and C shared similar sentiments. Participant P1 from school A, said:

Ethical leaders must be accountable to all stakeholders at the school. For many years that I taught, educators and principals do not want to take full responsibility of their actions...if you ask why... the answer is I don't want to lose my job.

On probing further, DP1 from school B stated that:

I think, there is a lack of moral accountability on the part of educators and principals because they think that they are not obliged to report to their followers... Lack of accountability is being observed every day at our school...and the Department of Education is doing nothing about that despite the matter being reported.

”

Similarly, E4 and DP2 from school C also concurred with the sentiment that lack of accountability is one of the causes of unethical practices of educators and school principals.

Most of the principals after attending meetings and workshops keep information to themselves or only certain educators are given...others get it through hearsay.

Participants E5, E6 and DP3 from school C showed that there is a gap in the legislative framework which some educators and school principals are exploiting. Participant DP3 said that:

There is no policy in place which compels educators and school principals to report to their subordinates...if they do it is selective reporting.

It is my view that accountable leaders can lead to gains in public trust and can build a good reputation for themselves or the schools they are working for (Odole, 2018). Hlongwane (2021) avers that ethical leaders who are accountable will always provide accurate and reliable information to the followers. Ethical behaviours enhanced by accountability need to be enriched with trust and purpose in order to build on performance. Sentiments from participants on this theme concerning the strategies required to promote ethical leadership practices were supported by the literature, such as Calik et al. (2012) who posited that accountability had the ability to enhance ethical leadership practices. The followers depend on such information to make informed decisions and actions. Educators and school principals who are accountable to the stakeholders remove doubts and mistrust that subordinates might have. Adherence to the accountability principle encourages professionalism in the school setting. Accountability inspires ethical behaviour practices to both educators and learners at school.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Causes of unethical leadership behaviour practices

This theme consists of four sub-themes discussed in the sections below.

According to Hlongwane (2021), the incidence of ethical wickedness at school by educators and principals has reached frightening magnitudes worldwide. This is corroborated by literature which asserts that public schools are not safe from maladministration and unethical practices (Serfontein & de Waal, 2015). Furthermore, dishonesty and mistrust are some of the unethical elements of leadership that impact on the conduct of educators (Odole, 2018). There are multiple factors described in the literature in chapter two that sway most educators, deputies and school principals to act unethically in the school context (Theunissen, 2019). Recently, a study found that unethical practices shame the image of the school (Maseko, 2017). The following sub-theme was articulated by the respondents during the face-to-face interviews.

4.4.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Greed as the prime motivator of unethical practices

The data from the interviewed participants indicated that there were wide-ranging factors that influenced unethical leadership behaviour practices of educators and school principals in public secondary schools. This is supported by the literature which defines greed as a selfish motivation to acquire an unfairly excessive amount of resources, at the expense of others (Cardella, Kugler, Anderson & Connolly, 2019). This means one chooses to put others aside and pay them no attention in the pursuit of self-interest. A recent study found that greed through malicious envy predicted lower satisfaction with life (Zeelenberg, Seuntjens & Van den Ven, 2022). Butts (2012), in support of the forgoing assertion, emphasized that the primary motivation that triggers unethical practices is greed, jealousy, envy and anger. According to Dladla (2020), greed is the main cause of educators and school principals acting unethically. Greed stems from different factors and impacts both the school and the community. The majority of the respondents mentioned greed as the prime motivator behind why educators and school principals engaged in unethical practices.

P1 from school A expressed his observations of greed by articulating that:

As an educator myself...I think greed is the root cause that influences educators and school principals be enticed to embezzle the school funds. Moreover, people want to be rich overnight at the expense of needy learners.

Participant E1 from school A echoed similar sentiments when he mentioned that:

Yes...it is very sad to see some educators and principals trying by all means to generate extra money from the school coffers. They want money to meet their personal needs. I think greedy is the driving force...They lack ethics.

This assertion is corroborated by Avrahami (2012) who stated that some educators and school principals have set standards for themselves and want to maintain these at all costs.

Participant E2 from school A expressed his observation of greed:

It is a serious concern in our schools. There is an abuse of power by some educators and school principals in positions. Some educators have noticed that there is no consequence management from the Department...no one is being punished or fined for this wrong doing...they capitalize on that and start stealing the school funds.

Nothing is being done to reprimand the culprits who are squandering school funds; instead they are being redeployed from one school to another (Dladla, 2020).

Participant DP1 from school B concurred with the notion expressed by research participants from other schools who believed that greed is the primary factor that motivates educators and school principals to exhibit inappropriate behaviour. Participant DP1 posited that:

From my own experience as deputy principal, I am in the dark about how the school funds have been administered. Those who are in charge of school finances do not want to see anyone nearer them because they are greedy.

They are in power and untouchable...exposed to school coffers and they use money as they wish. The only time they talk to us is when they say the money is in the bank and later to say there is no more money.

Participant P2 from school B also agreed with the earlier views from the other schools that greed is the source of unethical actions of some educators and school principals. He commented that:

Oh yes...some educators and school principals use their positions to steal school funds...money which is supposed to buy teaching aids is being channelled into their pockets. They are not happy with what they are earning from the Department.

This is affirmed by Hitch (2015) who opines that the educators' need to fill their pockets is one of the causes of unethical behaviour.

Similarly, E3 from school B concurred with the notion of the other participants that greed is the root cause of negative behaviour. Participant E6 had this to say:

Eish... Some school principals and educators misappropriate school money at times to enrich themselves and even to change their lifestyles...and teachers are not willing to speak out against wrongdoing because they are not protected by anything. They think nobody is watching them. Moreover, they inflate their claims for the sake of getting extra cash for themselves.

Principals and educators see their access to school finances as a golden opportunity for enriching themselves instead of improving the teaching and learning conditions in their schools (Dladla, 2020).

Participant DP2 from school C also concurred with the previous views of participants from other schools. According to the participants, greed is defined as a self-centred and exaggerated need for more of something than is required. Participant DP2 explained:

Well, there are some teachers and school principals who are accepting kickbacks in order to influence the result of the bidding procedure at the schools...they recommend the particular candidate in order to get money in return.

When probing further, participants from school C: E5, E6 and DP3 shared similar opinions with participants from other schools. They expressed the negative impact greed has on the secondary schools. Greed influences unethical practices in the school setting. Participant DP3 said the following:

Unethical leaders use their position in the school to steal money that is meant to buy learning and teaching materials. This has become a habit...the school cannot afford to pay other services like electricity which is rendered by the local municipality. Schools have remained poor because of unethical actions of some school principals, educators and school governing body members.

The research suggests that, greed directly affects the educators' unethical practices at the school. Naidoo (2015) argues that most school funds have been drained by greed from educators and school principals. Greed has propelled educators to engage in corrupt activities at various public secondary schools (Hlongwane, 2021). Greed is a sign of moral decay on the part of educators and school principals. There is no mechanism to monitor what the educators and school principals do.

4.4.2.2 Sub-theme 2: The operating environment as a factor in unethical practices

Tapia-Fonllem, Fraijo-Sing, Corral-Verdugo, Garza-Teran and Moreno-Barohona (2020) define a positive school environment as a school having appropriate facilities, well-managed finances, available school-based health support, a work ethic and a clear disciplinary policy, high levels of collaboration and communication among stakeholders and effective school leadership. In contrast, they describe a negative school environment as one where there are undesirable behaviours such as high levels of frustration among educators, school principals, learners, and the community at large as the school is found in the community environment. Odole

(2018) states that a negative work environment impacts on ethical practices. The participants' responses are in line with literature by Kutsyuruba, Klinger and Hussain (2015) who asserted that educators, school principals, learners and other relevant stakeholders work in an environment where trust, transparency and accountability are lacking. The school environment plays a crucial role in the achievements of the desired goals of learners and educators. Previous studies have shown that variables such as physical, academic and social dimensions influence the school environment (Mastandrea & Crano, 2019).

The findings of the study suggest that the operating environment is a contributing factor in educators' and school principals' unethical behaviours in public secondary schools. Participants E1, E2 and P1 from school A corroborate the assertion that school environment plays a role in the unethical behaviour of educators and school principals. Participant P1 articulated that:

I think...poor working environment, that is where you find most of us earning low salaries and not matching with high work demands...this is where dirty tricks of trying to get extra cash comes in.

Participant E1 from school A concurred with this view:

Oh yes...educators operate in a school environment which is not transparent. For instance, even if you see someone doing the evil thing....there are no mechanism in place to report the school principal or teacher. We are afraid of being victimized.

On further probing, E2 from school A asserted the following:

Yes indeed...some educators engage in these evil behaviours because they have inherited it within the community environment in which they serve. The environment of the school is a fertile ground to enrich them. Educators and learners are growing up and working in an environment with leaders who

themselves are not leading by examples or walking the talk...not supporting ethical decision taken.

