THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN BRINGING ABOUT IMPROVED LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN MKHANYAKUDE

By

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DECLARATION

I, Goodness Nozipho Mngomezulu declare that: The leadership role of the school principals in bringing about improved learner performance in Mkhanyakude, is my own work and that all the sources used in this study have been acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

Signed by GN Mngomezulu on the 7th day of January 2018
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Above all, I give all praise and honour to the God Almighty who gave me strength and made it possible for this study to take place.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to mother my Malitha and my father Nkonkoni Josiah Myeni who instilled in me the love of and the value for education.
ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of the principals in bringing about quality results in schools at UMkhanyakude District. I explored the topic by consulting the relevant literature on the instructional role of the principals as leaders in schools to enhance academic performance. I followed a qualitative approach making use of observations and interviews conducted with both primary and secondary school principals in nine selected schools. The data collected were arranged under selected themes and critically analysed and interpreted.

The objectives of the study were to investigate the principals’ influence on the learner achievement, to determine how principals practically embrace constitutional values in their leadership role and to identify the leadership styles principals employ to facilitate participation of stakeholders in decision making and to determine the principals’ role in improving the classroom instruction.

The findings reveal that the success of the school depends on the leadership role of the school principal, in guiding and leading all the school stakeholders to work toward the achievement of the school vision and goals. This approach required the principals to take a quantum leap and change the way they think about their roles and responsibilities in school.

The findings proved that school principals play the most influential role in bringing about quality results at school, the majority of principals still confuse instructional leadership with curriculum management, principals do not understand the power of their influence to direct school activities and fail to use invitational and emotional intelligent leadership styles to involve stakeholders from the community in solving community-related challenges. Principals must be empowered with relevant skills to enable them to perform their leadership roles as proposed by the Department of Basic Education.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>Advanced Certificate in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>Annual National Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATP</td>
<td>Annual Teaching Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bachelor of Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed. (Hons)</td>
<td>Bachelor of Education Honours</td>
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<td>B. Paed</td>
<td>Bachelor of Paediatrics</td>
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<td>B. Tech</td>
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<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>DoBE</td>
<td>Department of Basic Education</td>
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<td>EEA</td>
<td>Employment of Educators Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDE</td>
<td>Further Diploma in Education</td>
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<td>HED</td>
<td>Higher Education Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immune Virus</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOD</td>
<td>Head of the Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>LTSM</td>
<td>Learner –Teacher Support Material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEPA</td>
<td>National Education Policy Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAM</td>
<td>Personnel Administrative Measures</td>
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<td>PFMA</td>
<td>Public Finance Management Act</td>
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PMDS : Performance Management Development System
PPN : Post Provisioning Norm
SACE : South African Council of Educators
SAPS : South African Police Service
SASA : South African School Act
SGB : School Governing Body
SMT : School Management Team
SPTD : Senior Primary Teacher’s Diploma
SSTD : Senior Secondary Teacher’s Diploma
STD : Secondary Teachers Diploma
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Each year after the release of the Grade 12 results in UMkhanyakude District, principals of the underperforming schools are invited to the meeting with the District Director, where they give an account on why their schools had failed. In that meeting the principals are reprimanded and blatantly told that they had failed the learners. When giving an account some principals shifted the blame to educators, learners or sometimes parents, and sometimes they would blame the failure to insufficient resources. Some principals attribute the problems to the education system itself with its endless changes, as far as the curriculum is concerned.

When returning from these meetings educators are invited to the staff meetings, results are analysed, those who did not do well in their subjects, are asked why they have failed the learners and requested to justify their poor performance. In their accountability educators would also shift the blame, to reluctant learners, shortage of teaching materials and the poor infrastructure.

Despite all the shifting of the blame the finger would always be pointed at principals, as managers and leaders of the whole teaching and learning process. During the era of Innah Cronje, as the Member of the Executive Council (Education) in KwaZulu Natal, principals were even given letters threatening them that if the school’s results especially those of the Grade 12 learners, did not improve they would be charged for incompetence. In June 2015, almost all principals in UMkhanyakude District received letters threatening them that if the results for Annual National Assessment (ANA) do not improve, the principal will be charged for incapacity or the school and will be deprived of its status of being a self-governing school on financial matters. Again in the beginning of 2015, in Gauteng the Member of the Executive Council (Education) Panyaza Lesufi threatened to expel all principals of the schools that underperformed according to the Provincial standard.

The pointing of fingers, the blaming and the defending do not help anyone in the process. Principals remain in the dark as far as the relationship between their leadership role and learner performances are concerned. This shows clearly that the Department of Basic Education still has
a lot to do in training school principals to understand the relationship between their leadership and the learner performance. Clark (2011) states that principals of underperforming schools are unwilling to acknowledge that the poor performance may be the consequence of the lack of leadership and good management on their part. Hoadley (2007) argues, the focus now should no longer be on what the principals should be doing, but rather on whether or how curriculum and instruction are managed at school.

1.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

When the democratic government came into power in 1994, new polices and new laws were introduced, like the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, South African Schools’ Act 84 of 1996, Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 and National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996. The Constitution of the Republic of South African Act 108 of 1996 provided for the curriculum transformation and development. This had aimed at democratising education, where the school leadership had to take into account the new values, which were, equality, freedom, participation, human dignity and social justice in decision-making. The South African Schools’ Act created a whole new approach to learning, managing and governing schools. As a result, the education system underwent a number of changes in departmental policies, curriculum and teaching methodology. This new approach requires the principals to change the way they think about their roles and responsibilities in schools, (Steyn, 2002).

The work of the principal has been broadened. It is no longer good enough for principals to be good administrators, as it was the case with the apartheid education system, and they are now expected to be proactive leaders and managers, (Naicker & Waddy, 2002). One of the reasons why schools underperform, according to Clark (2011) is that principals spend most of their time on administrative matters rather than on managing and monitoring quality of teaching and learning. The principal no longer holds all the responsibility for running the school. The work of the principal is now more formally shared with the School Management Team and the School Governing Bodies.

The South African Schools’ Act, 84 of 1996 also requires the educational managers to change from apartheid values to values enshrined in the Constitution of the country. School managers are expected to take note of the following themes, which are: new principles and values of the
education system, learning and teaching as the main aims of education management, self-managed schools, governance and developing schools as learning centres (Naicker & Waddy, 2002).

Naicker and Waddy (2002) assert that management and leadership systems have also changed; they no longer follow the top-down process. Management and leadership are no longer the sole responsibility of the principal, but it is a shared responsibility where all the stakeholders are cordially invited, and involved in decision making. The principals must involve stakeholders in every plan they make for change so that they enjoy a buy-in. It is very clear that for the principals to work effectively and efficiently they must embrace the Constitutional values, which are, to mention a few, human dignity, equality, participation, democracy, freedom and justice.

South African Schools’ Act 84 (1996) provides rights to schools especially those with section 21 status to manage their own responsibilities; hence they are referred to as self-reliant and managing schools, (Steyn, 2002). These schools have to design their own learning programmes, develop their own planning, arrange their own finances, manage and develop their own human resources and their own code of conduct. Principals as agents of change need to be dynamic and skilful in their school leadership and management. Metcalf, (2011) states that the principals’ role in leading change and success is indispensable. Principals need to give support in the implementation of the new curriculum, support in teaching methodology and in all other aspects that concern teaching and learning.

The school principal as leader is required to work in a democratic and participatory way to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education for learners (Naicker & Waddy, 2002). For both the learners and educators to give their best, they need to feel that they are treated with dignity. They need to feel that they are treated as human beings who are valuable, capable and responsible. The principal who treats people in such a manner is referred to as the invitational leader (Davies & Brighouse, 2008). Stakeholders treated in this manner easily participate in decision making. Steyn (2002) emphasise that the school leadership needs to provide opportunities for teachers, students, parents and community members to participate in running the schools.
Naicker and Waddy (2002), further state the principal as a leader influences educators and learners to perform their educational tasks. If principals are to influence others effectively they need to understand their personalities, what motivates them, their values and difficulties they experience in life. The principals are not able to understand others if they do not understand themselves and their own emotions, so for the principals to be more effective and efficient they need to be emotionally intelligent (Antanakis, Ashykanasy, and Dasborough, 2009). This will enable them to communicate and lead by understanding others’ thoughts, views and feelings. Therefore, the principal leadership is largely about influencing the behaviour of others to achieve excellence.

The Skills Development Act 97 (1998) clearly states that work places should be used as active learning environments and that employees should be provided with the opportunity to acquire new skills, (Thurlow, Bush & Coleman, 2003). Naicker and Waddy (2003) agree with this when they say that schools need to be seen as learning centres, where the principal must ensure that continuous development and development for all staff members take place.

The Employment of Educators Act, 76 (1998) states clearly that it is the responsibility of the school principal, to guide educators and develop them where necessary in their daily work. Thurlow, Bush and Coleman (2003) maintain that when looking at the characteristics of effective schools, the principal concentrates on teaching and learning and the maximisation of learning time and learning and focuses on achievement.

Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, (2004) posit that when scrutinising the link between student achievement and educational leadership practices, without powerful leaders, troubled schools are unlikely to be turned around. Hoadley (2007) states that it is generally agreed that it is the school principals who are responsible for the creation of conducive environment for quality teaching and learning to take place. More emphasis is put on the principal as the instructional leader focusing on how curriculum and instruction are managed.

Taylor (2013) in National Education Evaluation Developmental Unit report posits that the term instructional leadership was initially used to signal centrality of improving the classroom instruction to the work of the principal. Adding to the role of the principals, the report indicates that principals are responsible for managing the curriculum and instruction, monitoring learning programmes and identifying areas which require professional support. Furthermore, the report
states that the principal is responsible for creating an instructional climate, which includes the optimal use of time for teaching and learning and developing the school as the place where learning is made exciting and where learners and teachers feel supported. Shava (2016) posits that the role of the principal is to empower teachers and contribute to the school improvement journey through empowerment and spreading the good practice initiatives.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study investigates the leadership role of the principal school in relationship to learner achievements at school. There are few studies which have focused on the direct impact the leadership role of the school principal has on learner performance or achievement. When looking at the aims of the principals’ job as per, Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, the principal seems to be more of a manager than a leader, creativity and innovation are not that much encouraged on the side of the principal as the leader. The school principals have to manage the departmental policies and personnel. Nothing much is said about the principals as the instructional leaders, which centres on the principals as being responsible for improving classroom instruction, monitoring learning programmes and managing the curriculum. The nature of how principals work as instructional leaders is unclear.

Leadership is mostly about influencing the behaviour of learners and educators to perform their educational tasks, (Naicker & Waddy, 2000). The school principals have a responsibility to lead and influence the behaviour of all the stakeholders to achieve excellent results. The school principals have the responsibility to positively invite all the stakeholders in making teaching and learning processes effective, so that at the end the day quality results are achieved. The challenge faced by many principals is how to do this, especially in UMkhanyakude as they lack exposure to literature that deals with participative, distributed, invitational, instructional and emotionally intelligent leadership. The Department of Basic Education (DoE) has not done much to prepare principals for their new leadership roles in classroom instruction, managing the learning programmes and curriculum.
With this background the study wants to examine the leadership role of school principal in influencing learner achievement and to scrutinize principals’ ability to embrace the Constitutional values, to involve all stakeholders in decision making and to improve the classroom instruction in order to bring about improved learner performance.

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is aimed at investigating the role of the principals in bringing about quality results in schools at UMkhanyakude District. The objectives to achieve the aim of the study are listed as follows:

- To investigate the principals’ influence on learner achievement;
- To determine how principals practically embrace constitutional values in their leadership role;
- To identify the leadership styles principals employ to facilitate participation of stakeholders in decision making; and
- To determine the principal’s role in improving the classroom instruction.

1.5 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.5.1 The leadership role of the principals

The leadership role of the principal under the director of the district is the daily operation of the school. This role includes maintaining proper order and discipline, being in charge of and supervises teaching and learning, organise and manage the school.

1.5.2 UMkhanyakude

UMkhanyakude is the northernmost of the 11 districts of KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. As a District it is situated at Mkuze. It is a very rural district, the largest town being Mtubatuba in the South, with Hluhluwe, Mkuze, Jozini, Kwangwanase and Ingwavuma further in the North. It is one of the most deprived districts in South Africa according to the District Health Barometer. Deprivation being defined as a combination of indicators including unemployment rates, access to piped water and electricity, female-headed and child-headed households with high number of children and low education level (Massyn & Day, 2013)
1.6 INTENDED CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE
This study will contribute to the body of knowledge by adding new information on how the school principals will positively influence the behaviour of all the stakeholders to bring about quality results in schools. It will look deeply into the present leadership roles of school principals at UMkhanyakude district, to see if it positively contributes to the improvement of learner performance. It will bridge the academic gap on the existing literature on the relationship between the principal’s leadership role and curriculum and learner performance. This study is hoped to be of great value not only to principals but also to researchers and students.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Research paradigm
This study falls within qualitative research approach. An interpretivist paradigm foregrounds this study which generates some questions and thoughts involving the leadership role of the principal under the director of the district are the daily operation of the school. The researcher is interested to extract participants’ opinions and views. Qualitative research methods are deemed appropriate for meeting the aim of this study.

1.7.2 Research Design
Weaver and Oslon (2006) define paradigm as pattern of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished. An interpretivist paradigm foregrounds this study which generates some questions and thoughts involving all affected authorities due to leadership practices used at schools to improve teaching and learning. The researcher was interested in understanding the topic in question from the participants’ point of view. Mc’Kenna (2002) argues that an interpretivist paradigm is associated with practical interest which further seeks to extend human understanding and to take the right action with a particular environment. One of the characteristics of the research paradigm is methodology, which looks at the strategies used to discover knowledge.
The research methodology that was used in this study is a qualitative method as it seeks to understand how a community or individuals within it perceive a particular issue. Its aim was to answer questions like, what, how and why rather than how many or how much of the phenomena as it is the case with the quantitative method. With this method the researcher sought to understand the behaviors, experiences and the attitude of the principals towards their leadership role in relationship to learner performance. This was addressed by qualitative methods such as the interviews and observations. Document reviews were also used as the research method.

1.7.3 Population and sampling procedures

The target population for this research study were school principals from both primary and secondary schools of UMkhanyakude District. Nine principals were interviewed, four from primary schools and five from secondary schools, and in the selection process of the target samples, performance of each school was taken into account. Purposive sampling was used for this research, because it was the type of sampling which was appropriate for qualitative research. In purposive sampling the researcher selected the sample based on judgment and was confident that the chosen sample was truly representative of the entire population. McMillan and Schumacher, (2010) argue that in purposive sampling the samples are chosen; because they are likely to be knowledgeable about the phenomenon the researcher is investigating. One of the major benefits of purposive sampling is the wide range of sampling techniques that can be used across such qualitative research designs.

1.8. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

1.8.1 Qualitative interview

A qualitative data collection method uses structured or semi-structured techniques. The most commonly used methods include individual interviews and observation. It is used to gain understanding of underlying reasons, motivation and opinions (Newman, 2014). It provides insight into the problem or helps to develop ideas. It is used to uncover trends in thoughts and opinions and goes deeper into the problem. Qualitative data seek to answer what, why and how question, as pointed out in the aim of the study. Sample size was typically small and respondents were selected to fulfil a given quota (Wyse, 2011).
Interviews and observation were used as data collection tools. The target population for this study were principals of UMkhanyakude District. Nine schools were identified, four primary schools and secondary schools. Principals from these schools were interviewed while observing the school and principal’s behaviour. Since this study focused on schools, the researcher got the permission from the Provincial Department of education.

1.9. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

The deductive approach was used to analyse data in this research proposal. Barnard, Gill Stewart and Chadwich (2008) state that this approach involves using a predetermined framework to analyse data. Researchers impose their own theories and then use these to analyse their interview transcripts. This approach is suitable in studies where the researcher is already aware of the probable responses of the participants. This approach was suitable for the research topic under investigation as the researcher was familiar with the topic under study.

When presenting the data ideas were arranged in a logical order of relevance. Headings and subheading were used to strengthen the organization of the article. The language used was simple to accommodate the target audience. Tables were used to communicate the message ensuring that information is understandable to readers by discussing it in the text.

1.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Since the researcher had the responsibility to participants, ethical principles were used to protect participants and ensure that their information remains confidential. These, principles are autonomy (which is protecting the right of the individual to choose if he participates or not), beneficence (where the researcher will be ensuring that good thing are done at all times during information collection process), non-maleficence (which is not doing any harmful thing) and lastly justice (Beauchamp & Childress, 2012). With these principles the rights of the participants were ensured.

The researcher ensured that the participants consented without being forced. The researcher made use of informed written consent, where the study purpose was made clear, explained what participation involved and the potential harms and benefits (Patton & Cochran, 2002).
1.11. RESOURCES

This research had no special resource implications. Current resources were enough, and apart from the usual research and travel grants, no additional institutional resource allocation was required.

1.12. FEASIBILITY

This study was feasible, because of the following reasons:

- The research topic was within the researcher’s expertise;
- The research question concerned the principals of UMkhanyakude and participants were principals of this District;
- The qualitative research method was as relevant to the research topic as it aimed to answer questions like, what, why and how rather than how many or how much of the phenomenon, as it is the case with the quantitative method. With this method the researcher sought to understand how leadership relates to curriculum and instruction, looking into the behaviours, experiences and the attitude of the principals in relationship to learner achievements.
- The researcher had exposure to departmental policies and documents as the principal; and
- The researcher had the resources and materials required for this project, which included resources like; time involving the timeframe allocated for this proposal. The financial support was also sufficient. The researcher also had access to internet.

1.13 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND INNOVATION

Throughout the study, the researcher did her best to maintain confidentiality. All information provided by participants was used solely for the proposed research and will be carefully stored in the University of Zululand as per its Intellectual Property Final draft (9 October 2012) to ensure privacy for information and participants in involved.
1.14. PRELIMINARY TABLE OF CONTENTS

This study has five chapters, to be organised as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction, orientation and background
This chapter spoke to the outline of the study as a whole: the motivation for the study, the problem statement, aim and objectives, definition of operational concepts, and the research methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature review
This chapter provides the literature review which covers the theoretical framework of the study. Sources containing information on former studies and perspectives linked with the research topic are shared.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology
This chapter broadly looks at the method of research used to collect data from the respondents. It discusses the approach, instruments and the way data were dealt with.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and presentation
This chapter covers the presentation of field work, and the analysis and interpretation of the data. Findings are categorised and discussed according to relevant themes.

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusions and recommendations
This chapter provided an overview of the findings of the study, conclusions and suggested recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to review literature as it relates to the research topic, which looked at the role of the school principals in bringing about quality results at UMkhanyakude District. At the same time this chapter answered the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The questions looked at the influence of the principals’ leadership role in bringing about improved learner performance and their ability to influence the behaviour and the thinking of the other stakeholders so that they are also channelled towards bringing about improved learner performance at school.

