

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF PRINCIPAL'S
LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN A SELECTED
BLOEMFONTEIN HIGH SCHOOL**

by

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Declaration

I, Bongiwe Tayi, student number: _____, hereby declare that the dissertation titled: *Teachers' perception of principal's leadership in improving academic performance in a selected Bloemfontein high school* is my own original work and all sources that I used or quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

March 2023

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Signature

Date

Abstract

The performance of a school is often linked to the principal's leadership and there is a growing concern that most South African public schools are not functioning effectively. The observation is that principals hardly go to classrooms to check if teachers are attending their lessons Dongo (2016). This is a qualitative case study which explored teachers' perception of principal's leadership in improving academic performance in a selected Bloemfontein high school. The study essentially interrogates the implications of principal's leadership in improving academic performance as perceived by teachers. This research is informed by School Management Theory of Leithood, (2019). A sample of 15 participants was designated from a selected high school in Bloemfontein, in the Free State, in South Africa, using the purposeful sampling method. Data were collected through focus group interviews with 5 SMT members including the principal, structured interviews with 5 experienced teachers and 5 questionnaires were completed by the subject teachers available. The data collected were analysed and grouped into themes, for further interpretation. The results showed that lack of school principal's leadership skills could lead to poor school academic performance as perceived by teachers. Teachers viewed the principal's leadership in schools as a significant variable that can strengthen and enhance school improvement and academic performance. The paper suggests that successful schools be led by a visible principal who communicates frequently about school pedagogical tasks. This study also serves as a guideline on principal's leadership and how effective school leadership serves as a platform that inculcates the virtues of good teacher and learner, for better performance.

Key words: Principals, leadership, perceptions, and academic performance.

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Table of contents

<i>Item</i>	<i>Page</i>
Declaration	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of contents	iv
List of figures	vii
List of tables	viii
List of abbreviations	ix
CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background to the study	2
1.3 Statement of the research problem	4
1.4 Research questions	5
1.5 Research aim and objectives	6
1.5.1 Research aim	6
1.5.2 Research objectives	6
1.6 Purpose of the study	6
1.7 Significance of the study	7
1.8 Definition of key terms	7
1.9 Limitations of the study	11
1.10 Delimitations of the study	11
1.11 Chapter outline	11
1.12 Chapter summary	12
CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	143
2.1 Introduction	143
2.2 Theoretical framework	143
2.3 Teachers perception on effectiveness of principals leadership role	18
2.4 Leadership in South African schools	20

2.5	Principals' leadership role	27
2.6	Principals' leadership styles	27
2.7	Leadership styles in education context	343
2.8	School academic performance	344
2.9	Leadership and learning outcomes.	37
2.10	Factors that influence principal's leadership and their impact on learning outcomes	38
2.11	Principals' instructional leadership role	432
2.12	Legislative framework: strategies to improve the academic performance of schools	46
2.13	Reasons for poor academic performance	48
2.14	chapter summary.....	49
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY		51
3.1	Introduction	51
3.2	Research paradigm	51
3.2.1	Ontology.....	52
3.2.2	Epistemology	53
3.3	Research design	57
3.3.1	Case study	57
3.4	Research Approach	58
3.4.1	Qualitative Research Approach	58
3.5	Population and Sample	59
3.5.1.	Population	59
3.5.2	Sample	59
3.5.3	Sampling procedures	60
3.6	Data collection instruments.....	60

3.7	Data collection procedures.....	67
3.7.1	Scheduling of focus group and semi-structured interviews	67
3.8	Data analysis techniques	67
3.9	Ethical considerations	67
3.10	Chapter summary.....	68
CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA		69
4.1	Introduction	69
4.2	Data presentation and analysis/interpretation	69
4.3	Discussion of data.....	86
4.4	Chapter summary.....	98
CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		100
5.1	Introduction	100
5.2	Summary.....	100
5.3	Conclusions.....	10
5.4	Recommendations	109
5.5	Study conclusion	110
REFERENCES		113
APPENDICES		137
Appendix A Letter from the supervisor		137
Appendix B Letter to the principal requesting permission to conduct research		138
Appendix C Consent letter for participants.....		140
Appendix D Questionnaire for experienced teachers		142
Appendix E Questionnaire for subject teachers.....		143
Questionnaire F Focus group interview questions for SMT		15957
Questionnaire G Letter requesting permission from the Department of Education to conduct research.....		16058
Appendix H Ethical clearance certificate		16269
Appendix I Language Editor's certificate.....		169
Appendix J Plagiarism certificate_		162

List of figures

Figure 2.1: Different leadership styles	26
Figure 2.2: Transactional leadership	32

List of tables

Table 2.1: Factors supporting and hindering teaching as well as learning in schools	40
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List of abbreviations

SMT	School management team
SASA	South African Schools Act
SETA	Sector of Education and Training Authority
SGB	School Governing Bodies

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perception of principal's leadership in improving academic performance in a selected Bloemfontein high school, Free State Province, South Africa. This dissertation's focal point is on the effectiveness of the principal's leading role, and how a principal's style of leadership affects the academic performance of the school. The intent was to bring to light good professional practice from different contexts and to focus on how teachers perceive a principal's instructional leadership role in improving the academic performance of the school. This study will explore how a principal's leadership is seen by teachers as it relates to improving academic performance in school. Next, the study sought to determine the effectiveness of principals' leadership role regarding improvement of academic performance as perceived by teachers. Finally, it will observe how effective the principal's leadership role is in improving academic performance, according to the perception of the teachers and will assess how principal leadership style affects academic performance as perceived by teachers; and determine teachers' opinions on principal's instructional leadership role as improving academic performance. Problems associated with principals' leadership in high schools might be solved suddenly regardless of the research conducted so far. Hence, it seems that further research is needed to explore how a principals' leadership is seen by teachers as it relates to improving academic performance in school. The findings might contribute to enlighten the Department of Education, to equip principals with skills that will enable effective principal leadership for improving academic performance. The study is introduced in this chapter. The research problem statement and research questions are also covered in this chapter. At the end of the chapter, there is a discussion of the study's purpose, significance, delimitations, and limitations, as well as the research aim and objectives.

1.2 Background to the study

Even though South Africa's democracy began more than 25 years ago, today the youth still face challenges caused by limited access to education and economic opportunities (Lishivha, 2019). There is even evidence that pupils at some schools are learning under trees. The situation is even worse in rural areas, where it is common for learners to be unable to access school facilities, due to flooded rivers during rainy seasons – these circumstances lower learners' educational outcomes. Equipment and buildings, such as classrooms and laboratories, are essential components in schools. Among other advantages, a high-quality infrastructure supports better instruction, improves academic performance, and lowers learner dropout rates. In South Africa, most schools are facing challenging situations, which include unemployed, poor parents and a variety of social and economic challenges that contribute to poor performance of learners (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). General observations by researchers seem to suggest that a lack of infrastructure, resources, and community support, as well as poor working conditions, are the main causes of poor academic performance in schools. For instance, according to Glewwe and Muralidharan (2016), poor school and teacher governance is a result of a high frequency of teacher absenteeism and a lack of leadership. Whilst the impact of these factors cannot be underestimated, studies have proven that teachers perceive principals' lack of leadership to be the main cause of the poor academic performance of schools. The leadership a principal provides is extremely crucial for both teachers and learners in a school. Improving academic performance is important for an effective educational system.

Only 2 631 out of 6 772 schools obtained a pass rate in the 2015 Matric school-leaving examination, while 1 018 schools had pass rates below 40%, (South Africa's Department of Basic Education, 2015a). Many schools continually struggle to attain a pass percentage of 40%, which concerns the government. Hence, it has developed extensive strategies to raise standards and improve school academic performance, for which effective principal leadership is the catalyst as indicated (Shava & Tlou, 2016).

Action Plan to 2019 (Department of Basic Education, 2015b) supports school principals who make sure that teaching in schools occurs as planned and in compliance with the Republic of South Africa's national curriculum. The principal must also understand their

role as a leader, which entails encouraging cooperation, creativity, and a strong work ethic, both within and outside of the school community.

According to Barni, Danioni and Benevene (2019), teachers' goals and behaviours in the school are motivated by their own values. Additionally, their values can promote their wellbeing and feeling of self-efficacy, resolve issues related to their professional activities, and have a significant impact on crucial academic outcomes, including learner performance, motivation, and environmental well-being. According to Hompashe (2018), an effective education leader is one who can expand a school's capabilities and improve learner learning by inspiring teachers, staff, and learners. The fact that the principal teaches classes and has a direct, rather than indirect supervisory role demonstrates the potential importance of the role that school principals can play in raising teacher morale and improving academic performance through real curriculum monitoring. According to Daries (2021), the school principal is crucial in managing and building a school culture. This requirement puts pressure on the principal to align educational inputs with the educational outcomes of the processes of teaching, including provision of leadership by teachers in classrooms.

According to Bush and Glover (2016), school principals should focus more on their primary functions - teaching and learning - and make appropriate class visits if they want to have a good effect on learners' outcomes. It has been discovered that principals are unaware of their responsibility as instructional leaders. Muhammad and Yaumi (2015) state that teacher performance cannot be achieved through the actions of the teacher alone, but needs the active participation of the principal, as the leader, through a leadership function approach to help teachers to carry out their duties.

A principal is required by the Schools Act (South Africa, 1996) to report on the academic progress of the learners. According to the Matric results, many South African schools are underperforming. Consequently, as principals play a crucial role as change agents to create a pleasant working environment, the findings of this study might be used to the management of the educational system in the Motheo District of the Free State Province, where the school included in this study is located. Furthermore, the study may contribute to expanding the scientific knowledge base, which might justify the expectations of principals' leadership. The South African Schools Act (SASA) was amended in 1997 to strengthen principal accountability in the delivery of education, and the Department of

Basic Education (2016a) reports modest progress in this direction. This dissertation intends to investigate and explore how a principal's leadership is seen by teachers as it relates to improving academic performance in school.

1.3 Statement of the research problem

It is the observation of the researcher, as a senior education specialist, that few principal leaders are effective in their leadership roles, their leadership styles, and their instructional leadership. These shortcomings seem to impede the quality of the academic performance of schools. There is increasing concern that few South African public schools are operating successfully, and it has been noted that principals rarely visit classrooms to ensure that teachers are paying attention to their teachings, according to Dongo (2016). The performance of a school is often linked to the principal's leadership role. The researcher discovered that certain of a principal's responsibilities are automatically delegated to teachers by principals, who are then responsible for ensuring that a conducive environment is established for teaching and learning. However, teachers do not always see themselves as being responsible for providing leadership in schools. This is alarming, as teachers do not hesitate to accuse the principal or government when a school does not accomplish its goals. This culture of blame is evidenced by demonstrations and complaints about lack of resources, instead of teachers and principals providing leadership at schools.

Meador (2019) indicated that every principal should provide ongoing, collaborative teacher support as it lends to improved teacher performance boosts academic performance. Therefore, when teachers do not receive enough support from their principal, academic performance is affected. This lack of support may result in a decline in teachers' dedication, which may have an adverse effect on how they manage their classrooms. According to Chabalala and Naidoo (2021), there are concerns about both the effectiveness of principals' roles as instructional leaders and the quality of education provided by teachers. Teachers believe that a lack of support in classrooms by principals can lead to negative teacher perceptions about the principal's leadership, as well as other challenges in classrooms. It is not easy for teachers to work under these circumstances, despite the training that they received on how to work with learners. It is therefore

important to establish how teachers view the role of principal's leadership in improving a academic performance.

The researcher selected a school that was once thought to be among the best in the Free State, but saw a decline in performance in 2015, when it achieved a pass percentage of 54,2% (Free State Department of Education, 2016). The Free State Department of Education considered this school to be underperforming. The researcher contends that the principal's leadership in the selected high school in Bloemfontein, Motheo District should contribute to an improvement in academic performance.

Teachers' opinions on the effectiveness of principal's leadership have not been addressed by researchers, and what the best way to support teachers to improve academic performance. This study attempted to investigate teachers' perception of principal's leadership in improving academic performance in the selected high school in Bloemfontein. It is identified that, basically, some principals are unaware of their responsibility, and that leads to the ineffectiveness of their principal's leadership. According to Bush and Glover (2016), school principals should focus more on their primary functions - teaching and learning - and make appropriate class visits if they want to have a good effect on learners' outcomes. The main aim of this research was, therefore, to explore and understand how a principal's leadership is seen by teachers as it relates to improving academic performance in the selected school. In this regard, this study might enlighten principals on how effective principal's leadership serves as a platform to inculcate the virtues of good teacher and learner, in improving academic performance.

1.4 Research questions

The primary research question for this study was the following:

What do teachers think about the principal's leadership role in terms of improvement of academic performance in the selected school?

The following sub-questions were also addressed by the study:

- i) How do teachers view the effectiveness of the principal's leadership role in terms of improving academic performance in the selected school?
- ii) What impact does the principal's leadership style have on the academic performance of the school in the selected school?
- iii) How do teachers perceive the principal's instructional leadership role as improving academic performance in the selected school?

1.5 Research aim and objectives

1.5.1 Research aim

To explore how a principal's leadership is seen by teachers as it relates to improving academic performance in the selected school.

1.5.2 Research objectives

The objectives of this research were to:

- i) Investigate how effective the principal's leadership is in improving academic performance in the selected school, according to the perceptions of the teachers.
- ii) Assess how principal leadership style affects academic performance as perceived by teachers in the selected school; and
- iii) determine teachers' opinions on principal's instructional leadership role in improving academic performance in the selected school.

1.6 Purpose of the study

The goal of this study was to explore how teachers perceived the principal's leadership role provided, in relation to improvement in academic performance in the selected school. Specifically, the study sought to determine the effectiveness of principal's leadership in improving academic performance in a selected schools as perceived by teachers. Teachers' perspectives on a principal's leadership style in relation to increasing academic performance were investigated to determine how effective teachers believed the principal's instructional leadership is in improving academic performance.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study's findings reveal how a principal's leadership role can be strengthened while academic performance is improved. The findings will enlighten the Department of Education, to equip principals with skills that will enable effective principal leadership for improving academic performance. This study is likely to contribute to the way principals' leadership play a role in assisting educators to enhance their skills in the classroom situation, so that they can achieve the expected learning outcomes and, thus, contribute to better performance throughout the school. The study results will serve as guide for principals and indicate how effective principal leadership serves as a platform to inculcate the virtues of good teacher and learner performance. The researcher believes that the starting point of improving a school's academic performance is improving the school climate, which the principal can achieve by using a practical leadership style. The results of this study could also be administered in the education system in the Motheo District of the Free State because principals are crucial change agents who improve working conditions for teachers and motivate learners. I think that teachers' perspectives on the leadership role played by the principal in improving academic achievement in schools are crucial, as teachers and principals collaborate closely.

The findings are of major importance for assessing how to apply the principal leadership role, the principal leadership style and instructional leadership as major tools for improving academic performance of a high school in Bloemfontein. It can also provide a guide on how to create positive change.

1.8 Definition of key terms

This section describes important terminology such as teachers' perceptions, leadership, principal leadership styles, principals' leadership, school principal, academic performance, and experienced teachers.

Perception

Cherry (2016) defines perception as a sensory experience of the world. It involves both recognising environmental stimuli, and actions in response to these stimuli. The term perception means the psychological process through the experience gained by the five

senses, individuals can process responses into positive or negative perceptions. Perception is the key and the primary term in the dissertation, it means the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.

Teachers' perceptions

Whittle, Telfred and Benson (2018) define teachers' perceptions as attaining awareness or understanding of sensory information. The everyday meaning of perceptions is that it is the result of perceiving or observing, having a mental image, concept, consciousness, and awareness of elements of the environment through physical sensation. This term was defined in the study; however, it will continue to be clarified more going forward. Teachers' perceptions in this study are the thoughts or mental images teachers have about their principals' leadership and are shaped by their background knowledge as well as life experience.

Leadership

According to Kruse (2013), leadership is the process of social influence that maximizes others' efforts to accomplish a goal. Leading a team or organization is another definition of leadership. The school principal's position as a leader is defined as a principal's leadership in the current study. The specific meaning of leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of people to influence and guide followers or members of an organization, society teams. The term leadership in this study means the influence people, groups, and organizations to achieve goals.

School principal

A principal must evolve into a leader of learning who can build a team that can deliver adequate instruction, according to the Wallace Foundation (2013). A school principal is the leader and the person who gives direction to teachers and learners of a particular school. The term 'principal' refers to the most important or senior person in an organisation or group. The researcher defines a principal as a leader of an elementary, middle, or high school.

Academic performance

According to Narad and Abdullah (2016), academic success refers to knowledge acquired and is evaluated by marks given by a teacher and/or educational goals set by

learners and teachers to be accomplished over a particular period. Numerous variables could be influencing the variation in academic performance in South Africa (Nkgapele, 2021). Academic performance is also seen as the extent to which a learner, teacher or institution has attained their short or long-term education goals as indicated by Tadese, Yeshaneh and Mulu (2022). In the current study, academic performance measured learner achievement in various academic subjects, it is the term that indicates a learner's achievement. It measures learner learning across various academic subjects which is assessed by formative and summative assessment.

Experienced teachers

Graham (2020) defines experienced teacher as the person with years spent teaching in classroom. Blomeke and Delaney (2012) proposed a model that identifies cognitive abilities and affective motivation characters as two main components of teaching experience. For the purposes of this study, the term experienced teacher is defined as a teacher with more than five years of teaching experience at secondary school. Skills, attitude, and motivational variables contribute to mastery of teaching and learning.

Principals' leadership styles

Principals perform responsibilities though out academic year, including planning, curriculum oversight and development, vision casting, communication, evaluation of teachers and staff, Dahri (2015). Principals' leadership styles are styles of management in schools applied by principals in influencing the actions of an organised group towards a goal accomplishment. Three major types of principals' leadership styles are authoritarian, laisses fair and democratic style of leadership.

Transformational leadership

As proposed by Kouzes and Posner (2017), transformational leadership is grounded in the concepts of inspiring and motivating people toward a shared vision to achieve goals at a higher standard. Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. A leadership strategy that affects people and social systems because it makes followers change for the better with the goal of turning followers into leaders.

Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership specifies employee's roles and tasks, hence stimulating the self-interests of employees based on the reward that awaits, Baskaranda, Watson and Cromarty (2017). Transactional leadership is known as managerial leadership, is a leadership style where leaders rely on rewards and punishments to achieve optimal job performance from their subordinates. Transactional leadership is a method of measuring success that involves leaders and followers evolving and concentrating on results while adhering to the structure of the current organization.

Laissez-faire leadership

Laissez-faire leadership has primarily been considered as the most passive leadership style that may yield various destructive effects on employees, Skogstad, Hetland, Glaso and Einarsen (2014). Laissez-faire leadership is universally considered to be the most ineffective leadership style. Laissez-faire leadership, is known as delegative leadership, is a type of leadership style in which leaders are hands-off and allow group members to make the decisions. Researchers have found that this is generally the leadership style that leads to the lowest productivity among group members.

Democratic leadership

The idea of democratic leadership suggests that leadership can be conducted in ways that includes people rather than treating them simply, Woods (2021). Democratic leadership is also known as the participative leadership or shared leadership, it is a leadership style in which members of the group participate in decision-making process. Democratic leadership involves team members taking a participatory role in the decision-making process.

Autocratic leadership

Autocratic leadership employs absolute, authoritarian control, demand over staff, Yi (2022). Autocratic leadership refers to giving one person all the control and in decisions and taking very little inputs from other group members. In this study, autocratic leadership style has many benefits in that it creates efficiency by allowing decisions to be made quickly, provides structure to an organisation as one leader controls all the process and procedures and it tends to create a dependable system.

Principals' instructional leadership

In this study, principals' instructional leadership is central to school improvement. Principals play a role as mentors, supervisors, evaluators Abdul and Rahmar (2018). Principals' instructional leadership is seen as the administrator that emphasises the process of facilitating the interaction of teacher, learner, and curriculum.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The Motheo District in the Free State served as the sole subject of the present study. The sample size was constrained because this was qualitative research. The study was restricted to just one high school in the Motheo District, so the results of this sample cannot be generalized to the entire Motheo District or Bloemfontein community. These restrictions were imposed by the case study technique of data collecting that was selected for the study. A case study is based on an in-depth analysis of a particular person, group, or event to uncover the reasons behind fundamental concepts, according to PressAcademia (2018).

Timing turned out to be one of the constraints. It took a long time to obtain permission to conduct interviews. Given that participation in the study was voluntary and that those who opted out may have been the ones to provide key information, the study's limitations cannot be overlooked. The researcher tried to put study participants at ease and assured them of the confidentiality of data that would be collected.

Coding was also a challenge, as it took place a month after the transcription process. Despite the limitations encountered, the responses that the participants provided shed light on the perceptions of teachers on the role played by the principal in school academic performance, thereby observing the effectiveness of principal's leadership role.

1.10 Delimitations of the study

This study was delimited to one high school in Bloemfontein. In total 15 teachers, including the principal, were selected to participate. They possessed a range of demographical characteristics. The school had a complement of 32 teachers, which was regarded as the general population of the study. Feedback from teachers, including the principal, helped the researcher to gain a wide picture on the study topic.

1.11 Chapter outline

This study comprises five chapters.

Chapter 1: Background to the study

The background of the study, the research problem, the research questions, the purpose and objectives of the investigation, the constraints, and the delimitations are all covered in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Review of related literature

A review of relevant literature that was examined to give the study a theoretical foundation is presented in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter provides information on the research design and methodology used in the study.

Chapter 4: Presentation, analysis, and discussion of data

Data presentation, data analysis and data discussion are all covered in this chapter. Data collected from teacher interviews is presented. The researcher also explored three research questions with the data collected.

Chapter 5: Analysis and interpretation of the findings

The findings of the research are assessed and evaluated in Chapter 5, which forms a foundation on which conclusions are presented and recommendations made.

1.12 Chapter summary

In addition to outlining the research problem and research questions, this chapter provided an overview of the background to the study. The study's purpose, significance, and research goal and objectives were also described. The leadership role of principals in improving academic performance in schools is explored in this chapter from the perspective of teachers. The chapter included definitions for the important terminology used in the study, as well as explanations to the study's restrictions and limitations. The

literature on teachers' opinions on the leadership style of principals in raising academic performance in schools, are reviewed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Principals play a crucial part in school functioning, maintaining the operational management of schools, coordinating teachers, disciplining, and encouraging learners, while providing a leadership role to ensure improvement in academic performance. A review of related literature is a critical writing, constructive analysis of the literature in a specific field by summarizing, classifying, analysing, and comparing with a scientific text or previously published literature, according to Ramdhani, Ramdhani, and Amin (2014). The idea of assessing related literature is to profile the amount of information already available on a particular topic. This chapter presents the related literature, which was unearthed during a thorough, in-depth search by the researcher. The purpose of this study was to investigate and explore the principal's leadership role in improving academic performance, as seen by teachers.

The chapter begins with the theoretical framework followed by a review of the literature on teachers' perceptions on effectiveness of principal's leadership role, leadership in South African schools, leadership roles for principals, and leadership styles for principals. A review of academic performance is also covered in this section. The review of the factors that affect a principal's leadership is presented in the next section, which is followed by a discussion of the principal's position as instructional leaders. The relevant literature study was therefore regarded extremely vital and crucial in that it determined whether the data acquired by the researcher had the ability to add to our knowledge of the leadership role played by principals. The chapter concludes by presenting the causes of poor academic performance. The theoretical basis for this study is provided in the section that follows, and an overview of the literature is also offered, emphasizing any possible gaps in the review.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Background of the theory

Swanson and Chermack (2013, p. 122) define a theoretical framework as a structure that can hold or support a research study's theory. The primary goal of a theoretical framework is to guide researchers in their data analysis, explanation, and interpretation. An empirical social science researcher's belief that their research should be guided or informed by theory, is implied by a theoretical framework. Gordon (2022) explains theory as a series of functions within an organisation, that work together to achieve its aim.