Manjunatha and Maqsud (2013) assert that the background of employees has an impact on their conduct, whether ethical or unethical.

Similarly, the responses of E3 from school B affirmed the responses of the other participants:

Oh yes, at our school some unethical behaviours that I have observed include favouritism and nepotism that have eroded this noble profession and ethical standard.

Participant DP1 from school B echoed the sentiment of respondents from other schools who believed that the school environment could contribute to the unethical conduct of educators and school principals:

Well...there are educators and principals that are taking advantage of the working environment ...nobody is watching their evil behaviours. They do wrong things in order to get favours from their colleagues who are indirectly benefiting. It is free for all. They exploit the situation for their own benefit...there are no strict measures to curb these malpractices.

Educators and school principals do things that they know are wrong because of peer pressure (Dladla, 2020).

Participant P2 from school B agreed with the views of participants from the other secondary schools that a negative environment is the cause of unethical practices of educators. He stated that:

Educators operate in the environment of fear...They don't want to report these malpractices because they are afraid of the consequences...fear of being victimized... or even being demoted... or not getting promotion.

Similarly, E4 from school C expressed the view that unethical practice is directly related to the operating school environment. Participant E4 articulated that:

It is important to note that the social backgrounds of educators motivate their actions at the school. Most of the negative elements in our society permeate into our school environment. Worse it...some educators and principals live in an environment of bribery and fraud... Nobody cares... Wrongdoing is regarded as normal.

In responding to the question, DP2 from school C shared the following:

For me, the societal ills that are realized in our community infuse into the school environment. Theft or evil actions taking place in our schools are a reflection of what is happening in our society at large. Some of the educators come from communities where there are no morals, values or ethics.

A similar view was echoed by P3 from school C:

It is true, some of the educators, school principals and school governing body members take the advantage that ...there is no policy for reporting any wrongdoing in the school and they continue looting school funds.

Participant E5 from school C shared similar experiences of the school environment. The participant stated:

Well, I think teachers and school principals operate in an environment where there is absence of consequential management for their evil behaviors... some teachers are motivated to cheat the system because there are no monitoring mechanism in schools.

Participant E6 from school C concurred with the views of participants from other secondary schools. He elucidated that:

Environmental pressures both at school and community encourage teachers to get involved in in all kinds of unethical practices; these include bribery and inability by those in authority to enforce discipline for the crime committed.

Bandura (1999) asserted that within a social cognitive theory , environmental factors play a significant role in personal factors that affect moral thought, effective self-reactions and ethical conduct.

Engaging further with the question, DP3 from school C stated that:

The poor working condition is one of the contributing factors of unethical practices in the school...most of the educators are not happy with the salaries they earn.

It is extremely difficult for the educators and school principals to operate at the required level in environment where corruption is endemic (Dladla, 2020).

Environment is one of the most influential contexts of unethical conduct in the school. According to social learning theory, people will behave following what values are acceptable in their environment by observing and gathering information on their surroundings (Bandura, 1997). Leaders have the moral obligation to create an environment in their organizations where employees experience security, integrity and trust (Grigoropoulos, 2019).

In analysing the sentiments from the responses of all twelve respondents, all participants unanimously agreed that operating in a negative school environment contributes to unethical practices. The environment entices educators and school principals to be involved in evil actions (Mastandrea & Crano, 2019). The community within which the school is built plays an important role in influencing the ethical culture of the school. Mastandrea and Crano (2019) state that the school environment is one which educators, school principals, learners and other relevant stakeholders should operate in an environment of trust, transparency and accountability. Based on the information above, environmental factors directly affect educators' ethical behaviour.

4.4.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Inadequate training of educators and school principals

Findings from the data agreed and the operating environment was not the only factor that influenced unethical practices; the third one was inadequate training of educators and school principals. Most participants during interviews revealed that lack of training of educators and principals could be adding to unethical practices at the school. Participants P1, E1 and E2 from school A described inadequate training as the cause of unethical practices of educators and school principals. As P1 explained:

It is true, as a school principal, I have observed that some educators have only the theory part and lack the practical part of teaching...as class managers could hardly manage their own classes. They haven't acquired ample knowledge and skills. On the other side most principals don't know how to mentor or support the new ones. They are found wanting all the time.

Similarly, DP1 from school B echoed the opinions of participants from other schools who described inadequate training of educators and school principals as influencing elements in the unethical practices of educators and principals. When asked about his education training background, DP1 went on to explain that:

During my four years training as deputy principal, our curriculum did not include subjects like ethics, ethical leadership and school financial management...moreover, we were not properly equipped to manage and lead learners and finances.

Participant E3 from school B concurred with the notion of DP1 that inadequate training was the source of unethical conduct of some educators and school principals:

I think insufficient amount of time is allocated to in-service training of educators and school principals. We are ineffective in the implementation of relevant legislation and school policies. Worse it, we lack knowledge of

morals, ethics and values. The Department of Education is not doing enough to capacitate principals and educators to be more effective and efficient. There is no consequence management, for principal and teachers think that they are above the law.

Participant P2 from school B was of the view that lack of training of educators impacted negatively on the learners as they are on the receiving end. Participant P2 summed it up as follows:

Department of Education has taken corporal punishment out of school premises...no alternative ways of instilling discipline has been provided for the educators and principals. Educators are frustrated...educators have no clue of what to do. They end up taking the law into their own hands. Educators still want to use corporal punishment despite it being abolished.

The opinion of participant E4 from school C was corroborated by E5 from school C who articulated that:

Yes, educators are not fully equipped to deal with ethical dilemmas experienced day to day at school...in other words they are not capable to do the work that they have been employed for. In addition, there is no monitoring taking place by the District officials.

In responding to the question, E6 from school C point out that the Department of Education should develop programs that can equip educators and school principals with knowledge and skills to do their work effectively and efficiently. Participant E6 commented that:

The development and ongoing backup support of educators and school principals is the key to the success of any school. Therefore, educators need regular support from the Departmental officials to monitor the work at hand. The relationship between some educators, school principal and learners is very poor...At our school most of the problems are not addressed but instead

they are swept under the carpet. Teachers lack the necessary knowledge to lead ethically the learners and other stakeholders. A shortage of highly qualified educators has become a serious challenge...ongoing educator training can assist the educators and school principals to determine what actions to take if they witness unethical practices taking place in the school environment.

Furthermore, DP3 from school C also agreed with earlier sentiments of participants from other secondary schools:

I think at our school, some teachers lack a comprehensive skills and knowledge to carry out their work with diligences...at the workshops organized by the department of Education, some of the facilitators lack competency and professionalism...even after these workshops there is no follow up from the Department of Education.

In analysing the above sentiments, all participants from schools A, B and C during interviews revealed inadequate training of educators and school principals as a primary cause for unethical practices taking place in the public secondary schools. The following theme discusses the implementation strategies at public secondary schools.

4.4.2.4 Sub-theme 4: Lack of ethics education in schools

According to Singh and Twalo (2015), ethics is the study of morals. Ethics are beliefs about what is right and wrong or good and bad (Eluka et al., 2015). Ethics education promotes ethical values in other people and leads to success in professional and interpersonal relationships (Reddy, 2017).

Ekwokoma and Osagiobare (2021) indicate that ethics is the study of interpersonal and social values and the rules of conduct that derive from these values. A code of ethics and policies on ethics and ethics training advance ethical behaviour because they prescribe which activities are acceptable and which are not (Crawford, 2017). Educators and school principals need to know the basic principles and standards

that they are expected to uphold in order to execute their work, as well as where the limits of acceptable behaviour are (CECD, 2022).

The findings from this research suggested that not all participants had in-depth understanding of the concept “ethics”. In addition, some of the participants explained it differently. Indeed, Tushar, Waliullah and Nargis (2022) postulated that there is no universally accepted definition of ethics. Most participants gave different understanding of the concept “ethics”. In responding to the question, EI, E2, P1 and DP1, who are based at the two schools A and B, shared similar sentiments. Participant P1 further commented that:

I think ethics refer to a standard or ruler of measuring what is right or wrong in the eyes of the people. It is the set of values such as respect in the individual.

On further probing the matter, E3 from school B commented that:

Yes, ethics is the moral principles that direct person's code of conduct in everyday life...Without moral principles there will be disrespect in our school.

In qualifying this assertion, Naidoo (2015) refers to ethics as a set of moral principles and values that determine an individual's behaviour. Ethics and leadership are intertwined (Villirilli, 2021).