This chapter was divided into four topics all looking at the role of the principal as the leader and the improvement of learner performance or achievement. Topic one looked at the principal’s leadership role and their influence in learner achievement. The second topic determined the ability of the principal in practically embracing the constitutional values as they create a new approach in the principals’ leadership style. The third topic reviewed the principals’ role in improving the classroom instruction, since nowadays there is much emphasis on principals as instructional leaders. Lastly this chapter scrutinised the importance of the principals’ ability to involve the other stakeholders in decision making, since education is now a shared responsibility (Naicker & Waddy, 2002). Although the research was initiated by the way Grade 12 results were analysed, where the principal as the leader became the focal point, the focal point of this research was not Grade 12, but the whole school, since Grade 12 performances is informed by performance in the lower grades.

The need for this study was of interest, primarily to assist in the career development of principals especially in the UMkhanyakude District, to inform their daily practices and to identify their potential so that they are in better position to identify and solve challenges that hinder learners to perform at their level best.

2.1.1 Background

The apartheid education system was based on top-down management and leadership style. During this era the principals’ role was that of receiving policies and see to it that those policies were
effectively implemented. There were external monitors who visited schools with the aim of seeing to it that principals do things correctly. These were policies with which the Department of Education aimed at keeping things as they were. Principals received instructions and policies from the Department of Education, irrespective of the fact that those policies meet the needs of the community or not. Naicker and Waddy (2002) maintain that, the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) made the managerial decision whilst the principals had to run the school on a day-to-day basis. They assumed to a greater extent the role of the administrator than that of an educational manager. Principals worked in environments that were very bureaucratic and controlling and they were used to receiving and giving instructions.

This is the era in which the responsibilities of the principals were to see to it that the educational policies, programmes and procedures were well implemented and to ensure that the status quo was maintained. Principal’s creativity, critical thinking and originality were not encouraged. Naidu, Jouebert, Mestry, Mosege and Ngcobo (2013) posit that, under the apartheid system of education and the environment under which school principals worked were highly regulated and they served as facilitators of the state agenda or administrators. One of the reasons why schools underperform, according to Clark (2011) is that principals spend most of their time on administrative matters rather than on managing and monitoring quality of teaching and learning. Furthermore, Shava (2016) posits that school leadership plays a central role on affecting the educational development of the learners for whom they have responsibility over.

2.1.2 Decentralisation of powers in the education system

The 21st Century has witnessed numerous changes globally and locally in almost all areas of life (English, 2011). These changes range from political, economic, social and cultural contexts, and schools, since they operate within these contexts and have to adjust their operations if they have to continue to be relevant, in addressing the demands and satisfying the needs of the societies they serve, (English, 2011 & Botha, 2013). Browne - Ferrigno and Johnson - Fusarelli (2005) contend that to positively respond to these forces of change, schools require adaptation in school leadership and management to harness and direct the changes to continuous school improvement.

South African schools were no exception to global changes sweeping through education systems (Naidu, et al., 2013). They posit that the role of management and leadership in South African
context changed from that of dependency or centralisation to that of self-management or decentralisation (Bush, 2003) and that this paradigm shift was necessary for management and leadership development to direct the complex, new policy environment and realising transformational goals (Engels, Hutton, Devos, Bouckernooghe & Aertelman, 2008). The advent of democratic system of government introduced with itself the decentralisation of power from the higher hierarchy of authority to the lower level (Bush, 2013, Naidu et al., 2013).

The decentralisation system devolves powers to the subordinates, thus changing institutions, which were previously highly controlled to self-managing institutions. With decentralisation there is a shift or distribution of power away from top agency in hierarchy of authority. Bush (2003) posits that countries like South Africa, England and Wales see this shift of power as the participative democracy, while United Kingdom refers to it as devolution. Bush (2003) mentions that the success of this system depends on the quality and the nature of internal leadership and management; this refers to the principal’s ability to lead and manage the school. Bush (2003) further argues that the trend towards a self-managing school in United Kingdom has enhanced the appreciation of the importance of the managerial competences of the leader. This paradigm shifts in South African context necessitated the need of intensive retraining and re-skilling of school principals, to equip them with the new skills demanded by the new education environment.

Decentralisation of authority broadened the work of the principal; it is no longer good enough for principals to be good administrators, as it was the case with the apartheid education system, and they are now expected to be proactive leaders and managers, (Naicker & Waddy, 2002). This decentralisation of power shifted the centre of power in the school, from the principal’s office to the whole school community. Hayward (2008) argues that leadership no longer exists only in the principal’s office. Leadership is now distributed and shared among all the relevant stakeholders, hence participative leadership is emphasised.

When the democratic government came into power in 1994, new policies and new laws were introduced, like the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, Employment of educators Act 76 of 1998 and Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (Naidu et al., 2013; Steyn 2002; Naicker & Waddy, 2002). Naicker and Waddy (2002) further maintain that the South African School’s Act created a whole new approach to learning, managing and governing schools. This new approach requires the principals to change the way
they think about their roles and responsibilities in schools (Steyn, 2002). The Constitution of the South African Republic Act, 108 (1996) provides for the curriculum transformation and development. The Constitution aims at creating society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights which were totally neglected during the Apartheid era (Naicker & Waddy, 2002).

The work of the principal has been broadened; it is no longer good enough for principals, to be good administrators (English, 2011; Sacred Heart College R & D, 2000), as it was the case with the apartheid education system, and they are now expected to be proactive leaders and managers (Naicker & Waddy, 2002). One of the reasons why schools underperform, according to Clark (2011), is that principals spend most of their time on administrative matters rather than on managing and monitoring quality of teaching and learning. Browne-Ferrigno and Johnson-Fusarelli (2005) assert that the paradigm shift in school leadership requires the principal to assume broader responsibilities than in the past. Principals are to move away from solely developing administrative competencies to fostering learning, developing curriculum and enhancing teacher development (Hourani & Stringer, 2015).

Naidu et al. (2013) contend that the Bill of rights and the South African School Act, 84 of 1996 also require the educational managers to change from apartheid values to values enshrined in the Constitution of the country. School managers are expected to take note of the following themes, which are; new principles and values of the education system, learning and teaching as the main aims of education management, self-managed schools, governance and developing schools as learning centres (Naicker & Waddy, 2002; Naidu et al., 2013). It is very clear that for the principals to work effectively and efficiently they must embrace the Constitutional values, which are, to mention the few, human dignity, equality, participation, democracy, freedom and justice, (Hayward, 2008; Naicker & Waddy, 2002; Naidu et al., 2013).

Naicker and Waddy (2002) point out that management and leadership systems have also changed; it is no longer using the top-down process. DoE, (2008) posits management and leadership are no longer the sole responsibility of the principal, but it is a distributed and a shared responsibility (Hoyle & Wallace, 2008; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harries & Hopkins, 2006), where all the stakeholders are cordially invited (Purkey 2006; Stoll, Fink & Earl 2003), and involved in decision making, the principals must involve stakeholders in all plans they

School principals as leaders are required to work in a democratic and participatory way to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education for learners (Naicker & Waddy 2002). For both the learners and educators to give their best, they need to feel that they are treated with dignity (Stoll, et al 2003; Van Deventer & Kruger, 2008). They need to feel that they are treated as human beings who are valuable, capable and responsible. The principals who treat people in such a manner are referred to as the invitational leaders (Davies & Brighouse, 2008; Purkey 2006). Stakeholders treated in this manner easily participate in decision making. Steyn (2002) emphasise that the school leadership needs to provide opportunities for teachers, students, parents and community members to participate in running the schools.

The South African Schools’ Act 84 (1996) gives rights to schools especially those with section 21 statuses to manage their own responsibilities; hence they are referred to as self-reliant and managing schools (Steyn, 2002; Naicker & Waddy, 2002). These schools have to design their own learning programmes, develop their own planning, arrange their own finances, manage and develop their own human resource and their own code of conduct. Naicker and Waddy (2002) assert that principals as agents for change need to be dynamic and skilful in their school leadership and management. Metcalf (2011) states the principals’ role in leading change and success is indispensable. Principals need to give support in the implementation of the new curriculum, support in teaching methodology and in all other aspects that concern teaching and learning (Steyn, 2002; Bredeson, 2006; Hourani & Stringer 2015; Benoliel, 2017; Hutton, 2016).

Mpungose and Ngwenya (2018)’s definition of the self-managing school, provides a clear link between self-management and decentralisation. They define self-managing schools as schools in the system of education where there has been significant and consistent decentralisation of authority to school level to make decisions related to the allocation of resources. Bush (2003) maintains that the research on self-management in England and Wales largely suggests that the shift toward school autonomy has been beneficial. According to Naidu et al. (2013), this has not
been the case in South Africa, especially to those schools in the remote rural areas like UMkanyakude.

Naidu et al. (2013) argue that when the government attempted to redress the legacies of the apartheid regime, making schools self-managing institutions leaders have faced the challenge of transforming schools to comply with rapidly changing policies as well as ensuring that the full potential of every learner is unlocked to meet the needs of the changing society. This is due to the fact that principals were never prepared for this task. The poor quality of results, which is more evident in rural areas and the increasing number of school being labelled as poorly performing schools raise concern about whether principals have the required skills, knowledge and expertise to lead schools effectively in this challenging and complex environment (Naidu et al., 2013).

2.2 Principal's leadership role and his power of influence

Bredson (2006) states that the principal is in the unique position to influence the structure, culture and the mission of the school. When differentiating between leadership and management, Clark (2012) posits that the principal, on the one hand is the leader who develops the vision of an organisation, while on the other hand serves as the manager who carries out the vision of the school. The principal works with and through the teachers and the School Management Team to carry out the vision of the school. The principal should sell the school's vision to the teachers, in a manner that teachers adopt the school’s vision and make it theirs. Van der Westhuizen (2002) maintains that through the power of influence the principal convinces, inspires binds and influences the behaviour of teachers to work towards the achievement of the school vision.

Van der Westhuizen (2002) posits that as a leader the principal carries the vision of the school, so the principal must be able to articulate this vision to all stakeholders concerned. Bush (2003) argues that vision setting is increasingly regarded as an essential component of effective leadership. Outstanding leadership has outstanding vision for their schools, the vision which is communicated in the manner that commitment is secured among the members. This vision must be well articulated to the members that they are able to make sense of it. The leader must articulate the vision in a compelling way, such that it becomes the shared vision of the leader, educators, parents and learners. The effective principal implants the vision in all the structures and the processes of the school. All the decisions taken by the school must evolve around the school’s vision (Kotter 2011).
When looking on influence of leadership on learner achievements Leithwood et al. (2006) posit that leadership affects student learning accounts for about ¼ of total direct and indirectly affects student learning, second to classroom instruction. This means that teachers are the most significant in school to have a direct influence on student performance while the leadership work of principals is only second to that of teachers. Though leadership work of the principal is said to be second to influence learner achievement. It cannot be denied that principals have the primary responsibility to create conducive conditions for quality teaching and learning (Hoadley, 2007). The quality of teacher achievement in teaching and learning is determined by the leadership quality of the principal. So Dempster’s (2012) claims that troubled schools can only be turned around by talented leadership and further motivates that in this way leadership practice enhances learner achievement.

Leithwood et al. (2004) posit that there are three basic elements of successful leadership which comprise three sets. These serve as the core of leadership practices, one of which is setting direction. Setting direction involves developing shared vision that serves as the framework for vision and goals. Interpreting and sharing the school goals by the principal motivate both educators and the learners and help them to make sense of their work. The achievement of the set goals is facilitated if all the stakeholders concerned are involved in goal setting.

The principal’s power of influence is very necessary in this exercise; the principal must define the set goals in the manner that all the stakeholders see value in them. Therefore, they will all work willingly to accomplish the set goal which is now theirs, because they all have a buy-in element. Maxwell (2010) refers to this level of leadership as permission, where people follow because they wish to. Under such atmosphere the school’s performance is enhanced. Van der Westhuizen (2002) concurs with this when he maintains that leadership is following by own free will. It is getting people to work without the feeling of obligation.

Setting a clear vision for the school, the principal establishes the direction. Without clear vision all the school activities will be disorientated. Leithwood et al. (2004) posit that having the clear vision is the single most important contribution that the principal can make for the future success of the school. The principal must ensure that the vision is achievable and challenging to stretch a
little further than what was done before. Clear vision increases both educators’ and leaders’ cooperation and motivation to achieve the school’s set goal. It provides an incentive for the existence and the operation of the school.

Maxwell (2010) maintains that leadership is an influence that comes with the title. The principal must be able to make all those concerned to work willingly towards the achievement of the set goals. Positional influence alone is not enough, because people feel obliged to follow. The principal must reach a level where people follow willingly. The leader is someone whom others gladly follow (Maxwell, 2010). Furthermore, Maxwell (2010) defines leadership as the process by which school leaders direct and influence educators and learners to achieve educational excellence. Effective influence requires understanding people, what motivates them and their values and the difficulties they experience in life. In other words, effective leadership requires emotional intelligence. Antanakis, Ashkanasy and Dasbourough (2009) define emotional intelligence as one’s self knowledge, self-awareness, social sensitivity, empathy and ability to communicate successfully with others.

Effective leadership in bringing about improved learner performance largely depends on the principal’s ability to use the power of influence effectively, the principal’s ability to involve all the stakeholders in decision making and make them feel that the school belongs to them. This influence bends the stakeholder’s motivation and activities toward the achievement of the school goals. Successful leadership involves setting vision which is clearly communicated to all the school members, to direct their actions towards the achievement of the school goals.

### 2.2.1 The difference between leadership and management

It becomes difficult to talk about the influence of the principal leadership role without looking at the differences and relationship between leadership and management. Bush (2003) posits that the two terms, which are leadership and management, had been used a lot interchangeably as if they are synonymous, while they are not, but the principal plays the role of being both the manager as well as the leader (Clark, 2012; Bush, 2003). The DoE (2008) presents a very interesting distinction between management and leadership. They see the leader as someone who is concerned about developing the vision of the organisation, while on the other hand the manager is concerned with the implementation of the vision.
The leader is concerned with transformation, strategic issues, people and doing the right things, while the manager is concerned with transaction, operational issues, systems and doing things right. Looking at the responsibilities of the principal in self-reliant schools, one realises that the principal needs both managerial and leadership skills. The following are characteristics of the leader; originality, creativity, strategic, transformational, learning, focusing on people and doing the right things (Clark, 2012).

Looking at the new approach in education, schools have to design their own learning programme, develop their own planning, arrange their own finances, manage and develop their own human resource and their own code of conduct (Naicker & Waddy, 2002; Steyn, 2002) one realises that leadership skills are vital. Here the principal must be someone who is original, proactive and be able to lead and manage the change. Maxwell (2010) posits that leadership is not an easy thing to do; it develops daily, but not in a day and it is multi-faceted. Therefore, for leadership to be effective it requires much seasoning and grooming. To achieve the above aims principals must be original, creative and strategic in their planning (Clark, 2012).

With the new laws and policies in education an effective principal is the one who is a lifelong learner, the one who is also able to develop and train the educators in new policies and the ever changing curriculum (Steyn, 2002). Maxwell (2010) concurs with the idea of successful leaders as lifelong learners where the process of learning is on-going as a result of self-discipline and perseverance.

National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, states very clearly that one of the seven roles of the teacher is that of being a scholar, a researcher and a lifelong learner. The Skill Development Act 97 of 1998 stipulated that work places should be used as active learning organisation (Maxwell, 2010). For this reason, employees should be provided with opportunities to acquire knew knowledge and skills and this will enable educators to keep up with advances in the management, curriculum and teaching methodology. This responsibility heavily lies on the shoulders of the principal (Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998).

The democratic principles are people-oriented, the principals must focus on people and move with them as he or she leads the school since leadership is now shared. Maxwell (2010) argues that people development is one of the most important aspects of leadership. This ensures that the leader
does not move alone, but with all the followers. Studies (Yukl 2002; Browne-Ferrign & Johnson-Fusarelli 2005; Masitsa, 2005; Hourani & Stringer, 2015; Hutton, 2016 & Bredeson, 2006) have identified leadership practices, like promoting school professional development, developing and communicating shared goals and vision to be very important in bringing about teamwork within the school, which in turn develops and enhances teaching and learning (Maxwell, 2010). Enhanced teaching and learning bring about improved learner performance. In the new dispensation leadership has become the process of building capacity, participation and collaboration among followers (Van der Westhuizen, 2002). Maxwell (2010) insists that good principals acknowledge that, they do not know everything they draw on the expertise of those around them.

Principals as agents of change need to be more of a leader than a manager; they must be dynamic, initiative, skilful and visionary as they lead the change (Hourani & Stringer, 2015). Nonetheless this does not mean that the management skills are not necessary for the principal, as the principal still needs to see to it that school policies to achieve that particular change are in place and are implemented. The principal still needs to ensure that the systems for quality teaching and learning are in place and are operational.

Bush (2003) argues that the differences between leadership and management must not be over emphasised at the expense of the others. He attributes importance to both, since different settings and times call for different responses. Lunenburg (2011) states, effectiveness and success of a school with great leadership and chaotic management do not last long it is temporary, while on the other hand the one with floppy and watertight management will be in a different kind of trouble, successfully underachieving in a negative way.

Yukl (2002) sees leadership as the process of social influence. This influence is exerted by the principal to parents, learners and educators to structure activities and relationships within the school. The purpose of this intentional influence is the realisation of the school common goals, thus leadership becomes the process of bending the motivations and actions of others to achieve certain goals. Hourani and Stringer (2015) and Maxwell (2010) concur with Yukl (2002), since they also see leadership as the ability to influence an individual or a group towards the achievement of certain goals.
Bush (2003) argues that the significance of effective leadership and management role of the school principal for the successful operation of a school has been acknowledged during the 1990s. The DoE (2008) concurs with Bush (2003) where it maintains that good leadership leads to good schools. Naidu et al. (2013) maintain that the changing education environment in democratic South Africa has brought to the fore the need for management and leadership development in directing the complex new policy environment and realising the transformational goals. A broader body of evidence indicates that the principal is the most powerful, strong, effective and forceful factor in determining school climate. This evidence also indicates that visionary leadership and the creation of the conducive school climate and culture are very important to support and enhance teacher efforts, which in turn bring about improved learner performance (Maxwell, 2010).

Outstanding leadership has remained the key characteristic of outstanding school performance. If one seeks quality results in school performance one must ensure its presence and that potential leader development is given high priority (Alobiedat 2010). Taking this idea to South African context of education, one remains wondering why development of leaders, if the leadership role of the principal is so influential in the success of the school, is given the least attention. In South Africa, since the inception of the democratic government, there have been a number of curriculum changes in the education system. Each time the change is introduced principal briefing is overlooked. One cannot call it development, as a one-day workshop leaves principals confused. Lin (2012) postulates that improving principal leadership is a vital component to the success of educational reform initiatives that seek to improve whole-school performance, as principal leadership often exercises positive, but indirect effects on student learning.