The aim of the study is to explore how a principal's leadership is seen by teachers as it relates to improving academic performance in school. The objectives of this research were to: Investigate how effective the principal's leadership role is in improving academic performance, according to the perception of the teachers. Assess how principal leadership style affects academic performance as perceived by teachers; and determine teachers' opinions on principal's instructional leadership role as improving academic performance. It fascinated many educational researchers to look at the teachers' impressions of principal's leadership, because South African students generally perform poorly academically, both inside and outside of the country (Ivase & Akpakwi, 2019; Arar, 2016; Mafora, 2013; and Ismail, 2012). Note the educationally significant impact on learner performance when reviewing these studies of teachers' perception of principal's leadership conducted in Nigeria, Israel, South Africa, and Colorado.

2.2.2 Principles and assumptions

The principal's leadership versus improvement of academic performance in schools, particularly for high schools, has therefore been the subject of very few published studies.

Apparently, Brown (2019) states that if teachers do not get enough support from principals, it affects academic performance. This lack of support may result in a downward spiral in teacher commitment, which may have a negative impact on how well teachers manage their classrooms. Teixeira, Amoroso, and Gresham (2017) contend that among other advantages, having a quality infrastructure supports better education, improves student outcomes, and lowers dropout rates. The successful execution of the curriculum is the primary activity, according to Naidoo and Petersen (2015), who claim that the focus of schools is on teaching and learning. According to Kivunja (2018), theory, research and practice are all interconnected to comprehend the factors that influence behaviour, test potential change agents, and disseminate successful interventions.

Because of the poor academic performance of South African learners, the researcher believed it was necessary to investigate the impact of the principal's leadership in improving academic performance as perceived by teachers. Atasoy (2020) investigated the principal's leadership as well as the improvement of academic performance in schools.

This research study was informed by the **school improvement theory** of Leithwood (2019). Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2019) emphasise the links between leadership development and school results. The school improvement theory calls for ensuring that learners and teachers are present, on time and regularly, keeping classrooms organized and disciplined, and providing sufficient resources to support learning. In the case of principal's leadership in improving academic performance, in practice, this process of critical reflection is particularly useful for further development problem solving skills. Allude to prompting learners and teachers to reflect on how they have tackled a problem in the past enables them to look forward and use the experience to deal with the forthcoming challenge. In doing so, the researcher has found that teachers and learners become more self-directed in their approach to learning. The researcher holds the view that one of the responsibilities of the principal is to assist and encourage teachers to lead learners to attend classes regularly. Perhaps, it is time for school principals to assist teachers in improving academic performance using school improvement theory. Lastly, principals should adapt an attitude that welcomes criticism, and moral of commitment. According to Leithwood's school improvement theory, it can be stated that poor school performance will ultimately follow if teachers have negative opinions of leadership. Good performance cannot be realised in education institutions without appropriate leadership. This notion is supported by the European Commission (2019), which argues that systems should provide opportunities for principal leaders to develop competences that support them in strategic thinking and planning.

Mafora (2013), indicates that principals should play a pivotal role in providing transformative leadership for social justice in these schools. The purpose of his study was to examine, through a social justice framework, how teachers and learners who are School Governing Body members perceive and experience the principals' leadership in Soweto secondary schools. The author wants to show that leadership behaviour of

principals is perceived as a barrier to democratic transformation and social justice, and this engenders resistance and threatens management effectiveness. This kind of study is also a tool to generate or influence decision making and planning of a certain school to ensure the effectiveness of the principal's leadership role.

According to this study, teachers tend to be reserved about pedagogical parental participation when they view the principal as effective. Teachers welcome parental participation if the principals are non-involved. It is concluded that Arab teachers can function as agents of change in their society toward more democratic norms.

According to Taylor, Van der Berg, and Mabogoane (2013), the poor academic achievement of South African learners may be due to the dysfunctional principal leadership at many schools. The tradition of school effectiveness is frequently linked to the idea of successful leadership. The principal's role is essential to effective leadership in schools. Research on teachers' opinions of the leadership role played by the principal and the best ways to support teachers in improving academic performance in a school, seems to be lacking. Educationists appear to have a strong opinion that principals may enhance the teaching and learning environment by creating an environment that supports better curriculum management (Kiat, Heng & Ratnam-Lim 2016). To advance best educational practices, principals are accountable for creating a good learning environment, inspiring teachers, and learners, and efficiently managing resources. More than ever before, principals must deal with a greater number of new demands, challenging decisions, as well as responsibilities. Their days are typically occupied with a variety of administrative and management tasks, including resource acquisition, learner discipline management, parent conflict resolutions, and handling unforeseen teacher and learner crises. According to Daries (2021), many school principals struggle to strike a balance between their extensive administrative responsibilities and their responsibilities for curriculum leadership obligations. However, the type of that work should always consider the current needs and circumstances of the school.

The roles and responsibilities of the principal have changed to incorporate both those of a manager and a leader, claim Mpungose and Ngwenya (2017). The emphasis on

guidance in schools in the Department of Education's definition led to this study adopting it. Sutton and Austin's (2015) mission statement are that it wants to improve school performance. Aydin, Sarier and Uysal (2013) assert that an effective leadership role yields positive outcomes for a leader's followers. According to Shava, Heystek, Chasara and Kepemimpinan (2021), principals are essential to sustaining school improvement. I concur that school principals are crucial to provide leadership in schools.

2.2.3 Relevance of the theory to the study

The way principals communicate with teachers has a fundamental influence on teachers' behaviours, their interaction with learners, and teacher retention. This supports the research by Naidoo and Petersen (2015), who found that majority of principals view their work to be that of a manager inside an organization. To ensure quality teaching and learning, principals participate in the actual teaching and learning processes at the school. The responsibility for teaching and learning falls on principals' shoulders in the South African educational system. I agree with the scholars who argue that leadership should be the responsibility of principals, deputy principals, department heads, and teachers, especially given the work demands and responsibilities placed on principals' shoulders in South African education, in schools.

The principal is responsible for both teaching and learning in the context of South African education. When the school does not perform well, the principal must account for the poor performance. Available evidence suggested by Chisholm et al. (2005) is that South African teachers spend slightly less time on their activities overall, but much less time on teaching than policy requires.

Principals must ensure that learners are not deprived of their right to education. A key question in relation to sustainable instructional leadership by principals relates to when they should make changes and what to give up when making space for a new activity. Studies on instructional leadership (Hallinger, Wang, Chen & Liare, 2015; Lopez & Hossain, 2021; Mestry, Moonsammy-Koopasammy & Schmidt, 2013) appear to offer data that vary about principals' view of their critical role in promoting curriculum delivery at their schools. Bush and Glover (2016) believe that instructional leadership may be the best path to take for improvement of academic performance in their analysis of the literature on school leadership in South Africa. According to Lopez and Hossain (2021),

school principals should be present in person and virtually, to address learners' and teachers' challenges creatively. Hence, the input of teachers in academic improvement and in the effectiveness of principals' instructional leadership should not be ignored.

In many nations, including Zimbabwe, school heads and mentors play crucial roles in teacher education programs, according to Makura and Zivere (2013). To improve optimal instructional methods, principals are accountable for creating a good learning environment, inspiring learners, and teachers, as well as efficiently managing resources. As a result, principals are crucial in the creation and upkeep of academic standards, which outline the information and abilities that learners are supposed to master in each grade and in each subject (Mestry, 2017).

In their daily work, principals hardly ever distinguish between managing and leading; they are merely carrying out their duties on behalf of the school and its learners. More than ever before, principals must deal with new demands, challenging decisions, and added responsibilities. Their days are typically occupied with a variety of administrative and management tasks, including resource acquisition, learner discipline management, parent conflict resolution, and handling unforeseen teacher and learner crises. Some principals find it extremely challenging to balance their many administrative responsibilities with their roles as curriculum leaders.

In the South African school context, school principals are seen as leaders and managers who play an essential role in influencing the livelihood of their schools by establishing the tone and ethos of teaching and learning activities (Maponya 2020). As a result, strong teacher dedication and collaborative working relationships emerged as other factors that influenced the academic performance of learners. The findings of a study on factors affecting academic performance in public schools show that instructional leadership strategies, used by school principals were crucial in impacting the academic achievement of learners (Waweru, Nyagosia & Njuguna, 2013). Other factors influencing the quality of learner outcomes include the alignment of instructional delivery to the school's vision and mission, safety and orderliness of schools, expectations of success, time spent on tasks, monitoring of learner progress, and positive home-school relationships (Maponya, 2020; Marishane, 2017; Waweru, Nyagosia & Njuguna, 2013). It is important to address the

leadership of principals because it has a significant impact on the performance of learners in South African schools. Once schools are operating well, leaders can move on to create a vision and laying down specific goals and rules with confidence that there are measures in place to ensure their implementation.

According to Leithwood's theory of school improvement, it can be argued that negative perceptions of teachers towards leadership will ultimately result in poor school performance. Chalikias, Fotopoulos, Sidiropoulos, Kyriakopoulos and Zakopoulos (2020) elaborate on the principal's leadership role in the improvement of school academic performance. School principals, as leaders, make a positive contribution to organisational learning and outcomes. According to Mlachila and Moeletsi (2019), South Africa suffers from weak educational quality, despite relatively high levels of public spending on education than some other countries. To create a positive work environment, principals are essential change agents. There is strong evidence that the leadership style of the school principal affects the outcomes of learners and the academic performance of the school.

2.3 Teachers' perception on effectiveness of principal's leadership role

Whittle, Telfred and Benson (2018) define teachers' perception as gaining awareness or comprehension of sensory information. Perceptions are defined as the outcome of perceiving or watching, having a mental image, concept, consciousness, and awareness of aspects of the world through physical feeling. In agreement, Cherry (2016) makes the case that perception is viewed as a sensory encounter with the outside world. Since they are responsible for the leaders and managers, who have a crucial impact on how well their schools are run, school principals are seen as having a decisive influence on the academic performance of their schools and are subject to internal and external pressures to raise the achievement of learners (Maponya, 2020).

Teachers view the principals as the focal point of their schools, and they are expected to support teachers' level of development, strengthen their drive to advance professionally, and encourage the academic achievement of learners. Principals are frequently in charge of teacher development at the building level. Teachers see principals as role models, who must support their professional growth and offer ongoing feedback. Teachers also expect their principals to increase their understanding of

approaches, teacher guidance and abilities. Thus, the essence of how principal leadership is perceived by teachers is to effect positive change when the principal begins to work on improving his or her mistakes, which will boost academic achievement at the school. Given that schools frequently function as venues for cultural politics that serve to maintain and prolong some disparities, this would not be an easy task.

According to Mafora (2013), the framework accepted for examining the leadership practices of principals, as perceived by teachers, is the social justice and transformative leadership, according to three theories from the South African Journal of Education; 2013;3. At school level, it becomes the responsibility of principals who manage the day-to-day leadership and give impact to applicable state policies. It makes sense to assess the success of the principals' leadership techniques in their respective schools. The irony is that principals cannot be penalised for defaulting on their obligations because principals' conditions of employment do not make transformation enforceable. Therefore, principal educational leaders must exhibit dedication in their leadership.

Arar (2014) noted that many principals are now in charge of planning, teaching, supervision and performance follow-up, staff evaluation and development. Dissatisfaction with education outcomes has generated attempts to reform administrative methods and tools. However, this also puts more pressure on school principals to meet increased standards without being given any additional content. As a result, the role of the principal becomes quite complex. Successful principals spend a significant amount of their time observing, instructing, and mentoring their teachers, while also carrying out their administrative duties and establishing connections both inside and outside the school. Together, the teachers and the principals create a work schedule, create evaluation indices, offer suggestions for development, and strive toward outcome-based evaluation. To have a better understanding of the concept 'leadership', the next section considers how different educationists and scholars have defined this concept.

2.4 Leadership in South African schools

According to Nandasinghe (2020), leadership is a skill that motivates groups of people to act to accomplish a common objective. It is a process of encouraging and helping others to work enthusiastically towards objectives. Leadership is essential, because it

establishes a clear vision and communicates effectively with its subordinates and colleagues. Leadership is "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal," according to Northouse (2013). In the South African context, school principals must have the culture of 'Ubuntu' at his/her school, which means collective personhood and a collective, where principals perceive their work as that of a manager within an organization, according to Naidoo and Petersen's (2015) research. This is since a variety of strategies have been used to define leadership and its efficacy. To this study, this definition of leadership will be used more often than others, since it emphasizes innovation, motivation and change, the elements that are essential for improving school performance in the view of principals.

According to all the definitions given above, 'influence' appears to be essential to leadership in motivating others to act to accomplish shared objectives and enhance performance. Effective leadership, according to Taole (2013), is the basis of any system of education. Additionally, successful curriculum implementation can be ensured by leadership.

According to Ramrathan (2017), effective leadership is necessary to implement sustainable change in a school environment. Therefore, the capacity for leadership is crucial in inspiring teachers in schools. The academic performance of the school improves if the leadership is solid and decisive. In schools, the morale of teachers, the interest of the principals is most importantly and have the impact on improvement of school academic performance. Furthermore, the emphasis is that principals need to know and understand the teachers that he/she works with as well as the climate of the school if they want improvement in academic performance. This implies that it would be difficult for the leadership to bring improvement in academic performance without understanding the teachers and the school climate.

Most of the research on leadership effectiveness shows that school leaders have a significant impact on several variables, most notably according to Northouse (2013); Nandasinghe (2020); Naidoo and Petersen (2015). According to Robinson (2011), "the most powerful way that school leaders can make a difference to the learning of their students is by promoting and participating in the professional learning and development of their teachers."

2.5 Principal's leadership role

The main responsibility for directing and managing a school is that of the principal's leadership role, according to the Department of Education (DoE, 2014). The school principal's leadership role is an essential role in education. Leadership, according to Gul, Ahmed, Rehman, Shabir and Razzaq (2012), is the process of motivating subordinates to pursue their own interests to achieve the goals of the organization and find new paths to success. Depending on the school contexts in which they work, principals face very different sets of challenges. School-level differences or contextual factors have important implications for their leadership practice. These features include learners' background factors, school location (e.g. urban, rural), school size, government or public versus non-government designation of schools, school type and school level (elementary, middle, or secondary). In other studies, the level of schooling has been found to influence the type of leadership practices required. Primary schools tend to be smaller and involve different leadership challenges than large secondary schools. While leaders in large secondary schools frequently affect teaching more indirectly and may rely on teacher leaders or department heads to engage in curricular concerns, some schools give principals more opportunities to spend time in the classroom and closely monitor teachers. Since principals are frequently also classroom teachers in primary schools, they may view leadership as a more collaborative and participatory process. In the context of schools, the very nature of principal's leadership is therefore challenging, and since the principals must give directions to teaching and learning, the culture of a school can be affected by how teachers view the leadership of the school principal (Britton, 2018). This may, however, not be easy and as a result, the only way to create an effective school is for the principal to engage teachers in ongoing discussions and decision-making about educational challenges, as well as to strengthen school leadership to improve the academic performance of learners. It is also critical to understand how effective principals influence teaching and learning in a positive way. In turn, learner achievement is linked to a positive school climate, school culture, and principal leadership (Allen, 2015).

Though these definitions are slightly different, they show how important the principal's role is in schools. The Department of Education's definition is the most relevant to the aim of this study, given its emphasis on guidance in schools. The mission statement of

this school that participated in this study is that it wants to improve academic performance.

2.6 Principal's leadership styles

Jibril (2021) defines a principal's leadership style as a procedure that affects a group's activities and motivates them to achieve a specific planned outcome. Due to increased demand from education officials who emphasise that principals must account for academic performance in their schools, leadership is one of the most important concepts in relation to ways to enhance the performance of school employees (Jerotich, 2013).

Leadership styles are defined as methods that leaders use to direct control, execute plans, and motivate people (Backer, 2022). The Department of Education (2014) asserts that the leadership of a school's principal is essential to its guidance and management. Sukmaswati, Lilian and Wardiah (2020) indicate that a principal's leadership style influences learner achievement. It is against this background that the researcher believes that understanding different leadership styles will assist in developing a deeper knowledge of the role participated by school principals in school performance. In recent years, research have focused on teachers' perceptions of the principal's leadership rather than only watching and documenting it. Teachers' impressions of their school leaders have a lot to do with how task-oriented they are as teachers. These impressions influence teachers' motivation, which in turn influences learners' academic achievement (Fisher, 2011; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). There are various ways to describe leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire. Another description of school principals as leaders includes two styles: people-oriented principals who pay attention to teachers' needs, develop warm human interactions, empathy, empowerment, delegation of authority, and teamwork. The other style is task-oriented and maintains goals, rewards for success, efficiency, and performance quality (Abu-Hussain, 2014). "Transformational" is a popular phrase used in leadership literature to characterize the first type of leadership style. The inner drive of the followers is the focus of transformational leadership. Another leadership style frequently referenced in current leadership literature is "transactional leadership." This style is necessary to ensure the leader's managerial function. However, both types of leadership combine the ability to influence and build internal and external motivation toward the organization's goals and objectives. Leaders, as opposed to

successful leadership styles, can exhibit a behaviour style that demonstrates the absence of effective leadership attributes. Such a style is best described as lacking in leadership and avoiding making decisions. It should be noted that recent literature on effective school leadership emphasizes the value of distributed leadership (Barber et al., 2010). There is a global movement toward decentralizing school governance to improve education (Addi-Racchah, 2015; Arar & Haj-Yehia, 2016). This study will define school principal leadership based on teachers' impressions of three types of educational leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. These leadership styles were chosen because they are well recognized and addressed in current school management literature (Abu-Hussain, 2014; Arar et al., 2014; Barber et al., 2010; Fisher, 2011). Leadership and management studies conducted in Israel's Arab sector (Arar & Oplatka, 2011) indicate that the leadership style is rather conservative and centralized, with a higher predisposition toward collectivist orientation (Abu-Hussain, 2014). It is difficult to adapt leadership approaches to a particular environment. Cultural implications on leadership are well documented (Abu-Hussain, 2014; Fisher, Magen-Nagar, & Abu Nasra, 2014).

It was critical to this study's findings to understand the different styles of leadership used by principals when they work together with teachers to improve academic performance in their schools. My experience as a subject advisor has shown me that the principal's leadership style is crucial for creating an environment that is both conducive to teaching and learning. Rivai and Mulyadi in Kumala and Agustina (2018) define leadership style as a set of traits that leaders use to influence subordinates, so that organisational goals can be achieved. The term "principal's leadership style" is well known to school administration staff because it is mentioned in several types of textbooks and works of literature. It will, therefore, explore these principal leadership styles and interpret their effectiveness in working with teachers to improve school academic performance.

In the workplace, there are different styles of leadership, each with advantages and disadvantages. The leadership style that is most suited for a specific organization depends on its culture and goals. Among the styles are transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles (Jones & Rudd, 2008; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Khan, Ramzan & Ahmed, 2011). Few studies have been published on the principal's leadership style in South Africa, particularly for the high school sector.

Currently, many organisations experience challenges because of uncertainty, a rapidly changing environment, and compound work tasks, and to adapt to these challenges, a shift in leadership style is needed. However, unlike in organisational studies, leadership effectiveness in schools has received relatively little research attention.



Figure 0.1: Different leadership styles

Five leadership styles, namely: transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, autocratic and democratic, are presented diagrammatically in Figure 2.1. It is essential to gain an in-depth understanding of principals' leadership styles.

To examine how perceptions of leadership affect the effectiveness of school improvement, Tigistu (2012) conducted a study in Ethiopia. When principals applied the most suitable leadership styles of the five mentioned in Figure 2.1 in their schools, more effective teaching and learning were achieved, and the school academic performance improved.

The different leadership styles each have their own advantages and disadvantages. For this document, focus will be placed on the following leadership styles: transformational, transactional, laissez-faire styles, autocratic and democratic leadership styles. The five leadership styles will be discussed next.

2.6.1 Transformational leadership

According to Yukl (2013), transformational leaders are those that have a compelling vision for their team and intellectually challenge others in a way that is both demanding and considerate of the needs of the team members as individuals. Malechwanz (2019) asserts that transformational leadership encourages followers to work toward selflessness and to pursue the shared group's goals and values. According to Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993) and Yukl (1999), transformational leadership allows leaders to display qualities that inspire followers to reach higher levels of achievement. A transformational leader is someone who inspires and motivates others. These are people who have a significant impact on those around them. An extraordinary quality of transformational leaders is their ability to inspire others to take specific actions (Cherry, 2022a). The most widely used current leadership theory, according to Anderson and Sun (2017), is transformational leadership. Developing a new vision with the followers is the responsibility of the transformational leader. Avolio and Yammarino (2012) state that idealised influence is seen as behavioural charisma. The transformational leader motivates their team to ensure its effectiveness.

Leaders in schools aim to acquire teachers' trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect by demonstrating charismatic vision and leading by example. This type of leader is always visible to the team and relevant communities, so that the school goal can be attained. According to Alzoraiki, Rahman and Mutalib (2018), the dimension of idealized influence requires that the principal set an example, act with assurance and optimism, share the risks associated with applying ideas, and demonstrate high ethical standards in all their activities. Learners and other members of an organization are given hope for a better future by principals who lead with idealized influence (Berson & Oreg, 2016).

Additionally, the transformational leader is constantly searching for new ideas that will inspire the organization to fulfil its goal. The transformational leader motivates and inspires the teaching staff with new ideas and inspiration. (Alzoraiki et al., 2018). The principal also gives the work that the teachers do a sense of purpose by creating a common vision, establishing high standards, and encouraging a culture that plays to the self-interest of the followers. Avolio (2014) asserts that principals directly affect teachers'

workplace fulfilment by providing cultures that are meaningful and challenging, while assisting teachers in setting goals.

Evolving leadership attitudes is essential in providing support for learners and the whole school community (Gibson, Dollarhide, Conley & Lowe 2018). In this area of transformational leadership, principals create an environment where teachers can think innovatively and creatively without fear of criticism or punishment (Alzoraiki et al., 2018).

The teaching staff's perceptions and beliefs are changed by this leadership style, which also increases their commitment to and involvement in organizational achievement (Bass, Avolio, Jwing & Berson, 2003). The teaching staff is impacted by transformational leaders in such a way that they grow in confidence and respect for the position of leadership, as well as show commitment to the organization. In a framework of transformational leadership, principals have a responsibility for praising teachers for their accomplishments, when they demonstrate initiative, and when they achieve their targeted levels of potential (Alzoraiki et al., 2018). Principals and teachers concentrate on the common benefit of learners and the attainment of organizational goals through this collaborative culture (Eliophotou-Menon & Loannou, 2016).

According to Bass (1985), transformational leadership has the following four components: **Individualized consideration** is a term used to describe transformational leaders that focus on understanding the individual needs of employees and give them the tools they need to create an environment that encourages learning and gather support for the senior level goals and objectives. Executives must take the following steps for individualized consideration: Spend time mentoring others and remember that each employee has unique needs, skills, and goals. Executives must support employees in finding their strengths and offer a variety of formal training programs to enhance their performance at work.

Intellectual stimulation describes transformational leaders as leaders who encourage knowledge exchange within the organization to provide more creative ideas and solutions for pressing problems that frequently arise in the hypercompetitive economic climate. For intellectual stimulation, executives need to take the following actions: To solve problems effectively and find innovative approaches to completing assignments, it is vital to emphasize the effective coordination between various functional areas, to seek out

different points of view, and to conduct a thorough analysis when faced with an important decision.

Inspirational motivation implies that transformational leaders focus on encouraging people and do not simply treat them as a human asset. This raises the standard for what should be expected of them. Executives should do the following activities to inspire motivation: Talk positively about the future, enthusiastically about the work that must be done, and with assurance that the objectives will be achieved.

With **idealised consideration**, transformational leaders build a shared vision and strengthen relationships with employees. Executives need to do the following to employ idealized influence: Encourage organizational members to be proud of their affiliation with the organization, to show strength and assurance, and to put the needs of the organization ahead of their own. The executive must discuss the most crucial values and beliefs, take moral and ethical considerations into account when making choices, and stress the significance of having a shared sense of mission.

Yaslioglu and Selenay (2018) contend that for leadership to be transformational, the conditional benefit between leaders and followers must emphasize relationship-building, character-building, and creating a supportive environment for the followers as opposed to just making promises of rewards from the outside world. According to Eliophotou-Menon and Loannou (2016), transformational leadership focuses on the capacity of leaders to inspire followers to desire change, transformation, and improvement. Sinek (2017) asserts that principals who cultivate cultures free of fear, prioritize and support learner success. If they follow this style, leaders are expected to provide direction to the organisation.