Participants P2 and DP1 explained ethics to be a set of ethical standards of the school which demonstrates what they do, behave or say. They believe ethics assists the school to achieve its vision and mission. Participant DPI further articulated that:

In my view, the word ethics refer to respect, love and fairness between the teachers and the learners.

Participants E4, P3, from schools B and C pointed out that they did not understand the word ethics and the paramount importance of ethics in their schools. Participant E4 went on to assert that:

In our school the word “ethics” is a foreign language...it is not being used in our staff meetings or school premises. We need to be trained on ethics...what is all about.

Participant E5 from school C concurred with the sentiments of the above participants, that most educators have no knowledge of ethics:

Well, it is the difficult word to explain...I have no idea of what you are talking about. In my 23-year experience as an educator ...we just work at school. I do not recall our school or the Department of Education conducting workshop on ethics.

Participant P3 from school C went on:

Yes, as the deputy principal there is poor work ethics in our school... I noticed that there is low levels of accountability on the part of some teachers...for instance late reporting for work without valid reasons, dishonesty and mistrust among educators.

In the same vein, E6 and DP3 from school C showed that educators are experiencing ethical issues which need to be resolved. Participant DP3 articulated that:

Teachers and principals are struggling to deal decisively with ethical dilemmas which they are experiencing daily at school...knowledge of ethics is critical.

The goal of ethics education is to raise the moral awareness and maturity of educators and school principals, which will spread throughout the school system. Ethics education will benefit educators and school principals to cope with ethical dilemmas they face daily at schools.

Ethics is a key element of any successful leader in the community, particularly the educators and school principals who are in position of power in the school (Costa et al., 2022). Brown and Trevino (2006) echo that the definition of ethical leadership infers that leaders are required to demonstrate good ethics. Rebore (2001) maintains that ethics not only provides a framework for decision making but also requires reflection upon personal and professional values, attention to the disciplined ways of thinking, and ethical analysis to respond to the demands of school leadership. A clear ethics strategy is needed to better enable the school to realize its ethical goals (Mastandrea and Crano, 2019). Based on the information above, lack of ethics in schools directly influences the immoral behaviour practices of some educators and school principals.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Strategies for promoting ethical leadership behaviour practices.

This theme discusses the findings of the study in response to the study objective 3 in chapter one which reads: to determine strategies that could be employed by educators and school principals to ensure the promotion of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools. A clear ethics strategy is needed to better enable the school to realize its ethical goal (Mastandrea and Crano, 2019).

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the participants' responses expressed a variety of strategies and sentiments that could be utilized to promote ethical leadership behaviour practices in the school. The subsequent sub-theme was expressed by the participants. The findings of the study showed that all participants from school A, B and C unanimously articulated that ethical behaviour should be modelled to promote ethical leadership behaviour practices in public secondary schools.

4.4.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Modelling ethical behaviour

Ethical behaviour within an organization is influenced by leaders through the act of modelling (Brown, Trevino & Harrison, 2005). This assertion is corroborated by Huang et al. (2022) who state that it is through ethical behaviour modelling that an ethical leader will inspire followers to follow a moral code of conduct and assist

schools in implementing ethical policies and processes. Followers model the behaviour of the leaders when it comes to acting ethically. In other words, at school, subordinates take cues from a range of ethical behaviours displayed by their educators and school principals. In an organization like a school, educators should set an example through their behaviours (Huang et al., 2022).

Examples of how to achieve this include setting an example for subordinates, expressing moral values, and utilizing rewards and penalties to promote ethical behaviour practices within subordinates. Displaying good ethical behaviour can promote ethical conduct of the school. Educators and school principals have the fundamental responsibility to advance ethical behaviours by demonstrating those behaviours (Grigoropoulos, 2019).

Data from the study findings revealed that the majority of the participating schools unanimously agreed that modelling ethical behaviour could advance ethical leadership practices in the school setting. The responses of the participants from school A corroborated those voiced in other participating secondary schools. Participant E2 commented:

True, every teacher or school principal must set a good example and high ethical standards by behaving in an ethical way to so that the learners and other teachers can follow his or her footsteps.

Participant DP1 from school A reinforced the views of E2 from school A when he asserted:

Yes of course, learners look up to the educators and school principals as their role models... because they are school leaders who they must emulate from them. When educators walk the talk ... they will instill confidence in learners...in return learners will take education very serious.

On probing further, E4 and P3 believed that by virtue of educators and school principals holding key positions, learners and other stakeholders are more likely to emulate their behaviour. Participant P3 said that:

Teachers are expected to uphold high moral standards ... They are there to teach learners and other stakeholders respect, accountability and responsibility. They are holding positions of influence. The learners must learn good ethical behaviour from them.

Participant DP3 from school C supported the sentiment of the participants from other secondary schools who believed that learners copy what their educators are doing. Participant DP3 articulated that:

I have been a teacher for the past 16, learners listen to the teacher who respects them...They observe everything the teacher does and try to practice it.

Based on the examples above, the research posits that ethical behaviour modelling has a direct effect on educator ethical behaviour and empowers them to exercise this in the schools. Mayer et al. (2013) state that educators and school principals are believed to exert a strong influence on ethical standards in schools, such that they are seen as role models by the learners and the community at large. Examples of how to achieve this include setting an example for subordinates, expressing moral values, and utilizing rewards and penalties to promote ethical behaviour practices within subordinates.

Bandura (1997) elucidated that people learn through observing others' behaviour, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviours. Honesty, trustworthiness, integrity, fairness, respect, intelligence, and care are all fundamental elements of a role model leader (Tushar, Waliullah & Nargis, 2022). In addition, Odole (2018) emphasizes the point that educators and school principals are role models owing to the positions and powers they exercise in the schools. Subordinates model such behaviours like trustworthiness, and honesty to their colleagues, other members of the school and the community; this promotes satisfaction and loyalty to the organization while eliminating inefficient behaviours.

4.4.3.2 Sub-theme 2: On-going educator development program

The Department of Education is one of the government departments which should organize on-going educator development and ethical programs for school principals, deputy principals and educators to boost their confidence and capacity. This is affirmed by Manyaka and Sebola (2013) who state that ethical training and development programs form part of any ethical operation. This assertion is supported by Eisenbeiss (2012) who pointed out that educators and school principals who possess good ethics tend to implement ethical leadership more effectively. Similarly, Naidoo (2015) concurs with the above when he states that in order for ethical change to be effective, educators and school principals should be properly trained. Ongoing educator development programs include workshops and courses on ethics. Educators require knowledge and skills to enable them to face challenges in their school environment. Furthermore, educators need to be adequately trained so that they are competent to handle the ethical dilemmas in their schools. According to Naidoo (2015), for ethical change to be effective, educators and school principals need to be properly trained. Educators who are receiving in-service training regularly tend to demonstrate good ethics in their leadership (Brown & Trevino, 2006). To develop educators, both formal training and informal learning can contribute a great deal because these may lead to the educators' development of tacit knowledge, which can be contrasted with explicit knowledge (Markey et al., 2021).

The ethical training program will assist educators and school principals to know more about the school code of conduct, which can support educators and learners in raising concerns about ethical practices (Mihelic et al., 2010).

Training is a formal way to learn leadership skills (2022), and ethical training is needed to be an ethical leader. The Department of Basic Education should organize and develop ethical training programs for educators, deputy principals and school principals; this will guarantee that best ethical practices are being implemented in public secondary schools.

The majority of the participants' responses emphasized the importance of ongoing educator development programs in order to halt unethical behaviours ruining ethical standards and professionalism in public schools. Participants E1, E2 and P1 from

school A expressed similar sentiments about ongoing educator development programs. When asked about ongoing educator development programs, P1 from school A said:

I think continuous workshops and in service-training are critical in order to develop the moral behaviour standards for teachers and school principals in our schools.

On further probing the issue, E3, DP1, P2 from school B expressed lack of training as a contributing factor in unethical practices in the school setting. Participant P2 said:

It is quite clear that there is lack of training for teachers on ethical leadership in our school. Most teachers and school principals do not treat each other with respect and just at the workplace. The moral of teachers is very low.

Responses from E4 and DP2 from school C corroborated the responses of the participants from other secondary schools. Participant E4 commented that:

All I can say is that ...You only know or hear about SACE or certain legislation when the teacher has violated one of the pieces of the legislation or code of professional ethics. I don't recall a meeting where time is allocated for training of teachers in our school.

When probing the matter further, E5, E6 and DP3 from school C revealed that ethical issues are not prioritized on the agenda of the staff meetings. Participant DP3 explained:

I do not recall our school or circuit office regularly organizing workshops on ethical issues for educators or school principals to equip us on moral behaviour standards. Our school does not have a year program where legislations and policies are being itemized for discussion in the meeting... The lack of knowledge and training in ethics are the main cause of unethical practices of educators and school principals in schools.