It is therefore very necessary for principals to understand their roles as both a leader and a manager, since the effective running of the school needs both skills. As a manager principals plan and organize resources and set structures necessary for the effective implementation of the plan and ensure that everything is efficiently done, while as the leader the principals should be change oriented, the principals should use creativity and originality working towards the improvement of the school performance.
2.3 The principal’s leadership and the application of Constitutional values

Van der Westhuizen (2002) sees values as the central part of planning, decision making and all other management activities in a school. Hayward (2008) states, the school community’s commitment to clearly communicated values, are at the heart of every successful school and this enables the school to achieve excellence. The DoE (2008) further concurs with this when it states that at the heart of principal’s leadership and management are core values, which impact on what happens in the school. The principal as the leader has the responsibly to know, understand the set of accepted values and clearly communicate them to all the school members. These values are determined by the external environment which the school serves as the organisation. Hence Duignan (2014) posits that educational leaders are subject to both external and internal pressures. In South Africa with the advent of the democratic government, the Department of Education (DoE) had to adopt the new values based on the democratic principles. The very same values influenced the leadership role of the school principals.

O’Toole (2012) defines values as the principles through which the organisation operates and seeks to achieve its vision and mission. Values express the beliefs and the inspirations of the institution. Values drive organisations and provide them direction. Reeves (2002) and Hutton (2014) concur with O’Toole (2012), when they state that values are directional, meaning that values give guidance or show the way. Hayward (2008) states that, without value nothing can be done effectively. Farrer (2000) sees values as the foundation of education and their absence as the beginning of chaos, disorder and distress. The school as the organisation should be value driven and the behaviour of the individuals within the school should also be value driven. That is why Bredeson (2006) maintains that if one wants to know what is important in a school, watch what the principal does, because the principals’ behaviour is determined by their values. Bush (2003) states that leadership begins with the character of the leader expressed through personal values.

Hayward (2008) asserts that when he discusses ‘The five pillars of quality education’, he sees the identification and establishment of values as pillar number one, coming even before leadership as one of the pillars. This is very true, since one cannot lead without accepted values as they serve as the direction to each organisation. If people in an organisation have similar values, cooperation and common understanding, unity within the organisation is enhanced and less time is spent on solving problems based on misunderstanding (O’Toole 2012).
Values are actually directed at what ought to be done (Van der Westhuizen, 2002). During the 1980s schools became a site of struggle against rejection of apartheid. In the early 1900s with the emergence of Teacher Union, the battle against the apartheid system of education was intensified. Many schools became dysfunctional and the culture of effective teaching and learning was destroyed. School principals were caught up in the midst of the struggle. On the one hand the principals were to implement the policies of the apartheid department of education, while on the other hand they had to respond to the growing criticism from the community. They were at the point of not knowing what to do (Naicker & Waddy, 2002).

In 1996, the introduction of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act no 84 of 1996 saved the deteriorating conditions in schools. The Constitutional values enshrined in the Constitution gave direction to the school principals. They then started to know what is expected of them. These were the values which were accepted by the whole community of South Africa. They were the values based on the ‘ideal’ South Africa, as foreseen in 1955 in Kliptown when the Freedom Charter was drawn. Van der Westhuizen (2002) posits that values accepted by the community have a powerful and continuous influence on educational expectations of the school. School principals function effectively in schools if they understand and apply the broad community values to their day-to-day school life. School principals’ personal values must not contradict the community accepted values.

The Democratic era brought with itself the great need of transformation in all aspects of life in South Africa. To redress the legacy of apartheid in education system, the new system of education was to be introduced, with new policies and legislations. These new policies redefined the concepts of leadership, management and governance at schools (Sacred Heart College R & D, 2002).

The Bill of Rights and the Constitution of South Africa challenged school principals to change from apartheid values to the values enshrined in the Constitution. Principals were to change the way they think about their roles and responsibilities in schools. Educational leadership and management practices must now reflect the new principles and values as the new aims of management and leadership. The following are identified as the new values as embedded in the Constitution of South Africa, democracy, equality, human dignity, freedom and justice (Naicker & Waddy, 2002).
Confirming the idea of a paradigm shift in education, leadership and management (Naidu et al. 2008) postulate that the changing education environment in the democratic South Africa had brought to the fore the need for leadership and management development in directing the complex new policy environment and realising transformational goals. The phrase “complex new policy” leaves one wondering if school principals on their own would be able to carry out the responsibility of working towards democratic ways of running the schools. Naicker and Waddy (2002) view this as a challenge from the principals’ point of view, when they posit that, it was challenging for principals to move from an autocratic type of leadership, with its rule-bound approaches, which the previous government favoured, to more democratic, accountable and equitable forms of leadership.

It should be noted that, since schools were declared as self-managing organisations, as a new theme in education, the much-challenged principals were expected to build their capacity to manage themselves. The new themes in education require that the school principals build participation and collaboration, develop their own capacity and accept responsibility for self-management, Naicker & Waddy, 2002). This indicates very clearly that to effectively implement new policies, with new democratic values, principals need intensive training, firstly understanding the implication of these values in their day-to-day work and then the application of the very same values in the school life.

At the heart of principal’s leadership and management of the school are the core societal and educational values, which impact on what happens in the school (DoE, 2008). The principal as the leader must ensure that these values are shared by all the stakeholders, as the unifying factor in working towards the achievement of the school vision and mission. The principals have the responsibility to ensure that the behaviour of all the stakeholders at schools is guided by the Constitutional values, and that all the school policies should be guided by them.

2.4 The instructional leadership role of the school principal

It is generally known that the reason why schools exist is to provide good teaching and learning to the learners. Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2013) state that, though schools have responsibility for many aspects of the child’s well-being, their primary and unique purpose is to provide effective
teaching and learning, therefore leadership should be learning based hence the term ‘leadership for learning’ (Bush, et al. 2013). Clark (2012) contends that good teaching and learning is the school’s bottom line. So the principals as the lead professionals (Hourani & Stringer, 2015) should make this their core function and main concern. Dempster (2012) posits that the school’s moral purpose is improvement in the lives of children and young people through learning. So the principal has a responsibility to ensure that what learners learn is of a good quality.

It is a pity that many school principals pay less attention to the real issues of good teaching and learning in their planning and the execution of their day to day activities (Clark 2012; Houran & Stringer, 2015; Hoadley 2007). Clark (2012) emphasises that the school principals on a daily basis should be concerned with how to make good teaching and learning happen. Good teaching and learning are about the quality of what happens in the classroom.

Taylor (2013) employs the term instructional leadership to signal centrality of improving the classroom instruction to the work of the principal. The report indicates that the principal is responsible for managing the curriculum and instruction, monitoring learning programmes and identifying areas which require professional support. Leithwood et al. (2004) assert that when scrutinising the link between students’ achievement and educational leadership practices, they claim that without powerful leaders troubled schools are unlikely to be turned around. Therefore, principals are expected to be more committed to what happens in the learning processes (Hansen & Lárusdóttir, 2015). It has been emphasized that to enhance the achievement of the goal of education the school principals should be seen as firm and purposeful by sharing leadership responsibilities involving using experts that exit in the school (Shava, 2016). This can imply that there should be real empowerment initiatives for teachers.

Principals need to give support in the implementation of the curriculum, support in teaching methodology and in all other aspects that concern teaching and learning (Steyn, 2002; Bredeson, 2000; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Benoliel, 2017; Hourani & Stringer, 2015; Hutton, 2016). These above-mentioned authors assert that in their review of the relations between leadership and learning the principal plays the most influential role in learner achievement. Alobiedat (2010)
posits that effective leadership is sufficiently involved and knowledgeable about what is happening in the classroom and about the progress of each learner in the classroom.

2.4.1 The principal is at the centre of instruction improvement

Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) argue that instructional leadership theory originated in the late 1970s. Other scholars like Sergiovanni (2009); Knapp, Copeland, Honig, Plecki and Portin (2010) and Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) label it as “learner - centered leadership,” “learning - focused leadership” and “leadership for learning. Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) point out that a strong consensus is emerging that, whatever else they do, principals must be strong instructional leaders who are directly involved in the teaching and learning life of the school.

The DoE (2008) maintains that at the centre of the principal’s leadership role is a fundamental responsibility for the management of the curriculum, the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning and the raising of levels of learner achievement. Van Deventer and Kruger (2008) concur with this idea of the principal being in the centre of effective teaching and learning when they maintain that the principal is the central role player in ensuring the success of the teaching and learning outcome in the school and they point out that instructional leadership is the way with which the principal achieves this task. It is therefore, clear that improving instruction is central to all that happens at school, and that all the activities that the principal performs at school are aimed at bringing about improved instruction, which eventually brings about improved learner achievement (Hoadley, 2007).

Most scholars, like Hallinger and Heck (2010); Knap et al. (2010) Bush et al. (2013) and Hourani and Stringer (2015) are of the opinion that instructional leadership focuses on what happens in the classroom as the way of improving learner achievement, but Van Deventer and Kruger (2008) argue that instructional leadership is not different from the principal managerial and leadership duties that the principal performs every day. The principals’ managerial duties as generally known are planning, organizing, leading and controlling (Van der Westhuizen, 2002). It is true that the execution of these tasks by the school principal generally aims at bringing about improved learner performance, but getting into the classroom and finding out what takes place there provides the
principal with the first-hand and relevant information for properly planning, leading and supporting educators to teach effectively.

To support this Hourani and Stringer (2015) Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) postulate that as part of guiding and developing educators, principals are responsible for evaluating performance. Evaluation processes compel the principal to spend quality time in the classroom, for teacher evaluation. For this reason, Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) emphasize that principals must be strong instructional leaders who are directly involved in the teaching and learning life of the school.

Having identified the importance of the principals’ role as an instructional leader, cognisance should be taken of the fact that there are still countries like Norway and Sweden where instructional leadership receives attention, while in Trinidad and Tobago there are no recent studies on principal supervision and instructional leadership located (Hansen & Lárusdóttir, 2015). South Africa, like some of African countries to mention a few, Tanzania, Uganda and Madagascar, are no exception. Hoadley (2007) argues that in South Africa direct involvement in curriculum by school principals is among the least of their activities.

In one of the research studies on the relationship between leadership and learner achievement which Hoadley (2007) conducted, she discovered that a large sample of principals have very little experience in instructional leadership and most of them do not regard themselves as instructional leaders. Fleish and Christie (2004) posit that the apartheid regime undermined the principal’s authority in this key area. As a result, today’s principals have very little experience in leading teaching and learning and managing people in education (Hoadley, 2007).

To concur with the above-mentioned idea, Bush et al, (2013) point out that in South Africa there is very limited material on the management of teaching and learning. It is also clearly stated that in South Africa there are no accounts of how school principals and other school managers exercise instructional leadership (Bush et al., 2013). Although South Africa and her African counter parts are still lagging behind when it comes to issues of instructional leadership, it is interesting to note that there are countries like United State of America and United Kingdom who have taken a
noticeable step ahead in this regard. Hoadley (2007) posits that in United States there is an increasing argument that instructional leadership should be the main responsibility of the principal.

Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) in their study of the leadership role of the school principal in relationship to learner achievements contend that successful leaders have an indirect, yet powerful, influence on the quality of educational provision and the achievement of students. Leithwood et al. (2004) maintain that principal’s influence on learner achievement is second only to classroom instruction. Teachers are the ones who are in direct contact with the learners. Principals influence learners’ performance in the classroom through teachers (Bush, 2003). So the principals need to positively influence the teachers and shape them, since the principals cannot directly influence learner’s behaviour in learning, but they can with the educators. For this reason, Bush (2003) is correct when he posits that instructional leadership comprises three aspects which are; talking with teachers, promoting teacher professional growth and fostering teacher reflection.

The principal therefore, has a responsibility to lead and influence the behaviour of educators to achieve excellent results (Bush, 2003; Hoyle & Wallace 2005; Engels, Hutton, Devos, Bouckemooghe & Aertelman, 2008; and Hayward, 2008). When looking at the role of the principal in influencing teachers’ behaviour in teaching and learning, Bush (2003) states that leadership refers to bending other people’s motivation, actions and will towards achieving certain goals. The first requirement for good teaching and learning to take place is that those who are directly involved have a will to make it happen (Clark, 2012). The contemporary studies from many countries prove that the principal is still viewed as being primarily responsible for school performance and outcomes (Jones, Joo, Muniandy, Perera & Harris, 2015).

2.4.2. Instructional leadership and teacher development

Bredeson (2006) postulates that the school principal has a significant influence in teacher development, as they have a great impact on teacher learning. They do have this through their role as instructional leaders, their role in the creation of an environment conducive to learning, direct involvement in the design, delivery and content of professional development and lastly through their role in the assessment of professional outcomes.
The Skills Development Act, 97 (1998) clearly states that workplaces should be used as active learning environments and that employees should be provided with the opportunity to acquire new skills (Thurlow et al. 2003). Naicker and Waddy (2003) agree with this when they posit that schools need to be seen as learning centres, where the principal must ensure that continuous development and development for all staff members take place.

The Employment of Educators Act, 76 (1998) states clearly that it is the responsibility of the school principal, to guide educators and develop them where necessary in their daily work. Thurlow et al. (2003) assert that when looking at the characteristics of effective schools, the principals concentrate on teaching and learning and the maximisation of learning time and learning and focuses on achievement.

Hourani and Stringer (2015) posit that the roles and responsibilities of the principal as the instructional leader include, developing, implementing and evaluating the learning programmes, monitoring teacher and learner progress and influencing teachers learning through involvement in the design, delivery and assessment of professional development outcomes. Therefore, for the principals to effectively raise the learners’ achievement they must be well informed about curriculum matters and at the same time they must practise participative leadership, which involves educators in matters that pertain to their development. To summarise this Newman, King and Young (2000) state that principals’ leadership is recognised as the critical force in the whole school’s capacity to educate students.

Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinback (1999)’s study stress that leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly. When defining instructional leadership Leithwood, et al. (2004) maintain that it is that part of leadership that focuses the leader’s attention on the behaviour of both teachers and learners as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of learners. On the other hand, Southworth (2002) sees instructional leadership as an aspect that is concerned with teaching and learning, including professional learning of teachers as well as student growth. Southworth (2002)’s definition differs from Leithwood et al. (1999) s’ in the sense that his definition involves teacher development. Browne-Ferrigno and Johnson- Fusarelli, (2005) posit that the paradigm shift in
school leadership requires the principal to assume broader responsibilities than in the past. Principals are to move away from solely developing administrative competencies to foster learning, develop the curriculum and enhance teacher effectiveness; this happens through teacher evaluation and development (Hourani & Stringer, 2015).

The above discussion alludes to one of the responsibilities of the principals as instructional leaders, is to develop teachers. For that reason, Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) postulate that in any endeavor to improve school effectiveness, teacher development is the key ingredient. It is interesting to note that teacher development does not take place in the vacuum. Developmental programmes must be informed by what is happening in the classroom. Hourani and Stringer (2015) and Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) stipulate that teacher development and supervision go hand in hand. The principal cannot supervise teachers without going to the class to observe teaching and learning. So if supervision of teaching and learning is successfully done, teacher development is also enhanced (Hansen & Lárusdóttir, 2015). Hourani and Stringer (2015) see the effective principal as the lead professional who is involved in teaching and learning.

### 2.4.3 The relationship between instructional and invitational leadership

Initially, it was assumed that instructional leadership was the sole responsibility of the principal, but of late it has been acknowledged that the responsibility for instructional leadership should be shared by principals and other professional staff (Hansen & Lárusdóttir, 2015). The school principal as a leader is required to work in a democratic and participatory way to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education for learners (Naicker & Waddy, 2002). For both learners and educators to give their best, they need to feel that they are treated with dignity (Stoll et al. 2013; Deventer & Kruger, 2008). They need to feel that they are treated as human beings who are valuable, capable and responsible. The principal who treats people in such a manner is referred to as the invitational leader, (Davies & Brighouse, 2008; Purkey 2006).

Naicker and Waddy (2002), further state the principal as a leader influences educators and learners to perform their educational tasks. If principals are to influence others effectively they need to understand their personalities, what motivates them, their values and difficulties (Masitsa, 2005)
they experience in life (Antanakis et al. 2009; Kippengerger, 2002; Singh & Dali, 2013). The principals cannot understand others if they do not understand themselves and their emotions. Moreover, for the principals to be more effective and efficient as invitational leaders, they also need to be emotionally intelligent (Antanakis et al. 2009). This will enable them to communicate and lead by understanding others’ thoughts, views and feelings. Therefore, the principals’ leadership is largely about influencing the behaviour of others to achieve excellence (Bush, 2003, Hoyle & Wallace, 2005; Engels et al., 2008 & Hayward, 2008). The Antanakis et al. (2009) defines emotional intelligence as an ability to manage ourselves and our relationship effectively and also to sense other people’s emotions, understanding their perspectives and taking an active interest in their concerns. Therefore, as much as it is necessary that the school principals prioritise the interest and the needs of the school it also very important that the interest and the concerns of the teachers at school are taken into account. To concur with this idea Maxwell (2010:19)) states, “People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.” So this clearly shows that in the process of teaching and learning, the leader must understand the feeling of both the learners and educators so that they are in a position to meet them. Maxwell (2010) postulates that the leader must sacrifice his energy and focus on the educators’ and learners’ needs and desires. If both teachers and learners feel that they are cared for they will give their best in their duties which are, teaching and learning, wherein the quality result will be the end product. Since leadership is about influencing the behavior of both learners and educators in the classroom, the principal is the lead professional involved in teaching and learning (Hourani & Stringer, 2015).

Therefore, invitational leadership is highly successful in leading and facilitating the social and emotional development of the educators and the learners. Invitational leadership involves a generous and genuine turning towards others in empathy and respect with an ultimate goal of collaborating with them for the achievement of the common vision. It involves sending positive messages to people making them believe they are valuable, able, responsible and worthwhile (Purkey & Siegel, 2013). Maxwell (2010) posits that it creates an environment where both teachers and learners can start to recognize their own potential and when favorably invited they can demonstrate high levels of achievement (Lin, 2012).
2.4.4 The principals’ leadership and the creation of positive learning environment

Lin (2012) highlights five elements of a school’s healthy learning environment, which are; shared vision, supportive shared leadership, shared teaching practice, physical condition and staff quality, and collective creativity. Hourani and Stringer (2015) when supporting the value of vision in the creation of a positive learning environment states that leading strategically is more than just developing a vision, but it is creating a shared mission statement with staff and community input. If teachers especially own the school vision, they easily participate in leadership when invited and then teaching practices become mutual concern. Under such environment teaching and learning flourish and learner achievement is enhanced.