Transformational leadership is inextricably linked to employee motivation (Zareen, Razzaq & Mujtaba, 2015; Fiaz, Qin, Ikram & Saqib, 2017) and communication behaviours (Men, 2014; Bose & Haque, 2011). According to Campbell (2020), effective transformational leaders are those who can create highly productive teams that are dedicated and strong. This is because transformational leaders lead with vision for the organisation and implement that vision with their teams (Campbell, 2018). They are leaders who can develop strong emotional bonds with their team members, which increases productivity (Baesu & Bejinaru, 2015; Sasikala & Anthonyraj, 2015).

Employee behaviours may change because of transformational leadership, which may impact workplace productivity. The usage of transformational knowledge, according to Le Ba, Lei and Thahn (2018), may offer effective ways for improving knowledge management at work. According to Drift for Transition (2023), transformational knowledge adopts an integrative strategy and treating system; it also supports the goal of understanding the complexity of present situations and is critical of the status quo. It produces potential sustainable futures and associated actions.

Yanfei et al. (2018) examined the crucial significance of psychological capital as the main method by which transformational leadership can affect employee voice behaviour in another study that dealt with communication in the workplace. The application of this leadership method may enhance relationships between leaders and employees and has significant implications for developing workplace cultures that are supportive of employees (Yanfei et al. 2018). Employee psychological health is also related to transformational leadership, according to Arnold (2017) and Hildenbrand, Sacramento, and Binnewies (2018).

The literature on transformational leadership provides examples of how this style of leadership can increase workplace trust and employee engagement. There are four dimensions of transformational leadership, according to Reza (2019). Bass (1985) refers to the dimensions of charisma or idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, which are frequently used to support this effort, to understand the importance of a transformational leadership style on employee motivation and workplace behaviour. It's critical to realize that, despite being advantageous, this leadership style cannot be regarded as the finest and most effective type of leadership in all circumstances. It is essential for leaders to comprehend the significance of context-specific factors to adopt effective leadership styles.

2.6.2 Transactional leadership

Transactional leaders thrive in a structured, organised environments. Transactional leaders must understand how to encourage, inspire, and motivate employees to act in ways that result in significant improvements. The structure and organization can create a sense of security. Hopefully, the staff employees will relax once they are aware of what

to expect. People need consistency, therefore implementing and enforcing tight rules and procedures for better health practices gives a team security. As a result, an organization's workforce is motivated and empowered to innovate, which contributes to the success of the business moving forward. According to Khan et al. (2011), a transactional leadership style includes management by exemption and contingent rewards.

In transactional leadership is where a leader and a follower exchange something so that the leader can get something from the follower in exchange for something else. According to Muthiani (2019), a leader focuses on categorizing tasks together with projected benefits to be gained upon achievement in provisional rewards, satisfying the spirit of exchange between the parties. Rehman, Shareef, Mohamood, and Ishaque (2012) claim that a transactional leader who is a school principal drives their personnel by luring or repelling their self-interest - the emphasis is on rewards as an external motivational element. In this instance, followers' performance and goals are met as a typical end-task-based objective. A school principal may exhibit varying degrees of transactional or transformational leadership styles, depending on the circumstance, according to Bussing (2002), who claims that transformational leadership is an extension of transactional leadership. Management by exception, on the other hand, entails leaders making sure that predetermined goals are achieved correctly and on schedule (Muthiani 2019). According to several researchers, principals that practice transactional leadership assign follower's specific tasks to do and offer rewards based on their performance. The leader has the power to examine results and correct followers when they don't fulfil the goals that were set, and the leader and followers both commit to work toward achieving these goals (Muthiani, 2019).

According to Steinmann, Klug, and Maier (2018), transformational leaders inspire followers to dedicate themselves to organizational goals and achieve performance results. Steinman et al. concluded that no one leadership style would be appropriate in all school situations after attempting to determine whether transactional leadership is appropriate for principals. With this leadership style, it is assumed that committed staff members at schools will act in the school's best interests while working in an environment of trust, flexibility, and empowerment.

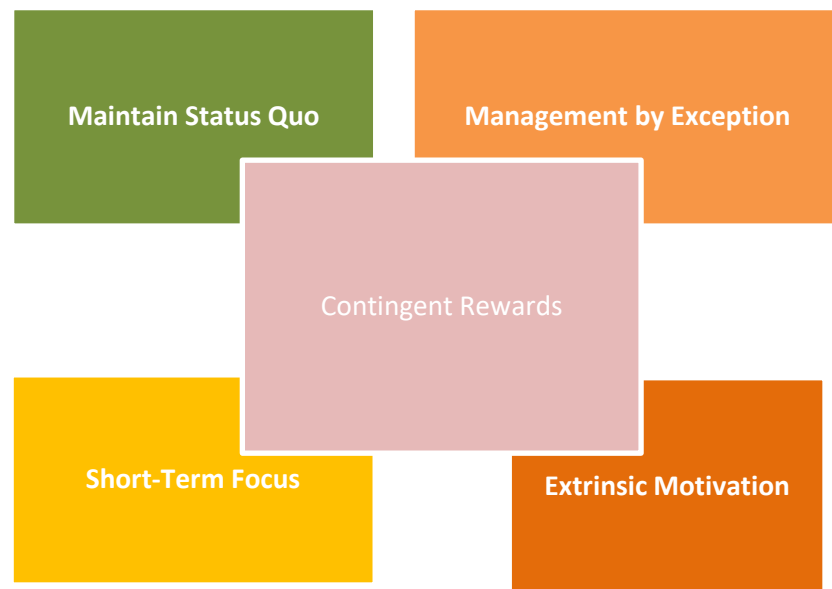


Figure 0.2: Transactional leadership

Thus, to conclude, transactional leadership involves contingent rewards, namely, maintain the status quo, manage by exception, have a short-term focus, and apply extrinsic motivation. This is the part of one style of leadership that focuses on supervision, organisation, and performance. It is an integral part of the full-range leadership model, as it focusses on performance-related tasks and goals. This type of leadership is effective in crisis and emergency situations, as well as for projects that need to be carried out in a specific way.

2.6.3 Laissez-faire leadership

Another leadership approach a principal might use to guarantee successful teaching and learning in schools is Laissez-faire leadership. When a leader relinquishes management of tasks to subordinates, a Laissez-faire leadership style is adopted; the principal can be seen as a resource with passive participation. A Laissez-faire leader lacks direct control over their subordinates and neglects to give them feedback on a regular basis (Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi, & Shaikh, 2012). Without a leader, working on multiple tasks and coming to various conclusions on different topics or situations alone results in low productivity and low job satisfaction. With a workforce that needs little supervision and is

highly skilled and experienced, this type of leadership is typical (Muthiani 2019). Laissez-faire leadership practices result in no leadership efforts from leaders, which can result in poor output, a lack of control, and higher costs. The laissez-faire leadership style provides followers entire flexibility to decide on anything relevant to the organization. According to research (Adeyemi, 2013; Lieberman, Beverly, & Alexander, 2007), there is no statistically significant link between learners' academic achievement and the laissez-faire leadership style of principals. According to Khan (2017), laissez-faire leaders believe people are unpredictable and uncontrollable and understanding people is a waste of time; this leader maintains a low profile and works with whatever structure is available without making suggestions or criticising. Therefore, it can be claimed that principals who employ a laissez-faire leadership style neglect to check in with people to whom they have delegated tasks, which may result in a fall in performance (Imbovah, Nyatuka, Bogonko, & Nyamwaka, 2020).

2.6.4 Democratic leadership

Participatory leadership, often referred to as shared leadership, includes group members participating more actively in the decision-making process. Everyone is given the chance to participate, and discussions are encouraged along with the open exchange of ideas. Although the group leader is still present to provide direction and control, the democratic leadership style tends to emphasis on group equality and the free exchange of ideas (Cherry 2022b).

Dike and Madubueze (2019) report that the democratic style motivates humanness, teamwork, and participation by workers. Leaders adopt this leadership style to involve employees in managerial tasks while providing direction and assistance. Although the phrase "majority rules," which is frequently associated with the word "democratic," may come to mind, effective democratic leadership does not really fit with that idea. Nothing done by a majority rules committee turns out well, as leadership coach Taylor (2021) of Philadelphia observes. A democratic leader is still in charge, they're just not making all the decisions by themselves. The former CEO of IBM, Rometty (2021), discusses the significance of creating a culture where individuals are aware that they are expected to weigh in on ideas, even if doing so results in some degree of dissent.

A democratic leadership style is especially advised for creative organizations or initiatives that call for collaboration across diverse organizational units, according to Mohiuddin (2017). The democratic leadership style encourages employee motivation and creativity, while allowing groups to feel involved in the organizational process. There are advantages of the democratic leadership style. The first one is that it is effective and encourages quality contributions from employees. Secondly, it produces a cooperative spirit that motivates the team and improves group morale, which, in turn, leads to higher productivity. Furthermore, it encourages group members to share their ideas, makes group members feel engaged, fosters confidence, and rewards creativity.

2.6.5 Autocratic leadership

Autocratic leaders make vital decisions on their own (Malq̄s, 2012). This type of leader gives subordinates clear and short instructions on what to do and how to do it. A leader should learn to display restraint when utilizing an autocratic leadership style to operate their institutions, claims Chukwusa (2018), because it hinders the development of innovative ideas for problem-solving. This leadership approach puts the leader at the center of every decision-making process. Strong incentive for leaders is successfully provided by an autocratic leadership style. The most effective strategy and best way to succeed and increase academic achievement in school may be an autocratic leadership style.

2.7 Leadership styles in education context

According to Mehdinezhad and Mansouri (2016), the leadership styles of principals have a direct impact on teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy, and they can also influence their professional experiences (Ch, Ahmad, Malik & Batool, 2017). This may have a negative effect on teachers' overall job performance and organizational commitment. When there is trust in the workplace, teachers are less hesitant to share ideas with other teachers and their leaders, according to a study on school principals' leadership behaviours and teachers' organizational trust. Kars and Inandi (2018) investigated the relationship between school principals' leadership behaviours and teachers' organizational trust, as well as whether leadership behaviours may significantly predict the qualities of teachers' organizational trust and work fulfilment. The focus of the 2015

study by Stewart-Banks, Koufie, Hakim, and Branch was on the relationship between principal leadership ideologies and teachers' job performance and morale. According to Stewart-Banks et al. (2015), principals who effectively communicate, are open-minded, approachable, like teaching, and are educated about the area of education, have a substantial impact on the productivity and morale of their teaching staff. (Mehdinezhad & Mansouri 2016 refer to principals' leadership styles as to be closely related to teachers' feelings of self-efficacy and can also have an impact on teachers' experiences and professional life. Therefore, showing consideration, acceptance, and concern for the teachers' needs and feelings that contributes strongly towards teachers' satisfaction with the leader and improves interpersonal relationships. Principals report strong and positive influences on teachers' motivation, commitments, and beliefs regarding the supportiveness of their working conditions which, in turn, had greater influence on classroom instruction. Although building capacity of teachers has been regarded as an important function of the principals, these researchers found that school leaders have substantial influence on motivation and working conditions of the teachers.

Principals' leadership qualities can impact student performance in addition to affecting teachers' work satisfaction and views (Kars & Inandi, 2018). Tatlah, Iqbal, Amin and Qraishi (2014) investigated teacher leadership and how effective principal leadership can be used to improve the learning climate in schools to better understand the mechanisms through which principals influence the organizational process in schools. The researchers discovered that two important channels via which principals' leadership behaviours affect learners, are school environment and teachers' perceptions of their principals (Tatla et al., 2014). Teacher job fulfilment and efficiency have been proven to be highly correlated with principal leadership. Due to these factors, transformational leadership outperforms transactional leadership in terms of improving leader performance, and it also has a positive and substantial correlation with follower satisfaction (Khan et al., 2011).

2.8 School academic performance

According to most studies, principals oversee making sure the learner outcomes are positive by cultivating positive interactions among school stakeholders, establishing function-oriented expectations for the core objectives of standard-based subject instruction, creating open channels of communication between teachers and principals,

and balancing styles while overseeing the curriculum (Elliot & Clifford, 2014; Mkhize, 2017; Naidoo & Petersen, 2015). Since they are primarily concerned with managing the school's finances, dealing with staffing concerns, and carrying out the duties of the governing body, principals have not yet conceptualized their role as leaders in the curriculum. There are additional aspects that contribute to effective instructional leadership and delivery, so principals do not have to be one-dimensional and only concentrate on teaching and learning. According to Ramrathan (2017), school leadership is the process of directing the abilities and energies of teachers and learners toward the accomplishment of shared educational goals. A school's principal is a leader who oversees supervising all learners, teachers, and administrative responsibilities. Meador (2019) asserts that it is the responsibility of the principals to guarantee the efficient operation of the school to raise academic standards. The principal ensures learner discipline, teachers' evaluation, and new policy creation. However, the principal's primary responsibility is leadership. The primary leader in the school premises is the principal and should perform this role effectively. Effective leadership influences the academic achievement of the school by improving the performance of the teachers and learners themselves. Principal leadership style has a significant impact on learner performance (Lunenburg, 2010). According to Ramrathan (2017), effective leadership is necessary to implement lasting change in a school environment. This suggests that without knowing the school's climate, culture, and the teachers it employs, the principal would likely have difficulty enhancing the academic performance of the school.

The culture of a school is shaped by the school's leaders or principal. According to research (Velasco & Edmonson, 2018), teachers have a significant impact on learners' success and achievement. The well-being of teachers and the school are correlated with the principal's leadership style, according to Collett (2013). The effect of school leadership on school culture is paramount to both learners and teacher success (Turan & Bektas, 2013). The leadership of the school creates the environment and determines the standards that learners and teachers must adhere to. Louis and Murphy (2017), who emphasize the need of trust in all school relationships - administrators to teachers, teachers to learners, schools to families, and in all successful institutions - support this point of view. According to Tschannen-Moran (2014), trust is important in interpersonal

interactions at school and improves learner performance. The principal's involvement in allocating resources, making decisions, creating the school's identity and culture, supporting collegial connections, and gaining outside support, are all tied to the idea of leadership.

According to Brew (2021), every educational system places a significant priority on learners' senior high school academic achievement. While many elements have been explored that affect the academic achievement of learners, many issues still exist. To address the gaps and areas that require additional study, a review of the literature in this field would be very helpful. The current study employed a narrative review methodology to examine the literature on senior high school learners' academic performance and numerous factors influencing the achievement of learners. The study explained how these factors have a detrimental impact on academic performance and the necessity of reducing them to raise learners' academic achievement. The study discovered that truancy has a significant negative impact on academic performance and can occasionally result in school dropout. The study also discovered that a few additional factors, including the educational and financial status of learners' parents, the accessibility and availability of textbooks, libraries, practical laboratory, lunch services, and teachers, have a significant impact on the academic achievement of learners at school. Learners who are exceptional academically and are positively exposed to these factors are more likely to perform well than those who are less exposed to these factors. According to the study, aspects including truancy, parental education and income levels, textbook accessibility and availability, libraries, laboratory, meal preparation, and teachers should be periodically evaluated and modified to fit the requirements and aspirations of learners. This will significantly boost learners' academic performance and help them accomplish their life goals.

The literature review is of paramount importance to update the current information and trend of research on factors that influence the academic performance of learners at the senior high school level. This is hoped to provide resources to fill the gaps and areas that need to be researched for the betterment of educational systems. To achieve this, the study was organized into an introduction, methods and other topics, including the influence of truancy on academic performance in secondary schools, the influence of

parents' levels of education on learners' academic performance, the influence of parents' income on academic performance of learners in secondary schools, the influence of textbooks' availability on academic achievement, the influence of libraries on academic achievement, laboratory availability and academic achievement, meals provision at school and academic performance in secondary schools, the influence of teachers on learners' academic performance, conclusion and recommendations. Being absent from school above the allowable period without permission, is not accepted. This situation becomes worse by additionally declining the scores of the learners on standardized tests when they are absent from the class in more than the allowed period of days. However, a lot of teachers who usually absent themselves from school either request leave from school leaders or they are sick.

2.9 Leadership and learning outcomes

School leadership, according to Ramrathan (2017), is defined as actions that contribute to constructive influence, growth, and development of both people and groups for a common goal. This definition suggests that a leader should not be self-centred. It is the leader's duty to influence his followers meaning the teachers in a school environment in a positive way to achieve the set target. Additionally, according to Fomunyam, Memela, and Ramrathan (2017), leadership is the ability to inspire people to accomplish great things. The authors place a strong focus on the idea that leadership is the process of turning ideals into actions and vision into realities, which results in the growth and good influence of individuals as well as groups for a specific goal. As a result, leadership fosters the environment that turns difficult possibilities into enormous success (Ntombela, 2011). Since schools with effective leadership tend to consistently perform well, leadership is a key determinant in school performance. The settings that enable teachers in assisting learners to succeed are typically created by principals who set goals and build strong management to enhance processes (Muthiani, 2019). Another important distinction is that learning outcomes pertain to the learner's current academic standing in a school. Learners' performance, which is determined by how their skills, knowledge and attitudes have changed, because of their academic experiences, serves as a representation of their academic status. A true indicator of performance is the way in which learners may demonstrate that they have gained competencies. Academic performance has been regarded as the level of knowledge, skills, and competencies that a student has acquired

in education (Vargas-Ramos et al., 2021). Hallinger and Heck (2010) concur that school leadership should direct most of its energy to improving student outcomes – pursuing other goals should be secondary. School principals have a major role to play in moulding and enforcing the values of a school in a way that fosters and creates a positive school culture. Moreover, successful leadership is not haphazard, but deliberate, thus, positively affecting school culture. Principals play a major role in the creation of a shared vision and establishing it within the school's values and beliefs (Hauserman, Ivankova & Stick, 2013). Most principals have a positive perception of their instructional leadership roles. There is still a lack of proper research on some aspects of school leadership and management in South Africa, particularly managing teaching and learning.

Every decision made by school leaders affects the capacity of the school and may strengthen or deteriorate student learning outcomes. According to Youngs and King (2002), school capacity is the ability of a staff to raise achievement for learners. As a result, an effective educational leader is one who can build a school's capacity in a way that improves student learning through inspiring teachers and learners (Panda, 2022).

It is for these reasons that the researcher assumed that, through proper and effective communication between the teachers and the principal, learners would perform and achieve their goals. A key factor in transferring leadership benefits to educational outcomes is teachers' central position between the principal and learners. As a result, school leaders should think about techniques that encourage teachers to use effective pedagogies and achieve learning outcomes (Muthiani, 2019).

2.10 Factors that influence principal's leadership and their impact on learning outcomes.

A principal of a school is frequently thought to be knowledgeable, yet unable to advance their educational institution. That can be because of various variables influencing the principal's leadership. The teachers should support the school principal in their leadership to improve the school academic performance. A way of supporting the school principal leadership is by creating a school atmosphere which is conducive to teaching and learning. Schools with effective teaching and learning, effective principal leadership have

high achievement regardless of the type of community served by the school. By the same token, ineffective school teaching learning climates are associated with low levels of achievement.

According to Situmorang (2019), one of the elements impacting a school principal's leadership is the training they received. On the authority of Situmorang (2019), training improved the school principal's leadership, which improved the ability of the principal's supervision to perform their duties. Additionally, Winingsih and Sulistiono (2020) discovered that work experience affects school principals' effectiveness. Cebekhulu (2016) discovered that managing and creating budgets took up most of the time spent by principals. A school principal can exercise more flexible leadership and be more willing to take chances to effect change as they gain experience, including through active participation in organizations.

Table 0.1: Factors supporting and hindering teaching, as well as learning in schools.

Factors that support effective teaching and learning	Factors that hinder effective teaching and learning
• Good teamwork • Committed and experienced teachers	• Weak teamwork • Demotivated and inflexible teachers

Winingsih and Sulistiono (2020) indicated that a principal's leadership style and behaviour are influenced by several factors, including leadership training that the principal has attained, work experience (including organizing), and work performance as a teacher, in addition to the principal's ownership of competencies and vision. These three elements are believed to have a substantial impact on principals' ability to demonstrate visionary, active, creative leadership behaviour, act as change agents, and be willing to take chances for progress (Winingsih & Sulistiono, 2020).

2.10.1 Leadership training

Management experts have a variety of opinions on what training means. In the study of De Beer (2016), the notion of training or development of leadership evolved in response to internal and external pressure confronting the organisation. Leadership training can be

viewed implicitly as an activity to create, develop, hone, and enhance someone's leadership abilities (Winingsih & Sulistiono, 2020). A school principal must take responsibility for the crucial component of leadership training. A school principal can learn about different styles of leadership and gain other theoretical and practical skills through this type of training, enabling them to perform their duties effectively. According to Winingsih and Sulistiono (2020), training affects teacher competencies, as well as the leadership of principals.

2.10.2 Work experience

Another factor that is thought to have an influence on the principal's leadership is work experience. Work experience can be interpreted as the length of time someone has worked, both the number of years of work and types of work (Winingsih & Sulistiono, 2020). The main goal of teacher development in schools is to give teachers the knowledge and abilities they need to better accomplish organizational goals, as well as to increase their commitment, capacity, and resilience to persevere in using the necessary knowledge and abilities to improve academic performance in school. In every organization, having work experience raises a person's potential, because of the formation of knowledge or skills on the ways of doing a job. Work experience, in theory, is an understanding of something that has been lived and an appreciation that produces an experienced and skilled worker. The person will operate more productively and effectively because of the learning outcomes from work experience (Winingsih & Sulistiono, 2020).

Work experience is believed to have an impact on a school principal's degree of knowledge and skill mastery in performing their duties (Winingsih & Sulistiono, 2020). Undoubtedly, a new principal will exhibit nervousness and passivity, lack the courage to take chances, and fear failure. It is suggested by Hartini (2012) and Wirawan, Bagia, and Susila (2016) that a principal's competency is positively impacted by their professional experience. Salwa, Kristiawan, and Lian (2019) share the same conclusion, namely that job experience is one of the factors that positively impacts school principals' performance.

Working with experienced individuals in a school setting makes organizational members more productive, and the structures' adaptability should match the shifting nature of the school's improvement goals.

2.10.3 Learning outcomes

All schools try to educate or enculturate their learners with knowledge, skills, and values they may need to function or lead their communities in the future. To this end teaching has become the responsibility of the principals and teachers in schools. To achieve learner success outcomes, all stakeholders in education educators, principals and parents need to work together for the benefit of learners. The most critical factors that can contribute to learner success are, the educator, the school environment and the principal's leadership. The key characteristics or correlates of effective schools and effective teaching are effective principal leadership, a purposeful teaching and monitoring progress to improve school academic performance. If the school is to provide learners with any meaningful education parents must get involved and offer the necessary support.

It is believed that a principal's leadership affects how conducive the environment is to the processes and results of student learning. Supporting learning outcomes is a crucial step to make sure the tools required to meet the objectives, are available and effectively employed. Effective and qualified principal leadership will result in systematic and directed education management, which will eventually yield positive results in all areas, particularly student learning outcomes (Winingsih & Sulistiono, 2020). Numerous studies support the claim that the leadership of the principal has a substantial impact on the accomplishment of educational results in schools. Ishaq, Yusrizal, and Bahrin (2016) discovered a beneficial relationship between the leadership position of the principal and teacher effectiveness, which in turn has an impact on student learning results. According to Mutiara, Sulton, and Irawan (2017), school principals play a role in increasing educational quality. Consequently, Fadhli (2016:23) concluded that "school principals are one of the key and important factors in creating effective schools".

By giving the instructional support and resources needed for their profession, effective leadership ensures that their teachers have the expertise they need to succeed in their roles; they also create a secure and orderly learning environment and are sensitive to the requirements of each individual student. (Leithwood, 2012). In a globalised world characterised by a situation of intense competition between nations in a struggle for limited resources, the role of education is becoming more important (Winingsih &

Sulistiono, 2020). Implicit implementation of education in schools is also required to develop competent, creative, critically thinking, collaborative, communicating, and problem-solving student outputs (Agung, 2017). The implicit role of school principals in managing their education institutions is even more important, especially in directing and moving their teachers to achieve student output that is aligned with the needs caused by globalisation (Winingsih & Sulistiono, 2020).