The study found that to be regarded as a strong moral person one should have the right attributes such as respect, honesty and transparency (Trevino et al., 2000). Respect makes followers trust their leaders and contribute more (Nevhutanda, 2017). Respect is shown by ethical leaders through good listening skills, feeling for others and being able to tolerate different views from their followers (Nevhutanda, 2017). The importance of ethics training is to establish common codes of conduct, to acquire knowledge and skills which can help in identifying unethical practices and guide educators and school principals in making ethical decisions.

4.4.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Implementation of legislation and policies in the school setting

Numerous legislation and policies have been enacted to advance ethical behaviour practices in various government departments, including the Department of Education. The South African Constitution section 195 of 1996 stipulates that all public servants must advance high standards of ethics. In addition, the constitution infers that there should be strict mechanisms to ensure transparency, accessibility, and accountability within government. This includes learners, educators, and school principals. The South African Council of Educators (SACE) (Act 31 of 2000) prescribes the ethical behaviours of educators in schools. The foregoing is supported by Naidoo (2015) who asserted that the SACE Code of professional ethics should be strongly applied to ensure obedience by all educators.

The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) (Act No 1 of 1999) provides strict financial measures to be adhered to when purchasing or awarding a tender at the school. The Employment of Educators Act (EEA) (Act No 76 of 1998) prescribes the procedures to be followed in the appointment of suitably qualified educators and the code of conduct of educators. The South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act No 84 of 1996) outlines guidelines for the code of conduct of the learners as well the School Governing Body (SGB). Despite these initiatives, schools are still experiencing a rise in unethical practices. Askew, Besler and Kees (2015) posit that it is unacceptable to have rules and regulations that are not executed as is the case with schools. Most of the participants' responses during interviews seemed to suggest that implementation of legislation and school policies could assist in the enhancement of ethical practices

in the school settings. Participants E1 and P1 from school A believed that compliance with the legislation could advance the ethical behaviour of educators and school principals.

Oh yes most of the school principals and teachers are not following the legislative frameworks and policies because of poor planning.... if Department of Education

can be strict in the application of rules, teachers will behave responsibly...the Department of Education is dragging its feet to interfere in instances where the educator or school principal has contravened the law... in most cases they turn a blind eye, they only respond when the matter has been brought to the public by the social media... When the case is reported one office pass it to another office...no one wants to own the problem.

Participants E3 and DP1 also concurred with the views of participants from other secondary schools. Participant DP1 articulated that:

There is lack of understanding of various legislations enacted by the South African government and in particular the Department of Education...regular workshops on these laws need to be conducted in order to empower the teachers in our schools. Most schools have beautiful school policies and laws... but the biggest problem is the application thereof...Some teachers take advantage of the situation and act unethically.

Participants P2, P3 and DP2 from schools B and C also emphasized the need to create an atmosphere of teaching and learning through the enforcement of the school policies.

Educators and school principals are struggling to deal with ethical dilemmas in their schools because of poor interpretation of the school policies... All teachers and learners must be treated equally and with respect...Yes, I think most teachers lack the knowledge and skills of executing the legislative frameworks and school policies...they struggle to write a report when the

teacher has acted unethically...I think the Department of Education should organize regular workshops on the application of legislative frameworks so that school principals and educators can be effective in the implementation of these laws without fear or favour.

Participants E6 and DP3 from school C believed proper governance of the school must be established to assist with the implementation of the legislations and school policies

To address unethical practices in the school, I think the Department of Education must assist schools to enforce the existing legislations...This will motivate educators and school principals to take their work very serious. They will be afraid of the consequences. Well, most of the training sessions are mere talk-shops. There is no feedback from the workshops... educators and school principals do not know the consequences of violating the law and school policies, and the punishment thereof.

The participant E5 from school C believed that effective execution of the legislation and school policies could eliminate unethical practices of educators and school principals. Consequently, the school will achieve the desired objectives. Participant E5 stated:

I think some educators and school principals don't know how to apply the school policies and legislations. If you report a wrongdoing...They apply a delay tactics until the ethical issue disappears naturally...They are also afraid to handle disciplinary cases because they think this might jeopardize their relationships.

During our training there was no ethics as subject offered to us. As teachers we are not well equipped to deal with ethical issues at the school.

In light of the aforementioned statements, the majority of the participants' responses seemed to indicate that modelling ethical behaviour, organizing ongoing educator development programs and the implementation of legislation and school policies

could be strategies employed to assist educators, deputy principals and school principals in the promotion of ethical practices in public secondary schools. The following section will discuss educators and the effectiveness of ethical practices in public secondary schools.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Effectiveness and efficiency of ethical leadership behaviour practices

This theme consists of two sub-themes as discussed below:

The final theme that developed from the analysed data was educators' effectiveness and efficiency of ethical practices. This theme discusses the findings of the study in response to the study's objective 4 in chapter one, which reads: to examine the extent to which educators are effective in the enhancement of ethical practices in public secondary schools. Findings from the data revealed that the majority of the research participants were of the opinion that educators, deputy principals and school principals, by virtue of the positions they hold, can be effective and efficient in the advancement of ethical leadership behaviour practices in the school setting.

4.4.4.1 Ethics as part of the curriculum

Ethics and leadership are intertwined (Villirilli, 2021). Ethics is an essential component in teaching and plays a critical role in how an educator interacts with colleagues, learners and society at large. Good professional ethics are among an educator's most important resources. Ethics should be part of the curriculum at school because all teaching is founded on ethics. Educators and school principals, by virtue of the positions they hold, are role models for the learners. Besides being moral models, educators are also expected to demonstrate ethical principles through their teaching (Sharma et al., 2019).

Babalola, Stouten, Camps and Euwema (2019) aver that effective and efficient ethical leadership behaviour enhances school performance by integrating moral values into school practices. Effective and efficient ethical leaders build a positive atmosphere of teaching and learning within the school setting (Charoensap, Virakul

& Senasuk, 2019). Similarly, the moral characteristics of effective leadership behaviour demonstrated by educators and school principals show they are honest, respectful, and accountable to their subordinates (Sharma, Agrawal & Khandelwal (2019). It is important to point out that effective and efficient ethical leadership behaviour includes sharing information about school practices, procedures, attributes, and actions (Guo et al., 2023). Data generated from the semi- structured interviews indicated that the majority participating schools A, B and C emphasize the importance of incorporating ethics in the curriculum of the school to equip educators and school principals to handle ethical dilemmas effectively and efficiently. In responding to the question, E, E2, E3, P1 and DP1 from school A and B shared similar view on ethics. Participant P1 from school A stated:

I think ethics assist teachers to treat their colleagues, learners and other stakeholders fairly, honesty and respectfully.

Rabie and Abdul Malek (2020) state that ethics plays a critical part in engendering the right set of ideas, thoughts, and principles, which consequently influence individuals' work behaviour, conduct, and action.

Participants E4 and DP2 from school B concurred with the sentiment of supporting workplace ethics to other participating participants. When probing the issue further, DP2 stated:

True indeed, educators with strong sense of ethics turn to motivate ethical work behaviour at the school and free to report any ethical dilemmas.

Ethics motivates educators to exert extra effort in their work and to avoid unethical conduct the workplace (Idrees, Hynek, Jin, Akbar & Jabeen, 2022).

Similarly, E6, P3, DP3 from school C believed that with ethics instilled in all values of the school to all subordinates. Participant DP3 went on to say that integrating ethics into the school assists in promoting responsible and ethically conscious educators and learners in the school.

It is apparent from the research that it is explicitly clear that educators and school principals who possess strong knowledge of ethics become effective and efficient in the execution of ethical behaviour practices within the school setting. Educators should possess the knowledge of professional ethics to provide quality education and inculcate good morals in the co-workers and the learners. Furthermore, previous studies corroborated the view that ethical leadership behaviour practices assist learners and educators to attain the school objectives (Ahmad et al., 2021). Educators and school principals who possess the traits of respect, honesty, accountability, and transparency tend to implement ethical behaviour practices more effectively and efficiently (Eisenbeiss, 2012).

4.4.4.2 Support and monitoring from the Department of Education

The Department's strategic goals are effective and efficient support; monitoring; development and improvement of ethical educators (DBE, 2021). For the educators to be effective and efficient in the promotion of ethical behaviour practices, the Department of Education should organize workshops and seminars to equip the educators and school principals with the knowledge that will assist them to deal with ethical dilemmas they are encountering daily at school. In other words, educators would be capable of giving moral support when with ethical issues arise. Further, as Sherpa (2018) states, educators will demonstrate respect, justice and ethical behaviour in their conduct with co-workers, learners and parents. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the participants from school A, B and C expressed the view that educators need support and monitoring from the Department of Education. When probing the matter further participant P1 from school A stated:

Yes, the Department of Education must organize more workshops for educators and school principals in order to effectively advance ethical behaviour.