Hallinger’s (2000) model on instructional leadership consists of three sets of instructional leadership dimensions, which are: defining the school vision, managing an instruction programme and promoting a positive learning environment. Hoadley (2007) argues that it is generally agreed that principals have the responsibility to create conditions conducive for quality teaching and learning. She puts more emphasis on the principal as the instructional leader focusing on how curriculum and instruction are managed. Maxwell (2010) maintains that there is a greater body of evidence which indicates that the school principal is the most powerful, strong, effective and forceful factor in determining school climate and that the direct relationship between visionary leadership and school climate is vital to support both teacher and learner efforts that lead to the support of instructional programmes.

Lin (2012) maintains that educational leadership enhances the effectiveness of organization through the direct and indirect influence approaches by principal leadership. As indirect they appear primarily to work through the organizational variable of school mission or goals and through variables related to classroom curriculum and instruction. The direct influence by principals focuses on building an excellent health condition of the school, which is also known as the healthy school climate. Van Deventer and Kruger (2008) define school climate as the quality and frequency of interaction among all stakeholders involved in the school life. Van der Westhuizen (2002) posits that the quality of human activity in an organization is greatly determined by the spirit which infuses that organization, so is the school.
It is generally accepted that the principal as the leader is responsible for initiating and maintaining the healthy school climate (Lin, 2012). Van der Westhuizen (2002) witnesses this when he states that the leadership of the school principal is of the utmost importance in the creation of the healthy school climate and that the leadership position enables the principal to influence all the stakeholders to the extent that their actions are guided to work together towards achieving a common goal, which is educative teaching.

The leadership style of the school principal is said to be having an influence in determining the school climate (Van der Westhuizen, 2002; Kippenberger, 2002; Van Deventer & Kruger, 2008; Lin, 2012). Kariuiki, Ngugi and Kinzi (2016) assert that the success of any school programme depends on the leadership style of the principal. Shava (2016) believe that good leadership in schools can contribute to school improvement by whetting motivation, participation and coordination of the teachers. This implies that quality school leadership is a key to continued learning improvement. Therefore, the principal leadership is largely about influencing the behaviour of others to achieve excellence, (Bush, 2003; Hoyle & Wallace 2005, Engels et al. 2008; Hayward, 2008) The way the principals perceive, view and treat both teachers and learners determine their behavior in the classroom and eventually their level of commitment toward achieving the set goals, which in combination eventually culminate in learner achievement.

Lin (2012) identifies four key components that support the creation of an environment resulting in increased student learning outcomes; they are the principal’s personal capacity, school-wide professional capacity, organizational capacity, and community capacity. The principals’ personal capacity consists of personal knowledge, attitudes, and professional pedagogy, (Lin 2012). These deal with principals’ ability to deal with others. Bush (2003) states that leadership begins with the character of the leader expressed through personal values, self-awareness, emotional and moral capability. Maxwell (2010) maintains that leadership is about creativity, strength, inspiration and strong character of the school principals. This means that the personality of the principal as the leader sets the tone for effective teaching and learning to take place.

The school principals as leaders are required to work in a democratic and participatory way to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education for learners
Effective principals know that teachers are valuable assets of the school. They are therefore, to be treated with dignity and respect (Stoll, et al. 2013; Deventer & Kruger, 2008). Both teachers and learners give their best if they feel that the environment they work under is caring. The presence or absence of effective school leaders, positive school climate and positive attitudes of teachers can directly or indirectly influence school performance and learner achievement. It is also argued that principals who work with all stakeholders at school could create conditional structures that support affective learning and teaching for all (Martin, 2016; Sayadi, 2016).

Maxwell (2010) postulates that people do not care how much the principals know or how well educated they are, but their concern is on how they treat them. This means it is not the leader’s brain that touches people, but the leader’s heart. If principals are to influence others effectively they need to understand their feelings, know what motivates them, and recognise their values and difficulties (Masitsa, 2005). The principals cannot understand others if they do not understand themselves and their emotions, so for the principals to be more effective and efficient they need to be emotionally intelligent (Antanakis et al 2009). In such an environment teaching and learning flourish.

School-wide professional capacity includes teacher leadership, teaming, infrastructure, and school-wide pedagogy. Butler and Christie (1999) emphasise that the school leadership needs to provide opportunities for teachers, students, parents and community members to participate in running the schools. Leithwood et al. (2006) found in their study that collaborative leadership exerts a more profound influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed and shows that multiple-leadership is more effective than individual leadership. To support this, Hallinger and Heck (2010) are of the idea that distributed leadership is significantly related to growth in student learning.

So the principals’ responsibility for creating instructional climate cannot be underestimated, since it serves as the basis for effective teaching and learning to take place. To support this DoE (2008) states that the principals have a major responsibility for creating a climate that encourages high levels of performance and commitment from all who work in the school. Environments like that...
facilitate harmonious collaboration among principals and teachers, to review teaching practices with the goal of improving them, (Hansen & Lárusdóttir, 2015). Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) posit that creating an environment that encourages teacher learning as part of an instructional leadership role, is very important. Supportive and encouraging work environments enhance the development of teaching practices that increase and improve learner academic performance.

Hoadley (2007) argues that generally the direct involvement in instruction by the principal is among the least frequent activities, and one would expect this to be the case in South Africa. In the deep rural district like UMkhanyakude where the local libraries are insufficiently stocked with contemporary management and leadership textbooks, principals should be facing more serious challenges. The difference between schools in urban and rural area in South Africa is witnessed by Bush et al. (2013), when they posit that there is still a huge difference between schools in cities and those deep rural areas.

2.5 Principals’ leadership and stakeholders’ involvement in improving teaching and learning

The school has its origin in the parents’ desire to have specialised knowledge and skills transferred to their children, since modern life and a lack of information curb parental engagement and opportunities to equip their children with specialised knowledge. The schools are therefore held responsible and were established to endow their children to fulfil the parents’ calling (Van der Westhuizen, 2002). This clearly shows that the school works in partnership with the parents and the community at large.

Van der Westhuizen (2002) furthermore maintains that the state is the other body in partnership with the school. He says that its function is to exercise power and to see to it that justice is done through legislative and judicial laws. The DoBE at both the national and the provincial level create the policy, legal and regulatory framework, within which each school functions (Steyn, 2002). This policy framework aims at ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place. The
principal as a leader must ensure that these policies are in place and that they are in line with the Departmental policies.

The principal should take note that to improve the quality of teaching and learning, working very closely with the district officials is vital. As instructional leaders, they are not specialists in all the subjects. To draw the informed teacher development programme the principals need the support of the subject specialists.

With the advent of democratic government and its democratic principles, there was a paradigm shift in the way the schools were managed and governed in South Africa. Schools were declared as self-managed schools, to which power was decentralised (Naicker & Waddy, 2002). Xaba and Nhlapo (2014) posit that the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, like in many countries worldwide ushered in a school governance approach aimed at democratizing education through the participation of all stakeholders by way of the decentralization of decision making to schools.

Decentralisation has its origin from the belief that the state cannot control schools, but should share its power with the stakeholders, particularly those closer to the school. Van Wyk (2012) maintains that this is based on the belief that if the school and the community collaborate in making decisions, healthy relationships and true mutual responsibility will develop. Such relationship will give birth to an environment that will enhance teaching and learning.

Decentralisation of authority broadened the work of the principal, as mentioned above that, it is no longer good enough for principals to be good administrators, as it was the case with the apartheid education system, and they are now expected to be proactive leaders and managers (Naicker & Waddy, 2002). This decentralisation of power shifted the centre of power in the school, from the principal’s office to the whole school community. Leadership no longer exists only in the principal’s office. Leadership is now distributed and shared among all the relevant stakeholders, hence participative leadership is emphasised (Hayward, 2008).

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 mandates the establishment of democratically elected School Governing Bodies (SGBs) comprise parent and educator representatives, including learner representatives in secondary schools (Xaba & Nhlapo, 2014). This Act also mandates the
School Governing Body to promote the best interest of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at school, and to support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional duties (Heystek, 2001 & Naidu et al., 2008). Xaba and Nhlapho (2014) posits that the core function of the governing body is to promote the educational interest of the school and eventually that of the learners.

The introduction of School Governing bodies does not change the fact that the school principal is the leader, but the principals need to understand that leadership now is no longer their sole responsibility, but it is shared responsibility (DoE, 2008, Hoyle & Wallace, 2008, Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood et al. (2006), where all the stakeholders are cordially invited (Pukey, 2006; Stoll, et al, 2003), and involved in decision making (Maxwell, 2007; Naicker & Waddy 2002; Hoyle & Wallace,2005; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood, et al., 2006, Browe- Ferrigno & Johnson-Fusarelli, 2005; Masitsa, 2005; Kafka, 2016). The South African School’s Act (SASA) created a whole new approach to learning, managing and governing schools. This new approach requires the principals to change the way they think about their roles and responsibilities in schools (Steyn, 2002).

In South Africa though the introduction of School Governing Bodies, is part of complying with the democratic principles, the challenge is that many parents and school personnel have a little or no experience in school governance, and there has been insufficient preparation for Governing Body’s taking on governance roles and responsibilities (Hoadley, 2007). Despite all that as part of leading people the principal is still responsible to develop a shared purpose and direction, build and sustain effective teams and engage in shared leadership, facilitate productive and purposive work relationships (Hourani & Stringer, 2015). It is for this reason that Alobiedat (2010) posits that outstanding leadership has remained the key characteristic of outstanding school performance. If one seeks quality results in school performance one must ensure its presence and that potential leader development is given high priority.
Knapp, et al. (2010) see leadership as the shared work and commitments that shape the direction of a school and its learning improvement agendas, and that engage effort and energy in pursuit of those agendas, since the School Governing Body is the most crucial part of the school’s functionality, whose functions contribute positively to good school governance. School principals as leaders are required to work in a democratic and participatory ways to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education for learners, (Naicker & Waddy, 2002).

For people to render their best, they need to feel that they are treated with dignity and respect, (Stoll et al. 2006; Deventer & Kruger, 2008). People need to feel that they are treated as human beings who are valuable, capable and responsible; so are the members of the School Governing Body. The school principals have a responsibility to cordially invite the Governing Body members to school’s decision making. Stakeholders treated in this manner easily participate in decision making. Steyn, (2002) emphasise that the school leadership need to provide opportunities for teachers, students, parents and community members to participate in running the schools. Therefore, the principal leadership is largely about influencing the behaviour of others to achieve quality results, (Bush, 2003; Hoyle & Wallaace 2005; Engels et al., 2008; Hayward, 2008).

Parental involvement cannot only happen in the form governance through the Governing Body; it can also take place through individual parental involvement. Alobiedat (2010) agrees with this when he states that parental involvement in the life of the school has a positive influence upon learners’ progress and development. Parents can do this through educational visits and attending parents’ meetings to discuss learner progress, as well as involvement in learners’ homework, helping learners to have access to books for reading and monitoring learners’ written amount of work at home.

The principals as leaders have a responsibility to invite parents to this process of taking part in the instructional leadership, which at the same time enhances the distributed leadership at school. Leithwood et al. (1996) claim that this form of leadership has a greater influence on schools and learner achievement. Hallinger and Heck (2010) found that distributed leadership is significantly related to growth in student learning.
Van Deventer and Kruger (2008) argue that parental involvement does not happen spontaneously, as it calls for principals’ effort to bring it about. They insist that the principals have the responsibility to create an inviting school climate which should convey warmth and sincerity. Parents should feel welcome and comfortable when they visit the school. It is under such environment where parents will easily participate in decision making, which in turn will make them co-owners of the school. Once they co-own the school they will do their best to protect it and commit themselves toward the achievement of the school goals.

Steyn (2002) maintain that the school is an open system and as leader the principal must understand that the whole school system is dependent on the input from the outside environment. What happens in the community has great influence on teaching and learning in the classroom? If the community is violent, learners will bring violence within the school. If the community is full of social ills, like teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and HIV and AIDS, learners will also bring these with them to school. Despite all these, the principal as both the leader and the manager has a responsibility to ensure that, the school is brought closer to its vision and mission (Steyn, 2002), which is mostly the provision of quality education.

To manage and monitor the influence of the external environment and to deal with the social ill, that might impact the school negatively, the principal as invitational leader is expected to invite and work very closely with the other Departments like the South African Police Service, Department of Health, Department of Social Development and the Department of Correctional Services. SAPS must be invited to conduct crime awareness campaigns within the school, since sometimes it is the very learners who threaten the safety of the school, who bring dangerous weapons into the school (DoE, 2015).

The social ills like drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and HIV and AIDS also impact the school performance negatively. The principals as leaders need to understand that they cannot deal with these social ill alone. The principal needs to invite support from other departments and NGOs. The Department of Health can help the school in dealing with teenage pregnancy and issues of HIV and AIDS. This department can also help the school in dealing with drug abuse and their impact
on humans’ lives. The Department of Social Development should also be invited to school when dealing with orphans and vulnerable learners (DoE, 2015).

The support given by these sister departments is indirect, but directly affects what happens in the classroom. So the involvement of all these stakeholders is vital for effective teaching and learning to take place. The involvement of all these stakeholders calls for principals who display initiative, being proactive and committed visionaries to the welfare of the school.

**2.6 Conclusion**

The above-mentioned discussion puts clearly that quality leadership is necessary for the improvement of learner achievement. It is interesting to note that outstanding leadership has remained the key characteristic of outstanding school performance. Principals should understand that every key area within their leadership role is directed at the promotion of quality teaching and learning (DoE, 2008). The principal as the leader needs to understand that the leaders’ effectiveness lies in distributing leadership and shared decision making. All the stakeholders will take part in leadership only if the principal has cordially invited them; make them feel that they are co-owners of the school and that they are capable, valuable and responsible as human beings. Teaching and learning flourish in such a school climate, thus learner achievement is improved.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter sought to explain methodology and procedures used to guide data collection for this study. It was in this chapter that the plan about how the data were acquired and the methods used to collect and analyze that data are spelled out. This chapter also shares the methods used to answer the research questions. Walonick, (2018) maintains that a well-defined problem points to the method of investigation the researcher used to explore data in order to answer the research questions.

To remind the reader this study investigated the role of school principals in bringing about quality results at schools in the UMkhanyakude District. Mantzoukas (2008) categorizes research studies into two, namely descriptive and causal. Descriptive studies emphasize the understanding through looking closely at peoples’ actions, words and records, while causal studies examine patterns of meanings emerging from the data, which are often presented in the participants’ own words. Furthermore, Kumar (2014) emphasizes that the main purpose of descriptive studies is to describe what is prevalent with respect to the issues or the problem understudy. Looking at the nature of this study, the research method employed was descriptive.

The data explored in this study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- How does the principals’ leadership role influence the learner achievement?
- How could principals practically embrace the Constitutional values in their leadership role?
- What should the principals do to involve all stakeholders participating in the school’s decision making?
- How could the principal improve the classroom instruction?

While the aim of this study was to investigate the role of the principals in bringing about quality results in schools at UMkhanyakude District, to reiterate the objectives of this study as presented in Chapter one as follows:
To investigate the principals’ influence on the learner achievement;
To determine how principals practically embrace constitutional values in their leadership role;
To identify the leadership styles principals employ to facilitate participation of stakeholders in decision making; and
To determine the principal’s role in improving the classroom instruction.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

This qualitative methodology was chosen in the light of the purpose of the study, the kind of information that was required and the available resources (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Interpretivist model was used in this study since it is concerned with understanding the world as is it from subjective experiences, such as interviews or participant observation that rely on subjective relationship between the researcher and the subject (Creswell 2009). Most of the data in this study was drawn from both primary and secondary schools’ principals, was about their roles in bringing about improved results at schools.

Creswell (2009:4) furthermore states that, “Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning the individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problem”. In this study the researcher had employed this interpretivist model as it had enabled her to understand in depth relationships of human beings to their environment and the part of those people play in creating the social fabric of which they are part, as far as the topic of the study was concerned (McQueen 2002)

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Purposive sampling has been employed for this study, since it enabled the researcher to select the individuals whom the researcher has felt that they would best answer the research questions. Kumar (2014) posits that the researchers only go to those people who in their opinion are likely to have the required information and who are willing to share it with the researcher. In qualitative
research participants are carefully selected for inclusion, based on the possibility that each participant will expand the variability of the sample (De Vaus, 2010; Newman, 2014).

Furthermore, Gray (2009) emphasizes that in purposive sampling the researcher deliberately selects the subject against one or more traits to give what is believed to be a representative sample. The researcher has done sampling based on judgment, and the researcher was confident that the chosen sample was truly representative of the entire population. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) argue that in purposive sampling the samples are chosen, because they are likely to be knowledgeable about the phenomenon the researcher is investigating. The researcher deliberately selected individuals whom in her opinion would supply data that would appropriately answer the study question.

The school principals for both primary and secondary schools of uMkhanyakude District were believed to be the best samples, as leaders they were likely to be knowledgeable about the topic, the researcher was investigating. Nine Principals were interviewed four from primary and five secondary schools. The researcher had intended to conduct the interviews on six primary schools and six secondary schools’ principals, but unfortunately only four principals from primary and five from secondary schools were available for interviews.

In the selection of the target samples, performance of each school was taken into account. The inclusion of the primary schools was on the basis that the learner’s background information gained in primary school determines the learner performance in the secondary schools. The researcher wanted to have a closer view and observation of the leadership roles of these primary schools’ principals as compared to leadership roles of the secondary schools’ principals. During the sampling process, the researcher ensured that the representativeness of population the researcher wanted to draw a conclusion from was also taken into account (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Van Wyk (2012) states that research design is the overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems to pertinent and empirical research. It articulates what data is required, what
methods are going to be used to collect and analyze this data and how all of this is going to answer the research question. Walonick, (2018) posits that every research design begins with the research question. Research questions are the single most important component of the study, since initial ideas are translated into a feasible educational research (Bordage & Dawson, 2003).

Moreover, Mantzoukas (2007) argues that in qualitative studies, research questions have an additional value. They determine the manner in which the study is conducted, so the research design in this study clearly states, what data were required, what methods were used to collect and analyze this data, and how all of these had answered the research questions. That is why Van Wyk (2012) further maintains that a well-defined problem points to the method of investigation.

This study was descriptive, since it answers the how question and had aimed at investigating the role of the principals in bringing about quality results in schools in the UMkhanyakude District. Qualitative research develops a general focus of inquiry that helps to guide the discovery of what is to be known about some social phenomena (Maykut & Morehouse, 1999).

Kumar (2014) describes qualitative research as the research which has its base on philosophical position, which is broadly ‘interpretivist’ in the sense that it concerns itself with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced. In addition, Kumar (2014) posits that in qualitative research, methods of data generation are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced. It is concerned with how people perceive particular aspects of life and what is their attitude towards it (Wyse, 2011). Kumar (2014) posits that qualitative research adheres to the concept of respondents’ concordance whereby the researcher makes every effort to seek agreement of the respondents with the interpretation, presentation of the situations, experiences, perceptions and conclusion.