2.11 Principals' instructional leadership role

De Matthews (2014) defines instructional leadership as the principals' actions in relation to promoting growth in teaching and learning. Through instructional leadership, there is a clear setting of goals, management of curriculum, monitoring of lesson plans, allocation of resources, and regular evaluation of teachers to promote student learning and growth. According to Bhengu and Mkhize (2013), instructional leadership enables principals to set goals, manage the curriculum and supervise all the practices related to teaching and learning in the school. Principals frequently assign instructional leadership responsibilities to teachers in township schools in South Africa so that they can concentrate on managerial duties. The principal is ultimately responsible for the teaching and learning processes in the South African educational system. The principal is the first person assessed when a school doesn't perform well. Principals were found to be unaware of their responsibilities as instructional leaders, according to a previous study conducted in Gauteng (Bush & Heystek, 2006). In their evaluation of the literature on school leadership and management in South Africa, Bush, and Glover (2016) note a growing understanding that instructional leadership may be the best path to take for school improvement in the country. Bush and Glover (2016) quote Robinson et al. (2008), who contend that school leaders must focus more on the basic activities of teaching and learning if they are to have a good impact on student outcomes. According to Bush and Glover (2016), this can be accomplished through phase and learning area discussions among educators as well as appropriate class visits. More precisely, instructional time management is emphasized by other researchers (Taylor, Mabogoane, and Akoobhai, 2011) as a crucial component of instructional leadership. These researchers observe ineffective time management practices in numerous South African schools. Arriving at school, getting to class, and covering the material in class are the

three levels at which these manifests. Taylor et al. (2013) discovered the prevalence of poor management practices, together with extremely low levels of teacher subject competence and damaging union activity, in high schools from the Eastern Cape and Free State provinces. Instructional leadership is also seen as provided by leaders who support and develop the skills of teachers. Principals frequently provide instructional leadership roles to teachers in township schools in South Africa so that they can concentrate on managerial responsibilities. For teachers and learners to achieve the intended academic outcomes for learners, the principal, who serves as the instructional leader, is expected to lay the instructional tone (Mthiyane, Bhengu & Bayeni, 2014). Principals will be able to achieve excellent teaching and learning when they take on the tasks of instructional leadership. Some township principals do perform the previously mentioned duties. However, based on the researcher's own teaching experience, it seems that even if these tasks are now shared by other school leaders, such as the deputy principals and HODs, the principals still carry the entire responsibility. The principal, who serves as the instructional leader, must set the instructional tone that teachers and learners must follow to achieve the expected academic outcomes for learners (Maponya, 2020). The principal must establish effective channels of communication with all stakeholders to face issues connected to educators' performance in their teaching practice to set this tone (Le Fevre, Robinson & Viviane, 2015). According to Taylor et al. (2013:67), students in historically underprivileged schools do worse academically because of "weak instructional leadership and classroom practices." The proposals in the NEEDU report (2013:19) place a major emphasis on instructional leadership.

As explained by Brolund (2016), instructional leadership is a model of school leadership in which a principal collaborates with teachers to promote best practices in teaching. The principal is frequently given a negative evaluation when a school performs poorly. The principal has a significant impact on the teaching and learning process when taking the meaning of instructional leadership into account. Leaders at schools should be held responsible for enhancing their schools and serving as instructional leaders. However, Dongo (2016) reveals that some principals lack understanding of what instructional leadership entails. The researchers assert that an effective leadership role yields positive outcomes from the leader's followers (Aydin et al., 2013).

This confirms the findings of Naidoo and Petersen (2015), that most principals view their work to be that of an organisation's manager. To ensure quality teaching and learning, principals participate in the actual teaching and learning processes of the school. The responsibility for teaching and learning falls on the shoulders of the principals in the South African educational system. Khumalo (2016) agrees that instructional leadership is the instrument for school improvement. The best principal instructional leadership prevails when the principal gives direction and support to teachers and learners with the aim of achieving positive improvement of curriculum delivery, as reported by Du Plessis (2013). There is mixed data from studies on instructional leadership indicating how principals view their critical role in advancing curriculum delivery in their schools. One of the definitions of instructional leadership that was on display stated that the principal has an impact on both the teaching and learning process and the academic performance of the school.

The principal has a significant impact on the teaching and learning process, according to the definition of instructional leadership. According to the South African Department of Basic Education's Action Plan to 2019 (2015b), school principals would be developed to make sure that teaching and learning go as planned in schools. Thus, teachers' working conditions, including their interactions with learners and colleagues, affect productivity directly. School leaders should be accountable for improving their schools and are expected to function as instructional leaders. Supovitz (2010) explains that principals, as managers of their schools, are pivoted to the success of the school by providing quality teaching and learning. However, Dongo (2018) reveals that there are some principals who have only a partial understanding of what instructional leadership entails. The National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU 2014) investigated 133 primary schools throughout South Africa, and reports that, in general, school leaders were fully aware of the importance of their role and that of instructional leadership in directing the curriculum. The report claims that despite this understanding of the value of instructional leadership, the schools' implementation of it did not follow the guidelines set forth in the CAPS.

The suggestion is that the quality of instructional leadership roles of principals should be increased, and class supervision and monitoring learners' progress and learning climate should be developed to achieve the best instructional practices (Safeek & Nawastheen,

2016). In the South African education context, accountability for teaching and learning is on the principal; when the school does not perform well, the principal must account for it.

Anderson (2015) argues that the issue of timing can rest on leadership intuition as much as on rational analysis. South African educators spend far less time on actual teaching than the amount of time specified by policy, and principals must ensure that learners are not deprived of their right to education. Conversely, a key question for sustainable instructional leadership by principles relates to when to make changes and what to give up when making space for new activities. Such judgment is manifested in not only knowing *what* and *how*, but also knowing *when* (Boal & Hooijberg, 2011); and as important, knowing what *not* to do.

Lastly, studies on instructional leadership seem to provide conflicting evidence regarding the principal's understanding of their key role in promoting curriculum delivery at schools. According to Bush and Glover (2016), school leadership in South Africa, determined that instructional leadership might be a proper route to follow for school improvement, specifically academic performance. Following is the presentation of the extent of principals' power and authority.

2.11.1 The extent of principals' power and authority

School and college principals have power and authority as a direct result of their senior positions, regardless of their personal qualities. Therefore, principals and School Management Teams (SMT) should develop more accurate monitoring tools to keep track of the performance of teachers and to identify problem areas, as suggested by Mngomezulu (2015). In addition, leaders should supply the necessary resources, such as staff support, facilities, and equipment, and provide tools for work review for better academic performance of a school.

Davidoff, Lazarus and Moolla (2014) suggest a holistic approach to school development, which they call whole-school development. In this way, all people and school-related aspects are taken into consideration when understanding and responding to school dynamics. The main aim of whole-school development is to increase the effectiveness of the organisation through facilitating the development of both the people and the structures of the organisation (Davidoff et al., 2014).

2.12 Legislative framework: strategies to improve the academic performance of schools.

The researcher believes that successful improvement of the academic performance of schools requires changing teachers' working conditions. Therefore, the effects of school improvement capacity are achieved through changes in teacher practice, and teachers' perceptions suggest that some change takes place over time. Naidoo and Petersen (2015) state, "Pick the right school leader and great teachers will come and stay". Teachers' perceptions of their principal's leadership influence student achievement at their schools.

Shava, Heystek, Chasara, and Kepemimpinan (2021), note that for successful schools, principals are essential to sustaining school improvement. The principal serves as a compass setting to steer teachers in a common direction; provides a set of norms that defines what teachers should accomplish and how. The effective principal provides a source of meaning and significance for teachers and learners for improvement of school academic performance. The author concurs that school principals are crucial to giving leadership in schools. Teachers and learners are influenced highly by values, beliefs. Hence, the task of school principal in this regard is to focus on leading school, with a view to fostering a strong functional culture promoting growth and improvement of school academic performance. Several studies have illustrated the critical influence of school principals as managers of their schools are pivoted to the success of the school by providing quality teaching and learning Supovitz (2010).

2.12.1 The South African Schools Act of 1996

The SASA of 1996, as amended (South Africa 2006), is the main legal instrument that regulates activities in the public schooling system. The SASA, together with the Employment of Educators Act, form the basis for holding principals, SMTs and teachers accountable. In South Africa, there has been a significant policy shift in school leadership and management since the start of democracy in 1994. The South African Schools Act was amended in 1997, which sparked a movement for more responsibility in the provision of education. According to the Act, the principal is responsible for the academic performance of learners in the school (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The Department of Basic Education (2015) observes some progress toward achieving this objective in the

field of school management. The NEEDU report (2012) notes an increase in the proportion of schools with class registers and improvement plans. However, despite general progress in plan implementation, some people interviewed by NEEDU in most provinces voiced unhappiness with the time allotted to implement the plans. The growth in schools having improvement plans could not actually reflect an improvement in school management, but rather a rise in nominal compliance. The policy environment for school leaders and managers has dramatically changed because of the shift from a racially segregated to a united non-racial education system (Bush, 2011). Since 1994, the South African government has been able to implement efforts targeted at reforming education from its segregated history, according to Ngcobo and Tikly (2010). Despite this, South Africa unfortunately performs worse than other foreign comparators in education and has not made any significant progress.

The role that principals are expected to play in managing their schools is explicitly captured in Chapter A, Section 4.2 of the Personnel Administrative Measures, under the heading, Duties and Responsibilities that Principals must Execute. The implication of non-compliance with the above-mentioned pieces of legislation are described in Chapter 5, Sections 16, 17 and 18, which deals with misconduct and incapacity. The expected activities of school governing bodies and of representative councils of learners are covered in the SASA (South Africa 2006). Regarding improvement of academic performance, the Department of Basic Education revised a five-year strategic plan, 2015–2020 that mentions possible resolutions, among which are measures relating to school management and leadership, curriculum planning and management, improved contact time, support by school governors, parental and community involvement, infrastructure maintenance, appropriate staff appointments, and assigning accountability.

As indicated by the Department of Basic Education (2020), school management is highlighted by the National Development Plan as one of the significant aspects that can improve the performance of schools. Goal 21 of the *Action Plan to 2019: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025* (Department of Basic Education, 2015b) highlights that the basic annual management processes must take place at all schools in the country in a way that contributes to a functional school environment. Indicator 21 of the *Action Plan* requires the sector to determine the percentage of schools producing the minimum set of management documents at a required standard, for instance, a school budget, a school

improvement plan, an annual report, attendance registers and a record of learners' marks.

2.13 Reasons for poor academic performance

Poor academic performance can be attributed to a wide range of factors, as explained by Lishivha (2019), including the difficulties that young people continue to face because of their limited access to economic opportunities and educational options. Consistency in schools was further hampered by the frequent changes in school principals. Most principals reported having trouble inspiring their teachers, the majority of whom seemed to lack a sense of responsibility. Lack of responsiveness to government reform efforts in the South African schooling system is also seen as a reason for poor academic performance. Researchers included lack of respect for teachers by learners (De Wet, 2021). This, and other factors, are highly correlated to learner achievement and they have a significant influence on poor academic performance. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the principal to lead curriculum delivery. The study found that there are significant differences amongst South African schools when it comes to things like teacher commitment, planning, teacher expertise, and mastery of curriculum covering. Additionally, these elements are connected to academic performance and learner achievement. As demonstrated by Surizal, Marzolina and Marpaung (2014), training affects teacher skills, as well as the leadership of principals. The relationship between the principal's leadership and the training he or she acquired is also allegedly influential in this paper. It is also highlighted that teachers' productivity is directly impacted by their working environments, including interactions with learners and co-workers. Uncontrolled behaviour, as examined by Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga (2014), is also a problem that correlates to poor academic achievement in schools, according to emerging data. According to Glewwe and Muralidharan (2016), low academic performance may be a result of a lack of leadership, as well as poor school and teacher governance, which is brought on by a high rate of teacher absenteeism. The working conditions for secondary school principals in Kenya are extremely difficult and complicated, according to Onderi and Makori (2013). In their research of 87 principals from around the nation, they discovered that the top challenges they encountered were poor security, escalating sectarian tensions and disputes, student behaviour problems, violence, and a lack of

resources. The issue became more challenging as shareholder demand increased. They discovered that the principals' ability to provide advice and counselling to their learners was hampered by the lack of professional development opportunities and assistance available to them. According to the conclusions of the many authors, there are additional elements, such as poverty, that have an impact on successful learning in South African underprivileged schools. This section discovered and argued about literature related to the study research problem, aim, objectives and questions.

2.14 Chapter summary

The major aim of this chapter was to review the relevant literature of principal's leadership role with reference to the study's focus of improving academic performance. The first section touched upon theoretical framework used. The author of this study accepts the view that the theory has an influence. Additionally, the theoretical framework was touched upon to show how the study may meaningfully contribute to the practice of effective principal leadership styles and the legislative frameworks utilized by principals to enhance academic performance in schools. This chapter focused on a theory related to the role played by principals' leadership and how the principal's leadership role improves the academic performance. The chapter examined these aspects in relation to the theory of school improvement that shaped this study. According to Shava, Heystek, Chasara, and Kepemimpinan (2021), principals are essential to sustaining school improvement and principals play an important role in leading schools.

Maponya (2020) remarks that in the South African school context, school principals are seen as leaders and managers who play an essential role in influencing the livelihood of their schools by establishing the tone and ethos of teaching and learning activities. Principal's leadership and improvement of academic performance have become a great concern for teachers in schools. According to Situmorang (2019), training improved the school principal's leadership role, which improved the ability of the principal's supervision to perform their duties. The review indicated that although South African teachers from high schools' express positive attitude towards principal's leadership role, the failure rate in schools is still high. Principals' leadership qualities can impact learner's performance in addition to affecting teachers' work satisfaction and views (Kars & Inandi, 2018). This chapter provides a thorough analysis of the principal's leadership responsibilities with

reference to the study's focus - improving academic achievement as perceived by teachers.

Studies on teachers' perception on effectiveness of principal's leadership and principal's leadership role reported a significant relationship between these teacher variables and improvement of academic performance. Mafora (2013) indicated that the framework accepted for examining the leadership practices of principals, as perceived by teachers, is the social justice and transformative leadership, according to three theories from the South African Journal of Education. The chapter, furthermore, explained the different leadership styles that could be employed by principals and discussed principal instructional leadership. In the following chapter, the research methodology, design, and sampling will be discussed. Data analysis and ethical considerations will also be detailed.

The leadership in South African schools and the leadership roles is covered followed by the review that addresses the variables related to factors that affect the principal. A discussion of the leadership styles for principals also took place. The literature review shows a significant relationship between the principals, teachers, and learners considered in this study as well as the improvement of school academic performance. Mostly, all sources reviewed for the purpose of this study report a significant positive relationship between principals, teachers, and learners including improvement of school academic performance. The fourth section of the review shows principals' positions as instructional leaders. Reasons for poor academic performance were also touched. Variables such as strategies to improve the academic performance, learning outcomes, work experience, extent of principals' power and authority and leadership training teacher were discussed. Inconclusive findings are reported for principal's competence where this review reported poor performance of learners despite some better-qualified teachers. It was, however, the purpose of this study to further investigate and explore how teachers perceived the principal's leadership role provided regarding improvement of school academic performance.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher explains the research methodology that was used in the study and provides information on steps that were taken during the investigation of teachers' perception of principal's leadership in improving academic performance in a selected Bloemfontein high school. Volsoo (2014) acknowledges that research methodology refers to a researcher's approach when persuading a study and it focusses on the research procedures and instruments to be used to conduct the task. This chapter elucidates the following: the research paradigm, research design, population, sample, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations.

Methodology is the process of acquiring, organising, and analysing data. The selected research methodology has a huge influence on the study as it guides the selection of population and sample, the research design, and data analysis. This chapter presents a discussion on research design, sampling methods, data collection and how data was analysed and interpreted by this study. A case study method was employed to obtain information about teachers' perceptions and how a principal's leadership plays a role in assisting school educators to enhance their skills in a classroom. The chapter also refers to the ethical considerations applicable to the process of collecting data. The magnitude of the research methodology is to clarify the steps taken by the researcher when studying research problems and undertaking the logic behind them. This chapter explores the methods and techniques used to conduct this study.

3.2 Research paradigm

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), define paradigm as a philosophical way of thinking. On the contrary, (Creswell 2014, p. 6-11) enumerate paradigm as a basic set of beliefs that should be accepted as true without having to be proven.

3.2.1 Ontology

Antwi and Hamza (2015) describe ontology as the way investigators define the truth and reality. Reality is also claimed as objectively given and measurable, or objective and quantifiable. Al-saadi (2014) defines ontology as the study of 'being', and is concerned with 'what is', that is, the nature of existence and structure of reality, or what is possible to know about the world. Therefore, the researcher must accept the reality on how things are and they work. The only reality is the one constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation. Consistent with the paradigm adopted for this study, the ontology of this study posits that reality is a social construct and that each of the participants in the study have their own view of reality that is informed by their own unique experiences. The ontology of this study contemplates multiple realities as it was esteemed that the participants were subjective and socially constructed (Barbour 2014:29). Hence, the researcher afforded all participants an opportunity to share their experiences, viewpoints and understanding of the role that principals play in improving academic performance. Through this study looking at the reality, the researcher was able to determine the meanings that participants assigned to teachers' perception of the role performed by the principal's leadership in enhancing academic achievement. This study also examines how teachers view the effectiveness of the principal's leadership role in terms of improving academic performance, what impact does the principal's leadership style have on the academic performance of the school and how teachers perceive the principal's instructional leadership role as improving academic performance.

The study used the interpretivist paradigm as it allowed the researcher to view the world in through the perceptions and experiences of the participants. The researcher used these Interpretivist experiences to construct and interpret the understanding from the gathered data. The interpretivist Ontology adopts a relativist view that perceives reality through intersubjectivity by considering meaning in research and understanding of social and experiential aspects. Interpretivism is based on assumption that reality is subjective, multiple, and social constructed, the researcher can only understand someone's reality through their experience of the reality which may be different from another person's shaped by the individual's social perspective. Ontology is used to find out if things exist or not.

The view held by the researcher based on the ontological assumptions was that there are multiple socially constructed realities, and these social constructions of reality are probably influenced by specific academic communities to construct or understand paradigm.

3.2.2 Epistemology

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), epistemology is knowledge, something that can be acquired, or something that must be personally experienced. Epistemology tries to understand what it means to know. In this approach, people cannot be separated from their knowledge, therefore, there is a clear link between the researcher and research subject. According to Moss (2021), epistemology is the study of knowledge and justified belief. The emphasis is on evaluating doxastic attitudes of individuals in abstraction from their social environment. Social epistemology seeks to redress these imbalances by investigating the epistemic effects of social interactions and social systems. Epistemology is a study of the nature of knowledge, explanation, justification, and the rationality of belief, as stated by Hashemi (2019): Philosophical analysis of the nature of knowledge and its relevance to concepts such as truth, belief and justification, problems, and issues of dubious scepticism, including standards of knowledge and justification. Epistemology reveals the relationship between research participants and acquiring of knowledge (Edirisingha 2012).

This study was more inclined towards epistemology paradigm as the term refers to the assumptions people make about what knowledge is, how knowledge can be generated, what and how it is known (Breakwell, Smith and Weight 2012:490). This paradigm highlights the relationship between the inquirer and the know. Epistemology, therefore, is concerned with how people should go about the business of trying to determine what is true, or what the facts of the matter are on selected topics. The epistemological issues considered by the researcher in this study relates to the role of principal leadership as seen by teachers as it relates to improving academic performance in the school, the effectiveness of the principal's leadership role and the principal's instructional role in improving academic performance. Epistemology looks at how one knows reality, the method for knowing the nature of reality (Maree 2012: 55-56) and the relations between reliability and validity as well as subjective and objective (Hays and Singh 2012: 540).

The researcher was of the view that the reality was not objective as much part of construction of reality know interpretive. As a result, the researcher had to be sensitive to the participants' perspectives, as these subjective experiences mirrored individuals' realities. The choice of paradigm was guided by what the researcher intended to achieve since the philosophy focuses on the relationship between the researcher, reality and how reality is obtained. Lastly, epistemology philosophy indicates that participants, topic, and researcher should provide impartial results.

3.2.3 Axiology

Tufail (2012) defines Axiology as a philosophical study of value. It includes questions about the nature and classification of values and about what kinds of things have value. Axiology incorporates ethics (theory of morality) and aesthetics (theory of taste and beauty) as well as other forms of value. The axiological assumptions (role of values): The researcher's subjective values, intuition and biases are important as they play a role in the dialog of social construction and inform the interpretation of the data.

The axiology philosophy dispenses with the value or quality of research and focuses on ethics as well as aesthetics (Khan, 2015). Axiology focuses on question about, "what ought to be". It deals with the nature of values and relates to the reaching of moral values and character development. The role of axiology is to protect the participants taking part in the research. In this study regarding ethical behaviour, ethical clearance from the university was received and supports the ethical sight of research.

The concept of axiology studies human values that motivates human behaviour to bring out meaning in human life. Axiology is applicable to the field of qualitative research in as much as it has a strongest match on ethical context of research, offers an important basis for making explicit the assumptions of different paradigms of the research. In this study, the philosophy of axiology was contemplated as the researcher was intending to acquire fair results when conducting the study by supporting the values and ethics during the research process.

3.2.4 Positivism

Wilson (2010) elucidated that positivism consists of three stages of human reasoning notable: theological, the metaphysical and scientific. Theological stage meant that people used supernatural or divine explanation to understand society and the world. In the theological stage the mind attributes phenomena to entities or forces comparable to humans to explain them.

The metaphysical stage, people viewed the world and events as natural reflections of human tendencies. This stage is called, 'Transitional stage' as it progresses from imagination to rationality.

The scientific stage refers to the scientific methods used to find solutions. The scientific stage focuses on explanation and prediction. In this study the philosophy was not used as the researcher understood that positivism wish to establish facts and they need to generalise the findings, positivism is associated with quantitate methods of data collection.

3.2.5 Realism

According to Forkner (2013), realism emphasises that the universe has objective to focus on existence. This philosophy relies on the idea of independence of reality from the human mind and it is based on assumptions of scientific approach to the development of knowledge. In this study the philosophy was used as the theory of causation is quite compatible with qualitative research. Mental events and processes are real phenomena that can be the causes of behaviour. In this study, realism was suitable as the themes were emerged from the data collected thereby preserving the individual experience and realities.

3.2.6 Interpretivism

This study adopted an interpretive paradigm based on a set of assumptions concerning the realities of the role played by principal's leadership in improving academic performance. Dean (2018) states that research through an interpretivist paradigm, which co-constructs knowledge socially or experientially, and the researcher, are inseparable from the research. The precedence of using interpretivism is that the original data

collected using the philosophy tend to have high level of validity and the data are trustworthy. The researcher decided to use the interpretive paradigm to make sense through understanding and interpreting all the complex role played by principal's leadership in improving academic performance. The interpretivist paradigm adopts a relativist ontology, in which a phenomenon may have multiple interpretations and can be determined by a process of measurement. According to Edirisingha (2012), Interpretivists are researchers believing that reality is multiple and is relative. Interpretivist researchers seek to understand motives, meanings, reasons, and other subjective experiences within their context and at a particular time (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Dudovskiy (2019) and Hammersley (2013) state that the interpretivist paradigm was originally rooted in the idea that methods used to understand knowledge, related to human and social sciences, cannot be the same as those used for the physical sciences, because humans interpret their world and then act based on this interpretation.

The choice of this paradigm was largely influenced by the nature of the phenomenon to be studied and the assumptions that the researcher held about the issue under investigation. The interpretivist paradigm was chosen for this study because the researcher recognised the importance of social constructs, context, and time on human behaviour. It was seen to be suitable for understanding the subject under review, as it is also dependent on the situational context at a given point in time. The interpretivist paradigm afforded the researcher an opportunity to conduct a study in its environmental context and to solicit the views, opinions, beliefs and perception of the teachers, learners, and other members of the SMT on the role leadership plays in improving academic performance. This paradigm also allowed the researcher to obtain the subjective perceptions of the teachers on the role played by a principal's leadership in improving school performance. Interpretivism aims to master and interpret human behaviour and not to predict and generalise the effects and causes. All findings and interpretations discussed in Chapter 4 were reached through discussions and interactions with the teachers and SMT members who experience the challenges associated with academic performance. The study itself did not seek to prove any theory or hypothesis. The following section discusses the ontology and epistemology of the study.