Participants E2, P2 and DP1 from school B believed that monitoring of educators and school principals after workshops needs to be given a priority. DP1 stated:

True indeed, it is important for the Department to make follow-ups to ensure proper execution of legislations and policies...and where there are weaknesses be addressed speedily ...there should be regular visits to schools.

Participants P3, E4, E5 and DP3 from school C concurred with the opinions of participants from other secondary schools that monitoring, and development programs can assist educators and school principals to be more effective and efficient in the enhancement of ethical behaviour practices in the school setting. Educator education development programs should be conducted to improve their moral compass (Boon & Maxwell, 2016). Participant E5 articulated that:

The Department should ensure that policies are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Good communication and support policies are in place.

Othman and Rahman (2014) maintain that effectiveness and efficiency are essential principles that ethical educators should possess in the school setting. This notion is supported by Odole (2018) when he asserted that effectiveness and efficiency will assist the ethical educators to promote ethical practices. Eisenbeis (2012) opined that ethical educators and school principals who hold the qualities of honesty, integrity, trustworthiness and respect tend to implement ethical behaviour practices more effectively.

Ethical awareness can also promote ethical behaviour by providing a constant reminder of what is acceptable behaviour within the school. This is especially effective when the visible examples stem from the positive behaviour of ethical educators. The research has found that respect, justice, integrity and community care are some of the fundamental values that enable educators to develop strong ethical leadership within an organization, particularly schools (Lee et al., 2021).

Educators' work ethics can have extensive effects on the school cultures and influence all stakeholders to practice the same behaviour. Ethical educators and school principals should be a good example and show high ethical standards by

behaving in an ethical way. Ethical educators ensure that their co-workers are part decision-making processes, are cared for and fairly treated (Madiga, 2022).

Effective and ethical educators care more about the greater good than their own needs. Educators must instil shared core values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness and compassion by applying legislation and school policies fairly (Brimmer, 2007). Effective and efficient communication styles of educators and school principals are also modelled by their followers when they are respecting professional ethics (Andreas, 2015). Good ethical practices project a good image of an organization, which attracts patronage as the public gain confidence in the school because of its ethical character (Eluka et al., 2015).

Odole (2018), in his study, concluded that by including effectiveness and efficiency as components related to ethical practice, ethical educators and school principals are more likely to promote ethical behaviour practice in the school environment. Educators and school principals are the most influential persons in any school and greatly impact the ethical behaviour of educators in the school context (Guo, 2023). Cheteni and Shindika (2017) maintain that educators and school principals can achieve an ethical environment in the school setting by establishing practices that strictly conform to upholding ethical values and beliefs. Ethical educators need to display to their colleagues that ethical principles are critical to the realization of the vision and mission of the school (Hlongwane, 2021).

For the effective functioning of schools, educators and principals should possess strong morals and values to guide them in their daily conduct and decision-making processes. Educators must instil shared core values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness and compassion (Brimmer, 2007). Ethical school leaders should embrace these attributes in order to be effective and efficient in the advancement of ethical behaviour practices. The subsequent section presents and discusses document analysis.

4.5 Document analysis

Document analysis, as defined by Bowen (2009), is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents that can be utilized to promote information, enhance other types of research data, and confirm other sources. Document analysis can assist in answering the research questions. In addition, document analysis is a relatively simple process (Dalglish, Khalid & McMahon, 2020). The advantage of document analysis is that it is a good source of background information.

The researcher requested the participating schools A, B and C to present to the researcher official documents to be analysed. These documents were related to ethical leadership behaviour practices in public secondary schools. The significance of the documents was that they could shed light on the research problem and provide answers to the escalating unethical practices. The following documents were scrutinized, namely, the South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act No 84 of 1996), the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) (Act 1 of 1999), the Employment of Educators Act (Act No 76 of 1998) (EEA), the South African Council for Educators (SACE) (Act No 31 of 2000) and school policies like learners' code of conduct, financial policy and procurement policy.

The findings revealed that the majority of schools had all the required documents that address the ethical conduct of educators, school principals, deputy principals, learners and SGB members. However, some schools did not develop their own school copies, for instance, a code of conduct for educators, school financial policy as well as procurement policy. In addition, many of these documents are lying in the school principals' offices. The educators only know of these documents when there is a problem. The findings from the semi-structured interviews confirmed the existence of such documents and that educators are not exposed to or have access to them. Despite the existence of these ethical documents, the findings suggest that there are serious ethics violations and with no consequences for unethical practices. In conclusion, most of the documents contain ethical information which could answer the research questions and research problem. The following section provides a summary of this chapter.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter presented and analysed data and themes emanating from the semi - structured interviews and document analysis. It further presented and discussed the causes of unethical practices among educators and school principals in public secondary schools. In addition, this chapter focused on strategies that educators, deputy principals and school principals could execute to advance ethical practices. The subsequent chapter concludes with the summary, conclusions and recommendations deriving from the findings of the research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The study investigated the practices of ethical leadership behaviour practices in selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. This chapter presents and discusses a brief overview of the empirical findings from the semi-structured one-on-one interviews and document analysis about ethical leadership behaviour practices in public secondary schools, which were analysed and interpreted in chapter four. The chapter also discusses the limitations of the study. Furthermore, it makes recommendations for improving ethical behaviour practices in public secondary schools. Finally, the researcher makes final recommendations on the entire research project.

The study aimed to achieve the particular objectives that follow:

- ❖ To identify the ethical components of ethical leadership practices in Limpopo Province's public secondary schools.
- ❖ To probe into the causes of unethical leadership practices in public secondary schools.
- ❖ To determine what strategies educators could employ to promote ethical behaviour practices in public secondary schools.
- ❖ To investigate how effective educators are improving ethical behaviour practices in public secondary schools.

The following section discusses the key findings from the literature review and presents a summary of the main empirical findings according to the four deductively generated themes, namely:

- ❖ Elements of ethical leadership behaviour practice.
- ❖ The causes of unethical behaviour.

- ❖ Strategies for encouraging ethical behaviour.
- ❖ The effectiveness and efficiency with which educators implement ethical behaviour practices.

5.1.1 Theme 1: Elements of ethical leadership behaviour practices

The theme discussed in detail the ethical elements that educators, deputies, and school principals should possess as school leaders within the school setting. The theme examined the empirical findings of the study in response to the study objective 1 in chapter one: "To identify the elements of ethical leadership behaviour practices from the perspective of educators and school principals."

The study's findings appeared to show that the majority of the research participants from the participating schools, namely A, B and C, were already familiar with the ethical principles associated with ethical leadership. As Hegarty and Moccia (2018) state, ethical leadership is leadership based on ethical principles, because ethical leadership operates within a moral behaviour paradigm. According to the literature review, educators and school principals must uphold high ethical standards such as respect, honesty, justice, transparency, community care, trust, and accountability for the school's success (Grigoropoulos, 2019).

Furthermore, Lawton and Peaz (2013) argue that if school leaders demonstrate these ethical principles in both their thought processes and actions, they may find it easier to implement ethical leadership. The majority of the participating educators identified four fundamental elements associated with ethical leadership behaviour practices: respect, honesty, transparency, and accountability.

According to the research findings, respect is one of the ethical elements that educators and school principals should possess in order to be respected by co-workers, learners, and all stakeholders in the school and society at large. All people, regardless of socioeconomic or cultural background, should be respected by ethical educators and school principals. The ethical educator prioritizes respect for the dignity, worth, equality, diversity, and privacy of all people (WHO, 2017). According to a review of the literature, respect is a sure way to gain trust (Dladla, 2020). The

results of the findings of the study showed that one of the most important characteristics associated with ethical leadership is honesty. Honesty keeps one's integrity intact (Daft, 2014). Co-workers and students readily follow educators and school principals who are truthful.

The conclusions of the study indicated that the majority of the participants explicated honesty as a key feature of ethical leadership. The literature revealed that ethical leaders are known as leaders who are honest and respectful (Odole, 2018). According to the study findings, honesty appeared to be a fundamental component that educators, deputy principals and school principals should possess if they are to be successful in leading and developing their schools. Further, it emerged from the findings of the study that most educators and school principals saw transparency as a critical ethical principle related to ethical leadership. This is supported by research that shows that leading with transparency increases accountability behaviours in both educators and school principals (Huang et al., 2022). The majority of the public secondary schools that participated believed that transparency could improve ethical leadership behaviour practices within the school. The study findings revealed that most of the participants' responses unanimously agreed that accountability is an essential attribute of ethical leadership behaviour practices. Research studies have found that accountable leaders are honest in sharing information about their responses with relevant stakeholders (Othman & Rahman, 2014). The participants believed that accountable leaders are willing to justify their decisions and actions.