Concurring with Kumar (2014), Denzing and Lincoln (2017) posit that qualitative research is multi method in focus, it involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter, meaning that the researchers interpret the phenomenon terms of the meaning people bring to them. It underscores understanding by looking very closely at people’s actions and behaviors, while aiming to discover patterns which emerge after this close observation.
So in this study a qualitative research method was employed, because the researcher wished to understand and describe the meaning, experiences, beliefs and values of school principals in their daily execution of their work as leaders, with the aim of bringing about improved learner achievement.

3.5 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Van Wyk (2012) maintains that the research methodology concerns itself with, research processes, the tools and the procedures to be used to collect and analyze the information. The researcher at the same time needs to be aware that there is no one best method of research that can be employed to address all situations, but the researcher chooses from a variety of techniques, depending on the research questions to be explored, time available and costs.

As inferred above that this study is descriptive in nature; descriptive studies make use of qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is helpful to describe or answer questions about particular, localized contexts and the perspectives of a particular group toward events, beliefs or practices (Kamal, 2014). Pace (2012) stipulates qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspects of social life. It is employed if the researcher intends to uncover trends, thought and opinions and delve deeper into the problem of a particular group of people. Maykut and Morehouse (1999) argue that in qualitative research personal meaning is tied to context in data collection.

Furthermore, Patton and Cochran (2002) stipulate that qualitative data collection employs qualitative methods to collect that data. This study has used qualitative methods like interviews and observations. Interviews were the appropriate method of collecting personal and detailed information.

The researcher employed observation also as part of the method of data collection. Observation is the selection and recording of behaviors of people in their natural environment. Sandelowski
(2000) maintains that observation of behavior is thought to be more objective than self-reports of behaviors and it is often seen as the criterion measure, against which self-report is judged. Sometimes participants fail to divorce their perception from facts and what they know at times clouds what is actually happening (Briggs & Coleman, 2007). Through this method the researcher was able to collect data on the wide range of behaviors, captured the variety of interactions and openly explored the individual behavior. With this method the researcher was able to reconcile what the participant said when responding to research questions during face to face interviews and what they were actually doing.

3.6 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

According to Surrey Library (2012) qualitative data analysis is done through content analysis. Content analysis is a procedure for the categorisation of verbal or behavioural data, for purposes of classification, summarisation and tabulation. Analysis of data in this study involved noting patterns and consistencies in data from respondents, while also observing similarities and differences between individual narratives. Once interviews had been transcribed the coding of data commenced. The analysis involved thorough reading of the notes to identify themes and sub-themes.

Creswell, (2009) states that in qualitative research data analysis begins when one has accumulated a sub-set of the data, providing opportunities for the salient aspects of the phenomenon under study to begin to emerge. Patton and Cochran (2002) describe this as thematic analysis where the researcher looks across all the data collected to identify the common issues that recur, and identifies the main themes that summarize all the views that have been collected. This is the most common method for descriptive qualitative study.

Interpretive research studies people as they create and associate their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings as they interact with the world around them, therefore interpretive researchers attempt to understand phenomena through accessing the meaning the participants communicate to them (Kamal, 2014). So in this study the researcher had studied all the data collected, identified
common ideas and tried to understand and interpret the meanings the participants assigned to the leadership role of the school principal in bringing about quality results in schools, in the UMkhanyakude district.

The framework for qualitative data analysis was also used which is consistent with the interpretivist approach. This approach offers a systematic approach to collecting, organizing and analyzing data from the respondents. The three components of this approach which occur concurrently throughout the data analysis are “data reduction”, “data display” and “drawing and verifying conclusions” which assist in developing propositions. Initial coding that involves “putting tags, names or labels against the pieces of data” is referred to as “descriptive” codes. These codes are valuable in initiating analysis, in enabling the researcher to get a “feel’ for the data (Miles & Hubermann, 1998:205).

In this study the therefore as a researcher, having transcribed data from interviews, analyzed data while noting patterns and consistencies in data from respondents, observed similarities and differences between respondents’ narratives. I thereafter put name tags on pieces of data collected that was coding. The researcher then thoroughly read the notes to identify themes and sub-themes and categorized them accordingly.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Munro (2011) defines ethics as a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or a group and which is widely accepted, and offers rules and behavioral expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students. Since the researcher has the responsibility to participants, Beauchamp and Childress (2012) posit that ethics protect participants and ensure that their information remains confidential. So in this study the researcher has taken into account that the participants are protected and that the information they have shared remains as confidential as possible.
The University Research Ethics Policy defines research ethics as the principles and practices that guide the ethical conduct of research. These should embody respect for the rights of others who are directly or indirectly affected by the research. Such rights include rights of privacy and confidentiality, protection from harm, giving informed consent, access to information pre- and post-research, and due acknowledgement. Ethical conduct in research also includes the avoidance of inflicting any suffering of any kind, and protection of the environment.

The researcher has engaged with the university’s policy and procedures on research ethics, and its policy and procedures on managing acts of plagiarism, and the researcher understands the grounds of their consent. The supervisors and the researcher have considered and discussed the ethical issues that arise from this research.

The research did not fall into any category that requires special ethical obligation. Only the school principals in UMkhanyakude will be involved as participants in this study. The letter seeking permission to conduct research was forwarded to the schools identified and the Department of Education. The research did not create any conflict of interest, real or perceived.

The researcher has read the university policy and procedure on research ethics and its policy and procedures. Therefore, the researcher undertook to:

- respect the dignity, safety and well-being of the participants, and also respect anonymity and confidentiality
- reference her work accurately according to her chosen reference technique.
- seek ethical clearance certificate from the university of Zululand Research Ethics Committee to allow this study to progress
- give each participants concern form and covering letter that explain the purpose and nature of research;
- keep the information collected save and confidential; and
- conduct the research and produce the dissertation, subject to normal supervisory and collegial assistance.
Should circumstances emanate that could compromise ethical obligation, the researcher would disclose them to the supervisor and appropriate actions in terms of relevant university policy would be taken.

3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Qualitative data are collected through unstructured form of data collection but it remains important to ensure that data analysis is reliable and its validity is safeguarded. Validity is simply defined as the accuracy or truthfulness of the scientific findings (Leung 2005). Furthermore, Leung (2005) argues that a valid study should demonstrate what actually exists and a valid instrument should measure what it aims to measure.

Validity and reliability are ideas that help to establish the truthfulness, credibility, or believability of findings (Gray, 2009). Validity is taken as the important element for consideration in research. Neuman (2014) posits that validity indicates how well the conceptual and operational definitions mesh with one another; the closer they fit the higher is the measurement validity. Validity is defined in Kumar (2014) as the extent to which a concept, conclusion or measurement is well-founded and corresponds accurately to the real world. For qualitative study to be considered trustworthy, it must address the issues of validity. Authenticity must be emphasized through giving fair, honest and balanced access of social life from the viewpoint of a participant. This implies that validity rest in the collection and analysis technique.

To ensure that the truthfulness of the finding is maximized in this study, both face and content validity were employed. According to Holden (2010) face validity refers to the relevance of the study as it appears to test participants. In the same vein, face validity measures what it is supposed to measure. While content validity refers to is to how well the test measures the behavior for which it is intended, (Shuttleworth, 2017). With face validity The researcher used own judgment and examined and modified each question until the researcher was satisfied that it was an accurate measure of the desired construct, while with content validity the researcher tried to ensure that the instrument, which was interviewed with open-ended questions, as well as observation provides adequate coverage of the topic.
According to Leung (2005) reliability refers to ability of the method of inquiry to yield consistently the same results over a repeated testing period. Leung (2005) also posits that reliability concerns itself with, consistency, stability and repeatability of the participants account as well as the researcher’s ability to collect and record information accurately. Walonick (2018) simply maintains reliability is synonymous to repeatability. If the research tool bears the same results repeatedly that instrument is said to be reliable.

Healy and Perry (2000) postulate that a high reliability of response is obtained by providing all respondents with the exact same set of questions. In this study the reliability of data provided was ensured by using the very same technique Healy and Perry (2000) suggest. All respondents who were school principals were provided with similar sets of questions which concern their role as leaders. The researcher also read and analyzed all information provided by respondents. Patton and Cochran (2002) also maintain that the other way of ensuring the reliability of data provided is to analyze the whole set of data.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored methodology and procedures used to collect qualitative data in order to answer the research question. It also spelled out the plan about the data that were required, the methods used to collect and analyze that data. It also clearly defined the sampling procedure, employed to select the target population. Lastly it examined the criteria the researcher used to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected.
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS, DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored methodology, procedures, sampling and research instruments used to collect qualitative data in order to answer the research questions. This chapter analyses, interprets and summarises the data collected through interviews and observation. The above-mentioned research instruments were used to collect data to answer the following research questions:

- How does the principal’s leadership role influence the learner achievement?
- How could principals practically embrace the Constitutional values in their leadership role?
- What should the principals do to involve that all stakeholders participate in the schools’ decision making?
- How could the principal improve the classroom instruction?

An analysis of data was presented under four themes, themes which are based on the following objectives of study:

- To investigate the principal’s influence on the learner achievement;
- To determine how principals practically embrace constitutional values in their leadership role;
- To identify the leadership styles principals employ to facilitate participation of stakeholders in decision making; and
- To determine the principal’s role in improving the classroom instruction.
Table 4.1: The general background information of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s coding</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Teaching experience</th>
<th>Experience as the principal</th>
<th>Experience as deputy principal</th>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>B. PaEd, B.Tech and ACE</td>
<td>33 years</td>
<td>27 years</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB</td>
<td>STD, BA, B.Ed (Hons) ACE (Leadership and Management), Certificate in Learners with Special Needs and PMDP</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>SPTD, FDE and B Ed (Hons)</td>
<td>22 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>SPTD</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>SPTD. ACE and B.Ed.( Hons)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10 years and 5 months</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PF</td>
<td>SSTD, B PaEd, B.Ed,(Hons)and ACE(Leadership and Management)</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>STD, ACE(Academic) ACE(Management and Leadership)</td>
<td>21 years</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PH</td>
<td>STD,HED( academic)</td>
<td>22 years</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>STD, FDE, B.Ed(Hons)</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information in the table above indicates that 100% of the principals had more than 20 years’ experience in teaching and 100% of them had more than 10 years’ experience in leadership as both the principals and deputy principals. Twenty-two percent (22.3%) of these principals had less than
5 years’ experience as principals, 44.3% of them had more than 10 years’ experience as principal and 33.3% had experience ranging between five and seven years. School leadership is not an easy thing to do; it develops daily, but not in a day and it is multifaceted (Maxwell, 2010), therefore, for the principal to be effective it requires much seasoning and grooming.

UMkhanyakude is the district in the far, remote area, declared as the poorest of the poor, but about 77.7% of the principals had post graduate degrees in leadership either in an Advanced Certificate in Education or a Bachelor’s of Education Honours or both. It needs to be borne in mind that this district does not have even one educator’s training institution, so to obtain these qualifications principals sacrificed a lot of their time, energy and their money travelling to institutions far away from their residential places.

With the new laws and policies in education an effective principal is the one who is a lifelong learner, the one who is also able to develop and train the educators in new policies and the ever-changing curriculum (Steyn, 2002). Maxwell (2010) concurs with the idea of successful leaders as lifelong learners where the process of learning is on-going as a result of self-discipline and perseverance. The sacrifice made by these principals to develop themselves, without the support of the Department, is huge. What is more disappointing being that their qualifications are not recognised as part of their job, as far as salary is concerned.

The performance of the principal who had much experience was far different from the one who had just been appointed. Both PA and PK are high school principals; PA’s school since his appointment has always been in the District Top Ten Best Performing Schools and PK’s school since his appointment is in the most Bottom Ten poorly performing schools in the district. Furthermore, the performance of the principal with intensive study in leadership and management was far different from the principal having only a Bachelor’s in education. PB and PD are both primary school principals, PD only has a Senior Diploma in Primary Education, while PB has a number of qualifications. This has far-reaching implications for their school results analysis which shows that PB’s school in most cases outperforms PD’s school.

Furthermore, the researcher has observed that PB’s primary school is one of the best performing primary schools and the secondary school it feeds is also one of the best performing secondary
schools in the area. On the other hand, PD’s primary school does not perform well, so is the secondary school it feeds. This has made the researcher to believe that what the learner learns in primary school serves as the background of what the learner learns at secondary school.

Looking at gender issues, there is no much difference between the performance of males and females, Both PA and PF are high school principals, both leading High schools. PF is a female principal while PA is a male; both of their schools compete in the District Top Ten Best Performing schools. The researcher had taken cognizance of the fact that experience does not always guarantee best performance by the principal. This was the case again with the recently mentioned principals. PA has 27 years’ experience while PF has six years’ experience as the principal, but their school’s performance is almost the same.

With this information the researcher had come to a conclusion that as much as experience was necessary, in managing and leading schools, with the ever-changing curriculum in the South African education system so was lifelong learning. The formal University or College qualification is good, as is shown in Table 4.1 that many of the Principals in UMkhanyakude had post graduate qualifications in leadership and management, but this was not enough. Formal institutions’ qualifications do not directly address the contextual UMkhanyakude School’s needs. Specific training programmes for principals, relevant to the needs of schools in this district was a necessity.

4.2. Themes under structured interview

Table 4.2: Illustration of the way in which data were coded (suggested theme and sub-themes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The role of the principal and its influence on learner achievement</td>
<td>• Positional influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Formulation and articulation of school vision and mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Setting school goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Influence through emotional intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Influence using invitational leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The principals’ leadership styles</td>
<td>• Involvement of other stakeholders as the Constitutional demand to put into practice the democratic values, like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
human dignity, participation, representation and transparency
- Stakeholders’ involvement as part of distributed leadership and shared decision making
- Stakeholders’ involvement and emotional intelligence
- Stakeholders’ involvement and invitational leadership

- Instructional leadership role of the school principal
- Principals as the lead professionals
- Instructional leadership at the centre of improving classroom instruction
- Instructional leadership as the base of teacher development
- Relationship between instructional and invitational leadership
- Instructional leadership role of the principal and setting of the conducive learning environment

- Principals practically embrace the Constitutional values
- Constitutional values: Democracy, Human dignity, equality freedom, transparency, and justice
- Values as central part of principal management and leadership
- Values as means of achieving school vision and mission
- Values as the direction setter
- Establishment of values as pillar number one for leadership
- Principal’s personal values and the school values

- Role of the principal in bringing about quality results
- Creating and articulating vision for academic success
- Creating a climate conducive to teaching and learning
- Distributing leadership to all stakeholders
- Improving instruction.

### 4.3 Illustration of the way in which data were coded

**Table 4.3: Illustration of the way in which data were coded**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Perception of participants on the principals’ leadership roles and his power of influence. | Positional influence  
Creation of a healthy school environment  
Distributed leadership  
Curriculum management and monitoring  
Setting school’s vision and mission |
| Perception of participants regarding the skills the principal should use to involve all stakeholders in decision making. | Management of human and financial resources  
Ensures proper planning |
| --- | --- |
| Consultation with all the stakeholders  
Application of invitational leadership  
Communication and listening  
Shared decision making  
Distributed and transformational leadership  
Being appreciative  
Setting clear goals  
Delegation and coordination of duties |
| Perception of participants regarding the instructional leadership role of the school principal. | Curriculum management and monitoring  
Plan, implement and monitor class visits  
Prioritising teacher development  
Encourage learner-centred methods  
Participative and shared planning of classroom activities  
Setting of high performance standards by both educators and learners  
Ensure that period register is in place and it is monitored  
Be clear about what is happening in the classroom  
Ensure that teaching and learning material is available |
| Perception of participants regarding the Constitutional values embraced by principals in their day-to-day leadership activities | Human dignity  
Equality  
Application of human right  
Transparency and consultation  
Responsibility and accountability  
Democracy  
Honesty and Ubuntu  
Professionalism  
Altruism  
Teamwork and respect |
| Perception of participants regarding the role of the principal in bringing about quality results. | Proper and quality administration  
Proper staff, financial and curriculum management  
Display of professionalism  
Establishment of functional school committees  
Visionary leadership with good planning  
Establishment of monitoring and support system.  
Proper usage of resources and staff appraisal  
Commitment and dedication  
Stakeholders’ involvement and networking with better performing schools  
Provision of curriculum support material  
Workshop on curriculum related  
Provision of teaching aids, resources, and curriculum support  
Workshop on curriculum related issues  
No support for principals  
School visits on fault finding mission |
4.3.1 The role of the principal and its influence on learner achievement

Most of the participants were of the view that principal as the leader plays the very important role in determining quality results though few could explicitly explain how principals use their power of influence to direct the course of teaching and learning. Participants saw the principals as the ones who use their positional power to achieve successful teaching and learning. Here the principals are seen as the authoritative figures that use their position to influence teaching and learning that would bring about quality results at school.

The responses of the participants about the leadership role of the principal and its influence on learner achievement are shared next.
PA claimed:

*The principal is the one who sets the tone of the school, and leads by example.*

PC was of the same opinion when she maintained:

*The principal is by virtue of his position in the school, both an exemplary and influential figure to learners and educators. His communication, dress code, discipline, etc. shape the learners’ attitude.*

These responses clearly imply that the principals influence the behaviour of the whole school and they should be very careful of what they say and do. Maxwell’s (2010) definition of leadership is that, leadership is the process by which school leaders direct and influence educators and learners to achieve educational excellence. He concurs with this idea of positional influence when he maintains that leadership is an influence that comes with the title. Although it is the teacher performance that directly affects student performance, it is the quality of leadership which matters the most in determining the motivation of teachers and the quality of their teaching (Vidon & Grasset, 2003).

PG and PI maintained that the principals’ influence lies in the fact that the principals are visionary leaders.

PG posited:

*The principal must be an effective planner, ensuring the availability of school vision and mission.*

While PI stipulated:

*Have the vision about the school and engage the SMT in sharing that vision.*

PG’s comment on the availability of vision did not reveal information on how the principal could use it to influence learner achievement. Having the vision as the principal is not enough; at least PI, stated that the vision must be shared with the School Management Team (SMT).

Leithwood et al. (2004) posit having the clear vision is the single most important contribution that the principal can make for the future success of the school. The principal must ensure that the vision is achievable and challenging to stretch a little further than what was done before. Clear
vision increases both educators’ and leaders’ cooperation and motivation to achieve the school’s set goals. It gives a reason for the existence and the operation of the school.