3.3 Research design

Creswell (2014) defines research design as the specific procedure involved in the research process: data collection, data analysis and report writing. The research design in this research used analysis research design. According to Plomp (2013), research design is used to come up with different research functions which include a case study, survey, action research and experiments.

3.3.1 Case study

The case study research design was used in this study to investigate teachers' perceptions of principal's leadership in improving academic performance. Ebneyamini and Moghadam (2018) define a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon, in depth within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the object of the study and context are not clear. Creswell (2013) explains the case study as a method that "explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information". It is a method used to narrow down a very broad field of research into one easily researchable study. According to Lambert and Lambert (2012), case study research involves "in-depth investigation of an individual, group event or system, usually within its real-life context and sometimes over a given period of time". Case studies are, therefore, bounded by time and activity; researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period.

According to Thomas (2011), a case study is an analysis of systems that are studied with a comprehensive view by either one or several methods. A case study has been proven to be useful for studying education innovations, for evaluating programmes, and informing policy. The purpose of choosing a case study for this study was to explore the particularity of a single case, that is, teachers' perception of principal's leadership in improving academic performance in a selected high school. Heale and Twycross (2018) state that, if a researcher wants to study a specific phenomenon arising from a particular entity, then a case study is warranted, and will facilitate an in-depth understanding of the single phenomenon. It was against this background that this method was chosen to study the social phenomena at school X. It also allowed the researcher to narrow down a very

broad field of research into one researchable study. The researcher will not only understand the meaning of participants but will also gain a better insight of different data gathering methods, such as focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires.

3.4 Research approach

This occurrence focusses on how the research is going to be conducted. A qualitative research approach was used to gain an understanding of whether and how principals contribute to learners' academic performance and to evaluate the implications of principal's leadership in academic performance as perceived by teachers in a selected high school in Bloemfontein in the Motheo District, Free State.

3.4.1 Qualitative research approach

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research approach is an inquiry process of understanding that is based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social and human problem. Hallett and Barber (2014) state that qualitative research approach is particularly well suited to identify causality and to uncover fine descriptive distinctions. Hence, data was collected through interviews, and by recording the information; questionnaires were also issued. A qualitative research approach enables development of an understanding of the meaning that people ascribe to their experiences (Austin & Sutton, 2015). The aim is to gather insights into how people live; what they do; how they use things; or what they need in their everyday or professional lives. Therefore, a qualitative research approach was chosen for this research because it is consistent with the paradigm and ontology chosen for the study; also, it was believed that this approach would be best suited to provide in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under review, as well as its context. Through a qualitative research approach, this study was able to obtain multiple perspectives from the participants. Moreover, the participants were able to explain their experiences within their own situational contexts.

To obtain multiple perspectives and an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under review, the researcher used three methods of data collection; the first one was the case study. Rashid, Rashid, and Waseem (2019) define a case study as a method that applies a range of empirical material collection tools to answer the research questions with

maximum breadth. The second method used, was the focus group. Sim and Waterfield (2019) describe a focus group as a type of group discussion about a topic under the guidance of a trained group moderator. The third method used was semi-structured interviews. DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) describe semi-structured interviews as an effective method for data collection when a researcher wants to collect qualitative open-ended data.

3.5 Population and sample

3.5.1 Population

Asiamah, Mensah and Oteng-Abayie (2017) define population as an entire group of which some information is required to be ascertained. A population is a collection of items or cases, such as people, things, or events, that meet certain criteria and to which the researcher wants to apply the findings of their study. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2015) defines population as the adjudicated entity, a country, or a geographic region.

(Department of Basic Education, 2015a), Motheo District in the Free State had 474 high schools, that is 241 secondary schools and 233 combined schools. The population of this study was all the teachers, including the principal, of a selected high school in Bloemfontein, in the Motheo District, Free State, South Africa. The high school had a complement of about 32 teachers, who were regarded as the general population of this study.

3.5.2 Sample

A sample is the group of individuals who participate in a study. These are individuals whom the researchers end up interviewing, or who complete a survey (Statistics Solutions, 2019). Moreover, a sample refers to units selected from a population to conduct a study and generalise about the entire population. Ismail and Kumar (2018) argue that it is not possible for a researcher to collect data from all cases in the population. A sample is selected and studied to understand the population from which the sample was drawn. Thus, there is a need to select a sample from the population.

Only one high school was purposively selected to represent all high schools in Bloemfontein in the Motheo District, Free State Province, South Africa, hence, a case study. The sample consisted of 15 participants. These were broken down as follows: five SMT members including the principal, five experienced teachers and five subject teachers. The subject teachers taught Grade 10–12 learners, while experienced teachers refer to teachers who had been teaching for at least five years. This sample was chosen because these teachers were experienced in teaching and learning. They were better placed to furnish the researcher with the information needed to answer the research question and were expected to provide information on their perceptions of the role played by the principal's leadership in relation to academic performance.

Prior to data collection, the sample size often depends on the resources and time available to the researcher. The participants who were selected to form the sample were teachers who were likely to possess rich information in respect to the purpose of the study, because they were all exposed to teaching and learning. All teachers were approached and those who were willing to participate, did so.

3.5.3 Sampling procedures

The researcher used a purposive sampling technique to select participants for this study. Purposive sampling is based on the judgment of the researcher as to who is likely to provide the best information to ensure success and achieve the objectives of the study (Etikan et al., 2017). In applying the case study method, the researcher limited the number of participants. Adwok (2015) defines sampling as the process of selecting a smaller number of participants to tell us essentially what a larger population might tell.

The sampling in this study was purposive, as the researcher sought to obtain the opinions of teachers and SMT members.

3.6 Data collection instruments

Data collection instruments are a critical part of the research, in that they enable the researcher to generate data. This study used focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires to collect data. Data collection was conducted with the SMT (principal, deputy principal and heads of departments), and interviews were conducted with the experienced teachers. Semi-structured interviews were used to

explore the teachers' perceptions further. Hard copies of questionnaires that had been developed were distributed at the school for subject teachers to complete. The objective of distributing the questionnaires was to gather complete and accurate information from the five subject teachers.

3.6.1 Focus group interviews

A focus group interview was used as the main data gathering instrument in this study. Stewart (2018) defines focus group interviews as a type of group that gather to discuss a topic. The aim is to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick & Mukherjee, 2017). Focus group interviews were conducted with the five SMT members, who included the school principal. The interviewer asked questions and participants responded.

A single focus group was employed to stimulate an interactive discussion of the topic by gathering all participants and a team of facilitators, as one group, in one place. This is the most common and classical type of focus group discussion, and it is widely used by both researchers and practitioners in different disciplines (Nyumba et al., 2017). This data collection instrument was selected, because it is complementary to the research methodology and design selected for this research.

Using focus group discussions enabled the researcher to gain insight into the thoughts and feelings of SMT members on the research topic. Participants had a chance to clarify their points and offer examples, because the researcher used challenging questions to help the participants enhance their comments. The focus group interview helped the researcher to interpret the participants' responses and behaviour during the interview. The researcher was free to formulate questions during the interview. Participants were also free to voice their views; this approach helped the researcher to obtain detailed information.

To complement data generated from the focus group discussions, the researcher also used semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, to solicit broader perspectives on the topic being studied.

3.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

Rahman (2019) states that a semi-structured interview is suitable for finding previously unknown qualitative trends and issues, to explore new areas of research interest, and for phenomenographic studies. The semi-structured interview technique has the advantage of allowing the researcher to ask questions in any way they see fit. The purpose of semi-structured interviews is to gather information from key informants who have personal experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs related to the topic of interest (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The semi-structured interviews were used to assess what determines the link between the principal's leadership and academic performance.

Paradis (2016) explains that interviews are ideal when they are used to document participants' accounts, perceptions, or stories about participants' attitudes towards and responses to certain situations or phenomena. It is characterized as a personal method of obtaining information concerning opinions, in a way that the interviewer is non-directive. Interviewees are given more space than they usually have in a normal social conversation. In this study, the interview focussed on the perception of teachers regarding their principal's leadership influence on their own behaviour. It also focussed on the teachers' views on how the principal's leadership can influence academic performance, and other topics. Teachers were asked to voice out their perception so that their principal can know, understand, and have a way of knowing how to work with educators so that they can change their perception and for improving academic performance.

Using semi-structured interviews gave the researcher an opportunity to probe and clarify responses given by participants. In this regard, interviews were conducted with five experienced teachers from the main target group of a particular high school in the Motheo District, Free State. The researcher classified experienced teachers as teachers who had been teaching for more than five years. It was anticipated that these teachers would have in-depth knowledge of their education and leadership system. The researcher had prepared a list of seven questions beforehand, and this list served as a guide throughout the interviews (see Appendix D).

3.6.3 Questionnaires

McLeod (2018) defines a questionnaire as a research instrument consisting of a series of questions that are asked for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. Questionnaires can be administered face-to-face, by telephone, online or through hard paper copies. Data can be collected relatively quickly, because the researcher does not have to be present when the questionnaires are completed. A questionnaire is a document that contains a collection of questions, as well as other items that are used to collect information for analysis by the researcher. Five subject teachers completed the questionnaire, which comprised open-ended questions (see Appendix E).

The purpose of using open-ended questions was to gain a deeper understanding and gather information on teachers' perceptions of principal's leadership in improving academic performance. The use of the questionnaire was beneficial to the study, because the participants were able to complete the questionnaires privately, in the comfort of their homes. This approach limited possible bias from the researcher and afforded teachers the opportunity to respond to the questions without fear of being judged or victimised for their opinions. Moreover, the questionnaires were answered confidentially.

The researcher is convinced that the combination of these data collection instruments enabled her to generate a wide range of opinions that are consistent with the ontology and methodological approaches adopted for this study. Certain procedures were followed in the data collection process.

3.7 Data collection procedures

As part of the process of collecting data, the researcher followed several steps to invite participants to participate, to obtain their permission, to distribute the questionnaires and schedule the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussion. The data collection process also involved visiting the high school that formed part of the study. Face-to-face interviews, one of the most popular techniques for gathering data in the social sciences, entail asking questions to participants and recording their responses.

3.7.1 Scheduling of focus group and semi-structured interviews

The scheduling of the focus group and semi-structured interviews was done and days for interviews were chosen. The focus group interview was scheduled through the principal. The school has weekly meetings attended by all SMT members, and the researcher asked whether she could use this scheduled meeting to run the focus group interview. This approach ensured that the scheduling was seamless, and that all the participants attended, as these meetings were already part of their weekly schedules. Five SMT members were interviewed in the focus group. The aim was to ensure that the data are credible, and conclusions drawn are more reflective of the overall views of educators, and not of the single, most powerful educators in the group. The interview went very well, and all participants were available on the scheduled date.

Appointments were set up with each of the five participants to conduct the semi-structured interviews at times and venues convenient to participants. Doing so ensured that each participant provided their own individual responses, that they felt comfortable and were not influenced by others' perceptions in the process. Five experienced teachers were interviewed through semi-structured interviews.

The entire process ensured that all data required for the study were collected effectively, using all the instruments as per the plan of this study. All completed interview schedules, focus discussion reports or recordings were retained by the researcher for data analysis.

The questionnaire was distributed at the school. The researcher delivered the questionnaires to the school principal, who then distributed them to the participants. The participants were provided with envelopes for the completed questionnaires, which they sealed and returned through the school principal, to ensure confidentiality and data integrity.

3.8 Data analysis techniques

This section discusses how each research question was answered. Three research questions were answered by the data that had been collected with the following data collection techniques: a focus group with members of the SMT, including the principal, semi-structured interviews with experienced teachers, and questionnaires completed by subject teachers.

The interviews involved dialogue with the researcher, who set the agenda and asked questions; the interviewees were cast in the role of participants. The researcher conducted all the interviews. The general aim of the interviews was to see through the participants' eyes by asking them to explain their experiences. Open-ended questions were used to orient the participants. The data was organized in a way that would address the research questions. In this study, the researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim from the audio recording. The researcher listened to the recordings repeatedly, whilst reading the transcript to identify the perceptions of the participants that accompanied certain responses, for example, when a teacher laughed while reflecting on an experience. The researcher grouped all the responses into themes, and then looked at dominant and subsidiary themes that had emerged from the participants' responses. The themes were then summarised. Finally, conclusions or deductions were drawn regarding the way educators viewed the principal's leadership role at the school.

The researcher went through all the information that had been collected and organised it according to the research questions. Similar topics were grouped and categorised into major and minor topics. The researcher embraced a thematic analysis. The researcher read the responses to the questionnaires and listened to all the interview transcripts. Through the process of reading and listening, the researcher made changes to the minor issues that emerged, to make sure that the reflective notes were manageable. This helped the researcher to link the data that had been collected from the participants with the research questions and the literature on the study topic, including the theoretical framework. The data was then summarized. Finally, conclusions or deductions were drawn on how the educators view the role of leadership in schools.

In this study, the following procedures were applied in the qualitative content analysis: Data was audio recorded on a smartphone, and a tablet was used as a backup recording device. Data analysis was done immediately after each interview. Several themes emerged (Eyisi, 2016). Throughout the interviews, data was recoded and clustered into themes and subthemes; the researcher paid particular attention information that responded to the research questions. The main and sub-research question of this study was the following:

What do teachers think about the principal's leadership role in terms of improvement of academic performance in the selected school?

Research question 1: How do teachers view the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in improving academic performance in the selected school?

This research question was answered by the SMT members, including the principal, through focus group interviews. Questions relating to whether the principal was effective in their leadership role to improve academic performance, were asked. SMT members were also asked whether the principal monitored and supported teachers in their duties relating to enhancing learner performance.

The researcher was sensitive to what SMT members said about the principal's effectiveness in their leadership role to improve academic performance. The researcher next tried to code the data to make sense of it. Themes were found in the responses provided by participants in focus group interviews.

Research question 2: What impact does the principal's leadership style have on the academic performance in the selected school?

Semi-structured interviews with experienced teachers assessed how the principal's leadership style affects the school's academic performance. The experienced teachers were asked interview questions relating to the principal's leadership in general, the value and suitability of the principal's leadership role, and leadership styles that affect academic performance. Open-ended questions were asked to orient the participants. Themes that appeared in the responses of the participants were compiled and explained.

Research question 3: How do teachers view the principal's role as an instructional leader in improving academic performance in the selected school?

The researcher sought answers to research question 3 by soliciting the views of the subject teachers on their principal's instructional leadership role in relation to improving academic performance. Subject teachers were asked whether principals are effective in their instructional supervision of teachers. Questionnaires were completed by five subject teachers in the selected school in Bloemfontein, in Motheo district, Free State, after the structured interviews had been conducted with experienced teachers. The questionnaire as data collection tool, had three sections. Section 1 gathered biographical information on the subject teachers.

Section 2 posed questions on the principal's instructional leadership, which subject teachers answered by means of a five-point scale. Section 2 provided the opportunity for free response. The researcher read all the views of the subject teachers.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are concerned with protecting participants' rights, and protecting the participants from exposing themselves to personal, psychological, career and physical harm (Silaigwana, 2017). In this research, all ethical considerations prescribed by the Central University of Technology were strictly adhered to. As a result, the researcher acted in an ethically responsible way throughout the study and protected the rights and welfare of the participants in the study (Oluwafisoye & Akande, 2013). A letter from the researcher's supervisor in the Faculty of Humanities in the Department of Postgraduate Studies: Education, confirming registration for the researcher's course, is attached (**see Appendix A**). A letter to the principal requesting permission to conduct research was written by the researcher (**see Appendix B**). A consent letter was given to participants by the researcher in that school (**see Appendix C**); the principal and the teachers who were willing to take part in the research signed the consent letter and participants were made aware that they can leave the research study at any time, but when withdrawing from the study, the participant should inform the research team. Participants were also informed about the purpose of the study.

Furthermore, permission to conduct the research was requested from the Faculty of Humanities, Department of Postgraduate Studies: Education. Permission was granted, and an ethical clearance certificate was received before the researcher visited the school to collect data (**see Appendix G**). Additionally, the researcher filed a letter to the Department of Education asking for approval to carry out research at a specific school in the Motheo District (**see Appendix H**).

The researcher presented the study to the principal and the educators and requested volunteers to participate. The researcher observed anonymity of persons and places. The researcher allowed participants to withdraw in part or fully from participating. The researcher allowed participants to decline to answer questions and to decline to be observed. The researcher used codes to refer to participants to protect their identity and

protect them from any form of abuse or victimisation that might arise if the information on this study was made public. All completed interview schedules were retained by the researcher for analysis. Confidentiality was guaranteed for participants and their responses throughout the process.

Participants were asked to consent to have their interviews recorded, and for their responses to be used in the presentation of the study. The school and their names are not identifiable in print. A laptop with a password was used to protect information. All the documents were stamped; hard copies of appendices were also stored safely in a lockable cabinet as evidence. The research findings will be made available to the participants when they are ready.

3.10 Chapter summary

Chapter 3 provided an explanation of methodological procedures that were followed in the study to address the research questions. In this research, a qualitative research approach and a case study research design were used, and the strengths of a case study were explained. The purpose of the study was to explore teachers' perception of the principal's leadership in improving academic performance. The instruments used by the researcher to collect data were also explained, as well as the reasons for using focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, and a questionnaire for collecting data were discussed. Data collection, analysis procedures and ethical issues were also explained. To conclude, a discussion of the trustworthiness of the data was given. The study adhered to ethical principles. The next chapter presents, analyses, and discusses the data.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the data and analyses and discusses responses provided by participants on the role played by their principal's leadership in improving academic performance in a selected Bloemfontein high school as perceived by teachers. The study used a case study research design to obtain an understanding of whether and how a principal's leadership role contributes to learners' academic performance. In seeking to uncover the principal's leadership role regarding improvement of academic performance as perceived by teachers, the researcher gathered data by administering a questionnaire and conducting semi-structured and focus group interviews. Participants' contributions, in the form of answers to questions, were analysed using a thematic approach.

4.2 Data presentation and analysis/interpretation

This study investigated the effectiveness of the role played by a principal's leadership in improving academic performance as perceived by teachers in a selected school in the Motheo District, Bloemfontein, Free State Province. The presentation, analysis and discussion of the research data are guided by the following main research question:

What do teachers think about the principal's leadership role in terms of improvement of academic performance in the selected school?

4.2.1 Research question 1: How do teachers view the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in improving academic performance in the selected school?

Research question 1 was posed to members of the SMT, who included the school principal, in a focus group interview. In this section, participants were asked to give their opinions on whether the principal was effective in their leadership role to improve the academic performance. SMT members were also asked whether the principal monitored and supported teachers in their duties, related to enhancing learner performance.

Themes for this question emerged from responses given by the participants during interviews. Data was coded to discover similarities and differences in the information gathered. The analysis of data yielded the following themes: Communication, and principal support.

4.2.1.1 Theme 1: Communication

(Seidl in Schoeneborn & Blaschke, Citation 2014, p. 290) assert that what matters is not how a particular individual accepts communication but how a subsequent communication interprets the preceding communication it is connected to; only a communicative event can decide the particular way in which the immediately preceding communicative event is understood. This theme gazes at what communication look like for the principal in the selected high school.

Participants PSX, SMT1, SMT2 and SMT5 indicated that communication between the principal and the teachers is important and must be performed by the principal to improve academic performance. It was deduced from the participants' responses that communication between the principal and the teachers in this school was positive. Participants PSX, SMT1, SMT2, and SMT5 gave almost similar responses, and mentioned that open communication is very important for a healthy and strong relationship between the principal and teachers, to improve academic performance. The researcher also found that there was good communication between the school principal and the teachers; there was a good team spirit at the school and that promoted the effectiveness of the principal in their leadership role. For instance, the teachers assisted the school principal with duties when the principal was absent.

Participant PSX stated the following in relation to the principal's communication with the teachers:

You allow the teachers, you give them that space, you communicate the information, you say, colleagues, I am just the captain of the ship here, but I cannot do everything alone.

Participant SMT5 supported what participant PSX had said, namely that the principal did not only communicate with teachers to attend lessons – the principal also attended

lessons, and that motivated teachers, as the principal lead by example. SMT 5 shared their view as follows:

Principal's positive way of communicating with teachers and learners motivates us as teachers because, in many schools, principals are office based and not communicating with teachers, I do not want to tell you, they are failing schools.

Participant PSX's response was supported by SMT3, who did not want to add information, but who responded, *I think they have said a mouth full*. Participant SMT4 said:

They said it already about his open communication, the only thing that we teachers do, we want the principal to do everything.

Participant SMT2 explained the importance of congruence between effective communication and action and explained that it is not just enough for the principal to communicate effectively, they must also be a model to teachers. SMT2 also mentioned how important democratic leadership is for enhancing school communication and the improvement of academic performance.

As teachers we are looking at what [the principal] is doing. It means if the principal is not making sure that there is order and stability, the teachers will not make sure that there is stability, it is good as if it is the duty of the principal to make sure that learners are in class. In some cases, teachers will just pass the learners without telling them to go to class as if it is the duty of some else to come and tell them. That is why, in many schools, when the principal is not there, there is chaos, they can't run the school and they are waiting for the principal.

Participant SMT5 went on explain on how the principal communicates effectively with them as teachers.

I still support the idea of a democracy that the principal applies, presently we are capable to speak out our minds, which is something good. I think the principal is a democratic person because he allows the teachers to bring suggestions to improve the school.

Participant PSX revealed that:

Most of the times, as principals, we do things alone, without communicating with and when we are not there, teachers and even the members of the SMT do not know what to do, because they were never given a platform. Most of the times their perceptions are informed by the way I lead.

According to participant PSX, most principals fail to communicate with their teachers, and when teachers take the initiative, principals get offended. Participant PSX also stated that:

The kind of leadership that I offer will make them to see me in a particular way. Some of us if teachers take initiative, they take leadership, I get offended and say, guys do not forget who is in charge, sometimes they pull back, because of the way I lead.

The results under this theme confirm the findings that the research conducted reflected that to improve academic performance, there is a need for effective communication between teachers and principals. The theme also reveals that two-way communication between the school principal, their team, and between the teachers in general, is of the utmost importance. The theme also highlights the importance of congruence between communication and action for improving performance. The next theme on principal support is furnished.

4.2.1.2 Theme 2: Principal support

Principal support is maintained to have a remarkable influence on bringing off improvement in academic performance. Principal can play an important role in supporting teachers by promoting teacher leadership by delegating and empowering teachers in ways, (Sebastian 2016).

Participants PSX, SMT2 and SMT3 indicated that the principal supported teachers in their duties and that doing so improved academic performance. The researcher interviewed the participants about support provided by the principal at their school. It is evident from the information collected that the principal always ensured that they worked with the teachers and supported them, to improve academic performance. PSX

considered principal support to be important, and that a principal must work together with teachers to improve school academic performance. When the researcher asked the opinion of Participant PSX about the support given by principals, the response was that, as principals are leaders who support teachers to improve academic performance, principals must be flexible, since they work with human beings.

There are unforeseen circumstances that can impact, that can affect even the implementation of the strategy and there are external factors as well. As I support them, I must also bear in mind that we might get what we want to achieve, but we must also leave a room for disappointment, yes! We must keep in mind we are dealing with human beings who have other things that might affect, that might influence whatever that we hope and as we monitor the strategies, we can see that this one is giving us what we want, but has negative effect so let us modify it.

In the interview, participant SMT2 seemed to agree with SMT3 that, as principals support their teachers in improving academic performance, principals should consider the timeframe when they draw up plans and avoid telling teachers when to complete their topics. Teachers are the masters of their subjects; thus, they should decide when they will complete their topics. Participant SMT 3 stated that:

Time and the timeframe for what must be implemented must be reasonable, for example, in an error analysis there is a topic that was difficult in a test, now we need to go back to it, how long is going to take us to complete it? Is the topic going to be achievable in a month's time or in three months' time? I think the principal would apply that as a strategy in working with teachers in improving school academic performance.