5.1.2 Theme 2: Causes of unethical behaviour practices

This theme investigates the causes of unethical behaviour practices in the school setting. The findings are discussed in this subsection in relation to the study's objective 2 in chapter one: "To investigate the causes of unethical leadership behaviour practices in public secondary schools."

The study found that the majority of research participants articulated various causes of unethical behaviour practices of educators and school principals within the school, according to the findings of study. According to the literature, the primary motivators that lead to unethical behaviour are greed, jealousy, and anger (Butts, 2012). Dladla

(2020) avers that greed is the root cause of unethical behaviour by some educators and school principals. According to study participants, some educators and school principals committed heinous acts to enrich themselves.

On the other hand, the study findings revealed that the majority of participants identified the operating environment as a factor in unethical behaviour practices of Educators and school principals in school settings. According to the literature review, the community in which the school is built has a significant impact on the school's ethical culture (Mastandrea & Crano, 2019). As a result, a negative environment would produce negative behaviours within the school. According to the study findings, a lack of adequate training for educators and school principals contributes to unethical behaviour practices within the school. Educators and school principals should be well-equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their duties effectively and efficiently.

The current study's findings revealed that the majority of participants pointed out a lack of ethics education in their schools as the source of unethical behaviour practices. According to a review of the literature, educators and school principals should understand basic ethical principles and standards that they should uphold in order to be well prepared to deal with ethical issues in the school setting (OECD, 2022).

5.1.3 Theme 3: Strategies of the promotion of ethical behaviour practices

The discussion of the findings in this subsection addresses study objective 3 from chapter one: "To investigate strategies for the promotion of ethical behaviour practices." This theme investigates strategies for promoting ethical behaviour in public secondary schools. According to the current study findings, the research participants unanimously affirmed a variety of strategies that could be used to promote ethical behaviour practices in the school.

The research findings revealed that the majority of the participants' responses believed the Department of Education should organize an ongoing educator development program for educators and school principals in order to develop their

self-confidence and capacity. Workshops and ethics courses are among the ongoing development programs. According to the literature review, educators should receive regular in-service training to improve their ethical behaviour. Educator moral behaviour will be developed through ongoing educator development programs. The researcher believes that implementing an ongoing educator development program would improve educators' knowledge and skills in dealing with unethical practices.

The findings revealed that legislation and policies were identified as one of the strategies that could advance ethical behaviour practices in public secondary schools. Participants indicated that the main cause of unethical behaviour practices by educators and school principals was a failure to implement legislation and policies. Some educators, for example, engaged in unethical practices because there is no consequence management at school. In my opinion, the failure of some educators and school principals to adhere to the legislation and schools caused disrespect, dishonesty, and a lack of accountability and transparency within the school.

The Department of Education should hold workshops for educators and school principals on the implementation of legislation and school policies. Legislation and school policies, in the researcher's opinion, guide educators, learners, and school principals' ethical behaviour. Finally, the current study found that the majority of research participants believed that modelling ethical behaviour could promote ethical behaviour practices among educators, learners and school principals. When it comes to acting ethically, the literature revealed that followers model their leaders' behaviour (Huang et al., 2022). As a result, ethical educators and school principals should set a good example.

5.1.4 Theme 4: Effectiveness and efficiency of educators and school principals in the promotion of ethical leadership behaviour practices

The following section summarizes the research findings through document analysis. This theme investigates the effectiveness and efficiency of educators and school principals in promoting ethical leadership behaviour practices. The empirical findings discussed in this subsection centred on the study's objective 4 of chapter one: "To

assess educators' and school principals' effectiveness and efficiency in promoting ethical leadership behaviour practices." According to the findings, the majority of the research participants thought educators and school principals could be effective and efficient in promoting ethical behaviour practices in the school setting. According to the literature review, effective and efficient ethical leaders foster a positive environment for teaching and learning (Charoensap et al., 2019). Effective and efficient educators foster an open and supportive environment in which learners and other stakeholders feel comfortable discussing ethical quandaries encountered at school. According to the findings of the study, participants believed that the Department of Education should provide regular support and monitoring to educators in order for them to successfully advance ethical behaviour practices. More workshops and seminars should be organized by the Department of Education to prepare educators to deal effectively and efficiently with unethical behaviour practices.

5.2 Summary of the study findings

This section summarizes the main research findings. The current research produced four themes and document analysis as key findings, summarized below:

5.2.1 Theme 1: Elements of ethical leadership behaviour practices

The current study's findings revealed that the research participants were familiar with the elements associated with ethical leadership. Respect, honesty, transparency, and accountability were identified as four elements of ethical leadership by the participants. According to the study's findings, educators and school principals play an important role because they are responsible for shaping the behaviour of learners as well as staff members in the school.

To be respected by their subordinates, educators and school principals must respect all stakeholders, regardless of their status, creed, race, or gender. Ethical educators should respect the perspectives of co-workers and learners, who will respect them and the school's properties in turn. Respect fosters self-confidence and ethical behaviour in learners and co-workers in the school. Respect fosters healthy

relationships among school stakeholders. Participants emphasized the importance of respect because ethical educators who operate with respect maintain high ethical behaviour standards in the workplace.

The study results revealed honesty as another characteristic associated with ethical leadership behaviour practices. Participants emphasized the importance of honesty as the foundation of trust. Educators and school principals can effectively influence learners' ethical development if they consistently demonstrate honesty, respect, transparency, and accountability in their own actions and interactions.

Additionally, the findings of the study indicate that learners and other educators have faith in their leaders. It has also emerged from the findings that honesty assists ethical leaders in the school in dealing with ethical dilemmas without fear or favour. According to the current research findings, transparency is an additional important component of ethical leadership behaviour practices. Transparency was defined by participants as being open to others and allowing them to enter your space. Transparent educators make it easier for all school stakeholders to collaborate and build strong relationships. Transparent educators, in the opinion of this researcher, foster trust among co-workers and students in the school setting. Transparency has a positive impact on subordinates' ethical behaviour.

Furthermore, the conclusions of the findings showed that accountability in ethical leaders plays a critical role in the advancement of ethical behaviour practices. The study's findings indicated that educators and school principals should accept responsibility for their decisions and actions. Participants revealed that educators and school principals lacked moral accountability because they believed they were not required by law to report to their subordinates at school. Above all, the findings of the study pointed out that the Department of Education should develop a reporting policy on unethical behaviour practices of some educators and school principals, occurring in schools.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Causes of unethical leadership behaviour practices.

The findings of the study indicated that the majority of participants expressed various root causes of unethical behaviour practices of educators, deputy principals, and school principals in public secondary schools. It was discovered that greed was the primary motivator that influenced unethical practices of educators. Participants in the study believed that some educators and school principals engaged in unethical practices in order to enrich themselves with school funds intended for purchasing learning and teaching materials.

It has emerged from the findings that the majority of participants mentioned the working environment as a contributing factor in unethical behaviour practices of educators and school principals. The environment played a significant role in educators' unethical behaviour practices. A negative school environment encourages unethical behaviour among students, educators, and school principals. Participants revealed that a lack of transparency and accountability in the school's environmental decision-making process encouraged unethical behaviour. The study's findings revealed that societal beliefs and practices influenced the ethical behaviour of educators and school principals in the school setting.

The findings further revealed that a lack of adequate training for educators and school principals contributes to unethical behaviour practices in the school setting. Participants emphasized the importance of educators and school principals acquiring ethical knowledge and skills in order to foster ethical behaviour in the classroom. According to the researcher, inadequate training makes it difficult for educators to implement the ethical principles of promoting ethical behaviour practices. The study's current findings revealed that a lack of ethics education is another major factor influencing unethical behaviour practices in the school context because some educators did not have a strong foundation of understanding moral principles. The conclusions of the study showed that not all participants had a thorough understanding of the concept "ethics."

5.2.3 Theme 3: Strategies of promoting ethical leadership behaviour practices.

The results of the study findings pointed out that ongoing professional development for educators and school principals could enable them to promote ethical behaviour practices in the classroom. The majority of participants suggested various strategies for improving good ethical behaviour practices. This includes demonstrating ethical behaviour. Educators and school principals play critical roles in demonstrating ethical behaviour as positive role models for learners and other stakeholders to emulate. The Department of Education should take the lead in promoting ethical behaviour practices in the schools.

The findings further revealed that ongoing support for educators' development programs is critical for promoting ethical behaviour practices in schools. The educator development program would assist educators in strengthening their ethical principles. The Department of Education should organize this ongoing training to provide educators with ethical strategies and skills to address moral dilemmas, promote ethical behaviour, make good ethical decisions, and foster a positive ethical culture in the school.