In fact, the vision must be shared with all the stakeholders: this includes parents, learners, educators and the School Governing Body. Mokoqo (2013) elucidates this perception when he posits that effective principals mark their starting point by working tirelessly on developing and articulating a school vision that reflects high standards of performance and also advocates for the acceptance of the vision by all the stakeholders. Furthermore, Van Rockall (2008) maintains that successful principals facilitate the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Bush et al. (2013) argue that vision setting is increasingly regarded as an essential component of effective leadership. Outstanding leadership has outstanding vision for their schools, the vision which is communicated in the manner that commitment is secured among the members. The vision should be articulated in a compelling way and be implanted in all the structures such that all the stakeholders are able to make sense of it (Kotter, 2011) and then own that vision as theirs. Van der Westhuizen (2002) maintains that through the power of influence the principal convinces, inspires binds and influences the behaviour of teachers to work towards the achievement of the school vision.

Only two of the nine respondents saw the distribution of and sharing leadership with other stakeholders by the principal as an important tool with which the principal could influence learner achievement.

PC maintained:

Involving all the educators in the smooth running of the school, can help. Involving the parents in their children’s education, is valuable and by doing that the principal would be influencing learners’ achievement.

PB’s response concerning shared leadership was not clear whether the principals interact with all stakeholders informing them about the decision the principal had taken or involving them in
decision making. With PB’s response one is tempted to believe that involvement of parents in children’s education means imposing decisions already taken on matters that concerned children.

The school principal as leader is required to work in a democratic and participatory way to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education for learners (Naicker & Waddy, 2002). For both the learners and educators to give their best, they need to feel that they are treated with dignity (Stoll, et al, 2003; Deventer & Kruger, 2008). The fact that the participants did not mention the importance of participative and distributed leadership as ways in which the principals could extend their influence to others, especially the educators, is worrying. Distributing leadership enhances cooperation among stakeholders.

It is interesting to note that more than 50% of the respondents were of the opinion that curriculum management and monitoring are aspects which the principal can employ to influence learner achievement. It is very important that the principal knows what is obtained in the classroom, although it has been mentioned above that the principal’s influence comes the second after that of the educators, since educators are the ones with direct contact with learners in the classroom. This is how one of the experienced principals put the importance of the principal’s role in curriculum management.

PD asserted:

He or she involves herself/himself in curriculum development where educators are encouraged to plan and design teaching and learning activities in an integrative and active manner. She/he creates a learning environment i.e. the classroom atmosphere that encourages the exchange of ideas, questions and experiences.

The setting of goals and the motivation of educators to achieve the set goals was seen by more than 30% of respondents as one of the important areas with which the principal influences the learner achievement. This was how the respondents articulated their views on this point:
PB claimed:

*He is the one who supposed to formulate the attainable goals, which will enable the educators to perform their tasks.*

PF maintained:

*A good leader sets goals and motivates educators to work towards achievement of those goals.*

PH posited:

*The way the principal sets the goals to be achieved by the school directly impacts on the teacher performance. The principal said you must motivate your staff, learners and parents to the extent that everyone is eager to work towards achieving the goals set for the school.*

PI postulated:

*Setting attainable goals motivate and inspire both learners and educators to work towards the achievement of the goals.*

The achievement of the set goals is facilitated if all the stakeholders concerned are involved in goal setting. Interpreting and sharing the goal by the principal motivates both educators and the learners and help them to make sense of their work. The principal must be able to make all those concerned to work willingly towards the achievement of the set goals (Maxwell, 2010).

Effectiveness of leadership in bringing about improved learner performance largely depends on the principal’s ability to use the power of influence effectively, the principal’s ability to involve all the stakeholders in decision making and make them feel that the decision is theirs and they would want to see it implemented (Maxwell, 2010; Naicker & Waddy 2002; Hoyle & Wallace, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood et al. 2006; Fusarelli, 2005; Masitsa, 2005; Broune-Ferrigno & Fusarelli, 2005; Kafka, 2016).

Yukl (2002) sees leadership as the process of social influence. This influence is exerted by the principal towards parents, learners and educators to structure activities and relationships within the school. The purpose of this intentional influence is the realisation of the school common goals, thus leadership becomes the process of bending the motivations and actions of others to achieve
certain goals. Maxwell (2010) simply states it well, when he posits that leadership is nothing else but influence.

### 4.3.2 Principals’ leadership skills

During the interview the school principals displayed different perceptions on the skills the principals should use to involve all the stakeholders in decision making. In the above discussion it was made clear that leadership is no longer confined to the principals’ office, but must be distributed to and be shared with all the stakeholders concerned. Naicker and Waddy (2002) posit that for the principal to be more effective they are required to work in a democratic and participatory way to build relationship and ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education to learners. By so doing the principals would be multiplying their influence. Since involving other stakeholders is so important in enhancing the principals’ influence on learner achievement, it is vital important that the principals have the necessary skills to involve other stakeholders in decision making.

The failure and the success of the school largely depend on the leadership style employed by the principal. Kariuki et al. (2016) stipulate that the principal is the major component in the school leadership and management whose ability and skills, personality and professional competence largely determine the tone and efficiency of the school.

When asked to mention skills principals should use to involve all stakeholders participate in the school’s decision making process, participants responded as follows:

PA asserted:

*Principals’ consultation with all stakeholders is essential in the processes of leading and managing the school, to allow inclusive decision making, while delegating also remains the skill the principal should possess to release the power of decentralised decision making. The principals should invite innovations and create an environment that is open and transparent to*
all stakeholders to allow access to decision making. Communication of decision and listening to the views of stakeholders and all community networking and partnership also facilitate involvement of stakeholders.

PC claimed:

*Communication skill plays a major role in decision making process. The principal has to communicate the school’s vision and mission statement to all the stakeholders so as to make them participate fully in school decision making process. Consultation and listening skills, reporting and feedback are all important for decision making process.*

PH asserted:

*The principal must be transparent, honest and give space for parents, learners, teachers and community to voice their opinions. The principal must appreciate any effort made by other role player. The principal must table reports regularly to all the stakeholders.*

The above responses allude to democratic leadership style of the school principals. The common point among all the principals was communication, though presented in different ways. From the principals’ responses it was clear that the most important skill the principals need is to have other stakeholders involved in decision making communication. Through communication the principal can invite or disinvite other stakeholders from involving themselves in decision making. PA put this clearly, when he said that the principal must be inviting, meaning that the principals should possess the skills which would make others want to come and work with them. Effective principals know that teachers are valuable assets of the school. They are therefore, to be treated with dignity and respect (Stoll, et al. 2013; Deventer & Kruger, 2008).

Stoll, et al. (2013) refers to this style of leadership as invitational leadership. They describe the invitational leader as the ones who treat others as valuable, capable and able. It is clear that if the principal places value on other stakeholders they will feel invited to decision making. Whatever the principals say to or about other stakeholders send the message, if the message places value to them they would be invited to work with the school principal towards the achievement of school goals. So it is important that the principal has good communication skills.
Democratic principles encourage participation, debate and dialogue, to emphasise that, respondents as follows:

PA postulated:

Principal should communicate the *decision and listening to the views of the stakeholders and the community.*

PF claimed that:

*The principal should be open to other people’s opinion.*

PI stipulated:

*The principal should listen to the views of others.*

These responses showed that the principals should not dictate their views and opinions to other stakeholders. Listening to the views and opinions of the stakeholders would mean that the principal values the stakeholders’ ‘contribution to school leadership’, thus making them co-leaders. Steyn (2002) emphasise that the school leadership needs to provide opportunities for teachers, students, parents and community members to participate in running the schools.

The above-mentioned responses also show that the principals should not be autocratic leaders; they must be people who listen to the views and opinions of other stakeholders (Van der Westhuizen, 2002). This will in turn result in stakeholders listening to the principal. Mokoqo (2013) maintains that if the principal engages in healthy dialogue where ideas of the staff are valued, the principal wins the support of the staff. The influence exerted by the principal is directional as it leads towards the realisation of the set school goals.

Still on the democratic leadership style of the school principal, the participants also had this to say:

*Principals, consultation with all stakeholders is essential in the processes of leading and managing the school, to allow inclusive decision making, while delegation also remains the skill principals should possess to release power of decentralised decision making that informs their final word (PA).*

and
Be a democratic and a transformational leader (PF).

The above responses indicate that the UMkhanyakude school principals were aware of the new themes in education which was brought about by the democratic government in South Africa. Naicker and Waddy (2002) maintain that the South African School’s Act created a whole new approach to learning, managing and governing schools. This new approach requires the principals to change the way they think about their roles and responsibilities in schools (Steyn, 2002). This implies that the principals have to take an invitational stance, inviting all the stakeholders in decision making, thus distributing their leadership.

Leithwood et al. (2006) ’study on the impact of school leadership led to the claim that it has greater influence on school and students when it is widely distributed and shows that multiple leadership is more effective than individual leadership. To support this, Hallinger and Heck (2010) maintain that distributed leadership is significantly related to growth in student learning.

4.3.3 The instructional leadership role of the school principal

It was so interesting to note that 100% of the respondents were of the idea that the principal should be hands-on regarding curriculum matter, though majority of them seemed to be not clear about the difference between curriculum management and instructional leadership. When asked to raise their views on the role of the principal in improving the classroom instruction, the principals responded as follows:

*Principals play a vital role in the classroom instructional process, through curriculum management. They must regularly visit teachers in their classroom to provide support and monitor their progress in providing quality teaching and learning. Principals must also create functional curriculum structures, within the school to monitor efficiency and quality classroom instruction and prioritise teacher development with the school (PA)*

It was so interesting to note that 100% of the respondents were of the idea that the principal should be hands-on regarding curriculum matter, although the principal’s involvement was approached
from a different perspective. The following respondents were of the idea that the principal should be directly involved in what is happening in the classroom. They had this to say:

and

*Principals should have class visits plan, implement it, and give feedback timeously to educators on regular basis. Written work reported on a template should be in place and should be reported on a weekly basis to the School Management Team (PG).*

The above principals’ responses depict the principals as people who are directly involved in classroom instruction. This is highly recommended; hence such principals are referred to as instructional leaders. Among the respondents, PA was the only one who highlighted the relationship between class visits and educator development. To support the above statement Hourani and Stringer (2015) and Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) stipulate that teacher development and supervision go hand in hand. The principal cannot supervise teachers without going to the class to observe teaching and learning. So if supervision of teaching and learning is successfully done, teacher development is also enhanced (Hansen & Lárusdóttir, 2015). Hourani and Stringer (2015) see the effective principal as the lead professional who is involved in teaching and learning. This means that principals are to move away from solely developing administrative competencies to foster learning, developing curriculum and enhance teacher effectiveness. (Hourani & Stringer, 2015).

Knapp, Michael, Copeland, Pleckie, Bradley and Honing (2010:4-6) and Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015:585) label it as, “learner-centered leadership,” “learning-focused leadership” and “leadership for learning.” Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) point out that a strong consensus is emerging that, whatever else they do, principals must be strong instructional leaders who are directly involved in the teaching and learning life of the school.

To further explain the principals’ role in improving instruction in the classroom, the respondents highlighted the following as responses:

PC posited:
The improvement of classroom instruction lies with every educator within the school and the principal being the supervisor. Each and every class should draft/craft the class rules, in collaboration with all the shareholders and should be implemented and respected by all.

PF maintained:

The school principal should have knowledge of the curriculum management. Principals are expected to know what educators do in classroom and they should work closely with Head of Department to monitor learner performance in the classroom and ensure that effective learning and teaching environment is established.

PF posited that:

The principal must ensure that policies such as class work and homework, classroom attendance and assessment and learners work monitoring policies are in place. The principal must see to it that contextual factors do not interfere with school functionality. The principal needs to ensure that resources such as furniture, textbooks and other teaching and learning material are available. The principal must see to it that discipline is maintained inside and outside the classroom.

The above participants’ responses revealed that principals ensure that a favourable teaching and learning environment is established for effective teaching and learning. According to Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) instructional leadership is when school principals underscore creating an environment that encourages teaching and learning. So the principals’ responsibility for creating an instructional climate cannot be underestimated, since it serves as the basis for effective teaching and learning to take place. To support this DoE (2008) states that the principal has a major responsibility for creating a climate that encourages a high level of performance and commitment from all who work in the school. Under such environments, principals and teachers work together, in a harmonious manner to review teaching practices with the goal of improving those (Hansen & Lárusdóttir, 2015).

Van der Westhuizen (2002) posits that the quality of human activity in an organization is greatly determined by the spirit which infuses that organization, so is the school. This means that the principal as the leader sets the tone for effective teaching and learning to take place. Both teachers
and learners give their best if they feel that the environment they work in is protective, hence PF maintained that the principal should ensure that discipline was maintained at school, since a disciplined environment facilitates teaching and learning.

The importance of the leadership role of the school principal on learner achievements cannot be denied though Leithwood et al. (2006) posit that leadership effects on student learning accounts for about ¼ of total direct and indirect effects on student learning, secondly only to classroom instruction. It is true that teachers directly impact learner achievement in the classroom, as it is where the actual teaching and learning takes place, but the truth also remains that principals have the primary responsibility to create condition conducive to learning for quality teaching and learning (Hoadley, 2007). The quality of teacher achievement in teaching and learning is determined by the leadership quality of the principal.

DoE (2008) maintains that at the center of the principal’s leadership role is a fundamental responsibility for the management of the curriculum, and the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning. At the center of all principals’ activities lies curriculum management, to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and to raise levels of learner achievement. This makes one to conclude that whatever activity the principal executes, it should be executed with great care, since all eventually impact what takes place in the classroom. So the principals as the lead professional (Hourani & Stringer, 2015) should make this their core function and main concern.

Dempster (2012) posits that school’s moral purpose is improvement in the lives of children and young people through learning. So the principal has a responsibility to ensure that what learners learn is of a good quality. Hansen and Lárusdóttir (2015) argue that improving student learning is the core task on which school principals should focus their attention. In addition to that they emphasize that it is very important for a principal to provide leadership in the area of teaching and learning, more specifically, leading development of the learning environment for students in order to better meet their needs. Clark (2012) contends that good teaching and learning are the school’s bottom line. So the principals as the lead professionals (Hourani & Stringer, 2015) should make this their core function and main concern.
4.3.4 Challenges principals encounter at schools

Naidu et al. (2013) argue that while the government attempted to redress the legacies of the apartheid regime, by declaring schools as self-managing institutions, principals were faced with the challenge of changing policies as well as ensuring that the full potential of every learner is unlocked to meet the needs of the changing society. This is due to the fact that principals were never prepared for this task. The poor results which were more evident in rural areas and the increasing number of schools being labelled as poor performing schools raised concern about whether principals had the required skills, knowledge and expertise to lead schools effectively in this challenging and complex environment (Naidu et al. 2013).

It was in this area where the vulnerability of UMkhanyakude District was displayed. From the responses of the principals working in this district one realised that it is really not easy to work in this area of the world as the school principal. Challenges presented by the respondents made one realise that being a principal in this area is not easy.

The following were the participants’ responses when asked to mention challenges faced by principals on daily bases in this District:

Late coming due to water scarcity problems in the area, absenteeism of learners during grant pay day, social ills factor, but which are minimal, a high rate of poverty in the area and high pregnancy which is observed all happen annually (PG).

PI posited: education with their unrealistic policies and financial constraints (PF) are all very
The first challenge is absenteeism; secondly it is late coming, thirdly it is learner pregnancy.
and Learner discipline, educators who are not passionate about their job, the department of education with their unrealistic policies and financial constraints (PF) are all very discouraging.

The above responses were from high school principals and the most common challenges encountered by these high school principals are absenteeism, late coming and teenage pregnancy. Looking at the above challenges one realises that they cannot be dealt with by the principal alone.
To deal with teenage pregnancy, the principal needed to involve other stakeholders, like the health department, parents and learners themselves. These challenges are multifaceted, besides involving other stakeholders the principal needs to be a very strong visionary leader and the crafted school vision should be articulated in a manner that it eventually becomes all the stakeholders’ vision.

Late coming and absenteeism can be dealt with by adhering to school policies, which are shared by all stakeholders concerned. Both learners and parents should be involved in crafting these policies. If these stakeholders are involved, they will eventually co-own them and want to see them implemented.

The new themes in education require that the school principals build participation and collaboration, develop their own capacity and accept responsibility for self-management (Naicker & Waddy, 2002). This points very clearly to the fact that effective implementation of new policies; with new democratic values require intensive training, firstly on understanding the implication of these values in their day-to-day work and then the application of the very same values in school life.

Some of the challenges mentioned above had their roots from the society, challenges like poverty stricken communities, late coming, absenteeism and teenage pregnancy. Some teenagers got pregnant, because they want to get money to curb poverty. They face these challenges on a daily basis. Late coming was the result of long distances travelled by learners to school. The department of Education’s intervention could make a difference here, and learner transport could be the solution.

With regard to absenteeism PG said that learners absent themselves in order to go to collect grants, while others attend prenatal clinics and all this is the result of teenage pregnancy. PF said some departmental policies are unrealistic, in other words they cannot be easily implemented in UMkanyakude District. Some learners travelled plus or minus 16 kilometres to and fro school. Some pregnant learners cannot travel such long distances daily on feet, without absenting themselves once or twice a week, even if they reach school, they come to school so tired, then effective learning hardly takes place. The Department of Education needs to reconsider or restructure the policy on learner pregnancy.

The participants furthermore mentioned the following as challenges they faced on daily basis:
Learner discipline and educators who are not passionate about their job (PF).

and

Lack of professionalism by some staff members, lack of discipline by some of the learners and you end up in a court room every day. Further poor participation and commitment by some of the parents and non-adherence to policies by staff members are disappointing (PH).

These were challenges which were within the reach of the principal; the principal needs empowerment to deal with these challenges. The principal should train teachers on professional behaviors. Shared policies on both learners and teacher behavior should be set in place and they should be strictly adhered to. Both teachers’ and learners’ code of conduct should clearly state the expected behavior and the consequences of failing to adhere to the expected norm.

With regard to poor participation and commitment by parents, the principal should use their emotional and invitational leadership styles. School principals as leaders are required to work in democratic and participatory ways to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education for learners (Naicker & Waddy, 2002). Effective principals know that parents are valuable assets to the school. They are therefore, to be treated with dignity and respect (Stoll, et al 2013; Deventer & Kruger, 2008). People give their best if they feel that the environment they work under is caring. Maxwell (2010) postulates that people do not care how much the principals know or how well educated they are, but their concern is on how he or she treats them. This means it is not the leader’s brain that touches people, but the leaders’ heart.

The challenge that still remained with UMkhanyakude District was that most of the parents were illiterate; they placed less value on the education of their children. Some though value education but they did not have what it takes to give effective support. Many of the learners in this district were without parents; they stayed with their grandparents who were too old to attend to school matters. These children were the ones who created disciplinary challenges at school.