In answering a question on support provided by the principal, participant IKSMT0 explained one of the strategies principals would use when they work with teachers to improve academic performance:

There are management activities in the form of plan, control, and leadership that principals would use as strategies when supporting teachers in improving academic performance. One need to have a plan and making sure that the plan is executed in a manner that you wanted it to be productive and

controlling. To ensure that it is implemented properly and accordingly, you must control.

The data provided by participants relating to this theme shows that the principal supported teachers in their duties, to improve academic performance at that school. A particular member of SMT as a participant referred to the importance of time and timeframe, and management activities: planning, controlling and leadership that must be properly implemented to improve academic performance. Apart from the management activities mentioned, the principal was supportive of teachers, even if there were unforeseen circumstances that impacted the implementation of the strategy – including external factors. The principal realised that principals might get what they wanted to achieve, but they also had to be prepared for disappointment. This was proved by the evidence given by the principal and four SMT members during the interviews. Although most participants agreed that the principal was very supportive and that there was effective communication between the teachers and the principal, one SMT member did not say much; this member simply said other SMT members had said a mouthful about the principal.

4.2.2 Research question 2: What impact does the principal's leadership style have on the academic performance in the selected school?

In this section, experienced teachers were asked to briefly explain how the principal's leadership style affected the academic performance. This research question was answered by experienced teachers in semi-structured interviews. As the interview questions were open-ended, a variety of responses were elicited. Participants referred to many tasks. The participants' responses revealed two themes that were connected to research question 2. The following themes emerged: Teachers' job satisfaction, and the principal's motivation of teachers. These two themes represent the most significant tools for determining how a principal's leadership style affects the academic performance as perceived by teachers.

4.2.2.1 *Teachers' job satisfaction*

According to Nanjundeswaraswamy (2021), the job satisfaction of employees is directly linked to their superiors. It is reported that the involvement of teachers by the principal at

the school during the decision-making process creates an effective working ambience for the teachers and establishes a pleasant relationship among teachers themselves. Teachers' job satisfaction is dependent on the principal's leadership style that is applied to improve the academic performance. To answer research question 2, the researcher interviewed the participants on job satisfaction at their school. Participants' responses described job satisfaction as a process that determines the mission. A supporting example was given by participant EXP1, who said that, if teachers have high job satisfaction, academic performance will be affected positively.

Teachers should be involved by the principals in schools in decision-making process and that will create effective working place. That will promote good academic quality and we will ensure that we are helping with the smooth running of the school, if he has a good vision in the improvement of the school results.

The definition of job satisfaction is a person's feeling of satisfaction in an occupation, which acts as a motivation to work. Leaders influence subordinates, so that organisational goals can be achieved. Job satisfaction is not only self-satisfaction; it is how satisfied people are after doing the job. Participant EXP1 explained:

Job satisfaction is important; it should take place in schools and the principals must have a good vision. We need to ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place, teachers enjoy their work, respecting contact time, learner participation and parent involvement.

Once accepted by followers, leaders motivate followers to ensure that a goal is achieved. Participant EXP2 emphasised a similar view:

The deputy principal must ensure that HODs [heads of departments] are having their meetings with teachers and then they plan the academic performance of the school, they plan for their departments and the deputy principals must help the principals.

Participants indicated that, if there is job satisfaction among teachers at schools, the attitudes of the followers will change, and they will support the school to achieve the goals of the school. Academic performance will improve too, through an effective principal leadership style. Participant EXP5 supported the view of participant EXP1:

If there are methods leaders use to execute plans and motivate people, do planning to know that this is what will do on this date, the academic performance of the school will change, as everybody does his or her task right.

On the same topic, participant EXP3 said that the success of the team is linked to the successful accomplishment of goals through job satisfaction. Participant EXP3 went on to explain how motivating followers to commit themselves can improve the ultimate results of the school. When the researcher asked EXP3 to elaborate their view on job satisfaction, EXP3 pointed out:

Putting the plan or unfolding this plan and controlling by means of communicating to check over and over whether there is success of our plans, that can improve the ultimate results of the school. Those are the cornerstones; we need to put more on what we are doing.

Teachers' job satisfaction is crucial for the success of a school; if everyone is willing to play their part, there will a positive change. Participant EXP4 emphasised that teachers should be involved in different committees, as well as in the school-based support team. EXP4 explained:

This is the big committee in our school, and we really need to have a big, large numbers from the educators' side, in that committee, we are dealing with learners' problems, learners' behaviour, learner performance, as well as extramural activities. I think we really involve ourselves in the committees that will help us to break the groups that we have and that will encourage the spirit of cooperation.

The data collected for this question shows that five experienced teachers declared that teacher job satisfaction was the most significant method to bring about improvement in the academic results. In addition, the study found that teachers' job satisfaction makes a principal's leadership role effective. The participants were able to make connections between proper planning done by the principal and the important part played by teachers in planning. The data collected from interviews provided additional insight; for instance, participant EXP1 indicated that teachers should help the principal in terms of planning and monitoring the work of learners. It is important to make sure that teachers take part in planning, so that teachers can contribute to improving academic results.

4.2.2.2 *The principal's motivation of teachers*

The principal's motivation of teachers is very important where the principal compliments teachers for their valuable contribution. The principal is expected to give teachers incentive to motivate them to create interest and commitment towards teaching (Kapur 2018). Praising teachers or educators makes them feel powerful and there will be an improvement in academic performance. This is evident b comments. The following responses were given by the participants to answer research question 2. Participant EXP1 pointed out that:

Principals' teacher motivation contributes a lot to school academic performance, whether the school performs, progresses, or retrogresses.

Other experienced teachers at the school shared the same views. They said that the principal as a leader had to show the right direction and motivate the teachers, so that the school can perform well. Participant EXP2 emphasised that:

As a teacher you need the principal to be a leader, and then you need the principal to sometimes be a father figure by motivating teachers. By virtue of this position, the principal is tasked with a huge responsibility of sometimes advising using humanity when talking to people. He must be approachable. He is holding a position of trust.

Participant EXP3 pointed out that:

In any organisation, there are small groups of people who are viewing the principal in a particular way.

Participant EXP4 said:

We have many groups, as you can see, now we are sitting in our staff room, others are sitting there, in those rooms there are very big discussions about type of principal he is in the school.

Participant EXP5 raised a concern:

I do not want to say the principal is too lenient where the principal gives teachers and the HODs [heads of departments] s a chance to contribute on improving the whole process of the school.

From the above data, the responses from the three experienced teachers indicate that principals as leaders must show the right direction. One experienced teacher seemed to be worried about how small groups of people in their corners in the organisations view the principal and discuss the way the principal motivates teachers around the school. An analysis of teachers' responses reveals that, in their school, the principal relied too much on some teachers.

Participant EXP2 considered teachers to be the most important resource for improving academic performance:

Teachers must make sure that they teach, and they advise in their departmental meetings, in the staff meetings. They should give inputs in the staff room, and they work as a team. What needs to happen, every teacher must do work, teachers must advise others, they must work as a team. They must be fair and tell each other that, you must be told that you are not doing your work and you make us to lag.

In addition, participant EXP4 revealed that when teachers took part in decision-making, learner performance improved:

Being involved in all the decision-taking in learner performance, as well as extra classes and whatever programme that is going to help the learners to improve their performance. Many teachers are not supporting the principal and are not intending to support, because some of them say it is better to resign or exchange to other schools, maybe the situation will be better, Principal X was better, they are mentioning previous principals and I think that will not help. We are looking at the current situation. Those principals are gone, we need to look at the current one.

The study found that participants agreed that, if teachers support the principal's role, it contributes to improving academic performance and, if the principal can motivate the teachers, the school will be effective and there will be improvement in academic performance.

Participant EXP3 mentioned that:

I must make sure that I dedicate myself to the objective that I am here for by going to attend classes that will be the core or the basic function of being here. Secondary it might happen that some of the teachers are not actually capacitated to teach those subjects that they're doing, they are qualified to do the job, for example, in accounting. You will find that the teacher has not been teaching the subject. We must support one another.

Participant EXP5 added:

You know we have our own things; it is either you organise your own classes to improve the results, or you talk to other teachers to improve the results without involving the principal. Some principals want to always want to suggest, let us do this. As a teacher I can suggest, let's have morning classes, extra classes, and afternoon classes. To eradicate absenteeism and late coming, let us close gates.

The researcher interviewed the participants about what determines success between principals' leadership and academic performance as perceived by teachers. Communication was identified as equally important for collaboration. The researcher wanted to establish whether there was communication between the principal and the teachers at that school. Participant EXP3 responded:

Okay, because I believe in the strategy of openness, of all-inclusive management style, where everybody is allowed to say whatever he says, so if the principal can be able to use his communication tool by communicating his strategies to his deputy principal, communicating strategies, as well that he wants to employ through to the HODs [heads of departments] and teachers, where everybody can be able to communicate or discuss matters of concern and matters that can improve the school that will be able to assist the principal.

In agreeing with participant EXP3, participant EXP1 stated that:

He can be too friendly to people, if that can change a little, not that he should ignore people, but not too friendly. There are people who might think he befriends other people, of which it is not a problem if they do not think there is unfair treatment towards others at the expense those who are being favoured.

Other people might think he does not cope. I think he is trying to communicate with everybody and make them at ease.

Teachers pointed out that, in some schools where a principal had good communication with the teachers and learners, the academic performance improved. Participant EXP2 was of the view that some teachers are not supportive of the principal:

Teachers think negatively of the principal as the principal is not coming to teachers and update them with relative information and changes. Teachers seem angry.

The data provided by the experienced teachers seem to agree with the view of Chauhan (2017), that communication is a two-way process, wherein the message in the form of ideas, thoughts, feelings, and opinions are transmitted between two or more persons with the intent of creating a shared understanding. Participant EXP4 said:

Teachers need to be listened and teachers [laughs] also need to be taken care of, for example, if you look inside our staff room, we do not have chairs, proper cupboards in our classes, heaters, we are getting cold, our windows are broken, if the renovations can be done on time, our school will be better and the results will be better as well. Look at our school is old, old enough than me.

An analysis of the experienced teachers' responses reveals that, in this school, there was a lack of effective communication between the principal and the teachers. Participant EXP1 motivated this finding:

It differs from one teacher to the other. There are those who feel that he is too lenient and others they think sometimes he is too harsh, to me they both work for the school, because he can be supportive and able to discipline those delinquents. Both sides they work for the school because we can understand him.

Participant EXP2 emphasised:

Let me say, to me it is positive, because the principal, amongst other things, what he does, he encourages learners. He is always close to learners, though sometimes to teach us things, but now, all in all, learners become motivated,

teachers sometimes some of them will be offended if I hear something from the learners if it is not said in the staff room, so, I believe there must be a protocol, first teachers, then learners. Some of us currently live near these learners' homes. When a parent hears something from a learner, he will ask you then I do not know, so it creates problems. I think the principal is doing a lot in terms of academic; he is trying, though I feel in extra-curricular he is lacking. We have a principal who does not support extra-curricular, who does not support sport.

Participant EXP3 revealed that:

The performance of the principal is outstanding, as I indicated before, he works relentlessly to improve achievement by focusing on the quality of instruction, the principal helps define and promote high expectations.

Participant EXP4 expressed that their principal was doing well:

He is trying his level best. He only needs our support and then we only need to break the small groups that we are having and work as a team.

Participant EXP5 gave their opinion:

He is very good, especially concerning discipline and, sure everybody knows how the school was.

Regarding this theme, the participants' responses show that the principal's leadership style should be respected. Their examples were as follows: Participant EXP1 raised points on how the positive motivation by the principal of teachers contributed to academic performance:

Positive principals' teacher motivation contributes a lot, whether the school performs, progresses, or retrogresses. I think the way the principal conducts himself or herself, it has a lot to do with the performance of the school in terms of ensuring the well-being of your staff members is considered. I think it is very key because a happy employee results in maximum production. If the teachers do not like the style of the principal, they might sabotage and they need to share the same view.

Participant EXP2 added the following information:

He is holding a position of trust. So, but now as teachers we tend to not trust the principal, sometimes it is the behaviour that we see from the principal. You can say something in confidence to the principal sometimes and the principal say it to somebody else or he has mentioned it generally in the staff room, some of those things they make people to become sceptical when it becomes to those things. The principal must be the person who is honest. Some people are different, something said in private must remain private, because we have talked in private and there is no reason to say it in the staff room.

4.2.3 Research question 3: How do teachers perceive the principal's instructional leadership role as improving academic performance in the selected school?

The data in relation to research question 3 was collected by asking participants to contour how teachers perceive the principal's instructional leadership role in improving academic performance. The topics that arose from the responses of the participants are grouped together and described. The questionnaire gathered data in relation to subject teachers' views on the principal's instructional leadership for improving academic performance.

4.2.3.1 *Instructional management*

Participants ST1 and ST2 echoed that instructional management is a tool for exerting positive influence to improve academic performance. School principals have an obligation to set goals and make sure they are achieved. It was noted from the participants' responses that subject teachers ensure that they carry out instructions given by principal and execute their teaching and learning duties. Participant ST1 declared, *I carry out instructions given to me*. Participant ST2 agreed with participant ST1 that carrying out all instructions given by the principal that are directly related to teaching and learning, was the subject teacher's role in supporting the principal. Similarly, participant ST2 responded that, *I carry out all instructions given to me and attend my classes as expected*. Participant ST5 indicated that subject teachers implemented what was required by the principal, and by doing so supported the principal to be an effective leader and to ensure that the academic performance improved. Participant ST5 added that, *being part of his meetings and implement what is required is important*. In support of what was said by participants

ST5, ST1 and ST2, participant ST4 referred to, *sharing the important information that will improve the school.*

Participant ST3 seemed to disagree with the other participants. Participant ST3 did not respond to the question, and the researcher noticed that participant ST3 was not sure of what to say – there may be a variety of reasons for ST3's hesitation.

According to the data, subject teachers believe they are playing a big role in supporting the principal's leadership role and contributing to improving academic performance. This was proved by the evidence given by four subject teachers, although one teacher did not respond.

From the data above, it can be concluded that there is a need for subject teachers to play their role, to ensure that they work together with the principal to improve the academic performance. An analysis of subject teachers' responses reveals that teachers carry out instructions related to teaching and learning that are issued by the principal, and they believe that implementing what is required by the principal is the most significant role teachers can play in supporting the principal's instructional leadership role. Subject teachers mentioned that sharing important information improves the academic performance.

4.2.3.2 *Teacher evaluation by principal*

Data on the next theme suggests that regular teacher evaluation by the principal has a significant influence on improving teaching and learning in classrooms (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013). To gather data to answer research question 3, the participants were requested to complete a questionnaire about how teachers perceive the principals' instructional leadership role in improving academic performance in the selected school. The following were the comments given by respondents in attempting to answer the above research question. Participants ST4 and ST5 raised the point that teacher evaluations by the principal are important, and they focused the most on the support that the principal needs, as well as to support the academic programme. Participant ST5 said:

Because he plays a vital role in the school as a whole and he needs our support more than anything.

Participant ST4 added that:

It will encourage educators to participate fully to support the academic programme.

Participants ST1 and ST2 believed teacher evaluation by the principal gives teachers and learners a clear direction to take to achieve academic improvement. Participant ST1 stated that:

It is important, because teachers, learners and parents all depend on him [the principal] to know and understand what must be done.

Teacher evaluation by the principal is important, participant ST3 said, *to improve the performance of the school.*

The responses above indicate that all the participants were of the view that teacher evaluation by the principal plays a significant role in academic performance.

4.2.3.3 *Principal's school guidance*

The data provided by participants on the completed questionnaires indicated how teachers perceive the principals' instructional leadership role as improving academic performance. The participants were asked to suggest how the principal's school guidance could improve instructional leadership. Teachers perceived the principal's school guidance as improving academic performance. The principal is responsible for the overall smooth functioning of the academic performance. An effective school principal gives guidance to teachers and is undoubtedly the key to a successful academic performance. Participants ST3 and ST4 believed lack of communication was a serious factor that hindered the principal's instructional leadership. Participant ST3 stated that, *the principal does not involve teachers in the decision-making process.* Participant ST4 added that there was a *lack of communication and resources.*

4.2.3.4 *Lack of resources*

Participant ST1 said that one of the factors hindering the principal's instructional leadership role is lack of resources and mentioned shortages of resources: Participant ST2 revealed that on the list of the factors hindering the principal's instructional leadership role was that teachers are not cooperative. Participant ST2 believed that there was, *non-cooperation of teachers and lack of support from the [education] department.*

4.2.3.5 *Lack of commitment*

Participant ST5 mentioned that a lack of commitment from educators was a factor that hindered the principal's instructional leadership. Participant ST5 specified, *lack of commitment from educators, non-attendance of classes and lack of teamwork.*

4.2.3.6 *Addressing hindering factors.*

To answer research question 3, the researcher wanted to know how the factors that hindered the principal's instructional leadership could be addressed. Four participants – ST1, ST2, ST4 and ST5 – indicated that the hindering factors had not yet been addressed, while respondent ST3 did not respond to the question. Participant ST4 indicated that addressing hindering factors can be dealt with by communicating with educators in time and holding meetings with the SMT and staff members. Participant ST5 confirmed that the pass rate in lower grades is low. Participant ST5 added that:

The school has reduced the pass percentage target in lower Grade, e.g., Grade 8 and 9 during June examination.

This comment indicates that a great deal needs to be done to address hindering factors.

4.2.3.7 *Creating a positive culture of learning and teaching.*

Three participants did not comment, while two participants highlighted the following aspects: The principal should coordinate and collaborate with all the stakeholders and should implement policies and plans. The participants believed that it was imperative for teachers and principals to work together, regardless of gender and age. This was supported by the comment made by participants ST4 and ST5. Participant ST4 said:

The principal should coordinate and collaborate with all the stakeholders to improve the performance.

Participant ST5 contributed that:

Principals should try to reach all the levels of ability for staff, regardless of their age, gender, etc. and to involve them directly to implementation of new policies and plans, etc.

The data that had been collected from subject teachers shows the two subject teachers declared that principals should really work together with teachers.

4.3 Discussion of Data

This chapter provides a reflection on the research process. The following research questions were posed.

4.3.1 Research question 1: How do teachers view the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in terms of improving academic performance in the selected school?

4.3.1.1 *Communication*

According to the results of the study, participants agreed that effective and positive communication between the principal and teachers is one of the most important strategies a principal can use in working with teachers to improve school academic performance. In this study, teachers reported that they assisted the school principal with the principal's duties in the principal's absence. This agrees with the findings of Onuma (2016), which reveals that lack of supervisory skills in school principals could lead to poor school academic performance. Arlestig (2008) found that school improvements become effective in the presence of communication between the principal and teachers. The common view of a successful school includes a visible principal who communicates frequently about the school's pedagogical tasks, teaching, and learning.

The study also found that the principal does not only communicate with teachers to attend classes; the principal motivates teachers by guiding teachers toward a stronger and more successful teaching career. Khan (2017a) argues that, to ensure effective communication, the school principal must be passionate about teaching. Therefore, effective communication between a principal and teachers has a positive impact on school academic performance.

It is evident from the responses of the participants that good communication between the principal and teachers contributed to developing a good team spirit at the school. Many researchers have studied the behaviours of effective principals (Horn, Klasik & Loeb, 2010). Schools cannot succeed without effective communication. The researcher infers

that effective communication is the best strategy principals can use to work with teachers to improve academic performance.

4.3.1.2 *Principal support*

Data analysis reveals that participants agreed that there are important factors principals should keep in mind when applying strategies to support educators to improve academic performance. Participants suggested that leaders need to be flexible and must implement a reasonable timeframe for what must be implemented. There are also management activities, in the form of planning, controlling and leadership, that must be implemented, and which could enhance school academic performance. This finding corresponds with that of Matoke, Obiko and Nyamongo (2015), who found that these development factors have a significant effect on teacher motivation. The study of Matoke et al. 2015 recommends that school principals should keep in mind the above important factors when supporting teachers to improve teaching and learning.

4.3.2 Research question 2: What impact does the principal's leadership style have on the academic performance in the selected school?

4.3.2.1 *Teachers' job satisfaction*

The data divulge that participants agree that, if the principal involves teachers in the school's decision-making processes, it creates an effective working ambience for the teachers and establishes a pleasant relationship among teachers themselves. It is important for the principal to make sure that teachers participate in planning; their involvement can mediate how the principal's leadership style affects the academic performance. Thus, it seems neither teachers alone nor principals alone can improve schools; this can only be achieved by teachers and principals working together (Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2011). It was also reported that planning improves the ultimate results of the school. Teacher job satisfaction in schools is important. If everybody is willing to fulfil their own role, positive change is possible.

The study found that principals are increasingly expected to lead their schools within a framework of collaboration, shared decision-making and planning with teachers and other staff members. This finding is important for understanding how a good principal supports high levels of teaching and learning. However, the participants emphasised that planning

should be clear, and that the principal must have a good vision, to ensure that quality teaching and learning take place. Finally, the definition of teacher job satisfaction can be defined as the emotional reactions of teachers to their jobs or to fulfil their teaching roles (Özkan, 2022).

It is evident from the literature reviewed and the data provided by the participants that teacher job satisfaction is important as it contributes to the well-being of teachers and their learners, the overall school cohesion, and an enhanced status of the teaching profession. If followers are aware of the plan and it is explained to them clearly, the attitudes of the followers will change, they will support the principal, and academic performance will improve as well. The responses of the participants confirm that the success of the team is achieved through teacher job satisfaction. The researcher, therefore, concludes that, even though teachers appeared to be significantly involved in supporting the principal's role, they did not experience this as sufficient, they feel like teacher job satisfaction only occurs partially.

Experienced teachers shared the idea that the principal as a leader must show the right direction and motivate teachers, so that the school can perform well. The study concludes that the principal must provide direction to ensure successful principal leadership and improvement of school academic performance. Participants EXP2 emphasised that:

As a teacher you need the principal to be a leader, and then you need the principal to sometimes be a father figure by motivating teachers. By virtue of this position the principal is tasked with a huge responsibility of sometimes advising using humanity when talking to people. He must be approachable. He is holding a position of trust.

Participant EXP4 said:

We have many groups as you can see, now we are seating in our staff room, others are sitting there, in those rooms there are very big discussions about type of principal he is in the school.

Participant EXP5 raised a concern:

I do not want to say the principal is too lenient where the principal gives teachers and the HODs [heads of departments] a chance to contribute on improving the whole process of the school.

It is vital that principals, as leaders, show the right direction. One experienced teacher seemed to be worried about the way small groups of people in their corners of the organisation view the principal and discuss the principals' teacher motivation around the school. An analysis of teachers' responses reveals that, at this school, the principal relied too much on some teachers. It is concluded that, if direction from the principal is lacking, there is chaos at the school, which teachers enjoy, and blame the principal.

Participant EXP2 considered that teachers were the most important resource for improving school performance:

Teachers must make sure that they teach, and they advise in their departmental meetings, in the staff meetings. They should give inputs in the staff room, and they work as a team. What needs to happen, every teacher must do work, teachers must advise others, they must work as a team. They must be fair and tell each other that, you must be told that, you are not doing your work and you make us to lack behind.

In addition, participant EXP4 revealed that when teachers take part in decision-making, learner performance improves:

Being involved in all the decision-taking in learner performance, as well as extra classes and whatever programme that is going to help the learners to improve their performance. Many teachers are not supporting the principal and are not intending to support, because some of them say it is better to resign or exchange to other schools maybe the situation will be better, Principal X was better, they are mentioning previous principals and I think that will not help. We are looking at the current situation. Those principals are gone, we need to look at the current one.

The study found that participants agreed that, if teachers support the principal's role, school academic performance will improve, and if the principal can motivate teachers, the school will be effective and there will be success between principals' leadership and academic performance. Participant EXP3 mentioned that:

I must make sure that I dedicate myself to the objective that I am here for by going to attend classes that will be the core or the basic function of being here. Secondary, it might happen that some of the teachers are not actually capacitated to teach those subjects that they're doing, they are qualified to do the job, for example, in accounting. You will find that the teacher has not been teaching the subject. We must support one another.