The conclusions of the study findings suggested that the implementation of legislation and policies in the school could be a major factor in the enhancement of ethical behaviours by educators and school principals. Participants indicated that the majority of educators and school principals were having difficulty implementing legislation and policies in their schools. Educator training was critical in equipping educators with ethical methods of enforcing laws and policies in the school setting. The Department of Education should hold workshops on the techniques for implementing ethical legislation and policies in order to foster ethical behaviour practices among all stakeholders in the school.

5.2.4 Theme 4: Effectiveness and efficiency of educators in the promotion of ethical behaviour practices

The results of the study findings revealed that educators, deputies, and school principals could be effective and efficient in implementing ethical behaviour practices in the school setting because of their key positions. Educators and principals should have a strong understanding of ethical principles and practices. The participants

agreed that the Department of Education should hold ethics education workshops to provide educators with the knowledge and skills required to be effective and efficient. The foundation of teaching is ethics in education. Knowledge provides a foundation for effective teaching and promoting ethical behaviour. The researcher is of the view that these workshops would reduce unethical behaviour by educators and school principals. According to the study's findings, the Department of Education should monitor and support educators and school principals in order to make them more effective and efficient in their efforts to improve ethical behaviour practices.

Participants stated that educators required regular workshops and development programs to assist them in implementing legislation and school policies. In this researcher's opinion, the Department of Education should appoint officials who are knowledgeable about ethics in order to empower educators and school principals.

5.2.5 Document analysis

The following section summarizes the research findings through document analysis. The current study found that the majority of participating public secondary schools had relevant legislative documents and school policies addressing the ethical behaviour of educators, school principals, learners, and the school governing body. However, it was difficult for educators to evaluate them. According to the current study, most school principals rarely read, shared, or implemented what was contained in the documents. The current study revealed that the Department of Education should hold workshops on these documents.

5.3 Recommendations of the study

The following recommendations are made based on the study's findings:

- ❖ As influential role players in the school setting, all educators at all levels of education should receive extensive ethics training.
- ❖ The Department of Education should provide ongoing educator development on new strategies for improving moral and ethical behaviour in schools for all stakeholders.

- ❖ Support and supervise all educators and school principals in the effective and efficient implementation of laws and policies.
- ❖ The Department of Education should consider developing a reporting tool for unethical behaviour practices in the school setting.
- ❖ Ethics should be included in the curriculum for tertiary educator training.
- ❖ The Department of Education should take the lead in promoting ethical leadership behaviours at all levels of education.
- ❖ SACE should hold regular workshops on the code of professional ethics for all educators, particularly those new to the system.
- ❖ The Department of Education should encourage schools to form ethics committees in order to foster a positive ethical culture in the school.
- ❖ The Department should organize ongoing educator professional development programs focusing on techniques for fostering ethical behaviour in the school.
- ❖ Reward and recognize ethical educators and school principals as positive role models for others to follow.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The research project was designed specifically for selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. The sample excluded public primary schools and private schools. The study was limited to public secondary educators, deputies, and school principals who are directly responsible for improving the moral and ethical behaviour of all stakeholders in the school setting. Because the study is a case study with a small sample size, the research was limited to three public secondary schools.

Furthermore, the researcher's findings could not be generalized because the study used purposive sampling, which was limited to a small number of participants. These are representative elements from a given population of educators for inclusion in a study (Dubey and Kothari, 2022).

5.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the ethical leadership behaviour practices in selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province. Ethical leadership is critical in promoting good moral ethical behaviour for every learner and educator in school, regardless of socioeconomic or cultural background. Similarly, ethical leadership ensures that sound ethical decisions that benefit all stakeholders in the school are made. Ethical leadership is important in promoting the school's ethical climate by implementing ethical principles such as respect, accountability, transparency, doing good to others and refusing to take unfair advantage. To ensure a safe learning and teaching environment for both educators and learners, ethical educators must promote good moral ethical behaviours.

It is critical that ethical educators and school principals uphold ethical behaviour practices to achieve the school's vision and mission. Furthermore, because of their positions, ethical educators and school principals can have a significant positive influence on the moral behaviour of learners and other stakeholders in the school. The study makes pertinent recommendations that could help educators, deputies, and school principals promote ethical leadership behaviour practices in schools and society at large. As a result, enhancing the ethical culture will encourage teaching and learning in the school setting.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATORS:

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR PRACTICES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS. A CASE OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

The interview schedule is designed to investigate ethics and ethical leadership in public secondary schools and how will ethical leadership resolve ethical behavior challenges in secondary schools.

1. Biographical information of the participant

1.1 Age (Optional) :

1.2 Gender :

1.3 Present position :

1.4 Years of experience in teaching practice:

The subsequent questions will be asked during semi-structured one-on-one interview session.

1. The elements of ethical leadership practices.

1.1 What is your understanding of the concept “ethics”?

1.2 What does leading with ethics mean to you? Please comment.

1.3 If someone asks you: “What is ethical leadership” What do you think the answer should be?

1.4 Why do you think ethical leadership practice is important in your school? Please comment.

1.5 What do you think are the most important elements associated with ethical leadership? Please elaborate.

1.6 Is it important that educator, deputy principal or principal of your school to serve as an ethical leader? Please elaborate.

2. The causes of unethical leadership behavior.

2.1 Tell me what does unethical behavior mean? Please elaborate.

2.2 In your view why are educators or school principals indulging in unethical practices in your school? Please comment.

2.3 To what extend does your school environment contribute towards unethical practices?

2.4 Tell me about incidents which you believe compromised ethical standards in your school? Please comment.

2.5 What are the biggest unethical behavior challenges that educators or school principals are faced with on a daily basis at schools? Please elaborate.

3. Strategies that could be employed to promote ethical behaviors.

3.1. What strategies could be used by educators / school principals to enhance ethical behavior practices in your school? Please Comment.

3.2. Tell me what steps do you take to prevent unethical behaviors in your school? Please elaborate.

3.3 In your opinion how does your School Management Team motivate ethical behavior practices in your school?

3.4 What should the Department of Education do to promote ethical behavior practices in your school?

3.5 Have you been invited to an organized workshop or training on code of professional ethics by District or Province? Please Comment.

4. The effectiveness of educators in the enhancement of ethical practices.

4.1 To what extend do you view the attainment of ethical leadership practice as being effective in your school? Please comment.

4.2 How effective is ethical leadership practice in your school? Please elaborate.

4.3 In your opinion what should the Department of Education do to effectively ensure the attainment of ethical leadership behavior practice in your school?

CONCLUSION would you like to make the last comment related to this interview that I did not ask? Feel free to comment.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR PRACTICES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS. A CASE OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

The interview schedule is designed to explore challenges that hinder the attainment of ethical leadership practices in selected public secondary schools.

The subsequent questions will be asked during semi-structured interviews session.

1. The elements of ethical leadership practices.

1.1. What is your understanding of the concepts “ethics” and “ethical leadership?”

1.2. Why do you think ethical leadership practice is important in your school?
comment.

1.3. What are the elements of ethical leadership practices in schools in Limpopo Province?

1.4. What do you think are some of the important elements associated with ethical leadership?

1.5. In your view what kinds of elements make good, ethical leader?

1.6. In your opinion what do you think are specific requirements of ethical leadership behavior in your school?

1.7. Is it important that educator, deputy principal or principal of your school to serve as an ethical leader? Please elaborate.

1.8. In your view why is trust in ethical leadership important?

1.9. How is respect and ethical leadership connected? Please comment.

1.10. What does leading with ethics mean to you?

1.11. What specific ethical leadership behaviors are required of all educators in your school?

1.12. If someone asks you: “What is ethical leadership” What do you think the answer should be?

2. The causes of unethical leadership behavior.

2.1. In your view why are educators indulging in unethical practices in your school?

2.2. To what extend does your school environment contribute towards unethical practices.

2.3. In your experience how does greed play a significant role in influencing unethical practices in your school?

3. Strategies that could be employed to promote ethical behaviors.

3.1. What strategies could be used by educators to enhance ethical behavior practices in your school?

3.2. What should the Department of Education do to promote ethical behavior practices in your school?

3.3. How does ethical behavior practice benefit learners in your school?

3.4. In your opinion how does your School Management Team motivate ethical behavior practices in your school?

3.5. Have you been invited to an organized workshop or training on code of professional ethics by District or Province?

4. The effectiveness of educators in the enhancement of ethical practices.

4.1. To what extend do you view the attainment of ethical leadership practice as being effective in your school? Please comment.

4.2. In your opinion what should the Department of Education do to effectively ensure the attainment of ethical leadership behavior practice?