When analysing the challenges experienced by UMkhanyakude District principals, one notices that challenges experienced by primary and high school’s principals are the same though they differ here and there. Primary school principals said nothing about teenage pregnancy and nothing
was said about learner absenteeism, though late coming in high school was a matter of concern. In high schools the challenges had their origins from home background; look at teenage pregnancy, late coming and absenteeism, while some have their origins from school community individuals like educators and parents. With the primary school most of the challenges have their origins from the departments and its policies. This was what the primary principals had said about challenges they encountered on their daily basis:

PB postulated:

Educator absenteeism, learners’ late coming, departmental workshops and disorganised meetings, lack of water, educator union meetings, parents taking learners to clinics, teachers taking long sick leaves are common occurrences. Dealing with overcrowding of learners in classrooms, fighting against drug abuse among learners and rape cases among the learners by other learners and by the community gangster and hooligans are shocking.

PD maintained:

I have a large workload and I end failing to achieve what is expected of me as I am the class teacher of intermediate phase with four subjects in each grade. I am expected to do administrative work and there are no support staff members. The PPN issue is creating problems, because even if you have two learners in the classroom you have to teach all the subjects.

PC stated:

Short notice meetings and workshops from clusters, circuits and districts are time-consuming. Meetings and workshops for educators and principals keep principals occupied. Union’s representatives, who are not cooperative, result in teaching and learning being disrupted. Parents visit the school without making appointments.

Most of the challenges mentioned above mostly had their origins from the department. These were challenges like overcrowded classrooms, post provisioning norms, principals having large classroom workloads, shortage of water in schools, shortage of professional qualified educators and meetings disrupt teaching and learning. The DoBE should do something about this. Policies
on principals’ workload should be revisited by the DoBE. Principals, educators and subject cluster meetings and workshops should be planned in advance, so that people concerned have time to organise themselves and plan for these meetings too.

With regard to drug abuse and rapes, though shocking that these happen in primary school, the principals need to create functional Safety and Security School Committees. These committees have representatives from different community members as it includes local iNduna, religious leaders, social workers, psychologist local policing forum and representatives from SAPS. With regard to parents who visit schools without appointments, these could be dealt with by making clear a shared policy on parental school visit days and hours. These are the challenges the principals could not deal with successfully on their own.

That is why the DoE, (2015) maintains that to manage and monitor the influence of the external environment and to deal with the social ill, that might impact the school negatively, the principal as invitational leader is expected to invite and work very closely with the other Departments like the South African Police Service, Department of Health, Department of Social Development and the Department of Correctional Services. South African Police Service (SAPS) must be invited to conduct crime awareness campaigns within the school, since sometimes it is the very learners who threaten the safety of other learners at school.

4.3.5 Constitutional values embraced by principals

The Constitution aims at creating society based on democratic values; the following are identified as the new values as embedded in the Constitution of South Africa namely democracy, equality, human dignity, participation, freedom and justice (Naicker & Waddy, 2002; Hayward, 2008; Naidu, et al. 2013). The Bill of Rights and the Constitution of South Africa challenged school principals to change from apartheid values to the values enshrined in the Constitution. Principals were to change the way they think about their roles and responsibilities in schools.
Educational leadership and management practices must now reflect the new principles and values as the new aims of management and leadership. That is why now leadership is to be shared and distributed among different role players within the school. Social justice and fundamental human rights which were totally neglected during the Apartheid era (Naicker & Waddy, 2002) are now to be made part and parcel of school’s policies and planning. Naidu et al. (2013) contend that the Bill of Rights and the South African School Act, 84 of 1996 also require the educational managers to change from apartheid values to values enshrined in the Constitution of the country.

With the advent of democracy, principals were expected to take note of new themes in education, amongst which, were the new principles and values of the education system, (Naicker & Waddy, 2002 and Naidu et al., 2013). It is very clear that for the principal to work effectively and efficiently he must embrace these Constitutional values. The school as the organisation should be value driven and the behaviour of the individuals within the school should also be value driven. That is why Bredeson (2006) maintains that if one wants to know what is important in a school, watch what the principal does, because the principal’s behaviour is determined by the school values. It should be noted that the school values cannot be contrary to Constitutional values.

Under this theme the principals were requested to just mention the values that govern their day-to-day activities in schools as enshrined in the Constitution of the country. The following were the responses from respondents on Constitutional values that govern the principal’s behaviour:

PA posited that:

*The Constitution provides equal opportunity to all learners (all citizens). In the educational context the principal’s duty is to uphold these values by adhering to the policies of the department in every step he takes in managing the school. These policies serve as an outline and guidance towards the said values.*

PB was of the opinion that:

*Principals must display democracy, social justice, Ubuntu, honesty, excellence, professionalism, empathy, responsibility, transparency, altruism, accountability are crucial.*
PC posited:

*Human dignity, equality, advancement of human rights and freedom, non-racialism and non-sexism, transparency, openness, consultation and accountability are all very important qualities.*

From the responses of the principal above one notices that, most of the principals were not clear about the Constitutional values in Chapter Two of the Constitution of Republic of South Africa, that govern their daily behaviour at schools. PA, had only alluded to equality only as the Constitutional values he mentioned the departmental policies. PB had identified some of them, though mixed them with KwaZulu Natal Department of Education values not the Constitutional values. PC was the only principal who seemed to know the Constitutional values governing the behaviour of the school principal.

Van der Westhuizen (2002) sees values as the central part of planning, decision making and all other management activities in a school. Hayward (2008) states, the school community’s commitment to clearly communicated values, are at the heart of every successful school and this enables the school to achieve excellence. The DoE (2008) further concurs with this when it states that at the heart of principal’s leadership and management are core values, which impacts on what happens in the school. The principal as the leader has the responsibly to know, understand the set of accepted values as set in the country’s Constitution. The very values should be clearly communicated to all the school members.

If the principals are not clear about the values that are supposed to govern the school’s behaviour, it is clear that they are planning and are engaged in decision making processes which would be vague. The school’s policies and learners’ code of conduct needs to take these values into account. Failure to understand the importance of the application of these values in the daily life of the school has left some principals and educators without work. Look at the human dignity as the Constitutional value which needs to be incorporated in discipline policy, section 10 of South African School’s Act talks about the abolition of corporal punishment. Application of corporal punishment equals human beings to animals; human behaviour could be corrected through discussion with those concerned. Failure to understand some of the Constitutional values results
in principals taking wrong decisions, decisions that may land them in prison, as in the case of the usage of the corporal punishment.

Embracing Constitutional values by school principals on their day-to-day work is very important; as it has been alluded to that failure to apply them correctly may land the principal or educators in prison, because failure to apply them correctly is the violation of human rights. From the responses of the participants it was clear that the majority of them are not very clear about these Constitutional values; this presents the UMkhanyakude District Office with the huge responsibility, of conducting intensive training of the school principals on these Constitutional values and application of these values in schools.

4.3.6. The support given by the district to the Principals to advance their leadership roles to in order to bring about quality results at schools

When asked about the support the principals receive from the district, the majority of respondents were of the idea that the UMkhanyakude District does give support to principals to carry out their leadership roles in schools. The support mentioned involved; provision of teaching aids and resources, provision of curriculum support, workshop on curriculum related issue, provision of Learner Teacher Support Material and rewarding of good performance.

These were the principals' responses on the support they receive from the district office:

PC asserted:

*The support that I am getting from the district ranges from meetings to workshops. The district sometimes provides circulars and curriculum related materials. The curriculum coverage monitoring tool as well as the subject annual teaching plan is all provided by the district.*

PA posited:

*The district provides teaching aids and resources and develops educators through orientation workshops and other various teacher development workshops. The district also*
conduct school visits to provide curriculum management and various support programmes. Appraisal is also noted for good educator and school performance. Many other various programmes are accessible as made available to schools to improve effectiveness such as career guidance, welfare campaigns, sports, development, etc.

**PB maintained:**

The district organises workshops (induction workshops for the newly appointed principals, curriculum management workshops for all the principals. Schools are visited on regular basis and support is given by the subject advisors. Imbizo meetings are also held where by all the stakeholders are invited are to discuss ways of getting better results. LTSM are delivered on time. Subjects’ specifics workshops for each and every learning area are organised for the educators.

Responses from the principals showed that the district intervention in leadership and management development of principals is so minimal. Principals made mention of briefing meetings and induction workshops as part of support. Taking from above responses one sees that the support given to schools is mostly curriculum administration and management. None Nothing was said about principal’s skill development on leadership and management for them to be effective and efficient instructional leaders.

The failure of the department to develop principals on relevant leadership skills is contrary to the Skill Development Act 97 of 1998 which states that work places should be used as active learning organisation (Maxwell, 2010). Principals as employees should be provided with opportunities to acquire knew knowledge and skills and this will enable them to keep up with advances in school leadership and management practices leadership practices, like promoting school professional development, developing and communicating shared goals and vision and to promote teamwork within the school, which in turn develops and enhances teaching and learning (Maxwell, 2010).

Naidu et al. (2013) argue that while the government attempted to redress the legacies of the apartheid regime, by declaring schools self-managing institutions, the most important duty of developing principals as agents for change was neglected. Decentralisation and democratisation of
education was accompanied by introduction of new legislation and policies in education. New Constitutional values which directly impacted management and leadership skills of the principals were introduced. This was due to the fact that principals were never prepared for this huge task of transforming the education system. The poor quality of results, which is more evident in rural areas and the increasing number of school being labelled as poorly performing schools raises concern about whether principals have the required skills, knowledge and expertise to lead schools effectively in this challenging and complex environment (Naidu et al. 2013)

School are said to be very important in effecting any change taking place in any country, while principal are the drivers of that particular change, yet the rhetoric about their importance is often not accompanied by sufficient attention either to what knowledge and skills they need or how they will learn what is needed to effectively lead the school (Brown, Afara, Hartman, Mahar & Mill, 2016). That was the case with principals in UMkhanyakude principals were required to produce quality results at school, while less attention was paid to their training and development.

 Principals need development in issues of instructional leadership, participatory leadership, practical application of the constitutional values, whole school evaluation and planning, school based budgeting and financial management. As agents of change principals must be dynamic, initiative, skilful and visionary as they lead the change (Hourani and Stringer, 2015), they need to be given support equal to their task.

4.3.7 The role of the principals in bringing about quality results

Opinions of the respondents regarding what they thought the roles of school principals in bringing about quality results schools vary. About 33% of the participants saw the issues of curriculum management as the most important aspect in bringing about quality result while 11% maintained that being a visionary leader plays a very important role in bringing about improved learner performance. More than 88% of the respondents saw principals more as managers than leaders. That is what they said about the principals’ role in bringing about quality results:
PG asserted:

_A proper curriculum management plan must be in place, well implemented and monitored. A school principal should have a good recruitment strategy for educators and well established induction programme for newly appointed educators._

PF maintained:

_Principals should make sure that they manage the curriculum well; they prioritise teaching and learning all the time. Get both learners and educators motivated._

PC posited:

_Monitoring of both learners and educators work by school principals should be done at least on quarterly basis. Setting of the controlled common tests and tasks must not be neglected._

PK postulated:

_The principal must be a goal oriented and a visionary leader who plans for the present and the future._

Studies (Kotter 2011; Bredeson 2006; Yukl 2002; Browne-Ferrigno & Fusarelli 2005; Masitsa 2005; Hourani & Stringer (2015); Hutton, 2016) have identified leadership practices, like promoting school professional development, developing and communicating shared goals and visions to be very important in bringing about teamwork within the school, which in turn develops and enhances teaching and learning (Maxwell, 2010). In the new dispensation leadership has become the process of building capacity, participation and collaboration among followers (Van der Westhuizen, 2002). Maxwell (2010) insists that good principals acknowledge that, they do not know everything they draw on the expertise of those around them.

It is interesting to note that respondents allude to principals as instructional leaders. Principals are seen directly involved in and concerned about what is taking place in the classroom. They monitor the work of both educators and learner and prioritise teaching and learning time. Though the importance of leadership styles like participative, invitational and emotional intelligent leadership
in democratising education were never highlighted. These are the skills which ensure the involvement of all stakeholders in learner education.

It is also interesting to note that the importance of principal being a visionary leader is highlighted. Bush (2003) argues that vision setting is increasingly regarded as an essential component of effective leadership. Outstanding leadership has outstanding vision for their schools, Issues of originality and creativity when one is the principal are not emphasised, forgetting that since schools were declared as self-managing principals supposed to be dynamic, initiative, skilful and visionary, since principals are the agents of change (Clark, 2012). The principals are also required to develop their own capacity and accept responsibility for self-management (Naicker & Waddy, 2002).

In many countries if changes were introduced in the education system principals become the focal point; this has been witnessed in Abu Dhabi, when schools went through the period of reform and change. Hourania and Stringer (2014) argue that reform of the school system in Abu Dhabi was regarded as the priority for desirable sustainable development in an attempt to reduce dependency on oil and create a knowledge-based economy; this understanding was coupled by a professional development plan for principals to enhance their capabilities to manage and initiate change in light of the reforms. So this should be the case with South Africa, if the country wants implement changes effectively and see principals producing quality results, principals as agents of change should be the focal point, by training them in knowledge, values and skills they would need to make schools effective places of operations.

4.4 CONCLUSION

A deductive approach was used to analyse and interpret data featuring in this research study. Objectives of the study were translated into themes, which were further broken down into research questions. It was the responses of the participants in each question which were treated as themes and sub-themes were formulated to bring about logic and organisation in the analysis and presentation of data. When analysing these data the researcher used her predetermined framework and used some educationist theories to analyse the interview transcripts. Participants’ responses were organised under each theme; they were analysed, and meaning was given to each response using some educationists’ theories in educational leadership, or arguments against the idea.
Principals’ responses showed that a lot of support still needs to be given to them so that they could be in a better position to bring about improved quality results in schools.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has dealt with analysis, interpretation and presentation of the data collected. This chapter provides a summary of the study. This chapter outlines the findings which emerged in Chapter 4.

Other chapters which have contributed to reach the conclusion and recommendations of the study are as follows:

Chapter 1 has outlined the orientation and motivation of the study; Chapter 2 provided different literatures for the study. Chapter 3 involved the methodology and Chapter 4 presented data analysis. The objectives of the study have been used to write the summary, outline findings and make recommendations of the study. Objectives are shared below. The objectives were to:

- investigate the principals’ influence on the learner achievement;
- determine how principals practically embrace constitutional values in their leadership roles;
- identify the leadership styles principals employ to facilitate participation of stakeholders in decision making; and
- determine the principals’ roles in improving the classroom instruction.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

5.2.1 Summary of Chapter 1

This study aimed at investigating the leadership role of school principals in bringing about improved learner performance. Chapter one serves as the introduction and motivation of this study and the problem to be investigated. This chapter briefly outlined the aims and the objectives of the study, the definition of the operational terms and the research methodology including research design, the research instrument, sampling procedure, data analysis and presentation. Furthermore, this Chapter provided the outline which included: the ethical considerations, required resources,
the feasibility of the study, intellectual property and innovations. Knowledge dissemination, the researchers’ and supervisors’ declarations are also included in Chapter 1.

5.2.2 Summary of Chapter 2

The declaration of public schools as self-managing organisations in South Africa under SASA (Act 84 of 1996) legislation was part of the government’s agenda to transform education through decentralisation and greater community involvement. This shift of power is also referred to as the participative democracy, and in the school situation the success of this system depends on the quality and the nature of internal leadership roles of the school principal, which means their ability to lead and manage the school. The new paradigm shift requires principals as leaders to be original, creative and innovative.

Constitutional values which are part of the democratic government were introduced which aimed at creating democratic societies, required the school principal to work in a democratic and participatory ways to build relationships with all the relevant stakeholders to ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education for learners. Principals are therefore expected to use their power of influence to invite and enable other stakeholders to take part in decision making.

This change in leadership requires the principals to develop new leadership styles, where they needed to share and distribute their leadership. Principals are therefore needed to be inviting, emotionally intelligent and transformational to ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education at school as part of their instructional leadership styles.

The new paradigm shift requires the school principals to move away from solely developing administrative competencies to fostering learning, developing curriculum and enhancing teacher development. Principals are to ensure that what learners learn is of good quality; hence the term leadership for learning and this involves management of instruction, monitoring learning programmes and identifying areas which require professional support. The principal as curriculum manager should play a positive role particularly if the entire approach to teaching is changing. This concurs with the work of Maringa (2016) as an instructional leader is expected to monitor the instructional management of curriculum in order to provide curriculum resources and support to educators. As lead professionals it is their responsibility to ensure that effective teaching and learning take place in classrooms.
5.2.3 Summary of Chapter 3 (Methodology)

This study was descriptive, since from its beginning the researcher attempted to find answers, investigating how the leadership role of the school principal brings about improved learner performance in schools at UMkhanyakude District. As a qualitative study, it has developed a general focus of inquiry which has helped in guiding the researcher to discover what is known about the topic under study. The main data collection tool employed in this study was the interview. Nine principals of UMkhanyakude District from both primary and secondary schools were interviewed on their leadership role in bringing about improved learner performance in schools. The main findings from the interviews are summarised below.

The data collection tools employed in this study were interviews and observations. Personal interviews provided personal and detailed information. The principals from both primary and secondary schools were randomly selected for interviews, as they were likely to have the required information; hence purposive sampling, ethical considerations, data management and analysis were outlined. Lastly data validity and reliability techniques were identified.

5.2.4 Summary of Chapter 4

From data collected the researcher concluded that principals see themselves as influential figures to determine the effectiveness of teaching and learning and they believe that their influence lies in their positional power. Leadership is the process by which school principals direct and influence educators and learners to achieve educational excellence.

It should be noted that given a title of being a principal does not make one a good leader. Leadership embraces creativity, originality, initiative and being able to bend others’ motives and actions towards the achievement of the school vision and goals. Positional influence alone is not enough, because people feel obliged to follow. The principal must reach a level where people follow willingly. The leader is someone whom others gladly follow.
5.3 FINDINGS

5.3.1 The principals’ leadership role that influences the learner achievement

Research findings have revealed that leadership is the process of social influence which is exerted by the principal to parents, learners, educators and other stakeholders to structure activities and relationships within the school. The purpose of this intentional influence is the realisation of the school common goals, thus leadership becomes the process of bending the motivations and actions of others to achieve school vision and goals. This concurs with Sanzo, Sherman and Clayton (2011) that the principal is the most important and significant figure in determining the success of the school.

Data collected proved that the majority of the school principals are not aware of the immense power they have to influence leaners’ achievement. However, Pont, Nusche, Moorman (2008) emphasise that the principal is generally expected to play a more active role in instructional leadership through monitoring and evaluating the teacher performance by mentoring, coaching and planning teacher professional development and orchestrating teamwork and cooperative instruction. In addition, some do understand that they have positional power, through which they influence the course of events in schools. Positional power does not always have a positive influence on stakeholders; in most cases it is resisted by stakeholders. Principals ended up not elucidating how they exactly influence learner achievement in schools.

Data collected revealed that the principals believed that their influence lies in the articulation of the school vision to other stakeholder. Studies reveal that what separates the leader from the manager is that, the leader carries the vision of the organisation, while the manager works towards the achievement of that vision (Clark, 2012; DoE, 2008). Having the clear vision is the single most important contribution that the principal can make for the future success of the school. Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and van Rooyen (2009) agree that the vision of the school must be able to place teaching and learning and at the centre of instructional leadership.