Participant EXP5 added:

You know we have our own things; it is either you organise your own classes to improve the results, or you talk to other teachers to improve the results without involving the principal. Some principals want to always want to suggest, let us do this. As a teacher I can suggest, let's have morning classes, extra classes, and afternoon classes. To eradicate absenteeism and late coming, let us close gates.

The researcher interviewed participants to determine what determines success between the principal's leadership and academic performance, as perceived by teachers. Communication was identified as equally important to collaboration. The researcher wanted to establish whether there was communication between the principal and the teachers at that school. Participant EXP3 explained:

Okay, because I believe in the strategy of openness of all-inclusive management style, where everybody is allowed to say whatever he says, so if the principal can be able to use his communication tool by communicating his strategies to his deputy principal, communicating strategies as well that he wants to employ through to the HODs [heads of departments] and teachers where everybody can be able to communicate or discuss matters of concern and matters that can improve the school that will be able to assist the principal.

In agreeing with participant EXP3, participant EXP1 stated that:

He can be too friendly to people, if that can change a little, not that he should ignore people, but not too friendly., There are people who might think he befriends other people of which it is not a problem if they do not think there is unfair treatment towards others at the expense those who are being favoured.

Other people might think he does not cope. I think he is trying to communicate with everybody and make them at ease.

Teachers pointed out that, at schools where the principal had good communication with teachers and learners, school academic performance improved. Participant EXP2 was of the view that some teachers were not supportive of the principal, and the teachers were demoralised. Participant EXP2 pointed out:

Teachers think negatively of the principal and there is no one coming to them, they seem angry.

The data provided by the experienced teachers seem to agree with the view of Chauhan (2017), that communication is a two-way process, wherein the message in the form of ideas, thoughts, feelings, and opinions are transmitted between two or more persons with the intent of creating a shared understanding. The conclusion is that this builds a strong sense of good communication and a realisation of school improvement, as participant T4 said:

Teachers need to be listened and teachers [laughs] also need to be taken care of, for example, if you look inside our staff room, we do not have chairs, proper cupboards in our classes, heaters, we are getting cold, our windows are broken, if the renovations can be done on time our school will be better and the results will be better as well. Look at our school is old, old enough than me.

An analysis of the experienced teachers' responses reveals that, in this school, there was a lack of effective communication between the principal and the teachers. Participant EXP1 motivated this finding:

It differs from one teacher to the other. There are those who feel that he is too lenient and others they think sometimes he is too harsh, to me they both work for the school, because he can be supportive and able to discipline those delinquents. Both sides they work for the school because we can understand him.

Participant EXP2 emphasised:

Let me say, to me it is positive, because the principal, amongst other things, what he does, he encourages learners. He is always close to learners, though sometimes to teach us things, but now, all in all, learners become motivated, teachers sometimes some of them will be offended if I hear something from the learners if it is not said in the staff room, so, I believe there must be a protocol, first teachers, then learners. Some of us currently live near these learners' homes. When a parent hears something from a learner, he will ask you then I do not know, so it creates problems. I think the principal is doing a lot in terms of academic; he is trying, though I feel in extra-curricular he is lacking. We have a principal who does not support extra-curricular, who does not support sport.

Participant EXP3 revealed that:

The performance of the principal is outstanding, as I indicated before, he is going through seven leadership, and he is there himself. He becomes part of the implementation.

Participant EXP4 expressed that their principal was doing well:

He is trying his level best. He only needs our support and then we only need to break the small groups that we are having and work as a team.

Participant EXP5 gave their opinion:

He is very good, especially concerning discipline and, sure everybody knows how the school was.

Regarding this theme, the participants' responses show that the principal's leadership style should be respected. Their examples were as follows: Participant EXP1 raised points on how the positive motivation by the principal of teachers contributed to school academic performance:

Positive principals' teacher motivation contributes a lot, whether the school performs, progresses, or retrogresses. I think the way the principal conducts himself or herself it has a lot to do with the performance of the school in terms of ensuring the well-being of your staff members is considered. I think it is very key because a happy employee results in maximum production. If the teachers

do not like the style of the principal, they might sabotage and they need to share the same view.

Participant EXP2 added the following information:

He is holding a position of trust. So, but now as teachers we tend to not trust the principal sometimes it is the behaviour that we see from the principal. You can say something in confidence to the principal sometimes and the principal say it to somebody else or he has mentioned it generally in the staff room, some of those things they make people to become sceptical when it becomes to those things. The principal must be the person who is honest. Some people are different, something said in private must remain private, because we have talked in private and there is no reason to say it in the staff room.

4.3.2.2 *The principal's motivation of teachers*

Analysis of data gathered to answer research question 2 on how the principal's leadership style affects the school's academic performance, found that participants believed that the motivation of teachers by the principal improves school academic performance. The principal's motivation of teachers was identified as important as collaboration. The researcher wanted to establish whether the principal of the school motivated the teachers.

Ineffective communication can also transpire in other ways, such as through a disruption in the due course of communication (Alrabai, 2016). According to this study, disruptions during communication are a common occurrence and a leading cause of failure to convey ideas effectively.

Participant EXP1 pointed out:

Principals' teacher motivation contributes a lot to school academic performance, whether the school performs, progresses, or retrogresses.

Other teachers shared the same views. Experienced teachers shared the views that the principal as a leader must show the right direction and motivate the teachers so that the school can perform well. Participants EXP2 emphasised that:

As a teacher you need the principal to be a leader, and then you need the principal to sometimes be a father figure by motivating teachers. By virtue of this position the principal is tasked with a huge responsibility of sometimes advising, using humanity when talking to people. He must be approachable. He is holding a position of trust.

Participant EXP3 pointed out that:

In any organisation, there are small groups of people who are viewing the principal in a particular way.

Participant EXP4 said:

We have many groups as you can see, now we are seating in our staff room, others are sitting there, in those rooms there are very big discussions about type of principal he is in the school.

Participant EXP5 raised a concern:

I do not want to say the principal is too lenient where the principal gives teachers and the HODs [heads of departments] a chance to contribute on improving the whole process of the school.

From the above data, the responses from the three experienced teachers indicated that principals as leaders, must show the right direction. One experienced teacher seemed to be worried about how small groups of people in their corners in the organisations view the principal and discuss the principals' teacher motivation around the school. An analysis of teachers' responses revealed that in their school the principal relied too much to some teachers. Once there is no direction and there is chaos at school, teachers have to endure that and yet they blame the principal.

Similarly, participant EXP2 considered teachers as the most important resource for improving school performance:

Teachers must make sure that they teach, and they advise in their departmental meetings, in the staff meetings. They should give inputs in the staff room, and they work as a team. What needs to happen, every teacher must do work, teachers must advise others, they must work as a team. They

must be fair and tell each other that, you must be told that, you are not doing your work and you make us to lack behind.

In addition, participant EXP4 revealed that where teachers take part in decision-making, learner performance improves:

Being involved in all the decision-taking in learner performance, as well as extra classes and whatever program that is going to help the learners to improve their performance. Many teachers are not supporting the principal and are not intending to support, because some of them say it is better to resign or exchange to other schools maybe the situation will be better, Principal X was better, they are mentioning previous principals and I think that will not help; we are looking at the current situation those principals are gone we need to look at the current one.

The study indicated that participants agreed that if teachers support the principal's role, that can yield better school academic performance and if the principal's teacher motivation is positive, the school will be effective and there will be success between principals' leadership and school academic performance. Participant EXP3 mentioned that:

I must make sure that I dedicate myself to the objective that I am here for by going to attend classes that will be the core or the basic function of being here. Secondary it might happen that some of the teachers are not actually capacitated to teach those subjects that they're doing, they are qualified to do the job for example in accounting. You will find that the teacher has not been teaching the subject. We must support one another.

Participant EXP5 added:

You know we have our own things; it is either you organise your own classes to improve the results, or you talk to other teachers to improve the results without involving the principal. Some principals want to always want to suggest. Let us do this. As a teacher I can suggest, let's have morning classes, extra classes, and afternoon classes. To eradicate absenteeism and late coming, let us close gates.

The researcher further interviewed the participants about what determines success between principals' leadership and school academic performance as perceived by teachers. Communication was identified as equally important to collaboration. The researcher wanted to establish whether there was communication between the principal and the teachers in a particular school. Participant EXP3 responded:

Okay, because I believe in the strategy of openness of all-inclusive management style, where everybody is allowed to say whatever he says, so if the principal can be able to use his communication tool by communicating his strategies to his deputy principal, communicating strategies as well that he wants to employ through to the HODs [heads of departments] and teachers where everybody can be able to communicate or discuss matters of concern and matters that can improve the school that will be able to assist the principal.

4.3.3 Research question 3: How do teachers view the principal's role as an instructional leader in improving academic performances in the selected school?

4.3.3.1 *Role played by teachers.*

The results of the study and literature reviewed, indicate that participants play an important role in carrying out instructions given by the principal at the school. Teachers use what they know about the principal's instructional leadership role to improve school academic performance. According to Adams (1970), the role of a teacher relates to what individuals do or the expectations of others (pupils/learners/learners, colleagues, school leaders, etc.). The role of the teacher is never uniquely defined, and the definition is influenced by many factors.

Thus, teachers are seen as good subject experts with a thorough knowledge base in their subject area (Poom-Valickis, Oder & Lepik, 2012). In this study, participants indicated that teachers implement what is required by the principal, to support the principal to be an effective leader, and they share important information to improve the school's academic performance. Therefore, the trait of a good teacher includes generating a deep understanding, engaging in critical thinking, and promoting teamwork. The researcher concludes that, even though teachers were most significantly involved in supporting the principal's role, yet they did not feel this was sufficient, and they were also partially

involved in planning, as became evident in the interviews. Once a plan is adopted by a leader and the followers, it can, theoretically, mediate the effectiveness of the leadership role of the principal by influencing the followers' perceptions of the quality of their relationship with the principal. Teachers participated in the principal's support team and used their knowledge of the principal's instructional leadership responsibilities to boost academic achievement at the school. The review of the literature and the information provided by the participants make it clear that teachers helped the principal raise the academic performance at the school.

Furthermore, the data collected indicated that there is a need for teachers to play their role, as well as work together with the principal to improve the school's academic performance. In this case, teachers supported the principal and made use of what they knew about the principal's instructional leadership role to improve school academic performance, by assisting where they could. The chapter showed that the most significant role teachers play in supporting the principal's instructional leadership role, is carrying out instructions issued by the principal and implementing what is required by the principal. Participants mentioned that sharing important information improves the school's academic performance. Teachers also work to attain the school goals by assisting where they can. In this regard, it is evident that teachers support the principal in improving school academic performance.

4.3.3.2 Importance of the principal's instructional leadership

The results of the study and literature reviewed, indicates that principals' instructional leadership role plays a significant role in improving school academic performance. The *Action Plan to 2019* of the South African Department of Basic Education (2015b) envisages that school principals will ensure that teaching in schools takes place as expected and in accordance with the national curriculum. Hompashe (2018) found that, in many schools in the Eastern Cape, the dysfunctional leadership by principals may be an important reason for poor academic performance. Principals are expected to have insight into their role as leaders.

The findings of this study are limited, as they are based on teachers' views of their principal's behaviour as it affected the improvement of school academic performance. Teachers reported only their theoretical views on the principal's behaviour, and not their

actual behaviour at school. The data collected, thus, indicate that participants see the principal's instructional leadership as important. The principal's instructional leadership role needs the support of teachers. The principal plays a vital role, and the school needs the support more than anything. The study found that participants believed that the principal's instructional leadership gives teachers and learners clear direction on how to achieve academic improvement. Teachers, learners, and parents all depend on the principal to know and understand what must be done.

4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter aimed to present findings of the study which focused on the three research objectives developed for this study. The findings show on the biographical information that more females (3) participated than male (2). The results highlighted that most participated have B. Ed qualifications. Three teachers offer Mathematics, two offer Geography out of five participants. All five participants have 6-10 years of experience.

The researcher concluded that teachers' perceptions of the role played by the principal's leadership in a particular high school in the Motheo District in the Free State are informed by the way the principal leads, or the kind of leadership the principal uses. The in-depth discussion of participants' responses to questions addressed the research questions. Participants' responses shed light on the principal's leadership style, as well as the leadership style preferred by teachers.

From the theme communication under contrast number one which is the effectiveness of principal's leadership in improving academic performance in the selected school. All statements had great response especially the statements saying, "Principal's positive way of communicating with teachers and learners motivates us". It is evident from the responses of the participants that good communication between the principal and teachers contributed to developing a good team spirit at the school. This is how effective the principal's leadership is in improving academic performance in the selected school according to the participants. A democratic leadership style is preferred by teachers; this style encourages two-way communication and provides teachers with the freedom to voice their views, which are heard by the principal. Teachers are not in favour of a Laissez-faire leadership style, under which everyone is free to do what they want. Teachers, as providers of education to learners, play a significant role in the improvement

of learner performance and ensuring that school academic performance improves. Strategies, the way the principal communicated with teachers, and proper planning were discussed in relation to its contribution to the smooth running of the school. The principal should communicate well with teachers, and that can be done through proper planning. It is through mutual support that the school's academic improvement can be improved.

Moreover, to sustain effective principal leadership, it is important for teachers to support the principal. From the researcher's investigation, the principal makes a significant contribution to the running of the school and to ensuring that the schools' academic performance is a success. The study concludes that, to change to positive teachers' perception, there should be effective communication between the principal and the teachers. Communication will ensure effective principal leadership and improvement of academic performance.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is presented in three sections. The study is summarized in the first section, which is followed by conclusions and recommendations emanating from the research findings that were analysed and interpreted in Chapter 4. The summary of the research findings is based on the research questions (Section 1.4) and recommendations. Next is the findings that emerged from the data provided by interviewed participants, in line with the themes categorised in Sections 4.2 and 4.3. The researcher investigated how teachers perceived the leadership of the principal in relation to the academic performance of the school.

5.2 Summary

The primary objective of this study was to explore and investigate the effectiveness of principal's leadership in improving academic performance in a selected high school. A special focus was on assessing how principal leadership style affects academic performance as perceived by teachers. The section also determines and explore teachers' opinions on principals' instructional leadership role in improving academic performance in the selected school. This section draws attention to the research findings which emerged from the study about the principal's leadership in improving academic performance in a selected high school.

From the literature study, it is transspecies that effective principal's leadership qualities can impact learner's performance in addition to affecting teachers' work satisfaction and views (Kars & Inandi, 2018). In turn, learner achievement is linked to a positive school climate, school culture and effective principal leadership (Allen 2015). It is also distinct from the literature studied, however, that the observation is that some principals hardly go to classrooms to check if teachers are attending their lessons Dongo (2016).

Summary of findings of the research data are guided by the following main research question:

What do teachers think about the principal's leadership role in terms of improvement of academic performance in the selected school?

5.2.1 Research question 1: How do teachers view the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in improving academic performance in the selected school?

The summary of findings is presented in the following themes that are emerged in this study.

5.2.1.1 *Communication*

Research reveals that good and positive communication between the principal and teachers are one of the most important strategies a principal can use in working with teachers to ensure the effectiveness of a principal's leadership in improving academic performance. Arlestig (2008) found that school improvements become effective in the presence of communication between the principal and teachers. The study data also show that two-way communication between the school principal, their team, and between the teachers in general, is of the utmost importance. As far as teachers are concerned, academic improvements become effective in the presence communication between the principal and teachers. For instance, teachers could assist the school principal with his duties in his absence. The common view of a successful school includes a visible principal, who communicates frequently about the school's pedagogical tasks, teaching, and learning. The study found that the principal not only communicates with teachers to attend classes, but he also attends them and that motivates teachers, as he leads by example. Therefore, effective communication between the principal and teachers has a positive impact on school academic performance.

To keep orderly environment, schools cannot succeed without effective communication, and effective communication is the best strategy principals can use in working with teachers to improve academic performance. The findings show that good communication

between the principal and teachers can contribute to a good team spirit within the school that can have a positive influence towards improvement of academic performance.

5.2.1.2 *Principal support*

Literature says principal can play important role in supporting teachers by promoting teacher leadership by delegating and empowering teachers in ways, (Sebastian 2016). Teachers mentioned several factors that can help to improve academic performance, such as flexibility on the side of the principal, and using reasonable time and timeframes for what must be implemented. Moreover, management activities in the form of planning and control must be implemented to enhance academic performance. *Generally*, the results indicate that there are some principals who still do not always exert genuine efforts to provide support to teachers to improve teaching and learning.

5.2.2 Research question 2: What impact does the principal's leadership style have on the academic performance in the selected school?

5.2.2.1 *Teachers' job satisfaction*

Bascia & Rottman (2011) restore the importance of working conditions in schools not only for teacher motivation, effectiveness, and job satisfaction but also for learner opportunity to learn. In this study, evidence shows that, teachers' job satisfaction is dependent on the principal's leadership style that is applied. If the principal involves teachers in the school's decision-making processes, an effective working ambience is created for the teachers, and pleasant relationships are established among teachers. The aim of job satisfaction is to determine the mission, and if teacher job satisfaction is high, there will be improvement in academic performance. In most cases, it is not only the self-satisfaction; the happiness process evolves from the current state or condition of the people in a team to a future state the leader desired, that can be accomplished through job satisfaction. If teachers have high job satisfaction at schools, the attitudes of learners will also change, and the school will achieve its goals. Therefore, academic performance will improve through the application of an effective principal leadership style. The study indicates that the success of a school team requires successful accomplishment through job satisfaction. Failure to motivate teachers to commit themselves to their work will not improve the results of the school. It is crucial for teachers to have job satisfaction if the

school is to be successful; everyone involved must be willing to play their role, and this will lead to positive change. Teachers should be involved in a variety of committees, including the school-based support team.

In addition to above teacher involvement, teachers were able to make connections between proper planning done by the principal and the important role played by teachers in planning. Findings show that it is important for the principal to ensure that teachers are part of planning that can bring improvement to academic results.

5.2.2.2 *The principal's motivation of teachers*

Evidence shows that the principal's motivation of teachers affects school academic performance. Experienced teachers shared the view that the principal as a leader must show the right direction and motivate the teachers, so that the school can perform well. However, one experienced teacher seemed to be concerned about small groups of people in their corners within the organisation, who view and discuss the principal's failure to motivate the teachers at the school. The view was that the principal relied too much on some teachers. Without direction, there is chaos at school; teachers must endure that, and yet they blame the principal. The empirical findings of the study indicate that participants agreed that, if the principal motivates teachers, teachers will support the principal's role, and that can yield better school academic performance.

5.2.3 Research question 3: How do teachers view the principal's role as an instructional leader in improving academic performances in the selected school?

In answering research question 3, the following themes emerged from the responses provided by the participants:

5.2.3.1 *Instructional management*

The study found that instructional management is the best tool for positively influencing the improvement of school academic performance. School principals have the obligation to set goals and make sure that they are achieved; doing so encourages subject teachers to carry out instructions given by the principal and execute their teaching roles.

Participants reported that they play a considerable role in supporting the principal's leadership role to improve school academic performance, by planning the teaching and

learning programme and assessing learners. When learners are actively involved in their work, they tend to behave well. Teachers carry out instructions related to teaching and learning that are issued by the principal and implement what is required by the principal. This is the most significant role teachers play in supporting the principal's instructional leadership role.

5.2.3.2 *Teacher evaluation by principal*

Evidence shows that effective and regular teacher evaluation by the principal has a significant influence on improving teaching and learning in classrooms. Teachers feel better when the principal recognises their strengths and weaknesses regarding instructional methods and classroom management; this feedback provides teachers with an early opportunity to adjust. Teacher evaluation encourages and motivates educators to participate fully in supporting the academic programme. Participants believe that evaluation by the principal gives teachers a clear direction to take to achieve academic improvement. If the principal provides feedback to educators as soon as possible, it creates opportunities for growth-conduct and giving a debriefing, because the teacher will have an action plan.

5.2.3.3 *Principal's school guidance*

It is evident that a principal is responsible for the overall smooth functioning of the school achievement of academic performance. An effective school principal gives guidance to teachers and is undoubtedly the key to a successful school academic performance. Teachers reported that lack of communication is a serious factor that hinders the principal's instructional leadership. As the head of the school, the principal has the responsibility to provide the staff with adequate guidance. Guidance involves individual counselling, personal help in solving problems and a variety of services that have the common objective of helping teachers understand their learners.

5.2.3.4 *Lack of resources*

Evidence suggests that the principal's ability to lead instruction at the school is seriously hampered by a lack of resources. Participants expressed that the principal did not provide extra resource material that could assist with teaching and learning at the school.

Participants reported that there was a lack of support from the Department of Education. Shortages in financial resources hindered the principal's instructional leadership role and made teachers less cooperative. The principal rarely provided professional development training for teachers.

5.2.3.5 *Lack of commitment*

It is evident that a lack of commitment by teachers hindered the principal's instructional leadership. Lack of commitment from educators, and their failure to present lessons that are required, and avoidance of teamwork are challenges that principals face while practicing instructional leadership. Teachers sometimes show resistance to change.

5.2.3.6 *Creating a positive culture of teaching and learning.*

The evidence suggests that a principal should reach all the levels of ability of the teachers. The principal should coordinate and collaborate with all the stakeholders and implement policies and plans. In improving school academic performance, a set of rules and expectations should be laid down and keep a positive mind-set for effective instructional leadership by principals. Lastly, participants declared that principals should work together with teachers, regardless of the age and gender of the teachers.

5.3 Conclusions

In evaluating and summarising teachers' perceptions of the roles played by the principal's leadership regarding improvement of the academic performance of a high school in Motheo District, in Bloemfontein, the following conclusions are drawn from the study, based on the research questions. The relative degree of importance of effective communication between the principal and teachers makes it one of the most important strategies a principal could use to ensure the effectiveness of their leadership role. This was determined from the responses of teachers to questions asked to respond to research question 1. This strategy will help the principal to establish good relationships with teachers, and teachers will assist the principal with duties in the principal's absence. Therefore, effective, and positive communication between principal and teachers should be maintained at schools. Thus, the principal can improve school academic performance through effective communication with teachers.

The study concludes, in response of research question 1, that the support principals provide to teachers ensures the effectiveness of the principal's leadership role and improves the school academic performance. Management activities in the form of planning and control must be implemented to enhance school academic performance. When principals support teachers, it helps teachers to improve their motivation, and to have trust in and respect for their principal. Thus, the principal needs to be flexible, and support teachers by applying reasonable times and timeframes for what must be implemented. At the school in this study, the perception was that the principal was not making genuine efforts to provide support to teachers to improve teaching and learning.

The respondents' tendency to evaluate how the principal's leadership style affects the school's academic performance was determined in response to research question 2. Teachers' job satisfaction was identified as a process that determines the mission of the school. Notably, however, the teachers' job satisfaction improves school academic performance, as the involvement of teachers by the principal in the school's decision-making processes creates an effective working ambience for the teachers and establishes a pleasant relationship among teachers themselves. Teachers' job satisfaction is dependent on the principal's leadership style. In most cases, it is not only the self-satisfaction; the happiness process evolves from the current state or condition of the people in a team to a future state the leader desired, that can be accomplished through job satisfaction. This, according to teachers, also stimulates a positive attitude towards learners, and the school can achieve its goals. Therefore, school academic performance improves through the principal applying an effective leadership style. The success of the school team is represented by the successful accomplishment through job satisfaction. Failing to motivate teachers to commit themselves to their work will have a detrimental effect on the ultimate results of the school. Teachers having job satisfaction is crucial for the success of the school. If everyone is willing to fulfil their own role, positive change is possible. Teachers should be involved in a variety of committees, including the school-based support team. Thus, participants were able to make connections between proper planning done by the principal and the important part taken by teachers in planning. Therefore, to improve school academic results, it is important for the principal to make sure that teachers take part in planning.