4.3. How effective is ethical leadership practice in your school? Please elaborate.

CONCLUSION would you like to make the last say anything related to this interview which I did not ask? Feel free to comment.

APPENDIX C: DOCUMENT REVIEW SCHEDULE

The documents that will be reviewed will not be older than 5 years and will encompass ethical and unethical practices relating to the study. The documents will include:

- (1) South African School Act (SASA)
- (2) Employment of Educators' Act (EEA)
- (3) South African Council for Educators (SACE)
- (4) Public Finance Management Act (PFMA)
- (5) The School Financial Policy
- (6) Minutes of Staff meetings relating to ethical and unethical behaviors.
- (7) Minutes of School Governing Body (SGB) relating to aspects of ethical and unethical practices.

The documents will be utilized to validate the observations and interviews thus enhancing the trustworthiness of the findings.

APPENDIX D: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECK LIST (FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS)

DOCUMENTS	YES	NO
1. South African School Act (SASA)		
2. Employment of Educators Act (EEA)		
3. South African Council for Educators (SACE)		
4. Public Finance Management Act (PFMA)		
5. The School Finance Policy		
6. Minutes of Staff Meeting(ethical and unethical)		
7. Minutes of SGB (ethical and unethical practices)		

APPENDIX E: CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

Date: 29 August 2022

This is to confirm that ethical clearance has been provided by the
Faculty Research and Innovation Committee
[01/06/16] in view of the CUT Research Ethics and Integrity Framework, 2016.

Ethical clearance number:

[HREIC 02/22/10] ST.M.Ed

Applicant's Name and student number	PETER GANETSANG RAKGALAKANE 220049950
Supervisor's Name for Student Project	Dr M Kimanzi
Level of Qualification for Student's Project	M.Ed
Title of research project	Ethical leadership behaviour practices in public secondary schools: a case study of selected schools in Limpopo province.

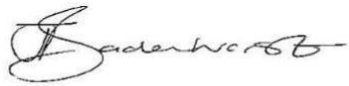
All conditions as set out below have to be met as set
out in your LS 262 a form.

As this research focuses primarily on human
beings you will be ethically responsible for:

protecting the rights and welfare of the participants;
gaining the trust and co-operation of all the participants with the
assurance that the information collected will be kept
confidential;
informing the participants from the outset that their participation will be
voluntary, and that the data collected will be conducted with the consent of
the relevant authorities;
adhere to the principles of rigorous data collection, analysis and
interpretation consistent with the design of the study;
keeping a data trail for possible auditing purposes and safe-keeping
of raw data for a period of three years after publication of the
results/findings;
respecting the confidentiality of the data.

We wish you success with your

research project. Regards



Prof JW Badenhorst
(Chairperson: Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics and Integrity Committee)

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APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE
SENTRALE UNIVERSITEIT VIR TEKNOLOGIE, VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI E BOHARENG YA THEKENOLOJI, FOREISTATA

Enquiries: Rakgalakane Peter Ganetsang

Email: rakgalakanepeter26@gmail.com

Institution: CUT
Student No. 220049950
Contact No. 0828142670

Supervisor: Dr M Kimanzi
Contact No. 0738717588
Email: mkimanzi@cut.ac.za
Date: 22 March 2022

INFORMED CONSENT FORM INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

TITLE: ETHICAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR PRACTICES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS. A CASE OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA.

Dear Educator/SBST Member/Deputy Principal/Principal

My name is Rakgalakane Peter Ganetsang, I am a masters student (220049950) at the Central University of Technology under the supervision of Dr M Kimanzi.

You are invited to participate in a research study of my title as mentioned above. Permission for the study has been given by the Department of Education, District, Circuit and the school principal. I have purposefully chosen you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic. I wish to provide you with more information about this research project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part in the research project. The aim of the study is to explore the experiences of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools from educators' point of view.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 1 hour in length to take place in a mutual agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You are free to decline to answer any of the question if you so wish. In addition, you may decide to withdraw from the research project at any time without any negative consequences. With your kind permission, the interview

will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Information provided will be considered strictly confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. Furthermore, with your kind permission, anonymous quotation may be used. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. If you have questions about the study, please call me at 082 8142670 or email: rakgalakanepeter26@gmail.com. My supervisor Dr Kimanzi, M. contact number 0738717588 or email mkimanzi@cut.ac.za. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form which follows on the next page.

Yours sincerely



CS Scanned with CamScanner

RAKGALAKANE PETER GANETSANG

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the invitation letter about the study of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools in Warmbaths circuit. I have had the right to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional information needed. I allow my interview to be audio-recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I am informed that I have a right to withdraw my consent at any time without any negative consequences.

I agree of my own free will, to participate in this research project.

Participant's Name (please print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Researcher's Name (please print): _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX G: LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT



CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE
SENTRALE UNIVERSITEIT VIR TEGNOLOGIE, VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI E BOHARENG YA THEKENOLOJI, FOREISTATA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

September 21, 2022
To whom it may concern

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AS PART OF THE MASTER'S IN EDUCATION QUALIFICATION

It is a requirement of our M.Ed. qualification that the student completes a dissertation based on research in a specific field of study. In this way students are given the opportunity to creatively link and discuss the theoretical aspects of the programme to the practical issues facing schools in real life settings. Typically, the study necessitates data gathering and the student is using interview method specifically.

Student name: **REV PG RAKGALAKANE (Student No. 220049950)** has chosen to do a research project entitled: **ETHICAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR PRACTICES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN LIMPOPO, PROVINCE**

Your assistance in permitting access to schools for purposes of this research is most appreciated. Please be assured that all information gained from the research will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Furthermore, should you wish any result/s or findings from the research "to be restricted" for an agreed period of time, this can be arranged. The confidentiality of information and anonymity of personnel will be strictly adhered to by the student.

I am available at any stage to answer any queries and/or to discuss any aspect of this research project.

Thank you for your assistance in this regard.

Kind regards,



Dr Mathew Kimanzi-study supervisor

Senior Lecturer: Department of Languages and Social Sciences Education
Central University of Technology, Bloemfontein Campus
Telephone: 0515073840/0738717588
Email: mkimanzi@cut.ac.za

APPENDIX H: REQUEST LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE
SENTRALE UNIVERSITEIT VIR TEGNOLOGIE, VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI E BOHARENG YA THEKENOLOJI, FOREISTATA

Raeleng Full Service Sec School

P O BOX 1691

BELA BELA

0480

30 August 2022

THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Limpopo Department of Education

POLOKWANE

0700

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SELECTED
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH
AFRICA.**

Rakgalakane Peter Ganetsang, Student No. 220049950, I am doing research with Central University of Technology under the supervision of Dr M. Kimanzi , contact No: 0738717588 or Email: mkimanzi@cut.ac.za .I would like to conduct research in public secondary schools in Limpopo Province.

The topic of my research reads as follows: **Ethical leadership behavior practices in selected public secondary schools: A case study of selected schools in Limpopo Province.** The study will entail determining the elements of ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools from educators' perspectives, probe the causes of unethical leadership practices in public secondary schools,

investigating strategies that could be utilized by educators to ensure the promotion of

ethical leadership practices in public secondary schools. I will appreciate your permission to conduct interviews with your four secondary schools under your supervision. The schools are:XXXXX Secondary School; XXXXXSecondary School; XXXXXSecondary School & XXXXX Secondary School.

I promise not to disrupt the teaching and learning time. Interviews shall be conducted at the time and venue that is convenient for the schools. All information will be treated with strict confidentiality. In ensuring confidentiality, the following shall be observed to the latter.

- ✓ Pseudonyms will be used to represent educators' names.
- ✓ There will be no financial - benefits that research participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.

Attached is the approval letter from the Central University of Technology, Free State Province.

For more information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr Kimanzi M to this number 0738717588

Thank you,

Yours Faithfully

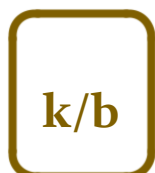
(Rev.) P. Rakgalakane

(Email: rakgalakanepeter26@gmail.com)

Cellphone no : 0828142670

PERSAL NO: 80640664

APPENDIX I: EDITING CERTIFICATE



2 April 2024

Editing Certificate

This letter confirms that the following Master's thesis by Peter Ganetsang Rakgalakane was language edited: **Ethical Leadership Behavior Practices in Selected Public Secondary Schools: A Case Study of Public Secondary Schools in Limpopo Province.**



Dr Karen Buckenham, *PhD (KwaZulu-Natal), MA (KwaZulu-Natal), TESL (Toronto), BSc (Toronto).*

kbuckenham@mweb.co.za

DISCLAIMER: The English language editor used track changes for corrections and inserted comments for queries. The responsibility for effecting the changes in the final, submitted document is the responsibility of the student.