The vision should be articulated in a compelling way and be implanted in all the structures so that all the stakeholders are able to make sense of it and then own that vision as theirs. Through the power of influence, the principal convinces, inspires, binds and influences the behaviour of teachers to work towards the achievement of the school vision.
Principals still see themselves as managers who only have to implement the departmental vision; they do not see themselves more as leaders who should apply creativity, originality and strategy in implementing the departmental vision. This is evident in that the majority of South African principals do not regard the oversight of curriculum and teaching as their main task, but feel that responsibility for this lies with the subject heads and HODs. Perhaps as a consequence of this perception, principals do not spend the majority of their time on aspects of instructional leadership, but rather on administrative duties and learner discipline (Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009).

As the matter of course principals do see themselves as school vision carriers, but they are not clear on how to articulate and share the vision to convince, inspire, bind and influence the behaviour of all the stakeholders to work towards the achievement of the school vision. This was observed by the researcher when she asked some educators and learners about their schools’ vision; she found that they were not clear about it.

5.3.2 The principals ‘leadership role and the application of Constitutional values

Research data reveal that one of the aims of the country’s Constitution was to create the society based on democratic values, which were identified as follows: democracy, equality, human dignity, participation, freedom and social justice. The Bill of Rights and the Constitution of South Africa challenged school principals to change from apartheid values to the values enshrined in the Constitution. Principals were therefore, expected to change the way they think about their roles and responsibilities in schools.

The findings have also proven that values form the central part of planning, decision making and all other management activities in a school and that the school community’s commitment to clearly communicated values, are at the heart of every successful school and this enables the school to achieve excellence. Values are also said to be at the heart of principals’ leadership and management; they therefore impact on whatever happens in the school.

Unfortunately, findings have revealed that the majority of the principals are not clear about these values that govern their day-to-day behaviour and upon which all the decisions taken at school should be based on. Some confuse these constitutional values with KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department values, while others confuse them with national departmental policies.
The fact that some of the principals are not clear about these constitutional values which serve as a guide for their decision making creates an impression that their planning and policy formulation does not take these values into cognisance of which is non-compliance with the departmental prescripts. Emphasising the importance of knowing and understanding values as part of leading and managing the school, Van der Westhuizen (2002) states that values form the central part of planning, decision making and all other management activities in a school while, Hayward (2008) maintains that values, are at the heart of every successful school.

The researcher has observed that, for the fact that some principals are ignorant about these values, they find themselves taking wrong decisions like promoting the administration of corporal punishment as a form of learner punishment, which is contrary to human dignity as a constitutional right. Sometimes principals dismiss pregnant girls from schools, leaving behind the boys who have impregnated the girls at school, forgetting about the value of equality between genders.

Since the majority of principals, as per findings are ignorant of these values it can be concluded that these principals are not the custodians of the constitutional values which determine the course of their leadership which foils the government agenda of creating democratic society based on these constitutional values.

5.3.3 Principal’s leadership role and stakeholders’ involvement in improving teaching and learning

South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 ushered in a school governance approach aimed at democratising education through the participation of all stakeholders by way of the decentralisation of decision-making to schools. Data collected reveal that in most cases parents particularly push all the responsibility of teaching and learning to educators; they do not see themselves as responsible for the teaching and learning of their children. When invited to parents’ meeting to discuss issues concerning teaching and learning they do not attend.

A mouthful of lack of parental support and involvement has been covered in studies of Nkosi (2014) and Maluleke (2014). Nkosi (2014) posits that the majority of schools do not get adequate support from parents. The take is that parents are ill-informed when it comes to the curriculum. They end up not knowing how to help, as they have problems of their own. The lowest rates of parental involvement are found in economically disadvantaged and less educated communities.
(Maluleke, 2014). In this instance the problem of continuity in learning from school to home is not taking place as these learners are not getting support they need and teaching and learning are not that very successful. The problem of lack of parental involvement in education of their children in majorities of schools in South Africa has always been the ghost that will haunt good initiative in education. The role of parents in education of their children is a powerful instrument for improvement to teaching and learning.

Research data have also revealed that schools experience a number of social challenges, of which schools on their own cannot solve, since they have their origins from the community. These challenges range from teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, orphans and vulnerable children and child headed families. These are issues which need the school community itself, Department of Health, Social Development and South African Policing Service.

It is important that school principals strategically involve all the relevant stakeholders in decision making and dealing with all the challenges experienced by the schools. The research findings reveal that principals are aware of the fact that leadership is no longer confined to the principals’ office but it has become a shared responsibility, but their knowledge on how to involve other stakeholders with an aim of improving teaching and learning is limited.

Data collected showed that the majority of school principals stated that communication is the skills the principal can use to ensure involvement of other stakeholders in decision making. Discussing the skills used in involving the stakeholders in decision making, Hayward (2008) postulates that the clearly communicated school vision to all stakeholders is the first step towards working with them in running the school. Some saw listening to the views and opinions of others as the skill to be used to involve other stakeholders in decision making, which is still part of communication.

It should be noted that through communication the principal can invite or disinvite other stakeholders to and from involving themselves in decision making. Therefore, all the stakeholders can take part in school decision making only when the school principal takes an intentional decision to invite them, (Pukey 2006; Stoll, et al 2003). Explaining what being a leader involves, Maxwell (2010) sees leadership as the capacity to devise plans that succeed and a faculty to inspire and persuade others to carry them out despite difficulties, discouragements and setbacks.
The failure of principals to embrace values like participation, transparency and human dignity also contribute to parents especially not attending parents’ meetings. Invitational and emotional intelligent leadership styles are not properly used as techniques which to invite parents and other stakeholders to partake in schools’ decision making. The principals should invite stakeholders to school and play their relevant role in improving teaching and learning. Covey (2005) sees the emotionally, intelligent style of leadership as the technique that can be used to draw other stakeholders to engage in decision making processes, when he defines it as one’s self-knowledge, self-awareness, social sensitivity, empathy and ability to communicate successfully with others.

The role of the educational leaders is to facilitate the re-culturing as well as the re-structuring needed to establish an inclusive educational setting at the instructional level. The educational leader therefore, acts as an agent of change (Calitz, Fuglestad & Lillejord, 2002) in developing strategies to engage parents and other interested stakeholders. Therefore, leadership becomes the process of building participation and collaboration. It is important that the school and the community collaborate in making decisions to enhance healthy relationships and true mutual responsibility. The good principals are the ones who acknowledge that they do not know everything, but draw on the expertise of others around them and develop them (Maxwell 2010). Such relationship gives birth to an environment that enhances teaching and learning.

The researcher had observed that, though some principals are aware of the importance of parental involvement in learner education, especially in school policies formulation and as part of learner disciplinary measure, they view it as time consuming. They therefore opt for short cuts where they develop the policies on their own or buy the already prepared ones. For learner discipline they make use of corporal punishment, thus violating the constitutional values of participation and human dignity. With regard to policy formulation, this eventually creates the state where the policies are not owned by all the stakeholders and administration of corporal punishment promotes the culture of violence in schools.

5.3.4 The principal’s leadership role in improving classroom instruction

Findings have revealed that the new approach in school leadership and management as per South African School Act 84 of 1996 requires the principals to change the way they think about their roles and responsibilities in schools. Principals are to move away from solely developing
administrative competencies to fostering learning, developing curriculum and enhancing teacher
development. Bush, et al (2009) posit that principals should provide good models in terms of lesson
preparation, subject knowledge, pedagogic approaches, and assessment and learner welfare. This
will require the principal to be able to monitor and support the teacher in the teaching and learning
processes.

School principals have a responsibility to ensure that what learners learn is of good quality; hence
the term leadership for learning and this involves management of instruction, monitoring learning
programmes and identifying areas which require professional support. With these new roles of the
principal, the principal becomes the instructional leaders. According to Van Deventer and Kruger
(2008) as instructional leaders, the principals are at the centre of effective teaching and learning
and they are central role players in ensuring the success of the teaching and learning outcome in
the school.

Findings have proven that the majority of principals cannot differentiate between curriculum
management and instructional leadership. They see curriculum management in general as the way
of improving instruction. Although few principals are aware of the fact that they need to be directly
involved on what is happening in the classroom, it is not clear how they do this. It has also been
revealed that principals are not familiar with the term ‘instructional leadership’. This creates the
impression that the school principals are not very clear of their role as instructional leaders as the
way of bringing about improved learner performance in schools.

The research has revealed that as an instructional leader, the principals are directly involved in
monitoring of curriculum delivery in the classroom, through class visits educator development and
the creation of the conducive learning environment. To concur with this Bush and Bell (2002) who
maintain that the principal is the one who provides direction and expert advice on development of,
teaching, learning and curriculum delivery, diagnose educational problems and encourage
professional development and teaching improvement. Teaching and learning in the classroom
bears a direct influence on learner achievement; it must therefore be at the heart of the school
principals.

This implies that improving instruction must be central to everything that happens at school, and
that all the activities that the principal performs at school must aim at bringing about improved
instruction, which eventually brings about improved learner achievement. To be effective in this area of leadership, the principal should always remember that the teaching and learning activity is the shared endeavour. Involvement of other stakeholders and their invitational skills are still a necessity, since for learners and educators to give their best, they need to feel that they are treated with trust and respect.

The researcher had observed that the majority of principals have delegated their duty as instructional leaders to school departmental heads. The majority of these heads of the departments (HODs) do class visits and monitor educator lesson preparations and Annual Teaching Programme (ATPs) as fault finding mission, not with the aim of developing educators in order to improve learner performance. The school principals remain on the dark spot on what actually takes place in the classroom.

So the principals’ responsibility for creating an instructional climate cannot be underestimated, since it serves as the basis for effective teaching and learning to take place. The principal has a major responsibility for creating a climate that encourages a high level of performance and commitment from all who work in the school.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study aimed at investigating the role of the principals in bringing about quality results in schools in the UMkhanyakude District. The results have indicated that when the country’s government introduced the decentralisation and democratisation of education, in order to redress the apartheid legacy, the government went ahead with changes in education, while leaving behind the agents of change who are principals. The following are the researcher’s recommendations according to each question.
5.4.1 The principals’ influence on the learner achievement

The school principal should be equipped with skills that will make them effective in influencing the course of events in this transformational era. The skills that enable the educators, learners and parents to work willingly towards the achievement of the school goals and vision should be a primary focus. The principal should be practically retrained on their roles and responsibilities, especially on how to articulate the vision vigorously in a way that participation is ensured. If the Department of Education wants to see principals positively influencing learner performance through their leadership, at least a two-year’ practical course designed to meet the leadership needs of the school principal can make a difference. This course should be a requirement to everyone who wants to be a principal. Those who are already in leadership positions need intensive retraining and re-skilling to equip them with the new skills demanded by the new education environment.

5.4.2 The principals’ roles and the practical application of Constitutional values

Principals need to be made aware of the implication of these values in the leadership and management of the schools. They also need to be trained and be equipped with skills on how they can practically embrace these constitutional values in their day-to-day leadership and management life. It is clear that as from the onset of the democratic era, principals were never properly prepared for this task of changing the country through their leadership role. Even the newly appointed principals practise what they copied from their principals when they were in lower levels at schools. One-day workshops conducted by Departmental officials are very shallow to develop principals.

5.4.3 Principal’s leadership role and stakeholders’ involvement in improving teaching and learning

To be more effective the principal is required to work in democratic and participatory ways to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education to learners. For both the learners and educators to give their best, they need to feel that they are treated with dignity, trust and respect.
Principals need to be skilled on how to use communication effectively that stakeholders’ involvement is ensured. They need training on how to send inviting messages in a manner those stakeholders see themselves as valuable, capable and responsible for the decisions made and eventually want to see them achieved. They need to be introduced to invitational and emotional intelligent leadership as leadership styles that ensure stakeholders’ involvement.

Principals need retraining on practical application of the following forms of leadership, to ensure stakeholders’ involvement in school decision making, which are distributive, emotionally intelligent, transformational and invitational leadership. Principals need to be skilled on how to use communication effectively in a manner that stakeholders’ involvement is ensured. They need training on how to send inviting messages in a manner the stakeholders see themselves as valuable, capable and responsible for the decisions made and eventually want to see them achieved. They need to be introduced to invitational and emotional intelligent leadership as leadership styles that ensure stakeholders’ involvement.

5.4.4 The principal’s role in improving the classroom instruction

Principals should be familiarized with terminology that forms the basis of their leadership practices. Principals in this study hardly mentioned leadership practices like instructional leadership, school professional development, participation and collaboration among the followers. The school principals need to be made aware of the difference between curriculum management and instructional leadership. School instruction will only improve if the principals are clear of their role and responsibility as instructional leaders.

Lastly principals should be encouraged to be lifelong learners and they should be incentivised for this professional development, not in point form as it is the case with Continuous Professional Teacher Development, but in a monetary value. This could inspire, encourage and motivate principals to study continuously for self-development, and keep themselves abreast with new developments and trends in education, thus becoming more effective and efficient in their leadership and management roles.
5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings from the study on the leadership role of the school principal in bringing about improved learner performance brought forth another area of interest in the light of school leadership and decentralisation and democratisation of education. It has become clear from this study that policies and structure for decentralisation and democratisation of education were thoroughly prepared, as our country’s policies are said to be the good ones, but human resources, in this case principals, were never efficiently prepared for this formidable and life-changing task of leading schools in order to improve people’s lives. From principals’ responses it was evident that the majority are struggling with effectively doing what is expected of them as school leaders.

It has been made clear that the leadership role of the school principal is a determining factor in the failure or success of the school. So it is crucial that further investigation is conducted on how to re-skill and retrain principals to make them more relevant to their leadership role.

The population/sample consisted of nine principals. A study with a bigger sample size, probably of national proportions is a viable option to ensure generalisation of findings. The interviews were the only data collection instrument utilised in the study. Mixed-methods approaches can be used as their combined strengths can improve the depth and accuracy of the findings. There is, therefore, room for a study where usage is made of both in-depth interviews and questionnaires.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study are those characteristics of design or methodology that influenced the interpretation of research findings. They are the constraints, on generalizability, applications to practice and utility of findings that are the results of the way in which the researcher chose to design the study and method used to establish the validity of the study (Prince & Murman (2004).

The topic under study has had its own limitations; UMkhanyakude District is very large district with five hundred and sixty-two schools. Purposive sampling was used where nine principals were eventually interviewed, which provided the data for this study. Nine principals out of five hundred and sixty-two did not provide representivity of the whole UMkhanyakude District. The area UMkhanyakude as such also served as the limitation; this is the deep rural area with limited resources and infrastructure, and this may have a negative impact on the leadership role of the
school principal. Hence, an investigation carried out in another district which is urban might come up with different findings.

5.7 CONCLUSION

This study has revealed the success and the failure of any school is the responsibility of the school principal. Effectiveness of leadership in bringing about improved learner performance largely depends on the principal’s ability to use the power of influence effectively, the principal’s ability to involve all the stakeholders in decision making and make them feel that the school and the improvement of classroom instruction belong to them. Nonetheless the findings have proven that principals are not aware of the immense power they have to influence the course of events in school to bring about improved learner performance. Although some know and understand their role as leaders in school, it is not to the extent that it can bring about radical change desired when the government democratised and decentralised the education systems as part of its agenda to bring about democratic society. Ineffectiveness and the failure of some of the principals and their school cannot be totally blamed to them. The Department of Education has a role to play here and principals were never and still are not effectively and efficiently prepared for this task. Therefore, a lot still needs to be done to retrain and re-skill principals in their new leadership roles.
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ANNEXURE A:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

This is a study of the role of the principals in bringing about quality results in schools at UMkhanyakude District.

1. In your opinion explain how the principal’s leadership role influences the learner achievement

2. Mention skills you think principals should do to involve all stakeholders participate in the school’s decision making process

3. In your view, what could be done by the principal improve the classroom instruction
4. What challenges do you encounter as a principal on your day to day execution of your leadership activities?

5. The new approach to leadership and management requires principals to embrace Constitutional values in their day to day leadership activities. In your view what are these values?

6. From your experience as a principal, what support is given by the District to make you as curriculum manager effective in bringing about improved learner performance? Explain.
7. Any suggestions you would like to make regarding the role of the principals in bringing about quality results in schools at UMkhanyakude District.
THE WARD MANAGER
Department Of Basic Education
UMkhanyakude District

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am presently registered for a Masters Degree in the Faculty of Education in the University of Zululand. As part of this programme, I am required to conduct a field-based research on a topic as approved by the Senate of the University. My study is entitled: The leadership role of the school principals in bringing about improved learner performance in Mkhanyakude District, to be conducted under the guidance and supervision of Dr. M.S. Mabusela and Prof MAN Duma.

I am writing to request access to some of the schools in your circuit, in order to carry out an investigation regarding the above topic. I wish to administer interviews and observations to principals in Mkhanyakude District.

You are assured that the study will not in any way interfere with the normal running of the schools in the Circuit. Copies of the interview schedule are attached for your perusal. I hope they’ll meet your approval. Throughout the study, and the report that will follow, the principles of anonymity and confidentiality will be strictly observed. Should you deem it necessary, I undertake to favour your office with a copy of the dissertation.

Your permission to conduct research in the circuit will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]
Mrs GN Mngomezulu

ANNEXURE C
# Ethical Clearance Certificate

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<td><strong>Principal Researcher/Investigator</strong></td>
<td>GN Mngomezulu</td>
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<td><strong>Supervisor and Co-supervisor</strong></td>
<td>Prof MAN Duma</td>
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<td><strong>Department</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Nature of Project</strong></td>
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The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project proposal and the documents listed on page 2 of this Certificate.

**Special conditions:**

1. This certificate is valid for 2 years from the date of issue.
2. Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date-31 July 2017]
3. Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.

The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this Certificate, using the reference number indicated above, but may not conduct any data collection using research instruments that are yet to be approved:

Please note that the UZREC must be informed immediately of:

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the UZREC
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

GN Mngomezulu - PGM 2016/276
### Classification:

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The table below indicates which documents the UZREC considered in granting this Certificate and which documents, if any, still require ethical clearance. (Please note that this is not a closed list and should new instruments be developed, these would require approval.)

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The UZREC retains the right to:

- Withdraw or amend this Certificate if:
  - Any unethical principles or practices are revealed or suspected
  - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
  - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
  - The conditions contained in this Certificate have not been adhered to

- Request access to any

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting the research.

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Professor Nokuthula Kunene  
Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee  
04 August 2016

GN Mngomezulu - PGM 2015/276

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PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN BRINGING ABOUT IMPROVED LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN UMKHANYAKUDE DISTRICT", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 25 January 2016 to 31 January 2017.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Umkhanyakude District

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 21 January 2016