The study concludes that teachers are worried about small groups of people in their corners within the organisation, who observe and discuss the principal's failure to motivate teachers at the school. It is believed that failing to motivate teachers will affect the school's academic performance. In addition, experienced teachers believe that the principal, as a leader, must show the right direction and motivate teachers, so that the school can perform well and avoid relying too much on teachers. Failure to motivate teachers will create chaos at school; teachers will enjoy that and yet blame the principal. If the principal can motivate teachers, it will contribute to better school academic performance.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this study in relation to research question 3, on how teachers perceive the principal's instructional leadership role, is that instructional management is the best tool for influencing school academic performance positively. Given that school principals have the obligation to set goals and ensure that they are achieved, subject teachers must carry out instructions given by the principal and execute their teaching roles. Teachers reported that they play a major role in supporting the principal's leadership role to improve school academic performance, by planning teaching and the learning programme, and assessing learners. When learners are actively involved in their work, they tend to behave well. Finally, teachers carry out instructions issued by the principal in relation to teaching and learning and implement what is required by the principal. This is the most significant role teachers play in supporting the principal's instructional leadership role.

The study concludes that, at the school involved in the study, there was effective and regular teacher evaluation by the principal, and it had a significant influence on improving teaching and learning in classrooms. Teachers felt better when the principal recognised their strengths and weaknesses in instructional methods and classroom management and provided the teacher with early opportunities to adjust their approaches. Teacher evaluation encourages and motivates educators to participate fully in supporting the academic programme. In this study, teachers seemed to believe that evaluation by the principal gave them clear direction to take to achieve academic improvement. When the principal provides timely feedback to educators, it creates opportunities for growth-conduct and providing a debriefing, because the teacher will have an action plan.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that the principal was involved in the overall achievement of school academic performance. Teachers believed that effective guidance of teachers by the school principal is undoubtedly key to successful school academic performance. Teachers also believed that the principal was responsible for the overall smooth functioning of school academic performance and lack of communication is a serious factor that hinders the principal's instructional leadership. As the head of the school, the principal has the responsibility to provide staff with adequate guidance. This, according to teachers, means the principal must conduct individual counselling, provide personal help to solve problems, and provide a variety of other services, with the common objective of helping teachers to understand their learners.

The study concludes that there was lack of resources around the school, and this is a major obstacle that hinders a principal's instructional leadership. Participants expressed that the principal did not provide extra resource material that could assist with teaching and learning at the school, and there was lack of support from the Department of Education. Furthermore, insufficient financial resources were obstacles that hindered the principal's instructional leadership role. Teachers became less cooperative, as the principal rarely provided professional development training.

The study concludes that educators lacked commitment, and that hindered the principal's instructional leadership. Some educators failed to attend classes; as a result, there was a lack of teamwork. Furthermore, teachers were sometimes resistant to change. All these are challenges were encountered by the principal while practicing instructional leadership.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that, although the principal coordinated and collaborated with all the stakeholders and implemented policies and plans, the principal should reach all the levels of ability of the teachers. In addition, to improve the school's academic performance, a set of rules and expectations should be laid down and keep a positive mind-set for effective instructional leadership by the principal. Lastly, participants declared that principals should work together with teachers.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered in relation to the findings of the current study. These recommendations are intended to close the gaps that were identified and are based on findings that emerged from the endeavour to answer the research questions.

5.4.1 Communication

Looking at the responses given, the study found that the relative degree of importance of effective communication between the principal and teachers is of utmost important a principal could use to ensure the effectiveness of the principal's leadership role, therefore, the researcher would like to recommend that it is of paramount importance for the principal to maintain effective communication between the principal and the teachers at the school, to ensure that effective principal leadership as a priority.

5.4.2 Principal support

The study found that teachers perceived the principal as not making a genuine effort to provide support to teachers in improving teaching and learning. Therefore, the researcher recommends that the principal should provide support for teachers, which would help teachers to be motivated, and develop trust in and respect for the principal. Thus, the principal needs to be flexible, and set reasonable times and timeframes for what must be implemented by the teachers.

5.4.3 The principal's motivation of teachers

Under this theme, the study found that teachers were worried about small groups of people in their corners in the organisation that observed and discussed the principal's failure to motivate the teachers at the school. Most participants believed that low motivation affected school academic performance, hence, a lack of teacher motivation will create chaos at the school, and teachers will have to endure that, yet blame the principal. The researcher recommends that sessions of the principal motivating teachers should take place. If the principal motivates teachers, school academic performance will improve.

5.4.4 Instructional management

The study found that teachers believed that instructional management is the best tool for positively influencing the improvement of school academic performance. The school principal has an obligation to set goals and make sure that the goals are achieved that enables subject teachers to ensure that teachers carry out instructions given by the principal and execute their teaching roles. Finally, teachers carry out instructions issued by the principal in relation to teaching and learning and implement what is required by the principal. Based on instructional management, the researcher recommends that the teachers at the school should execute their teaching roles and carry instructions issued by the principal, as this is the most significant role teachers play in supporting the principal's instructional leadership role.

5.5 Recommendations for further studies

This study focused on principal's leadership in improving academic performance in a selected Bloemfontein high school in the Motheo District. Although gathered information provided answers to research questions. Based on the study limitations, the researcher suggests further research. More information can be obtained if such study is conducted on larger scale and focus be on the behaviour of teachers at the schools of Motheo District in the Free State.

5.6 Study conclusion

The researcher set out to explore teachers' perception of principal's leadership in improving academic performance in a selected Bloemfontein high school in the Motheo District. From the empirical findings of this study, the researcher conclude that the principal can improve academic performance through effective communication with teachers. The derived information from the literature study, the interviews that were conducted, analysis indicate that teachers should work together and assist the school principal with the principal's duties when there is a need. The study indicated that good communication between the principals and teachers contributes to a good team spirit at the school. Thus, the chapter revealed the importance of effective communication between the principal and teachers is one of the most important strategies a principal can

use to ensure the effectiveness of principal's leadership role, therefore, the study recommends that the principal should ensure effective communication between the principal and the teachers at the school to ensure effective principal leadership.

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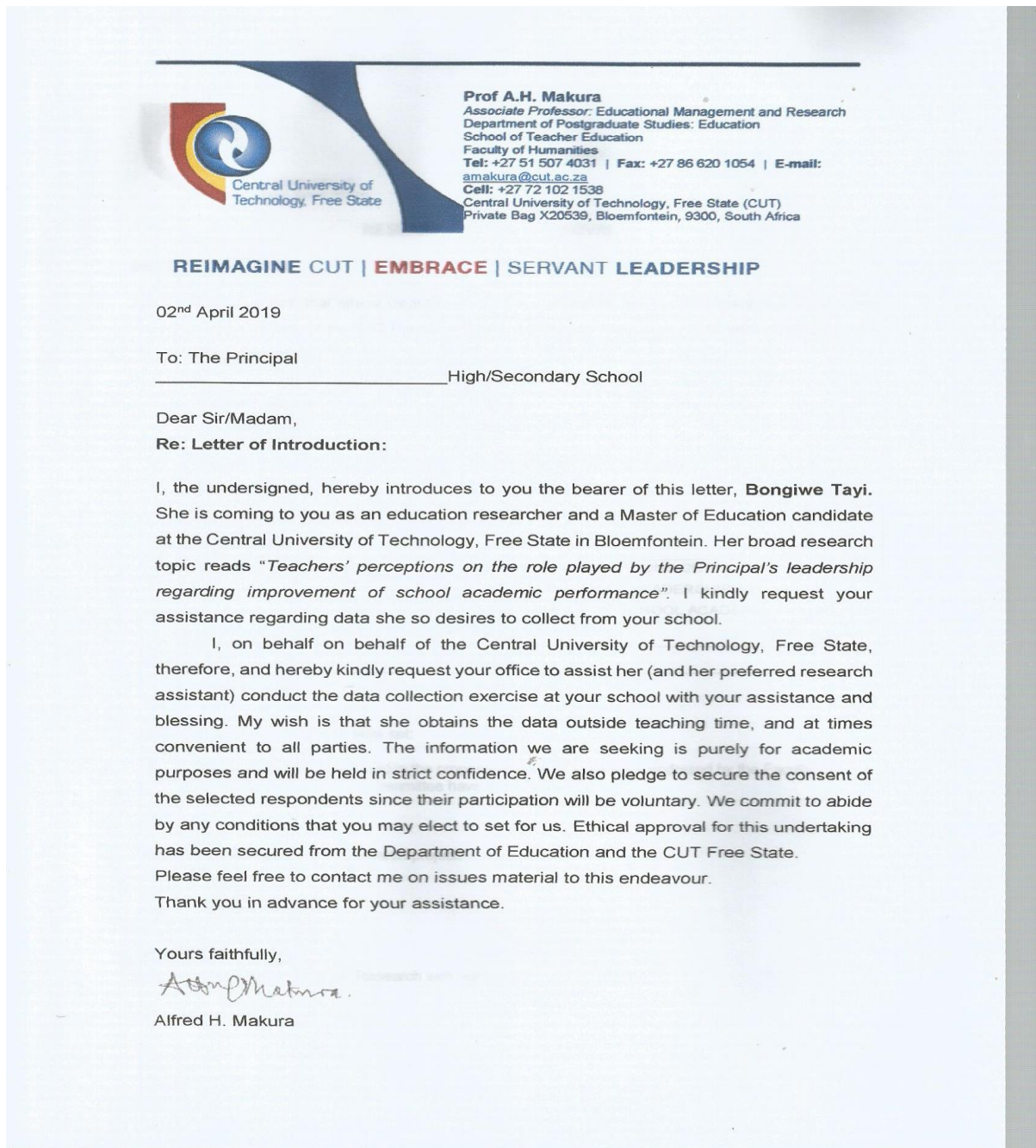
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Letter from the supervisor



Appendix B

Letter to the principal requesting permission to conduct research

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



Central University of Technology Free State

Faculty of Humanities

1 Park Road

BLOEMFONTEIN

9300

29 April 2019

The School Principal

Ikaelelo Secondary School

3051 Moipolai Street

Rockland

BLOEMFONTEIN

9309

Dear Sir

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I humbly request permission to conduct research at your school. I am a registered Master of Education (M.Ed. degree) student in the Department of Post graduate Studies: Education at Central University of Technology, Free State. The title of my research is: **"Teachers' perceptions on the role played by principal's leadership regarding improvement of school academic performance"**. This is a case study of your school.

I wish to conduct interviews with your 5 experienced teachers who have taught at least five years and more. I would also like to have focus group interviews with 5 SMT members and I also wish to issue questionnaire to 5 subject teachers. The names of the participants will not appear in any publication resulting from this study.

Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

Yours faithful



Bongiwe Tayi (051-4352485/0732478656)

Appendix C

Consent letter for participants



Central University of Technology Free State
Faculty of Humanities

1 Park Road

BLOEMFONTEIN

9300

29 April 2019

Dear Teacher

I am currently enrolled as a part-time student at Central University of Technology, Free State. I am a Master of Education (M. Ed.) student in the Department of Post graduate studies: Education. The topic of my research is: **"Teachers' perceptions on the role played by principal's leadership regarding improvement of school academic performance"**. This is a case study of your school. I wish to ask you to participate in my research.

One session will last approximately 25 minutes. We are interested in getting better understanding of the teachers' perceptions on the role played by principal's leadership regarding improvement of school academic performance. This information is important because it will help us to ensure support to principals for better performance throughout schools. I assure you that your name will not in any way be associated with the research findings. The information will only be identified only through code numbers. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time.

Thank you very much for your time and I appreciate your interest and cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Bongiwe Tayi

Researcher (073 2478656/051 4352485)

Participant's signature

Date

Appendix D

Questionnaire for experienced teachers

The title of my work is: Teachers' perceptions on the role played by principals' leadership regarding improvement of school academic performance. This study assessed the implications of principal's leadership role in achieving school academic performance as perceived by teachers.

1. How can the deputy principals, HOD's and teachers support the role played by principal leadership to improve learner performance?
2. What are the contributing factors of teachers' perceptions on principal's role in enhancing learner performance?
3. What your perceptions are with regards the role played by principal's leadership in enhancing learner performance at school?
4. In your opinion how does your principal leadership role affect the school academic performance as perceived by teachers?
5. How do you normally ensure effective principal leadership role in achieving school academic performance?
6. What training be needed for the principal to ensure effective leadership role.
7. How can the application of principal leadership role be a success?

Appendix E

Questionnaire for subject teachers

The aim of this questionnaire is to help us to find out your views on the role played by principal's leadership regarding improvement of school academic performance. Kindly respond to the questions below as honestly as possible. There is no right or wrong answer. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

SECTION A: Biographical Information

Please, mark your choice with (X) in the relevant field representing appropriate response, select only one option unless otherwise indicated.

1. Your age range (Years):

20 - 29	1
30 - 39	2
40 - 49	3
50 +	4

2. What is your gender?

Male	1
Female	2

3. What are your highest qualifications?

Bachelor of Education	1
Honours Degree	2

Master of Education	3
Other (Specify):	4

4. Your years of experience as a teacher:

Less than 5 years	1
6 – 10 years	2
11 – 15 years	3
16 – 20 years	4
Other (Specify)	

5. Your subject/s offering

Computer Applications Technology	1
English	2
Geography	3
Mathematics	4
Business Economics	5

Other	(Specify)	6
.....		

SECTION B: Views on Principal's Instructional Leadership

1. THE PRINCIPAL'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE						
HOW POSITIVE YOU ARE AS A TEACHER IN YOUR SCHOOL? Please answer each item by ticking off the "X" for relevant option, use the following five-point scale. 1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree						
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I am positive towards principal's instructional leadership role in your school.					
2.	I make use of what they know about principal's instructional leadership role in a positive way.					
3.	I work co-operatively with the principal.					
5.	I am very supportive towards principal's instructional leadership role.					
6.	I attend classes regularly to improve learner performance.					

2. IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

HOW OFTEN DOES IT HAPPEN AROUND YOUR SCHOOL TO ENSURE
IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNER PERFORMANCE?

Please answer each item by ticking off the "X" for relevant option, use the following five-point scale.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Undecided
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The principal collaborate with teachers to establish clear teachers' perceptions on principal leadership role.					
2.	The principal develops instructional goals for the school academic improvement.					
3.	The principal's instructional leadership ensures regular basis to discuss how to do your job better.					
4.	My principal often visits classes to support teachers.					
5.	My principal mainly focuses on learner achievement for improvement of school academic performance.					
6.	My principal ensures that teachers to their classes daily.					

7.	My principal involves teachers in decision making for better running of the school					
10.	My principal provides me with all the necessary instructional resources.					

SECTION C: Free Response question

1.	What role do you play as a teacher supporting the principal to be an effective leader?

2.	In your experience do you see yourself supporting the principal in improving school academic performance?

3.	Why is the principal's instructional leadership important, according to you?

4.	What factors would you see as hindering the principal's instructional leadership role?

5.	How are these factors that hinder the principal's instructional leadership addressed?

6.	Any other comments or issues you may want to add?

Thank you for your time and your honest response to the questions.

Bongiwe Tayi (Master student)

Questionnaire for subject teachers

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SUBJECT TEACHERS

The aim of this questionnaire is to help us to find out your views on the role played by principal's leadership regarding improvement of school academic performance. Kindly respond to the questions below as honestly as possible. There is no right or wrong answer. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

SECTION A: Biographical Information

Please, mark your choice with (X) in the relevant field representing appropriate response, select only one option unless otherwise indicated.

1. Your age range (Years):

20 - 29	1
30 - 39	2
40 - 49	3
50 +	4

2. What is your gender?

Male	1
Female	2

3. What are your highest qualifications?

Bachelor of Education	1
Honours Degree	2
Master of Education	3

Other (Specify):	4
---------------------------	---

9. Your years of experience as a teacher:

Less than 5 years	1
6 – 10 years	2
11 – 15 years	3
16 – 20 years	4
Other (Specify)	

10. Your subject/s offering

Computer Applications Technology	1
English	2
Geography	3
Mathematics	4
Business Economics	5
Other (Specify)	6

SECTION B: Views on Principal's Instructional Leadership

3. THE PRINCIPAL'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE
HOW POSITIVE YOU ARE AS A TEACHER IN YOUR SCHOOL?

Please answer each item by ticking off the "X" for relevant option, use the following five-point scale.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Undecided
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I am positive towards principal's instructional leadership role in your school.					
2.	I make use of what they know about principal's instructional leadership role in a positive way.					
3.	I work co-operatively with the principal.					
4.	I am very supportive towards principal's instructional leadership role.					
5.	I attend classes regularly to improve learner performance.					

2. IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

How often does it happen around your school to ensure improvement of learner performance?

Please answer each item by ticking off the "X" for relevant option, use the following five-point scale.

1. Strongly agree

2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree						
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The principal collaborate with teachers to establish clear teachers' perceptions on principal leadership role.					
2.	The principal develops instructional goals for the school academic improvement.					
3.	The principal's instructional leadership ensures regular basis to discuss how to do your job better.					
4.	My principal often visits classes to support teachers.					
5.	My principal mainly focuses on learner achievement for improvement of school academic performance.					
6.	My principal ensures that teachers to their classes daily.					
7.	My principal involves teachers in decision making for better running of the school					
10.	My principal provides me with all the necessary instructional resources.					

SECTION C: Free Response question

1.	What role do you play as a teacher supporting the principal to be an effective leader?

2.	In your experience do you see yourself supporting the principal in improving school academic performance?

3.	Why is the principal's instructional leadership important, according to you?

4.	What factors would you see as hindering the principal's instructional leadership role?

5.	How are these factors that hinder the principal's instructional leadership addressed?

6.	Any other comments or issues you may want to add?

Thank you for your time and your honest response to the questions.

Bongiwe Tayi (Master student)

Questionnaire F

Focus group interview questions for SMT

1. What are your perceptions regarding the role played by principal's leadership in enhancing learner performance?
2. What strategies are utilized by your principal in working with school teachers to enhance learner performance?
3. What factors would principals keep in mind when applying these strategies to work with teachers in improving academic performance?
4. How does the principal leadership role affect the school academic performance?
5. How are teachers assisting their school principal in performing his/her instructional leadership role?

Questionnaire G

Letter requesting permission from the Department of Education to conduct research



Central University of Technology Free State

Faculty of Humanities

1 Park Road

BLOEMFONTEIN

9300

29 April 2019

Senior Education Officer

Free State Department of Education

Private Bag X20565

BLOEMFONTEIN

9300

Dear Madam

Re: Request to conduct research at Ikaelelo Secondary School

I am a registered Master of Education, a part-time student in the Department of Post graduate Studies at Central University of Technology, Free State. I am under the supervision of Prof AH Makura. The title of my research is: **“Teachers’ perceptions on**

the role played by principal's leadership regarding improvement of school academic performance". This is a case study of Ikaelelo High School in the Motheo district.

I humbly request permission to conduct research at Ikaelelo High School. I promise to adhere to the ethical protocol.

Yours faithfully



Bongiwetayi

The Researcher

E-mail address: bongiwetayi1@gmail.com

Contact numbers: 073 2478 656/051-4352485

Appendix H

Ethical clearance certificate



Central University of
Technology, Free State

ETHICAL CLEARANCE: CUT

RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

Date: 7 February 2019

1.1.1 This is to confirm that ethical clearance has been provided by the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee in view of the CUT Research Ethics and Integrity Framework, 2016 with reference number **[D.FRC 24/18/02]**.

Applicant's Name	Tayi, B
Student number	9738460
Supervisor Name for Student Project (where applicable)	Main supervisor: Prof AH Makura Co-supervisor: Dr TL Matlho
Level of Qualification for Student Project (where applicable)	M.Ed
Title of research project	TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP REGARDING IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The following special conditions were set:

☒ Ethical measures as outlined in the proposal and which have been endorsed by the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee have to be adhered to.

We wish you success with your research project.

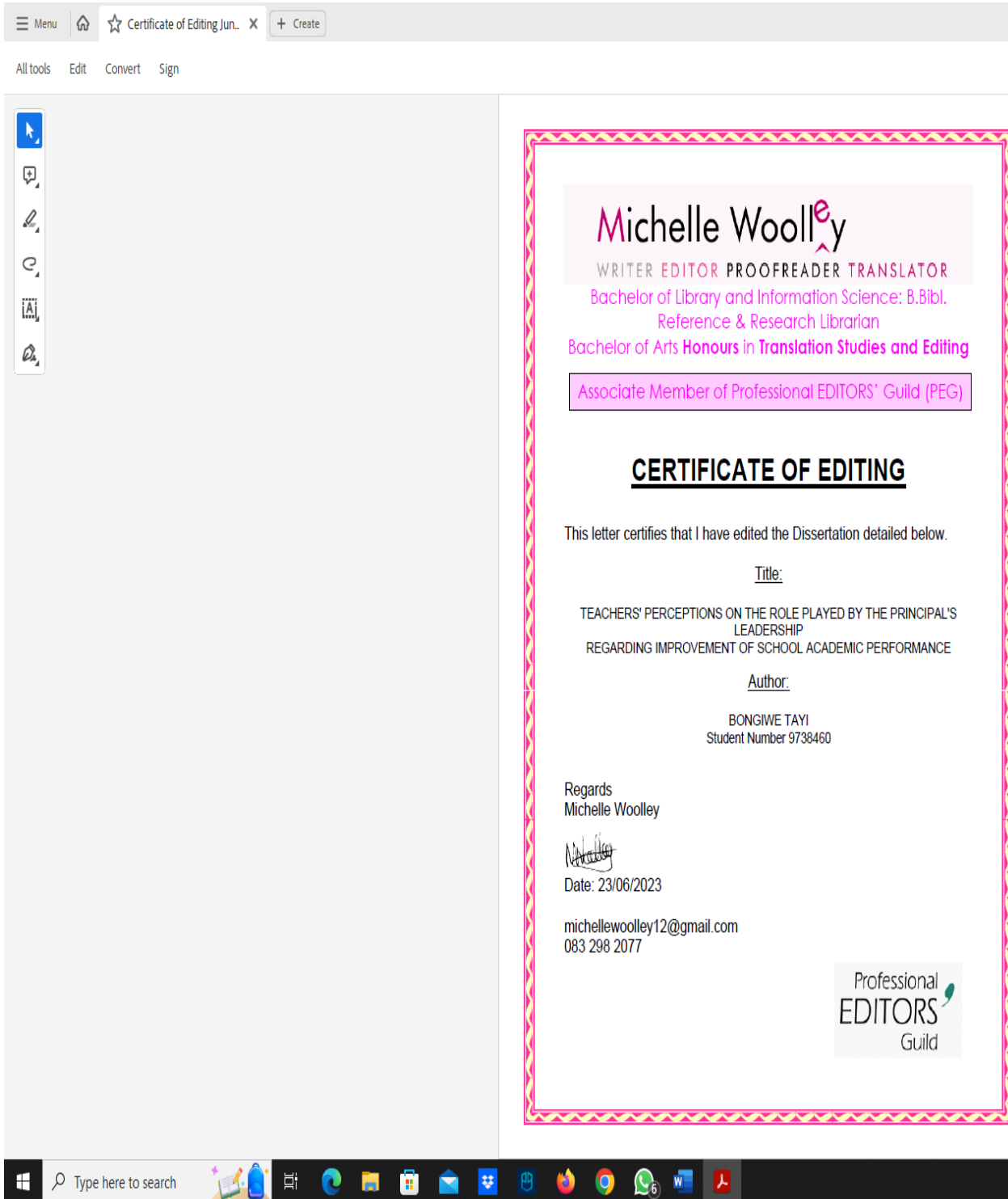
Regards



Prof JW Badenhorst
(Ethics committee representative: Research with humans)

Appendix I

Language Editor's certificate



Menu Certificate of Editing Jun... Create

All tools Edit Convert Sign

Michelle Woolley
WRITER EDITOR PROOFREADER TRANSLATOR
Bachelor of Library and Information Science: B.Bibl.
Reference & Research Librarian
Bachelor of Arts Honours in Translation Studies and Editing
Associate Member of Professional EDITORS' Guild (PEG)

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

This letter certifies that I have edited the Dissertation detailed below.

Title:
TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE PRINCIPAL'S
LEADERSHIP
REGARDING IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Author:
BONGIWE TAYI
Student Number 9738460

Regards
Michelle Woolley


Date: 23/06/2023

michellewoolley12@gmail.com
083 298 2077

Professional
EDITORS'
Guild

Appendix J

Plagiarism certificate

Perceptions On The Role Played by a Principal's Leadership

ORIGINALITY REPORT

7 %	8 %	3 %	1 %
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

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2	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	2 %
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